



Wilmslow Advanced Motorists

Registered Charity No 1113682



Recruiting at Wilmslow Show

NEWSLETTER

August 2006



Wilmslow Advanced Motorists

Newsletter

August 2006

Dear all,

Welcome to the August edition of the newsletter and especially welcome are the following new 'associates' attending fixed length course number 26 & starting course 27 in Sept:-

Simon Atkins, Steve Bradley, Maria Cooke, David, James & Phillip Emm Paul Fellows, Malcolm & Richard Tweedie.

Congratulations to the following who since the last newsletter have been recommended for membership of the IAM following test:-

Roy & Morgan Cowhig, Natalie Dench, Julie Drury, Alistair Grey and Simon

Diary Dates:-

Sunday runs

Sun Aug 6th - Run 7

Sun Aug 20th - Run 8

Sun Sept 3rd - Run 1

Sun Sept 17th - Run 2

Sun Oct 1st - Run 3

Sun Oct 15th - Run 4

Sun Nov 5th - Run 5

Tues Oct 10th Obs Meeting.

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 7.45 for 8.00 pm

Tues Aug 15th - Classroom 3

Tues Aug 29th Classroom 1

Tues Oct 31st Classroom 2

The last two dates are for fixed course No 27

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

Welcome again to readers 'old' and 'new'. We are well into the summer season which has served to highlight yet again that it seems to be the same people doing a lot of work to enable us to have a presence at the various events. There is a real need for 'fresh blood' to assist with publicity and recruitment. You don't have to be a full member of the IAM or the group, just a little bit of enthusiasm and effort is all that's required. (A tow bar would be a 'plus' mind you!)

Events coming up include Wilmslow Street party on the 28th August and Barclays fun day on the 2nd September. Coinciding with Barclays on the 2nd September is the IAM North West 50th Anniversary event at Woodbank Park, Stockport which would also benefit from your support. All of these are 'family orientated' events so pop down and lend a hand if you can.

On the subject of publicity it is being contemplated to produce a group calendar on more prudent lines to the WI 'Calendar' – Volunteers both male and female (and/or your car?) please register your interest with Vanessa, Helen or myself. As a further inducement to recruitment there is now a 'reward' scheme for recruiting someone you know to the 'skill for life' course. For each 'friend' who signs up you will receive a bottle of wine (or box of chocolates). Observers please note that I intend to keep you busy in the coming months, and current associates please consider becoming observers as we are very likely to need you!

In the past, the lack of support for social events has been very frustrating. Whilst we are in the main a driving group there is plenty of scope for fun as well, and it takes more than just organising something to get a social scene going. Is anyone game for some fun? Remember they will be open to non-members as well. Remember the saying, 'you don't stop playing because you get old, you get old because you stop playing'!

As always, if you have any ideas or comments about the group please let the committee or myself know. Please don't be shy!

Jerry Stone
chairman@w-a-m.info

Wilmslow Advanced Motorists is now a Charity !

After years of debate and procrastination, we have finally jumped through all the hoops and become a Registered Charity. So? you might well ask.

There are a few cons to the step, but the pros far exceed them. The main one is that we can proudly show off our new status wherever and whenever we 'touch' the public, to use that hackneyed marketing phrase. It shows that we're serious and altogether a good bunch of people to do business with. We hope this will go down well with any potential sponsors we might approach in the future.!

Then there's our superb website. In their wisdom, headquarters will only permit groups who are registered charities to carry their coveted 'IAM Quality Web Site' logo. Mark, our webmaster, was very keen to get the accolade after all the good work he's put into creating such a professional-looking site.

Of course – for the financially-astute amongst us - you will know that charitable status allows us to offer Gift-Aid and claim back tax on all your lovely subscriptions. The longer-serving members amongst us will be wondering how it is that we have run gift-aid since 1993 ! The explanation would take too much space, but ask the treasurer if you have a spare half hour sometime ... Rest assured, it's legal now !!

