

**DUMFRIES GROUP  
OF ADVANCED MOTORISTS**

**NEWSLETTER**

**AUTUMN 2003**

## **From the Chair**

My wife gets annoyed when I say on the day after the longest day, "The nights are drawing in....". Well, we are now heading back towards winter, but we are (well I'm..) enjoying brilliant driving (and riding) weather. However, when we get stuck in traffic jams our temperatures, and our tempers rise. Blessed are they with air-conditioning, for they shall keep their cool.

Ever had the experience of going out of the house and slamming the door behind you? Shouting all sorts of things inside your head, and going over the argument in the car? Ever considered what effect it has on your driving? Did you notice that you just went over the speed limit, and maybe that last overtake was a bit risky? Then come back down to earth with a bump, and thought "If I don't watch what I'm doing, I'll be in Casualty?"

Hot heads have no place behind a steering wheel, or on a motor bike. And driving when you are upset can get you into all sorts of trouble. How do you think it will sound if you say to the police officer "Sorry, officer I've just had a blazing row with my wife". Keep a cool head when you're out there. It's bad enough when you're concentrating.

Having a son at University, come the middle of July, it was time to move him to another flat. "Easy, Dad, we can do two or three trips in the car..." Aye, right... So that's when you go for the van option. Carries more than the car will, and you can have it overnight.

Pick up the van from the hire place (incidentally did you hear about the person who thought Hertz Van Rental was a Dutch international football player...). What's the first thing you do? Look around and settle into the cockpit drill. You check it all out, and then turn the key. Off you go, and it feels so different to your car, doesn't it? Steering is different, the ride is different - there's just so much bounce in an empty van. However, you're up higher, and the view is great. You can see for what seems like miles in front. But you haven't got the central rear-view mirror. So you have to make adjustments to your observation pattern, and check those side mirrors. Then, gradually, as you get more used to things, you settle into your driving.

Using advanced driving skills seems to make it easier for you to drive the van. Then you load up the van. And the handling changes again. And the thing is, I bet normally you wouldn't notice the handling on your car, because it's familiar.

All in all, it was great fun being "White Van Man" for the day, and a different facet of driving. Oh, by the way.... I forgot to check the horn on the van, until I was well on my way. It didn't work. Do you think they will drum me out of the Institute?

## **E-mail contact**

Some members have already sent details of their e-mail addresses to the Secretary. If you have access to e-mail could you please let us know on the membership renewal form or e-mail direct to Helen Cameron (dumfries@groups.iam.org.uk). This will help us, in the future, to keep members informed of events and other group business.

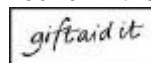
## **New Observers wanted**

The new Observer training schedule for the coming year is being devised, please let Graham Watson or Alan Jones know, if you want to be considered for inclusion on the scheme, or indeed just want to find out more about what is involved. This is your chance to give something back by helping others to improve their driving standards, but just as importantly it helps you to maintain or even improve your own standards.

Observer training to the new IAM National Qualification is available to any suitable full member of the Dumfries Group. Existing group Observers can continue to observe and there is no requirement for them to retrain. If they wish they may take part in the new scheme but priority will initially be given to training new Observers. Assistance is also available to current Observers who wish to prepare for the Senior Observers Qualification.

## **Membership renewal**

Included with this newsletter is the annual renewal form which this year includes a Gift Aid Declaration Form. Details of Gift Aid can be found in the Treasurer's article on the subject. Look for the Gift Aid logo:



The committee have reluctantly had to increase the annual membership fee which has remained unchanged for some time. This is as a result of continuing pressure on our funds and an operating loss over the last year. Since 2000 our annual insurance costs have almost doubled and we have face increased expenditure for training materials.

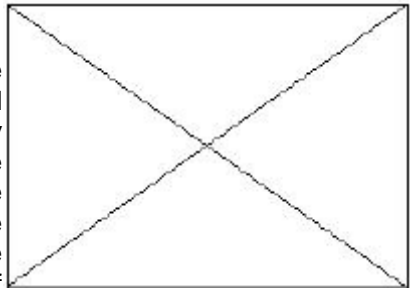
On the other hand there are improvements for members. This year sees a move to Dalston House Hotel, 5 Laurieknowe, Dumfries for our home events venue. New Group Handbooks have been produced and training of new Observers is underway to the new national standard. We're also looking at purchasing more training equipment to improve the quality of our service. The group has invested in a selection of videos and currently copies of 'Roadcraft' and 'Top Rider' are available for loan at the nominal contribution of £1. Please contact Helen Cameron if you would like to take advantage of this. Any suggestions for other suitable titles to add to library will be considered.

