



Cross axle

The magazine of the Scottish Land Rover Owners Club

www.slroc.co.uk

SUMMER 2021



Stories & tales told from those that battled in the leafers and then got soft for coils
(not all got soft, Michael Bruce battled on with his famous "Nessie")



RR on giant rocks



Fly back in time



LR = no garage floorspace

£10 (free to members)

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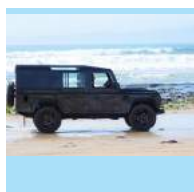
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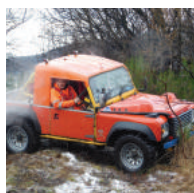
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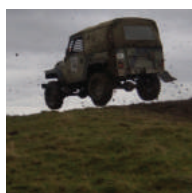
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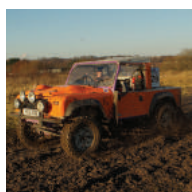
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Hello All,

Welcome to another packed edition of Cross axle. A big thank you goes to Neil & the editorial team who put the magazine together, and especially to all the contributors for your fantastic articles & pictures. It is also great that we are back out and have a few events to report on.



Chairman's chat

This edition has a couple of features harking back to the early days of Hill Rallying. These events are a special passion of mine, and as you may know I am the Chief Marshal for the Scottish "Borders" Hill Rally which is due to run on the 20th & 21st of November 2021, plug, plug.... I can remember in my early days of SLROC being "invited" to marshal at the 2011 event.

I took my wife's Freelander down to Forrest Estate and was handed a Radio and a Red & Yellow flag and sent out in to the forest to my location. I was amazed at all the different types of vehicles and especially the speed they came passed me, as they dropped in to the quarry and water splash in front of me and then roared off down the track. I can also remember hearing an almighty bang from down the track and after radio-ing in, was told to carefully make my way down and investigate. I found a very batter and bruised car that had failed to turn in to the next quarry and now had a mangled front end (Driver and Navigator were of course OK).

My favourite time of day on any Hill Rally is first thing in the morning, sitting on the hillside, listening to the silence, watching the birds soar in the sky, occasionally seeing a deer in the distance - and then, all of a sudden the V8 thunder can be heard echo-ing around the hills, the radio's start crackling with their safety messages and the excitement begins.

After a few years I began to get more involved in the organising of the event with a few other SLROC members, but under the direction of the Scottish Hill Rally Club. Do you know, the Scottish "Borders" Hill Rally takes over 100 volunteers to run the event, a year of planning, nearly a week to set up, and even the take down and tidy up takes a couple of days, with many, now friends, coming from all over the UK to assist. I can't image the sense of pride and achievement of finishing a Hill Rally as a competitor & crew (who normally number about 200 in total), but as a marshal and organiser it is immensely satisfying when that first car leaves the start line, but also when they all return (admittedly some on the back of a recovery unit).

If you would like to help out at this year's event, please get in touch.

Take care for now and I look forward as ever to seeing you out on the Hillside, in the quarries, but definitely in the forest in November.

Dean

Dean Pugh
SLROC - CHAIRMAN 

WEBSITE SLROC.CO.UK

A reminder to all club members to visit our website and forum at www.slroc.co.uk

Keep an eye on the events calendar for upcoming trials, comps and over events with links to book your entry online. Keep up to date with links to access all the rules and regulations for competitors, safety information, and log books. And remember that you can also join and renew your membership through the links to our online membership platform.

Take a look through the gallery of past events of all types (yes, even THOSE photos from the AGM are there. You know which ones I'm talking about), and join in on the discussion on our forum, whether you have questions about an event, looking for advice, or wanting to buy and sell either whole, partial or just bits for your Land Rover.

You can even find back issues of this very magazine available to download.

Cross axle 

The Hillrally One of the most all inclusive off road gatherings that brings crews, ground people, organisers and pit crews together from all points ... all generations, all levels and all skills

1980's were just a superb era for off road; ARC's flying high, a fabulous supply of baseline vehicles (mostly LR's of course), spares and gloriously enthusiastic clubs to join, with much willingly shared knowledge and experience, all encouraged so many of us to get seriously in to this superb sport. Learning the ropes, trialing, comping and heading off on off road adventures with the SCLROC in little Pinkers the S1 80, including a team foray over the border to the Nationals, was the very best entry in to the world of off road.



Championships developed, and top honours treasured in an event where a win came easily to no one. It took a team to get the car over the finish, and every member played a huge part in any victory. For the service crews, the hours were long, with many an anxious wait to see if the onboard crew could

The Ups & Downs of Hillrallies

by Diana Tigwell

Too short a time and we were wrenched away in a move to Devon, with 2 S1's and a trailer stacked hillbillie style with spares. This brought a complete change of club and competition style, first setting up what is now EDORC, then in to the depths of the daunting and much renowned AWDC ... but tbf, slightly warmer weather than Bathgate in winter!!

A few years competing right in the mix of trials, comps and the all time favourite event, team recoveries, and the chance to take a shot at commentating at one West Harptree comp safari, led to many fun filled, ridiculously exciting years on the mic at all sorts of events, competitive and non competitive, home and abroad.

But, of all the events, it was hillrallies that really created the atmosphere, the anticipation and excitement. The build up starting weeks before. The entry list pored over the instant it landed and seeding a case of much honour.

From the first Senior Service Hillrally, this year celebrating 50 years since Roger Fell and his team created the original format, hillrallies fixed themselves as a major point in any off road season.

The event format has taken as bumpy a course through off road history as the terrain of the stages themselves. These events, deliberately set to test absolute endurance, genuine off road skill and real team work were not for the feint hearted.

pilot the car to safely, and to the next 'service in'. More holding of breath when word came in of cars arriving in the wrong order ... who had entered the liaison first? Because someone else was coming in first but everyone was sure they'd gone out 3rd Adrenalin flowed and nerves frayed.

It has to be noted that this was far more intense be-



Diana, trialing with SLROC quite some time ago

fore the days of the instant communication that most crews have now, and in the commentary box, we relied on the vast safety net of marshals, time keepers, recovery and the organising team, especially those posted in the furthest flung places, to send in news, snippets of info on cars and damage, and often relief that a crew was ok, back on the road, or in safe hands.



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Hillrallies have come and gone in off road fashion and Championships, having become established have then waxed and waned as they really take a toll on any club or organiser, and securing ground for the mileage required is never easy.

Foot and Mouth was an absolutely horrific period and took a dreadful toll in so many ways. Sport was just one of the many aspects of life to suffer ... and off road was hit hard.

In 2002, we had been running Off Road Motorsport, the baseline newspaper we'd launched just before F&M hit, (strangely reminiscent of Off Road Worldwide and Covid!!), and had struggled to keep going through a devastatingly necessary complete dearth of off road events anywhere in the country. We all felt we really needed a good strong event to kick start things.

A multi site format was off the agenda, so Sidbury, with it's natural amphitheatre, was chosen and a 'shamrock' style layout created, which kept all the stages on one site. To give an extra edge, and to use it as a way to help new crews into hill rally, we even created road books, and had very short liaisons between the stages.

The highlight tho, was the night stage... a scene never to be forgotten. The pits were positioned on top of the north side of the bowl, looking with panoramic vista towards the most naturally brilliant off road section of ascent/descent runs known as 'The Fingers' ... a fabulous series of seriously steep, up and down runs along the face of an abrupt natural wall in the chalk 'bowl'.

Darkness dropped across the site, and from the vantage point of the service area, we looked down on the bowl as the night event come to life ... the lights of the cars flickered like fireflies across the scene, as they charged, apparently in all directions, flashing skyward up the climbs, disappearing totally, then instantly reappearing before hurtling down to zigzag across the plain. As each stage slickly came to life and joined in the dance .. it really became something quite ethereal, almost otherworldly!! Phil Turley, running radios, was utterly and almost speechlessly moved ... as were most of us ... it really was quite breathtakingly beautiful to see.

Keith and Sally Lewis took honours as the only ever winners of 'The Virtual Hillrally' to be held.

That was a joint effort between ORM, The Welsh

Hill Rally team and the AWDC, using the experience of each, which is the at the heart of hill rallies ... people coming together from all areas to put on one massive, complex and very challenging event.

The Southern, Y Rali Brun Cymru, The Virtual, The Perth, The Lincs, The Scottish Borders, The Welsh ... some running as one offs, other creating championships ... they all brought something different to the table.

With the Perth and the Lincs, there was a real treat ... we got to play in their respective motor circuits! Knockhill provided much entertainment including a roll centre stage. Cadwell Park had rally drivers just a bit blown away with the speed and style of some of the drivers switching skillfully to the tarmac sections.

Both ends, and all parts in between, of the timing sheet brought stories of endurance, perseverance and derring do, with highlights of sheer brilliance and pure talent juxtapositioned with many an exasperating error ... and fortunately not too often, but nonetheless always a real worry, some hefty offs and crunches. It's the full gambit of emotions ... for everyone involved.



Our Club President racing "Nessie"

From the commentary box there's been many a 'lump in the throat' moment as winners gratefully crossed the line totally stoked on adrenalin, with crews bursting with pride. Equally, some of the last over the line have the best and longest lasting stories to tell and treasure ... and a real team bond for life.

One the most stirring and poignant images in the history of the hillrally for me will always be Michael Bruce and Nessie ... for so any of us, a real and true legend in off road, and a glorious triumph and inspiration to the true heart of club motorsport. Always in the mix for trophies and always with a word of encouragement for others finding their way in to the heart of the hillrally.

Moments that stay forever have to include Stephanie and Racheal Simmonite's first hillrally win ... then the battle royale they had with Bruce Tigwell at the searingly super fast paced Southern Hillrally crossing the Sussex Downs, filmed with Tony Mason for Top gear. Gordon Monaghan taking the triple crown, Dave Marsh becoming hillrally champion, Tim Marsh, Robin Clarkson, currently, Justin Birchall simply supreme in 2019, and so many more worthy champions.

Chris Tomley's Hillrally that became a real Baja, with motorbikes led out by the legendary Derrick Edmundson, The Lex Army Rally team, on the lowest budget, with the biggest heart, and the most under-powered LR but always so much pride in seeing them lined up for the start ... And counting them over the finish line, often holding the commentary open long after most had finished.... If you talked them over the start line... you had to stay and cheer them over the finish ... no matter how long...

It's easy to get emotional over hill rallies. Heart, soul ... your entire life goes in to them for the duration. It's certainly something to be really celebrated in this, the anniversary 50th year. Off road legend himself, as well as avid historian David Mitchell is working on a special programme to reveal much, much more of the history behind one of our best loved of all off road motorsport events for Off Road Worldwide, which will be aired in May.

For those who have pondered Hillrally over Hill Rally through this ... it will be explained on the show in more detail. Suffice to say it was originally the Senior Service Hillrally, more recently though, Hill Rally has been adopted. Either way ... it's one huge rollercoaster of a story ... with all the turbulence and glory you'd expect from any off road histoire ... and hopefully much more to come!!

Roger Fell and the crew who instigated that very first magnificent hillrally, will, I'm sure, be applauded widely and appreciatively for bringing so much to the world of off road motorsport ...

Time for the hillrally, and all those who've been involved in its epic journey, to take a bow for sure!! xx

Diana Tigwell
Off Road Worldwide



Special Note - With thanks to Chris Caton for passing on to me some of his very own hill rally memorabilia .. totally treasured and a joy to share!! ⚙️

Mini Landrovers = Max FUN

Land rovers are fun no matter what size and here is the proof, Sandy Greenlees pick up and trayback and Stu Sim's Range Rover



Home
About

Full membership

SLROC has led the way in providing a fair and standard vehicle at home off-road at a competitive price.

SLROC holds over 100 competitive Driving opportunities for car and van drivers.

[Click here to join](#)

(Please note, if you are a new member and you need take a one-off payment.

Full Membership is available to all Members for £10.00 per year.

PLEASE NOTE THE MEMBERSHIP UNIFORM

More admin
<http://www.slroc.co.uk>

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Memberships join the 21st Century

When I joined the club in 1987 the memberships were an unknown process to me. Within a few years I had joined the committee and became aware that the memberships were a laborious and mainly paper based system. I was thankful that I didn't land that job on the committee! At some point probably around the late 90's early 2000 Sandy Young created a database and the club moved forward an inch but still the annual renewals took time and effort and lots of postage to issue first the renewal letter and then posting the membership card to renewing members. Payments were largely cheque or cash at events which comes with its own challenges. Margaret Berry as the then membership secretary oversaw the introduction of payment by standing order some years ago which was pretty successful and helped reduce some of the cash/cheque transactions. It made renewals a little easier too.