The down-side is that yours truly has more forms to fill each year, and committee members have had their legal responsibilities spelt out. [This nearly caused some resignations as one or two didn't realise what a liability being on the committee was !]

So be proud to belong and just remember those magic numbers, 1113682 !

Alan Brown.

Forthcoming Events

August 12th. “Garden Party”

A small social get together organised by Jose/Ivy in one or the others garden –contact either for details.

August 28th. Wilmslow Street Party

This event takes place in Grove Street between 11am and 4.30pm and is a very good opportunity for us to recruit associates from the general public. If you can spare a couple of hours to man the stall it would be appreciated as some of our stalwarts are away. Unfortunately Jerry is away so we desperately need someone to tow the MDU—any offers—(contact Jerry)--otherwise we will only have a table, as it is impossible to anchor our new gazebo to the footpath.

September 2nd. Barclays Fun Day & Stockport group’s 50 Years of Driving Event

The Barclays event is held at Radbrook Hall, Knutsford. This is a long standing commitment and also a source of income, which, we desperately need. We would like as many helpers as possible to assist with the running of a manoeuvrability test and manning of the MDU. Please let David know when you are available.

Stockport’s group event is being held at Woodbank Park Stockport .Due to the size of our group we decided it was impossible to run an event on our own so we joined in with Stockport and agreed to help where possible. If you are available please contact Jerry.

November 14th. AGM

Advanced notice that the AGM is provisionally arranged for the above date. Formal notice, confirming time and venue, will be given as set out in the constitution.

November 24th. Christmas meal

Over the past two years interest in this event has been waning and this time round we don’t feel we can generate sufficient numbers for a private room so the committee have opted for a separate table at a bigger event. Check with Barbara for final details.

What Car? Security Survey

Key theft and carjacking

An area of growing concern is the increasing number of cars being stolen with the aid of the owners' keys. Thatcham, the insurance industry's research and testing centre, estimates that up to 80% of vehicle thefts are now carried out in this way.

One of the most worrying findings in the survey is that nearly one-third of drivers leave their car keys on a table or hook within 10 feet of an external door. That makes them easy pickings for car thieves, whether the criminals are trying to 'fish' keys through the letterbox using wire hooks, or simply breaking in to the house to track down the keys for the car parked outside.

Ian Elliot, vehicle crime liaison officer for the Metropolitan Police, said that the Met estimates about 8% of burglaries are carried out purely to steal car keys. 'Organised car theft is on the up,' he said. 'With modern cars, these guys know they need the keys to drive away.'

The top 10 car keys most targeted by burglars in London last year reveal a surprising pattern. It is perhaps expected to see the BMW 3 Series and X5 or Mercedes CLK in there, but who would think the Vauxhall Corsa and Ford Fiesta would attract the attention of organised gangs? The theme linking these cars is that they're always in demand with used car buyers and therefore easy to sell on quickly through classified ads.

The mandatory fitting of immobilisers to all cars sold from 1998 onwards has helped slash car crime and hit Government targets, but the knock-on effect is a steady growth in key theft.

Carjacking, where the driver is forced to hand over their car to attackers, is currently impossible to quantify using Government data. Fortunately, none of the respondents in our national survey had been carjacked in the past year, so it seems that the problem is still relatively rare. However, if your car is stolen with the keys in it, you may find yourself in a grey area with insurers.

The Insurance Ombudsman, which deals with complaints, told us that most insurers exclude claims for theft if the keys are left in, or on, the vehicle. You would be covered if you were forcibly evicted from your car by a thief, but possibly not if you've stepped away from the car momentarily and left the keys inside.

Leaving your keys in the car when filling up with fuel, for example, will get short shrift from most insurers, and yet it is still all too common.

Top 10 cars stolen after keys obtained via burglary -
London region, 2004.

