

MINI ROUNDABOUT

October 2011

MELKSHAM

SPEED
GEAR
ACCELERATION
POSITION
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

October 20th	The AA – Martin Higgins & Steve Evans [N.B. No Library tonight. Items due tonight now due on 17 th November]
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

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

Member's Evening

We are looking at putting on a Member's Evening at one of our Social Evenings in 2012 (possibly 19th April). This would entail a selection of members giving a short talk/presentation about an aspect of their life – this could be motoring related or something completely different. What do you get up to at work, with your family, in your spare time? Or perhaps you have a driving story you could tell us. We hope that this informal evening will help us to get to know one another better. If you are interested in giving a 5-10 minute talk (or longer if you would like), please speak to Helen at a Social Evening or email events.coordinator@m-a-m.org.uk. Thank you.

Member Profiles

We would like to try to get to know our members a little better. Therefore we will be 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. Last month we featured our Newsletter Editor and Webmaster, Luke. This month it's the turn of our Treasurer, Douglas Colborne.

Getting to know: Douglas Colborne

Born and brought up in Middlesex, I have been an IAM member since 1987, having taken the advanced driving test in the Exeter area early that year.

After graduation from Reading University in Physics and Mathematics in 1963, my first job took me to Paignton, Devon working as a development engineer with STC. It was in Devon that I met my future wife Andrea. We married in October 1966 and moved to Reading. A lot else happened that year quite apart from England winning the World Cup!



My job changed that year as I transferred to a technical sales role still with STC, setting my work course with no less than six different companies for the following 42 years. Work took us back to the Paignton area in 1976 and what looked like being a short term move at the time turned into very nearly thirty years! Along the way we had two sons, both now grown up and married, one in Bath and the other in Littlehampton (working in car design, by the way) and two granddaughters, now aged 11 and 13.

With retirement on the horizon and the company I worked for on the move, it was time to say: "Where next?" So we came to Derry Hill in March 2006. House and location ticked all the boxes.

I put myself forward for a "Drive Check" in 2007, successfully I'm glad to say, and it was suggested that I might appreciate joining a local group which is how I came to MAM.

Apart from driving, I enjoy cycling, swimming, gardening and attempted DIY while together Andrea and I find time for grandchildren and travel.

Postscript

It was difficult to find any pictures of me since I'm usually behind the camera. The sneak picture above was taken while pausing on the Col du Mont Cenis last year while driving from France into Italy.

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.

Deaths and injuries on Britain's roads – 2010

[Recent] Department for Transport statistics confirm numbers of people killed in road accidents in 2010 fell to 1,850 a reduction of 17 per cent on the previous year. Seriously injured numbers fell to 22,660 – down eight per cent.

Despite this decline, the IAM's latest poll reveals that very few of the 2700 respondents have any faith in road deaths continuing to drop: Twenty-five per cent think they will keep going down. Thirty-four per cent think they will remain the same, and 36 per cent of respondents think that casualty rates will rise a little over the next three years.

The poll respondents are realistic about the likelihood of getting improved services on their roads with the threat of spending cuts. Seventy per cent think there will be a negative impact on the number of police enforcing traffic laws, 84 per cent think road conditions and potholes will worsen, 72 per cent think there will be a negative impact on the focus on road safety education and fewer road safety officers, and 62 per cent think there will be more unroadworthy cars on the road.

Seventy per cent think improved vehicle design and technology is the biggest single reason for declining deaths and injuries on our roads and 37 per cent think that more incentives to take post-test training courses will deliver the biggest improvements in the future.

IAM chief executive Simon Best said: "The value of preventing each fatal crash on UK roads is around £1.8 million, and approximately £200,000 for each serious injury – it's clear that effective road safety initiatives not only save lives but also save the nation money.

"The government should think about the real value of road safety initiatives when it considers its expenditure plans.

"As more and more driver aids are introduced we need to re-think the way we approach safe driving. Vehicle technology requires new thinking and an even greater emphasis on the driver as the decision-maker. The challenge now is for us all to treat driving as a skill for life and embrace post-test training."

Low sun and dirty windscreens

Peter Rodger advises drivers on dealing with low sun and dazzle.

- Always keep a good pair of sunglasses in the car – they really help.
- If you can't see, do the obvious thing and slow down, keeping an eye on the vehicle behind, in case the following traffic can't see you against the sun.
- If the sun is behind you, it's in the eyes of drivers coming towards you – be aware they might not see you.
- Low sun behind can dazzle you through your mirrors so be ready to dip the mirror and check over your shoulder for vehicles in your blind spot.
- Low sun highlights scratches and grime, so keep your washer bottles topped up with a good quality screenwash and change your windscreen wipers every year.
- Turn on your headlights before sunset and keep them on for an hour after sunrise so that it's easier for other drivers to see you in twilight.