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Dick Carter then took over as Membership Secretary and during his tenure investigations into a more automated, self-service membership application and renewal system was considered. This was introduced last year, just at the point that Dick decided to hand over the role. Timing was unfortunate for Dick as he handed over the reins to me he had done all the hard work converting all the data into the new system and setting it up ready for an easier job to administer. So, as I took over the role in March this year I have none of the old paper, cash and cheques to deal with, just an automated system which tells me when a member joins. My role now is simply to check we have all the details we need, payment is through an online portal so goes straight from your account to the SLROC account, no cash to handle. Then I write out the card, pop n an envelope with a little welcome to the club letter and off it goes.

Renewal time in October will be my first volume issue but I'm hoping that with an email reminder to all our members it will be a slick and easy process. Look

DAWN OF A NEW AGE

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proof,
nge Rover



Full membership only £25/year

SLROC has led the way in Scottish Off-Road Motor Sport for almost fifty years.

Our membership includes enthusiasts who find handling a V8 Land Rover Special more exciting (and cheaper!) than stage rallying, those with a fairly standard vehicle fitted with 'additional extras' and many with a showroom spec. vehicle doing the school run Monday to Friday, but equally at home off-road at the weekend!

SLROC holds over thirty competitive events of various types throughout the year for road going and modified vehicles, in addition to many non-competitive Driving Days and Green Flag Runs. Several weekend events are held over the year and are popular with all the family, opening up opportunities for camping and caravanning in some very scenic spots!

[Click here to join or renew your membership online](#)

(Please note, if you have recently renewed by Standing Order payment, please check that the payment was made successfully with your bank and you need take no further action.)

You will receive your Membership Card and, if available, a copy of our latest Newsletter, by return. Please note that Junior Membership is a 'one-off' payment.

Full Membership is £25.00 per year. Additional members of the family living at the same address as a Full Member may join as Associate Members for £10.00 per year and Junior Membership (for under 14s) is £1.00, a 'one-off' fee.

PLEASE NOTE THAT MEMBERSHIP RUNS NOVEMBER TO OCTOBER. IF YOU JOIN AFTER 31ST JULY YOU WILL BE GIVEN MEMBERSHIP UNTIL THE FOLLOWING OCTOBER.

More info about Club Membership and how to administer your membership can be found at <http://www.slroc.co.uk/membership/>

out for your email reminder coming out sometime in September and you'll be able to help me out by going direct onto our membership site to pay your annual subscriptions and I'll do the rest.

Thanks to those before me in this role for serving our members well and especially to Dick who did all the hard work taking us a leap forward in technology terms. I'm happy to help with any membership queries, just drop me an email on mags@gemm4x4.co.uk I look forward to seeing you out and about at events over the coming months.



Mags McLay
Membership Secretary



So Stephanie asked "Would you like to contribute and tell our members who you are and your part in the Scottish hill rally?"

Almost 50 years ago when I was planning to do the 1st Hillrally on the 1st & 2nd May 1971. I was then living in my home town of Liverpool so little did I know that 50 years later I would be living in Wales and still be involved with Hillrally's.

Having taken part in all the 1970's Hillrally's I then found myself with the new team in the 1990's putting on the Hillrally's again. This time being Clerk of Course and then Rally Director and jumping to the last few years I found myself doing different jobs i.e. Deputy Clerk of Course, 00 Car driver & Steward's etc, on the Hillrally's.

Right! so my part in the Scottish Hillrally is very simple I enjoyed them very much, with being C O C of the Welsh Hillrally's. When Ian said that he and his team would be putting a Hillrally on in Scotland would we help and of course the answer was YES! with a great number of the Welsh team doing a number of jobs before and during the event, in my case I was asked to be one of the club stewards. Thinking back all those years I seem to remember it was not a case of advice but more a case of the experience that we had found in Wales being passed on to the Scottish team members, then arriving a couple of days early to help out as and where doing the many things that required doing. But once the event was running had very little



to do other than explain to different people in and out of the sport what Hillrally was all about. But as its the Scottish Hillrally I am looking forwards to read all the Scottish members story's, Again the thing that stood out was it was just one big team being it a Marshal, Service Crew, Competitor, Official, all working together and enjoying the sport of Hillrally.

But looking to the future, well the event has changed over the years, but the one that "THAT'S MOTORSPORT" club, is planning "The Welsh Borders Hillrally 2022" under Neil Rogers & Jon Aston (and I am Deputy Clerk of Course) that is planning to take place in 2022, The format is to bring all the best of Hillrallying back to Wales. With a few new ideas as well as some from the 1970's. ⚙

WHO IS DAVID MITCHELL?

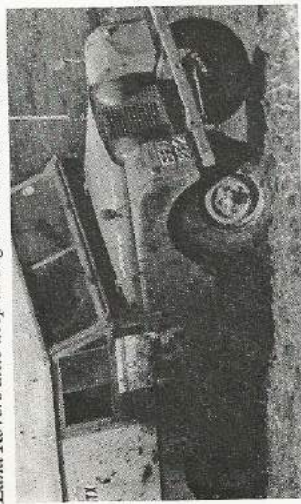
by David Mitchell



Senior Service Hill rally (Cont'd.)



The spectator on the right might well scratch his head . . . three Land Rovers axle deep in bog and more coming up.



John Pugh stepped in at the last moment to replace a non-starter. Here, with a little near-side lift, he carves around a curve.



John Redfern, from Exmoor, pushed his little Hofinger hard during the final afternoon's slaloms, often spectacularly.



Moment of truth for Frank Milner, of Yorkshire, as he rolls his Land Rover only seconds from the end of the hillrally.



When you are up to your gunwhales in peat bog the thing you don't do is try to drive out of it . . .



Roger Craythorne, in the lead at this stage, shows that his Range Rover can climb hills on two wheels . . .



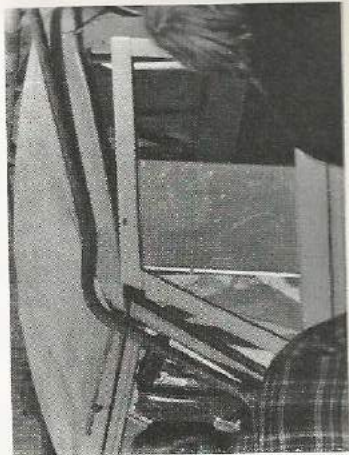
. . . and when faced up with a one-in-three hill, can actually accelerate up into higher gear.



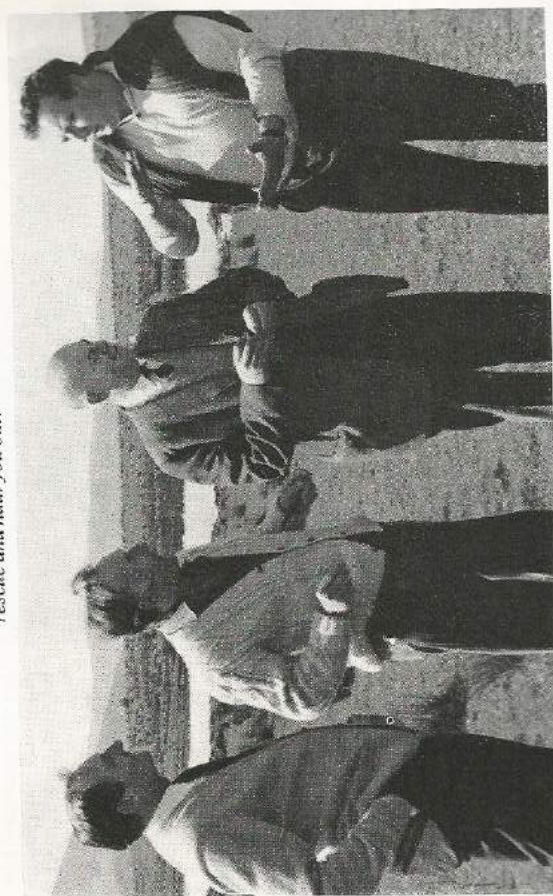
Fellow competitors left their own vehicles and ran across to help extricate the crew and turn off the petrol . . .



There were no injuries and more than enough hands willing to get the vehicle back on its wheels.



The roll-over bar undoubtedly saved the crew a lot of grief, although the hood was well modified and the windscreen shattered.



It was about this big . . . Regional Sales Manager (West) Mike Pegler entertains Jack Harper (Sales Development Executive), left, and two noted Bristol wholesalers, Messrs Ken Collings and Bill Dawson.



. . . you wait for a service car, complete with built-in winch, to rescue and haul you out.



From left, Frances Sykes, Ian Sykes, Michael Bruce, Alan Crow, Sheila Jessiman, Chris Kinross and Martin Speck

When I started to write this piece, my abiding memory of the Hill Rallies was the fun and excitement we had. Yes, they were expensive but they were unique and worth all the effort and cost many times over. Michael Bruce, Chris Kinross and I sat down recently after lockdown to chat about our exploits and the many laughs we had had, our chat could have lasted for days – if nurse hadn't intervened! The purpose of my article is to try and convey just how different the hill rallies are from club events (which are good fun too) and there is talk of a new hill rally series.....

the service area and proving stage were all within the grounds!

Mike and Chris won the spirit of the rally award which paved the way for return visits from the Scottish contingent. It was after this hill rally that Ian Sykes turned idle speculation into hard graft and launched the first Scottish Hill Rally in 1997. Planning and running a hill rally requires a lot of background work, stages have to be identified and planned and landowners won over to the cause. Regulations drawn up and teams of marshalls and recovery recruited to ensure it all runs smoothly and permits obtained. Service areas area/s need to be identified, able to accommodate about 200 vehicles and trailers, accommodation found and the

SMELLS LIKE TEAM SPIRIT

by Tom Rae

1992 was the year and Steve Ramsay was planning to enter the resurrected Welsh Hill Rally with Sheila Jessiman (then Wilson) as navigator. After Denholm trial that year, over a Chinese carry out they tried to enlist our esteemed president Michael Bruce. As the event was then only three weeks away and Nessie was not exactly ready, he declined but the seeds were sown and by 1993 Michael was prepared and word had got round SLROC so with Chris Kinross as navigator and yours truly and Alan Crow as service crew he entered. We were joined by Ian and Frances Sykes and Steve Ramsay and Sheila back for a second round. The venue was the Baskerville Arms in mid Wales.

The atmosphere there was buzzing with many well-known names and their machines, Drew Bowler, Paul Williamson, the Simmonite clan, Mike Lee, Paul Roe, Robo Aliperti, Paul Clarke to name but a few. The hotel was bonkers, taken over entirely by the event,

road book writing and then there is the nailbiting time when the preparation is done and publicity starts and the wait for entries to come in. I have over-simplified it but I hope you get the picture.

Just what is a Hill Rally? It is essentially a stage rally where the various stages are off road connected by public road miles. It starts with scrutineering the day before where the vehicle is checked over, this is purely a safety check but it must pass and then it is secured in a parc ferme and cannot be touched until the rally



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starts. Also at that time a road book is issued which details where the special stages are and timing etc, that is the start of the navigators evening as they need to familiarise themselves with the maps and the area as well as drafting some times for stage start/finish etc. Next day is the start and the tension builds up to the off by which time both driver and navigator are on a high. However, that is when mistakes happen and I well remember setting off from Perth Auction mart on the first Scottish Hill rally in 1966 and taking the first left – into Tesco instead of the second left onto the bypass!

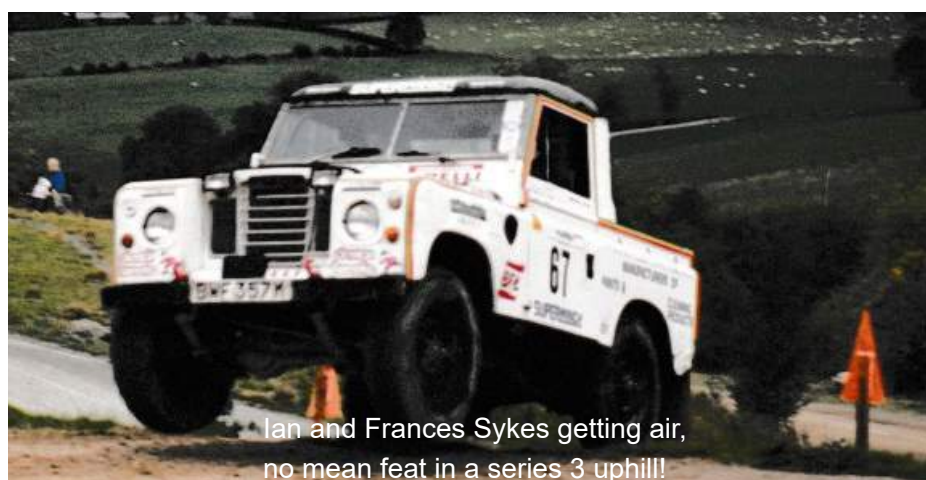
Preparation is important and work starts preparing the vehicle long before the event, the hill rallies have a particular set of requirements due to the combination of road and stage miles, the distances involved and the regulations. Items such as Brandt or Halda trip meters and suchlike are useful for the navigators but not essential, a functioning intercom system is useful too to inform the driver of potential hazards though not all of them - just to keep things interesting. It is also necessary to carry items on the competition vehicle for emergency use during the stage, jack, quick release spare wheel and get the wheel changing process mastered. Also basic tools and cable ties and maybe a ratchet strap or two.

