

GWENT GROUP OF ADVANCED MOTORISTS

REGISTERED CHARITY NUMBER 1067486

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The above Committee will meet at 7:00pm on the second Tuesday of each month, at the Road Safety Centre, Hartridge Farm Road, Hartridge, off Ringland Way. For details of the next meeting please contact Tony Blane.

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 !

Michael Lahert

1929 – 2005

It is with much sadness that we have to record the passing of our friend and Chairman.

Affectionately known to us all as Mike, passed the advanced test in 1975 and joined the Cardiff and South East Wales Group (as it was known), becoming a Committee Member shortly after joining.

From the start he was actively involved in the group activities and was an enthusiastic observer from the word go.

In 1977 it was suggested that the Cardiff and South East Wales Group covered far too big an area and Mike was prevailed upon to set about forming a sub-group for Gwent. This he did with his usual enthusiasm and it was duly formed at an inaugural meeting on the 22nd March 1977. Mike was unanimously elected Chairman.

Almost precisely four years later on the 16th March 1981, the sub-group attained full group status as the Gwent Group, and Mike was unanimously elected as its first and, so far, only Chairman.

There is absolutely no doubt that the success of the Gwent Group can be attributed to Mike's ability and energy as Chairman. For the whole of his 24 years as chairman he was an active Observer and more than half of the Group's current membership owes its success in passing the test to his assistance. He expected no member to do what he would not do himself and his ability to persuade members to turn out to act as marshals for events in pouring rain is an indication of his charm and no doubts his Irish origins.

Since 1981 he personally supervised the printing and distribution of the Group's Newsletter. He regularly attended both Regional and National meetings and when the local Road Safety Officer was unable to continue with the twice-yearly series of Better Driving classes, through ill health, Mike made alternative arrangements with Gwent Constabulary and on occasions took the classes himself.

Mike retired from full-time employment in 1992 and his energies were devoted even more towards promoting the Institute. He took on more Associates in his role as Observer, undeterred by a bout of illness in 2002 and being diagnosed as a diabetic.

Under Mike's Chairmanship the Group was pleasantly surprised to win the BP £1000 award in 2001, using it to promote a successful series of car confidence courses for ladies and the elderly.

In 2002 Mike was presented with a Community Award by Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Police for his contribution to road safety in Gwent and in 2003 he

received an award on behalf of the group for his achievements in road safety in Wales from the Minister for Transport and the Environment in Wales with a contribution of £5000 from the lottery-funded "Awards for all Wales". The Group purchased a Mobile Display Unit in 2004 and Mike was extremely proud.

Mike's will be an impossible act to follow. We shall all miss him immensely. May he rest in peace back in his Ireland homeland.

Edwin Marsh

Mike Lahert

The funeral, in the form of a service of Thanksgiving for the life of Michael Joseph Lahert ('Mike') took place at St. Annes RC Church, Malpas, Newport on Friday 13th May 2005 at 1:00pm. Internment was to take place in Kilmanagh, Kilkenny, Ireland on the 18th May.

A large number attended the service filling the small church to capacity with many representatives from both the Gwent Group of Advanced Motorists and Llanwern Golf Club as well as Heddlu Gwent Police and Capita Symonds Road Safety Dept. Tony Blane and Mervyn Thomas acted as pallbearers on behalf of the Group. During the service our Hon Sec Edwin Marsh gave a moving eulogy for Mike.

After the ceremony concluded, some of us made our way to Llanwern Golf Club to where we had been invited to attend the reception and where expressions of sympathy and sorrow were made to his widow Theresa.

Unfortunately, this had not been announced in the church as apparently had been the intention so there were probably quite a few who were not aware of this arrangement.

However, myself, Mervyn and Madeline Thomas, Carol Shergold, Vic and Linda Pinnel and Bill Parry did attend on behalf on the group. The golf club catering people laid on a very nice buffet for the gathering for whom I would like to say a big thank you on behalf of the group.

It was altogether a very fitting tribute to our late departed friend and colleague.

Tony Blane

From the Chairman

It is with a very heavy heart that I am penning these lines. It was with the deepest shock and sadness that we learnt of the death of our esteemed chairman Michael Lahert on the 5th May after a short illness.

I had known Michael, or Mike as we all knew him by, for quite a number of years through my membership of this Group. He was a founder member of the Gwent Group and the one and only chairman in the whole of its existence. Next year would have been his 25th anniversary as Chairman. He really has been one, if not the main stalwart of this group throughout this time and was very dedicated to the group and very determined in his efforts in promoting safer driving on the roads as can be judged by his remarkable achievements in enabling his hands to reach the good of passing the IAM Test. His 'behind the scenes' work with the group was also very prolific and much of his time involved one matter or another to the betterment of the group.

He will be sorely missed and a very hard act to follow.

Another of his passions was the game of golf and such was his enthusiasm for these two activities that I am sure there were several occasions when his wife, Theresa, must have wondered where he was and what he was up to.

Our thoughts are with her at this time.

