

MINI **ROUNDABOUT** May 2011

MELKSHAM

SPEED
GEAR
POSITION
ACCELERATION
INFORMATION

INSTITUTE OF ADVANCED MOTORISTS
MELKSHAM & DISTRICT

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

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

May 19th	21 st Annual General Meeting (<i>N.B. No Library tonight</i>) Speaker: David Douch on the topic of Vehicle Occupant Security
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

CONGRATULATIONS

On passing the Advanced Driving Test

<u>Associate</u> Peter Beg	<u>Observer</u> Elaine White
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Also congratulations to Steve Watts for passing his Observers' Theory and Practical Tests

AGM

Please support our AGM on Thursday 19th May. It is your chance to have a say on the future of the Group. We are looking for volunteers to become Committee members. If you would be interested in this, please contact a member of the Committee. Our speaker after the AGM will be David Douch, an expert in vehicle security. You will find the all the AGM documentation enclosed with this month's *Mini-Roundabout*. N.B. The Library will be unavailable on this date. Items with a return date of 19th May will now be due on 16th June.

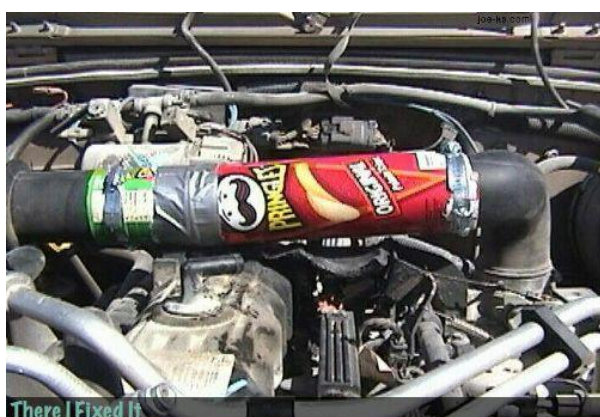
DriveCheck Night – Thursday 16th June

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 social evenings or by contacting Helen at events.coordinator@m-a-m.org.uk. Payment should be handed to Douglas Colborne at social evenings, or sent to Douglas Colborne 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



Fake Cop?

Thank you to Andrew for pointing this out to us: Last month we published an article regarding unmarked police cars and the phone number 112. There is a possibility that the story that was linked to the article is in fact not true; however the message behind it is still very important. The advice from askthe.police.uk is legitimate, as is the 112 number, so please be vigilant about unmarked police cars, and start using 112 when calling from mobile phones.

Vandalism

In recent weeks there has been a spate of thefts of car aerials and smashed car windows in the Broadmead/Walwayne Court area of Trowbridge. Please keep your eyes open and report any suspicious activity to the Police by calling 0845 408 7000.

It is with great sadness that we have learned of the sudden death of Ann Scarborough who was an Associate who regularly attended social evenings. Our thoughts are with her family at this time.

2020 vision – IAM to change driver behaviour to reduce road deaths

The IAM [has] launched its ten-year road safety strategy, which proposes that the road safety industry should aim to reduce road deaths on UK roads to 1,000 a year by 2020, saving 1,000 lives over the period. The strategy supports the UN Decade of Action for Road Safety 2011-2020.

With the vast majority of crashes caused by human error and lapses in concentration, the IAM believes that tackling driver and rider behaviour is the key to cutting road deaths. Cars don't cause crashes, drivers do.

The key focus of the strategy is to target those drivers at highest risk:

- young drivers
- older drivers
- motorcyclists
- business users
- cyclists

For its part the IAM is developing products, such as Momentum for young drivers and DriveCheck 55 for older drivers, as well as promoting advanced driver, motorcycling and cycling training. These are proven to improve road safety.

The IAM also want to see driving on rural roads - the most dangerous – to be part of the driving test and a new post-test training system for young drivers which builds on the success achieved in Austria. There, further training in the first 12 months after passing the test has reduced young male fatalities by nearly 30 per cent.

The IAM's driver training company, IAM Drive & Survive, will be working with businesses to train their company drivers and will encourage these companies to only use suppliers who make sure their employees are trained as well.

IAM chief executive Simon Best said: "We want to see five-star drivers in five-star cars on five-star roads. Cars and roads are getting safer so it's time to concentrate on the driver by improving their skills and behaviour. Over the decade we will work with around 200,000 road users through education and coaching on driving, riding, cycling and commercial driving. That's 20,000 people a year who will be safer.

"As the government looks to publish its road safety strategy we believe that over 1,000 lives can be saved in the next decade by continued partnership between government, local authorities, enforcement agencies and education bodies. This also means a cost saving to the UK economy of £1.8 billion over the period, with each fatal accident costing society £1.8 million.

