

MINI ROUNDABOUT

November 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

November 17th	Network Rail – Liz Heading, Community Safety Manager
December 8th	Ben Schofield, Communications Manager, IAM
January 19th	Driving Comedy – Roger Wiltshire
February 16th	Judith Billingham – Wiltshire Council Road Safety Manager, Education
March 15th	Robin Silman, RNLI
April 19th	Member's Evening TBC
May 17th	22 nd Annual General Meeting

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

Publicity Officer

Your Committee has come up with a range of ways of publicising your Group and are continuously discussing how we can attract new members. Whilst it is great that we are thinking about how to do this, it is not always possible for us to pursue our goal when we have other roles to fulfil too. Therefore we are seeking a dedicated Publicity Officer, who would be responsible solely for advertising us to the outside world, publicising events in the local papers and providing reports or short articles on our Social Evenings and what we do, for our own newsletter, and for local papers. If you would be interested in this role please contact Luke Pickett in the first instance at roundabout.editor@m-a-m.org.uk

Wanted Library Help!



For a long time, I have thought that the Library suitcase is heavy and I was becoming concerned for the kind gentlemen who lift the suitcase into “Babe” for me. With this in mind, the suitcase was weighed, and it weighed 3 stone!!

Looking at the stock in great detail, to see why the stock is not being used, I am revamping your Library. There were 40 items in stock, but now there will be 21 items. I have withdrawn items which are more than 3 years old, not consulted very much, or never been consulted. This will make the suitcase lighter!

I would now like your help please. What do you want in your Library for it to become more interesting to you? Do you want only car books, items like fire engines, steam, military vehicles e.g. tanks, history, racing cars, old cars, F1, jokey, puzzles, DVDs? Suggestions or ideas would be most gratefully received from you, because to be honest, I am stuck in looking what to get for you, as I am seeing the same items on bookshelves over and over again. The only suggestions I would turn down would be any kind of manuals, or books like “Lady Chatterley’s Lover!”

If you would like to donate any of your own surplus books that you no longer require to the Library, you may do so.

I would like to keep your Library going for you, but I do need your help. You can contact me by email at librarian@m-a-m.org.uk, or if you have a Library item on loan, you will see my telephone number on the date label which is used for you to ring me anytime concerning the loan you have e.g. can I renew etc, and you can always chat to me on a Thursday Social Evening.

At November’s Social Evening, I shall be putting the withdrawn items from the Library, on a table next to the current Library stock, for you to help yourself, if you wish to keep a copy of an item. You may give a small donation to the Treasurer for your item, but this will be up to you.

I hope that some of you will chat to me about this article.



Pat

Member Profiles

We would like to try to get to know our members a little better. Therefore we are publishing in *Mini-Roundabout* and in the Group's Scrapbook, held in the Library, a profile of anyone who wishes to give us a little more information on themselves and what they get up to. Please send all profiles to roundabout.editor@m-a-m.org.uk. This month we feature our Events Coordinator, Helen Pickett.

Member Profile: Helen Pickett

Date of test pass: August 2009

Position on Committee: Events Coordinator

Home life: Helen is married to Luke (Newsletter Editor & Webmaster), and they have a 14 month old son called Alexander. Family is important, with both sets of parents living within a five minute walk of home.



Education: Helen studied for her GCSEs at St Augustine's RC School, and for her BTEC National in Performing Arts at Chippenham College between 1993 and 1995. Then through working at Wiltshire Council she obtained an ECDL, NVQ Level 3 Business Admin, NVQ Level 3 Line Management, BTEC National Civil Engineering, HNC Civil Engineering and HND Civil Engineering. Helen is currently an Associate member of the Institute of Highways Engineers working towards her Engineering Technician qualification and professional registration.

Day job: Helen works as a Highways Management Technician for Wiltshire Council. This involves dealing with winter maintenance issues, such as the gritting of roads, as well as licensing for road verges. Helen has given two presentations to the Group in the past, detailing her work. She is also the Newsletter editor, Webmaster and Communications Officer for the South Western branch of the Institute of Highways Engineers.

Hobbies: Helen has always been interested in music and played in numerous bands throughout her school life. Most notably she was heavily involved in Trowbridge & District Youth Band, which is where she met Luke. Helen currently plays trombone for Amesbury Town Band. She also sings with St. James Church Choir, Trowbridge, and *In Ecclesia*, a group who meet up three times a year to sing in cathedrals across the south west. If time allows, Helen likes to read, and to play the online role-playing game *World of Warcraft*.