May he rest in peace.

As I am sure it would have been Mike's wish the Presentation Evening/AGM went ahead as planned on the 11th May at the Green Meadows Golf Club, Cwmbran.

We began the presentation ceremony with the Vice-Chairman Tony Blane introducing the 'top table' guests including our President Supt. Nigel Russell, Region 1 Co-Ordinator Lona Williams and Penny Thorpe Principal Road Safety Officer, Capita Symonds.

Having welcomed all the recipients and everyone else present he then outlined the procedure of the ceremony. Each member was called up in alphabetical order to come forward to have their certificates formally presented to them by our President and a photograph was taken by our photographer Chris Webb to commemorate the occasion. Other presentations included those to newly qualifies Motorcycle Observers: Steve Brand, Mark Jones, Peter Skelton and Steve Williams, also Greg Sullivan (unable to be present) was acknowledged for his qualification as was Richard Bennett, also not present as a newly qualified car observer. After the presentations were completed, our President said a few words of encouragement to everyone for all their efforts and finally a vote of thanks was given by our Hon. Sec. Edwin Marsh. Following a short break for some refreshments and during which time some group photographs of the successful recipients were taken the AGM was held. This took the usual agenda and I shall include a fuller report of

proceedings in the next newsletter but, for now, a word on election of officers and committee: all the current members of the committee stepped down and were re-elected. In the light of present circumstances and regrettably due to the fact that no new nominations were received for election on to the committee some changes in responsibilities were made. Tony Blane was elected as chairman (he will also continue to look after regalia (the shop)). Carol Shergold continuing as Chief Observer, will also be vice-chair, Mervyn Thomas in addition to being M.D.U. Co-ordinator and Events Secretary will also be P.R.O.

I would like to thank very much those members who have taken on additional tasks.

Many Thanks,

Tony Blane

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
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. -----
		Police Open Day, Police Headquarters MDU Visit See page 25 for more details.
	Saturday 18th & Sunday 19th	BikeSafe Weekend Workshop 9:00am to 5:00pm Based at Road Safety Centre, Edlogan Way, Cwmbran.
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 Via Rhayader, Llyn Clywedog, Wales's highest road pass and on to Lake Vyrnwy for lunch. Return via Newtown
	Wednesday 13th	BBQ - All welcome. Tony Parsons hosts the group at the Anchor Inn in the shadows of Tintern Abbey.
	Wednesday 27th	Treasure Hunt - All welcome. Thinking caps on for this one. See page 11 for more details.
August	Wednesday 10th	Local Peaks Superb views all within easy reach.
	Saturday 13th	Chepstow Agricultural Show MDU Visit See page 25 for more details.

August (cont'd)	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.
	Saturday 17th & Sunday 18th	BikeSafe Weekend Workshop 9:00am to 5:00pm Based at Road Safety Centre, Edlogan Way, Cwmbran.
	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 – All welcome. 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 Functions

Future Bikesafe Events

There will be three workshops, which will be held between 9am and 5pm on the following weekends: 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.

Treasure Hunt – Wednesday 27th July

Map, clue sheet, pencil will be supplied.

On the clue sheet you will find three points which you have to visit to collect information. From this information you will discover the final meeting point.

Hint: this is likely to be a pub somewhere in the region.

Please note - this event is open to both cars and bikes.

In fact, it will probably be easier in the car!!

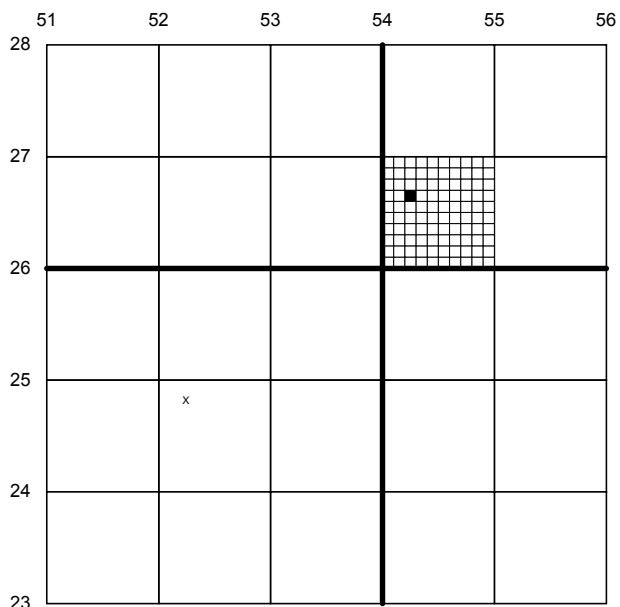
In preparation, here's a reminder of how to read O.S. maps.

'SIX-FIGURE MAP REFERENCES' MADE EASY

Ordnance Survey Maps (O.S. Maps) are divided into **squares**.

Each square has two sets of numbers, one on the horizontal line and one on the vertical line.

These lines are always read: vertical line to the left of the square, then the horizontal line below the square.



