

ROHDB0016



SALISBURY PLAIN

Wherever you go in the world to get your off-road thrills, there is quite simply nothing like Salisbury Plain. A vast wilderness given over to training the British Army, it's criss-crossed by an extraordinary network of rights of way which make it entirely unique.

Much as we like to criticise the manner in which countryside access has been managed in Britain, especially over the last ten years, there can be few countries in which the concept of rights of way is so strong, it's possible to drive your 4x4 right through the middle of a military exercise, even as tanks roll by around you. That, however, is the bizarre reality on the Plain, one which makes exploring it by 4x4 even more of an adventure.

This roadbook, which is in the main a combination of lanes used in various other routes over the past few years, explores a series of rural byways which vary enormously in nature, both on and off the Plain. At times, you'll be likely to meet a dog-walker coming the other way in a family hatchback – but here and there, you'll encounter ground the likes of which will make you glad to have a second vehicle behind you with a strong towrope ready for action.

When you reach the Plain itself, meanwhile, you'll encounter a different kind of hazard. The rights of way used here cross and recross the Larkhill and Westdown Artillery Ranges, meaning you're liable to come face to face with red flags and closed gates – at these times, normal rights of way rules are emphatically not applicable, and you must keep out.

This only becomes a potential problem towards the end of the route, however, from around step 175 onward. Unless you're doing it on a day when there's late firing on the Westdown Artillery Range (normally Tuesdays and Thursdays, plus some Saturdays), you'll probably get here after the red flags come down at 5pm or so, though in winter we'd suggest being cautious about driving on the Plain after dark, as picking your route through the sea of tank trails and other tyre tracks is hard enough in daylight.

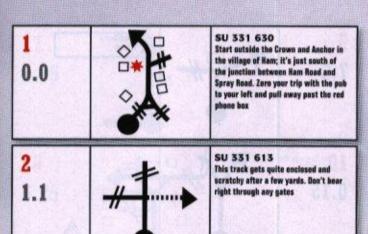
By now, at any rate, you'll have had a major day's green laning already, so if you have to cut and run here you won't be missing too much. In particular, as well as a wide variety of tracks in the lands surrounding the Plain, you'll have explored parts of the Army's training areas where live firing doesn't normally happen, meaning you shouldn't see any red flags – though you might well come face to face with the odd couple of dozen tanks or be studiously ignored by a well-disciplined group of marching squaddies.

These are the areas the army uses for practising infantry manoeuvres, and the landscape all around shows the marks of this. Everywhere you look, there's evidence of where tanks have chewed the ground up – creating a bizarre moonscape of a view in places and, possibly more to the point, making it a pig of a job to work out where you are.

As a result, this is a roadbook which, while it's by no means all plain sailing (boom boom) for drivers, really is the equivalent of a masters' degree for your navigator. Make no mistake, finding your way around out here is tough; and when we say 'make no mistake,' we mean it in every conceivable sense, because getting it wrong and ending up off the right of way is ridiculously easy and potentially very dodgy indeed. Don't assume that the army and its range wardens are out to get you, though; they understand the way it is, and will only get shirty if you start acting the fool.

Hopefully, our instructions will help you find your way through. But don't forget that since we set out this roadbook, there's every chance that the landscape could have been crucified by several hundred tons of tracked vehicles – code, perhaps, for 'take a map and GPS.'

Don't be put off, though. This is a fascinating adventure in a landscape that's quite unlike anything else in Britain, and the route will also take you past both Stonehenge and the 'German Village' – a complex used to train troops in street fighting. Get lucky, and they could be at it, thunderflashes and all, as you drive past – a surreal bonus in a route which will be quite unlike any other green laning experience you'll ever have.





STICK TO THE ROUTE!

When using green lanes, you must ALWAYS stick to you must ALWAYS stick to the right of way. NEVER drive off on to the verges or surrounding land. It's illegal, it's damaging and lanes are constantly being closed because of it. Playdays are for playing - lanes are for laning!

Start	Ham (SU 331 630)
Fluish	Bratton (ST 913 523)
Distance	130.4 miles
Time	12 hours
Terrain	Gentle downland
	Bleak open plain
Hazards	Ruts, sometimes deep
	Occasional axle twisters
	Surface water after wet weather
	Unexploded bombs
	Other users
	Other users, in tanks
OS Maps	Landranger 173 (Swindon and Devizes)
	Landranger 174 (Newbury and Wantage)
	Landranger 184 (Salisbury and the Plain)
	Explorer 130 (Salisbury and Stonehenge)
	Explorer 131 (Romsey, Andover and Test Valley)
	Explorer 143 (Warminster and Trowbridge)
	Explorer 157 (Marlborough and Savernake Forest)
	Explorer 158 (Newbury and Hungerford)