## Testing time for Mark Ranshaw

My test was to start at 4.30pm meeting in Safeway car park. I arrived early at 4 o'clock in order to avoid any embarrassing botched parking attempts under the watchful eye of the Examiner, Tom Findlay. As it turned out I was able to make a perfectly unflustered reverse manoeuvre giving me a straight forward exit out of the car park. The Examiner arrived at about 4.20 and did his paperwork and checked my documents. After the cockpit checks, we were away on time at 4.30 heading for the Annan Road.

Departure from Dumfries was fairly uneventful given the time of day (the start of rush hour) with a number of parked vehicles to pass, in the face of moderate oncoming traffic. Heading out of Dumfries, I started my commentary and was just able to extend up towards 70mph in 5<sup>th</sup> gear on the Collin Bypass when the examiner asked me to take the next right turning (onto the old Annan road, the B724). As we entered Greenlea I was suddenly stricken with a hoarse voice and feared that this might cramp my style seriously but fortunately it seemed to clear after a minute or so and I wasn't similarly afflicted again thankfully! We were to stay on this road for its entire course to Annan and was mostly fairly uneventful, both Clarencefield and Cummertrees being negotiated without any problems.

Shortly after the T-junction for Powfoot we encountered a section of newly made road with loose chippings and a temporary speed restriction of 20mph. For some while before this I had had one car behind me and a white transit van behind him. I have to say that up to this point neither of these vehicles had shown any obvious sign of

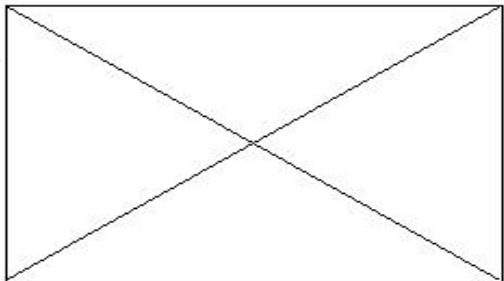


annoyance at my (naturally) careful progress given the increasingly winding and dipping nature of the road. However, as the 20mph stretch showed no sign of coming to an end, the white van decided he could bear this no longer and broke ranks accelerating rapidly to treat me to an irritable flurry of beeps on his horn as he passed, before pulling in sharply and showering the front of my car with loose chippings - despite the fact that there was no oncoming traffic for him to avoid. I commented that the van had shown no consideration for my vehicle (whilst thinking to myself that I would have to get the touch up paint out later!) and Tom agreed. I later discovered that he had taken the registration number of the van, had noticed it parked on a forecourt in Annan, and expected to have words with the owner at a later time or date.

Annan was relatively quiet, but with a long wait at the traffic lights in the High Street. Much use of all mirrors. We departed from the roundabout at the top

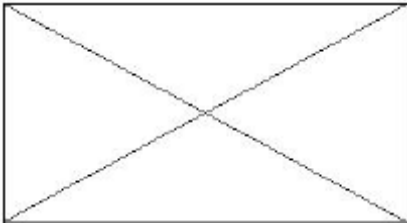
of the town in the direction of Kirkpatrick Fleming (the B6357) and I was aware of a strange sensation as my voice was talking of accelerating away into the national speed limit zone but my right foot had turned to lead and we were dawdling along in the low forties! A cloud had descended and I started to feel a sense of having lost my grip on things when, fortunately, Tom asked for a right turn onto the A75 in the direction of Gretna and I snapped back into shape. Does everyone suffer from these temporary lapses about half way into the test? Anyway, the A75 provided a brief opportunity to cruise down the unusually quiet straight stretch towards Eastriggs before a left turn onto the unclassified road indicated for Eaglesfield. No road markings and a badly broken up nearside, particularly in one place where some heavy tractor movements had completely smashed up part of the road at a field entrance. Still, I think I negotiated all of these, and other pot holes, without upsetting the passenger or overly disturbing the suspension.

Over the staggered cross roads and we continued in the direction of Eaglesfield. A brief moment of misinterpretation came as we approached Chapelcross and I initially thought a 90 degree deviation to the right with a left junction (actually an entrance to the power station) was a halt for a T junction until I realised there was no white line across the road. Not a road I'm familiar with but needless to say I mentally ticked myself off. After a 90 degree left at Creca, we made a right turn at the T junction with the B722 and proceeded towards the 90 degree left 'corner from Hell' and 'slalom' down to the motorway junction at Eaglesfield. I was pleased with my negotiation of the corner and my subsequent observation and planning down this road.