MAKING UP A MAP REFERENCE

The shaded square bounded by:
54 (VERTICAL) **and** **26** (HORIZONTAL)

The spot is therefore in square 5426.
This is not accurate enough.

To get a more precise reference of the spot, each line can be further divided into **10 divisions** (like graph paper). Thus creating additional vertical and horizontal lines as shown.

Calculate how many divisions into the square your spot is situated, **RIGHT & UP**.

The SPOT is: **3 divisions RIGHT & 7 divisions UP.**

The 6 Figure Map reference is therefore:

54 and 3 divisions right & 26 and 7 divisions up.

It is written simply like this: 543267

READING A MAP REFERENCE

Say you are given a Map Reference of **523248**. First cut it in half: **523 & 248**

Then put in a decimal point before the last numbers: **52.3 & 24.8**

The position is, therefore, **52 & 3 divisions RIGHT & 24 & 8 divisions UP** (X marks the spot!)

(A rhyme to remember: ALONG the CORRIDOR then UP the STAIRS)

Polo Shirts and Sweatshirts

Reference to these articles was made in the last issue of this newsletter (April page 16). These items can now be obtained through Tony Blane and the shop (details on the front inside cover).

The price for the Polo Shirts is £10 and for the Sweatshirts £14 (plus any postage and packing if necessary) in sizes S, M, L and XL and in colours Black, Red, Navy, Royal Blue, Bottle Green (dark), Grey and Maroon – the writing in each case is in white.

Please remember to provide proof of IAM Membership when placing your order.

Tommy Cooper - One Liners

Police arrested two kids yesterday, one was drinking battery acid, the other was eating fireworks.

They charged one and let the other one off.

So I was getting into my car, and this bloke says to me "Can you give me a lift?" I said "Sure, you look great, the world's your oyster, go for it."

"You know, somebody actually complimented me on my driving today. They left a little note on the windscreen, it said 'Parking Fine.' So that was nice."

MOTORCYCLE SECTION SUMMER TOUR 2005

A tour to the Lake District is being arranged for
September 2005
from the 9th to 12th.

The outline plan
to travel up Friday
tour the Lake District on Saturday and Sunday
travel back via North Wales on the Monday.

The cost for accommodation will depend on the number of riders
going.

Interested?

Then let Steve Williams know:

steve@gwent-advanced-motorists.org or
phone 07832 378346,

I will need to know if you are going by the end of May
and a deposit by the end of June.

CONTINENTAL SUMMER TOUR 2006

A 7 to 8 day Continental tour has been suggested for 2006,
at the moment no location has been agreed upon and
your comments are welcome.

The preferred dates for a tour would be outside of the school holidays,
the reason for this is to try and avoid the price hike that all travel
companies like to apply when the little darlings are off.

September seems the logical choice
but please feel free to contact
Steve Williams - steve@gwent-advanced-motorists.org or
phone 07832 378346
and let me know of any opinions you may have.

Past Events

Open Forum

On Tuesday 29th March 2005 an open forum evening was held at the Road Safety Resource Centre, Edlogan Way, Cwmbran.

The main purpose of the evening was for members to come along and put forward their views and ideas on ways in which we could improve our social calendar within the Group and to suggest some proposals as to how we would 'celebrate' in 2006 the 50th Anniversary of the establishment of the IAM and also, as it happens, the 25th Anniversary of the forming of the Gwent Group.

Unfortunately, the attendance was rather disappointing but nevertheless several ideas were discussed and these have been taken on board and will be further considered.

We would like to thank Penny Thorpe, Principal Road Safety Officer for her input. Our President, Supt. Nigel Russell had also been invited to attend but was unable to do so. Our chairman, Mike Lahert was due to have a separate meeting with him at a later date.

It was agreed to hold a further meeting on these matters on Tuesday 31st May 2005.

POSTPONED UNTIL FURTHER NOTICE.

Tony Blane

Presentation Evening 2005

The following successful members were formally presented with their IAM Certificates by our President Superintendent Nigel Russell at the Presentation Evening held at Greenmeadow Golf Club, Cwmbran on Wednesday 11th May.

Motorcyclists

Rod BATE, Roget

Gary HOULIHAN, Cardiff

Steve BRAND, Cwmbran

Steve REED, Hengoed

Commercial

Michael SHACKELL, Caerphilly

Car

Stephen CHAPLIN, Abergavenny

Gary CONCH, Pontypool

Richard DOWLE, Pontypool

Gary HELKVIST, Newport

Phillip LUFF, Newport

Andrew McCLOUD, Newport

Simon NICHOLLS, Cardiff

Mike SHACKELL, Caerphilly

Peter SKELTON, Abergavenny

Gareth TANSWELL, Newport

Frank WISEMAN, Newport

Qualified as Group Observers (Motorcyclists)

Steve BRAND, Mark JONES, Peter SKELTON, Steve WILLIAMS

Qualified as Senior Observer (Car)

Derrick HODGES

The Committee wishes to express their sincere congratulations on their success to those present and to all the other members who were unable to make it to the Presentation Evening.

