

MINI ROUNDABOUT

June 2011

MELKSHAM

SPEED
GEAR
ACCELERATION
INFORMATION
POSITION

INSTITUTE OF ADVANCED MOTORISTS MELKSHAM & DISTRICT

www.m-a-m.org.uk
Registered Charity No: 1055930

INSTITUTE OF ADVANCED MOTORISTS
MOTORISTS

WHAT'S ON?

All monthly social evenings are held on the third Thursday of the month at the Riverside Club, Bath Road, Melksham, SN12 6LP unless otherwise advised, starting at 19:30. There is a modest charge of £1 to cover refreshments and a ticket for the raffle.

If you are not sure where the Riverside Club is there is a map on our website.

Bring a friend: All welcome, including non-members and members of other groups

June 16th	DriveCheck Night
July 21st	Skittles Night, The White Hart, Atworth, 7:30pm (see page 2)
July 28th	Observers' Meeting, The Bell, Broughton Gifford, 7:30pm
August	No social evening during August
September 15th	Escorting Abnormal Loads: Ian Brooks, RoadPilots
October 20th	The AA
November 17th	Network Rail: Liz Heading, Community Safety Manager
December 8th	Ben Schofield, Communications Manager, IAM

The most up-to-date information can be found on our website. Please check this regularly, as regrettably, last minute changes to events do occur. If you have any suggestions for events or speakers for social evenings, please contact Helen Pickett at events.coordinator@m-a-m.org.uk

AGM

Our AGM was held on Thursday 19th May. We welcomed the following people on to the Committee:

Bob Swaffield: Chairman
Richard Clark: Vice Chairman
Douglas Colborne: Treasurer

Thank you very much to these people for stepping forward. We would like to thank Paul Wilkins and Graham Bennett for their hard work in their roles as Chairman and Treasurer.

DriveCheck Night – Thursday 16th June

Our annual DriveCheck Night moves back to a lighter evening this year. This is your chance to hone your skills and make sure you haven't picked up any bad habits since passing your test (Associates welcome too). Traditionally we seem to have more Observers than members on this evening, so please make an effort to come for a short drive. This is not a test, but an informal opportunity to continue to develop your driving ability. For more information contact our Chief Car Observer, David Major, at chief.car.observer@m-a-m.org.uk.

Skittles Night – Thursday 21st July, 7:30pm

Our annual skittles night will be held at The White Hart, Bath Road, Atworth, Melksham, SN12 8JR. Cost: £5.25 per head to include a basket meal. You can choose from: sausage and chips, scampi and chips, ploughman's, chicken and chips, mushroom stroganoff or vegetarian sausage and chips. Please sign up, indicating your chosen meal, at the June social evening or by contacting Helen at events.coordinator@m-a-m.org.uk. Payment should be handed to Douglas Colborne, or posted to him at Fregates, Church Road, Derry Hill, Calne, SN11 9NR, no later than **Friday 15th July**. Cheques should be made payable to 'Melksham Advanced Motorists'.

There... I Fixed It



Observers' Meeting – Thursday 28th July, 7:30pm

Our annual Observers' Meeting will be held at The Bell on the Common, Broughton Gifford, SN12 8LX. Everyone is welcome, not just Observers. Our Regional Group Coordinator, Richard Furneaux, and our Chief Observer, David Major, will be giving presentations and there will be the opportunity to find out a little bit more about the role of an Observer. Contact David Major if you are interested in attending.

IAM Insight

Remember that the IAM publish a monthly newsletter called *Insight*, which is aimed at local groups and their members. You can view this by visiting http://www.iam.org.uk/iam_eneletters/insightgroupscommunique.html. If you are on the *Mini-Roundabout* distribution list then you already receive this via email. If you are not receiving emails please let Luke Pickett know at roundabout.editor@m-a-m.org.uk. By giving us your email address we save a vast amount of time and money, as well as helping the environment, and you will receive more information about the IAM and the Melksham Group than you would otherwise do. We will also be able to contact you quickly in the unlikely event that arrangements for social evenings change at the last minute.

Is 80 the new 70?

More than 70 per cent of drivers and riders think that the UK motorway speed limit should be increased by at least ten mph according to an IAM poll of over 2000 people.

Not only do people feel that the limit should be higher, almost 60 per cent say they would be more likely to stick to an 80mph limit than they are to the current limit of 70mph.

Nearly 60 per cent of people also admitted to travelling above 70 mph when traffic is free-flowing and uncongested, with 20 per cent of those travelling at 80 mph or faster. The survey reflects the latest DfT research of free-flowing motorway speeds, which found that 52 per cent of cars exceeded the 70 mph speed limit and 16 per cent travel at 80 mph or faster.

IAM director of policy and research Neil Greig said: "Even though motorways are the safest roads, increasing the motorway speed limit is a controversial subject. This is why we want to see a trial to test its impact on road safety, fuel consumption and driver behaviour.

"A new 80 miles per hour limit would need to be properly enforced to make sure that it does not become an excuse to drive at 90."

