

MINI ROUNDABOUT

September 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

September 15th	Fire Safety – Rob Buckland, Wiltshire Fire & Rescue Service [N.B. Abnormal Load Escorting has had to be postponed, date TBC]
October 20th	The AA
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.

Driving Joke

[Thanks to Pat for providing this joke. If you have any driving related stories or jokes that you would like to share, send them to roundabout.editor@m-a-m.org.uk]

Waiting in Doncaster to catch speeding drivers, a Police Officer sees a car puttering along at 22mph. Says he to himself: "This driver is just as dangerous as a speeder!" So he turns on his lights and pulls the driver over. Approaching the car, he notices that there are five old ladies, two in the front seats and three in the back...wide eyed and white as ghosts. The driver, obviously confused, says to him "Officer, I don't understand, I was doing exactly the speed limit! What seems to be the problem?"

"Ma'am," the officer replies, "you weren't speeding, but you should know that driving slower than the speed limit can also be a danger to other drivers."

"Slower than the speed limit? No sir, I was doing the speed limit exactly...Twenty-two miles an hour!"the old woman says a bit proudly.

The Police officer, trying to contain a chuckle explains to her that A22 is the road number, not the speed limit. A bit embarrassed, the woman grins and thanks the officer for pointing out her error.

"But before I let you go, Ma'am, I have to ask...Is everyone in this car OK? These women seem awfully shaken, and they haven't made a sound this whole time," the officer asks.

"Oh, they'll be all right in a minute officer. We've just come off the A120."

Library Book and Scrapbook

There is a new book in your Library. It's called "For The World's Best Driver". I found it a good and interesting book to read. There are many different aspects in the book: the history items are not too long, so you don't get bored with the subject; there are surprising different kinds of facts; light hearted jokes; general information. The book will take more than 5 minutes to read, but it will be worth it. Paul, your ex-chairman has read this book, so you could have a second opinion on the book from him.

The Scrapbook needs new input! So, you will see 3 very different items in it. Your Membership Secretary/Associates Coordinator Angela, and Member Alan, are Members of the Chippenham Town Band. There are now photos in the Scrapbook showing them at their Band's Concert in Chippenham Park on the 1st May 2011. Also, your Events Coordinator Helen, and Mini Roundabout Editor/Webmaster Luke, have submitted very interesting biographies of themselves. I am trying to do the same as Helen and Luke, but must admit, not getting very far with it!

If you feel you could/would/like to contribute anything to the Group's Scrapbook, please do so by handing to me at a Social Evening or emailing librarian@m-a-m.org.uk



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. We will start with the Committee. If you would like to send us a profile please either use the template below, or create your own, and send it to roundabout.editor@m-a-m.org.uk. Our first profile is from Newsletter Editor and Webmaster, Luke Pickett.

Member Profile: Luke Pickett

Date of test pass: July 2007

Position on Committee: Newsletter Editor & Webmaster

Home life: Luke is married to Helen (Events Coordinator), and they have a 1 year old son called Alexander. Family is important, with both sets of parents living within a five minute walk of home.



Education: Luke gained his GCSEs and A Levels at The John of Gaunt School in Trowbridge. He studied music at Cardiff University, gaining a BMus degree, and then completed his PGCE in secondary school music teaching at Bath Spa University in 2009.

Day job: Teacher – although trained as a secondary school music teacher, Luke is currently working as a brass instrumental teacher for Swindon Music Service, teaching whole classes and large groups in primary and secondary schools. He also works as a supply teacher in Wiltshire, again at primary and secondary level. In the summer months Luke works as an examiner for the Edexcel exam board, marking GCSE and A Level music examination papers.

Hobbies: Luke has always been interested in music and played in numerous bands and orchestras throughout his school and university life. Luke was heavily involved in Trowbridge & District Youth Band, which is where he met Helen. He currently plays 1st Trombone for Amesbury Town Band and is asked to conduct when the Musical Director is absent. Luke is also the conductor for Westbury & District Choral Society, and 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.

Date profile compiled: September 2011

Public want 20mph limits, but not the enforcement

Sixty-seven per cent of people think that 20mph zones should be used outside schools according to the latest poll of nearly 4000 people by the IAM.

A further 38 per cent think that they should be used on roads with amenities such as parks and shops, but only a quarter would like to see them made the default speed limit in all built-up areas. Forty-three per cent of people would like the road outside their house to have a 20mph speed limit, but opinion is split here as 39 per cent wouldn't.

Forty per cent of people think that this speed limit is best enforced by speed limit signs, leaving the police to enforce the limit and the public to comply. Measures to physically slow people down are less popular, with only 20 per cent in favour of safety cameras, and 21 per cent supporting a combination of measures including road humps and cameras.

