

GWENT GROUP OF ADVANCED MOTORISTS

REGISTERED CHARITY NUMBER 1067486

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The above Committee will meet at 7:00pm at the Road Safety Centre, Hartridge Farm Road, Hartridge, off Ringland Way. For details of the next meeting please contact Mike Lahert.

Any Group Member or Associate Member wishing to address the Committee may do so in writing or in person by attending one of the Committee Meetings.

All are welcome.

If you wish to speak on a motorcycle issue and do not wish to approach the main committee, then you should contact Andrew Lamb.

The editorial committee of the Gwent Group of Advanced Motorists wish to make it clear that the views expressed in this newsletter and on the Group Website, are not necessarily those of the Institute of Advanced Motorists. They are purely the Individual views and opinions of the contributors and some may be controversial. It is, however, felt that only by complete and uninhibited discussion can any impact be made of the road safety problems.

FREE EXPRESSION WILL PROMOTE DISCUSSION

YOUR COMMITTEE (Bike Section)

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Members wishing to be on our e-mail mailing list should send their request to steven.williams5@ntlworld.com or call Steve on 07832 378346. Members are contacted when last minute event or special occasions arise.

WHAT MAKES THE PERFECT RIDER ?
PRACTISE MAKES PERFECT, WELL ALMOST !

A Warm Welcome to All New Members		
Name	Area	Observer
Phillip Henshall	Chepstow	Mervyn Thomas

Congratulations on Passing the I.A.M. Test		
Name	Area	Observer
Doug Jeffrey	Newport	Dave Elger
Louise Gilbey	Newport	Mike Lahert
Jason Pritchard	Newport	Mike Lahert
Richard Dowle	Pontypool	Mervyn Thomas
Peter Skelton	Abergavenny	Graham Evans

FOR SALE

BMW 325i, black alloys, 21,250 miles, as new, expect a small dent in the roof due to a football (bloody kids!!!). Leather interior. May p/x.

Engine A1 condition, 170 bhp. See photo on page 28.

Price: £3,000 for quick sale.

Chairman's letter

Whilst chatting to members at the Christmas Dinner, many said how impressed they were with the front cover of our newsletter, saying it did encourage you to pass it on. I advised them that now was the time to submit articles for future publication. Anything you have that may be of interest – it doesn't have to be motoring related, it could be a holiday (home or abroad), good accommodation, boating trip, etc.

When David Williams took over the editing of the newsletter he said he would only do a trial period of 3 issues. Having chatted to him since he has agreed to carry on for another year, for which we are most grateful. It would be appreciated if members and associates could send him as much material as possible to ensure there are always full newsletters.

Now that 2005 is with us we are looking to the year ahead. We are looking for venues to take the MDU and already have plans for visits to Monmouth, Chepstow, Steam Rally Abergavenny, Police Open Day, Chepstow Agricultural Show. See details in this newsletter. I take this opportunity in asking our members to be on the look out for any other events to which we could take the MDU for a road safety promotion. This would be of great help and would be much appreciated.

Last year the MDU proved to be a huge success the cars and bikes. We would like to hear from members and associates who could help on the MDU on promotion days whether for an hour or two, or even ½ day, anything would be appreciated. If you can help please contact me.

Bob Phelps has resigned his post as Public Relations Officer (P.R.O.) for the group. He recently tendered his resignation and I would like to thank him for efforts as P.R.O. over past years. We are grateful to him for promoting the IAM to many organisations many thanks, Bob for a job well done.

Now the time has come for us to seek a replacement P.R.O. and it's essential we get this post filled as soon as possible. We are appealing to members or associates who have a flair for this sort of role and who would be able to assist with publicity. We know we have members with many talents within our group. If you are interested please contact the chairman.

We are also on the lookout for someone who would be prepared to type minutes of meetings, etc., also other group material that needs upgrading. It would be tremendous help, as such a person is badly needed. Please contact me.

I said in my last letter, we need helpers in many fields - whether it be marshalls for fun runs / bike rides, observers for associate training, helpers for production of the bi-monthly newsletter, group promotions, or assisting on the Mobile Display Unit - we need you. If you can help in any way possible contact me on 01633-857028 or Mobile 07771-905670

Hers's to happy motoring and biking

Kind regards from your chairman

Mike Lahert.

Bike Section AGM

The Bike section held their AGM on Wednesday 26th January.

Details of the new appointments can be seen on page 4.

The previous role of the Chief Observer is now split between the Chief Observer and Membership Secretary. The Membership Secretary is also named as the point of contact on the literature handed out at events. The Chief Observer will be responsible for allocating Associates to Observers.

The next Bike Committee meeting is to be held on Wednesday 9th February 2005 at the Road Safety Centre, Edlogan Way, Cwmbran, commencing at 7:30pm.

If you have anything you wish to raise at this meeting, please forward your comments to any member of the committee.

Presentation by Dave Elger 26th January 2005

Subject: Post Test Riding

“What happens to your riding once you’ve passed your test?”

It could either

1. Improve
2. Stay the same
3. Get worse

Hopefully your riding should improve after you’ve past your test, as this is considered the basic level. At this point, you have learnt the basics of Advanced Riding Techniques and as you ride you will gradually improve, picking up tips and pointers from other riders along the way.

An ideal time to pick up pointers is to attend the group rideouts and watch other riders.

Alternatively, you could get another member, preferably someone who knows the subject, to check your riding. This could be your original observer or one of the other observers. The benefit of having another observer is that they may pick up something your original observer missed and provide you with additional tips and techniques.

If you’d like to spend some money then you could take advantage of the Assessments offered by the IAM. Currently they offer a standard assessment for £25 and a Special Assessment at £60. Both assessments are carried out with one of the IAM Examiners. As part of the Special Assessment, which is carried out by

an IAM examiner, you will receive a full written report and your ride will be graded as a percentage.

Natural progression from passing your test is to pick up more tips and techniques, work on weaknesses and to continually improve. A good example given during the presentation – What would happen if David Beckham stopped practising and dismissed his coach? Eventually his performance would drop below the standard expected. The same could be said for motorcycle riding.

Do not become complacent. Get advice.

We're here to promote safe riding practices.

Future Events

End of February 2005

Visit to I & J.L. Brown Ltd.
Makers of Fauld Town & Country Furniture

Arrangements have been made for a visit by Group Members and Friends to visit I. & J.L. Brown Ltd. They are based at Whitestone, approximately 6 miles north of Hereford. They are specialists in English Country Furniture and French Reproduction Furniture.

A visit can be arranged for the day or evening, around the end of February. If anyone is interested, please telephone Mervyn Thomas on 01291-672880 or Brendon James on 01495-722335 or Mobile 07974-108705.