Rodger said: "Dirty windscreens make it even more difficult for drivers to see in the low sun we get every morning and late afternoon in the winter months. Your heater is often on demist, blowing traffic fumes, suspended oil and smoke onto the inside of the screen which quickly builds to a film of grime which is a major cause of glare. Clean your screen inside and out, with glass cleaner at least once a week."

Slippery when wet

IAM chief examiner Peter Rodger offers some advice on maintaining your car during the autumn period.

- Clear out plenum chambers – the tray-like area under the bonnet, below the windscreen. This can fill up with water when it gets blocked with leaves. This water can seep into the car's electrics, causing expensive and potentially dangerous damage.
- A patch of wet leaves can be as dangerous as hitting standing water – take care and reduce your speed before driving onto them.
- In cold weather, clear windscreens of condensation or ice before setting off. Always give yourself extra time, to ensure visibility is at an optimum before starting your journey.
- Make sure your wiper blades are in good condition. If they squeak as they wipe, they probably need replacing, and always make sure they are turned off before starting the ignition to save the blades and the risk of a blown motor fuse when the first frost hits.
- Autumn can also take its toll on car batteries – keep the top of the battery clean and dry and make sure the terminals are tight and free from corrosion.
- If a battery is more than three years old, check it now; you might save yourself many a frustrating start to a morning.

Rodger said: "Bear in mind that leaves can be slippery, especially when wet. Avoid hard acceleration or braking as it can cause skidding. And be aware that there may be a dip, pothole or other road hazard hiding under those leaves covering the road."

Why does it always rain on me?

Peter Rodger gives advice on driving in heavy rain.

- Before you set off, set your heater controls – rain makes the windows mist up in seconds. You don't want to be fiddling with controls when you should be concentrating on the road
- Slow down. In the rain your stopping distance should be at least doubled. Giving yourself more space helps you to avoid spray, especially when following a large vehicle
- Keep your eyes on the road ahead and plan your driving so that you can brake, accelerate and steer smoothly – harsh manoeuvres will unbalance the car
- If you have cruise control, avoid using it on wet roads – it may create problems if you start to aquaplane
- See and be seen. Put your lights on – as a rule of thumb, whenever you need to use your wipers you should also turn your headlights on, and before overtaking put your wipers on their fastest setting
- Making sure your car is properly maintained will make a difference too. Check your wipers regularly, that your tyres are properly inflated and have enough tread, and that all of your lights work and are clean. By law, you must keep the windscreen washer filled, but remember, to keep your windows clean, you must do the inside as well

Rodger said: "There's nothing quite like getting to your car in the rain. It's a haven from the elements. But be cautious, especially after prolonged dry spells – rain on a dry road is dangerously slippery. And think about the people on the pavements – remember it is illegal to splash pedestrians."

IAM says work your ABS

The IAM is supporting calls to make anti-lock braking systems (ABS) compulsory on all new large motorcycles by 2015. MEPs will shortly debate proposals that would force manufacturers to introduce ABS as standard on all new motorcycles over 125cc. The proposals set a deadline of 2017 for this, although the IAM and the FIA would like to see this brought forward by two years so that the safety benefits can be seen as soon as possible.

In 2010, the number of motorcyclists involved in fatal accidents in the UK came to 403* – 21 per cent of all road deaths. Yet motorcyclists make up just four per cent of road users. The risk of being killed or injured is 50 times greater for motorcyclists than for car drivers, over the same distance. Based on recent research by the FIA and from experience in Italy, where nearly a quarter of all new large bikes already have ABS, the IAM estimates that compulsory introduction would save 1500 lives a year across Europe. In the UK three quarters of all bikers killed are riding the biggest bikes so this technology has huge potential to save lives here. The IAM's report *Licensed to Skill* also shows that 'sudden braking' and 'slippery road' are in the top 10 causation factors for motorcycle casualties.

IAM director of policy and research Neil Greig said: "ABS is available now on many new bikes and the evidence is clear from across Europe that it is delivering fewer deaths. Carefully crafted legislation making ABS mandatory for all large road motorcycles would make motorcyclists safer, although we do still have concerns about the long term reliability of some ABS systems. On motorcycles ABS is still prone to faults because it is more open to the elements and repairs can be very expensive. Compulsory fitment will bring down unit costs and allow all riders to enjoy the safety benefits."