Reasonably light traffic on the motorway allowed for a smooth integration into lane 1 and we took 5<sup>th</sup> gear and accelerated up towards the speed limit, allowing faster traffic to overtake us. Climbing up from Ecclefechan I observed a tanker lorry ahead of me in lane 1 which was making good progress so we were gaining on him slowly but nevertheless I was planning my overtake. Unfortunately a clutch of cars in both lanes 2 and 3 hove into rapid rear view, their arrival on my offside coinciding with the point at which I would have liked to pull out, so I had to trickle off some speed to make the manoeuvre after their passing. This was OK and we passed by the lorry in lane 2 just at the start of the descent towards Lockerbie, so monitoring of speed was critical here! An Alfa 156 came level in lane 3 doing approximately 80mph and I checked my nearside mirror and determined it would be safe to indicate left for my return to lane 1. Barely had the rear of the Alfa passed my front end than he cut

sharply across my bows, removing any zone of safety before me, and despite the fact that lane 3 ahead was completely clear and he was not under any undue pressure from drivers behind. In a flash, I checked the nearside mirror again to ascertain the position of the lorry and pulled in rather more swiftly than I would have liked - particularly under test conditions - but nevertheless safely. The Examiner felt that the other vehicle had been 'very unhelpful' in this circumstance but I don't think he would have considered taking any further action. Sadly, this is the sort of behaviour that is very common on motorways.



Apart from checking my speed, the rest of the motorway drive was uneventful and we pulled into Lockerbie for a couple of manoeuvres in side roads - reversing round a corner and a parallel park - and it was back to Dumfries via Lochmaben. A considerate vehicle crossing my path allowing me

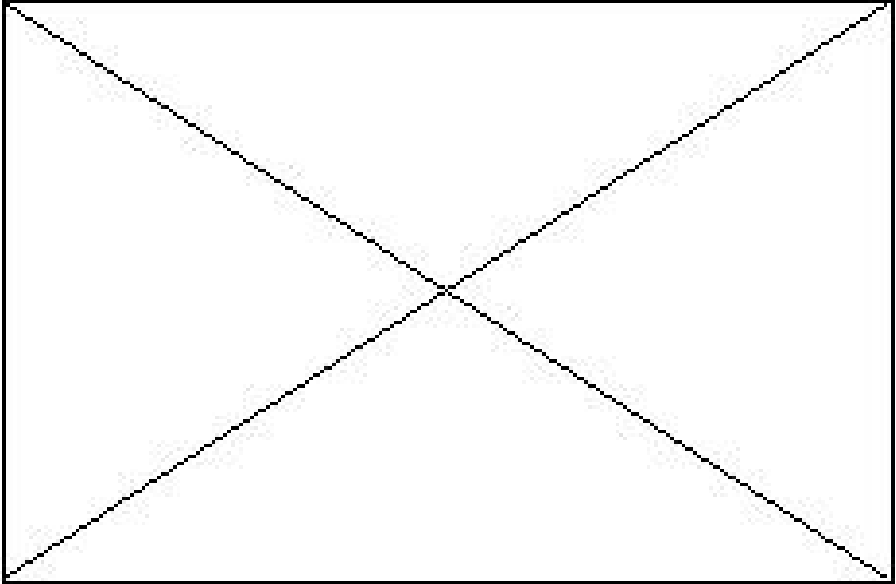
through and a check in the windows of Costcutter' for reflections got me through the tricky narrow bit of Lochmaben.

I was rather too cautious in the climb out of Lochmaben through the switch back bends and could have made much better progress here. Good observation and more acceptable speeds got me through Torthorwald and back to the Dumfries By-pass. At the roundabout I expected the examiner to take us along the A75 for a few more roundabouts but he didn't and just asked to go back to the car park by the quickest route. Obviously this involved going down the narrow bit of the Lockerbie Road by Noblehill with parked vehicles everywhere but careful observation, planning and clutch control got us through here without incident; I say this now but at the time I thought "I think I've failed, he's hardly said anything, barely written anything down and he hasn't asked me any questions!" and now he was busy writing the report sheet. Maybe I wasn't worth bothering about? However, as soon as I had completed my shut down drill, Tom said he wouldn't hold me in suspense, I had passed! He complimented me on my smooth gear changes and good use of mirrors and signals when needed and a good commentary but noted a lack of progress at times with a tendency to be over cautious. (I think in 'normal' circumstances this won't be such a problem!) I thanked him for his time and he left. I went into Safeway and bought some bubbly! (But didn't drink it until I got home and shared my joy with Gaynor, my wife!)