- | | |
|------------------|-------------------|
| 1 BMW 3 Series | 6 BMW X5 |
| 2 VW Golf Mk 4 | 7 Ford Fiesta |
| 3 Mercedes CLK | 8 VW Polo |
| 4 Vauxhall Corsa | 9 Peugeot 206 |
| 5 Ford Focus | 10 Vauxhall Astra |

Don't be a subscriber

A speed camera at motorway road works raised more than £1million in fines, it was recently disclosed. The Gatso camera caught more than 18,000 drivers in 18 months after it was installed on the M62 at Ferrybridge, West Yorks.

The speed limit was reduced from 70 mph to 50 mph for the road works. Motorists caught by the camera were charged a total of £1,088,000 in fines, according to figures obtained by a national newspaper under freedom of information laws.

Panic

Police cordoned off Liverpool City Centre recently when a suspicious object was discovered.

It later turned out to be a tax disc!!

Road Works

Last year the main road near to where I live was resurfaced. And I know what you're expecting me to say next- that it's now worse than it ever was, is covered in nasty grit that destroys underseal, and has already been dug up by the Water Board to replace some pipes.

But no. This was by far the most professional, efficient and well-managed civil engineering contract I have witnessed at close quarters.

The work began at 10 o'clock one night when all the traffic had died down. The whole road was closed and an army of stout men turned up with a gigantic fire-belching engine. This thing, moving at a speed so imperceptible, removed three inches from the top of the road surface while somehow avoiding the drains and manhole covers.

The next morning, just before the rush-hour started the bollards, the security tape and the workers' tea tent were all removed and the road opened again. It wasn't very good, because each manhole assumed the proportion of Ayres Rock and the grooves left by the skimming machine tended to steer motorcycles into the path of oncoming traffic. But it was open.

The next night it was closed again. Now another roaring inferno turned up to lay the new surface, inching along the road and dispensing the gleaming, sweet-smelling black top in its wake. By morning it was finished, and this little corner of UK plc was back in business, thanks largely to some blokes from Poland.

And the results were-and there really is no other word for this- perfect, people were on their hands and knees at the kerbside, searching vainly for flaws. Small children were riding up and down on bicycles, marveling at its smoothness. People in shops could be heard saying "have you driven on the new road yet?" There had not been such a collective sense of wonderment since the invention of the radio.

A year on I find only two small patches that have been disturbed, and these have been mended almost invisibly. It really is a pleasure to arrive home by car.

So can someone explain the appalling mess that's been made of our side roads? Most have been excavated for the purpose of installing new water pipes and where the work has been completed the contractor has made good the road, in the sense that we don't actually fall down the hole. But, God in heaven, it's unsightly. The new tarmac is the wrong color, the wrong texture, and isn't flush with the old stuff.

How can I portray the sheer horror of these road repairs? Let me put it this way. If one of the perfectly laid, green tiles on my bar-room floor were broken, this lot would come round, affix a slightly, brown tile of half the thickness, use the wrong colour grout and then stand back and say "Yeah, that looks pretty good."

It's not even an isolated case. Since noting this I have been totally absorbed in studying the road surface. Everywhere I look it is a patchwork of cack-handed repairs completed so shoddily that it is a mystery the place isn't littered with spilled bicyclists. Why is this? It can't be harder or more expensive to repair a road properly than it is to do it badly.

The people around here studiously mend their window frames, grow brightly coloured shrubs in their front gardens and paint their front doors in amusing colours. Yet this model of English urban splendour faces a road that appears to have been imported from 1990's Bosnia.

The side roads of England are a disgrace.

Newspaper article

Ed This brings to mind Bedells Lane & the section of Knutsford Road between Davenport Green & Brook Lane Corner

Wilmslow Show

As you will see from the front cover we attended the above event on Sunday July 9th complete with our new gazebo which stood up to the "fresh" breeze far better than some of our neighbours who we thought were trying to give a demonstration of hang gliding.