As the rally may well cover upwards of 100 stage miles, the service/spares support is very important there is a need to recruit a service crew early on and start to plan what spares to take though they are inevitably the wrong ones! In our day we gave estimated arrival and departure times for the service crew from the road book but there were often delays due to stages being closed for whatever reason or even changed. Mobile phones were relatively new and coverage was generally poor in typical hill rally country. On some hill rallies there was more than one service area which meant the service crew had to be mobile. Fuel for the competition and service vehicles had to be planned quite carefully too as filling stations could be few and far between and when you got there they were often busy with other competitors and their crews. Ian and Frances Sykes getting air, no mean feat in a series 3 uphill!

Hill rallies are very much a team event, the driver, navigator and service crew all have defined roles and they are all essential if the team is to taste success. There is the same helpful camaraderie that is so much a part of club events with emergency spares being taken from road cars if necessary and shared with other teams to help keep them in contention.



Chris Kinross and the author starting on the first Scottish Hill Rally, minutes later we were in Tesco car park!



Ian and Frances Sykes getting air, no mean feat in a series 3 uphill!

It is difficult to convey just how involving and satisfying it is to get all this together and participate and better still achieve worthwhile results. The hill rallies are a unique off-road adventure and everyone should try it if they can, at least once!

Tom Rae ⚙



Mike Bruce and Chris Kinross with well deserved "Spirit of the Rally" and class awards



CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT: Roger Crathorne, Vyrnwy Evans and Rover colleagues; early morning view of the abandoned Llangollen Railway station used as the start of the first Welsh Hill Rally – now restored and part of a heritage railway; Roger Crathorne in No 1, on his way to victory in the Range Rover Classic on the inaugural Welsh Hill Rally; No 35, PF Simms from Southern Rover Owners Club, rolls at the spot Roger Fell crashed the previous night while he was checking the route of the third stage of the rally

It's not always about the racing



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C'MOFFAT THAT'S PAST IT'S BEST

by Stuart Moffat



110 V8 Hi-Cap

Why do we do it? What possess us to start a Land Rover ReBuild? It may be just a way to pass the time or it may be for sentimental reasons. In my case for this 1989 110 V8 HiCap it is the latter. The vehicle was acquired by my wife's cousin in

2000 and by about 2012 it had to be taken off road as it failed an MOT, needing a lot of chassis welding. I spent many enjoyable times with Andrew at Murrayfield and political rallies, and many nights discussing the above and sharing a love of good whisky. I regularly badgered him about when he was going to get a new chassis for it. Sadly Andrew passed away during a trip to Australia after suffering a massive stroke in 2019.

I spoke to his two sons and said I would like to buy the car from them and they were delighted that someone was wanting to restore it, as they had contemplated scrapping it.

So began my journey.

In hindsight, it might have been better that it had been scrapped!

I recovered it from Drymen in July 2019, leaving a breadcrumb like trail of wee bits of rusty chassis all the way home!

It sat outside at the farm for the next few months until the 5th of January this year, when I managed to get it undercover in the old barn.

I tinkered away through January, February and March stripping it down and chopping the rear part of the chassis (many of the bolts needing the wee grinder) I hadn't set myself a timescale to finish the rebuild, but I then found myself with plenty of time on my hands (5 months) due to the lockdown.

I was thankful that I had this project to give me a reason to get out the house each day.

By mid May I was in the process of restoring the front and rear axles, both needing new spring brackets and radius arm brackets welding on. I managed to wear out two twisted wire wheels on the grinder getting rid of rust.

Throughout May and into June there seemed to be twice weekly parcel deliveries from various parts suppliers



By the end of May, the rear axle was finished and I started more dismantling and with some more cutting and grinding where necessary, the engine and gearbox were out. The 3.5 V8 lump was mounted onto an engine stand and pushed to the corner of the workshop for later.

The old chassis was lifted away in three pieces and a barrow load of rust swept up.

Xmas arrived early on the 16th of June, with the arrival of the new chassis and bulkhead from Sheilder. There is a lot of debate about the best manufacturer of replacement chassis'. In the end I decided on Sheilder as they do chassis and bulkhead.

By the end of that day, we (my brother Graeme and I) had the chassis manoeuvred into the workshop and the rear axle attached. This officially marked the start of the rebuild as opposed to dismantling.

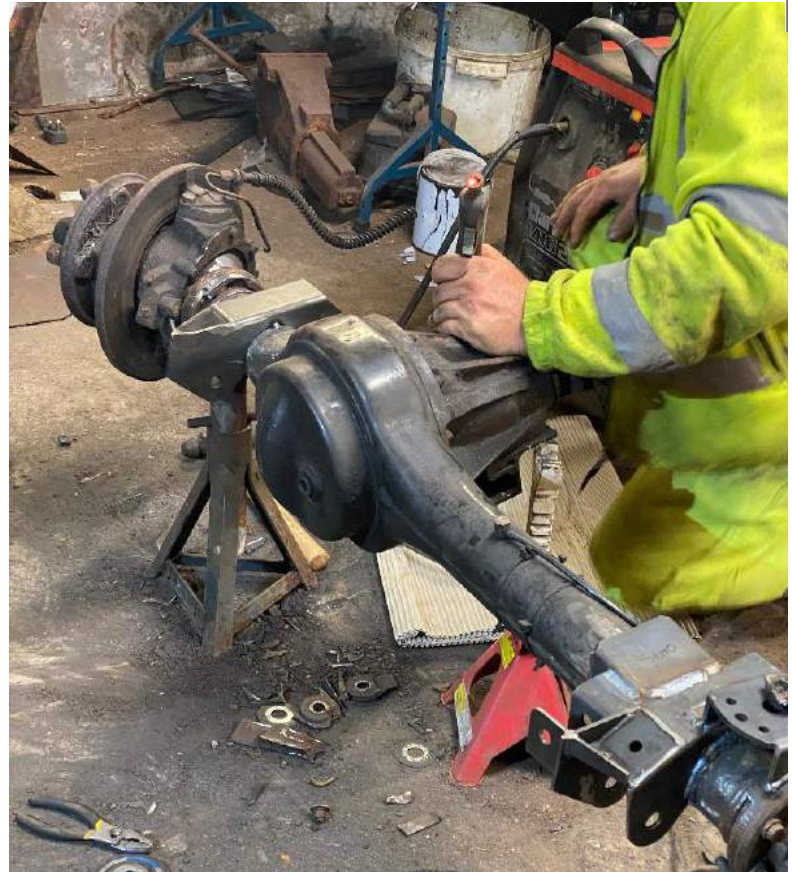
I then started on the front axle, which needed a lot more work. I did the cutting, grinding and dressing up and my brother did the measuring and welding.

I then worked away at a relaxed pace with dressing and painting various bits and fitting new swivels, brake discs and bushes. Fitting bushes and bearing races was a pleasure due to a friend relocating his workshop and needing a place to store some equipment, including a 20 tonne press!

By mid August, I had a rolling chassis.

My attention then turned to the gearbox.

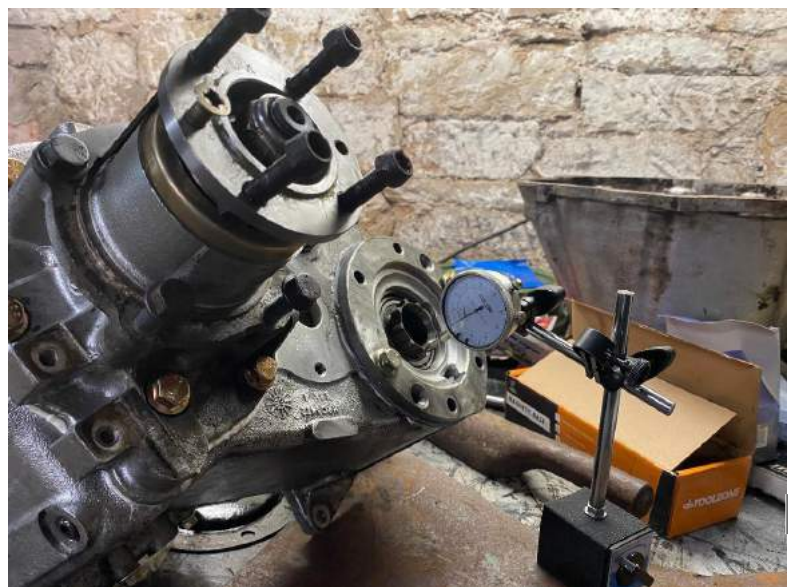
The V8 HiCap is fitted with an LT85 and after splitting it from the transfer box was found to have a badly worn output shaft and front bearing. I read up on how to rebuild, but soon decided to send it to the professionals and sent it on a pallet to Ashcroft for rebuilding. It was suggested that I change it for an R380, but that would mean a change to the bellhousing and a lot more money, plus I wanted to keep the vehicle as original as possible, only replacing what was unrepairable.



I did however tackle the transfer box, which is an altogether simpler affair. I duly ordered a repair kit and new cross drilled input shaft, as well as a dial gauge for measuring endfloat.

State of play at the moment is: Rolling chassis, transfer box rebuilt and waiting on delivery of gearbox. The plan is fit the gearboxes and start on the bulkhead and all the dash fittings.

Things have had to slow down though as for me lockdown has ended and I'm back to work. ⚙️



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I started out in offroad racing with my brother Colin Stevenson, navigating for him and driving myself sometimes. Then I started navigating for novice drivers which I really enjoyed. Without realizing it I had learnt so much from my brother and relating it to novice drivers was so rewarding.

Cammy (Cameron Crow) and I did our first Borders hill rally together back in 2014. Cammy was desperate to have a go himself, so I agreed to navigate for him. It was the start of a good working relationship. It's all about team work when you are doing a hill rally. The navigator is responsible for the timing between stages, you have to arrive at the correct time into a stage start. The navigator also calls the course and the driver follows the instructions..... or that is the theory! He won the novice driver prize at that first outing and has done every Borders hill rally since then.

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RACING ISN'T JUST FOR BOYS!

by Pauline Stevenson

Always getting a finish and doing well in class and overall. I think our best year was 2018 when we finished 11th overall, almost in the top ten against the best off-road racers in the country. An amazing effort in a fairly basic Tomcat. Then in 2019 we entered the hill rally championship which meant going to do the Welsh hill rally in May and the Borders hill rally in November. We had a rollover in Wales and a cameraman just happened to be there and caught it all on film! He was delighted with such exciting action happening right in front of him. It is on Facebook needless to say! We managed to get pushed back on our wheels and drove out of the stage and got back to the service park. Where our trusty service crew Johnnie Drysdale, Allan and John Crow got us sorted and back out for the next stage. Great team work, we couldn't do it without a service crew. When we do the Borders hill rally our service crew consists of Land Rover experts Grant Jessiman, Allan Crow and "Special" Ian. Also their wives Sheila, Emma and Beth who keep us fed and watered all weekend. They are Superstars, Cammy and I get to race and have fun, the service crew sit in the service park usually in the freezing cold, waiting for our return and do whatever is necessary to keep us going.

The "racing family" is like no other, the camaraderie among us all is what it is all about. After missing a year due to c****d I can't wait to get back on the start line. Racing isn't just for boys! ⚙️





HILLRALLIES. A SERIES OF ADVENTURES
It all started in 1992 when preparing for the annual Target Hill trial. Steve and Sheila had come to help with the setting out and during the evening Chinese carry out meal asked if I would be interested in taking part in the forthcoming resurrected Hillrally due to take place in Wales. As this was to be held in 3 weeks' time I realised that to bring old Nessie up to standard just to get to Wales, never mind survive a 3 day event, would take considerable effort and even if I could take 3 weeks off work there would not be time. Steve and Sheila went and survived, having considerable success and making their mark on the event. The seeds of interest were sown and a major overhaul commenced, interspaced with a full calendar of Club events and the goal of October 1993 being set.

before and had a rough idea where it was. I had been too, many years ago, but as it had been on a rugby trip I was too rough to remember anything.