Respondents felt that enforcing the limit in 20mph zones should be of medium priority compared to other road policing duties.

IAM head of road safety Kevin Delaney said: "The IAM supports the selective use of 20mph speed limits where there is clear evidence that the risk of casualties will be reduced. But blanket 20mph speed limits or limits at inappropriate sites risk widespread disregard by drivers who do not recognise a necessity for them. Consultation with, and buy-in from, local people here is essential.

"Passive enforcement measures, such as speed bumps, are unpopular and active enforcement by police is unrealistic in the current financial climate. If lower speed limits are restricted to locations and times where there is an obvious need, responsible drivers, who are the overwhelming majority, will adhere to them without the need for enforcement."

Advanced motorist Rob Raikes, 66, said: "In Portsmouth where there is a city wide 20 mph limit, motorists have found that the average journey time has increased by a very small amount, and that the stress of driving has reduced by quite a large one. Our streets should be for people, not cars."

Back to school with the IAM

IAM chief examiner Peter Rodger is asking drivers to take extra care now that the school run has started again.

- Don't compromise your concentration and the safety of other road users by being in a hurry. Leaving the house five minutes earlier changes the nature of how you make the journey.
- Take extra care to compensate for the fact that children won't always be paying attention, especially when approaching the school gate.
- Never stop on the yellow "zig zags" by the school gate, and always ensure you let your passengers out on the pavement side.
- An informal arrangement to share the driving with other parents reduces driving pressure.
- Be aware that the speed limit surrounding your local school may have been reduced to 20mph, so slow down and keep an eye out for children crossing the road.
- If your children are walking to school on their own, make sure they are aware of the potential hazards such as crossing busy roads and encourage them to always use the pedestrian crossing if there is one.

Rodger said: "The school run brings with it a 20 per cent growth in rush hour traffic. A little preparation can go a long way to making the school run easier, and reducing your blood pressure in the morning."

Are roads just for cars?

Fifty-eight per cent of people think that drivers should be held legally responsible for accidents between cars and more vulnerable road users in pedestrian-priority zones, according to the latest poll by road safety charity the IAM.

Woonerfs* are the most sophisticated of these zones, and are a concept which comes from the Netherlands where they are commonly used. They are designed to be used at walking pace to make them safer for more vulnerable road users and encourage cycling and walking. Forty-eight per cent of the 4,000 respondents think the Woonerf concept – with no pavements, giving cars, pedestrians and cyclists equal use of the same road space – is a good idea for use in the UK, with 27 per cent thinking they are a bad idea.

When asked where these zones should be sited primarily, 36 per cent said in shopping areas, and similar areas with high pedestrian traffic, and a further 33 per cent thought they would be of the most use in some residential areas where a particular need was identified. Sixteen per cent think they should be used on all residential roads.

The biggest benefit of the system, as voted for by more than half of the respondents was the removal of street clutter including kerbs, signs and railings. Improved pedestrian and cyclist safety were also popular at 49 and 43 per cent respectively, and only a quarter believed there would be no benefit at all.

Opinion on whether the respondents themselves would want to live in such a zone was evenly split, at 39 per cent each.

IAM director of policy and research Neil Greig said: “Our poll reveals a surprisingly positive attitude towards better protection of cyclists and pedestrians, both in road layout and legal responsibility. On the continent, attractive street design is used to make it clear where pedestrians have priority but this approach is in its infancy in the UK.

“The IAM supports any move to improve safety for pedestrians and cyclists, but research is needed into the best way to inform drivers about changes in legal responsibility, and also on the effect a Woonerf might have on the road sense of children brought up in such a zone, when later exposed to less protected areas.”

*A Woonerf is a Dutch concept where by design, drivers and riders are restricted to a maximum speed called ‘footpace’ (one of the last archaic concepts in Dutch traffic law) referring to the pace of a horse. In practice this means a 15 km/h (10mph) maximum applies to all drivers and riders. Pedestrians may use all of the road and the responsibility is on drivers and riders to avoid being in an accident with a pedestrian. In an accident with a child under 14 years old, the driver is held to be liable; in one involving a pedestrian over 14, the likelihood is that the court will decide in favour of the pedestrian, but it is not based on explicit traffic law.

Flash floods – advice for drivers

Motorists are being warned that the inevitable flash floods that come with heavy rain could make driving conditions particularly hazardous. Road safety charity the IAM is warning that motorists could face torrential rain in the coming days, which means poor driving visibility, difficult car control, slippery road surfaces and increased stopping distances.

IAM chief examiner Peter Rodger said: "A suddenly very wet road surface increases the chances of slipping when braking or steering, which is a problem not just for motorists, but cyclists and motorcyclists too."