Wednesday, 9th March 2005

Road Safety Centre, Edlogan Way commencing at 7:30pm

A talk by Police Constable Chris Goddard on the subject of Road Traffic Collision (R.T.C.) Investigation

The work: Road Traffic Investigators (RTI's) conduct detailed investigations into road traffic accidents, either in traffic units in the police force or on behalf of insurance companies or legal firms. They analyse events leading up to an accident and diagnose possible causes.

Their work involves collecting information by liaising with the police, obtaining witness statements and examining scene photographs. Investigators then produce scale plans and reconstruct accidents using computers, calculating contributing factors such as momentum and speed.

The information gathered is used to produce accident reports and expert witness reports for judicial and civil courts and tribunals.

Tuesday 15th March

Mike Lovelock, the IAM Staff Examiner, would like to meet the Group's observers.

Mike has a background of Bikes, Cars and HGVs.

The meeting will take place at Hartridge Road Safety Centre and will commence at 7:30pm.

Tuesday 29th March

On Tuesday, 29th March at 7:30pm we are holding an Open Forum evening at the Road Safety Resource Centre, Edlogan Way, Cwmbran.

We are inviting all members to come forward to give us their views on ways we could improve our social calendar. We have many members with talents that could be put to good use, to enhance our social side of things - think of some ideas for discussion.

In 2006 the IAM will be celebrating its 50th Anniversary. We may wish to put one large show to celebrate the occasion or maybe put on a show that could visit each town in Gwent during the year to make people aware of our existence.

I will be inviting our President, Supt Nigel Russell, to attend for his input, also Penny Thorpe, Principal Road Safety Officer, she will probably have some ideas regarding what we should be doing to create interest in the group.

We have been informed by IAM House that money will be made available for advertising, I'm sure that the Motorcycle side will have plenty of ideas for promoting the 50th year celebrations.

If you are unable to attend and have a suggestion that you wish to propose, please don't hesitate to contact me in writing or ring me (Mike Lahert) on 01633-857028 / mobile 07771-905670.

Tuesday, 3rd May 2005

Morgan Car Factory visit

A visit to the Morgan Car factory has been arranged for Tuesday 3rd May 2005. Anyone who is interested in attending this event to contact Mervyn Thomas as soon as possible.

Mervyn Thomas - 01291-672880

Wednesday 11th May 2005

Our AGM and presentation evening will be held in the function room Green Meadows Golf Club, Treherbert Road, Cwmbran on Wednesday 11th May. Arrival 7:15 for a 7:30pm start.

Recipients for the presentation will be invited by letter some two weeks before. Please make every effort to attend, as this will show your appreciation of the observers' efforts in preparing you for the test. After the presentations there will be photographs followed by tea and coffee.

The AGM will take place to elect the 2005 committee and to discuss any matters arising. The committee requests those present to wait for the AGM affairs. Your presence will be much appreciated as we would like more people to participate in group committee affairs as the group needs new blood. Please put your name forward for election at the AGM. Please advise Mike Lahert if you are interested either in writing or by phone.

BikeSafe

Industry forced to save Bikesafe

The Motor Cycle Industry Association has announced that it will be funding the administration costs of the national motorcycle safety programme 'Bikesafe' until the end of the financial year in April 2005. The industry grant amounts to a total of £37,500.

Bikesafe is a police led scheme, which was piloted in 1996 and has been running in a number of force areas since then. Bikesafe combines rider assessment, road safety discussion and assisted motorcycle riding to identify areas where riders could benefit from advanced motorcycle training.

Bikesafe acts as a conduit to more established training programmes and is very popular among riders of all kinds. Increasing interest from riders and the spread of the programme to encompass the majority of the UK led to the launch of a national Bikesafe initiative at Motorcycle Industry's (MCI's) road safety conference in May 2004.

The programme is currently co-ordinated nationally by North Wales Police and officers around the country often give up free time to ensure the scheme's success. As well as being popular among riders, Bikesafe can claim success in cutting casualty numbers. Bikesafe London is one of the most popular in the country and is heavily oversubscribed. MCI believes that the programme has helped towards the eight percent decrease in motorcycle casualties in London in 2003.

Resources for Bikesafe have always been tight, with many programmes relying on the good will of chief police officers and individual police motorcyclists. As a result, earlier this year, Bikesafe, with the support of MCI applied for proper year-to-year funding from the network of safety camera partnerships. This was refused due to the current rules surrounding how revenue raised from speed cameras can be used.

Questions in Parliament exposed unwillingness by Government to change the rules so that road safety programmes with a proven track record, such as Bikesafe, could benefit from camera cash.

Faced with the prospect of funds running out for the national scheme, MCI has stepped in to fund the scheme with a one-off grant.

MCI feels that the Bikesafe funding issue has exposed a lack of coherent thinking by Government with regard to motorcycle safety and highlighted the vexed issue of the role of speed cameras.

Craig Carey-Clinch, MCI director of public affairs said; "The idea of a national road safety scheme, which is police run, has public support and a proven record, effectively going bust a few months after its launch is absurd. The Government seems to expect that a scheme it has already indicated supports, can run on good will, private sector cash and fresh air and in the process reduce the number of motorcycle accidents about which it claims to have so much concern.

"It is quite clear that if we're to see a reduction in motorcycle accidents Bikesafe needs sustainable levels of long-term funding, which can only really get from Government sources. This will help the programme develop and reach more riders who are at risk.

"The refusal of Ministers to consider speed camera funding is short sighted and exasperating to say the least. Speed cameras are so unpopular partly because there is a public perception that cash for cameras disappears into the black hole of safety camera partnerships never to be seen again.

"Public acceptability of speed cameras would improve if some of the revenue raised was ploughed back into a scheme which the public can see helps to improve road safety in an area of particular public concern - motorcycles accidents.

"The rules need changing and Government needs to release funds - they've done it for other road safety programmes, they can do it for Bikesafe - otherwise Ministerial commitments to improving rider safety will start to look a little hollow."

Article courtesy of Rospa Motorcycling News (www.rospa.com)

Future Bikesafe Events

There will be three workshops, which will be held between 9am and 5pm on the following weekends: 23/24 April, 18/19 June and 17/18 September. They will be based at the Road Safety Resource Centre, Edlogan Way, Cwmbran. Please be advised that there are only a limited number of places available.

Two of our full members have attended these sessions in the past. A report by one of them can be seen on Page 13.

Gloucester Police - Bikesafe Show

Gloucestershire Police are hosting the National Bikesafe Motorcycle Show 2005

To be held at Cheltenham Racecourse on the weekend of April 2nd/3rd - our aim is to encourage riders to seek post Test training, via Bikesafe or by other means, but to encourage them in that aim, we are presenting a "free to all" - trade, exhibitors & public alike - motorcycle show.