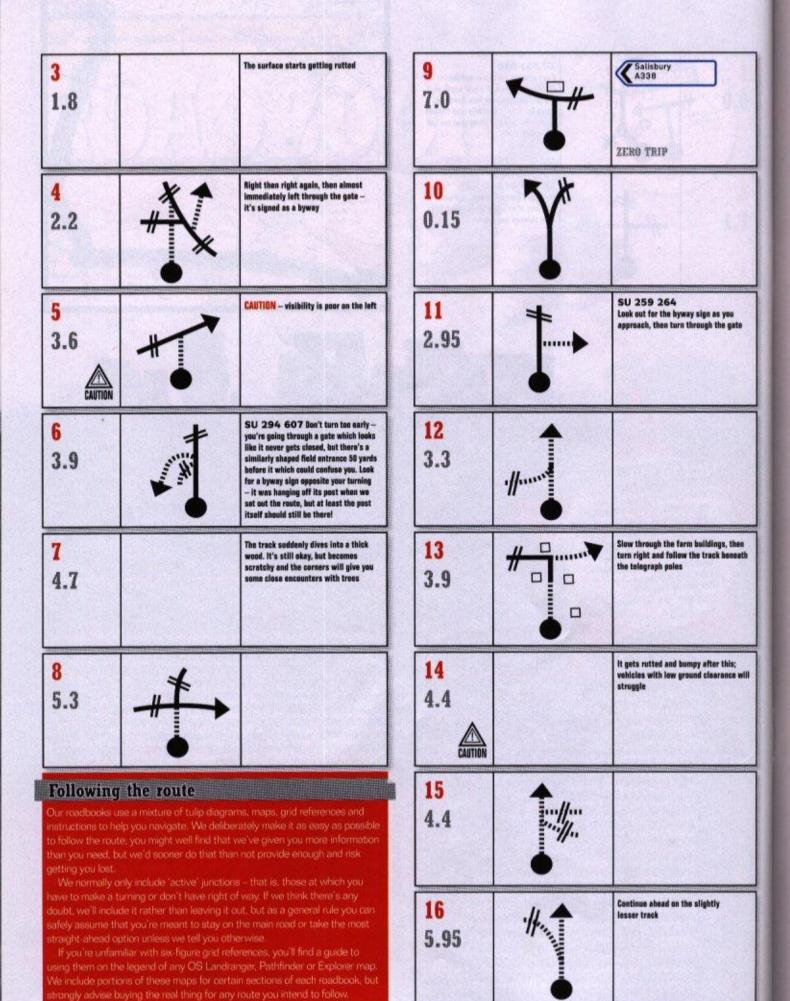
Salisbury Plain

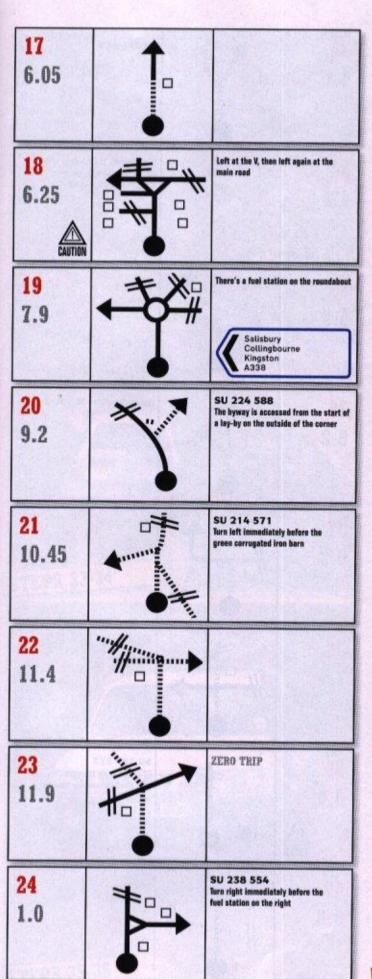
Access to the rights of way on Salisbury Plain is controlled by red flags and lamps posted to show when live firing is in progress. When these are up, you must keep out of the areas they relate to – fail to do so, and you could wind up getting prosecuted, shot or blown to bits.

A section of road and track towards the end of this roadbook crosses the Westdown Artillery Range, and is normally closed until 5pm every day. On Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays, all things being equal the flags come down after that, but on Tuesdays, Thursdays and

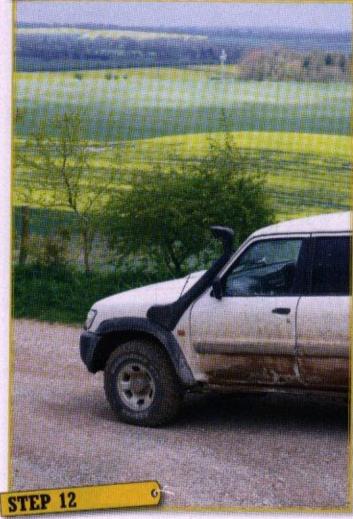
Saturdays the firing can continue into the night. Sundays are normally left open, though the ranges can be shut without notice at any time – to dispose of unexploded shells, for example, or if the day's activities have started any fires in the grass and brush. To check the exact situation, you can call the range operations office on 01980 674763; they understand how it is with rights of way on the Plain, and are very helpful.



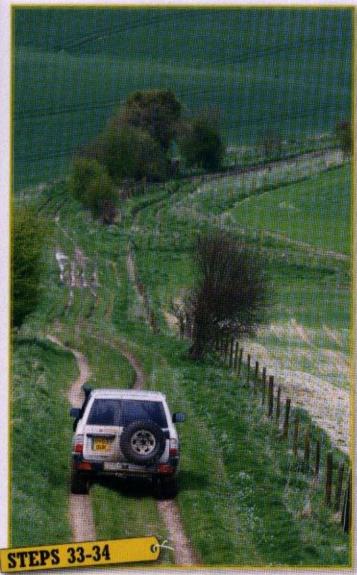


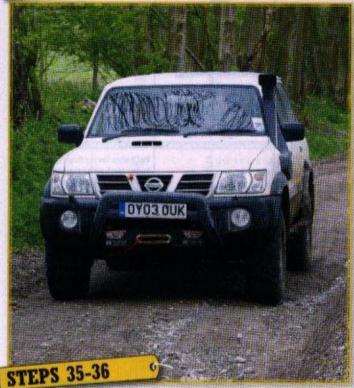






25 1.2	1 #		33 4.1		SU 211 565
26 2.0	#	SU 223 549 This is an ill-defined grass track along the field edge, with the fence to your left. Look out for a byway sign on the fence post at the junction	34 4.7		There are ruts at the bottom of the hill, and for the next mile, which are deep enough to require respect
27 2.2	#	The track on the left is gated	35 5.9	×	
28 2.5		Turn right immediately after the gate, to run along the bettem field edge	36 6.2	Arright.	Yours is the slightly lesser track
29 2.6	#		37 6.8	# 1	The second secon
30 3.1	1 *		38 7.5	#	ZERO TRIP
31 3.2	#		39 0.4	T.	SU 180 573 CAUTION as you approach — it's a very tight turn back over your shoulder
32 3.3	#1	SU 209 554	40 0.9	##·	





