

MINI ROUNDABOUT

January 2012

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

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 – let Helen know if you want to give a short talk
May 17th	22 nd Annual General Meeting – Speaker: Gavin Edwards, General Manager of European Technical Centre, Cooper Tires

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

Membership Renewal

It's that time of year again! Membership remains at £12 for 2012. You will need to return the Membership Renewal Form and Gift Aid Form to Angela by **31st January** at the latest. If you receive *Mini-Roundabout* via email you can send your forms to Angela via email if you wish. If you would like to pay via standing order please complete the standing order instruction and send it to your bank (if you normally pay by standing order there is no need to send this form again, but you do still need to send your renewal form to Angela). All renewal forms and gift aid forms should be returned to the Membership Secretary, Angela Summers, at:

membership.officer@m-a-m.org.uk or 2 York Close, Chippenham, SN14 0QB

Forms were sent out with the December *Mini-Roundabout*. If you have lost yours, please contact Angela or Luke to obtain replacements. If for any reason you do not wish to renew your membership, please let Angela know. Your continued support is much appreciated.

Note this applies to full members only, not current associates.

Driving Comedy – Thursday 19th January

A couple of people have asked what on earth this presentation could be about! Here is your answer: Roger Wiltshire is a stand-up comedian and will be mixing driving stories with stand up comedy including:

- How he nearly became an advanced motorcyclist
- How riding motorbikes altered his physical appearance
- How the Pink Panther nearly made him crash a motorbike (twice)

If you receive *Mini-Roundabout* electronically, a sample of Roger's work can be found by clicking [here](#).

Member Profile: Angela Summers



Angela has been a full member of the IAM and Melksham and District Advanced Motorists since March 2003, and is now a Senior Observer and Membership Secretary/Associate Coordinator.



She is a qualified DSA Driving Instructor and Driving Instructor Trainer, and is currently studying for a Diploma in Driving Instruction.

Other “work” has consisted of running and instructing Cycling Proficiency courses for year 6 Primary School children, and running/teaching cooking, Art and Music classes at Primary schools and Junior Bands.

Married to Tony, they have 3 children: Ellen 17 yrs; Laura 14 yrs; and David 8 yrs, and live in Chippenham, Wiltshire.

Outside of work, Angela loves horses and music, belonging to the very active Chippenham Town Band, as a Saxophonist. She is also Engagements Secretary on the Band Committee, arranging events with organisers for village fetes, military and private civilian functions and parties, and special occasions like Royal Wedding/Jubilee celebrations and Christmas Carols and Bandstand events.

Councils give roads the cold shoulder

In November we featured an article about Councils who are spending less on winter maintenance this year (electronic readers can click [here](#) to read the article again). Since then we have been trying to get a statement from Wiltshire Council in reaction to this article. We finally have it, and here it is:

“Over the summer months Wiltshire Council has been preparing for winter. This preparation includes driving and checking old and new gritting routes, refilling grit bins, carrying out repairs and servicing to our weather stations that are strategically placed throughout the county, replenishing the salt stock with 14,000 tonnes of salt in our depots, and most importantly, ensuring that the gritting fleet is serviced, calibrated and fully fit for purpose for the demanding months that lay ahead.

Wiltshire Council has 61 gritting vehicles all of which pass through our own maintenance workshops. They carry out a thorough check and service of all components including the ploughs to ensure breakdowns are at a minimum through the winter. Driver training also has to be carried out and the gritting routes are discussed with drivers so that they familiarise themselves with any changes that may have been made.

This year sees the arrival of 3 new gritters to the fleet. These are factory prepared and so are ready for operation when they arrive. They will join the rest of the fleet which covers around 54,000 kilometres a year. Each time a salt run is called the vehicles travel approximately 1,100 kilometres between them and last year [2010/11] the fleet was mobilised more than 50 times.