Many thanks to the 11 "volunteers" who manned the stand on a rather cool and blustery summers day. Quite a bit of interest was shown and we are hopeful of getting a few new associates as a result of the event.

On the advertising posters one of the highlights of the show was to be a flypast of The Red Arrows, this took place at 10.16 -- 45 mins before the show opened. Later in the day the public address announced that the Red Arrows had already flown over the showground but they would be back again----- Next Year!!

It's your magazine

Four times a year we circulate approx 140 copies of the newsletter to paid up members. It is assumed they all get to their destinations as there is never any feedback or comment. It's your club and the newsletter should reflect your views as well as the views of the guys who keep it running. Let the editor, or any member of the committee, have your comments as well as any contributions for future issues preferably by email as the editor's typing is rubbish!!

Night Vision

In a recent newspaper article reference was made to the wearing of varifocal spectacles and the difficulty in judging distance when driving at night.

It was suggested that a second pair of spectacles with distance correction only was a safer option. This seemed to work for the correspondent who had no problem reading instruments.

Has anyone had problems with varifocals or have we any qualified opticians out there to give us a professional opinion?

Sat Nag

I don't understand the fuss about car navigation systems. I have had one in my car for the past 40 years. It does not need programming. I merely have to muse out loud what route I need to take, either in Britain or abroad and the matter is taken care of. Not only does it install itself next to me and provide voice prompts, sometimes in an unduly hysterical tone, but it also provides a regular supply of boiled sweets.

My unit has an intermittent malfunction. Sometimes when I have obeyed an order to turn left, it pokes me in the ribs and tells me it meant 'the other left,' i.e. right.

Ack: Daily Mail/Stockport IAM Newsletter

Two people's views

View 1

Ladies who lunch and men who drive 4x4 vehicles seem to require extra wide lanes due to the fact that they are unable to maintain their vehicles' position when driving on anything other than a straight road, also positioning when entering or leaving roundabouts is hazardous to other road users.

When they purchase their vehicle they are issued with a permit which allows them to park on double yellow lines and footpaths, and also to drop their little darlings off right outside the school gates regardless of any road markings.

View 2

Whilst sitting enjoying a coffee on a recent summers morning I watched with interest as a 4x4 vehicle started a parallel parking manoeuvre.

I had to marvel at the smoothness of the reversing manoeuvre and the speed at which it was slotted into the limited space. No one could have done it better.

The driver's door opened, and to my astonishment, a small, elderly lady emerged, retrieved two walking sticks, and limped slowly away.

Perils of the hard shoulder

Motorists who stay with their cars after a breakdown on the motorway are putting their lives at risk, the AA said recently.

An estimated 250 people are killed or injured on the hard shoulder every year.

But a survey of 705 drivers found that a third of motorists would remain in the car after it had broken down. Another 23 per cent would get out of the car but stay nearby.

As a safety measure the AA is distributing bright yellow ponchos to its members.

The association says drivers should either get behind the barriers or on to the verge to minimize the risk of death or injury after stopping on the motorway.

The study also shows that four out of five drivers believe they are doing the right thing by setting up a reflective triangle ahead of their car after they parked it on the hard shoulder.

One in five would check under the bonnet, rather than switch on the hazard warning lights or go onto the grass verge to call a breakdown service.

The AA says motorists should not attempt any repairs – *even changing a wheel* – on the hard shoulder.

According to the association's research, 44 per cent of women drivers are likely to stay in their cars if they suffer a breakdown, rather than standing on the verge away from the hard shoulder – which is considered to be safer.

Ideally, drivers should leave their vehicle by the passenger door and stand as far up the verge as possible.

Time for a quickie

Life is short but a smile only takes a second.

World cup the final story

It is just before the England v Brazil match. Ronaldinho goes into the Brazilian changing room to find all his teammates looking a bit glum. "What's up?" he asks." Well, we're having trouble getting motivated for this game. We know it's important but it's only England. And, they're sh*te so we can't be bothered.