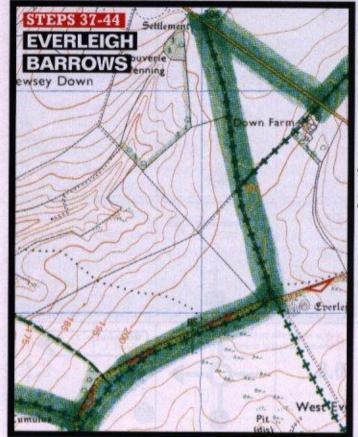
About our roadbooks

The Off Road Yearbook is a sister publication to Total Off Road, which proudly remains the only monthly magazine in Britain ever to have published 4x4 roadbooks. These routes take you through the British countryside on a mixture of rights or way and public highways, both surfaced and unsurfaced.

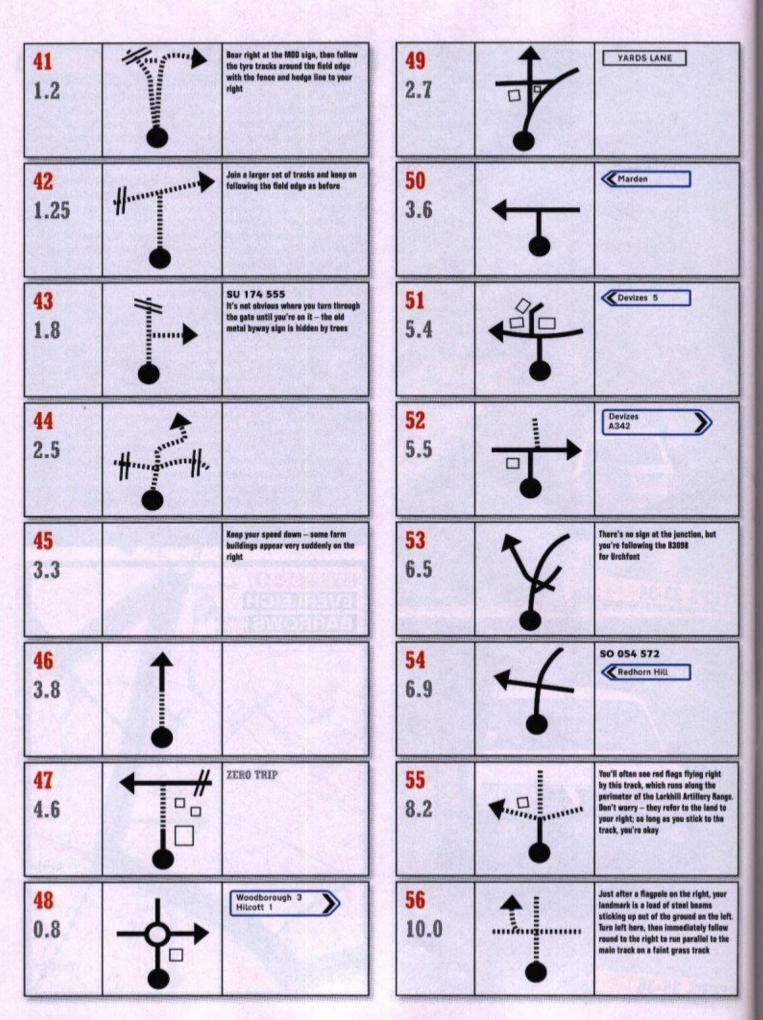
Our roadbooks are closely related to those in *Total Off Road*. They're designed to be safe to drive in a suitably prepared solo vehicle, and are largely suitable for standard 4x4s on tyres which are no more aggressive than a general-purpose mud-terrain. We do recommend travelling in tandem wherever possible, however, not just because it's safer but because it's also more fun. The risk of getting stuck can be far greater than it appears – and whatever you're driving, having help at hand can make the difference between a breakdown being inconvenient and potentially life-threatening.

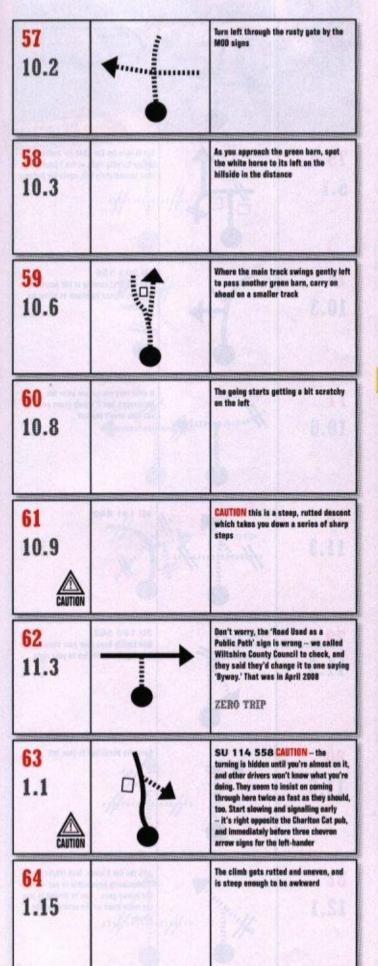
We always try to warn you of any potentially difficult sections you'll encounter, but the nature of any unsurfaced right of way can change quickly and dramatically. Wet weather can make a huge difference to the conditions underfoot, and what's wide open in winter can be tightly enclosed and paintwork-rippingly scratchy in summer.

