

CLUB OF THE MONTH

NORTHERN IRELAND LAND ROVER CLUB *by Ian Culbert*



IN 1996 a group of Northern Ireland Land Rover enthusiasts comprising Ian Gregg, Ian Clarke, Jack Bolan, Robin Jelly and Martin Magill, got together and formed the Northern Ireland Land Rover Club. The initial aim of the Club was to provide Land Rover owners with the opportunity to use their vehicles in an off-road environment, provide a Forum for discussion and provide members with information, advice and assistance on matters connected with motor sport and their vehicles.

As greenlanes do not exist in Northern Ireland, an arrangement was made with the Forestry Service

and private land owners to use their land. In return the Club would carry out repairs to the land and hold clean up days. A lot of this work in the past has included recovering abandoned vehicles from the Province's forests.

From these humble beginnings the Club has gone from strength to strength and ten years later it now has over 100 members. The Club still fulfils the original aims of the founding fathers but in addition the Club now takes part in various static shows to provide an opportunity for members to display their vehicles, they have arranged various discounts for members

through the Club's



'Preferred Supplier Scheme', and organise social events for the members and their families.

The Club has developed links with Land Rover enthusiasts in Ireland and has held a number of joint events with Club Land Rover Ireland. In recent years the Club has also developed links with off-roaders in the UK through various internet forums and many members make the now annual pilgrimage to Drumclog in Scotland to meet up with off-roaders from all over the UK.

The highlight of the Club's tenth anniversary celebrations was the recent charity family fun day held at Whiteman's Farm, a relatively new site used by the Club, but by far the member's favourite off-road venue.

Former Membership Secretary Michael Lynn and past Chairman Ian Culbert organised the event and proposed a lalld-back day with entertainment for those with and without families with the emphasis on using the day to raise money for charity. After discussing it with the membership they arranged a bouncy castle for the kids, although the main challenge was keeping the adults off it!

For those that wanted to off-road the rain on Friday night made the going extremely challenging – just what the members like. The organisers also laid on

a tyro trial for younger members and visitors to get a feel for off-roading in a controlled and safe environment. All those attending the event received a special Tenth Anniversary window sticker for their vehicle.

In the afternoon there was a charity clay pigeon shoot, which was won by one of the event sponsors, Ian Anderson of the 4x4 store. This was followed by a BBQ and charity raffle.

Before the draw took place Club Chairman, Mark Wilson, took the opportunity to thank the sponsors of the event, Belfast Land Rover Centre, 4x4 Store, Patterson Electronics Ltd and Mervyn Johnston for donating the prizes for the raffle and the site owners for once again letting the Club loose on their land! He also thanked the event organisers, those who assisted them, and the members who had attended for helping to make the day the success it was. At the last count a total of £600 was raised by the various events throughout the day.

The event ended with members gathering round a bonfire to socialise and tell tall tales of off-roading adventures!

■ Further details on the Northern Ireland Land Rover Club can be found on the Club's website at www.landrover-club.com