"But 1000 deaths is still a tragically high figure. Everybody needs to work together to reduce it further. For example, insurers should offer discounts to young drivers who have taken more training after their test.

"Equally every individual has to take responsibility for their own road risk, whether that is taking the initiative to improve their driving through further training, or simply taking a bit more care."

Got a head, get a hat?

More than ten per cent of cyclists would give up cycling if wearing helmets was made compulsory, according to the IAM's latest poll. Only 20 per cent think it should be compulsory.

The poll – which surveyed over 4000 people – also found that another 30 per cent would simply continue to cycle without a helmet.

Cycle helmets were not seen as a priority compared to using conspicuous clothing and lights, but nor were the respondents negative in their views towards them. Almost 60 per cent thought that wearing a cycle helmet should be a personal decision. Sixty per cent of those surveyed who cycle, do wear a cycle helmet.

A similar number of people thought that helmets offer limited protection from serious head injury, as think they save lives. Training was high on the agenda, and was rated the second most important cycle safety measure.

IAM cycling manager Duncan Pickering said: "One in ten cyclists being prepared to give up cycling shows how controversial compulsory helmets would be. But generally people are not anti-helmet – they see it as an issue of choice.

"Ultimately fewer than ten per cent voted that they didn't think wearing a cycle helmet was beneficial at all, so if cyclists feel safer wearing one it makes sense to do so. But cyclists can improve their safety and confidence a lot by taking training. Many accidents involving cyclists could be prevented by cyclists positioning themselves more defensively in relation to larger vehicles."

Rain on their parade?

The IAM is advising drivers on how to deal with sudden heavy rain showers, following weeks of dry weather.

IAM chief examiner Peter Rodger said: "Rain after a long period of dry weather makes the road surface extremely slippery. A combination of oil, loose gravel and dried rubber all prevent the tyres working efficiently."

Rodger offers the following tips on driving carefully in the wet:

- Visibility will be reduced. If you encounter a sudden downpour, slow down to the point where you can stop within the distance you can see to be clear.
- Stopping distances will also be far longer than on dry roads. Allow at least twice as much time as usual to stop - at least four seconds. Make sure you have plenty of tread on your tyres for optimum grip.
- Think about replacing those dodgy windscreen wipers that have been smearing for a while – fresh wipers will help you cope with unexpected showers. It's also worth trying one of the products that remove rain from the windscreen which extend the life of the wipers.
- Keep your windscreen bottle topped up with water and an appropriate screen wash – don't use washing up liquid, which causes needless smears. Dead flies on the windscreen are a particular issue over the warmer months, and also smear horribly when wipers are used. Clean the inside and outside of the screen regularly and you won't get caught out if it suddenly rains.
- And if the weather is causing flash floods, do you *really* need to make the journey right now?

Give young drivers life-saving skills

The IAM will continue to work with the government to introduce a new system of post-test driver training to reduce the rate of serious road accidents involving young people. In 2009 young car drivers accounted for 27 per cent of all car driver fatalities, and 2,026 young car drivers were killed or seriously injured¹. And with driver and rider error behind the top three causes of fatal and serious crashes, the message is clear – young drivers need more experience and training. IAM chief executive Simon Best said: “The government is right to prioritise saving young drivers’ lives in its new ten-year road safety strategy. Having analysed systems of post-test training from other countries, we know that the best examples have reduced young male deaths by almost 30 per cent.” The IAM wants to see accredited training offered to young drivers in the first 12 to 18 months after passing the basic driving test.

This would include:

- Training by qualified instructors.
- An initial on-road assessment to gain knowledge of their experience and to highlight any deficiencies.
- Off-road practice in handling in the wet, speed into corners and the impact of speed on stopping distances.
- Benefits such as cheaper insurance for young drivers who complete the training.

Best said: “The first year as a car driver is important for building up the driving experience necessary to reduce the risk of crashes. Post-test training with in-depth coaching on driving techniques, and extra hours behind the wheel – with an experienced instructor – will prevent accidents. We offer our full support to the government to develop life-saving training for young drivers.”

¹ Reported road accidents involving young car drivers: Great Britain 2009 Road Accident Statistics Factsheet No. 6 – 2009 Department for Transport

Drivers to be fined for littering

[Article source: uk.autoblog.com]

Ministers are considering a change in the law that would see motorists issued with £80 fixed penalty notices for littering – whether they are responsible for it or not.

The change would be inserted into the Localism Bill which is currently progressing through Parliament. Council officers would be given the power to issue the fines based on a car's number plate, and if a motorist was unwilling to shop the real culprit they would be liable themselves to pay the money. Fines can already be issued for littering, but the burden is on the person issuing the fine to identify the person who dropped the litter. CCTV cameras would also be used to enforce the change in the law.