A thought for ALL members – passing the Institutes Advanced Driving/Riding Test is really the first rung on the ladder, it is a foundation on which to build, not to sit back on your laurels. Why not consider continuing to demonstrate your advanced motoring skills by becoming an Observer yourself and help others to achieve your high driving/riding standards.

For further details please contact our Chief Observers, Carol Shergold (cars) on 01633-259602 or Mike Odelet (m/cycles) on 07832-378346. They will be very pleased to hear from you!

Notes on IAM National Motorcycle Conference (30th April 2005)

This conference was attended by Dave Williams & Steve Williams.

The format for the day was as follows:

Presentations in the morning on the subjects of how drink and drugs affect driving ability and high visibility garments and their effect.

Presentations in the afternoon by various IAM Groups covering a wide range of topics.

The first was by Graham Wynn of TTC Group (Telford Training Consultants Ltd.). They are responsible for providing educational courses Alcohol Education relating to the law and driving; also rider impairment following consumption of alcohol, drugs (prescribed and Over The Counter types).

The drink drive rehabilitation scheme was introduced in 1993 and ran as 'Small Pilot Scheme' until 1997. Between 1998 and 1999 it was expanded and from 2000 to date it is a Nationwide scheme and permanent.

The course lasts for 18 hours and is spread across 3 days. The cost is between £110 and £150. There is a 25% reduction in disqualification period if attendance of the course is recommended by the court. This is instead of points being applied to the licence.

In England and Wales

>85,000 motoring offences involving alcohol and drugs

3,500 people killed or seriously injured

17,000 total casualties

Motorcycle riders killed as a percentage of legal Blood Alcohol Limit:

Age:	16-19	20-29	30-39	40+	All Ages
	27	15	10	2	11

Provisional figures for 2003 show an increase of 13.

Young people are killing themselves - more work needs to be done at this age group.

It has been shown during studies that 3 units of alcohol reduce the work performance by 11%.

20% of people are arrested "the next day".

A third of all accidents involve occupational drivers.

Fact: Most alcoholics/problem drinkers are in employment.

Following a brief slide presentation, Graham Wynn proceeded to uncover a series of bottles, glasses, cans on the top table. Then proceeded to continue relating units of alcohol to the size of the drink, its percentage and the types of glasses used for such drinks. This was the really interesting part of the presentation.

Calculating Units

Category of drinks:	Spirit (40%)	Top of the scale
	Fortified Wine (17%)	⋮
	Table Wine (12.5%)	⋮
	Beers & Lagers (3.4% → 10%)	Bottom of the scale

A member of the audience was then asked to pour Graham a drink. He proceeded to pour a generous glass of Jack Daniels. The next participant realised that there was a point being made and poured a slightly smaller glass of Jack Daniels.

What occurred next, was the official pub measuring cup was used to see how many measures were in each glass. The smaller of the two contained nearly three measures, whilst the large glass contained nearly six measures.

One pub measure was then poured back into the glass. It just about filled the bottom of the glass.

The point being made here, was that when in the 'host' situation, if you poured a single measure then you may be seen to be stingy or mean with your drink.

25ml of spirit = 1 measure

50ml of port/fortified wine/martini = 1 measure

125ml of table wine = 1 measure

When the scale of units and the measurement for the drink driving limit was introduced in 1967 by Barbara Castle, the types of wine around were the likes of Lambrusco. The alcohol level in these wines was relatively low. Since then, we (as a nation) are more familiar with wine and expect a better quality of it. The better quality also means that the alcohol level in them is also increased.

A typical glass of wine (125ml) could be as much as 1.5 units.

250ml is equivalent to 3 units which is equivalent to half a pint.
250ml is a large glass of wine.

35ml for spirits is a new measure which is being used in pubs.

There is a general lack of public information about units.

Example

A half pint of mild is equivalent to one unit.

A pint of Stella (5.2%) is equivalent to 3 units.

An easy way of remembering is “drink a can think a pint”

A standard bottle of Budweiser is equivalent to 2 units.

The alcopop range from 275ml to 330ml bottles and these are either vodka or cider based and range from 5% to 6%. This means that the bottles can contain between 1.5 to 2.5 units per bottle.

On top of this, there is now the fashion of drinking a single shot in a glass.

Obviously, this is 1 unit. So the combination of an alcopop with a shot will soon push you over the limit.

Formula for calculating units: $\text{Units} = \text{Volume (litres)} \times \text{Strength (\%)}$

Example for fortified wine. 50ml x 20% = 1 unit

Absorption rates

30 minutes = 80% to reach liver

60 minutes = 100% to reach liver

Then, 1 hour per unit for the liver to process and get rid of the alcohol.

This is a best scenario. If the liver is damaged, then this time will be increased.

Does food soak up alcohol?

No. It provides a barrier and hence slows down the absorption rate. The same amount of alcohol still enters the blood stream. Consequently, the time taken for the body to remove the alcohol will be increased.