Ronaldinho looks at them and says "Well, I reckon I can beat them by myself, you lads go down the pub." So Ronaldinho goes out to play England by himself and the rest of the Brazilian team go off for a few jars. After a few pints they wonder how the game is going, so they get the landlord to put the teletext on. A big cheer goes up as the screen reads "Brazil 1 - England 0 (Ronaldinho 10 minutes)" He is beating England all by himself! Anyway, a few pints later and the game is forgotten until someone remembers "It must be full time let's see how he got on".

They put the teletext on "Result from the Stadium Brazil 1 (Ronaldinho 10 minutes) - England 1 (Lampard 89 minutes)". They can't believe it; he has single handedly got a draw against England!

They rush back to the Stadium to congratulate Ronaldinho. They find him in the dressing room, still in his gear, sitting with his head in his hands he refuses to look at them. "I've let you down, I've let you down".

"Don't be daft! You got a draw against England, all by yourself. And they only scored at the very, very end!" No, No, I have! I've let you down.....I got sent off after 12 minutes.

It's never too late

One week after passing his Advanced Driving Test an associate with Stockport group celebrated his 88th birthday.

Jock (L J Blades) thought that as he was getting on a bit he would have his driving checked so he joined Stockport IAM.

After passing the test he said he had never made a better investment.

Skid Pan

Vanessa Torr is our co-ordinator for the skid Pan so if you are interested in experiencing action on a skid pan please see her on a Sunday morning run

Vanessa will forward your names to Bob Brittain who very efficiently organises these events for us. Anyone can attend as long as they hold a full, valid, British driving licence. The fees have recently changed so check with Vanessa. There is still a reduction for IAM members

It sometimes takes a while before you hear as it is very popular - the sooner you act, the sooner Bob can include you. If you e-mail Bob direct he will need your Group name and your membership number. Please let Vanessa know if you do so and contact her with any queries.

Know your colours

Our motorways are awash with a new type of patrol vehicle. They are marked similar to police cars and have the words "Traffic Officers" emblazoned on the windows.

The above was a query, in a motoring column in a national daily paper, and asked, what are their duties? and what powers do they have?

The reply was, "so far they are limited to relieving the police by providing protection for broken-down cars or picking up debris off the carriageway"--that kind of thing. The worry is that their duties might be extended in the future. For more info go to www.highways.gov.uk/knowledge/5580.htm.

Ed - If you check, next time you see one, you will note that these vehicles have BLACK chequer marks where the real police vehicles have BLUE marks.

A Fare Deal?

A car and a motorbike go through a **rear** facing camera 10 mph over the limit— who gets prosecuted?

Both of them, YES

A car and a motorbike go through a **front** facing camera 10 mph over the limit,— who gets prosecuted?

Both of them NO

In a car, a forward facing camera checks your speed, logs your registration number, and sends out a fine.

On a bike, a forward facing camera checks your speed, logs your registration number, and, oh, wait, no registration number on the front of the bike, so we'll have to let him off.

The law when applied should be applied equally to all....or not at all.

Ed- Any comments.

Keep it quiet

In a recent question and answer column in a national daily paper a reader wrote in asking why his handbrake was releasing itself. The answer given was that the ratchet could be worn and it would make sense to press the button when the parking brake is applied in order to reduce ratchet wear.

Ed-All part of being an advanced driver.

Video Library

We have a selection of videos to rent at very reasonable rates. In particular the excellent "Roadcraft which runs for 90 mins and could be helpful to those associates nearing test.

See Tony Parkinson on a Sunday morning, or ask anyone manning the MDU..

The Institute of Advanced Motorists
Wilmslow Advanced Motorists

(IAM No. 5141)

www.w-a-m.info

Registered Charity No 1113682

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Data Protection Acts: The group intends to hold names and addresses on computer record for ease of administration, but if anyone objects to this then please notify the membership secretary.

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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