### **From the Daily Telegraph:**

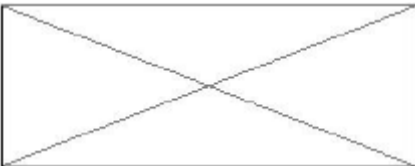
Commenting on a complaint from a Mr. Arthur Purdey about a large gas bill, a spokesman for NorthWest Gas said "We agree it was rather high for the time of year. It's possible Mr. Purdey has been charged for the gas used up during the explosion that destroyed his house."

## How's your observation? (answers on a following page)



### The cost of crashing

Ever wondered how the cost of crash repairs is worked out? There may be a few repairers who use traditional pen and paper but most now use specialist body shop management and estimating software to calculate and manage the process of insurance claims and monitor the progress of the repair.



Many repairers are allocated directly by the insurance company without the need for you to obtain three or so estimates. This is acceptable to the insurers because the cost of repair is based on

labour times agreed for each and every part needing to be replaced or repaired.

The process goes something like this:

- The claim is logged on computer, often on the direct instructions of the insurer. Here basic details are recorded, an inspector/estimator allocated, the car collected and a courtesy car allocated, as necessary.
- An inspection is used to identify the extent of the damage.
- This information is then entered into the computer by selecting the damaged parts from the database. The software is used to identify all the small parts as well as the major ones (e.g. Bolts, washers etc).
- Notes and digital images can be appended to the claim log as necessary.

- The computer then calculates the costs of materials and the labour element associated with each part, it even calculates the cost of paint and associated labour.
- Video/picture submission of vehicle damage can be made direct to the insurers with no wait for the assessor to attend in many cases.
- An itemised estimate – labour, parts, paint and materials is produced.

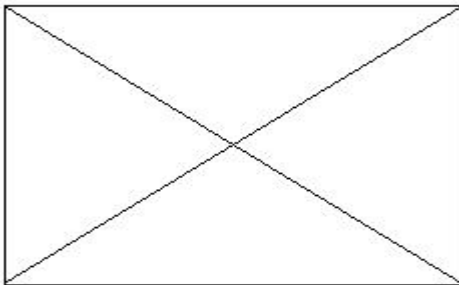
The software can also be used to generate parts purchase orders automatically from the estimate, which can also be transmitted directly to suppliers.

## **Take the hard shoulder home**

You may have noticed in the IAM Magazine (Summer 2003) that Alistair Darling, the Transport Secretary, announced that he wanted to permit the use of motorway hard shoulders, to increase capacity during peak periods. Although the scheme may sound a little hare-brained to start with, it is based on successful trials carried out in Holland.

The scheme involves providing ‘safe havens’ adjacent to the hard shoulder for use in event of breakdown or emergency. It is likely such arrangements will only be in use during congested periods and will be policed by CCTV with interactive signs advising drivers when the additional lanes are open to traffic.

There are some obvious safety issues with the idea but the benefits may come to the fore when traffic is at or near capacity for the road. Here the scheme



may, at least, reduce the dangers posed by unauthorised traffic already using the hard shoulder, such as the taxi shown in the adjacent photograph, which was snapped on the M8, moving onto the hard shoulder and ‘overtaking’ the congested traffic ahead. Not that we can condone his action, but he was one of many!

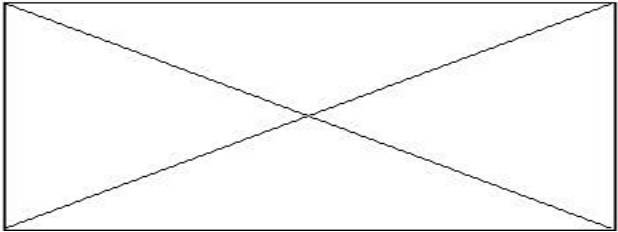
## **Relative Speed**

Most of us know that doubling your speed quadruples your stopping distance but do we know what effect a relatively small increase in speed can have on the distance it takes us to stop?

Consider two identical cars on a wide urban road, one in the nearside lane and one overtaking in the offside lane. The two cars are exactly level with each other, the one in the offside is traveling at 33mph while the one on the nearside is driving at the posted speed limit of 30mph.

