

2016 October Newton Longville

Posted on [October 30, 2016](#) by [keithrichards](#)

Experience the Country hosted an event sponsored by a magazine publisher. It was an all-day event on the Saturday aimed at people with little or no off road experience, giving them a two hour opportunity to learn a little and drive a little to understand the real capabilities of their land rovers even if they don't intend to do anything extreme any time soon.

BORG was asked to marshal this event and we wanted to support this to be a great success hoping that the sponsor may consider repeating this again sometime.

A few of us took time off work on the Friday to help set up the course. Mark Stopps, Operations Manager of Experience the Country, is experienced in off road work and understands how to best utilise the land and obstacles to good effect to give a wide range of technical and non-technical challenges to the visitors. He designed an excellent course which caters well for a large volume of potentially inexperienced off road drivers all travelling the same route.



Four sessions were organised for the day, each group starting with an indoor presentation which amounted to a great insight to vehicle design and features along with how and when to take advantage of some of the hi-tech gadgets that modern Land Rovers 4x4 cars have.

After the safety briefing they ventured out on to the course in convoy. The marshals at the start of each section could offer advice and final words of encouragement as one by one they took their vehicles through ever increasing challenging parts of the course.

For some, in their shiny brand new Range Rovers, even driving across the field to the first track through the woods would have been more off road than they'd previously taken their vehicles before.

Everyone has bags of enthusiasm and were really up for this. The first section was a rutted track through a tight group of trees or woods. The ruts had been engineered to not be too damaging but at least make scrapping noises under the cars as they go.

Certainly, people would have been bounced side to side and up & down.



The second woods were similar and perhaps steeper dips. Then there was a drive across open country to the technical challenge referred to as elephant feet.

Basically, a manmade section with railway sleepers offset between left and right, with peaks and troughs in the ground – a cross axle trial. There were a couple of shiny steel mirrors erected about 3m long and 1+m high so the driver can see alternate wheels just in the air. Great to see and understand traction control braking the spinning wheel up in the air diverting power to the wheels still on the ground.

The last section was a hilly area with deep muddy ruts twisting and turning around bushes and trees. The skill challenge of this section was assisted by a good down pour of rain the previous night.

The water splash was three short experiences of taking your vehicle through water. Nice and deep, top of the tyre depth if you drive slowly!



Everyone had seriously good fun and only one or two had to be recovered from being stuck so that they could continue and despite the thrill, no vehicles were damaged either.



Into the evening, there was the removal of the route markers and barriers and finally the club BBQ – and as usual, it rained but we are well prepared with the gazebo and so good food was had by all.