“It is easier to put the units in – harder to take them out”.

Graham Wynn

www.ttc-uk.com

Second presentation by Tom Craig of ICU UCMc

This presentation related to the wearing of fluorescent clothing, not only while riding but also when broken down by the roadside.

“Hindsight is not visible road safety.”

Usually, if the jacket is loose and flappy it is more conspicuous and will be seen quicker than a tight fitting one.

The most dangerous place on British Roads is on the hard shoulder of the motorway as a result of a breakdown.

List of motorcycle injuries

Going ahead or other.....	14,465
Overtaking stationary or moving vehicles	3,896
Going ahead on bend	3,251
Waiting to go ahead.....	1,075
Turning right or waiting to turn right	970
Stopping or starting	791
Turning left or waiting to turn left	565
Changing lanes.....	292
Parked	84

David Williams
(personal notes of the meeting)

Details of the afternoon presentations to be covered in the next newsletter.

General Information

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

IAM Fleet Appoints Malcolm Thorne as National Business Manager South

Issued: 13 April 2005

IAM Fleet, the commercial training division of the Institute of Advanced Motorists (IAM), has appointed Malcolm Thorne as National Business Manager South, with responsibility for managing clients and developing new business in Southern England.

With over 30 years of experience in the motor industry and particular expertise in the vehicle management and leasing sectors, Malcolm has a wealth of sales and management knowledge. Prior to joining IAM Fleet he was Southern Divisional Sales Manager for Highway Vehicle Management.

Commenting on the new appointment, Derek Camp, UK Business Manager for IAM Fleet said: "Malcolm's wealth of experience in the vehicle management and leasing sectors will play an important role in further developing IAM Fleet's business, helping our customers to significantly reduce risk for their occupational drivers."

Malcolm's outside interests include golf, gardening and supporting the Round Table in his hometown of Great Dunmow, Essex.

For more information, visit www.iamfleet.com, email enquiries@iamfleet.com or call 0845 3108311.

“Two Wheels Good” as IAM Bikers Grow - Four new IAM motorcycle groups join the pack

Issued: 26 April 2005

Unprecedented demand from bikers seeking advanced riding skills has led to the IAM extending its network of local groups - with four new groups established in the last month alone.

The new groups – all preparing riders for their IAM advanced motorcycling test - are needed to respond to the increase in demand from riders.

This year has seen an increase in IAM test applications of nearly 40 per cent.

Plymouth Advanced Motorcyclists were the first of the new groups (9 April) followed closely by Peterborough Advanced Motorcyclists (13 April), Wilts and Bath Advanced Motorcyclists (16 April) and Morecombe Bay Estuary Advanced Motorcyclists (17 April).

The four new groups are the latest to join a network of more than 200 IAM Groups, UK wide, most of which offer to prepare riders for their advanced test.

"Our motorcycle membership is now nearly 14,000 and growing fast," said IAM Motorcycle Manager Dave Shenton.

"Advanced motorcyclists get the best of their bike – and they have the time of their life. Riding is no fun if you are injured and that's where the IAM's Skill for Life course comes into its own," he said.

Mr Shenton said that the rise in so-called "born again" bikers was a major factor in the surge of popularity for advanced riding.

"Today's powerful machines need much more skilful handling than those that were around years ago."

The growth in IAM bike groups supports the first National Motorcycling Strategy introduced by the DfT to ensure the "mainstreaming" of motorcycling as a means of transport. The strategy recognises that an increasing number of people are turning to motorcycles and scooters in order to beat congestion as well as riding bikes just for the sheer fun of it. At its heart is the need to recognize improvements in post-test training, making it attractive to riders.

'In-Cab Camera' Wins IAM Backing

New technology improves driver performance and reduces fleet operating costs

Issued: 25 May 2005

IAM Fleet, the commercial training division of the Institute of Advanced Motorists (IAM), is endorsing DriveCam, a revolutionary new driver behaviour management system designed to improve driver performance and reduce fleet running costs. The DriveCam system integrates video technology and management software, which allows fleet managers to identify and remedy dangerous driving behaviour through driver training.

DriveCam works by collecting high risk driving 'events' on a palm-sized colour video recorder mounted behind a vehicle's rear view mirror. The recorder captures what the driver sees and hears, inside and outside the vehicle. When a triggering event occurs - such as an accident or harsh acceleration, braking or turning - images and sounds are automatically recorded.

Any events that have been captured by DriveCam are then downloaded onto a computer, allowing fleet managers to review an individual driver's performance, and take remedial measures where required. As DriveCam constantly records into a digital memory, it is able to capture activity ten seconds before and after an event, showing not only what happened, but why it happened. Such information can also be used as evidence in the settlement of insurance claims.

DriveCam is already being used in thousands of commercial vehicles in the United States, including fleets operated by utilities, public transport and logistics organisations, and by over 200 ambulance operators. The results generated by

the system, combined with driver training, have been proven to reduce the frequency and severity of accidents by between 30 and 50 per cent.