The two drivers notice a cyclist suddenly swerve towards them, at precisely the same moment, so they both carry out an emergency stop, at the same instant.

The nearside car stops just avoiding the cyclist but what about the other identical car? Well the offside car would still be traveling at almost



14mph at the point the nearside car stops so would hit the cyclist at that speed, fast enough to cause serious injury.

Some may well argue that if the driver of the speeding car had been exercising good observation then he may have avoided the collision but the fact remains that the ability to stop safely was prejudiced, in this example, by speeding or elsewhere just by excess speed. Most importantly the consequences of that excess speed may be critical for other road users.

Let's consider another scenario where a vehicle, traveling on a primary route (say the A75), at 55mph is being overtaken by a vehicle driving at 70mph when a vehicle emerges from a farm access. In this case, again assuming identical cars, both drivers start braking at the same instant then at the point the slower car stops, the overtaking car is still traveling at 43 mph!

Next time you are driving it could be beneficial to consider the effect just a little extra speed may have on your ability to stop, if you can't stop in time your journey will take considerably longer.



On the reverse of the membership renewal form you will find a Gift Aid Declaration which the group is asking you to consider completing.

Gift Aid is administered by the Inland Revenue. It replaces the Deed of Covenant scheme which some of you may be aware of from other charitable organisations such as churches, clubs etc. or even the IAM nationally.

If you sign the declaration it allows the group to reclaim tax on any donations, which also includes subscriptions, you make to the Group.

I must stress that this DOES NOT mean you pay anything extra, simply that the Group can recover a proportion of the Income Tax that has already been paid; more information can be found on the form.

It may be possible for the group to claim a tax refund for subscriptions made since April 2000, when Gift Aid was introduced, and the form reflects this.

I look forward to receiving your membership renewal and completed Gift Aid declaration..... *Allan Graham, Treasurer.*

### **ACPO: Operation Mermaid 2003**

Forty one police forces stopped around 2000 vehicles (mostly commercial) in this annual road safety initiative. The results showed that some 51% of vehicles were defective with 189 prohibited from further movement. 84 drivers were found to be in breach of driving hours regulations and 37 people were arrested for various criminal offences.

### **Scottish roads in need of repair**

The first nationwide survey into the condition of Scotland's roads has shown that over 40 per cent of A-roads need to be investigated for possible treatment, while up to 10 per cent are likely to require repairs to prolong their life (Surveyor, 8 May). The 2002/03 survey was a trial run for the new statutory performance indicator for structural condition that will be reported by Audit Scotland next year.

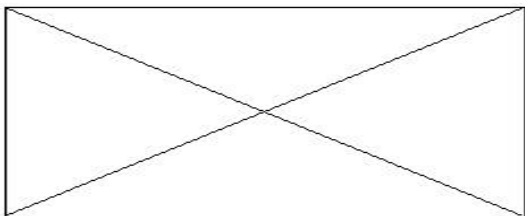
### **Manhole covers are a danger to riders**

A campaign has been launched to highlight the dangers that manhole covers can pose to motorcyclists.

Negotiating manhole covers is a major concern at all times for riders, in dry conditions they are a serious change in the road surface and in the wet they are very much more slippery, additionally problems arise when they are not flush with the surrounding road surface.

This may be a subject often ignored by the ordinary motorist but although the effect maybe more significant for those on two wheels, advanced motorists will recognise that such 'iron work' set in the road surface can also have an effect on vehicle stability especially under braking.

### **Traffic up one per cent in first quarter of 2003**



Estimated traffic levels on Britain's roads rose by one per cent between the first quarter of 2002 and the same quarter of 2003. Traffic increased on all road types except major roads in urban areas, where it fell by 2%.

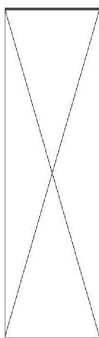
## **Technology just around the corner**

You may have noticed, from press reports, that car manufacturers are increasingly incorporating computer technology in their vehicles. Skoda, for instance, have helped with UK trials of satellite-linked Fabias equipped to monitor speed and location, then initially warn the driver if the speed limit is ignored. Volvo and Renault are participating in similar trials in Sweden and France. The DfT hope that manufacturers will voluntarily incorporate the technology but haven't ruled out making it mandatory. Some Nissan cars have dashboard computers with recognition software capable of identifying the driver, while some Lancia models already have in-car web access computers which use wire free technology and use 'Internet access hot spots' being made available in Italy.

