EWB Imperial - building a log bridge in the woods

Last weekend members of EWB UK from Imperial College London came down for what's become an annual camping trip to our woodland. As always, there was a project to get involved with - this time building a bridge over a stream that can support a vehicle! During previous visits they built a firewood shelter and a foot bridge, so this year was a step up in scale.

I made a timelapse video of most of the bridge building, it's about 7 mins long (it's in 1080p HD, so put it full-screen). Take a look, and then read the rest of the post to see the pictures and description.

Here's the full team that came down this year:

The bridge is needed to allow access to a new ride that I cut last winter. I saved some of the stems I'd cut to make parts of the bridge, and we felled a few others as required to complete it. The first steps were digging some foundations, which took quite a while:

and peeling the long logs that were going to be used as the main supports:

We put some chunky logs into ditches that had been dug on each side of the stream:

and then got the main supports in place, bolting them down later on:

In the centre of the stream we also drove in some stakes (see the timelapse video above), and I used the chainsaw to cut a notch in the top of them for the main supports to rest in:

On top of the main supports went some crossbeams (all of this was Sweet Chestnut, by the way), and again I cut some notches for them to sit in:

Then there was a lot of drilling and nailing...

Some of it by hand:

though we did have a solar panel and inverter on hand to recharge the electric drill:

Once that was finished, it was time to start making the ramps to lead on and off the bridge and also lay down some planks (the only bit of wood that was bought in for this):

The planks were also nailed down, and it was starting to look like it might be OK to drive on...

Of course, there's a signature on the side of the bridge:

We posed for a photo or two:


DIESEL

and then it was time to put it to the test...

There were some creaking noises, but it was rock solid!

A job well done - thanks to everyone who came from EWB Imperial to help with this!

Mike