Wiltshire Council will continue to work throughout the winter to ensure as much of the network is as safe as possible but motorists are urged to drive carefully in wintry conditions and never assume that a road has been gritted.

There have been no budget reductions to the winter service.”

[N.B. Helen’s job has recently changed and she is no longer involved in winter maintenance, so any issues or questions regarding this should be taken up with Wiltshire Council directly.]

IAM response to changes to the driving test

Road safety minister Mike Penning [has] announced that learner drivers are to be allowed to have driving lessons on motorways in an attempt to cut the death toll among novice motorists.

IAM chief executive Simon Best said: “This change will mean that properly supervised young drivers can learn how to drive on a motorway with somebody beside them. Motorways are, after all, our safest roads.

“As part of the changes to the test, we would also like to see more training for learners on rural roads – our most dangerous roads.”

The fast and the curious

Sixty-two per cent of young male novice drivers think they are more skilful than the average driver, according to the IAM's latest report, *The fast and the curious: young people's attitudes to driver training*. Only 32 per cent of young women say the same.

Young, novice drivers are the highest risk group on our roads, and male drivers between 17-29 are more than twice as likely to be killed or seriously injured as young female drivers*. Thirty per cent of car occupant fatalities are drivers aged 17-24, or passengers of a driver aged 17-24*¹, yet this age group makes up only eight per cent of all driving licence holders*².

The report also highlights the fact that young drivers are much more likely to take post-test training if there are proper financial incentives – reduced insurance premiums would encourage three-quarters of young novice drivers to consider further training.

IAM chief executive Simon Best, speaking at the IAM's annual lunch today, said: "Young male drivers suffer from a lethal combination of overconfidence and inexperience. They don't need curfews and other restrictions on their driving; they need to practice and gain driving experience safely.

"There are many paying thousands of pounds a year in insurance and killing themselves. The solution to this problem is to link driver training and insurance discounts."

But this training needs to be done early. Fewer miles driven since passing the practical driving test and fewer attempts to pass the practical driving test (more likely to be a first time passer) make drivers more likely to be positive about further training.

Notes:

1. For the purposes of the research young novice drivers were defined as someone aged 17-30 who had passed their driving test within the last three years.
2. *Calculated from Department for Transport statistics 'Reported Road Casualties in Great Britain' (published 2010). Table RAS30011 'Reported killed or seriously injured casualties by gender, road user type and age'
3. *¹Department for Transport, Reported Road Casualties in Great Britain, Table RAS40006 (2010)
4. *²DVLA, Driving Licence Statistics by age as at 25 September 2010

IAM response to Department for Transport's (DfT) release *Badge fraud crackdown for New Year*

Tough new measures to crack down on drivers who abuse the disabled parking system - including a new Blue Badge design which is harder to forge - came into force on 1 January. The full article can be found on the NDS/COI website by clicking [here](#).

IAM director of policy and research Neil Greig said: "While this is a welcome modernisation and security improvement to the blue badge system, much more must be done to expose those people who abuse the scheme by using the badge of a family member or friend to park in reserved parking bays. In the USA, police and parking officials have the powers and duty to enforce parking spaces reserved for badge holders – not just on roads but in public and private car parks too – and very heavy fines are levied on offenders. There must be much greater emphasis on enforcement by police and local authorities if this parking fraud is to be stopped."

Motorway services – show them no merci

Drivers continue to part with more cash for everyday items at motorway service areas, shelling out up to 40 per cent more for everyday items than they would on the high street.

A large Snickers bar costs 90 pence from a motorway service area compared to 68 pence from a high street branch – 32 per cent more – while a regular coffee costs 16 per cent more on the motorway. A packet of McCoys crisps was almost 45 per cent more expensive than a shop on the high street, and a packet of Walkers crisps was marked up by 36 per cent.

With petrol prices averaging about ten pence per litre more than at off-motorway forecourts the IAM is calling for a complete review of motorway prices, together with filling stations being forced to advertise their and their competitors' fuel prices, as is the case in France.