Finally, the roadbooks in *The Off Road Yearbook* were set out using the Nissan Patrol you see in the pictures. Our reasoning is that if a vehicle this large can get through, anything can! The Patrol is unmodified, except for its snorkel, winch and heavy-duty bumpers, and is fitted with the kind of tyres mentioned above. We don't include any lanes which it's not capable of tackling, and if we ever need to use its standard-fit rear diff-lock to get through, we'll warn you of this in the text.



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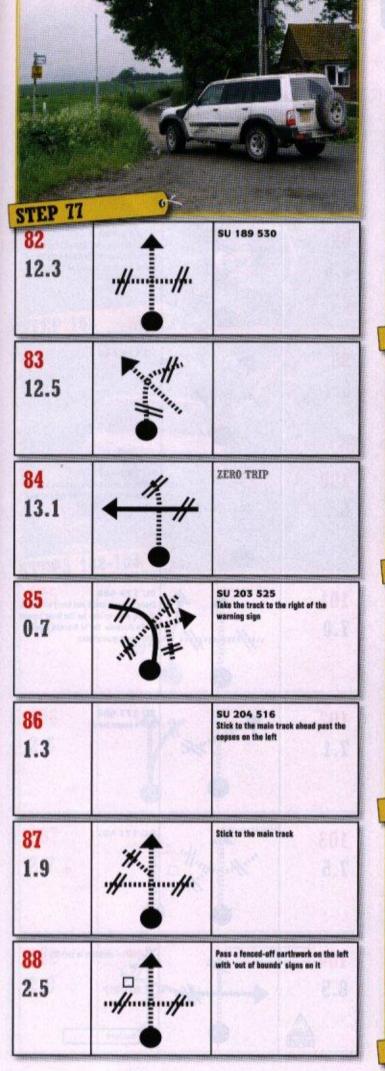


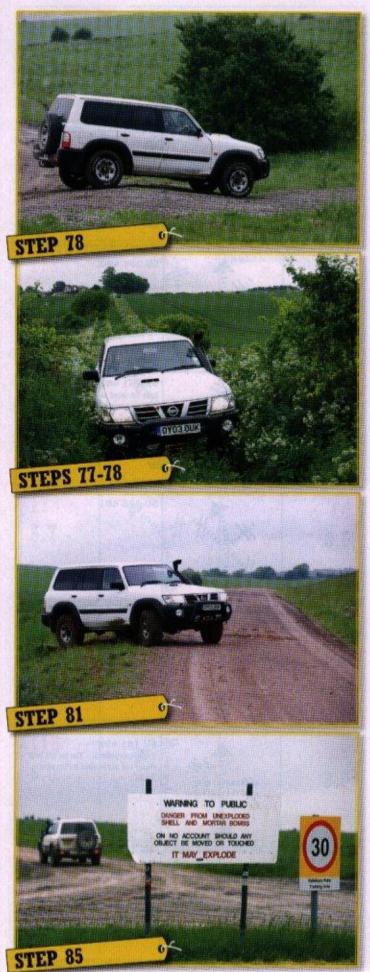
Driving on rights of way

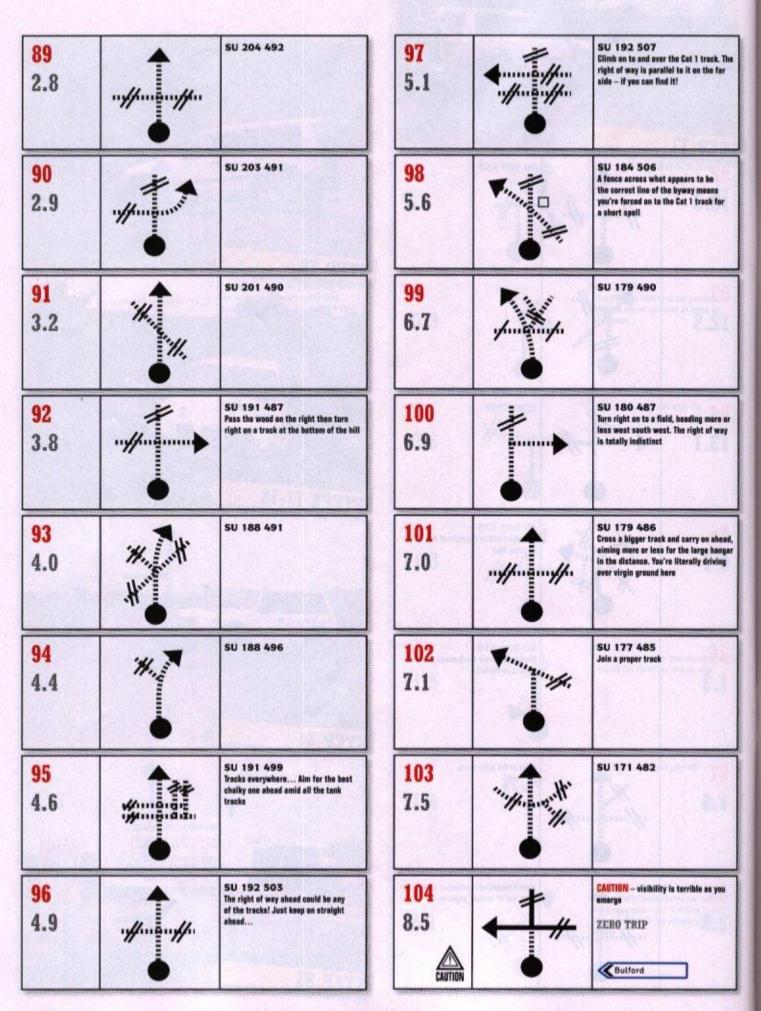
- Keep your speed right down.
- ▲ Pull over to let walkers, bikers and horse riders pass
- ▲ Don't travel in large convoys. More than about six vehicles, and you should split into smaller groups to avoid hassling other users
- A Leave gates as you found them
- Don't drop litter
- A Fords are not there for washing your vehicle
- A Fix that oil leak before you go
- Mud is not a playground
- Scrupulously obey all closure and voluntary restraint notices
- ▲ Don't cause a noise nuisance, particularly after dark
- Ensure you have a right to be there. We research the routes on our roadbooks very carefully, but the status of any route can change without notice
- Be prepared to turn back if the route is blocked, even illegally
- ▲ If you find an illegal obstruction, notify the local authority
- If someone challenges you, be polite and stay calm. If you're driving sensibly on a public highway or byway, they don't have a leg to stand on
- If someone gives you abuse (it does happen, though much less frequently than some laners' tales might make you think), don't give it back
- Stick absolutely scrupulously to the right of way
- Ramblers are not evil