We are receiving great support from the trade & the idea is to get riders to take a demo ride, on a new machine or theirs if they prefer, & give them a Police rider to follow them with a view to passing on a few hints & tips.

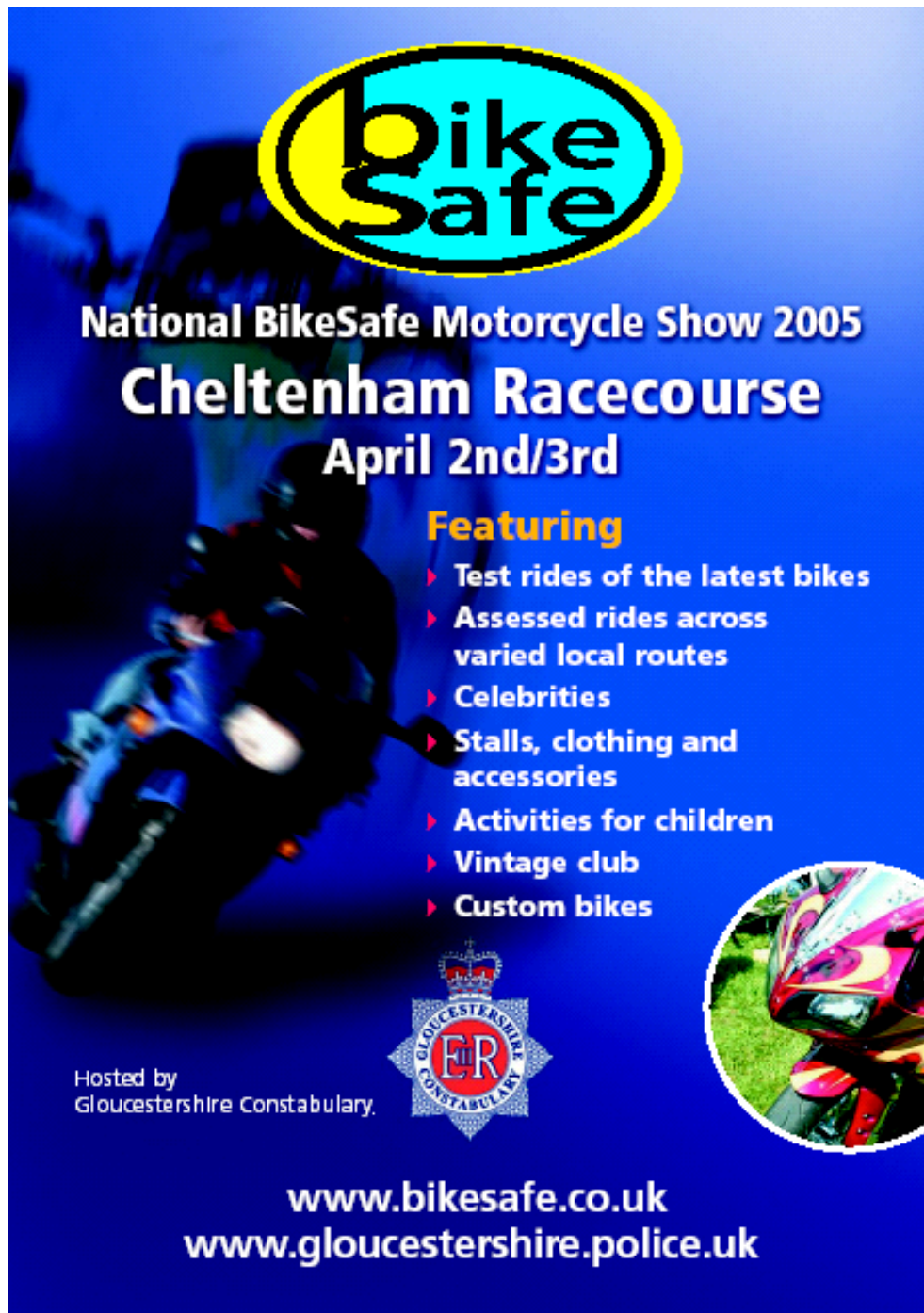
This is the first year we have hosted this event, although our colleagues in Durham have held their "Bikewise" event for 10 years now, & get some 10-12,000 people through the gates, & we would hope to emulate them.

We are providing some items to attract the younger generation, the thought being that if dad can't get the whole day off, he can persuade the whole family to come along for an hour or two, whilst he sneaks a test, & we keep the kiddies happy with bouncy castles & stuff, or if they are early teens, we hope to have a moped/scooter riding arena.

Just one warning ** Anyone who wants a test ride has to bring their licence to be covered by insurance**

Web link <http://www.gloucestershire.police.uk/crimereduct/25.html>

See full page advert on page 13.



The poster features a blue background with a blurred image of a motorcycle rider on the left. At the top center is the 'bike Safe' logo in a yellow oval. Below it, the event title 'National BikeSafe Motorcycle Show 2005' and location 'Cheltenham Racecourse' are written in large white text, followed by the dates 'April 2nd/3rd'. A 'Featuring' section lists activities with red arrowheads. At the bottom, it mentions the host 'Gloucestershire Constabulary' with their crest, and provides two website URLs. A circular inset on the right shows a colorful custom motorcycle.


bike Safe

National BikeSafe Motorcycle Show 2005
Cheltenham Racecourse
April 2nd/3rd

Featuring

- ▶ Test rides of the latest bikes
- ▶ Assessed rides across varied local routes
- ▶ Celebrities
- ▶ Stalls, clothing and accessories
- ▶ Activities for children
- ▶ Vintage club
- ▶ Custom bikes

Hosted by
Gloucestershire Constabulary.



www.bikesafe.co.uk
www.gloucestershire.police.uk

Bikesafe Report - Mark Gornicke

Police Bikesafe: 18th-19th September 2004

After several other members of the Gwent IAM Motorcycle group attended a Bikesafe event outside of Gwent previously and found it informative and beneficial, I decided that if given an opportunity I would attend one. Luckily Gwent Police

have started running these weekend workshops, a two day event, and one was to take place in September.

My reasons for doing this were primarily to learn and take on board advice and guidance from very experienced and safe police riders and to put myself and my riding skills under the spotlight, a personal test to see where I am.

Day 1.

The day came and under the dark grey sky I made my way to the centre at Edlogan Way.