With a van load of tools and spares following crewed by Tom, Colin Robertson and Stuart Townsend, we set off to the famous Baskerville Hall Hotel, which was the event base. Wales is a long way South, but we found it and booked in at this imposing Victorian pile, while casting glances around at all the exotic machinery gathered in the grounds and which were to be our competitors in the next three days. The gentleman behind the desk showed us to our room and immediately Chris resigned. There was a double bed. However, we managed to persuade the management that we had booked separate beds and would he like to supply same please. Then there was the issue of the ensuite toilet. That is precisely what it was. Sitting happily in a recess in the corner of the room. By this stage we were getting thirsty and decided that if, on approaching the room, the TV was on at full blast, then come back later!

Down at the bar, the first signs of things to come started to appear. Our receptionist was alone behind the bar, with approaching one hundred hefty off road types wanting to refuel. We got ours eventually, but not before noticing that our host had a habit of disappearing vertically downwards and reappearing after having been back at the reception desk.

Next morning we prepared Nessie for scrutineering, applied all the numbers and stickers and joined the queue. Now I had met the scrutineer before. Robbo is a big guy and you tend to do what he says. He does know what he is doing. He looked Nessie over and commented that if we had driven all the way down from Scotland it would probably keep going for another 3 days. The noise test was another first. The official asked me to hold it steady at 3000 rpm and then changed his mind. Just give it half revs as 3000 will be more than this can do. I did

Get a long drink, a comfy chair and enjoy a bit of history
by Michael Bruce

Firstly I had to read the MSA Blue Book and understand it, then apply it's wisdom to Nessie. Not in the end as difficult as I had at first feared. This event was not to ALRC rules, but surprise surprise all the classes referred to engine sizes that were very familiar, so our direct competition would be from other Land Rovers and similar in the 2.5 litre class. Next I had to find a cool headed competent and experienced navigator. I asked my wife. Once I recovered I asked Tom Rae, who quickly volunteered Chris Kinross for the job and himself for servicing. Chris said yes and then started to read the blue book. As an experienced solicitor he coped well with all the small print and seemed to understand most of it. Not having had to worry much about road books and arrival times I happily left it to him and continued with the mechanical aspects.

A year passes quickly when you are having fun and soon enough the entry forms arrived. Difficult questions like date of birth and next of kin were figured out although the entry fee took a while with all those zeros we sent it off. "Entry accepted" was the reality check and we planned the detail of the trip. Tom had been to Wales

not argue and was subsequently told that Nessie was the quietest vehicle in the event.

I do not recall all the details of each stage, nor did I know where we were. That was Chris's job, which he did perfectly. We had been issued with a warning that due to wet weather we would encounter standing water in places up to 2 feet deep. I had removed my front spot lamps and fitted a scoop to limit the amount of muddy water that contacted the radiator. A blocked radiator was not a good idea on a long drive. We passed between the pillars of a wind farm, the first time that any of us had been close to such things. Chris coped with unpronounceable Welsh name places and we waded the deepest river that I have ever attempted. Headlamps fully under water. Several others got their engines damaged at that point. There were many parts on the stages where it was necessary to forget about speed and drive like a trial section with eyes wide open for alternative ways through. We started to see other machines quite deeply imbedded in the countryside and did render quick assistance once or twice if they had their rope out ready. We were not totally alone among strangers as among the entries were Steve and Sheila,



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Bob Webster in a Lada Niva and Ian Sykes and Frances in their Series 2, but we only saw anything of them at the service areas. We found the Target times on several of the long stages to be just a bit tight and any queuing or holdups gave us some concern, but we managed to complete the event. The surprise came at the end when we found that we had finished third in class and then were given the Spirit of the Rally Award. We made a lot of friends there and decided that we would be back. Starting at number 56 and finishing in 23rd overall was way better than we had dreamed of. Most of the other competitors disappeared home as soon as it was all over, but we were not due to leave until the next morning. Along with Steve and Sheila, who I think won our class, we decided to splash out on a celebratory meal in the hotel. We found ourselves as the only ones left and had the palatial dining room to ourselves. The head waiter appeared. Our receptionist/bartender multitasking. He happily took our orders and eventually they appeared with him in a chef's uniform. When it came to the sweet, however, we looked at the extensive menu and as soon as something was selected he announced that that item was "off". All that we could have was apple pie. So we had apple pie. The decision was made that we would all be back next year. I had decided that the very grand front entrance was large enough for Nessie to get through and after a few beers Chris had to take the keys off me just in case, as by then I had reckoned that the very wide staircase was also wide enough. By then we had also worked out that there was a complete cellar or cave network under the hotel, which allowed one man to run the whole place solo.

The 1994 event came round with a much larger entry list. This year it was to be based at the Royal Welsh Showground at Builth Wells and accommodation was scattered among all the local hotels and B&B's. We found a farm B&B which was a few miles out of town, but could take us all, which limited the amount of lubrication possible in the evenings. Again Chris guided me around deepest Wales until, somewhere out on the moors on a link road between two stages, he called out "Left turn at the phone box ahead". A mile or so ahead we came across a phone box and duly turned left, straight into someone's front driveway. Realising that this was wrong and only just in time I stopped abruptly inches from a greenhouse. The owner, who was right inside, must have spilt his watering can down the front of his trousers in shock. Engage reverse and disappear fast. About ¾ mile further down the same road and we found another phone box and a proper T junction. But that had been the only house for miles so why so many phone

boxes. Something to do with the army signs which said "Unexploded ordnance. Do not drive off the public road" We had started as number 70 and were running near the back of the pack when returning from the stages at Sweet Lamb we were caught in a procession of service vehicles and marshalls all in not much of a hurry. As we were perpetually battling with tight target times and could not afford lateness penalties we wanted to get ahead. By careful scrutiny of a long sweeping left hand curve ahead I realised that nothing was coming the other way for at least a mile and set about overtaking 28 vehicles and trailers in one go. Chris had been studying maps and looked up in the middle of this attempt thinking that I had gone mad. Sorry Chris, but I had succumbed to that state years before. At one point on one of the stages we had to cross a river and then assault a very wet and steep hillside. Six or seven other competitors were having multiple runs at the same slope without success and two had slid back too far and were embedded in a hedge. We tried a couple of routes and then, as the few marshals were trying to extricate another car, we slipped off to the East and drove right round the hill. A long way, but we did not meet any other competitors for ages afterwards. One of the service areas was in the grounds of an agricultural college. We had broken a spring and as I set about changing it, my service crew chucked me out and sent me off for food while they did the work. I did not argue. As I was finishing my grub in the college canteen they came in for theirs, having completed repairs. Things were winding down as many other teams had left already. Colin wanted chips and there was about a third of a large aluminium tray full left on the counter. After a moment's haggling we got Colin the lot! He was delighted. By this time about the only other team left were one trying to replace a V8 engine in their racer in the 40 minutes allowed for the service halt. How many teams carry a spare engine in their service barge? We were the last finisher this time and again achieved Third in Class. The organisers moved us up to 55 in the starting order for 1995.



For 1995 we had Alan Crow along with Tom as service crew, but I cannot remember which of many incidents related to that event, which was again based at the showground and had a short stage partly across the grounds and perimeter roads and partly through the trees



on the hill behind. Some competitors hated the area in the trees, but as it was like a long trial section we were quite happy, if not too fast. Sadly, this was the last event that Chris took part in as my navigator. The ride quality of a leaf sprung motor had dislodged too many brain cells and he had met Drew Bowler. Out came the extra long cheque book. You know, the one with extra space for a string of zeros and shortly afterwards the grin on Chris's face went full circle when his new red machine arrived. The first fully built machine that Drew had produced. I knew that Chris was about to start really enjoying himself and, yes, I was just a little jealous, but my thanks go to him for doing a superb job for three years.

Ian Sykes had been competing at these same events and was beginning to hatch big plans. A Hillrally Club dinner was being organised near to the NEC at Birmingham on the weekend of the Motorsport Show in January 1996. By this time Sykes had put together enough detail to announce the running of the first Scottish Hillrally to be held around Perthshire in the following June. We all had to attend the Show in our kilts and matching sweatshirts emblazoned with the name of this new event and work as hard as we could to attract attention from potential competitors, sponsors and anyone else. As Nessie was now becoming known for always finishing, rarely getting stuck and then driving back to Scotland, people were actually stopping and speaking to us. As a result I managed my one and only sponsorship deal with Chris Perfect for a set of parabolic springs and what a difference they made. Another half inch of suspension travel, less weight and greater flexibility. Not nearly as much as coil springs would have done, but to me a great improvement.

Chris, Tom and I were coerced into joining the organising committee for the Scottish event and attended meetings to find a very competent and well known team mostly from the car rallying world gathered to get the show on the road. Ian Sykes was optimistic of getting up to 60 National A and 20 Clubman entries and set about talking to landowners, handing out videos of Welsh events and speaking to potential sponsors and helpers of all kinds. Chris got landed with landowner agreements,

Tom with marketing and I helped move kit around the country. In the end only 25 entries were received and a planned 40 mile stage at Rannoch had to be culled. Many of the big engine competitors complained that they could not complete 40 miles without refuelling. Perth Auction Mart was the ideal base although a restart in Perth town centre by a flag waving Lord Provost was a good publicity stunt marred by a lack of spectators. Still it was worth a try. Chris and Tom had entered their first hillrally in Chris's new car and were seeded 12 just ahead of Steve and Sheila. We were at 25 behind a Vauxhall Frontera, which I muttered about! Our class was merged with the bigger leaf sprung class led by Mick Gillett driving an almost unique Series 1 V8 built Bowler style, but with leaf springs. He was keen on keeping the leaf sprung classes going and came all the way from Coleshill near Birmingham. I had had to find a new navigator and just 3 weeks before the event a young lad, who had appeared at our Club Comp at Glendearg, volunteered. Henry Webster was at Edinburgh University and was due to graduate the day before the Hillrally. He skipped all the celebratory stuff and shot up to Perth clutching his red case with his degree in it. He had been active in the University Car Club and had followed his Father into off road sport. He took over the paperwork and got stuck in. There were small hiccups in the running of the event, but we got to drive the famous Tunnels stage for the first time. Very different and superb fun. Overall the event was a huge success and we took about 6 minutes off that Frontera's times, finishing second in class behind Mick Gillett. Chris and Tom finished in 8th overall and won their class. Sadly, Steve and Sheila did not finish, though I cannot remember why. The event was filmed by Top Gear and we had Tony Mason interviewing everyone throughout the day. There was a party afterwards in the Agricultural Centre and there I made a new friend. Sandy McLaren was the local Police Traffic Inspector in Hawick and had told me that his Sister worked at the Centre. She was the Manageress and got stuck into the dancing with little encouragement. However, next morning, when we phoned her from the caravan where we were all staying at the back of the Centre's lorry park and asked her to

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deliver a dozen fried breakfasts we got an unprintable reply.

Next came another trip to Wales. We all went in convoy and it was evening as we approached Wrexham. Over the brow of a hill on a fast road and the Discovery in front of us, towing a black and yellow Land Rover and a ton of spares on a trailer had to brake hard for a roundabout. The trailer tried to take charge and a violent wobble started. The only cure was full power, but the trailer was pushing hard in the wrong direction. The driver managed to rescue the situation, but only by going the wrong way round the roundabout. There was fortunately no other traffic in sight and we were still laughing when we got to Builth Wells. We faced an entry field of 88, much bigger than ever before, but had been seeded 49, just 5 places behind Chris and Tom and way ahead of Drew Bowler, John Cockburn and Ian Sykes! We guessed that someone might occasionally overtake us on the stages. Sadly, on stage 16, soon after overtaking one David Simmonite (in a very sick Simmbughini) our engine stopped without any warning. The distributor had stopped rotating, but the trouble was further down and turned out to be stripped skew gears. We got towed back to base and ended up on Ian Sykes's trailer with his competition car towing it. This was fine as Ian had wanted to go South and did not want to tow his outfit around the country. He could travel light and call in at Hawick in a few days time to collect the trailer and take it back to Inverness. Trouble was that his competition car was fast losing the hydraulics to its clutch and also had not trailer lighting socket. We set off, but a 2 ¼ Land Rover is not quick towing another on a trailer and by the time we got past Chester we realised that we would be on the M6 at night without trailer lights. We pulled off and phoned the AA. Initially we told them that we had a failed clutch cylinder. Over the phone they decided to go and get us a cylinder and fit it as that would be cheaper than hauling the whole outfit to Scotland. A quick vehicle swap at the roadside put Nessie in front and Sykes's motor on the trailer. When the AA van arrived we had to talk our way out of clutch repairs and into engine failure. That done we all slept in the back of a lorry cab and had a pleasant run home. Thanks Alan Crow for the use of your AA card. Chris and Tom did finish the event in 33rd place and 18th in class. We attended the Hillrally Club dinner again in January 1997 and then on to the Motorsport Show at the NEC where we collected class awards for the newly formed annual championship along with Chris and Tom.

