



Wilmslow Advanced Motorists

Registered Charity No 1113682



Economic Motoring

NEWSLETTER

Summer 2007



Wilmslow Advanced Motorists

Newsletter

Summer 2007

Dear All,

Welcome to the 'summer' edition of the Newsletter. Especially welcome are the following new 'associates' attending fixed length course number 30:-David Hadfield, John Osborne and David Uprichard.

See page 4 for recent test passes.

Diary Dates:-

Sunday runs

Sun Sept 9th - Run 1
Sun Sept 23rd - Run 2
Sun Oct 7th - Run 3
Sun Oct 21st - Run 4
Sun Nov 4th - Run 5
Sun Nov 18th - Run 6
Sun Dec 2nd - Run 7
Sun Dec 16th - Run 8

All Sunday runs start from the car park behind The Sam Finney pub in Wilmslow. Registration is at 10.00 hours, please make yourself known by checking in with Jose, Ivy or Gavin. Runs start at 10.30 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:-

Classrooms for course 30 will be held at: **The Drum & Monkey– Alderley Edge** These are at 7.45 for 8.00 pm
Tues Sept 4th Classroom 1
Tues Oct 29th Classroom 2
Tues Dec 11th Classroom 3

Committee meetings

Mon Sept 10th
Mon Oct 22nd

Observer Meeting

Tues Oct 16th
The above three meetings will be held at our usual venue:- **The Drum & Monkey Alderley Edge** but check before coming along.

Chairman's Chat,

It's been a very wet summer until very recently and unfortunately it even caused the late cancellation of the Wilmslow Show. Although I would have been alright in my 'devil' car, the ground was far too wet and could well have resulted in a muddy quagmire for everyone. This makes it all the more important for the group to publicise ourselves on Grove Street on Bank Holiday Monday, 27th Aug and at Barclays Fun day on 1st September. Volunteers please make yourselves known to either myself or Tony Parkinson. Younger members would be particularly welcome to try and recruit more members from the 'at risk' age group.

Whilst on the subject of younger members all groups have been asked to appoint a contact person for the under 30s, who I would hope would also become a committee member. He or she would be required to provide a contact telephone and email address. Anyone wishing to consider this please let me know asap, likewise with the AGM coming up in November if anyone would consider one of the positions don't be shy, make yourself known.

If I'm not too late, there is classroom 3 on Tuesday 14th August at Dean Row Community Centre with the opportunity to meet one of the IAM examiners, please come along and put any of those questions you've wanted to ask.

Since the 'centralisation' of the IAM Mobile Display Units I have been attempting to book units for Grove Street & Barclays, so far without any response. It remains to be seen whether the newly introduced system implemented by Head Office means that they will not be seen in the North again except for major or regional events. This matter will be brought up at the regional meeting but as a group we may need to decide on our own needs and how they can be fulfilled.

Finally you may have seen the article in the Wilmslow Express (& other editions) about 'older' drivers; if anyone has other newsworthy stories preferably with pictures please do forward them for consideration.

From what we all see daily on our roads there are plenty of drivers who would benefit from assessment & Advanced driving guidance so do keep spreading the word & dispel the myth that we wear flat caps and are slow 'wheel shufflers'!

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

Recent Events

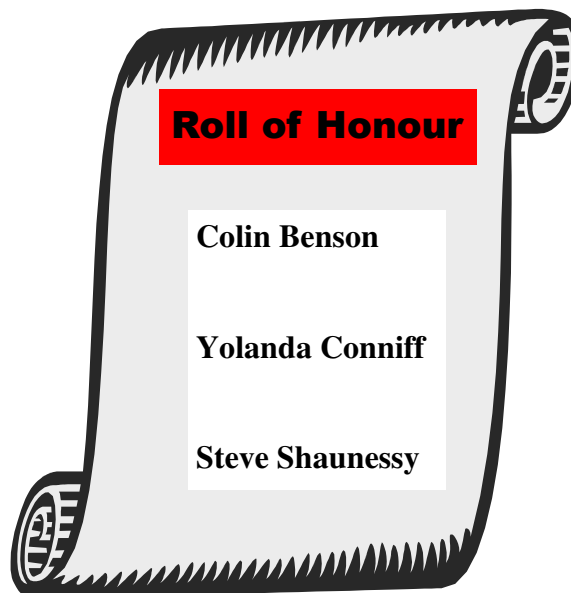
Due to the appalling 'Summer' we are having, our main recruiting opportunity, The Wilmslow Show, was lost to the ground resembling a bog. This event is one of our best chances of recruiting new associates-a golden opportunity lost.