Upon arriving I was greeted by the sight of eight police bikes, along with an array of tourers, cruisers and sports bikes. As we enjoyed a cup of coffee the heavens opened with a vengeance and everybody was glad that we were starting with a classroom session. The introductions were made and there was a big range in both experience and age across the attendees. This aspect should be welcomed by all parties since it shows the appeal of Bikesafe to all sections of the motorcycling community.

The Traffic Officer running the event led the first classroom session with a picture - hand drawn - of your typical bend and a discussion about paint!

The aim of the session was information: what is given, where it is and how to use it. It is surprising how much there can be but also what can be overlooked as you are riding. We also watched a bike safety awareness video to round off the classroom work for the morning.

Lunch was kindly provided at Police Headquarters and the weather also took a turn for the better and dried up quite nicely into perfect weather for riding.

The practical sessions then begun, and since one person failed to turn up there was 9 attendees to 8 police riders. Two of the Harley riders doubled up and the rest of us were one-to-one.

This made for a very personal and more focused course for all the attendees.

With regard to my ride we went through Caerleon, Usk, Gwehelog, Monmouth and onto Chepstow for a coffee break. Tyrone, the police rider commented on the fact that I'd obviously had some advanced training and that he would only need to keep an eye on minor aspects of my riding to help things be a little smoother. We followed some of the route back before turning onto the A449 dual carriageway to assess my riding in that situation, finally returning back to Edlogan Way.

The main point made was to come off the white line a bit more, the police approach to your lane is to divide it into three zones and to ride within those zones as appropriate for the conditions and situation. The other point being to hold my line after a bend rather than return to the white line where it would mean smoother progress into the next manoeuvre.

Day 2.

The following day we were straight out on the bikes and the police riders were looking for improvements or more consistency in the areas identified the previous day. Everyone took slightly different routes but ultimately the run ended up at the

services in Sennybridge for coffee. The route we took was via Abergavenny and Brecon, and the way back via Builth Wells, Talgarth and Abergavenny.

At Edlogan Way we had a "slowly" competition before moving on to Police Headquarters. Before lunch we spoke with the mechanic who looks after the Police bikes who offered some tips on checks and bike maintenance.

After lunch it was back to Edlogan Way and more classroom sessions.

The afternoon session was very good with a trained paramedic who was also a bike rider giving basic first aid advice with particular regard to motorcycle accidents, including how to remove helmets correctly. This was followed by security advice from a member of the crime prevention team, also discussed was a new scheme where the Police can issue metallic stickers (the type that are difficult to remove) with a number on them and you can place them on different bits of the bike. Particularly recommended is to place them on your wheels inside the tyre.

When you report your bike stolen, you notify the police of the numbers and if recovered the bike can be traced back to you.

The day was finished with police traffic officer Alan Dunn highlighting the merits of further development with advanced rider organisations such as IAM and ROSPA. Local members of GGAM then introduced themselves with Dave Elgar giving a short chat about the group and Greg Sullivan handing out goody bags with information for each attendee to take away.

Finally there was the obligatory certificate of attendance and another goody bag.

What were my conclusions after this course, well Bikesafe is a very good offering.

The classroom aspect is just right and covers the main areas, making you think about the road and environment but especially the first aid section.

The use of experienced Police riders means that attendees get the assistance and benefit of people who "live" on bikes and are trained to the highest levels. Informally it shows the police with a more "human" face and you learn of how the police approach things.

I think that they should be advertised and pushed a bit more, they can also act as a path into advanced training such as that offered by the IAM.

The problem is that in some ways the very people who would benefit from Bikesafe are ones who would never choose to go on it.

The other issue is those riders who have modified their bikes in some way; they wouldn't take their bikes to a course run by a police force no matter what assurances may or may not be given. To even begin to attract these people the courses would have to be offered where there is no need to provide your own bike either via increased funding to provide a pool of bikes nationally or via sponsorship deals.

Mark Gornicki

Many thanks to club member Mark for giving a good insight into the training available with Gwent Police. - Ed.

Manhole Covers

When riding we naturally avoid manhole covers and road markings, as they are slippery and uneven which can cause a bike to become unstable.

There is now the added hazard of missing manhole covers to contend with.

Recently forty cast-iron manhole covers have gone missing on minor roads in northern Powys, presumably for their scrap value. And presumably the persons who stole them were oblivious to the potential fatality when the first biker hits the big hole in the road.

If you see a missing manhole cover, contact Powys Council on 0814 607 6060.

Unusual Welsh Facts

Wales has more castles per square mile than any other country in Western Europe.

Wales is 160 miles long.

The Welsh coastline is almost 750 miles (1,200 km) long

Events

PLEASE NOTE:

THE WEBSITE IS UPDATED FREQUENTLY AND HAS DETAILS OF ALL UPCOMING RIDES AND ADDITIONAL RIDES.

IF ANY GROUP MEMBER HAS ANY IDEAS OF A PLACE TO VISIT, PLEASE CONTACT STEVE VIA THE WEBSITE OR BY PHONE.

Unless otherwise stated :

- Sunday rides (May to September) leave RSC, Edlogan Way at 9:00am
All other Sunday rides leave at 10:00am
- Wednesday evening rides at 7:30pm

Additional Information

Approximate mileages have been added against each Sunday rideout, in order to provide some idea of the duration.

Events Calendar for 2005

Month	Day	Destination / Activity
January	Sunday 9th	Hay on Wye - (80 miles) Departure time 10:00am at Edlogan Way The battery run (II). Boost the voltage and enjoy the delights at the local café.
	Wednesday 26th	Motorcycle Section AGM Edlogan Way - 7pm
	Wednesday 26th	Presentation A presentation by Dave Elger.
February	Sunday 13th	Weston-Super-Mare - (120 miles) Departure time 10:00am at Edlogan Way Across the estuary to visit this coastal town.
	Wednesday 23rd	Presentation You've read the report, now Tony Morgan shares his experiences of touring Croatia.
March	Sunday 13th	Bath - (120 miles) Departure time 10:00am at Edlogan Way Pillions most welcome to enjoy this world heritage site.
	Wednesday 30th	Open Forum Meet Tim Soper the Regional Motorcycle Adviser for South West England and South Wales.
April	Sunday 10th	Broadway - (160 miles) Departure time 10:00am at Edlogan Way Through the Forest of Dean to enjoy lunch at this delightful Wiltshire village. Return via Tewkesbury and Ledbury.
	Wednesday 27th	Skenfrith Liquid refreshments at the Bell Inn.