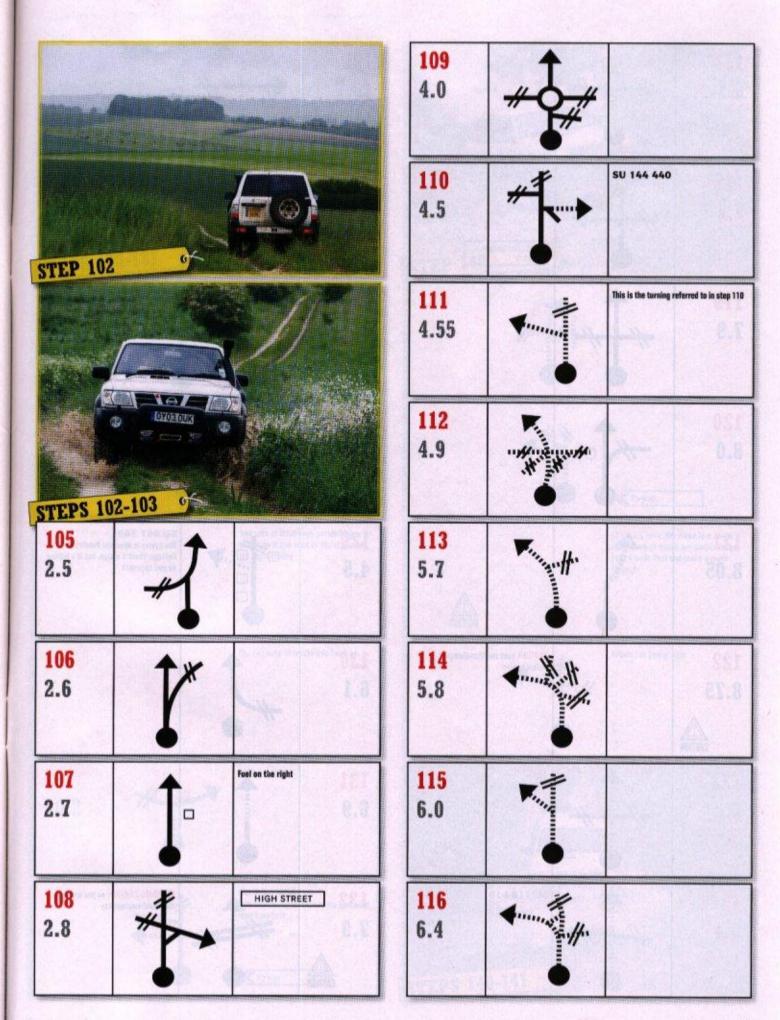
There's a sharp axia-twister as you climb on to the track crossing your path