1997 saw a return to Perth with an entry of 41 vehicles, which was testimony to all the work that Ian Sykes was putting into the event. More stage miles meant more hard work for a driver with no leaf springs and no power steering, but Sheila had decided to enter her Series 1. Funnily a couple of weeks before the event it got a dose of steroids and went overnight from being a 2 litre to a 3.5 V8. Sheila had met up with an experienced rally navigator in Suzanne Emiliani and suddenly we had serious competition. I think that was the year that the event went down to Cambusbarron and there was a need for recovery vehicles to be strategically placed at various points. One of these was a large ditch beside which Mags McLay by herself was lined up with George's 2 ¼ coil sprung trialler. Now Mags is not the biggest person on the planet, but she got landed with more than a few snatch recoveries as the ditch got deeper and deeper. Eventually we appeared and in true club spirit she lined up her motor with rope at the ready to help us through in record time. Thanks Mags, but we blasted through to a great cheer from her and some relief for us.

Several stages later we came to a bog and found a familiar figure standing beside his motor with rope in hand. By luck we got through the bog and in a few seconds had Rick and Martin out of their embarrassment. It can happen to anyone and on another occasion I can remember being on a stage at an off road site, the name of which I forget. This stage ran on their off road playday route, which included a steep drop into a right hand curve with lots of mud. There was a banking on the outside of the curve and I tried to take it at speed and use the banking as a wall of death! Only it was not a banking, but a mud covered hedge and we went right through it. Thanks Sheila for stopping and pulling us out. That day saw 17 out of 41 retired or failed to finish in time. Sheila and Suzanne got round as last surviving finishers and to the admiration of many others.

October saw us back in Wales in an entry list of 100 cars. Starting at number 58 and with Tom Rae driving Chris's Bowler, Ian and Frances Sykes in their Series 2 and Rick Wells in his Bowler, the Scottish contingent looked small. We managed to justify our seeding by finishing in 46th out of 49. Rick was the only other finisher from our bunch at 29th. Martin Speck headed our service team and I seem to remember one or two of the others disappearing to a nightclub miles away and staggering back at 5.00 a.m. They were still up at 7.00 towing the service trailer to the first service stop.

By now management of these events was becoming more experienced and the professionalism of the officials was very commendable. The huge organisation of obtaining ground, marking out up to 100 miles of stages, arranging rescue, recovery, doctors and marshals and the temporary office at Rally Headquarters largely went unseen by the competitors and intensive meetings were held at the RSAC Boardroom in Glasgow. Knockhill was to be used for the 1998 Scottish event as a spectator stage and by December 1997 several JCB's were already on site making preparations. The Scottish did not go too well for us. On Stage 4 we went down a hill a bit too quickly. There was a hazard marked half way down, which was a wet hole. We slid into it and by putting on the power too fast to try to drive out I broke the front half shaft. We did get out, but at the bottom of the hill we



were faced with a steep ascent on the other side. Even a certain marshal, who owed me for a tray of chips, could not assist enough to get us up and we had to slink back to Perth and replace the shaft. As with many mishaps, the amount of assistance from other enthusiasts meant that we were up and running in no time and ready to attack the Saturday National B run. We managed to come in in 7th place, but had missed out on a blast round Knockhill. However, the post event Ceilidh made up for some of the disappointment. Lynn was waiting for us again. The event had been marred by a bad accident to Martin Gallis and Kerry Gillett from Coleshill, who were both in hospital. Without a moment's hesitation, their vehicles and kit were all gathered up and got back to Birmingham by the combined resources of a team of volunteers.



October came round again and at the last minute an offer, which I could not refuse, changed our plans. Chris handed me his Bowler and said "Try That". A week before the event I collected it from Edinburgh and with minimum spares towed it to Wales behind Nessie. I drove it for the first time ever from the showground to the filling station about 800 yards away! I had looked it over before setting off and all appeared to be in good shape. Chris had pointed out to me his newly repositioned fuel filler. We had a few road miles to do to get to the first stage and got into line for the start. As usual Henry jumped out to get the time card stamped and got back in just in time. While we were counted down Henry started fidgeting around. He had got the seat belt tangled and could not do it up. We had to accept the start time and pull over. Eventually Henry had to get back out to sort the tangled harness. Meanwhile 3 minutes had passed and 3 other cars had started and were away ahead of us. Belt sorted and me only slightly wound up I let fly. Within 400 yards Henry was telling me to slow down. By then I had got the measure of how good the car was and overtook all the other 3 cars and some more. This was more like it. We then headed towards Sweet Lamb a good few miles North. Part way along the open road we progressively started to lose power and eventually had to stop. I had to think fast. Diagnosing fuel starvation I had to get to the pump in the tank. It was under the rear floor. Spare wheel out and 40 pop rivets beheaded with my hammer and chisel. Out with the pump and several ounces of steel filings removed one at a time from the magnets in the pump. Whoever cut the hole for the new filler pipe had very dubious parentage. Now we were a bit late. The 3.9 V8 got put to full use. Time was being made up

VERY fast and Henry was going a pale shade of white. We crested the brow of a hill on the main road to be confronted with a road blocked by police cars. The brakes worked at their limit. Fortunately all the police were preoccupied as a Safeway artic had gone off the road. We squeezed quietly past and took off again only a little more calmly. Off the main road and into the Sweet Lamb site and we might make it. Only that road had a rally imposed 20 mph limit. A marshal was in place to ensure enforcement. It took a while to sweet talk ourselves out of that, but eventually our friend Diana, to whom someone had rashly given the commentator's microphone, saw us coming and started to exaggerate to the level that only she can achieve, about our potential. We set off in front of her on the stage and made it for about 200 yards when the fuel problem resurfaced. I had not had time to remove and clean the tank and the rest of the swarf had jumped into the pump. We struggled on, but the promised impressive show did not materialise. We had to crawl back to base and spent time cleaning the tank and pump ready for the Sunday Run. I did apply to the organisers to see if they would allow us to use Nessie for the Sunday, but it had to be the same machine as had been entered from the beginning. Sunday went much better and we were running top ten stage times and overtaking some well known names when a ditch decided to reposition itself about 400 yards closer than it had been on the previous run on that stage. We bounced pretty hard and Henry, being of a large build, got severely winded. We survived, but had to take things easy as Henry was a bit sore. I reckon we lost around 7 or 8 minutes as a result of that incident, but we managed to finish in 5th place, 7 minutes and 35 seconds behind the winner. Thanks Chris. It was still a fun weekend and a superb machine to drive. Some time around then Henry bought a bargain Bowler from the late Selwyn Kendrick. Lucky for me it did not have an engine, so the 1999 season looked to be safe.

For 1999 we had 3 events to look forward to. For some time the various organisers had been trying to get up to 5 events on the calendar, at which point a fully recognised British Championship would be recognised by the MSA (now MSUK). The Welsh team were looking at a second event, but meantime, with the help of the Lincolnshire Land Rover Club they were organising one on the back of the Tour of Lincs car rally. The idea was that the start and finish and liaison routes would all be the same, as would the stage starts and where possible the stage finishes. The cars would use estate roads and the 4x4's would take off into the scenery and reappear at the finish of each stage. As the venues were old airfields and estates it all fitted together with a single team of timekeepers and start & finish marshals. All that was needed extra were more in stage marshals from our side. Fine. The base was a racecourse with huge parking area to cope with the car teams and the Hillrally entrants, 93 of them. It seemed that everyone had entered. Stage 1, Cadwell Park Race circuit. They had the bright idea that as the circuit was plenty wide enough and to save time they would set off the first seeded car (an ex works 2 litre Renault?) and the first 4x4 side by side. After half a lap the 4x4 would turn left into the countryside while the car completed 2 laps of the circuit. The thinking was that the 4x4 would have turned off in time before the fast car got round and on to

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its second lap. Lined up beside the car was Tim Marsh in his TMC. Nobody told the organisers that it was a 6 litre job! 3-2-1-GO and the TMC disappeared. Only the rally car was slow enough for the human spectators to actually see. From memory the first ten 4x4's blew away the cars and most broke the bogey time for the stage. Pete Rowe with his 8 litre Land Rover 110 must have scared some poor car driver out of his skin. Even we terrorised some poor car as we claimed the inside line on the first corner. Fortunately the rest of the stages, while short on hills, had enough technical off road bits to sort out a winner and the event was a success, though the meetings afterwards for the organisers would have been interesting to listen to! Never since, have I seen so many competitors at one event. We won our class and were 51st overall, having been chased hard by a newcomer, Chris Ratter, who had been made to repaint his lightweight the night before by the scrutineers. He did, but they regretted their decision when he turned up for recheck dripping wet paint!

July saw us back at Perth hoping to do better than in '98 and we had a reasonable seeding at 43 ahead of our new friend Chris Ratter at 50. There was another newcomer this time. From Galashiels one John Cleland, Volvo Dealer and Vauxhall Car race Ace had been loaned a Land Rover QT 4.6 V8 by Dave Marsh and the Plymouth crew. Now John had done some rallying in the past, but no off road stuff. They gave him a middle seeding number 30 as his car was a 4.6V8. That was one place behind Rick Wells. John moved up the rankings fairly quickly (he was used to not having to worry about what needed repaired as the staff did that sort of thing for him) and after a few stages we were on a back road going to the next, when John had just finished it and came towards us on a single width section. Still gaining speed he suddenly found that there was a small hump

backed stone bridge behind us and how he straightened up in time to fit across it well, he has not been seen since. He did well and finished in 16th place and I think was the first placed Scotsman. We were chased hard by Chris Ratter, who got slightly faster stage times, but in the end broke it and retired his lightweight. Grant Jessiman with the experienced Sheila Wilson on the maps also retired. Overall another good event with the entry numbers now up to 54 and we did get to blast round Knockhill.

In September, Tom Rae and I entered the Borders Historic Road Rally, not knowing what its format would be. We found out the hard way that precise timing with Halda meters was the way. We just had to guess and did not do well on the road sections. The only other vehicle in our class was an Austin Gypsy driven by one David Steel (yes-him) and they had a Halda. However when we got to Stobs Camp (ask Alex Lindsay where that is) and had a blast round a couple of miles of the old roads, we clawed back all our lost time and won our class by a large margin.

Wales again for the last Hillrally of the millennium and we were number 52 out of 72 plus 11 in the National B. My notes complained about the loss of the Sweet Lamb stages as these were proper hills and instead a greater proportion of the event was double runs with lots of forest tracks. You can run cars on tracks! However it is all down to availability and cost. At several points where we were crossing forestry roads a mat of tree branches had been laid to protect the tracks for the forthcoming Rally GB (of Wales!) in case it got bumpy for the cars. 3 classes were merged and we ended up in 52nd place. Can't argue with that seeding.

In January 2000, after the big panic about the Millenium Bug blew away, we went to the Hillrally Dinner at Meriden



Michael Bruce and Chris Kinross drove their Series One from Scotland, competed in it and drove home with the Snail Trophy for the last-placed qualifying finishers

By Saturday afternoon's last stage, night was closing in, but Doug Devonald-Batt could still just about see straight ahead





and collected our First in Class prizes for the year's efforts. 2000 was promised to be bigger, with 5 events planned. The first to be a return to the Lincs Tour, but that did not come off. Another was the Southern Hillrally in Wiltshire upgraded from an experimental hillrally which had been run by the AWDC for a couple of years. They had venue problems and had to keep moving to new sites and eventually this event did not happen either. However, a new event on South Wales, run by mostly the same organisers as the original one, did happen and it was based at Glynneath. Now anyone who knows a bit about rugby knows that Hawick Trades Rugby Club play Glynneath every year on the International weekend and while I had never played for them I looked forward to my first visit. Based around a reclaimed coal bing site it was ideal, except that an uninvited bunch of locals moved in and parked amongst the rally teams. They did no harm until we were packing up at the end and realised that they were all seriously Stoned out of their minds and proceeded to destroy their own campsite, setting fire to gas cylinders and trashing a caravan. We left fast.

Meanwhile Y Rali Bryn Cymru was good and not too hard physically as there were a fair number of tracks in use. Henry had come direct from London with a couple of pals and a tent and I had driven down solo with a small trailer full of tools and spares. We started as 32 and finished in 26th place, being narrowly beaten by Chris Ratter. I probably went a little cautiously due to the prospect of the long solo drive home, but that is my only excuse.