IAM chief executive Simon Best said: "We must end this motorway madness. Everything from sweets to petrol have an outrageous mark up.

"Our advice for tired motorists is always to take your rest break and have a coffee to help you freshen up. The danger is that rip-off prices will discourage people from getting the rest they need. Parking fines for drivers who sleep for longer than two hours put people off taking rest breaks."

Research undertaken by IAM using motorway service areas and high street shops:

Product	High street prices	Motorway services	Difference
Regular cafe Americano	£1.90	£2.20	15.79%
Regular flat white	£2.40	£2.80	16.67%
Regular hot chocolate	£2.40	£2.80	16.67%
Snickers duo	68p	90p	32.35%
Double Decker	77p	80p	3.90%
Walkers cheese and onion	70p	95p	35.71%
McCoys cheddar & onion	66p	95p	43.94%
Coca Cola 500ml	£1.67	£1.72	2.99%

IAM response to Department for Transport's (DfT) release *Government awards police forces £2.7 million to tackle motorway closures*

The full article can be found on the NDS/COI website by clicking [here](#).

IAM director of policy and research Neil Greig said: "This is a long lasting Christmas present for all those drivers who have ever been stuck for hours while the police sort out the aftermath of crashes. The frustration caused by delays leads to erratic driving, so as well as improving journey times this will also serve to make our motorways safer."

Driving and drugs don't work

Road safety charity the IAM is offering weekly motoring tips from Britain's top advanced driver, Peter Rodger. This week, he is giving advice on the risks of the effects of legal drugs.

- When you begin a new medication, ask the doctor or pharmacist about the side effects.
- Inform your doctor or pharmacist if you drive for work.
- Read the leaflet and labels with the medication for advice concerning side effects.
- Many medications may affect your driving even though you feel fine.
- If your medicine makes you dizzy or drowsy and you need to drive, talk to your doctor about taking medication which doesn't have these side effects.

IAM chief examiner Peter Rodger said: "Everyone knows that driving and taking illegal drugs is reckless and dangerous. But prescription and over-the-counter medication can also affect your ability to drive."

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.

Windy days ahead

Peter Rodger, Chief Examiner, gives tips for motorists to bear in mind during windy weather:

- Plan your journey – is there a route with less exposure to the weather and less risk of fallen trees? Choose a sheltered route if you have the option.
- Strong winds are not constant, they are usually gusty so ensure you hold the steering wheel firmly.
- Overtaking high sided vehicles or driving past buildings can result in a sudden gust from the side as you clear.
- Give cyclists, motorcyclists, lorries and buses more room than usual. They get blown around by side winds easily.
- Watch trees and bushes on the roadside - their branches show you how strong the wind is. Look well ahead, that way you don't need to take your eye off the road and you can see any windy patches before you get to them.
- Go slow enough to cope with the gusts. Wind can get under a car and reduce its handling and braking significantly.
- Keep an eye on what is happening to other vehicles – where they are affected will give you a pre warning.
- Keep extra distance between you and the car in front.
- Be careful of debris, try and have space beside you in case you need to dodge it.

Rodger said: "I have seen a parked car moved by the wind. Don't underestimate how powerful it is and how it can affect you whilst in the car."