In cases of severe flooding, you should reconsider making the journey at all. If it is unavoidable, and you have to drive through deep water, the IAM recommends drivers take the following precautions:

- Drive on the highest section of the road and don't set off if a vehicle is approaching you.
- Leave time and space to avoid swamping other cars and pedestrians.
- Drive slowly and keep going once you have started - make sure you have a clear run. In manual car, keep the revs high by "slipping the clutch" (which means the clutch is not fully engaged) all the time you are in the water.
- If you can't see where you are going to come out of the water, think twice about starting to drive into it.
- Under no circumstances in deep water take your foot off the accelerator, as this could allow water to travel up the exhaust pipe.
- Once you're out of the water, dry the brakes before you need them. The best way is to lightly apply the brake as you drive along for a few seconds, after checking nothing is following you too closely.

Mr Rodger added: "Another thing to consider when driving in wet conditions is stopping distances, as roads are slippery and it will take longer to stop. Drop your speed and give yourself more time to slow down. Visibility will be lower during heavy rain, so make a point of turning on your headlights whenever you need to use your windscreen wipers. Use your air conditioning to help clear the windows."

Comment on change to pothole rules

The Highways Agency has revised the rules on potholes in the road. Previously contractors were required to ensure that drivers were given a quiet, comfortable and even ride by making sure that any defects in the surface of the road were repaired within a 24-hour timeframe. However, the new rules state that potholes smaller than 15cm wide or 4cm deep are not classed as urgent for repair. The new guidelines refer to trunk roads and motorways. The massive increase in potholes is a consequence of three severe winters with 2010/ 2011 being the coldest for 100 years combining with years of underinvestment in routine road maintenance.

IAM director of policy Neil Greig said: "This just seems to be storing up larger repair bills for the future. All large potholes start off as small potholes -- it's easier and cheaper to fix them early and reduce the risk to road users. The reaction of the Highways Agency to this crisis is worrying because it seems to be an attempt to switch their legal responsibilities to maintain safe motorways and trunk roads from themselves to their contractors, in the hope they will come up with something. The Highways Agency's roads are the backbone of the country's transport system which is why the IAM would like to see their risk assessment of this decision to be assured that motorists will not be put at risk."

Sky high insurance creates road safety hazard for young drivers

Road safety charity the IAM is calling on insurance companies to overhaul their systems for calculating prices for young drivers, after finding that a search for car insurance quotes for an average 17 year old driver revealed the cheapest annual premium to be £7,091.38. The top price quoted was just over £9700.

This particular search – made on a popular price comparison site – was for the fictional ‘Tom Stevens’, with a date of birth of the 03/03/1994. He has held a full licence for one month, and was requesting insurance on a 2007 1.1l Kia Picanto. He lives in the London Borough of Richmond upon Thames and claimed the car would be parked on the road. He has no previous claims or convictions and is in full-time education with a part-time job, and requested cover just for ‘social’ use.

Once Tom had been driving for a year, his cheapest quote dropped to £2528.55, on an otherwise like-for-like basis.

IAM director of policy and research Neil Greig said: “Young drivers can only learn safer driving by practising it, but huge insurance premiums risk pricing them off the road. The challenge for the government, the insurance industry and road safety experts is how to balance the need for experience with the very real risk that young drivers pose to themselves and other road users.

“When an insurance premium is matching university tuition fees, innovative thinking is needed to reward the safest young drivers or spread the cost in a more manageable way.

“Many young people will need a car to get to work and there are serious implications to the economy of young people who are unable to afford to drive, and to road safety if drivers simply choose to forgo insurance.”

Road rage won’t get you anywhere

IAM chief examiner Peter Rodger looks at how to avoid conflict on the road:

- Most irritating manoeuvres made by other drivers are unintentional. Don’t take your frustration out by making offensive gestures, beeping your horn or flashing your lights.
- Don’t compete or retaliate. If someone’s driving annoys you, don’t try to ‘educate’ them.
- Be patient in traffic, and try not to push into traffic queues. If you signal in plenty of time, other drivers will usually let you in.
- Courtesy costs nothing. Being polite can diffuse a situation if you have made a mistake.
- Set an example to others. Give way at busy junctions or where traffic lanes merge. Wherever there are merging lanes, join in turn.
- Avoid making eye contact in a confrontation – while a friendly wave could show you’ve made an honest mistake, you might appear to be challenging the other road user.
- Don’t respond to somebody else’s bad behaviour by accelerating, braking or swerving suddenly. As well as winding up other drivers, you reduce your own car control.

Rodger said: “We all make mistakes when we’re driving, so try and cut people some slack when they do so. Road rage doesn’t improve the situation, and puts you, your passengers, and other road users around you at risk. The best thing is to stay calm and continue to drive sensibly so as not to make the situation any worse.”

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.

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