IAM Christmas Offer

The IAM is once again offering the Skill for Life package for £125 (usual price £139) when purchased as a gift. There are also other packages available that would make great Christmas presents. If you receive *Mini-Roundabout* via email you will have received information about this on 7th October. If you receive *Mini-Roundabout* via post and wish to purchase a gift, please contact the IAM direct on 020 8996 9600 or 0845 126 8600.

Ice advice online from the IAM

Road safety charity the IAM [has] launched a new website, www.drivingadvice.org.uk, to help motorists prepare their cars and drive them safely this winter. The site also contains traffic updates and weather forecasts.

Tips include rain, snow, ice, fog and wind: everything you can expect in a typically unpredictable British winter.

Winters' more treacherous driving conditions cause an increase in accident rates:

- The rate of accidents amongst car users is 9.4 per cent higher in winter months (November-February) than the normal monthly average
- Slippery roads contributed to 20,003 road casualties in 2010, and related to 118 fatalities
- Vision impaired by rain, sleet, snow, or fog contributed to 2,328 accidents in 2010, resulting in 3,318 casualties and 20 fatalities

IAM spokesperson Caroline Holmes said: "The number of serious crashes on Britain's roads is reducing and we want to see that trend continue. When the weather's bad motorists should always question whether they need to go out at all. Our website will help drivers make the right decision, prepare for winter and enjoy their driving, but do it safely."

There is a cure for the summertime blues

The IAM is calling for the end of British summer time because accident rates increase when the clocks go back in October. Research shows that changing the system could save up to 80 lives each year on Britain's roads.¹

An IAM poll of more than 2000 motorists last winter found that 65 per cent would support a double summertime system – moving the clocks forward by one hour throughout the entire year, while still putting the clocks forward in spring and back in autumn.

There are 17 per cent more pedestrian road casualties in November than the monthly average. This sharp increase is likely to be partly attributed to the winter clock change.

There is also an increase in the number of motorcycle accidents in November – 41.8 per cent higher than the normal monthly average and 73 per cent higher than in February. Numbers of casualties stay relatively constant but the rate per billion miles dramatically increases in autumn.

IAM chief executive Simon Best said: "Changing the current summertime system would save lives. Children especially are more likely to be out and about after school and an extra hour of daylight will make them more visible.

"We want to see a three-year trial of the new daylight system. If the trial period proves the new daylight hours to be a disadvantage, it is clear that the current system should be reinstated. However with convincing evidence of the potential benefits, it seems only right that we pilot a new system."

1. Broughton, J and Stone, M. Report 368, "A new assessment of the likely effects on road accidents of adopting a GMT+1/GMT+2 regime", Transport Research Laboratory, Crowthorne: 1998.

Don't drive so close to me

IAM Chief Examiner, Peter Rodger, advises motorists on braking properly, and how stopping distances are affected by adverse weather conditions.

Six of the best ways to get a grip on braking:

1. Brake in a straight line where possible. Braking while going through a bend unbalances the car, so get your speed and gear right beforehand
2. Brake smoothly. If you plan your driving and keep an eye on the traffic conditions ahead you can avoid braking harshly – in many cases you may avoid braking altogether
3. Don't underestimate how long it actually takes you to stop. At 30mph, you will take 23 metres or five car lengths to stop, at 50 this doubles to 53m (12 car lengths), and at 70 it takes 96m, or 21 car lengths
4. Always leave at least two seconds between yourself and the car in front. Watch the car in front go past a lamp post or tree, and count how long it takes you to reach it
5. As a guide, you should at least double this in the wet, and quadruple it in snow and ice
6. For extra winter grip, consider winter tyres. These maintain grip well below that of normal tyres, which start to stiffen below 7°C

IAM chief examiner Peter Rodger said: "Braking is a skill that needs practice – do it properly and you'll improve fuel consumption and journey times. If you prepare in time, and look further down the road, you can avoid stopping as often – for example, look ahead and plan to meet a gap in the traffic on a roundabout."

To help drivers stay safe this winter, the IAM has launched a new website, drivingadvice.org.uk, with traffic updates, weather forecasts and tips on how to drive safely in winter.

Tips cover rain, snow, ice, fog and wind – everything you can expect in a typically unpredictable British winter. Check it out before you travel.

Blue Light Awareness

Earlier in the year we featured an article regarding stopping for police vehicles. If you would like more information on what to do when blue lights appear behind you, visit www.bluelightaware.org.uk to watch a short video.

10% Discount with Eskeez

The Eskeez top is probably one of the best bits of biking kit money can buy. It is comfortable to wear, and maintains an even body temperature regardless of external changes. I have used the top under winter kit and leathers and found it superb. It's also nice when just walking the dog on a cool morning. I would recommend this to any fellow rider to add to their kit.