Road spending a third of motor tax

The Government takes more than three times more on motoring taxes than is spent on roads, latest official figures show. In 2010, fuel taxes raised around £27 billion for the Treasury, with about £5 billion coming from vehicle excise duty (VED). But the figures, from the Department for Transport (DfT), also showed that in 2010/11 just under £5.7 billion was spent on local roads and £3.75 billion was spent on national roads. The 2010/11 statistics also revealed that £7.6 billion was spent on the railways, and £4.9 billion went to local public transport. Total public spending on transport in the UK, including capital spending by public corporations, was £22.9 billion in 2010/11. The DfT said VED almost doubled between 1987 and 2010 while the increase in revenue from fuel duty more than tripled. The department added that, looking at the period 1997 to 2010, the overall cost of motoring (including purchase, petrol and oil and tax and insurance) had risen slowly, although there was a larger increase in 2010, and more slowly than the increase in the cost of living as measured by the retail prices index (RPI). But when the purchase of a vehicle is removed, motoring running costs have risen faster than the RPI, and public transport fares have risen faster than RPI. The DfT also published figures for VED evasion for 2011, which showed that about 0.7% of traffic on UK roads (including Northern Ireland) was being driven without a valid tax disc. This equates to about 249,000 vehicles, down from an estimated figure of 307,000 for 2010. The highest rate of evasion in 2011 was among motorcycles, with 2.1% not being properly taxed. It is estimated that VED evasion could have cost around £40 million in Britain in 2011/12, down from the figure of £46 million in 2010/11. Further department figures showed that while passenger numbers on London buses continue to grow, patronage in the rest of England is falling. The number of bus passenger journeys in Wales and Scotland is on the increase. Bus passenger journeys in London rose 1.9% in July-September 2011 compared with the same period last year, but total journeys in England fell 0.6%. The July-September 2011 increase in Scotland was 0.3%, while in Wales it was 0.5%.

AA president Edmund King said: "Fuel duty alone contributes more than 5% of the public finances tax-take, including council tax. Like councils that have come to rely on parking income and fines from parking and moving traffic offences to prop up town hall coffers, the Treasury is beginning to find out how high fuel prices and tax have started to kill off the goose that lays the golden egg. Sadly, the victims of tax hikes are poorer motorists - helping to turn the clock back on social mobility and undermining the ability of the workforce to find new jobs. These latest Government figures show it is business as usual for UK drivers who contribute more than three times what they receive in service. This has been the way for a generation and leads to inadequate infrastructure and frustrated road users."

A Treasury spokesman said: "At the Autumn Statement, the Government took more action to help households with motoring costs by freezing fuel duty until next August and scrapping a second planned rise altogether. This came after our decision to cut fuel duty at Budget 2011 by 1p, abolish the fuel duty escalator and replace it with a fair fuel stabiliser. The Government has listened to genuine concerns from motorists and delivered support worth more than £4.5 billion over two years. Petrol and diesel will be an average of 10 pence per litre cheaper - and the average Ford Focus driver will be £78 better off in 2012-13 - than if we had proceeded with the previous government's planned escalator. Our national infrastructure plan also confirmed that we will invest over £1 billion in tackling congestion and improving our road network."

IAM director of policy and research Neil Greig said: "This is highway robbery. Using so little of the taxes motorists pay on road upkeep is plainly unfair. Motorists are also paying the price as Britain's potholed and increasingly dangerous roads take their toll, damaging tyres, wheels, steering and suspension. Cuts are clearly going to have an impact on transport investment, but as more roads become more potholed and dangerous, spending on infrastructure now will save money in the long-term."

Talking 'bout a resolution

Peter Rodger, IAM Chief Examiner gives advice on ways to improve your driving for the new year:

- **Look out:** Keep an eye on the road ahead including pavements to give yourself more time to identify and respond to hazards.
- **Anticipate** what the traffic around you may do especially at traffic lights, roundabouts and junctions.
- **Room:** Make sure you keep space around your vehicle to leave you more time to deal with hazards.
- **Refuel:** When embarking on longer journeys, take a break every two hours.
- **Mirror-effect:** Use all your mirrors regularly so that you have 360 degree awareness of what is going on around you.
- **Don't presume:** Never assume that another motorist has seen you or will react in the same way you might.
- **Learn:** Be open minded and realistic about your limitations and always be prepared to learn from any errors you make.

IAM chief examiner Peter Rodger said: "The new year is a common time for people to sit back, reflect and reevaluate. Why not begin by making changes to your driving to make you safer on the road in 2012?"