John Kane, Sales Director for DriveCam Europe commented, "Following the highly successful introduction of DriveCam in the USA, where over 20,000 units have already been put into service, we are confident that the system can deliver similar improvements in driver performance and reductions in running costs for customers in the UK."

Mark Edwards, IAM Fleet's Head of Training said, "DriveCam accurately monitors driver behaviour, can help to identify drivers who require some form of training intervention, and can reduce accidents by up to 50 per cent. As part of a driving risk management programme, we would recommend this system to fleet managers seeking tangible evidence of driver behaviour to help reduce occupational road risk."

For more information, visit www.drivecam.com, email sales@drivecameurope.com or call 01582 765500.

For information about IAM Fleet, visit www.iamfleet.com, email enquiries@iamfleet.com or call 0845 3108311.

Tailgaters and Phone Users Revealed as Britain's Most dangerous Drivers

Issued: 26 May 2005

Drivers who tailgate other vehicles or use a handheld phone while at the wheel are the most dangerous threats on the road, according to a new survey from the Institute of Advanced Motorists.

More than half of all drivers regard each of these two activities as "highly dangerous", according to a BMRB survey of almost 700 motorists carried out for the IAM, the UK's leading organisation for improving driving standards. Drivers who overtake on single carriageway A-roads when there is oncoming traffic, and those who cut others up, forcing them to brake, are regarded as the next most dangerous threats.

The survey shows that more women (60 per cent) than men (47 per cent) regard tailgating as highly dangerous. Likewise, more women than men see "phoning and driving" as highly dangerous (61 per cent of women versus 44 per cent of men).

In contrast, young drivers (aged 17 to 29) are significantly less likely to regard other motorists' activities as dangerous. Only 30 per cent of young drivers regard "phoning and driving" as highly dangerous, compared with more than 50 per cent for all other age groups. Similarly, 40 per cent of young drivers consider tailgating highly dangerous, compared with 55 per cent of other age groups.

Steve Norris, a member of the IAM Council and former transport and road safety minister said:

"Many of Britain's motorists regard other drivers as lacking basic road safety skills. Too many road users slip into bad habits, either through ignorance, impatience or, even worse, aggression.

"Tailgating and phoning while driving are activities which are a clear threat to the safety of others. No one has the right to drive badly but the results of bad driving fill our hospitals every day. Motorists should leave at least a two second gap behind the vehicle in front, and more in bad weather. And using handheld mobile phones at the wheel has the potential to kill."

The IAM is calling on the Highways Agency and other local highway authorities to paint more chevrons on motorways and other fast roads to remind drivers of the "Two Second Rule" - the safe gap between vehicles.

The IAM also wants the Government to impose stronger enforcement of the regulation banning use of a handheld phone at the wheel, which was introduced 18 months ago.

Figures from a Department for Transport survey reveal that a total of 26,400 fixed penalty notices were issued by 27 of the 51 police forces in Great Britain during the first ten months of the regulation between 1 December 2003 and 30 September 2004.

This compares with the Department for Transport's estimate* that the new offence would result in 50,000 to 100,000 fixed penalty notices a year and 2,000 to 5,000 prosecutions in court.

Steve Norris said:

"More effective police action would help the Government achieve the aim of making 'phoning-and-driving' as socially unacceptable as drinking-and-driving."

"We are particularly alarmed by the evidence that many younger, less experienced drivers fail to appreciate the risks of poor driving skills.

Taking an advanced driving test will make them better equipped to identify and avoid dangers on the road, and be less of a risk to themselves and others. The cost is a small price to pay for making you a better, safer driver, with skills which could save lives - their own and others."

*Mobile Phones and Driving: Regulatory Impact Assessment, DfT, October 2003.

Mobile Display Unit (M.D.U.)

Past visits of the Mobile Display Unit

Usk Primary School Fun Run

On Sunday 24th April 2005, children of Usk Primary School took part in the School's annual fun run, Mums and Dads of the school children also took part, which was to raise money for School funds.

Weather conditions were ideal for running not too hot, with just a gentle breeze blowing. The same route was used as last year with competitors starting from Usk Cricket ground, with the finish line back at the school where cup of tea and cold drinks were awaiting the competitors which I believe was a record number of entries.

May I take this opportunity to thank the following marshals for giving a couple of hours of their time to help with the event, they are as follows: David Reynolds, Bill Parry, Roger Budding and Tony Jackson. Thank you all very much indeed, your help was very much appreciated.

Morgan Car Company

On Tuesday the 3rd of May a number of Advanced Motorists visited the Morgan Car Company, which is located at Malvern Links, not too far away and is a pleasant drive if you go via Ledbury which I believe everyone did. As it is a small factory, they could only allow six persons at a time, to go around the factory. So in the morning two separate parties of six looked around the factory and the same in the afternoon, resulting in twenty four members in total.