Select Committee MP's have proposed that satellite tracking equipment is incorporated in all new cars, within the next ten years and this will not only help reduce speeding but have the 'benefit' of allowing the introduction of tolls on all road journeys in the not too distant future.

Combining the various technologies currently in use or being developed could lead to the situation where the motoring population have all their movements monitored, all of the time. The identities of the driver and passengers could also be automatically uploaded to a database so, for instance, if any offences were committed on a journey the fine could be directed to the relevant person and the potential defence of not knowing who was driving the vehicle at the time could be ruled out. Perhaps those on the fringes of society, such as burglars and drug dealers may look for ways of traveling without being monitored and could well be tempted to try the joys of cycling. Public transport will not be an option, of course, as the number of cameras currently found on some city buses and trains will be increased and then beam their images, in real time, to an 'active' computer recognition/ monitoring station instead of just recording them for possible future use.

## **DfT reviews traffic light sequences**



The DfT have awarded a contract to The Transport Research Laboratory (TRL) to review the red/amber 'start' timings of the UK's traffic lights.

Currently the red/amber shows for 2 seconds and timings were last reviewed in the 1960's. The DfT has commissioned the research to check if the current settings are still optimal, taking into account changes to signal technology, vehicle performance and driver behaviour.

The TRL's simulator is being used to test potential changes to signal timing including the effect of omitting the red/amber phase altogether.

## **Statistics from the RAC Report on Motoring 2003**

There are a total of 32.3 million driving licence holders in Britain. While 82% of men hold a full car licence but only 60% of women have one.

Male drivers are more likely to have penalty points on their licence, one in five compared with one in eight for women.

Most car journeys are short, 60% are under five miles and 25% are less than two miles.

The average household spent £2,860 on motoring in 2001, which represented 14% of their income.

### **Accidents on our roads**

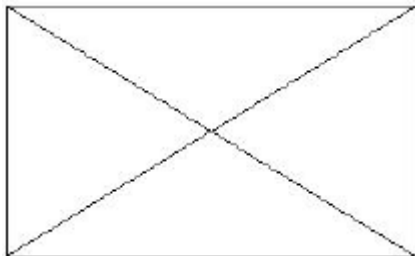
Last year the motorcyclist death rate, on Britain's roads, rose to the highest level for more than a decade, highlighting the need for improvement of rider and driver skills. 609 motorcyclists and moped riders died, a 4% increase on 2001 and the worst figure since 1990. Other categories of road user saw a small drop in casualty rate last year.

ROSPA attribute the rise in motorcycle deaths, at least in part, to middle aged men buying high performance bikes. Traffic congestion has also prompted the use of two wheeled transport to increase by 5% last year.

On Scotland's roads between 1951 and 2001 (inclusive), a total of around 1.29 million people were injured, and a further 31,700 died in accidents on Scotland's roads.

In 1962 (no figures available for earlier years) there were around 775,000 vehicles in Scotland. In 2001 the total number of vehicles was 2.262 million. Over this period, the number of casualties per annum has fallen from about 26,700 to around 19,900. So whilst the number of vehicles has almost trebled, the overall number of casualties has actually fallen by a quarter.

### **Distracting Signs**



The Guild of Experienced Motorists are campaigning for removal of the many unauthorised signs found along Britain's trunk roads and motorways. They say that advertisements, often to be found on old vehicles or trailers in roadside fields, are distracting to drivers and increase the risk of accidents. They are calling on Local Authorities to get them removed.

## **Alan Jones writes of his pet gripes.**

The Summer 2002 edition of Advanced Driving contained an interesting article, entitled, "Safer by Design." The article described how car safety has been transformed over the past few decades resulting in road deaths reducing from 7763 in 1972 to 3443 in 2001, despite a doubling of traffic volume in that time. Around 40% of this reduction was suggested as being attributable to three factors, namely, better passive safety in cars, improved local road engineering and reductions in drink driving. Looking to the future, the article suggested that the aim of the government is to achieve a further 40% reduction by 2010, with the biggest impact coming from further improvements in passive safety.

While this is a worthy aim, and manufacturers are working hard to introduce such features as active head restraints, seatbelts with pyrotechnic pre-tensioners, anti-lock brakes with electronic brake-force distribution, brake assist, traction control, skid control and many others, they all appear to have overlooked two simple but important safety features. I would go further, they seem to have deliberately introduced these features in such a manner that it can make driving more hazardous. I refer here to my two pet hates, which are: the use of front fog lamps and the positioning of the horn.