IAM welcome 80mph speed limit trial

The IAM welcomes the proposals for a trial to increase the motorway speed limit from 70 to 80 mph. With well established controlled and managed sections of the motorway network in existence already, it is feasible to assess its practicality and safety, and gauge driver's reaction to it.

IAM chief examiner Peter Rodger said: "We support a trial of an increase to 80 mph on controlled sections of the motorway. An increase may yield economic benefits of shorter journey times, but this has to be balanced against the potential road safety issues."

IAM response to changes in dangerous driving penalties

IAM spokesperson Vince Yearley said: "Dangerous driving can result in anything from near misses to serious injuries. But the maximum jail term for dangerous driving must relate to the driving offence - not the consequences, however awful."

The following figures represent the number of accidents caused last year by various types of dangerous driving activity (Department for Transport statistics):

- 18,803 accidents were caused by careless, reckless or hurried driving.
- 3,862 accidents were caused by aggressive driving.
- Aggressive, careless, reckless or hurried driving caused at least one death a day.
- 5,858 accidents were caused by drivers impaired by drugs or alcohol, resulting in 160 deaths.
- A significant 32,525 accidents were caused by illegal manoeuvres such as exceeding the speed limit, illegal turns, disobeying traffic signals and disobeying rules pedestrian crossings.
- 14 deaths and 139 serious accidents involved a stolen vehicle.

Conference calls for more young driver training

The IAM's annual conference of 400 road safety experts [has] called on the government to introduce a new system of post-test driver training to reduce the rate of serious road accidents involving young people.

In 2010, 30 per cent of car occupant fatalities were young drivers (17-24 years) or passengers of a young driver. Car occupant fatalities were 835, young driver fatalities 158 and passenger of young drivers fatalities 93¹. 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: "Having looked at 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 from 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 discounts on insurance and cheaper vehicle excise duty 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."

¹Department for Transport statistics <http://www.dft.gov.uk/statistics/releases/road-accidents-and-safety-annual-report-2010/>

* In Austria new drivers have at least three further contacts with qualified instructors within 12 to 18 months of passing their driving test. This has successfully reduced the number of deaths of young male drivers by nearly 30 per cent. After taking the test, drivers have an initial assessment to gain knowledge of their experience and to highlight any deficiencies. This is followed by visits to a road safety centre to demonstrate handling in the wet, speed into corners and the impact of speed on stopping distances.

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

Young drivers being priced off the road

[Article source: Young Marmalade, via the IAM]

Almost all young drivers feel they are being priced off the road by the cost of motor insurance, according to a survey.

As many as 21% of these young motorists have considered driving without insurance, revealed the poll by the Young Marmalade insurance company in conjunction with the House of Commons Transport Committee.

The committee's chairman, Louise Ellman, said she was "extremely concerned" at the poll results.

She added that she would be putting the results of the survey to ministers when they appear before the committee later today [11 October] to give evidence in an inquiry into the cost of motor insurance.

Among those appearing is former home secretary and justice secretary Jack Straw.

The poll of 1,127 young drivers showed that 96% felt young drivers were being priced off the road, while 30% had considered altering the information they provided to insurance firms in order to get a lower quote.

More than half (57%) were unaware that, after an accident, insurance firms often pass personal details to a solicitor, car hire firm or garage in return for a referral fee.

Mrs Ellman (Lab, Liverpool Riverside) said: "I am extremely concerned about these results, which show that young drivers think they are being priced off the road because of the high cost of motor insurance.

"It is shocking that so many young drivers are considering breaking the law - by driving without insurance or changing the details they provide to insurers - in order to get a cheaper premium."

She went on: "It's revealing that most young drivers are also unaware that many insurers receive referral fees in order to deal with claims they make.

"This highlights why the committee called for referral fees to be made more transparent in its report on the cost of motor insurance earlier this year."

Mike Penning, parliamentary under-secretary of state for transport, said: "We know that the cost of insurance is a problem for young drivers. That is why we are making changes to the driving test to make sure it better prepares drivers for real life on the road, and introducing a new 'pass plus' qualification to help improve the skills and knowledge of young drivers so that insurers then have the confidence to offer them lower premiums.

"In addition, we have introduced a new offence of keeping an uninsured vehicle, helping us to take targeted action against uninsured driving, which contributes to higher premiums."

IAM Response

IAM chief executive Simon Best said: "The challenge for the insurance industry is how to balance the need for driving experience with the very real risk that young drivers pose to themselves and other road users. Insurance premiums are matching university tuition fees. Many young people need a car to get to work. There are serious implications to the economy if they can't afford to drive, and to road safety if they simply choose to forgo insurance."

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

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.