May	Sunday 8th	Gaydon - (200 miles) Departure time 9:00am at Edlogan Way Head for the motor museum via some of the most picturesque villages in the Cotswolds / Wiltshire.
	Wednesday 11th	Slow Riding Sort out the slow speed wobbles with some practice.
	Wednesday 25th	Porthcawl Fish and Chips, the traditional cuisine at Butty Bay.
June	Wednesday 8th	5 Bridges (III) A bit of everything and always a favourite.
	Sunday 12th	Cardigan Coast - (200 miles) Departure time 9:00am at Edlogan Way Aberaeron up to Aberystwyth, returning via Devils Bridge and the Elan Valley.
	Wednesday 29th	Brecon and the reservoirs Off to Brecon again but then heading back another way?
July	Sunday 10th	Lake Vyrnwy - (230 miles) Departure time 9:00am at Edlogan Way Newtown and Welshpool arriving for lunch at this magnificent setting. Return via Wales's highest road pass and Llyn Clywedog.
	Wednesday 13th	BBQ Tony Parsons hosts the group at the Anchor Inn in the shadows of Tintern Abbey.
	Wednesday 27th	Treasure Hunt Thinking caps on for this one. More details to follow nearer the date.
August	Wednesday 10th	Local Peaks Superb views all within easy reach.

August (contd.)	Sunday 14th	Stratford Upon Avon - (200 miles) Departure time 9:00am at Edlogan Way Shakespeare's birthplace in rural Warwickshire.
	Wednesday 31st	Forest of Dean and Ross on Wye Getting there will be good with Stow Hill to look forward to.
September	Sunday 11th	Worcester Triangle - (160 miles) Departure time 9:00am at Edlogan Way An excellent route taking in some great roads.
	Wednesday 14th	Llangorse Talgarth sure to be in there somewhere.
	Wednesday 28th	Wye Valley Why? Roads, scenery, pub, what more could you wish for!
October	Sunday 9th	Cheddar & Brean Sands - (140 miles) Departure time 10:00am at Edlogan Way Britain's largest gorge and on to Bridgewater bay.
	Wednesday 26th	Bowling Newport mega bowl.
November	Sunday 13th	Castle Coombe - (120 miles) Departure time 10:00am at Edlogan Way Arguably the prettiest village in England.
	Wednesday 30th	Quiz Andy Lamb steps in to run this annual event.
December	Sunday 11th	Llandovery - (100 miles) Departure time 10:00am at Edlogan Way Battery run. Another chance to charge those batteries!
	TBD	Christmas Function

Rideout Report: Llandoverly

Date: 11th December 2004

Duration: 10:00hrs –15:00hrs

Distance: 140mls

Conditions: 8°C, wet turning dry.

Rider	Bike
Greg Sullivan	Triumph Sprint ST (Ride Leader)
Dave Williams	Honda Deauville 650 (Back Marker)
Lee Clarke	Honda VFR 800 Vtec
Courtney Purnell.....	Triumph Sprint ST
Lee Owen	Suzuki GSXR1000
Peter Skelton	BMW GS650 (winter hack, I don't think so somehow)
Judi Williams.....	Moto Guzzi Nevada Club 750
Mark Gorniki	Suzuki Bandit 600 (winter hack, Daytona gleaming on the garage)
John Probert	Kawasaki ER5
Tony Curtis	Honda Pan 1300
Dave Elger.....	BMW GS1200
Steve Williams	Yamaha Fzs 1000
Wayne Lewis	Honda Blackbird
Doug Jeffrey	Yamaha Fzs 1000

Another good turnout, 12 hardy souls meeting at Edlogan Way R.S.C. for the battery run to Llandoverly.

Now this destination is certainly nothing new for any of us but as the description implies it gave an opportunity for those less active at this time of year to charge their battery, refresh some riding skills and meet up with other members.

Four riders were making their own way to the West End café in Llandoverly as Dave Elger was combining the observing of two associates (Wayne and Doug) with an observer training session for Steve. Never one for doing things in short measures Dave and the other Observers have performed heroics recently with the number of new members coming through and also a group of full members going through observer training.

The briefed route was the direct way to Llandoverly via Pontypool, Abergavenny and Brecon and returning via Builth and Talgarth. We used the Marker drop off system again even though there was really no need, in fact using it in an exaggerated fashion by marking virtually every turn off. This served as a practice

session and enabled all riders to rotate right through the group on a number of occasions.

Proving to be quite successful it has to be reiterated that when indicated to mark a turn off it is each individual's responsibility to select a safe place to wait, and also ensure their own safety. Hazard warning lights can and should be used when stationary which was not always evident.

Eight riders left Edlogan promptly after 10am, stopping off in Abergavenny bus station for Lee Clarke and Peter Skelton to join us, Lee actually lives closer to Llandovery than Croesyceiliog so rode up to Abergavenny to meet us.

From Edlogan Way to beyond Crickhowell was difficult going with the mad Christmas shoppers on their annual pilgrimage to various outlets making the ride potentially more hazardous. No doubt drivers tend to lack concentration at this time of year so riders really must adopt defensive techniques to cater for every eventuality.

The traffic eased on the open road allowing us to push on, getting a wave from two Traffic police parked up in their Volvo and arriving in Llandovery at approx 11.30am.

Time for refreshments we stayed in the café for a good 45mins observing that the weather was brightening up outside.

Peter left us at this point to head home the direct way and once gone we had the usual photo shoot with Tony Curtis doing the honours (nothing personal Pete and nothing to do with the GS not being photogenic, allegedly). A few members showing extreme camera shyness and leaving their helmets on.

And then there were eight with Tony behind the camera.



L to R: Dave, Judi, Courtney, John, Lee C, Mark, Lee O, Greg.

With the sun shining I changed the return route to take the A4069 via Llangadog. An excellent road that crosses over the Black Mountains, the temperature dropped to 2°C on the top.

Lesson No 1: Sunshine on one side of the mountain does not mean the same on the other.

Mist and dampness slowed things down as we headed to Brynaman through the Afon valley and numerous 30s and 40s to Ystradgynlais. Aiming for Brecon on the A 4067 we passed Crey reservoir, Defynnog and stopped at Libanus waving off Mark and John who were returning via Merthyr Tydfil.

On we pressed along the A40 to Abergavenny once again encountering congestion around the shopping area, I'm sure some of those cars were there four hours ago, whilst queuing at the Oasis Café the last of the group pulled in after stopping to refuel.

Lesson No2: As the ST has a 220mile tank range I should not assume that of all the bikes.

Shortly after the four who had been preparing and training arrived having been to Llandovery later than us and no doubt having had a good session. So with most of the group back together we had a good chin wag and answered some questions from another rider expressing an interest in the group. All in all, an enjoyable ride for this time of year with two hours of daylight remaining to clean the bike.

Greg Sullivan

The Drop Off System

Within the rideout guidelines, there is mention of the Drop Off System. If you've ever wondered how this works and why it is used, then read the following article. This information is also available on the webpage.