"Shortening journey times for people travelling at quieter times, as transport secretary Philip Hammond suggests, is a good idea, providing it doesn't have a negative effect on safety."

Drivers want training not fines, says IAM poll

Only 15 per cent of drivers think that fixed penalty notices are the most effective way to tackle careless driving, according to a poll of 1900 people by road safety charity the IAM.

Forty per cent of people think that careless drivers should take compulsory driver training, while 33 per cent think it should be tackled with verbal advice from a police officer. Ninety per cent of drivers think that there should be a choice between paying for driver improvement training and penalty points.

Seventy-seven per cent of respondents think that serious offenders should have their vehicles seized and 59 per cent that all disqualified drivers should be made to retake their driving test.

IAM chief executive Simon Best said: "This poll shows broad support for the government's road safety strategy, but that fixed penalty notices are not popular. The vast majority of crashes are caused by driver error, they are not deliberate - fining drivers is punitive and does not improve driving skills. Driver quality is the key issue in improving road safety. This poll recognises that driving is a skill that needs refreshing and updating. More courses to address poor driving will make our roads safer."

Library

The Group's scrapbook has not been updated for some time. Pat would like to start adding some information on our members and what they get up to in their lives. This could be within motoring, or something completely different. If you are willing to spend a few minutes putting together a short profile of yourself/family/hobbies, Pat would be extremely grateful. These can be handed to Pat at Social Evenings, or emailed to librarian@m-a-m.org.uk.

A couple of people have recently told Pat some funny stories about driving. Whilst Pat is happy to receive this information, please also pass this to Luke, preferably via email to roundabout.editor@m-a-m.org.uk, for inclusion in *Mini-Roundabout*.

Don't let the breathalyser spoil your barbeque

As the police launch their summer drink-drive campaign, IAM chief examiner Peter Rodger recommends six top tips on avoiding the temptation and risk of drink-driving:

- Beware the quick drink after work. One pint with your colleagues in the sun might seem harmless but it can quickly turn into two, then three. Shell out for a taxi, get the train, or walk – it'll cost much less than a drink-drive charge or accident.
- Ignore peer pressure. Your friends or family have had a few and don't want to pay for a taxi. You have your car but have been drinking. Just say no – it's your licence at stake.
- Driving with good intentions to a party, to a pub or to a restaurant and then just having a drink or two, puts more pressure on you to risk driving home, even if you're not sure whether you are below the limit.
- You are likely to be breathalysed if you are involved in a collision, even if it is not your fault. Whether or not you think you're fit to drive, don't take the chance or somebody else's mistake might become your problem.
- Even if you resist and don't drive home, a drinking session the night before could put you over the legal limit the morning after. Bear this in mind and make alternative transport plans for the next day – don't just risk it.
- Many accidents involve pedestrians who have been drinking. When walking home after a few drinks, take extra care, and if you're driving be aware that pedestrians may be the worse for wear.

Rodger said: "Everyone is very aware of the risks of drink-driving during the Christmas party season, but drink-drive casualties actually reach a peak in the summer. When enjoying a leisurely lunchtime or evening barbeque with friends and family, you might think you are being careful, but the measures are likely to be larger and the drinks stronger than those served in a pub, and it's easy to get carried away.

"Summer or winter, if you drink, don't drive and if you are driving, don't drink. Always refuse a lift from someone you know has been drinking."

Men more dangerous than women on the roads

Men are more likely than women to be involved in crashes because of bad driving habits such as driving too fast and drink-driving, according to the IAM's latest research report *Licensed to skill: Contributory factors in road accidents*. When comparing men and women, men are nearly twice as likely to be involved in a collision due to being careless, reckless or in a hurry. They are also more likely to crash because of poor behaviour or inexperience.

The main differences highlighted in the report are:

- Careless, reckless or in a hurry is recorded more frequently for men (ten per cent) than women (six per cent).
- Travelling too fast for the conditions is recorded more frequently for men (seven per cent) than women (four per cent).
- Poor driving behaviour or inexperience is recorded more frequently for men (14 per cent) than women (ten per cent).

However recent research by the IAM shows that women and men aren't so different when it comes to driving behaviour and attitudes. Most men and women enjoy driving, and rate themselves to be confident, considerate and safe.

But almost twice as many men as women claim to be "very confident" drivers. IAM chief executive Simon Best said: "These results show that we need to look at the psychology of male drivers to reduce risky behaviour and over-confidence, but for both sexes accidents could be easily reduced by improving driver skills and lives could be saved. The government is moving towards this by introducing driver training for careless driving offences but all drivers should consider training. Driving is a life-long skill that requires life-long learning."

Swindon traffic lights to slow speeding drivers

[Article source: bbc.co.uk]

Speeding drivers in Swindon are to be slowed down by using traffic lights.

The town is thought to be the first in the UK to use the system in which cars going over the speed limit will trigger the lights up ahead.

