



Wilmslow Advanced Motorists



Sunday morning assembly

NEWSLETTER

February 2006



Wilmslow Advanced Motorists

Newsletter

February 2006

Dear all,

Welcome to the first edition of the newsletter in 2006. Especially welcome are the following new 'associates' currently on Fixed length course number 25:-

Roy Cowhig, Morgan Cowhig, Valerie Jones, Neville Phillips, Simon Threadgold, Alistair Grey & Natalie Dench.

Congratulations to the following who since the last newsletter have been recommended for membership of the IAM following test:- **Susannah Wright, Alex Cowhig, John Norbury, Colin Fellowes & Paul Marshall.**

Diary Dates:-

Sunday runs

Sun 5th Feb - Run 3

Sun 19th Feb - Run 4

Sun 5th March - Run 5

Sun 19th March - Run 6

Sun 2nd April - Run 7

Sun 23rd April - Run 8

Sun 7th May - Run 1

All Sunday runs start from the car park behind Sainsburys in Wilmslow. Registration is at 09.30 hours, please make yourself known by checking in with Jose, Ivy or Gavin. Runs start at 10.00 hours. Please do let us know if you can not make the run as this assists in organising observers. Contact numbers are on the back cover.

. Classrooms:-

Classroom & meetings are currently at the **Drum & Monkey, Moss Rose, Alderley Edge.**

These are at 7.45pm for 8.00pm starts.

Tues 28th Feb - Classroom 2

Tues 11th Apr - Classroom 3

Tues 2nd May - Classroom 1

(Fixed length course No. 26)

This venue may change so please do check before coming along.

Now that you have experienced advanced driving at first hand this is a good time to try and influence your friends and colleagues to come and enrol for the next course.

Chairman's Chat

Belated New Year wishes to all. As you read this the weather could be anything from dry and sunny to 12ins of snow or anything in-between including fog but hopefully as 'advanced' drivers we will all take note of the conditions before any trip and drive accordingly.

On the subject of fog it seems to be a bad habit amongst many (most?) drivers that when they encounter fog instinctively switch on their fog lights irrespective of whether they are of any benefit and without thought for whether the rear light in particular is going to cause more glare than benefit to following vehicles. It's quite simple really – look at the car in front and if you would benefit from seeing a rear fog light yours should definitely be on, but remember changing conditions on a journey may require you to switch them on & off a number of times over the duration of the trip.

Now for another 'bad habit' which is even more noticeable in such an affluent area as Wilmslow with the number of very expensive cars there are around. How come these people can afford the expense of the car, insurance & running costs but they can't afford a hands-free mobile phone kit or 'Bluetooth'? It is true what they say – money doesn't buy brains! Having said that one of my work colleagues recently had an apparently legal, 30 minute, hands free phone conversation, whilst I was in the vehicle with him. It was clearly apparent to me that due to the in-depth nature of the call he was not paying adequate attention to his driving. So just because a person may be legal in terms of hands free they could be a cause of unnecessary danger and/or be guilty of driving without due care & attention.

Enough of my 'whingeing' this year is the 50th Anniversary of the IAM so let's make it a Happy Birthday and a great year for the group and get the message over to as many road users as possible in our area and beyond. If anyone has any good ideas for events during the year please do let either me or the committee know.

Jerry, Chairman
E-mail: chairman@w-a-m.info

Letter to the bank

This letter is alleged to have been sent to a bank by a 96 year old woman in America.

Dear Sir,

I am writing to thank you for bouncing my cheque with which I tried to pay my plumber last month. By my calculations, three nanoseconds must have elapsed between him presenting the cheque and the arrival in my account of the funds needed to honour it. I refer, of course, to the automatic monthly deposit of my entire income, an arrangement which, I admit, has been in place for only eight years. You are to be commended for seizing that brief window of opportunity and also for debiting my account \$30 by way of penalty for the inconvenience caused to your bank.

My thankfulness springs from the manner in which this incident has caused me to rethink my errant financial ways. I noticed that whereas I personally attend to your telephone calls and letters, when I try to contact you, I am confronted by the impersonal, overcharging, pre-recorded, faceless entity which your bank has become.

From now on, I, like you, chose only to deal with a flesh-and-blood person. My mortgage and loan repayments will therefore and hereafter no longer be automatic, but will arrive at your bank, by cheque, addressed personally and confidentially to an employee at your bank whom you must nominate. Be aware that is an offence under the Postal Act for any other person to open such an envelope. Please find attached an Application Contact Status which I require your chosen employee to complete. I am sorry it runs to eight pages, but in order that I know as much about him or her as your bank knows about me, there is no alternative.