- - - - -

The whole idea behind the system of riding called the drop off system, is to provide a series of movable markers for all the riders in the group to follow, irrespective of any gaps which have occurred in the ride, so that riders don't have to "keep up" with the rider in front.

It acknowledges the fact that the ride can get strung out over a long distance, due to a variety of reasons - e.g. Road works, traffic lights, give way junctions, roundabouts etc. Also, not all riders will have access to a map, and might be on unfamiliar roads.

It allows the riders to ride at their own pace without worrying about keeping up, getting lost, or which way to go.

How it works.

The Drop off system will be explained to all riders in a briefing at the start of the ride, where riders should get to know their colleagues. The group will have a designated 'Ride Leader' and a 'Back Marker'. The positions of these two riders

will not change throughout the run. They will be introduced to all the riders in that group and be easily identified by a day-glow jacket or other identifier if possible.

Riders in the group may alter their own relative positions as they see fit whilst out on the road providing they always remain between "The Ride Leader" and "Back Marker".

When the Ride Leader makes a direction change at a junction or roundabout the new direction of travel should be marked by the rider directly behind the ride leader, (The Marker). To do this, the Marker should pull in at the side of the road, in a safe place where he/she will be visible to the rest of the riders, so the direction can be indicated to the following riders.

It is most important that the marker stops in a position where :-

- It is safe to do so.
- They do not put themselves at any risk.
- The rest of the ride can see them clearly as they approach the direction change.

The Marker should maintain that position until he/she can rejoin the rear of the section in front of the approaching Back Marker. The Back Marker will always try to give sufficient space for this to happen otherwise the Marker should allow the Back Marker to pass, then overtake when a suitable opportunity presents it self, thus re-establishing the correct running order.

It could happen that number two rider forgets to mark a direction change - in which case the next rider (Number three) should take it upon himself to drop off and mark the direction change to prevent the chain from breaking.

Do Note - It is always better to mark all direction changes rather than assume that the route is so obvious it is not worth doing.

Remember, as number two rider, you might think the ride direction is apparent - but you don't know when the riders behind might get split up, and one of them might not be familiar with the junction in question.

Any riders wishing to fall out from the group or who have a breakdown should report, en route, to the Back Marker who will note the situation and act accordingly.

If it is impossible to mark a direction change because of the danger to the Marker or other road users it is better that the direction change goes unmarked. Sometimes the Marker can park up safely a short distance away and return to the direction change on foot to direct followers.

The Drop Off System allows for the riders to go at his own pace and still remain part of the riding group. Speed limits should be observed at all times.

However, in this imperfect world, the group may sometimes become very 'strung out', causing anxiety to some riders, and the Leader may then decide to stop, in a safe place, to allow the group to re-form before continuing.

EXTRA NOTES FOR RUN LEADER AND BACK MARKER.

The Run Leader

At the start of the run, the leader should explain the System to his group and ensure that they can recognise each other on the road, stressing the danger of a rider inadvertently joining another group, or even a totally separate set of riders going the same way.

He should not make a DIRECTION CHANGE unless he has at least two riders in view behind.

He should ensure that the 'no.2' rider stops at a direction change, pointing out if necessary the best place for him to pull in, bearing in mind visibility and road safety, having noted such places in his preparations.

If it is not possible to mark a direction change because of danger to the Marker or to other road users, it is better that the direction change goes unmarked. Sometimes the Marker can park up safely a short distance away and return to the direction change on foot to direct the following riders.

If the Leader has previous knowledge of such a problem, it should be mentioned at the pre-start briefing, and the possibility of a 'follow-the-leader' treatment of that direction change.

On a long run, it can happen that the group becomes very 'strung out', causing anxiety to some. The Leader may then decide to stop in a safe place to allow the group to re-form.

Back Marker

The Back Marker should familiarise himself with the route beforehand.

He must be especially aware of any following traffic when pausing for the Marker to rejoin in front of him and be prepared to carry on past the Marker if conditions demand, slowing for the Marker to overtake him in due course.

Experience with this system has shown that the Back Marker needs to leave a large gap in front to allow the Marker to rejoin easily and safely.

He should also be on the lookout for any rider dropping out and act accordingly, either waiting with the stationary rider if the problem is temporary, or making note of the stationary riders details, and reporting this to the Run Leader if the rider is leaving the run permanently.

You are in charge of your motorcycle at all times and responsible for your own safety.

Gwent Group of Advanced Motorcyclists cannot accept any responsibility for actions you take or any incident that might occur.

Always ride for yourself and within your own capabilities.

Rideout Report: Hay on Wye

Date: 9th January 2005

Duration: 10:00hrs –13:30hrs

Distance: 92mils

Conditions: 9°C, wet.

Rider	Bike
Dave Elger.....	BMW GS1200 (Ride Leader)
Steve Webb.....	BMW R1150 RT
Courtney Purnell.....	Triumph Sprint ST
Lee Owen.....	Suzuki GSXR1000
John Probert.....	Kawasaki ER5
Tony Curtis.....	Honda Pan 1300
Richard Higgs.....	Moto Guzzi Le Mans
Steve Williams.....	Yamaha Fzs 1000

Another good turnout, 8 riders met at Edlogan Way R.S.C. for the battery run to Hay on Wye.

We set off along Treherbert Lane and headed for Usk via the A472 past the Cwrt Bleddyn Hotel. The roads although wet offered a fair amount of grip but care was required along the route because this area is littered with farm access points and mud is always a danger.

We passed through Usk and onto the Old Chepstow Road passing the Usk gliding club, the direction we took now is a little unclear as the ride leader was guiding us through some places that I am fairly sure are not on any map, however his trust in the GPS system fitted to his GS1200 was total.

At one stage of the journey along a single track road even I had to adopt the standing on the pegs position to navigate my way between the mud trails. All joking aside these roads were only two miles long and then it was back onto the twisty roads once again, we past Monmouth and made our way toward Vowchurch which is in the area known as the golden valley why its called this is beyond me as the past 3 times I have travelled this route my bike is covered in something and its certainly not gold.

As tail ender I was held up going through one village and was a situation that required me to make some progress to rejoin the rest of the group, in doing so I found myself approaching a hump in the road, bearing in mind I was travelling at the national speed limit (ish) for this type of road I quickly realised that even Evel Knievel would be approaching at a much lower speed, thank goodness for my advanced training, I had foreseen the hazard and taken the necessary steps to make sure the hazard was overcome with maximum enjoyment 🏆 and no danger to myself or any sheep that were in the vicinity .

The route from Vowchurch leads to Hay on Wye where we stopped for that all-important cup of Coffee and a chat.