The scheme will initially be piloted on Thamesdown Drive - where 67% of vehicles exceed the limit - and Queen's Drive - where 38% of vehicles speed.

Fixed speed cameras were abandoned by the Conservative-led borough council in 2009.

Gwillam Lloyd, the council's head of highways, said: "What we are going to do is install sensors in the road. Those sensors will monitor the speed of vehicles.

"If a vehicle is speeding then the lights will turn red."

He said drivers would be given no warning of where the sensors were located.

Councillor Peter Greenhalgh, cabinet member for transport, said: "We've seen it working elsewhere in Europe and what it does is it destabilises the driver.

"Frequently you see drivers just concentrating on themselves rather than what's happening in front of them. What this does is it takes those drivers out of that comfort zone and makes them concentrate on what's actually happening ahead."

There will be no signs to tell the driver why the lights have turned red.

Councillor Greenhalgh said: "The whole key is to monitor driver behaviour without beating them over the head.

"It may annoy them, but I think eventually people will work out that if they maintain a constant speed at or around the speed limit then actually their journey times will be much shorter because they won't be getting delayed by traffic lights."

The safety partnership in charge of speed cameras in Swindon closed in October last year.

Swindon's council, a member of the partnership, was the first local authority in England to abandon fixed speed cameras the year before.

Professor Stephen Glaister, director of the RAC Foundation, said: "We welcome trials of technologies other than cameras to deter speeding drivers and this sort of system is already extensively used in Spain and Portugal.

"But will the odd red light be enough of a deterrent to change the behaviour of persistent offenders? Some law-abiding motorists will surely be irritated at being stuck at the signals behind an errant driver, effectively paying the price for someone else's law breaking.

"But if speeding can be made as socially unacceptable as drink-driving without the need for a big stick then the majority of drivers should welcome the move."

Local Groups

You may not be aware that there are many local IAM Groups in the area. Our newsletter, *Mini-Roundabout* always goes out to these Groups and we often receive their newsletters in return. These are presented for you to browse on the Library table; however they can also be accessed online. We are particularly thinking of the Taunton Group newsletter, which is sent to us via email and will not be printed by us (except the current edition), to save on costs. If you would like to see what is going on in local Groups, have a look on the Library table, or better still, go to their websites. There is a link to all the Groups on our own website: www.m-a-m.org.uk/links.htm

Our local Groups include: Bath, Bristol, Cirencester, Gloucestershire, Salisbury Plain, Somerset Advanced Motorcyclists, Swindon, Taunton, Weston & Mendip, Wilts & Bath Advanced Motorcyclists.

FURTHER NOTICES

- **Observers:** If you think you would like to be an observer and/or would like more information about observing please contact David Major, Chief Car Observer, by telephone on 01985 217050.
- **Email addresses:** Help the environment - if you have an email address but receive your newsletters by post please let the Editor, Luke Pickett, know your email address. You benefit from early receipt of Newsletters, early notice of special events, and we save on postage, time and effort, as well as using up fewer trees! A win-win situation.
- **Speakers:** If you know of someone who could give us an interesting talk, or have a suggestion for a talk, at our social evenings please advise the Events Coordinator, Helen Pickett.
- **Publicity:** If you are able to display posters or distribute a few leaflets around your local area please contact Luke Pickett to obtain some.
- **Contact Details:** If you move house, or your email or telephone number changes, please inform Luke Pickett and Angela Summers so that you don't lose contact with us.
- **DriveCheck:** Remember that MAM is offering a FREE observed run for all potential new members so tell your friends now! For more information please contact David Major.
- **Website:** For the most up-to-date information, check out our website at www.m-a-m.org.uk

CONTACT US

07780 743555

www.m-a-m.org.uk

or:

Chairman: Bob Swaffield: chairman@m-a-m.org.uk

Vice Chairman: Richard Clark: vice.chairman@m-a-m.org.uk

Secretary: Archer Endrich: group.secretary@m-a-m.org.uk

Treasurer: Douglas Colborne: treasurer@m-a-m.org.uk

Librarian: Pat Ham: librarian@m-a-m.org.uk

Membership Secretary/Associates: Angela Summers: membership.officer@m-a-m.org.uk

Chief Car Observer: David Major: chief.car.observer@m-a-m.org.uk

Events Coordinator: Helen Pickett: events.coordinator@m-a-m.org.uk

Mini-Roundabout Newsletter Editor: Luke Pickett: roundabout.editor@m-a-m.org.uk

Webmaster: Luke Pickett: webmaster@m-a-m.org.uk

If you have any suggestions about this News Sheet, or any other aspect of our activities, please do not hesitate to get in touch.

Disclaimer

Any opinions expressed in this or any other newsletter published by the Melksham and District Group of Advanced Motorists are those of an individual or the editor. They should not be taken to represent the views of the IAM, its officers or the Melksham and District Group Committee, unless made explicit. As such, no legal responsibility can be accepted for any statement. The articles are published in good faith. Members are requested to seek confirmation of event details before attending, since regrettably last minute changes to plans do occur.