Despite appalling weather on the evening of Saturday June 30th a few diehards tried to enjoy a BBQ in Jerry's garage!!

Unfortunately a combination of rain, smoke and the cold terminated proceedings earlier than anticipated.

Congratulations

Following successful tests the associates listed below have been recommended for full membership of the IAM.



Forthcoming Events

August 27th. Wilmslow Street Party

This event takes place in Grove Street between 11 am and 4.30 pm. Due to the cancellation of the Wilmslow Show earlier in the year this is our only opportunity to put Advanced Driving before the general public and recruit associates, which are desperately needed.

The refurbished regional MDU has been booked for the event so all we need now is the manpower!! If you can spare a couple hours to man the stall it would be helpful-contact numbers are on the back page.

September 1st. Barclay's Fun day

The Barclays event is held at Radbrook Hall, Knutsford. This is a long standing commitment and also a source of income, which is always welcome. We need as many helpers to assist with the running of a manoeuvrability test and manning the stall.

Please let David Adderson know if you can help.

November 20th. AGM

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

November 30th. Christmas meal

Following on from the success of the event last year it is anticipated that a similar "Night Out" will be arranged.

Check with Barbara Helm for final details.

Q What do you call a sleeping bull?

A A Bulldozer.

Red Rags to a Bull

Caravans

Summer holiday time is here and caravan drivers are getting their usual criticisms – but shouldn't we all be a little more patient. A car and caravan take up less room than any supermarket delivery truck (Sainsbury, Tesco, etc) and on most motorways the trucks are the ones who travel "in convoy". Caravans might find difficulty manoeuvring through towns and villages – but so do the trucks. We admire the skills of the truck drivers driving and parking for deliveries in small towns – how about the skills of the caravan towers?

Also, caravanners are the ones who appreciate and explore our own lovely countryside (all year round too) instead of jetting off abroad.

So – let's show a little more tolerance.

Elderly (i.e. 70+)

Older drivers are once again being criticised en masse. Yes, there are some who need to take a test but not all. Those who have taken their Advanced Driving Test will stand a much better chance of successfully passing any possible future driving test brought in by the Government. Now would be a good time for IAM members to encourage their "elderly" friends and relations to take an IAM course!! We have a new course starting in September. Age is no barrier – we have had several "over-eighties" who have successfully passed their test at the first attempt.

Only in Britain

Do we leave cars worth thousands of pounds on the drive and lock up all the junk in the garage.

Do banks leave both doors open but chain the pens to the counter.

Gatsos go digital

Now there is no escape-if you are flashed, you're fined! All Gatsos are going digital with hi-tech equipment so they never run out of film.

Dutch-based Gatsometer-the firm behind the devices-has developed a new digital image capturing system. This can slot straight into the existing housing of the UK's 4,000 Gatso cameras-saving a fortune on replacing the complete units. Called the GS11, it will be signed off for use on our roads by the Home Office "any day now".

This camera is likely to be a huge hit with authorities; each GS11 should be able to quickly recoup its estimated £10,000 cost, as the upgrade will enable it to "generate many more fines". The wet film devices currently used in Gatsos-which make up 80 per cent of the cameras on British roads-can capture only 200 law-breaking incidents. That means on busy routes they can run out of film on a single day, so that many drivers who are flashed at never actually receive a ticket.

But this situation will end with the GS11, as it stores thousands of images. Its lens can also monitor four lanes of traffic at once; current Gatso cameras patrol only two. And with 11-megapixel resolution, the set-up can take higher quality images for better evidence.

The new camera also incorporates Automatic Number Plate Recognition (ANPR) technology for instantaneous identification of the speeding car. All the information can be downloaded over the internet or wirelessly on to a laptop computer, the upgraded Gatsos are much cheaper to maintain, thus encouraging authorities to install even more on our roads.

Paws for a silly

I say have you heard the one about the cat that ate a ball of wool?
She had mittens

One of Motoring's Top 50 Flops

Austin Allegro (1973 - 1983)

Famously, the car that was more aerodynamic going backwards than going forwards. Everything else was back-to-front about the Allegro, too. It replaced the Austin 1100/1300, which had been Britain's most popular car, but the Allegro never even got close.

Badly designed (the engine/gearbox unit was far too tall, ruining the handling of the bigger engined versions), badly built and badly marketed, it never stood a chance.

Oh and the early ones had a square steering wheel.



Editor Will anyone admit to owning one?

Another of Motoring's Top 50 Flops

Hillman Imp (1963 - 1976)

A great idea, ruined. The Imp was Hillman's answer to the Mini, but was put into production in a brand-new factory before the radical design had been tested.

