

## AND AWAY AGAIN

Saturday: vehicles organised for an early start Sunday, away between 7:15 and 7:30am and to Dargalvania (just like Transylvania), Brett going right at the lights, me waiting, as I went straight through, then Brett calls up "where are you?" "I'm just coming up to the hospital" "well I'm at the top of Maunu hill" so away we go, getting to Dargahol about 8:45, Colin, Nat, Brooke and Carol are there waiting. Jim turns up, so more yakking, and then we all wander into Mobil for a pee and to buy something. Colin and Nat decide to have a cuppa, and then about 9:20 we're away to Kaihu, Brooke in the lead. He pulls over at the Kaihu pub and says "You can lead the way now." So away again, stop and check out his track, seems wrong but eight years since I'd been there, so jump in Jim's buggy and away to check out the track, so we go as far as the car will go then onto Shanks' pony, decision made that it seems like the right place, so back to the road, into the tow vehicles and away again. After about half an hour a dead end turn-around, go back, stop at the top of the hill, try the cell phones – typical, some with coverage some without - trying to get hold of landowner to find the right track and find where I'd gone wrong when this chap and his son come walking down the track that we're on, bit of a yarn with him and he points us in the right direction. Yeah, okay so I was only about 18k's out, this chap's son wants to come and watch what we did as he was mad on 4x4s especially what's on TV, but couldn't as it was too far, so away again this time on the right road.

After a long time driving up and down hills we were quietly driving down only to stop once again, this time it was chainsaw time due to the amount of trees fallen across the road. With Colin up the trees with his trust axe – no, not his rusty axe – and me swinging the chainsaw with the rest helping to clear the debris, it was stop start for about a K, but finally the end was in sight. After parking the vehicles it was time for something to eat and drink – this was about 1:15pm, so far a really good start eh – ha, ha, ha.

After lunch, unload the trailers, drop the taranaki gate and away yet again, drive across some rocks, around the paddock trying to find a place to cross over. Only one place is suitable so I go in first – just a small stream about 800 wide, not quite a metre – with a small bank opposite. After bunting the far bank a couple of times and reversing back for another go Brett says "You're only in two-wheel drive." "Know why?" "Well only the front's got traction, nothing at the rear, because the rear drive shaft's going around. I think you've done an axle." So I was towed out. Next please. Colin has a go, several goes that is, then gets towed out. Brett has a go; his motor starts playing up, he gets towed out. Brooke's turn – lotsa noise, several goes and yes, he's out the other side. His vehicle's not running right though, so under the bonnet with the screwdriver – vehicle won't idle. Brett's turn again. He gets out the other side, but not happy where he is, so reverses back across the creek. Colin has a go, finally getting across, only in the wrong place, so Brooke tries towing him around a bit, but no go, so with the Landy pulling about 12 thousand revs he gets back across. Brooke comes back as well. We had a look around as to what was available as to the type of terrain and decided to come back at a later

date, possibly a campout for a weekend so we could spend more time there as there's some swamps, holes, gullies, hills, creek crossings, etc. Jim had to go, so he left I think round 4ish. I got towed back up onto the track, taranaki gate back up and then jumped into Brett's wagon, then drove down the track which follows the boundary then ducks off into the forest, turning around just before the steel gate, then headed back to load the vehicles on the trailers. When backing out my trailer slid over the edge and dropped into the water table, out with the winch rope and hooked onto an old mobile crusher, apart from moving the crusher a few feet, I finally got out of one predicament and into another, as the 'cruiser and the trailer weren't lined up to get back onto the track. Many forwards and backwards, and I got out facing down hill, then had to back the trailer back up to where I was before, finally facing the right way.

A bit of shagging around due to being so wet and muddy we were all facing the right way out, so away we went yet again, apart from two trees that were too big to cut up and remove we could still drive underneath with no problems, so it was back to Dargahol. Once we hit the tarseal Brooke and Carol were off in a cloud of diesel never to be seen until later (next day). Colin, Nat, Brett and I cruised into Dargahol; while Colin and Nat had tea, Brett and I shagged around trying to get the park lights working on the trailer, finally giving up, having a cup of coffee, then catching up with Colin and Nat for the trip home, getting home around 7:30pm.

It was hinted that maybe I could possibly use this property for a brass monkey run, and maybe a campout.

No, I didn't break an axle; it was a spider gear which ceased on the shaft.

Happy four-wheeling!! Yor cum bak now ya hear.....!

- *Syd Hogan*