Everyone enjoyed their visit and remarked how good it was to see skilled craftsmen at work building the Morgan car still by hand (British workmanship at its best), thank goodness not a robot in sight. Also the employees were most helpful when we stopped and asked questions about their work, and what a lot of questions to be asked, which were answered very politely and efficiently.

Members who missed out on the May visit and wish to visit the Morgan Car Company, please contact me and I will arrange another visit, perhaps in the Autumn.

Mervyn Thomas

I along with a number of other members of this group took up the invitation to make a visit organised by our Events Secretary, Mervyn Thomas, to the Morgan Motor Company at Malvern on Tuesday 3rd May 2005.

Because the numbers able to be accommodated on each tour of the factory was very limited the visits by our members were staggered throughout the day. With Ron Palmer accompanying me, I drove the 50 or so miles route up to Malvern to arrive at the allotted time of 10:30am (we were a bit early as it happened due to it not taking quite as long to get there as I had anticipated!!) We were met by Mervyn who told us where to go – to the visitors car park and reception, that is!

Having 'signed in' and given our passes we then set out to walk the tour of the factory on our own using a sketch map as a guide as to which route we should take – there was no 'human guide'! The tour which lasted around an hour took in all the main assembly shops (apart from the paint-shop for obvious reasons!), right through to the finished product.

I was particularly struck by the craftsmanship that was put into building the cars – each stage of operation was meticulously carried out manually; the number and varied shapes of wooden parts used was amazing. What a contrast to the methods used in manufacturing mass-produced cars – none of your robots and conveyor systems here! (About 9-12 Morgan cars are made per week).

My only disappointment with the visit was that there was as mentioned earlier, no guide to show us around – it would have perhaps been nice if we could have had some background and information imparted to us as the tour progressed and to have any questions answered though surprisingly the engineers/craftsmen were quite willing to stop their work temporarily to speak with us if we had something to raise. Also it would have been good to have perhaps received a simple information sheet giving some details of the history of the company and some information facts and figures for example.

But all-in-all it was a most interesting day and I should like to thank Mervyn Thomas on behalf of both myself and, I am sure, all the other group members who took up the opportunity for his efforts in arranging such an enjoyable visit.

Tony Blane

Mobile Display Unit

The M.D.U. will be attending all of the events that were listed in the last newsletter, and once again it would very much appreciated if any Members of the Group who are willing to come along and help with the M.D.U. at any of the events, just a couple of hours of your time that is all we ask for. Anyone who attends will be made most welcome.

Mervyn Thomas

Future Visits for the Mobile Display Unit

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 to follow closer to the date.

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

One in 10 'lies about car cover'

One driver in 10 is prepared to lie to an insurance company to keep premiums down, according to research by RAC Financial Services.

Claiming to keep a car in a locked garage overnight when it was not was the most common lie used by motorists

The RAC warned that by lying on their insurance applications, motorists could end up with a totally invalid policy.

The survey also found that 9% of drivers admitted to having driven without insurance at some point.

'False economy'

The RAC said it believed drivers had picked up bad habits when shopping around for cheaper car insurance.

The survey of 2,000 people found 11% had lied about locking their car away overnight, while 6% deliberately underestimated the value of their vehicle, while 2% gave the wrong main address to get a lower premium.

The RAC also said that one-quarter of motorists were only taking out minimal levels of cover to keep premiums down.

"When you look at the bills some people face, it's easy to understand why they feel pushed to reduce their car costs," said RAC Financial Services spokesman Philip Hale.

"But it's often a false economy. Many insurance policies will be invalid if the details given don't match the vehicle and minimal cover just means you're more likely to have to pay for repairs, or damage you cause."

In addition to 9% of those quizzed admitting to having driven without insurance, nearly one-quarter of motorists said their car had been on the road without a valid MOT, while 18% said they had driven with a tax disc that had expired.

"All these behaviours are illegal and driving uninsured is a particular concern," Mr Hale said.

Steve Schanzer

Fury as government extends Severn tolls

May 6 2005

Rhodri Clark, Western Mail

DRIVERS using the Severn motorway bridges must carry on paying the current tolls for more than a decade because of a government decision to charge VAT, it has emerged.

Anti-toll campaigners are furious that other private toll bridges in Britain have their VAT reimbursed while the Treasury extracts millions of pounds from drivers taking the M4 into Wales.

Without the VAT charges, the end of the current Severn tolls would now be nine years away.

But VAT has added more than two years to the tolls' lifespan.

Both Severn bridges are operated by a private company, which collects tolls to cover the cost of building the second crossing and maintaining both.

The terms of the concession say the bridges will pass to the state once the private company has collected a certain amount - just under £1bn in today's money.

At current rates of traffic growth, that target income would have been met in June 2014.

But in 2002 the Government decided to take about £150m in VAT from the tolls without increasing the charges, which are fixed by legislation.

With a portion of each toll charge going to the Treasury, the private company receives less income from each driver. As a result the company will not collect its target income by June 2014.