Please note that all copies of his or her medical history must be countersigned by a Notary Public, and the mandatory details of his/her financial situation (income, debts, assets and liabilities) must be accompanied by documented proof. In due course, I will issue your employee with a PIN number which he/she must quote in dealings with me. I regret that it cannot be shorter than 28 digits but, again, I have modelled it on the number of button presses required of me to access my account balance on your phone bank service. As they say, imitation is the sincerest form of flattery.

Let me level the playing field further.

When you call me, press the buttons as follows:

1. To make an appointment to see me.
2. To query a missing payment.
3. To transfer the call to my living room in case I am there.
4. To transfer the call to my bedroom in case I am sleeping.
5. To transfer the call to my toilet in case I am attending to nature.
6. To transfer the call to my mobile in case I am not at home.
7. To leave a message on my computer, a password to access my computer is required- this will be forwarded to you at a later date to the authorized contact.
8. To return to the main menu listen to options 1 to 7.
9. To make a general complaint or enquiry. The contact will be put-on hold, pending the attention of my automated answering service. While this may, on occasions involve a lengthy wait, uplifting music will play for the duration of the call.

Regrettably, but again following your example, I must also levy an establishment fee to cover the setting up of this new arrangement.

May I wish you a happy, if ever so slightly less prosperous New Year.

Your humble client.

I am sure we have all had similar feelings at some time or another. Ed.

Use your vote

In the words of Sam Walton, Wal-Marts' founder who knew there was a better way than whingeing and whining to undermine a business. He said "There is only one boss. The customer. And he can fire everyone in the company from the chairman down simply by spending his money elsewhere".

Cockpit drill ?

During a recent Sunday morning drive with an Associate, I offered one of my usual pieces of advice for the Advanced Driving Test, i.e. find a reasonable excuse to toot the horn sometime. An opportunity duly presented itself, and, guess what; the driver couldn't find the horn button! It was a courtesy car, the Associates' being in for repair.

Had it been a real emergency, the outcome could have had serious consequences. I don't blame the Associate - in my driving lifetime I have experienced horn buttons on the dashboard (MG TC), a lovely chromium plated horn ring, a button on the end of the indicator stalk (both left and right hand), a central boss on the steering wheel, and of course, the now more common twin pressure pads at ten to and ten past the twelve o'clock position above the central boss containing the driver's air bag.

Some horn buttons seem to need a hefty shove to operate resulting in an unintended blast instead of the desired gentle "toot". Horn rings were the best – 360 degree availability and so sensitive to operate. I recollect taking delivery of a hire car on arrival in the dark in Portugal, the location of whose driving light switch evaded me for a full five minutes before I could set off.

All salutary warnings say that we need to familiarize ourselves with all the controls of an unfamiliar car before driving it. Check the correct position of the head restraints also. The list is endless.

Thanks to Stockport IAM newsletter.

Mind games force drivers to slow down

The reign of the speed hump could be over after other ways of putting the brakes on speeding motorists were given Government backing. An experiment showed that drivers slowed down when faced with alternative traffic-calming measures. Now local authorities are to be allowed to use more subtle and 'psychological' tricks to get motorists to take their foot off the accelerator.

A major report for the Department for Transport reveals that 'psychological' traffic calming works. Painting the road different colours, taking out white lines or planting things in the way of sight-lines on corners can be used to make roads look narrower, or bumpy or

windy. Drivers feel less safe and drive more slowly- a principle adopted most radically in one town in the Netherlands which abolished all signs and road markings.

The four year study by the Transport Research Laboratory found that many optical tricks were successful in slowing speeds: in simulator tests all speeds fell when the measures were introduced some by an average of more than 4mph: and in one test in Latton, Norfolk, average speeds fell by up to 8mph and the speeds of faster drivers by even more.

The most successful measures, likely to be used in the future, were using red bricks to make the road look narrower and small areas 'built out' into the road with trees, shrubs or wooden posts, said the report.

It was discovered that 'psychological' measures were much more popular than physical obstacles such as humps and cushions. Janet Kennedy, the main author of the report, thinks this is because the tricks draw on elements of real roads such as country lanes, where many motorists naturally drive more slowly. Drivers forced to reduce speed by artificial means tend to resent it but accept having to slow down on a winding country lane or at a hump-back bridge.

A Department for Transport spokesman said it was so confident in the results that next year it would issue advice to local authorities on when, where and how the measures work best. Edmund King of the RAC Foundation said: "This will hasten the death of the road hump because it shows a practical way in which vehicles and people can share the same space in safety.

There are too many disadvantages with humps. They create more pollution and they are noisy. Although it was thought there will always be a place for the road hump"

Newspaper Article.

Urban clearway

A lorry carrying a large quantity of Vick Vapor Rub was recently involved in an accident resulting in the load being spilled onto the carriageway. There was no congestion for over eight hours.