Our "Home" event at Perth was next and fame at last. We featured on the cover of the Rally documentation along with Chris Kinross and Grant Jessiman. The fourth vehicle featured was the Simmbughini of Stephanie and Rachael Simmonite. Well, they were a bit better looking than most of us. After all, right at the start of our first event, Chris had calculated the combined ages of driver, navigator and Nessie to be over 120 years! I seem to remember the weather being hot and dry. We had two runs through the famous tunnel, which had a whole line of heavy farm machinery lying on the right hand side waiting for anyone to take a bad bounce and the sudden changes from daylight to black hole, even with 500 watts of lighting and then back into bright sunshine is something everyone should try. 3 runs round Knockhill got our lap time down to 2 mins 38 seconds and we pushed pretty hard all the way. There were a lot of retirals due mainly

to hard ground. From number 38 at the start we finished in 24th place and won our class, beating Chris Ratter by a surprising 16 minutes. Some of the stages had been deliberately set to run past the service areas to give the teams a chance to watch the action. Another good event and good Ceilidh.

Back to Bulth Wells in October and now with our caravan and awning so that we were on site. Much easier, though I would have to tow something home afterwards. The first thing that I got was a note saying that "our entry form was correctly completed –well done!" There was entertainment laid on for the Saturday evening, but there were 12 stages to do on the Sunday! There were also 3 stages run round the showground perimeter and woodlands for spectators and service crews to watch. I can not remember all the stage names nor what they were all like, but we managed to rattle round in steady fashion. Someone had again let Diana loose with a microphone and as the last day went on we noticed more spectators than usual. We had been used to seeing occasional marshals and not much else when running fairly well down the field on some events. This time, by the end of the day and with only the spectator stage round the showground to do, the crowds were huge by comparison and Diana had the volume up on the loudspeakers so much that even inside Nessie with a helmet on we could hear her voice, if not make it out. We were behind Chris Ratter on the start line and sensed that his lightweight was not running at 100%. However the stage had quite a lot of tarmac roads with 90 degree corners before we got into the trees. We went fairly hard at it with Henry gently urging caution at the top of his voice, while I only saw the rear end of the lightweight with a slowly reducing gap between us. The run through the trees was full of stumps, stones and potholes with little room between the trees and I did take care, but coming out at the far end we were inches off the back end of the lightweight. There was a 60 foot steep slope followed by a fairly open left turn and straight run to the finish. I thought about overtaking on the slope, but Henry thought about grabbing the ignition key. On the level I floored it and went sideways through the flying finish ahead of Chris. The marshals took refuge in the next valley. Henry politely informed me that we had already gained a full minute over Chris and attempted suicide was not really necessary. It turned out that due to retirals in one event or another by many of the main players, our friendly commentator had speculated that we might just have won the Championship. In the end we had come 5th overall and won our class. Henry subsequently realised that during the year he had also navigated to a good result on the Pirelli Rally with a friend of his and because it was a one-off had not registered for inclusion in the car rally championship. Had he done so and as the hillrallies had equal status with the car events, he would have been British Rally Navigator Champion 2000. I did later get his autograph on my menu when we went to pick up our class win prizes at the annual dinner. The overall picture for the year for vehicles read Wildcat 200, Simmbughini, TMC 4x4, Simmbughini, Land Rover Series 1, Land Rover Lightweight, TMC Animal,

A planned calendar of the same 3 events for 2001 came to a sudden halt with the outbreak of foot and mouth disease, which affected large parts of the country and,

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nearer to home, the farms of several older members of our club at Priesthaugh, Skelfhill, Dodburn and Southfield. Names that will be familiar to some of our older members. Off Road motorsport was particularly affected and the only events that got going were right at the end of the year.

2002 saw a return to Hillrallies with several competitors having taken the time out to build new machines. Ian Sykes had built a gas powered 100 inch Land Rover and was letting engine specialist Rowland Marlow loose in it with Frances on the maps. Y Rali Bryn Cymru was the first event, but with only 28 entries it was only just viable. However, at the exciting end of the entry list we had 3 Land Rovers, a Daihatsu and an Isuzu. The rest, being 5.7 litre Wildcat, Simmbugghini etc would not get in our way. Unfortunately I have no note of the results and have no idea how we did. I do remember driving around the army ranges at Epynt and seeing the mock Eastern European town used for training. The many signs warning of unexploded ordnance were slightly disconcerting.

At Perth in July it rained. Out of 38 entries, we were number 36. Nine retired broken and while we finished, we succumbed to the mud, which slowed us down to the point of being OTL, i.e too damned slow. All of the smaller engine vehicles went out in the same way. It was hard work just maintaining forward motion and at one point on the Balmanno stage we were warned by a marshal to stay high up on a side slope or we would end up sliding sideways off the hill. Not only did we slide sideways, but went right over the edge. This was technically taking us outside course limits, but we could not even stop. I got Nessie pointing head first down the hill and had to hope for the best. About 100 feet below were whin bushes and we aimed for them. For years later, when heading South on the motorway at Bridge of Earn, the gap in the whins was clearly visible. The incident saved us a mile of the stage, but did not help with the overall time. We had completed the course when many others did not and no marshals drowned.

We went back to the original venue of the Baskerville Hall Hotel for the October Hillrally and fitted a new set of Diamond tyres on site. Our room overlooked the disco, which did not bother us too much as a small whisky put us to sleep. I do not remember much about the stages, except that there was a shakedown stage at the beginning to sort out the running order. It was a wobble

through trees on a hillside and suited us. The finish timekeeper remarked "That thing is not slow!" as we got our card marked. As usual I had little idea where we were during the day and just drove where I was told to go. I do not have the results for that weekend. Henry managed to get Second in class as navigator and I got third as driver at the annual dinner for our efforts that year.

Our next event was back in Perth in July 2003. It was noticeable that the leaf sprung class had shrunk, but the Scottish competitors had increased and informal teams were appearing. The long stages like Balmanno were beginning to be hard work for us. The fastest average speed over the 24 mile Balmanno was 44.05 mph by Hugh Haines while we exceeded the target time of 70 minutes in good weather. After about 5 miles our shock absorbers were so hot that the paint blistered and they had little further effect until they cooled down for the next stage. It was either drive to survive or go for it and break something. We did finish four places up on our start number and really enjoyed the shorter stages where we could push harder.

Back to Wales in the autumn for a new look event held over different territory, but the event was slightly spoiled when several stages had to be stopped and following drivers given notional times. In spite of this, or were we helped by it, we finished in 30th and last place from starting at 42 and managed second in class. This was to be my last event with Henry navigating. He had quietly acquired a Discovery and was itching to have a go in the driver's seat. Thank you Henry for all you did in getting us around for so long.

For 2004 I found a new navigator in an old friend. Hamish Lockie had always been an adventurer and capable driver and knew what life in a leaf sprung Land Rover was like. He owns a 6 cylinder 80 inch trialler. An intensive course at the Chris Kinross school of navigation in the pub the night before the Scottish and we were set. We were now number 28 out of 34 with 7 National B cars behind them. The organisers saw fit to put a complete newcomer in last position. Henry with Father Nigel on the maps was that 34 and the rest of those around us were all coil sprung 90's and similar. The weather was good and Hamish did a superb job keeping us on the route and on time. At one point we actually caught up with another car and nearly had a rare chance to overtake someone, but the stage finish was yards ahead. Once clear of the



timekeeper, we realised the true situation. Two young ladies in that car were attempting to deal with 2 flat tyres using a small scissor jack just out of its packet. We had an easy timescale to get to service so stopped and fitted theirs and our spare wheels to get them to the service area. We finished in last place and collected snail awards, but also got the Spirit of the Rally award for our roadside services. A big reward for 5 minutes work. Henry. Now I do not have a copy of the final results, but after 5 stages he was 14 minutes ahead of us. A sign of things to come. Hamish could not commit to doing further events and so I was on the hunt for another navigator. My long time service crew manager and fellow SLROC member Alex Scott provided his niece Sharon for the job. Now I had known Sharon since she was a small girl living in the old house at Coilantogle and she had a fair idea of what was needed. Back to Chris Kinross's school of navigation.

So in October we headed back to Wales with number 31 on the sides and Sharon asking many questions. Apart from her nearly running out of fags, she did a professional job on the maps and time cards and refrained from telling me to slow down. I have no copy of the results, though full copies of the correspondence resulting from the initial rally being cancelled due to low entries and only being saved when the Marches Motorsport team took over. I do remember Sharon having to be pushed on to the stage at the prize giving at the end of the rally to collect her class award. She was shy!! At the end of year dinner I collected First in class, but due to having multiple navigators, they did not gather sufficient points individually. Our previous close competitor, Chris Ratter had by now updated to a 90 and had managed 3rd overall for the year. A good effort.

2005 started for us at Perth at number 34, directly behind Selwyn Kendrick, one of the instigators of the resurrected Hillrally back in '92. Henry, with Sarah Tomley, daughter of Chris Tomley, another main man behind all the Welsh events, beside him, was well ahead at 24 in his distinctive Friesian decorated Discovery. Chris Kinross turned up at number 17, having done it on the cheap for a few events by volunteering to be opening car. Well known former competitor John Cockburn had beaten Chris to the Zero car slot this time. This time he had persuaded Hamish Lockie to work the maps. A total of 9 Scottish vehicles entered the event and again our main claim to fame was being pictured on the front cover of the Rally documentation. Chris, who was still involved with event management, prepared sketches of the 25 mile Legend stage at Balmanno, which incorporated splits and merges to get two loops into the available territory and hence claim to the longest rally stage in the U.K. Having, years ago moaned loudly about the loss of the planned 40 miler at Rannoch, I had to smile and grit my teeth. Chris had sent me a note suggesting that I nip up and walk the route in advance. I did not think that that was allowed! Without a copy of the results I can not remember how everyone fared, but am fairly sure that we finished last, with very knackered shock absorbers and a broken steering wheel. I had for years had a very smart wheel from a P4 Rover car and the multiple chrome spokes were embedded in cast zinc alloy at the hub. Balmanno has a lot of hard bumps and the spokes started to break out. Temporary repairs with cold cure metal paste at service held for a while and meantime our intrepid service

crew scoured Perthshire for anything that would fit. A Series 3 steering wheel, covered in moss, was located in Glenfarg and saved the day. I am still using it. On return to base at Perth auction mart everyone was looking at me and kept asking as to whether I had heard about the huge fire in Hawick. I had not, but instantly guessed that it would be the ancient tweed mill located next door to my work. I phoned home, but apart from having to evacuate about 30 cars from the site we had suffered no damage and one fire engine had been allocated to hose down our building to keep it cool. A near miss, but by October we were not so lucky. A week before we were due to head for Wales the weather turned wet. Very wet. After 2 days solid rain the river Teviot burst its banks and flooded the town centre. The road outside our premises was partly washed away and we were under 2 feet of mud and water with 39 cars wrecked. I had to withdraw from the Hillrally and to their credit my service team turned up in Hawick for the duration and helped with the clean up. During the flood, which needless to say happened at 1.30 a.m. I attempted to get to the garage in Nessie, which had been fully rally prepared including waterproofing of the ignition. I drove through some spectacularly flooded streets up to my headlamps in fast flowing river water, but after feeling Nessie starting to lift off the ground and drift sideways like a barge in the Suez canal, I mounted the pavement and retired after giving a lift to one person still sitting in their car with water up to its windows. The high tide marks were still visible on the garage wall when we closed 2 years ago.

The Welsh guys treated me very fairly over my withdrawal and so next Spring our entry for Y Rali Bryn Cymru went in fast. We rented a cottage and had a 3 man Service team all from the Scott family. All went well and we finished 15th out of 33 starters. O.K. we were last again, but did win the best mixed crew award.

The following July and back at Perth, the event benefitted from having the first few competitors piped away from the start. My attempt to ruin their hearing had little effect although with now 12 Scottish entrants the effort was slightly appreciated by some including Chris Kinross, Alan Crow and Henry Webster, all of whom had started their rallying careers with team Nessie. Unfortunately both my long term acquaintance and fellow Borderer, James Millar and SLROC member Lee Bartlett fared badly, breaking down on the first and second stages and retiring all too early. James was subsequently consoled by being given the Spirit of the Rally Award. From a start number 44 we made it in 24th position, 4th in class and Last as usual. We collected 4 minutes penalties thanks to one member of our team underestimating the time it takes to get out of and back into a race suit moments before we were due back out of a service halt. Penalties had been issued to others for striking course markers, a problem that had been simmering for years and was now being dealt with. We also had taken several stage maximum times as we tried to drive to survive. Chris Kinross made the decision to retire after that event and now watches videos of all the events.