Officials believe the full amount will not be collected until "sometime in late 2016".

This information has been extracted from the Department for Transport by the National Alliance Against Tolls (NAAT), following an article in the Western Mail on refinancing of PFI projects.

John McGoldrick, of the NAAT, said, "The most recent estimate we know of is that tolls would end in 2016. The scandal is that if it were not for VAT, then the target would have been met earlier.

"The Government will take about £150m extra."

He said the Government had not been open about the situation.

"We still haven't had answers to all our questions. We want to know why the Severn was treated differently from other crossings."

He claimed MPs were misled when they were informed of the changes. "They were told VAT would not increase tolls. They were not told that the way this would be done meant drivers would have to pay Severn tolls longer."

Neath councillor John Warman, organiser of Campaign Against Severn Tolls, said the situation was unacceptable.

"We shouldn't stand for it in Wales, nor should our neighbours over the other side.

"The tolls are a big burden for everybody to pay. I think they're affecting the economy in Wales. They're a disincentive against businesses setting up here."

Mr Warman, a market researcher who crosses the Severn about once a week, said the Government should reimburse the VAT.

In 2000 the European Court of Justice ruled the Government was wrong not to levy VAT on private toll bridges, and in December 2002 the Government announced it would comply with the court's ruling from February 2003.

But the Government also promised motorists would not pay higher charges as a result.

An official told the NAAT, "To this end, the Government introduced a scheme, starting from 1 February 2003, for the reimbursement of VAT. Some toll operators have taken advantage of the scheme, others have not because either the

operator's total revenue falls below the VAT threshold or the operator has decided to subsume the VAT element without increasing toll charges."

Ten bridges, with the Severn crossings counted as one, were affected by the court ruling. They included the Skye bridge, where tolls have now been scrapped, and the Clifton suspension bridge in Bristol. Also included was the bridge over the Wye at Whitney, near Hay-on-Wye, where toll income was exempted from tax by a Parliamentary Act passed in the 18th century.

Steve Schanzer

Observations

Advanced Motorcyclists are encouraged to use observations and anticipation on which a riding plan can be based. Our IAM publication "How to be an Advanced Motorcyclist" and also "Motorcycle ROADCRAFT" goes into great detail on the subject emphasising how the information stage of the "system of motorcycling" is constant throughout all other stages.

Informative articles on Advanced Motorcycling can sometimes be found in other publications that make the same point but express them in another manner. It is encouraging to see such articles in motorcycle magazines and newspapers and those that take on board such advice can improve their riding and make themselves much safer on the road, and may even become interested enough in the subject to join an organisation such as ours.

StreetBiker, the Journal of the Motorcycle Action Group (MAG) recently published an excellent article by their resident road safety instructor Kevin Williams, offering advice on avoiding those intersection accidents by staying in the picture.

Many thanks to Kevin Williams for contributing this article.

Greg Sullivan

Staying Alive

If you've been riding for more than a few months the chances are you've found yourself in a situation where a driver in a side road either pulls out from the left or turns in front of you. They're extremely common accidents but largely avoidable if we just apply a few simple rules.

The first is to know where the junctions are. Many riders are surprised by emerging cars because they don't use the clues to see where they might come from. Signs are an obvious clue, but if we don't scan for them we won't see them. Triangular warning signs, direction signs and tourist information signs – they're there to help.

Even when there are no road signs other clues can indicate a potential hazard. Look for dropped kerbs, breaks in hedgerows and white paint marking the end of the road. A single street light is often found at the end of a lane. Look for refuges for right turning cars, traffic islands and bollards. A little cluster of houses might mark a crossroads but a tractor can emerge from anywhere, and so can horses, mountain bikes and pedestrians.

It would be best to avoid a wide left position in a right hand bend if anything could pose a hazard on the nearside. Use the context of the signs and markings to make more deductions. A triangular sign will give you advanced warning but a finger post will tell you exactly where the junction is. If the warning sign for a side road appears as you approach a blind crest, expect the side turning to be on the far side of it. Ask yourself if the driver is going to have time to clear the junction if you fly over it at top speed.

If there is a solid stop line across the end of a side road, the chances are that the view OUT of the junction is poor. A wide approach gives you chance to be seen, whilst keeping your speed down allows you to deal with a driver who's pulled out without knowing you're there. The second point is to ask yourself if the driver in the junction can see you. If they can't see you they can't react accordingly. If you can't see the driver, the driver can't see you – the front of the car doesn't have eyes!

Most riders have figured out that awkwardly sited telephone boxes, road signs and even pedestrians can easily hide a bike, but a couple of other classic errors are following too close, and overtaking a car turning left. If you sit right behind the vehicle in front, you're invisible, particularly when it's a transit or a truck. You appear to be a gap, which just might encourage a driver to use it. Similarly overtaking a car turning left seems straightforward, but the driver waiting to emerge from the junction may not have seen you and could easily pull out as the car begins its turn.

Scan to get the full picture, and remember to keep yourself in it.

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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.