Motoring in South Africa





King of the road

Top traffic officer calls for motorists to re-sit driving test

Motorists should be made to retake the driving test several times during their life. Britain's top traffic policeman said recently.

Meredydd Hughes, who becomes the Association of Chief Police Officer's head of roads policy, called on the government to consider overhauling the driver licensing system to ensure that driving standards are maintained.

The new testing regime was one of a number of reforms advocated by Mr. Hughes who also backed proposals to raise the motorway speed limit to a strictly enforced 80mph. He said that such a move would increase safety. "I learned to drive when I was 18 now I am 47. You can't tell me that conditions are the same as when I passed my test," I think there has to be emphasis on retraining and this would encourage it."

As chief constable of South Yorkshire, Mr. Hughes pioneered driver education programmes for motorists brought before the courts. But he believes much more needs to be done "Driving a car on the road is not a right, but a responsibility," he said. "People pass their test when they are 18 and they get into lazy and bad habits." In short term Mr. Hughes called on the courts to order more retesting of drivers proven to be dangerous or incompetent.

His call for an 80mph motorway limit is one that has been backed by a number of motoring organizations. But he made it clear that this would be accompanied by ending the practice operated by many forces of allowing motorists some leeway above the limit.

Mr. Hughes also advocated the creation of a dedicated highway patrol for Britain's motorways and questioned the wisdom of using different forces to police one stretch of road such as the M25 or M1. With different chief constables allowing a different margin of error, motorists can find themselves being prosecuted for going slightly over the limit in one county but not when they cross the border into another force's area.

Mr. Hughes's proposals are largely welcomed by Edmund King, the RAC Foundation's executive director. But while backing retesting for drunken and dangerous drivers, he described the suggestion that all motorists be retested as "bureaucratic."

Newspaper Article.

George Parker and Bill Barlow

In our last issue we sadly had to report the deaths of two of our longest-serving Observers, Bill Barlow and George Parker. Those of you who knew them well, will probably also know, that they met in 1947 whilst serving in The Royal Air Force and were stationed at Ringway (now Manchester) Airport. They remained good friends until they died, within a day of each other. It is comforting to know that on the 25th November their ashes were interred together on the site of 613 Squadron (their Squadron) at a small private ceremony.

Car pool lanes set for the M1

Motorway lanes that allow cars carrying more than one person to overtake traffic queues are to be introduced in a bid to cut congestion. The first car pool lane will be brought in on the M1 between Junctions 6a for St Albans and Junction 10 for Luton, early in 2006. There are also plans for more of the lanes on the M25, the M61 near Bolton, the M62 between Brighouse and Leeds, and the M6. Drivers who misuse the lanes will face fixed penalty fines of £30.

Looks like another rule unable to be policed –like driving whilst on the phone. Ed.

Not to be sneezed at

Men get flu, children get a cold. Women get on with it.

Get a Lift

If you despair of the school run, take a look at www.liftshare.com. Set up in 1997, it is a data base of people who want to find someone to share their journey (and the costs), be it regular or just a one-off trip. There are currently 94,000 members all over the UK, registration is free and in the first instance, people make contact with each other by email.

Liftshare can also set up specific schemes for employers and the website has some fun features such as a calculator to help you work out how much petrol money you can save each year (not to mention time). Call 0870 078 0225

North Wales Police Cars are first to take IAM Livery

More than 300 vehicles in the North Wales Police fleet are to be liveried on both sides with the institute of Advanced Motorists (IAM) logo – the first time that the IAM logo has ever been adopted for use by a police force.

North Wales Chief Constable Richard Brunstrom initiated the unique bi-lingual livery to mark a new partnership between the IAM and North Wales officers holding the standard response police driving qualification. Police cars will be rolled out with the new livery from December onwards as vehicles on the fleet are renewed or replaced.

Mr Brunstrom suggested the partnership during his period as the ACPO Road Policing Head when he came into close contact with the IAM.

A special IAM membership package for qualified North Wales Police officers has been introduced for the next three years. North Wales Police officers have had unofficial links with the IAM for some time. Several officers already volunteer their free time to carry out IAM tests. The Chief Constable is therefore particularly pleased that the link between the force and the Institute is now official.

The public associate the IAM with the a standard of driving. North Wales Police’s link with the prestigious organization is a sure sign to the public that our officers and staff comply with this nationally recognized standard,” said Mr Brunstrom.

“We are the first force in the country to display the IAM’s logos on our vehicles and are proud to do so.”

Christopher Bullock, IAM Chief Executive said: “This welcome partnership is a first in more than one way. Never before has the IAM’s work, in partnership with police forces throughout the UK, been acknowledged like this. We hope that Mr Brunstrom’s example will be a trail blazer for similar initiatives as we prepare to mark the IAM’s 50th anniversary in 2006.

