

Julimar Forest 12th May 2018

What a beautiful day for a leisurely drive in the hills. Anyway, I think that's what the participants on this trip were probably thinking since the mention of Julimar Forest when it's warm and dry doesn't conjure up any thoughts of a challenging drive! Later learned we had a 32 deg day and had broken some climate records for May. Wow!

I was joined today by Mike & Clare, my TEC (tail end Charlies), Paul & Terri who were to provide a running commentary on my TEC's performance, Steve & Kerry, our President and her partner in crime, Chris & Robyn and finally Alex. Maria apparently cut him loose for the day. Paul & Terri were 3 minutes away from a phone call to ascertain their whereabouts as we had almost given up on them. Unfortunately, Andrew & Bec who had said they were coming but were running really late (24 hours!) and missed out. Catch up with you on the next one guys.

Cleverly I had arranged for the trip to start and end at the "Chequers" watering hole in Bullsbrook. This shouldn't come as a surprise to those that know me well!

So, we headed off on the bitumen up the Gt Northern then onto Muchea East Rd then onto Julimar Rd where tyre pressures were adjusted.

Bang! When we hit the tracks it was straight into some tricky declines and a low range 1st climb. It was at this point I was bemoaning the fact that we had not had any recent rains to make this more interesting. Even so I sensed the adrenaline was beginning to flow!





By the time we reached our morning tea break I think the idea that this was going to be a walk in the park had been dispelled. Looking around the group one could see the colour returning to the faces as blood pressure was restored.

So far we had stuck to the tracks visible to GPS and also appearing on maps. Stage two took us off the grid onto tracks seldom used and a bit overgrown just for something different. During this section I included a stretch for designated Toyota drivers. An “Oh what a feeling!” moment with a not unexpected resulting banter on the two way!

Sadly, part of a track in this section had been closed and we had to detour onto the bitumen for a couple of kms before returning to the gravel. This led us to our lunch break where I had the opportunity to brief the group on the dangers contained in the last leg of the trip which was to come. I had sensed the group had started to relax up to this point. Soon fixed that!

The section contained a steep decline. It was so steep that the descent was achieved by cutting a zigzag track into the side of the hill. Absolutely a low range locked into first gear and lots of distance between vehicles type descent. Happily, everyone made it down safely. (bemoaning the lack of precipitation again)

Mike was in raptures, thoroughly enjoying playing with his little knob and moving between high and low ranges.

To close on a high we made the most of the views and the weather enjoying a leisurely drive back to our air up point in Lower Chittering. Terri left us here for an appointment at the Chocolate Factory! Alex also left, must have been on the clock! We also farewelled Chris and Robyn whilst the rest of us stopped at “Chequers” before heading home.

Thanks for your company everybody. It was a great day.

Steve