

Putting driving



hazards in reverse

by Ian Lamming

Fact File:

Suzuki SX4 S-Cross
Allgrip
Engine: 1.6 turbo
diesel
Power: 120PS
0-62mph: 13 secs
Top speed: 108mph
Combined miles per
gallon: 64.2
Transmission: six
speed manual
CO2 g/km: 114

IT'S a typical country road; narrow, twisty and covered in muck.

The tractor coming round the bend is wide and long and is sporting a bucket on the front the size of a car.

His side, there's only wall so there is nowhere he can go. The slurry tanker on the back makes it impossible for him to reverse, even if he wants to, which I suspect he doesn't. So it's down to me then.

I'm not fussed about reversing either as it's dark, the side windows are steamed and I can't remember passing a wide spot anyway.

The asphalt drops away and I have no idea what lurks in the murk. It could be firm and accommodating or it could be the black lagoon, complete with creature, tendrils and all.

But surprisingly things aren't that bad and my confidence is high. Now given that I once became beached in a big old off-roader on flat wet grass, why should this be so?

Well, it's because I've already fallen for the new S-Cross and have every confidence in its abilities. I also noticed two things; firstly, it has a nice set of Continentals on the alloy rims; secondly, it has automatic and switchable four wheel drive.

A drop, a squelch and a bump later and I'm off the road, round the behemoth tractor and back on terra-firma. Simple.

No wheel spin, no fuss. I suspect the all wheel drive came into call but it all happens so quickly I can't be sure. But the experience really boosts my confidence in this latest SX4 from Suzuki.

The last SX4 was shared with Fiat and was a little cracker. It looked good too. The new S-Cross looks more Japanese but really is a tidy motor.

For an SUV it is relatively small and manageable yet inside it swallows driver, passengers and luggage nicely – there's even a useful double-decker load bay floor, handy to hide the dirties or the valuables.

The cabin is truly excellent, very well put together and comfortable with comprehensive spec including touchscreen satnav, controls on the steering wheel and heated leather seats; lovely. It's also a fab drive.

The 1.6 litre diesel is provided by Fiat and it is strong and economical. Miles per gallon-wise 55+ is easy peasy and yet it has massive reserves of power. Better still you can put it in Sport and it absolutely flies – really.

It cruises through the dales with little thought to gradient or road surfaces. It just goes, grips and soaks up the bumps. Hit the highway and it is superb as it cruises effortlessly along at the legal limit.

And town driving is a breeze, particularly parking up where it beeps furiously and also shows you what is behind, as the touch screen becomes monitor for the reverse parking camera. Unusually it doesn't seem to get dirty like many and you can see clearly what is going on at the back.

S-Cross is a beauty excelling in absolutely everything it does. There are so many SUVs on the road today, we are spoilt for choice, but the Suzuki is cheaper than many and better than most.