That job was left to customers, who compiled a long list of faults in a very short time. The Imp's name was ruined and it never recovered. Although it struggled on for years, it never made any money as Hillman had to undercut the already unprofitable Mini on price.



Editor Who had one of these?

Heels to die for

The dangers of high heels have long been confined to unsightly bunions or falling over on an uneven stretch of pavement.

But now, it seems, those stilettos lurking at the back of your wardrobe really could be killer heels.

Up to 12 million women are putting lives at risk by driving in 'Inappropriate footwear' a recent report reveals.

As well as stilettos, female motorists are choosing style over safety by attempting to drive in flip-flops or even barefoot.

Last month, a court heard how a former model may have killed a cyclist because she was wearing two-and-a-half-inch heels during a test drive.

The survey, by women's car insurer Sheila's Wheels, found that 80 percent of female motorists-around 11.5 million-wear 'Inappropriate' shoes when driving.

66 percent said they preferred to wear high heels at the wheel, while 33 percent admitted wearing flip-flops. 18 percent revealed they wore no shoes at all. 10 percent said they have had a car accident or 'near-miss' because of their shoes. Despite this, only 17 percent keep a pair of driving shoes in the car to change into.

23 percent said they would not swap their shoes to drive – even if they knew it was safer. There seems to be a distinct lack of guide lines as to the best type of footwear to drive in.

A spokesperson for the road safety charity Brake, said "High heels, platforms and flip-flops can seriously hamper your ability to drive safely and could have fatal consequences. It only takes a few seconds to change your shoes to help ensure you arrive safely".

Last month a driver received an 8 month suspended sentence and a 7 year ban after hitting a cyclist. The judge ruled that the driver's stiletto ankle boots had contributed to her losing control of the vehicle.

How very true this is!!!

Today we also mourn the passing of another old friend, Common Sense, who has been with us for many years. No one knows for sure how old he was since his birth records were long ago lost in bureaucratic red tape.

He will be remembered as having cultivated such valuable lessons as knowing when to come in out of the rain, why the early bird gets the worm, life isn't always fair, and maybe it was my fault.

Common Sense lived by simple, sound financial policies (don't spend more than you earn) and reliable parenting strategies (adults, not children, are in charge).

His health began to deteriorate rapidly when well-intentioned but overbearing regulations were set in place.

Reports of a six-year-old boy charged with sexual harassment for kissing a classmate; teens suspended from school for using mouthwash after lunch; and a teacher fired for reprimanding an unruly student, only worsened his condition.

Common Sense lost ground when parents attacked teachers for doing the job they failed to do in disciplining their unruly children. It declined even further when schools were required to get parental consent to administer Panadol, sun lotion or a sticky plaster to a student; but, could not inform the parents when a student became pregnant and wanted to have an abortion.

Common Sense lost the will to live as the Ten Commandments became contraband; churches became businesses; and criminals received better treatment than their victims.

Common Sense took a beating when you couldn't defend yourself from a burglar in your own home and the burglar can sue you for assault.

Common Sense finally gave up the will to live, after a woman failed to realise that a steaming cup of coffee was hot. She spilled a little in her lap, and was promptly awarded a huge settlement.

Common Sense was preceded in death by his parents, Truth and Trust; his wife, Discretion; his daughter, Responsibility; and his son, Reason. He is survived by three stepbrothers; I Know My Rights, Someone Else is to Blame, and I'm A Victim.

Not many attended his funeral because so few realised he was gone.

If you still remember him pass this on. If not join the majority and do nothing.

Potholes

Following on from an article in the Spring edition of our Newsletter, where we reported that the average cost of mending a pothole was £54, a survey by Kwik-Fit revealed that the average cost of repairs, for damage to vehicles caused by potholes, was almost double at £95!!

Would you fail a test?

Three in four motorists would be likely to fail if they retook the driving test, claims a recent survey.

20 drivers with a total of 416 years' experience retook the test and 75 per cent failed. Four out of five reckoned that driving standards are becoming worse but only 31 per cent admit their driving is below par.

Editor See article on page 6 for help.

Two Hits and you're out

Motorists face tougher penalties under which they could lose their licence if they are caught speeding twice.

Those clocked at more than 45mph in a 30mph zone would collect six points under the plan for a sliding scale for fixed penalties. Breaking the limit by that amount for a second time would mean a total of twelve points and automatic disqualification.

The same applies to drivers caught over 32 mph in a 20 zone, over 57 mph in a 40 zone or over 94mph on a motorway or dual carriageway.