How common is it these days to find oneself followed by a car which has the front fogs illuminated when they should not be in use, or alternately, being blinded by the oncoming car with fog lights on without the justification described in the Highway Code. I contend that car manufacturers are guilty here of making it too easy for motorists to break the law. All they need to do is to change the controls so that the rear fogs have to be illuminated before the front fogs. At the moment, many manufacturers provide controls which allows drivers to switch on the front fogs first. A simple modification would make driving safer for everyone.

My second pet hate is the growing tendency for car manufacturers to position the horn control in the centre, or worse still, at the extremes of the centre, of the steering wheel. As members of the IAM we are trained to use the pull-push method of steering and finding the horn control, to warn other road users of our presence while using the pull-push method can be difficult and even hazardous at times, especially if we have to glance at the steering wheel to see where the control happens to be at that particular time. My old Renault Clio has the horn control on a fixed stalk, which means that the left hand can always find and reach the control with ease. With this arrangement there is no need to take one's "eye" off the road for that vital second while trying to deal with the particular hazard.

Come on manufacturers let's see these simple improvements in car safety.

## **Income and Expenditure Account** (For period ended 30 April 2003)

<b><u>INCOME</u></b>	<b><u>2003</u></b>	<b><u>2002</u></b>
	<b>£</b>	<b>£</b>
Membership subscriptions	448.00	518.00
Course Fees	128.00	240.00
Bank Account Interest	8.51	10.43
Sale of Roadcraft, H'way Code & PYADT	32.00	69.00
Refund of SGA Travel Expenses	33.30	33.30
Skill for Life Test Fee	NIL	350.00
Refund of Uncleared Cheque	10.00	NIL
	<b><u>659.81</u></b>	<b><u>1220.73</u></b>
<b><u>EXPENDITURE</u></b>		
Chairman's Expenses	NIL	NIL
Secretary's Expenses	12.00	8.45
Events Secretary's Expenses	NIL	NIL
Treasurer's Expenses	6.40	6.20
Group Monthly Meeting Expenses	70.00	60.00
Course Expenses - Room Rent	NIL	NIL
Printing Syllabus Cards	NIL	29.38
Insurance	271.95	270.75
SGA Affiliation Fees	25.90	44.90
Gifts/Prizes	58.44	66.35
Stamps	44.42	56.34
Newsletter Photocopying	91.73	47.93
SGA Travel Expenses	33.30	33.30
Observer Training Manuals	59.00	50.00
Senior Observer Test Fee	60.00	NIL
Catering for Quiz	24.50	NIL
Purchase of Trophy	5.00	NIL
SGA Meeting Meal Allowance	24.00	NIL
Observer Qualification Guides	10.00	NIL
PYADT	NIL	100.00
Highway Code	NIL	29.80
Skill for Life Test Fees	NIL	340.00
Refund of Skill for Life Test Fee (over)payment	NIL	10.00
Catering for AGM	NIL	7.80
Speaker Kit & Disk	NIL	5.00
Video - Advanced Driving	NIL	7.00
	<b><u>796.64</u></b>	<b><u>1173.20</u></b>

## **Income and Expenditure Account** continuation

	£	£
Bank Balance at 30 April 2001	803.53	
Bank Balance at 30 April 2002	851.06	851.06
Bank Balance at 30 April 2003		714.23
Funds Surplus at 30 April 2002	47.53	
Funds Deficit at 30 April 2003		136.83

Membership of the Dumfries Group of Advanced Motorists was 64 for the year ended 30 April 2003. These accounts were approved by the Auditors on 11 April 2003.

### **Secretary's report.**

The summer holidays are almost over and it's time to look forward to another season of IAM social meetings. Last year we had increased attendance at most of our meetings throughout the year so I hope that continues this year.

As you will gather we are having a change of venue so I hope as many as possible can come along and support your group at the Dalston House Hotel, Laurieknowe. Remember that it is your group and if anyone has any suggestions for future speakers or improvements we can make to the group, any committee member would like to hear from you.

In the early part of the summer I was in Malta on holiday. That was a driving experience and a half! Although I didn't actually drive, the experience of being on Maltese public transport was amazing. I'm sure many of the buses wouldn't pass an MOT and the drivers had to double-declutch to change gear. If a mere car got in the way, the bus driver drove as close as possible to frighten the life out of the poor car driver - usually a tourist. I'm sure they haven't heard of advanced driving there.