Well, Chris missed a new event. The first Borders Hillrally ran in November in the forests South East of Newcastleton. Only 23 miles from my house. That made a change. Now I had been in that area years before for the Borders 100 in 1981 and competed in subsequent

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comp safaris run by the Pennine Club as well as several camping weekends. The site was unique in that half of it ran South of the little river that serves as the Scotland/England border, so multiple permits had had to be obtained to run it. Also some of those on the South side can not read, as we found out on one stage when 4 cyclists had to get smartly out of the way. They were reported to marshals and had ignored the warning signs and tapes as their own activities were more important! To help preserve some of the forest tracks tyre regulations had been tightened and we were running on a second hand set of semi road tyres. They worked and in a couple of places where the course had dug up badly causing multiple recoveries we still impressed the marshals by ignoring their advice and successfully picking our own route through. Physically, due to the use of lots of tracks the event was easier to drive, but it meant that the leaders got up to some fearful speeds and when one or two went off, they disappeared into the next county. Our start number of 46 turned into a finish at 31st, only 5 minutes behind Alan Crow in his Tomcat, but again the only car behind us was the closing car. We were, however, only 33 minutes behind the winner, so maybe this style of event was easier on an older vehicle and pilot. The event was based at Whithaugh Park, which had religious and young persons uses during the week. As a result alcohol was forbidden on site, which took some getting used to by our gang. Twenty of the entries failed to finish, so it could not have been too easy a drive, but it was a new challenge and very enjoyable. We were second in class behind Rowland Marlow in a 2.5 V6 90 which had more technical innovations than a Russian Space rocket.

2007 came around and feeling that the competition had rather left us behind, in that I had not even replaced the spark plugs while others were building faster and faster buggies suitable for tracks and less and less for the fast disappearing hillsides and trials type areas, I had not entered anything. Then I got a phone call from Henry. Could I read a map? Yes, but what about all the clever stuff with time cards etc? Get to Newcastleton and bring your helmet was the reply. O.K. I climbed into the Discovery for the first time and was told "NO! you sit on that side" We set off on vaguely familiar tracks and I tried to read the road from the maps. It seemed to work and I even encouraged Henry to go faster. We worked our way up the numbers until we were looking really good and then disaster struck. On one of the long straight tracks and in an effort to keep overall speeds down the course ran into a small quarry before re-emerging on to the track. Over a sharp blind hump and there was a large boulder sitting loose right in front of us having been dislodged by the car in front that we were about to

catch. Our steering drag link took the impact and sheared off from the steering box drop arm. The steering wheel kind of lost contact with the wheels and we went straight on far enough to leave room for following cars. For a minute we looked at the problem and then, as younger people do, Henry played with his phone while I removed the ratchet strap from the spare wheel and tied it to the drag link, which was still attached at the wheels end. By heaving it round we pointed the wheels out of the quarry and drove clear. Then realising that the stage finished only half a mile away we set off, me running in front and steering while Henry pressed the loud pedal ever so gently. I demanded that the finish marshal gave us the time recorded when I passed the finish. The Discovery crossed 2 seconds later. We were still inside time, though had lost many places and moved off slowly. By pure luck an old drag link was sticking out of the scenery a few yards ahead and we fitted it rather quickly. Finish placing number 20. Had that not happened Henry, by my reckoning was on for at least a top 3 placing. It was a 2 day event and in between I had driven home for the night. The next morning Henry phoned to say that the restart had been brought forward by 30 minutes and at that stage we had still been running high up in the list. I had only just started breakfast as suddenly I had 35 minutes to get back to Whithaugh Park. Into the car and off up the road only to find hard frost and very slippery tarmac. I did know the road, but had to work hard and thought about the crash helmet sitting beside me. Malcolm Millar from Jedburgh was heading up the same road in his Discovery and still talks about the silver estate car that overtook him that morning.

That was to be my last competitive Hillrally. Henry went on to have a very successful career in his Discovery until he end over ended it and took a long time to re-shell it. He survived with no greater injuries than he had received years previously.

In 2008 I went back to Perth as service crew helping Alex Scott looking after some of the friends that we had made over the years. We had a good time in good weather, although I will admit to some regret at not having had another go myself. On the return to Perth with a broken Discovery on a trailer, Alex was towing, using an auto box Discovery and I was following with other crew in my car. We ran down the slip road at Stirling heading on to the M9 and just got into the middle lane at around 40mph when the trailer started to weave as only a trailer can. I had no concerns as Alex was very experienced, only it did not work out like that. After several weaves I realised that the trailer was going to win. I pulled over to occupy 2 lanes and spent what seemed like ages finding the hazard lights switch while watching the trailer finally tip in a shower of sparks. There were also all the spares and a dozen jerry cans of fuel tied on. The whole lot spread across the 3 lanes, closing the motorway. This suddenly looked serious and was a bit like occasional aspects of my day job, only with a lot more urgency. The tow car had stayed upright, but the people inside, including our Sharon, were very shook up. Hi-Viz o. Check that everyone was physically o.k. Get those jerry cans shifted and pick up scattered debris. Meanwhile a couple of other competitors had seen what had happened and squeezed up the hard shoulder to help. Queue on the road now ¼ mile back. We got the trailer and race car



separated and with the others help righted both. Queue now backed up out of sight. Started to pull the trailer and undamaged tow car on to the hard shoulder. Pulled the race Discovery in behind the trailer ready to reload and started to sweep up the remaining spares from all over the place. Sirens heard in the background. Oh! B.....! Who told them? Two Fire Engines, One ambulance and 2 Patrol cars started arriving. The road was now clear, but sat in the middle lane was a small hatchback with a girl in it having a blether on her phone. Actually she was still trying to call out the Mountain Rescue, Coastguard and Lifeboats just to be sure. I had just time to tap on her car window and politely ask her to please move to the next county SMARTLY as the road was now open both sides of her. We then spent a little while explaining to all the blue light teams that actually we had just had a minor problem and were reloading the race car and would be gone in seconds. We were. Subsequently the council had to be bluntly told that no, Alex did not hit their precious Armco on the central reservation and that the scratches on it were several years old. It was probably more dangerous trying to get close up photos to back that up than it was at the actual incident. The race car needed a new screen and pillar.

**THE EDITORS SEE THE DOCUMENTATION AND
RECORDING OF THESE EVENTS AS ONE OF THE KEY
REASONS FOR PUBLISHING THIS MAGAZINE
WE HOPE YOU ENJOY THE MEATY CONTENT**

I got really lazy after that and regret to say that I have not been to a Hillrally since. Not because of that incident, which was fairly minor as these things go, but due to realising that the next generation of race cars had already begun to be overtaken by a third and even faster style. Could I keep up with them? I doubt it. But then, as a slightly more famous Scotsman than me and who incidentally was born in the same street as me, once said "Never Say Never Again"

I would like to dedicate this little story to my good and much missed friend, the late Alex Scott, who died suddenly while doing what he liked most. Competing with his Series 1 "Boghopper". I appreciated his help and enthusiasm almost as much as he appreciated both my whisky and the kilt worn by John Cockburn's navigator! Thanks also to the members of Team Nessie: Alison Bruce, Chris Kinross, Tom Rae, Keith Rae, Robert Scott Snr., Alex Scott, Andrew Scott, Eric Scott, Robert Scott jnr., Sharon Scott, Henry Webster, Hamish Lockie, Martin Speck, Jim Douglas, David Hunter, Colin Robertson and there will be others to whom I apologise for having lost the appropriate memory cells from my brain. Not forgetting John Dominy, closing car driver, who patiently followed us round several rallies and who helped rebuild my front axle at Perth and then appeared as scrutineer at the next event and promptly failed that particular hub for excess play. I still appreciated your help John.

Michael Bruce ⚙️

BLUE BY YOU

Gratuitous photos of a braw wee landy on a braw wee beach

by Alastair Beveridge

Kept at our house in Scarista, Isle of Harris and gets used regularly while we're here. Great for trips to remote corners of the island, beaches for family BBQs and general workhorse duties, towing trailers and such like

We've had the Landie for 6 years or so, bought as a runner needing light restoration and it's been great fun.



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Isolation ain't all bad

Stephen Steele with his Disco chillin' and Emrys Kirby's tidy S11 in Iceland





The Scotts have been a part of the Land Rover club for as long as I can remember, and the club used to have many events up at Coilantogle (RTVs, Trials, Treasure Hunts, and so on). The farm was run by the eldest of the 4 brothers (Robert), and it's no surprise that the farm has a slew of old Land Rovers rotating through... often having been rescued from one scrap pile, mightily abused, and then passed onto another scrap pile. It is no surprise, therefore that [Big] Robert's son, "Wee" Robert, was a fairly accomplished bodger of Land Rovers, and a decent driver.



I really met him through his uncle, Alex Scott - owner of Boghopper, and whose car was often used by two, three, ... and once. FOUR members of the Scott clan.

Robert was hard on cars, and bent wings or broken windscreen were not uncommon occurrences when Robert was involved... but, by heck, he could get that car places! And fear seemed to be a foreign concept.

Once I'd got my own trials car, Alex and I would sometimes share the Scott Clan load... and Robert relished the challenge of the smaller, less powerful 80. Strangely, whilst he scored equally well in my car compared to his uncles... there was less damage. Whether that was because the car was "better", or because Robert took more care - I couldn't say.

A FAREWELL TO ROBERT SCOTT

by Ian Stuart



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After he dropped out of Trials, I still kept in touch with the whole family... Dropping in for a chat when passing, and stopping by to help with the occasional broken vehicle.

I was there when he bought his fancy racer - and buried it up to the front bumper on the loch-shore, and I went to get him out with my disco.

His work with digger was incredibly useful for me, in motorsport too: He helped fix tracks for me up in Dunning Glen forest; at Drumclog; and we spent an entire day making some glorious off-road sections down at Forrest Estate

We met down there, and Brian met us standing next to a 13-tonne digger (kinda small, for what we needed to do... but workable). Robert was obviously disappointed at the size of machine it was going to work with, but happy to be able to play. We stopped teasing him, and told him he was taking the 30-tonne machine up

in the quarry. With his uncle Eric bringing a tractor & trailer for moving spoil, we covered some 15 miles (at no more than 5mph, those machines are not fast!) and made/tidied up seven or eight "off road sections" in the day.... several of which are still being used!

But I guess my best memories of wee Robert are from fixing the tracks after racing at Callander: trying to get the vibrating roller onto his [knackered] trailer, the vibrating roller falling through the floor of said trailer, the laughs fettling the track with "Toolbox" in his JCB & Wee Robert in his 360...

.... that -

and he ALWAYS beat me, when he drove my car!

Jan Stuart - a dear friend ⚙

Wales to Iceland by Jan Sykes

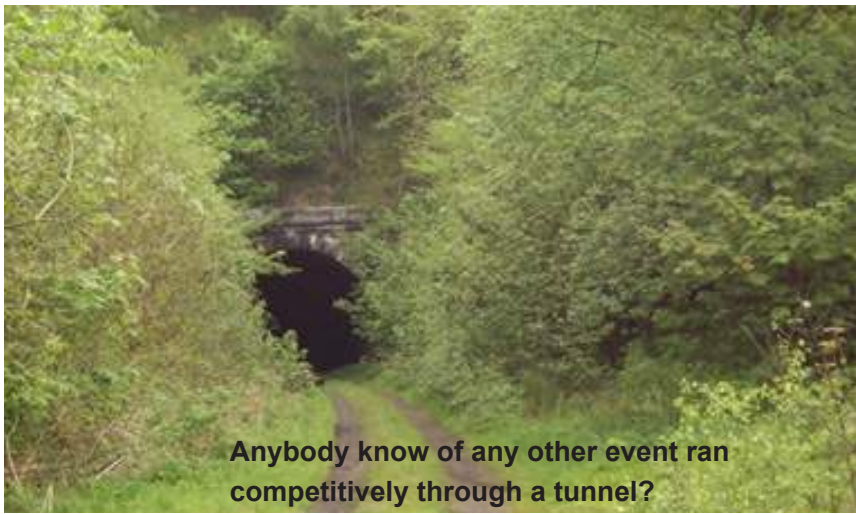
When I received the text message, would I write about my memories of the Scottish Hill Rallies I did kind of go "what again?". Having just written a piece for a researcher on UK hill rallies and my input to the two Scottish variants. It must also be remembered I wrote a monthly article for a UK Off Road magazine for almost 3 years. Anyway, I will do my best to inform and entertain.

The first Scottish Perthshire was in 1996, I somewhat surprised the researcher by saying I had no idea how many entered and no I don't have any paperwork about it anymore. I do know that it was a few years before 1996 that I started the planning and the initial starting point was a way to keep awake. Driving back from a Welsh event with Frances, Iain Grey and Geoff Hind who had all fallen asleep in the Discovery. My mind was running through the options and thoughts, "Who would come, where to host it, in the Highlands or in the Borders (my childhood homeland), which club would I approach?"