Currently, anyone caught speeding faces three points unless the case is deemed so serious it goes to court, meaning a driver loses their license only after a fourth offence.

But, under the Department for Transport (DfT) plan, due to be put out for consultation in September, those breaking the limit by only a few miles per hour will escape with just a two points.

Fines will also be issued on a sliding scale, with the present standard £60 tariff rising to £100 for six-point offenders and dropping to £40 for two-point offenders.

Police will still prosecute for really high speeds. Magistrates can order bans between two weeks and two months as well as issue points.

Jim Fitzpatrick, the transport minister, said: "Graduated speeding penalties make the punishment better fit the crime." This considers drivers who breach the limit by a small amount through lapses in concentration.

"It also allows for a higher penalty as a strong deterrent against more extreme speeders".

There are six new scales of two, three or six points for all speed limits from 40mph to 70mph. Speeding drivers in 20mph and 30mph zones will get at least three points.

The proposals, which could be law next year, do not go far

enough according to the charity Brake. A spokesman said: "Reducing the minimum penalty to two points sends the wrong signal. Penalties are already too low and don't act as a deterrent. Speeding kills and is a serious crime."

They also met with disapproval from motoring groups. Nigel Humphries, a spokesman for the Association of British Drivers, said unnecessarily low limits had been set on roads by many local authorities. "A lot of people who are driving sensibly are going to be clobbered by this and lose their licences," he said. "The system is an absolute farce as long as speed limit setting and the enforcement are kept separately."

A spokesman for the DfT said councils, motoring groups and safety campaigners would be among those consulted on the proposals.

The department is also believed to be considering proposals for a website that would "name and shame" Britain's worst drivers.

Get him to the church, any time

A bride was left waiting for an hour after a satellite navigation system led the coach carrying the groom to become wedged at the bottom of a steep hill.

The groom from Nottingham, was stuck at Trebarwith, Cornwall, which is too remote for a mobile phone signal. Locals drove him and his guests the final four miles to Tintagel where his bride to be was still waiting.

Dug into trouble

A driver was pulled over by police for driving his 18 year old son and his girlfriend to a school dance in the shovel bucket of his industrial digger.

An Aussie Love Story

An elderly man lay dying in his bed. While suffering the agonies of impending death, he suddenly smelled the aroma of his favourite Anzac bickies wafting up the stairs.

He gathered his remaining strength, and lifted himself from the bed. Leaning on the wall, he slowly made his way out of the bedroom, and with even greater effort, gripping the railing with both hands he crawled downstairs. With laboured breath, he leaned against the door-frame, gazing into the kitchen. Were it not for death's agony, he would have thought himself already in heaven, for there, spread out upon waxed paper on the kitchen table were literally hundreds of his favourite Anzac bickies.

Was it heaven? Or was it one final act of love from his devoted Aussie wife of sixty years, seeing to it that he left this world a happy man?

Mustering one great final effort, he threw himself towards the table, landing on his knees in rumped posture. His aged and withered hand trembled towards a biscuit at the edge of the table, when it was suddenly smacked by his wife with a spatula.

“Bugger off” she said, “they're for the funeral.”

Cloning Fears

Motoring groups have reacted to calls for the number plate system to be overhauled in a bid to beat "car cloning.

There are fears that increasing numbers of plates are being stolen or cloned by criminals attempting to commit crimes, or escape motoring penalties.

Superintendent John Wake of the Association of Chief Police Officers Vehicle Crime Intelligence Service told the BBC there was now no confidence in the DVLA licensing system to prevent cloning.

Mr Wake said a registration plate was the "first form" of identification of a vehicle." I don't have confidence that beyond that you can identify that that vehicle is the legitimate vehicle for that plate," he said.

He added that the service wants to see a central body set up for registration numbers, and for tamper-proof plates to be fitted in cars.

Paul Watters of the AA agreed that cloning was a "growing problem" that needs to be addressed.

Mr Watters added: "The system does need overhauling, although it would be honest to say we are already moving towards a more secure system."

He cited moves to introduce "theft proof" number plates and to restrict the organisations which are authorised to issue plates.

Nigel Humphries of the Association of British Drivers said he did not believe the problem was with the number plate licensing system.

He said: "What we need is enough traffic police officers to be able to pull people over."

Ack Yahoo

Older drivers use outdated maps

Older drivers are getting lost on Britain's roads because they rely on outdated maps for navigation, says a poll.

One in every 100 drivers over the age of 55 still refers to maps produced before 1950 and before the arrival of motorways, a survey from travel information company Trafficmaster found out.

Editor Try The Phillips Navigator Britain as recommended by the IAM

The Institute of Advanced Motorists
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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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