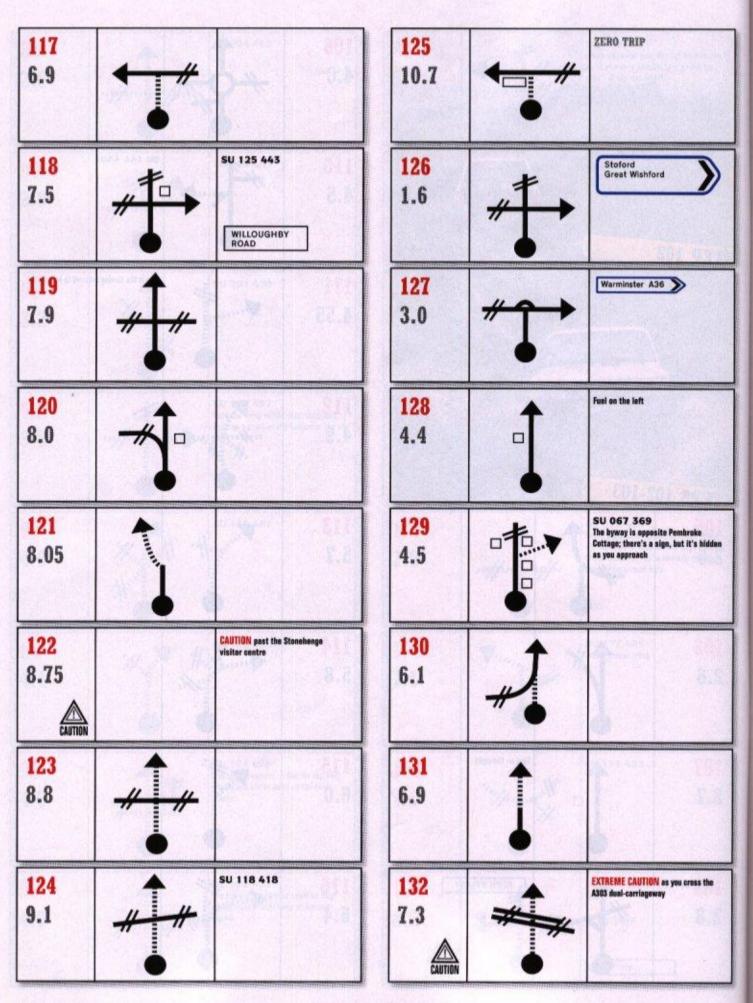
66 1.6	1		74 4.8	+	Andover Upavon A342
67 2.1	1	SU 162 549	75 5.1		Get in lane for the A342 for Andover, hefore turning right at the T-junction then immediately left, again for Andover
68 2.4	4	Immediately after the unexploded bomb warning sign, turn left on the faint gress track and follow ahead with the fence line to your left	76 10.3	7	SU 203 536 Take the first turning at the junction, which is signed up ahead as being for The Street
69 2.8	4	This is just after you've gone through a big dip. Note that the 'private land' sign, which it is no doubt accurate, doesn't stop the track from being a public right of way	77 10.6	* 1	It gots very overgrown after the farmhouse, but it's only grass and the ruta aren't too bad
70 3.1	1		78 11.3	<i>H H</i>	SU 191 540
71 4.05	1		79 11.5		SU 189 542 Turn tightly back over your shoulder, keeping the shrub line to your right
72 4.25			80 11.6		Keep the shruh line to your left
73 4.3			81 12.1	Harran	Join the Cat 1 track. Tank tracks mean it's basically impossible to see where the byway goes — you're alming to join the main track on the outside of the corner