We left Hay and made our way to Talgarth up over the mountain and into Abergavenny for one last stop, coffee and then goodbyes, another good ride.

My thanks to all that turned up, nice to see some faces we haven't seen for a while.

Steve Williams

Newsletter in Electronic Form (PDF)

If people would like to receive or access a PDF copy of the Newsletter then this is available via the new website. Access is restricted to members only, contact Steve Williams on steven.williams5@ntlworld.com for more details.

Advantages of having an electronic copy of the newsletter - you will be see the pictures in better detail and in colour too!

In Addition . . .

Why not subscribe to our e-mail list, you will be updated of any last minute events or relevant News Releases as they occur.

Your e-mail address is secure and not viewable by other parties.

You can un-subscribe at any time.

Visit www.gwent-advanced-motorists.org/mail_list1.htm

Whilst you're on the site why not sign our guestbook - it can be found at the top of every page.

IAM News Articles

The IAM President

Issued: 24 January 2005

The Duke of Gloucester's resignation as President of the IAM has now been received by the full IAM Council.

John Maxwell, IAM Chairman, said:

"The Duke's decision to resign the IAM Presidency has been received with great regret by all IAM Council members, given his effective and enthusiastic Presidency over 32 years."

IAM Chief warns that driver alienation "is not in the interest of Road Safety"

Issued: 8 December 2004

Safety on UK roads is at risk because drivers feel "targeted, vulnerable and alienated", said John Maxwell, chairman of the Institute of Advanced Motorists today.

Speaking at the IAM's annual lunch in London, Mr Maxwell said that motorists are made to believe that congestion, delay, environmental pollution and, not least, the accident toll, is all their fault.

"Car drivers and motorcyclists are not just part of the problem: they can be - and need to be - part of the solution. Treat them fairly and get them back on-side, and there will be a rapid pay-back - not necessarily in the way that the Treasury appears to understand best, but for road safety."

Specifically, it was the IAM's regret that there has been a "dismal failure to 'sell' the safety benefits of speed cameras - allowing them, instead, to be misunderstood as instruments of entrapment and fund-raising," said Mr Maxwell.

"Cameras are frequently sited where drivers believe them to be unnecessary, with a trigger mechanism that is lacking in discretion and penalty notices that arrive like overdue invoices. Too many road-users believe that speed cameras are nothing more than nice little earners, and that getting caught is less about discouraging dangerous driving than playing a game of chance."

In fact, Mr Maxwell argued, cameras have a "legitimate and valuable role in enforcing compliance, as distinct from ensuring capture", and there must be an urgent review of camera locations. In addition, all camera sites should clearly

show the speed limit at that point, with more repeater signs needed on restricted roads.

Mr Maxwell said: "Rehabilitating speed cameras - re-defining them as instruments of compliance, not capture - would do much to take the pressure off the vast majority of sensible drivers and riders who need little persuading that safety is common sense and should always come first."

Also necessary, says the IAM, is a review of speed limits, recognising the change in enforcement methods. Limits need to be seen to be right if they are to earn respect and to be observed, and the message must be that, whatever the speed limit, it is inappropriate speed that kills.

There should, said Mr Maxwell, be an "imaginative and positive response" to the Road Safety Bill, which already contains elements of driver re-education. And there needs to be more, not fewer, traffic police on UK roads. "A blue light and a sharp word will always have more effect, and earn more respect, than electronic surveillance and a penalty notice through the post."

Guest speaker at the IAM Annual Lunch was North Wales Chief Constable and ACPO Head of Road Policing Richard Brunstrom.



For details see page 5.

Car Section Christmas Dinner - 2004

The Group Christmas Dinner organised by the Car Section was held at Llanwern Golf Club on Wednesday 8th December 2004.

This venue has proved to be a popular one with our members over previous years when this event has been held there and once again this year the club came up trumps with another excellent meal and all the trimmings that went with it.

Our thanks must go to the catering and bar staff for the service provided and also to our chairman, Mike Lahert, for arranging for this function to be held there in the first place.

About 30 members and friends attended and it was nice to see a few new faces amongst the gathering. We hope they will continue to support the Group's future events over the forthcoming months and years.

After we had all enjoyed an excellent meal we adjourned to the lounge area where the only small formal part of the evening took place; chairman Mike Lahert thanked everyone for coming to the Dinner and introduced the two guests of honour - our President, Supt. Nigel Russell (accompanied by his wife) and Penny Thorpe, Principal Road Safety Officer for Gwent (together with husband Ken).

As this was the first time that our recently-appointed president has attended such an occasion, he was presented by Mike with an IAM tie (his good lady was also presented with a bouquet of flowers by Betty Williams). Nigel Russell then said a few words of thanks.

Earlier in the evening raffle tickets were sold amongst all our guests, organised by Carol Thomas and Carol Schanzer and the draw then took place.

Finally our chairman closed the formal proceedings by thanking all those who had generally donated the raffle prizes and extending seasonal greetings and best wishes to all for Christmas and a safe and successful 2005.

At the end of the evening, we all wended our way home from what was, I think it could be said to be, a most pleasant and enjoyable occasion.

Tony Blane

Advanced Driving Classes

The course that started on the 17th January 2005 was fully booked according to Phillipa Norris (Road Safety Officer) and we are most grateful to Penny Thorpe (Principal Road Safety Officer) for her recent Press Release supporting the course of lectures which seems to have attracted lots of interest. The number of enquiries coming in has been very encouraging especially as, up to now, such advertising has been at a cost to the group. The news release has done the trick, our sincere thanks to Penny Thorpe for her contribution.

Mobile Display Unit (M.D.U.)

Mobile display Unit Recent Visit

On Thursday 6th January 2005 we visited Gwent Square Cwmbran to promote the advanced driving lectures that were about to start on Monday 17th January, 2005.

In the morning there were some interest in advanced driving. The weather became dismal and everyone was soon running for cover, so the afternoon was rather bleak.

We are grateful to Cwmbran Shopping for giving the space free of charge which was much appreciated. Thanks to the following people that helped out on the day: Mervyn and Madeline Thomas, Tony Blane, Mike Lahert. Once again Madeline rolls and cakes were a wonderful treat. Many thanks Madeline you're a life saver.

Future Visits for the Mobile Display Unit

Saturday 2nd April 2005 - Monmouth Cattle Market Car Park

This is located at the bottom end of the town near Waitrose, between 9:30am and 4:30pm. The main purpose of the visit is recruitment and to promote road safety. We ask members and associates to encourage their friends to come along and meet us and hopefully become new members. We need volunteers to help on the day.