Dave Shenton

Head of Field Operations – IAM

ESKEEZ Thermals are now available at preferential rates to IAM members with 10% discount on orders - just add **IAM 10** in the code box at checkout online at www.eskeez.co.uk or contact Eskeez Customer Services on 08456 585856.

Councils give winter roads the cold shoulder

Road safety charity the IAM is warning that many of Britain's roads will become more hazardous for motorists as the frosts and local council cuts bite. In spite of the last two winters of severe cold, snow and ice, many councils are planning to cut back on winter road services, including salting, exposing motorists to dangerous driving conditions. Last year there was a 37 per cent increase in the number of cars overturning in snow and ice. Budget estimates from the Department for Communities and Local Government show a 3.6 per cent decrease in estimated spending for salting roads, snowploughing, and standby arrangements across England. This represents a significant cut when inflation is considered. Sixty-seven councils appear to be reducing the amount they are spending on winter road services, with 33 budgeting more than ten per cent less than last year. Most worryingly 21 councils appear to have budgeted over 30 per cent less than they did last year.

IAM chief executive Simon Best said: "Roads are essential for the economy – not only in rural areas where cars are the only way to get around but also on the main routes that keep our economy moving. Ambulances, supermarket food deliveries, meals on wheels, utilities, even the armed forces, all rely on having a usable road network. Last year, parts of Scotland nearly ran out of food and fuel. The 24-hour, just-in-time logistics system simply wasn't able to cope with the weather. Councils must make contingency plans to ensure that essential supplies can always get through, no matter what the weather. This has to include dealing with large numbers of drivers stranded for hours with no access to heat or food."

It is even more important that drivers and riders take care in severe weather conditions, given reduced winter road services.

Driving in snow – the method

- Is your journey essential? If at all possible postpone or reschedule your trip and don't ignore police warnings about closed roads.
- Double or even triple your normal stopping distance from the vehicle in front. Drive so that you don't rely on your brakes to be able to stop – on an icy surface they simply may not do that for you, but keep moving as much as possible, even if it is only at walking pace.
- On a downhill slope get your speed low before you start the descent, and do not let it build up – it is much easier to keep it low than to try and slow down once things get slippery.
- Start gently, avoiding high revs, and use second gear to avoid wheelspin. If you get yourself into a skid the main thing to remember is to take your foot off the pedals and steer. Only use the brake if you cannot steer out of trouble.
- Plan your journey around busier roads as they are more likely to have been gritted. Avoid using short cuts on minor roads – they are less likely to be cleared or treated with salt, especially country lanes.
- Always clear your windows, lights and mirrors. Don't forget that snow on the bonnet can blow back onto your windscreen, so clear that off, and clear the roof to avoid snow being blown onto traffic following you before moving off.
- Make sure you have an emergency kit so you are prepared in the event of a breakdown. This should include a charged up mobile phone, torch, food for energy, water and a blanket. For snow you also need a shovel with you. On longer journeys always let someone know you have set off and tell them your planned route.
- You can also improve car performance in snow by fitting winter tyres. Winter tyres have a different tread pattern to give better grip on snow and ice and have a snowflake on a mountain as a symbol on the sidewall. The symbol indicates that they use winter grade rubber which stays flexible and maintains grip to well below freezing. The rubber used on standard tyres hardens as the temperature drops.

Accelerate safely this winter

Peter Rodger advises on the use of acceleration and power in wintery conditions.

IAM chief examiner Peter Rodger said: “Power and acceleration are no good without control. This is especially true when drivers are faced with cold, wet and slippery conditions.”

Rodger has six tips to ensure you remain in control:

1. Be aware of the way your car applies power to the road. As acceleration shifts weight from the front to the back of the car, the wheels of front wheel-drive cars will spin more easily in wet and icy conditions.
2. Accelerate smoothly and maintain a safe speed particularly in wintery conditions – remember the speed limit may be too fast especially when conditions are poor.
3. Make sure you're in the correct gear before overtaking and use as much power as is safe bearing in mind your car's abilities, the speed limit and the road conditions.
4. Changing your use of the accelerator is a good way of slowing down, without ever needing to touch the brake. When you can see traffic slowing up ahead, ease off the power in advance instead of driving up behind it and braking as you arrive. This will reduce the amount you have to brake and save fuel.
5. When approaching bends, reduce your speed, but ensure you maintain a constant speed and a smooth line through the bend. As you drive out of the bend, you can increase the power. If it's slippery, leave accelerating until you are straightened up properly.
6. On level ground or downhill you should be able to start from stationary without using the accelerator in a modern car – just lift the clutch carefully, and then very gently apply power once you are moving. When the roads are icy, this can be a useful technique.