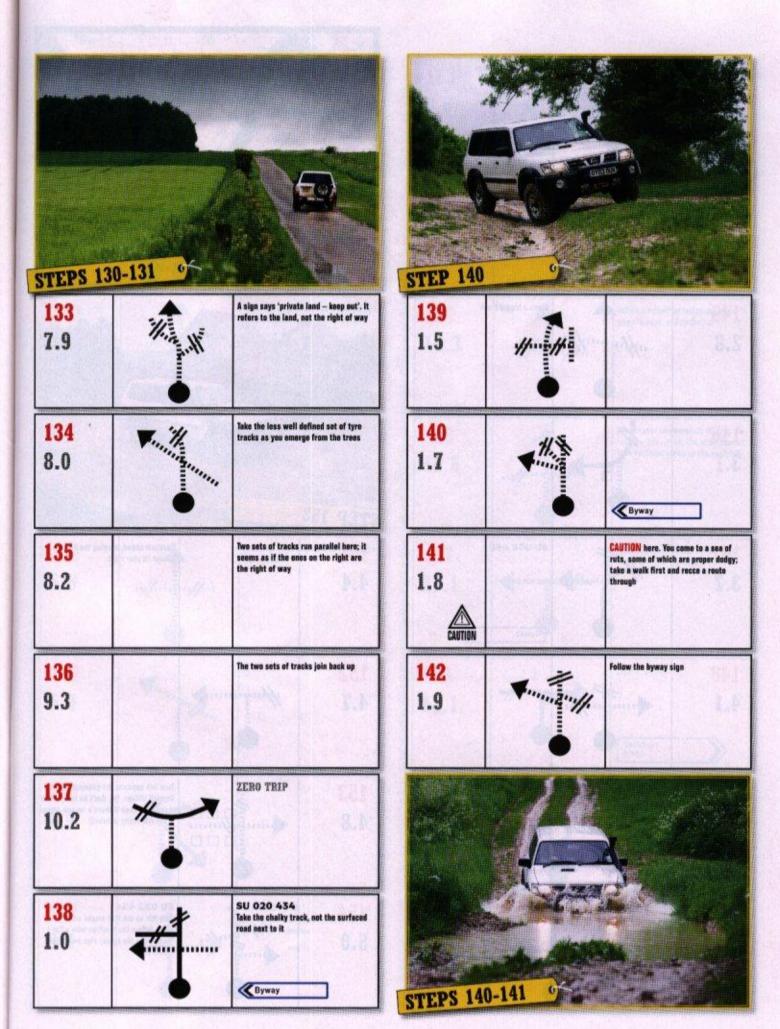


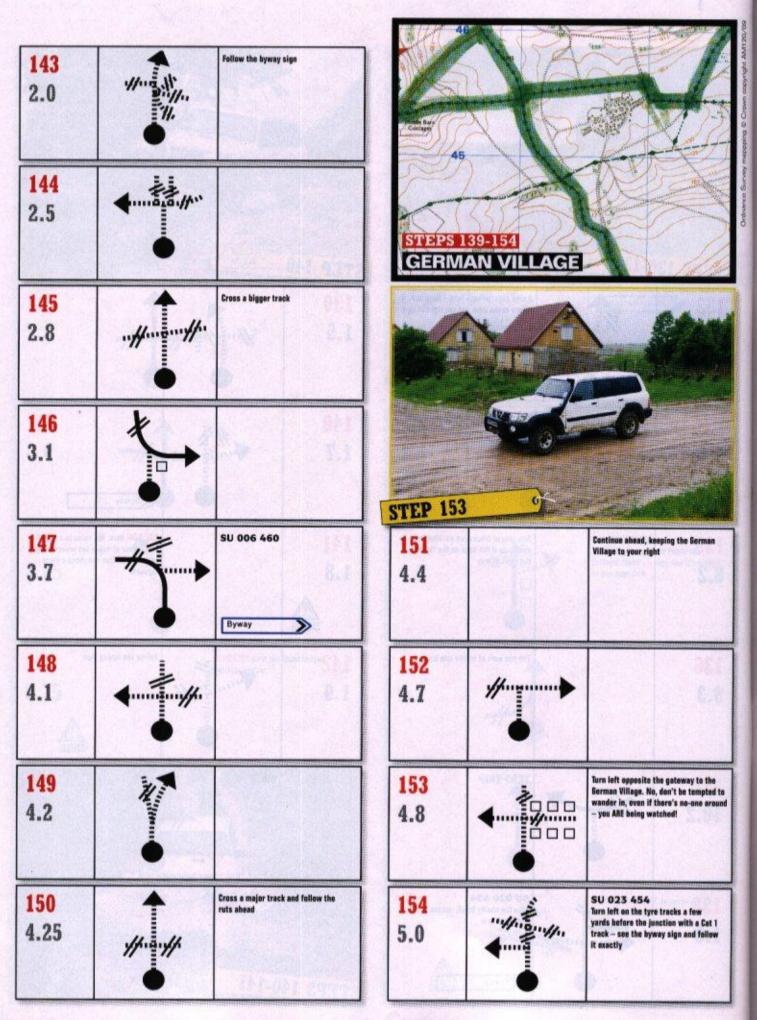


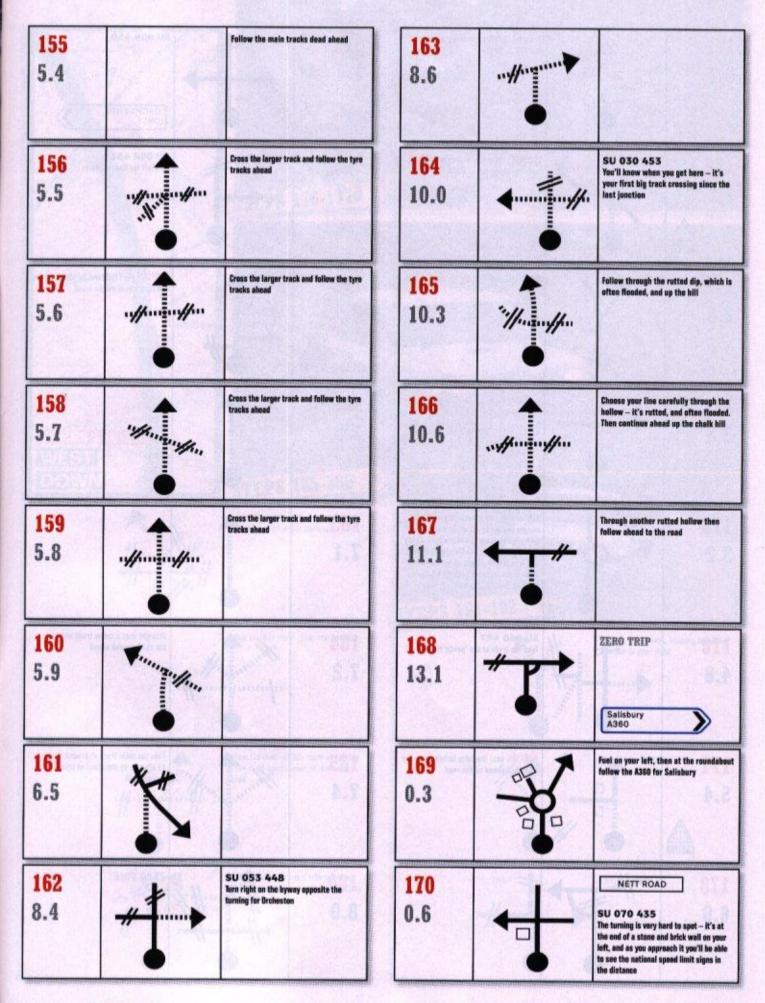


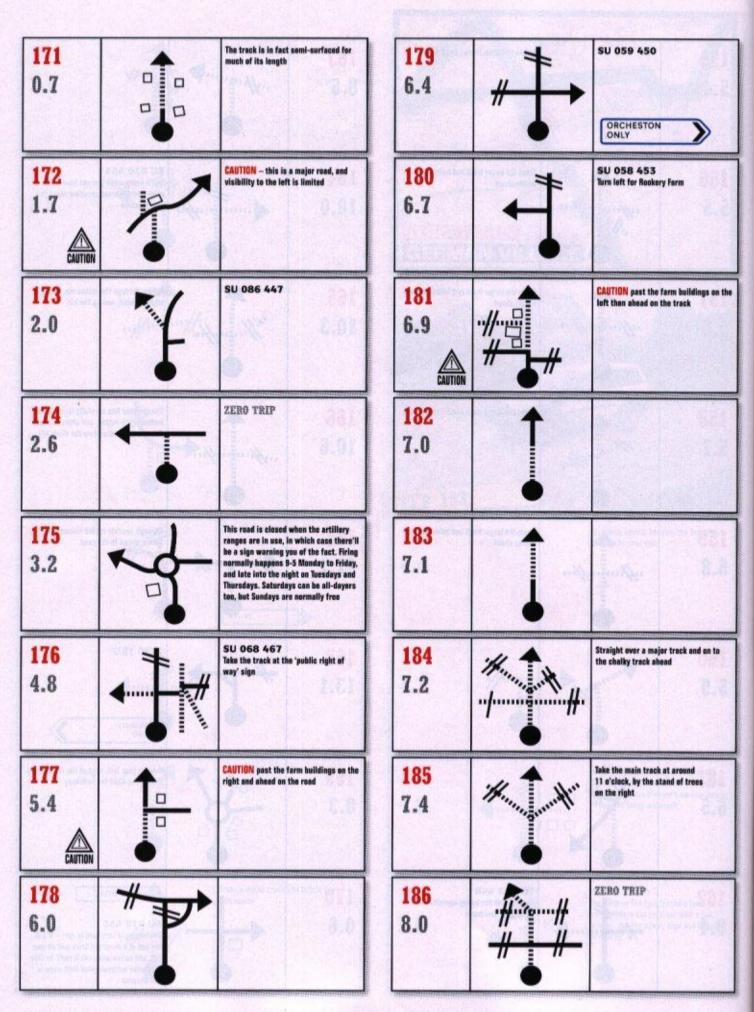


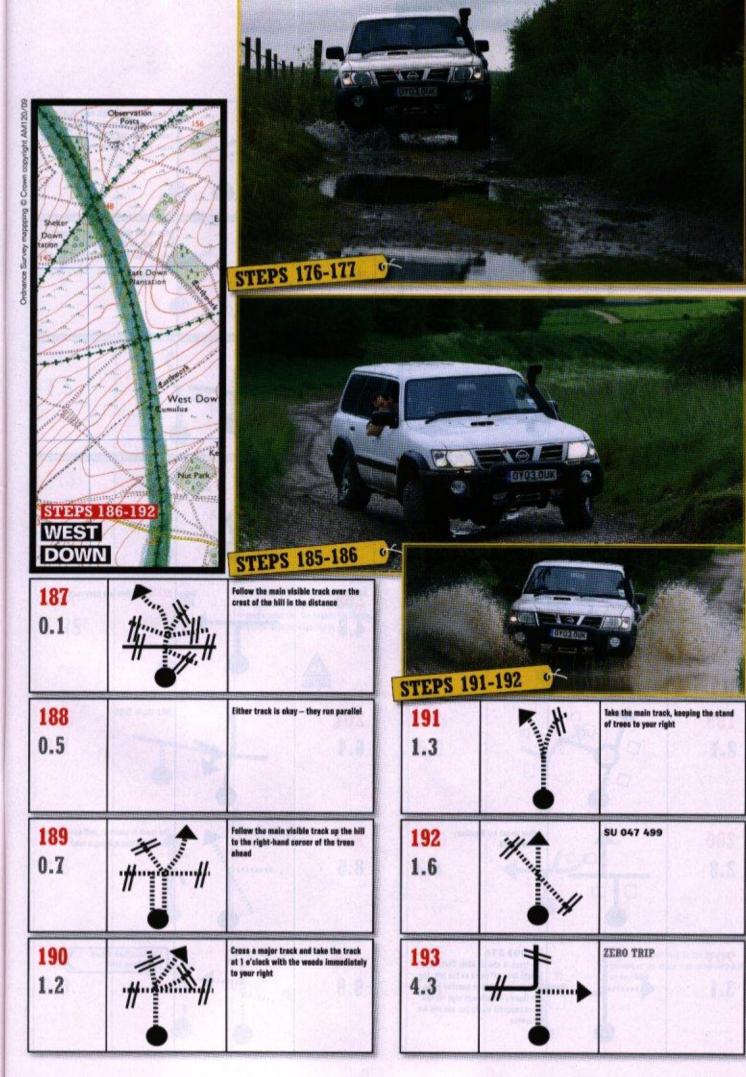












194 0.4	4	Look out for the byway sign	202 3.5	¥-17-1	Follow the byway sign; note that you're not meant to be taking the concrete read through the double gates, but the much smaller track to its left
195 0.9			203 3.7		Stay on the main track ahead; straying off te play in the woods is illegal and will just get 4x4s banned from the right of way
196 1.2			204 4.1	+	
197 1.3	100	Lavington	205 4.6	>	SCHOOLS WAS
198 1.6	-\$		206 4.8	7	CAUTION — this is a busy road
199 2.1		124 man man 124 1	207 6.4	*	SU 009 509
200 2.8	1-	Follow ahead for Westhury on the B3098	208 8.6	1	The track is about as well surfaced as they get without being a road
201 3.1	1	ST 997 536 The track is shortly after Dauntsey's School drep-off point on the left. The bywny sign has been knocked down, but there's a hridleway sign fer the track opposite which you can use for reference	209 9.8		Unclassified Road Pear Tree Hill

210 10.7	218 3.6		
211 11.3 Westbur Erlestok B3098	219 3.9	1	
212 1.5			A COMPANIES ELL AQUOMITO DE LA COMPANIES ANCIENTA DEL COMPANIES ANCIENTA DEL COMPANIES ANCIENTA DE LA COMPANIES ANCIENTA DEL COMPANIES ANCIENTA DEL COMPANIES ANCIENTA DE LA COMPANIES ANCIENTA DEL COMPANIES ANCIENTA
213	221 4.8		
This is just a few ya The track on the right - that's what the 'N Vehicles' sign is refs	ht is a footpath	1	
215	223 5.9		The section of Examples of Company of Compan
216 2.6	224 6.1		COLUMN TO THE PROPERTY OF THE
Continue on the main tr	225 6.3		Pull into the car park at The Suke for the and of the routs, and some very well arned R&R