Saturday 30th April 2005 - Chepstow

We will be located in the Welsh Street Car Park adjacent to the library between 9:00am and 4:00pm. The main purpose is to promote road safety and to encourage both car drivers and bikers to become members, and associates of the group to get their friends to come along and join us. There will be a News Release in local papers supporting our visit. Any members who can help on the day will be much appreciated.

Sunday and Monday 29/30th May 2005 9:00am - 5:00pm Steam Rally, Bailey Park, Abergavenny

The group have a space booked for the MDU at the above show. The main purpose is to promote road safety and to recruit new members for both cars and bikes.

This is a well-run rally organised by the Rotary Club. Why not come along and have a browse around those old time exhibits of steam, also farm tractors. This is always a good day. New members very welcome - encourage your friends.

Sunday 12th June 12:00pm - 5:00pm Police Open Day, Police Headquarters, Croesyceiliog

The police have allowed a space for our MDU at this event. Again the main purpose of the visit is to promote road safety and encourage new members
Come along and view the crime fighting exhibits on display, which include helicopter pad, dogs, drugs, etc.

Saturday 13th August Chepstow Agricultural Show, Broadwell Farm, Crick

More information in the April edition of the newsletter.

Mobile Display Unit

If there is anyone who has any events taking place near them in the foreseeable future, and they think a visit from the M.D.U. would be beneficial, please contact Mervyn Thomas or any member of the committee.

Members' comments

Group Riding and Keeping Up

An advanced group rideout should be an event that can be enjoyed by all participants and people in that group should not feel pressured into keeping up, I know from personal experience that the urge to keep up with faster riders is sometimes present.

One of the warning signs is when you find yourself going offline going through corners, i.e. cutting the apex thus reducing your view through the corner. Another occasion when the "got to keep up" syndrome kicks in is when the lead riders have got a couple of overtakes in and you are stuck behind traffic, you find you have 5 bikes behind you and the pressure starts to build because you think that you are holding them up, and that's when the dodgy overtakes start.

Consider this, we as a group have Rideout Guidelines and have adopted a drop off system that should mean that you can ride at a pace that suits you! And you should not feel pressured into riding beyond the point that you feel comfortable.

Steve Williams

Letter from Frank Wiseman

Advanced Age Advanced Driver ??

It was with some trepidation that I set out on the morning of July 3rd last to meet with and undertake my first observed run under the auspices of, Group Chairman Mike Lahert. Rising seventy-five, I was conscious of past newspaper and magazine articles suggesting that bodies of pensionable age were nothing less than a menace to road users in general and should be banned from control of anything more lethal than a sit on lawnmower.

It was not that I consider myself a bad driver; who does? I do moreover possess a good record over many thousands of driving miles spanning more some fifty-five years both in UK and abroad. It was more a case that advancing arthritis in my left knee had recently influenced me to move to automatic transmission, an art in which I had never received any tuition together with the realisation that all sort of bad habits might have crept in since my introductory lessons those fifty plus years ago. Those lessons had moreover been taken in pre motorway age totally different from the crowded conditions prevailing today.

Consequently it was with some relief that I discovered that Mike was of similar vintage to myself. Further, he told me that his oldest successful pupil had been no less than eighty-two. It was, of course, all part of Mike's considerable expertise in putting me at ease. By the end of the first run we had developed. I felt, a good working relationship.

Over some ten or so sessions during the following weeks I learned under Mike's guidance how best to slot onto motorways and how to ease "controllably", as required between lanes. I learned how to create space both for myself and other users, to observe and plan ahead and to anticipate hazards. Above all, however, I learned that driving is a full time occupation demanding continual concentration and not, as I had become accustomed to during many years of business driving, something to be carried out in a state of conscious automation.

On lesser winding roads, I learned, on cornering, how to use their width to maximise forward vision and thus maintain best legal safe rate of progress; I learned to recognise the tell tale surface signs of danger and, when required, I learned patience.

In urban areas I learned to use my lower gears to assist in observance of urban limits and, despite initial difficulty, I learned how to use my nearside mirror to reverse neatly around a kerb. Overall, amongst a comprehensive review of my driving prowess I learned better how to cope efficiently with roundabouts and to improve my behaviour in congested town traffic.

Indisputably I learned a whole lot more and am a better and safer driver for it. My last run with Mike was on my seventy-fifth birthday the 10th November and I actually passed my test on the 20th without his knowledge of its setting during his holiday back in Eire. We had arranged a further run for the 30th just after his return and I was able to turn up with my pass note for his inspection. I really believe that his evident pleasure exceeded mine.

Frank L. Wiseman

2nd January 2005

More Unusual facts about Wales

- Jack Daniels, distiller of the eponymous American whiskey, was of Welsh descent - his family came from Aberystwyth.
- Inhabitants of the Gwaun Valley in West Wales still celebrate the arrival of the New Year in the middle of January, which is based on the old calendar in use before 1752.
- The world's first steam engine, invented by Richard Trevithick, ran from Merthyr Tydfil to Abercynon in the South Wales valleys in 1804 - beating Stephenson's Rocket by 20 years.

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Full Page	12.50	20.00	27.50	34.00	42.50	50.00
Cost per Issue	12.50	10.00	9.17	8.75	8.50	8.33

Advertisers should send a copy of the required advert, indicating whether full or half page is required, to the Editor. A printout of the advert as it will appear will be supplied to the advertiser with a request for payment.

Cheques for payment at the appropriate rate should be made payable to Gwent Group of Advanced Motorists and be sent to the Group Treasurer, Ron Palmer, 8 Maple Close, Llanmartin, Newport NP18 2ET at least 7 days before the first day of the month of issue.

Small 'For Sale' type ads, from members only, will be accepted free of charge up to a maximum of 30 words. Please send a copy of the wording to the Editor.

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NOTICE TO ASSOCIATE MEMBERS

IF AN OBSERVER HAS NOT CONTACTED YOU WITHIN THREE WEEKS OF JOINING THE GROUP, PLEASE CONTACT THE CHIEF OBSERVER (DETAILS ON PAGES 2 & 4 OF THIS NEWSLETTER).

IN ORDER THAT THE GROUP MEMBERSHIP RECORDS ARE CORRECT AND UP TO DATE, PLEASE

INFORM YOUR OBSERVER OF THE DATE OF YOUR ADVANCED DRIVING TEST AS SOON AS YOU ARE NOTIFIED OF THIS.

WHEN YOU HAVE THE RESULT OF THE TEST, PLEASE INFORM YOUR OBSERVER.

IF YOU HAVE BEEN SUCCESSFUL, PLEASE INFORM THE MEMBERSHIP SECRETARY OF THE MEMBERSHIP NUMBER OF THE IAM WHICH YOU WILL HAVE RECEIVED FROM THE INSTITUTE.