Rodger said: “Wintery conditions don't necessarily mean you can't go out, but if weather conditions are very hazardous do question whether you really need to make the journey. Understanding your car's acceleration and power will help you stay in control whatever the weather.”

IAM opinion on plans to change the MoT Testing frequency

The Government is looking at ways 'to reduce the burden' of the MOT test which is currently required annually for cars three years old or more. Possible changes to this requirement have alarmed road safety, motoring and industry groups, who say that changes to the frequency of MOT tests for cars could lead to more than 250 additional road deaths a year. 25 organisations [have] joined forces to launch a campaign to get the Government to rule out reducing the frequency of MOT testing. The campaigners fear any reduction could lead to 2,200 additional serious injuries a year as well as more-expensive repairs and higher insurance bills for motorists. The organisations also say that most drivers are opposed to any MOT changes and that up to 40,000 jobs in the MOT industry, including a large number of apprenticeships, could be at risk.

IAM head of driving standards, Peter Rodger, said: “The IAM has researched MoT results and discovered that more than one in four cars fail their test at only three years old – delaying the test would therefore go against the evidence that cars need a safety-based inspection at three years old. What does need to be investigated though is why our failure rate is so much higher than other European countries at three years.”

Time for an 80mph speed limit

The IAM is calling for the government to pilot an 80 mph speed limit on a controlled and managed motorway to assess its practicality and safety, and road users' reaction to it.

In September the government announced that the motorway speed limit could be raised to 80mph.

On uncongested motorways more than half of car drivers exceed the 70mph speed limit, and around a fifth exceed 80 mph*; it is rare for the police to prosecute drivers travelling between 70 and 80mph*¹.

Road safety groups have raised a concern that legalising today's tolerated, yet unofficial, 80 mph speed limit would simply create an unofficial 90 mph limit. If this happened average traffic speeds would increase, as would accidents and their severity – more people could be killed and seriously injured.

The IAM highlights the need for a full risk assessment of an increase in the speed limit, and believes strict enforcement is required to ensure greater compliance with the limit. For example driving at 82mph should risk a speeding ticket.

The IAM wants to see 80mph trialled initially on "Controlled Motorways" and "Managed Motorways" where variable speed limit technology is used. These have already been implemented successfully on the M25 orbital motorway in Surrey and the M42 in the West Midlands.

IAM CEO Simon Best said: "A fifth of motorway-users already travel at this increased speed, and more than half exceed 70mph when they can, suggesting that a properly controlled 80mph limit may not show huge increases in carbon or road casualties. A detailed trial is needed to assess these risks though, and if they are shown to increase significantly, of course a better-enforced 70 limit may be a more appropriate system.

"Raising the motorway speed limit has been debated for many years, and the evidence is that the motoring public are ready for it*². The transport secretary should now publish a consultation with firm proposals."

Notes

1. * Department for Transport: *Road Statistics 2009; Traffic Speed and Congestion*
2. *¹ ACPO Speed Enforcement Policy Guidance

"The Association of Chief Police Officers (ACPO) has issued speed enforcement policy guidance, which suggests that enforcement will normally occur when a driver exceeds the speed limit by a particular margin. This is normally 10 per cent over the speed limit plus 2 mph. It also sets guidelines for when it would not be appropriate to issue a fixed penalty notice but to issue a summons instead.

Note: These are guidelines and that a police officer has discretion to act outside of them providing he acts fairly, consistently and proportionately.

70 mph speed limit

- ACPO charging threshold (Fixed Penalty) 79 mph
- Summons 96 mph"

Crown Prosecution Service (CPS): *Road Traffic Offences: Guidance on Fixed Penalty Notices*

3. *² IAM on-line poll of 2,400 drivers 2011

Ice driving tips

Peter Rodger advises on driving on ice.

IAM chief examiner Peter Rodger said: “Now is the time to start thinking about how to deal with wintry weather, so that when it comes along you are ready for it.”

Rodger offers six tips to drive confidently in icy conditions:

1. Ensure you have de-icer and a scraper. Before setting off, make sure you clean any ice or condensation from all the windows so that your visibility is clear.
2. When you set off, do so in second gear, releasing the clutch and accelerating gently.
3. As you drive, stay in higher gears to minimise the possibility of wheel spin.
4. Stopping distances are increased by up to 10 times in icy conditions, so leave much more distance than usual between your car and the car in front.
5. If your car loses grip, take your foot off the accelerator, and point the front wheels where you want to go.
6. Bear in mind, after the frost has gone, ice can remain in areas which are shaded by trees and buildings, including bridges.

Rodger said: “We all need to respect that the weather changes and make adjustments to deal with it. Being mentally prepared as well as having the right equipment is vital, so think about last year, any problems it caused you, and what you need to do to overcome them if they recur this year.”



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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