“In this case we have also been able to recognize the status of Wales as a dual language country and the importance of the Welsh language by using, for the first time, a Welsh translation of the IAM’s international logo.”

Issued by the IAM Press Office.

Mansell takes the wheel

F1 Racing legend Nigel Mansell is to be the new President of the IAM

Mansell passed his Advanced Driving Test last August, 19 years after scoring his first F1 victory at Brands Hatch. As IAM President, Mansell brings a lifetime of driving experience to the IAM.

"I believe driving expertise isn't just for the race track," said Mr Mansell.

"My grandfather always told me that it is no good lying on a hospital bed saying 'But I had the right of way'. That is why drivers can gain so much from preparing for their IAM test".

"I am honoured to take the Presidency of such a well regarded organisation and I hope that in this, its 50th Anniversary Year, we can inform and educate more drivers and riders than ever before," he said.

Issued by the IAM Press Office.

Slim Down

Cars are outgrowing their parking spaces, according to Auto Express magazine. While the width of some models have increased by as much as a quarter in the past 25 years, the minimum size of on street bays has remained the same.

Video Rental

We have a selection of rental videos at very reasonable charge. In particular the excellent 'Road craft' video but there are others too. Please see Tony Parkinson on a Sunday Run morning, or ask anyone 'manning' the MDU.

Centurion

You can live to be a hundred if you give up all the things that make you want to be a hundred.

Something to think about

- 1 Why do we press harder on a remote control when we know the batteries are getting weak?
- 2 Why do banks charge a fee on "insufficient funds" when they know there is no money in the account?
- 3 Why does someone believe you when you say there are four billion stars, but check when you say the paint is wet?
- 4 Why doesn't glue stick to the bottle?
- 5 Why do they use sterilized needles for death by lethal injection?
- 6 Why doesn't Tarzan have a beard?
- 7 Why does Superman stop bullets with his chest, but ducks when you throw a revolver at him?
- 8 Why did Kamikaze pilots wear helmets?
- 9 Whose idea was it to put an "S" in the word "lisp"?
- 10 If people evolved from apes, why are there still apes?
- 11 Why is it that no matter what colour bubble bath you use the bubbles are always white?
- 12 Is there ever a day that mattresses are not on sale?
- 13 Why do people constantly return to the refrigerator with hopes that something new to eat will have materialized?
- 14 Why do people keep running over a string a dozen times with their vacuum cleaner, then reach down, pick it up, examine it, then put it down to give the vacuum one more chance?
- 15 Why is it that no plastic bag will open from the end you first try?
- 16 How do those dead bugs get into those enclosed light fixtures?
- 17 When we are in the supermarket and someone rams our ankle with a shopping cart then apologizes for doing so, why do we say, "It's all right?" Well, it isn't all right so why don't we say, "That hurt, you stupid idiot"
- 18 Why is it that whenever you attempt to catch something that's falling off the table you always manage to knock something else over?
- 19 In winter why do we try to keep the house as warm as it was in summer when we complained about the heat?
- 20 How come you never hear father-in-law jokes?

21 If at first you don't succeed, shouldn't you try it like your wife told you to do it?

22 And my FAVOURITE

The statistics on sanity are that one out of every four persons is suffering from some sort of mental illness. Think of your three best friends, if they're okay, then it's you.

Life is short we must live it to the full, not sweat over the little things, and find beauty and happiness where we can.

Thanks to Wirral IAM Newsletter.

Cars skid further on new surfaces

Vehicles are skidding longer distances on new road surfaces designed to increase grip, according to a report by TRL the Government's former transport laboratory.

At worst, drivers could skid as much as 40 per cent further on the new surfaces, which are designed to reduce spray and noise, than on the old ones. According to the researchers the problem can last up to 18 months, while the new surface beds in.

Newspaper Article.

Grubby windscreens?

Ever had trouble getting the outside of your windscreen crystal clear? Scrunch up a big sheet of newspaper, wet it, and then scrub away with it. Rinse, dry, polish with a good clean cloth, and Hey Presto! All that grimy deposit has gone. Printer's ink is the magical ingredient (and you will have a very black hand)

As an alternative try a WW2 fighter pilot's trick: rub the windscreen with a wet cigarette (the tobacco end, not the filter). It should stay clear all day.

Let me know which works best. Ed.

And finally Feedback, articles and ideas are very welcome, so please do contact us about your newsletter. Ed.

The Institute of Advanced Motorists
Wilmslow Advanced Motorists

(IAM No. 5141)

www.w-a-m.info

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The views expressed in this newsletter are those of the individual contributor and not necessarily those of the Committee or the Institute of Advanced Motorists

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