I wrote to Ian Davis, at the then MSA, to discuss my idea, he introduced me to RSAC (Royal Scottish Automobile Club) who were looking for a new event to manage. So I was summoned to appear before the RSAC committee. Frances and I fitted that into a return trip to see Roland Marlow at ACR in Deeside. Frances and I went to Blythwood, where they were not too

amused to have a woman enter the men's club! It was like a job interview with the premier names of Scottish Motorsport sat round this big table and me answering the questions. I got the job or did they get the event? Working with Jonathan Lord is how I met Chris Kinross who handled all our contracts with the land owners. It was quite a piece of legal paperwork; when can we access which fields for setting up, when does it need to be cleared of stage furniture, when can we remove the fence, open up the wall and put in a gate. Payment details and other factors. One such odd factor was, proof of Network Rail agreeing to using the first tunnel and viaduct, we only did that once. The very first land owner to say yes to the hill rally concept was John Bruce at Balmanno and we still exchange Christmas cards and his boys now own the rifles I had before





Anybody know of any other event ran competitively through a tunnel?

moving to Iceland. It was he who told me about the tunnels. A couple of stories that encapsulates why the event had such good access to the land in Perthshire. The tunnel stage also used an open moor with silver white larch tree stub roots exposed to the sun. We lost this land when it was sold to a sheep breeder of prize rams. But as many will know the route also ran into a wood. The first route plan sent to MSA caused confusion until I explained how a tunnel is marked on an OS map! Any way back to the wood. John said, "Mark the route you want to use and I will have a look and comment, I don't have time today". So I tied strips of red/white tape to the trees along the proposed route, mostly an old pony trap ride. Notice I said tied,



What are you NOT seeing?
The famous Balmanno drop is on the right

John would not allow staples into trees. I did this one Saturday, on Sunday evening I had a message on my answer phone (remember them?). "Who put the strips of red tape up, that's how I mark the shooter's stands and now they will be confused and I have a shoot here next week. Not helpful". I taught at Inverness College but on Mondays not until 12:00. So at 3am I drove down to Balmanno, a 2 hour drive, so I was in the wood first light, jogged as much as I could and walked

the rest and pulled out all my tape markings. I left a note in his office to say ALL GONE. Then drove back up to Inverness. He still mentions this incident some 20 years on. I had put together a video and small pamphlet on what Hill Rallies were about, to hand out to prospective land owners. How the event would be managed by the respected RSAC. What we required and what we would put back by way of track improvements and new bridges, etc.. The sort of money we paid. I went visiting farms and estates, in either our Passat Estate or our Discovery, the Discovery was new on the market so caused interest and I dressed in country



flannels and tweed jacket! I had tea and scones all over Perthshire and a Rusty Nail offered from the two bottles, swigged!!!! After a few years of running the event, I had keys for many gates, farm doors (toilet purposes or "make the tea, Ian". On one hill moor, the heather was almost like a small scrub, the land owner wanted to preserve his access road so he asked, "Could we run on the heather?" "Yes sure." Now the route was not a roman road, it twisted and turned to get distance and to avoid wet patches or barren earth (sheep resting banks). The next year, "Could we slightly off set the route?" The rally track was devoid of old heather and the sheep had used the stripped track as a grazing route and of course left good manure.

MSA Hill Rally 1988				
Stage No	Stage Name	Stage Time	Distance	Notes
1	1st Hill	10.0	1.0	
2	2nd Hill	10.0	1.0	
3	3rd Hill	10.0	1.0	
4	4th Hill	10.0	1.0	
5	5th Hill	10.0	1.0	
6	6th Hill	10.0	1.0	
7	7th Hill	10.0	1.0	
8	8th Hill	10.0	1.0	
9	9th Hill	10.0	1.0	
10	10th Hill	10.0	1.0	

Stage No	Stage Name	Stage Time	Distance	Notes
1	1st Hill	10.0	1.0	
2	2nd Hill	10.0	1.0	
3	3rd Hill	10.0	1.0	
4	4th Hill	10.0	1.0	
5	5th Hill	10.0	1.0	
6	6th Hill	10.0	1.0	
7	7th Hill	10.0	1.0	
8	8th Hill	10.0	1.0	
9	9th Hill	10.0	1.0	
10	10th Hill	10.0	1.0	

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These tracks in following years had good young heather growth and what bird loves young heather? Grouse. The neighbouring land owner asked, having previously said no, "Would we like to run there!" Some other highlights of life as a Hill Rally organiser. Driving a JCB down one of the steepest hills, unknown to me, in full view of a group of hill farmers over at Struie watching through the scopes and glasses. There were some wagers outcome of the decent. Taking a shower in a disused water catchment trough's outlet pipe. Then realising that a line of hill rally helpers had arrived. John's brother was getting married, or was it his father (again of course) and I was invited to an evening party. By know the hill rally was a big annual fixture for many. I got back to the caravan, put a hose pipe into a blue barrel and some pallets beside it, then into the caravan and put on the heater. Went out and into that cold water tub to wash my hair and get rid of sweat and mud. John's Range Rover appears and no time to get to caravan I ducked into the tub. I could hear John bang on the caravan but no reply and off he went. At the party his wife told me, John looked for you to say come and have a shower!

The event was one of the first to use GPS route tracking, which via the college cad system I could print out to scale to match OS maps. I then copied the print to acetate and then that onto a map and then another copy, this time as a file. It certainly helped working at Inverness College. The technician's all loved, or appeared to, the challenges I kept presenting them with. By now I had bought an OS licence and the Scottish Hillrally Club I founded, still has that reference



number.

What happened to RSAC? Well to try and keep it simple and avoid any ill feeling, the club appeared to be disintegrating as they had sold Blythewood but lost money on the deal and Jonathan had lost his full time job. I felt it was essential to move to our own club and hold our own destiny. I had a Clerk of Course licence by now and had been sitting on the MSA's Cross Country (originally Off Road) committee for a few years. Land was becoming more difficult to find, I wanted to try and add freshness to the event. New rules on farming made many nervous. I had meetings with all the agencies so knew of the rules and how to work within them, but farmers are rightly canny about their primary income.

So the Scottish Borders Hill Rally was started. The MSA's higher echelon were not happy about the Scottish Borders title. You can't call you event after the country, it is not a National Event. Well actually we can, as that is the name of our sponsor and the name they want us to use. Newcastleton had been used by AWDC or NORC many years before but a Forest Enterprise forest now covers that area. The village and local forest had also been host to stages in the renowned RAC Rally. But an incomer, who did not like the noise, got on to the local council and that, was that, to motorsport. I did not know this at the time of approaching. I had already got a verbal agreement with enthusiasm from the forest manager so I now needed at base. Newcatleton looked the spot so I wrote to the Local Parish council. Please come and chat with us, we would like to have motorsport back again. The lady had moved on. They suggest Whithaugh Park an old holiday cabin location, now a church based activity centre, for them we were a gift of extra income. The local school was delighted at the thought of a safety awareness day at the school. So a couple of event vehicles, Ray Kemspter's was one,



then a rescue unit. There was a competition for the kids, colour in an off road buggy (very Simmbugghini like). That was not an easy competition for Frances and I to judge! Sadly our A9 road accident lost the photocopier and most of the leaflets I had made. The leaflet was comparing, skateboard and bike safety (PPE) to that of rally PPE plus the need for maintenance and lights.

By now environmental waste control was fully on the agenda for many, and the forest management had accepted our proposals. Spill kits, soak it, collect it, bag it, take it away. So after a damaged diff incident, it was not helpful but slightly amusing to hear on the

open radio. "What shall we do with the spill kit, dig a hole and bury it?" The forest manager monitored our frequency!

I will leave you with a page from one of my infamous stage set up manuals.

Twenty five years later and here I am in Iceland starting all that again, we hope to run a Hill Rally here in August. www.icelandhr.4allfours.co.uk with a lot of support from Andrew at Allisport, Jon at Voccloud and of course ourselves at Privileged Guest House and Tours, www.ghi.is

Ian Sykes ⚙

SLROC runs events called "Timed Trials" these are like miniscule hillrallies where we blast hard and fast over a very short course under the stopwatch, it tends to be VERY competitive!

But not too hard on cars



TIMED TRIALS- DAVE & DOUGIE

With restrictions easing we decided to bring back the speed events, so with Round 1 of the Timed Trials this brought some new faces and cars mixed with the Old Classics (I mean the cars), happy to say great numbers in competitors and helpers.

Round 2 of the timed trials gave us a brand-new site to play on Blackridge Quarry, excellent site that we will all be visiting at some point in the future!

Round 3 takes us to the Bathgate weekend CCV on the Saturday followed by a club comp on the Sunday. As always, A BIG THANK YOU to all who makes these events happen.

Dave & Dougie ⚙



CCV -

After a great year, we decided to have a condition of the



TYRO

The TYRO a good just 14 Defenders the year a fun second field of



CCV - ROBERT WILSON

After a long delay in starting this year we are off to a great year ahead with ccv trials again.

After our convenors meeting before we started back we decided to implement the ARLC rules .this being the use of safety glasses when trialing and also to have fore arms covered. This we felt in the current conditions is best as anything that's add to the safety of the drivers is best.



Bathgate was the first ccv of the year with A healthy entry of 19 and Torrance was our second with a little less with 12.

Michael Jackson winning Bathgate and Dave low winning Torrance.

Also a good Scottish entry has just been to the war of the roses in cartmel and some great sections made a great day with myself taking the win overall.

Our next ccv is the Bathgate weekend with the ccv on Saturday the 4th of September.

Look forward to seeing you all there.

Bob

FREEDOM! - CONVENORS REPORTS

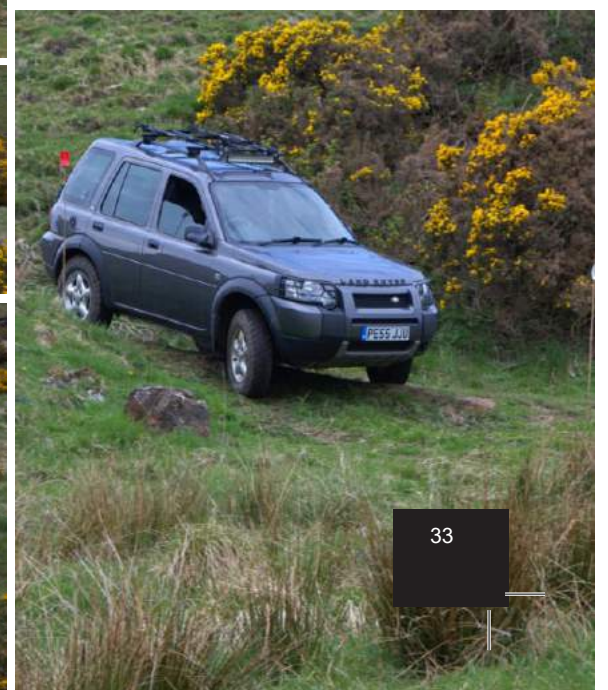
TYRO - POPS & BARRY

The TYRO season for 2021 started in Bathgate with a good turnout of 25 competitors. Some new, some just 14 and someone even turned up in a brand new Defender! With this in mind and being the first event of the year, the courses were set nice and easy to allow a fun day of driving with no risk of damage. For the second event we went to Torrance with a slight smaller field of 15. This is a fabulous site and gave us some

very twisty, technical sections. We must have set them right as at the end of the day we didn't have anyone on a clear but everyone was still smiling. For the rest of the year we're heading to some great sites and as mentioned already the sections are designed to be non damaging and suitable for even the newest of drivers and vehicles so come and join us.

Look forward to seeing you there.

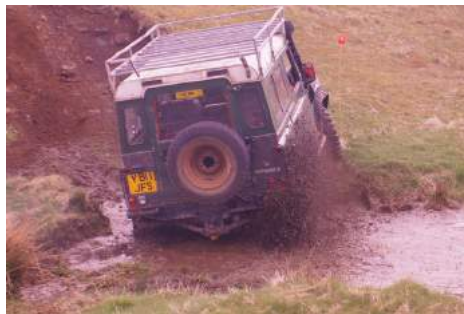
Pops and Barry.





CAPTION COMPETITION

email the editor
best caption wins a club shirt



RTV- CHRIS MOIR



Hi members I am Chris Moir the new RTV convenor it is great to be back out at events, thank you to those who have supported me by helping set up and marshal, the events we have had so far have been supported well and I look forward to the rest of the RTV season.

Chris Moir



Stop The Press! Success at WAR!

Scotland

this time the "Young Ones" were the Winners
the "Newbies" 2nd and
the "Auld Yins" 5th (blast that Tower of Hanoi)





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