Clyde Loakes, vice-chairman of the Local Government Association's environment board said that litter louts are currently getting away scot-free, and closing the current loophole should cover some of the £850m needed to keep streets clean: "It's time to get tough on lazy, selfish people who toss rubbish from moving cars and expect other people to cover the cost of cleaning it up," he added.

The proposals have already been criticised as a cynical attempt to boost finances that are being cut back by increasing the burden on motorists. Charlotte Linacre of the TaxPayers' Alliance said: "Motorists are already overtaxed. Councils have to make necessary spending cuts and there's plenty of fat to trim, they shouldn't look to plug gaps in their finances by ramping up charges on taxpayers."

Government car safety checks “putting drivers at risk”

[Article Source: telegraph.co.uk]

Which? Car rounded on the Vehicle and Operator Services Agency (VOSA) accusing it of having a far laxer approach to safety than its American counterpart, the National Highway Traffic System Administration (NHTSA).

Last year the NHTSA instigated 118 recalls, while according to Which, Car none were triggered by VOSA.

Richard Headland, editor of Which? Car, said: "We do think that drivers lives are being endangered.

“VOSA is a toothless organisation that appears to pander to the car industry. Which? Car believes it is providing a substandard level of protection to British motorists. In contrast, America’s NHTSA leads the way as an example of how a safety recall organisation should operate.”

However this was disputed by the Society of Motor Manufacturers and Traders, which represents the car industry.

“The VOSA vehicle recall process is one of the most robust in the world delivering an exceptionally high level of response rates compared to other sectors.

“In 2010 alone VOSA worked with vehicle manufacturers on over 300 recalls involving two million vehicles to ensure that motorists can remain confident of the high level of vehicle safety they rightfully expect.

“In addition to these recalls, manufacturers issued numerous service campaigns to customers, ensuring that quality, safety and reliability standards are maintained, with work often carried out as part of a vehicle’s regular service programme.”

VOSA also defended its performance. "Our priority is protecting road users in Britain and our vehicle recall system operates swiftly and effectively, contributing to Britain having some of the safest roads in the world," said Alex Fiddes, the Operations Director.

"If a manufacturer is unwilling or unable to issue a recall then VOSA would directly inform vehicle owners. However, this has not been necessary as manufacturers have always acted in accordance with the advice we have given."

IAM response to VOSA vehicle recall

Neil Greig, Director of policy and research at IAM said:

'The IAM fully support the Which? campaign for a more consumer focused VOSA. VOSA must be more proactive in telling drivers about recalls and technical problems arising around the world. It should also be more involved in investigating complaints from drivers and holding car makers to account.'

Number plates

Thanks to Angela for pointing out that DOD6Y is no longer a dodgy Porche, but a dodgy Bentley! Send your unusual number plate sightings to roundabout.editor@m-a-m.org.uk

Are we nearly there yet?

The IAM is advising parents on how to keep long car journeys with children as safe and enjoyable as possible. Research shows that having unruly children in the car is more likely to cause accidents than any other distraction.*

IAM Chief Examiner Peter Rodger said: “Bickering, fighting and tears are all part of getting away, as much as the fun had when you get there. Making sure you are kitted-out with plenty of things to entertain will mean the kids are distracted – instead of them distracting you.”

Rodger offers the following tips on making sure your children are safely strapped in:

- Ideally children under three should travel in the back and they must be secured by an appropriate child restraint, not an adult belt. Children under the age of 12 (or under 135cm tall) must use a child restraint if available. If not, an adult seat belt may be used instead.
- Children aged 14 or over must always use an adult seatbelt.
- Never put a rear-facing baby seat in the front where there is an active passenger airbag.
- If the only appropriate restraint or seat belt is in the front, a child aged three to 11 years old must use that.
- Isofix seat mounts are the safest way to secure a baby or child seat in your car. Most seat manufacturers make products designed specifically for use with these super-strong mounting points, which are common in many modern cars, and easy to use.
- Once it's in, grip the car seat and push it backwards and forwards – if it is fitted properly, the car should move and not the car seat.

* <http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/scotland/8277436.stm>

Navmat

The outgoing Chairman's latest purchase is a Navmat: a mat designed to hold your Sat Nav on the dashboard without slipping and without having to stick it to the windscreen, therefore not leaving any marks or rings on the window that show thieves that you have a Sat Nav. RRP for the latest version is £24.99 but a quick shop around will get you it for less. For more information visit www.navmat.co.uk

The original design



The latest version



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

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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

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