Tips on Pumping Petrol

[Thanks to Bob for providing this. Original source: a Shell employee]

With high petrol prices continuing, here are some tricks to get more for your money out of each litre of petrol:

- **Only fill up your vehicle in the early morning:** All service stations have their storage tanks buried below ground. The colder the ground the more dense the petrol. When it gets warmer petrol expands, so if you buy in the afternoon or evening your litre is not exactly a litre. Forecourts do not have temperature compensation at the pumps.
- **Don't squeeze the trigger of the nozzle to a fast mode:** Pump the petrol slowly, thereby minimising the vapours that are created while you are pumping. All hoses at the pump have a vapour return. If you are pumping quickly, some of the liquid that goes into your tank becomes vapour. These vapours are sucked back up into the underground storage tanks, so you're getting less for your money.
- **Fill up when your tank is half full:** The more petrol you have in your tank the less air is occupying its empty space. Petrol evaporates faster than you might think. [Ed: This does, of course, make your car heavier and so will burn more fuel]
- **If there is a petrol tanker pumping into the storage tanks, do not fill up:** Most likely the petrol is being stirred up as fresh petrol is being delivered, and you might pick up some of the dirt that settles on the bottom of the tanks.

[Ed: The source of this article seems to be from America and so some of the points raised may not apply in this country. It is, however, something to bear in mind.]

Norman Baker calls Satnav Summit to help motorists find way

[Article source: nds.coi.gov.uk]

Norman Baker, Local Transport Minister, will host the Government's first 'Satnav Summit' to thrash out solutions to end the misery caused when lorry and car drivers follow out of date directions from their satnavs.

The Minister wants highway authorities, mapping providers and satnav manufacturers to work more closely to ensure everything possible is done to make sure the right vehicles are on the right roads. At present, it can take months for map updates to make their way from local councils to satnavs. As a result, thousands of drivers follow out-of-date maps, and local residents end up with inappropriate traffic on their doorsteps. Furthermore, some motorists do not update their satnav maps, either because they forget or are not aware they can do, which makes the problem even more serious.

The summit will take place in early March, a month before local authorities gain important new powers to decide how their roads appear on maps - helping them to better direct traffic. Norman Baker said:

"Out of date directions mean misdirected traffic – a scourge of local communities. It is vital highway authorities, mapping companies and satnav manufacturers work more closely together to provide drivers with accurate, up-to-date information on traffic restrictions such as narrow roads or low bridges. This will help prevent huge lorries from being sent down inappropriate roads and ensure motorists are given the best possible directions. The summit is timely because from April we are allowing local authorities to reclassify roads - ensuring A roads are placed where they want traffic to run and lowering the category of road in places they want traffic to avoid - rather than having to come to Whitehall for approval. These powers will help councils make sure that drivers are using suitable routes."

The summit will be attended by the Association of Directors of Environment, Economy, Planning and Transportation (ADEPT) – which represents councils in transport - and ITS(UK) which promotes intelligent transport technology and whose membership includes satnav companies.

It is essential that there are clear lines of communication which allow councils to quickly get road classification information to satnav companies so route calculation software can be updated.

Ministers are also tackling the misery caused by lorry drivers following satnavs down narrow and inappropriate roads as part of a package of new traffic signs rules. Under the new rules confirmed last month councils will no longer need Whitehall approval to introduce certain new signs or some existing ones that they need to use on a regular basis – including one to warn lorry drivers of unsuitable roads.

IAM Response

IAM director of policy and research Neil Greig said: "While we welcome the 'Satnav Summit', high quality and consistent signposting will always be the best way to ensure that drivers get the information they require when and where they need it most. Local authorities and government must ensure adequate funding for traditional signposting remains a top priority even in the digital age. And drivers themselves need to take some responsibility, with recent figures showing that two-thirds of drivers are confused by basic road signs. Swot up on The Highway Code, plan your route and make sure you always have a good map in the car too."

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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