In the autumn the Group takes part in two joint meetings with the Carlisle and Westmoreland Groups - 10-pin bowling and the 3-way quiz. I would be grateful if everyone, who is able or willing to take part in either event, could let a committee member know as soon as possible, so that I don't have to coerce people into it at the last moment. These two events take place in October and November but as yet I don't have exact dates.

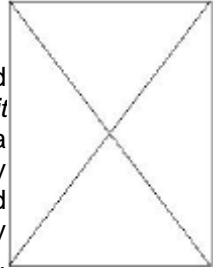
At the start of the new session I would like to encourage as many people as possible to support your group and hopefully we can look forward to another successful year.

## OBSERVERS CORNER

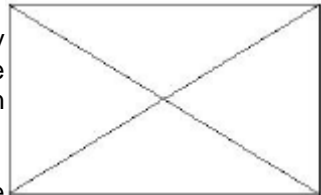
*The intention of this section is not to give you blanket instructions on a subject, but assistance to consider what is the best course of action. It is up to the driver to assess each individual scenario.*

### Signs at temporary speed limits.

The subject of temporary speed limits was recently raised and in particular how the end of the *temporary speed limit* (TSL) can be determined. The road in question was a section of motorway where there was a 50 mph temporary speed limit for repairs on the central reservation. At the end of these road works there was a single Highways Agency "Sorry for any delay" sign adjacent to the hard shoulder. This was contrasted to a section of the M8 where at the end of the roadworks there were national speed limit signs on either side of the road.

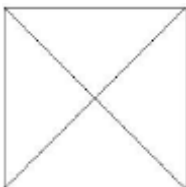


At first look it may seem that there is inconsistency in the signing and indeed in the second example there is no question as to what limit applies when leaving the temporary speed limit.



Reference to the rules however confirms that the signing in both cases is correct. In the case of a TSL on a section of road which normally would have one *permanent speed limit* (PSL) throughout the length then all that is required is **one** sign at the end, to mark the end of the temporary restriction. In the first case in question the TSL of 50mph was wholly within a section normally restricted to 70mph. The end sign can take the form of either sign shown above right.

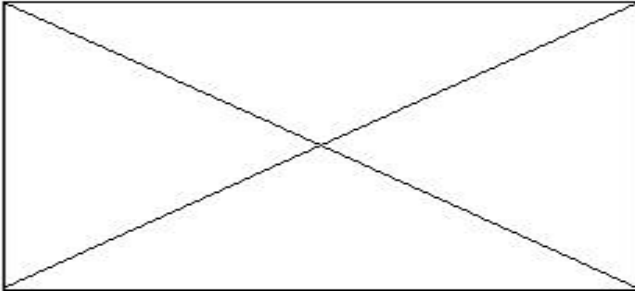
If the PSL changes at some point within the TSL then in addition to one of the above signs there must be either signs showing the maximum speed limit or the national speed limit sign as appropriate. These signs must be displayed in pairs, one either side of the carriageway after the end of roadworks sign. In the M8 example referred to, the PSL changed from 60mph to 70mph within the TSL so national speed limit signs were required at the end of the road works.



If, for example, the PSL had changed from 60mph to 40mph then 40mph signs would be needed, one either side of the carriageway, at the end of the road works.

Unfortunately the signing is often not strictly correct or consistent which adds to the confusion even for those motorists who try to drive in accordance with the law.

## Positioning on a wide road



Advanced drivers often identify situations where the actions of other drivers can have a significant effect on their safety and that of other road users. Anyone who drives on the A75 will frequently come

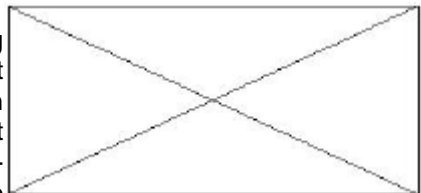
across situations similar to those shown on the adjacent photographs.

Surely most drivers recognise that there are dangers brought about in the situation shown in the top picture, especially as the two opposing lines of traffic were traveling at around 50mph and the overtaking vehicle was probably moving at or even above the speed limit for the road.

As observers we sometimes need to explain, to an associate, the reasons why such positioning and overtaking methods are intrinsically unsafe. If so, we can review, with the associate, the relevant content of PYADT (and Roadcraft) and the Associate Handbook. Obviously, as a minimum, time should be spent explaining that the overtaking driver cannot effectively see what potential hazards there may be ahead, the fact that there is nowhere to go if an oncoming vehicle also attempts to overtake and that neither the 'overtaker' nor any other driver has room to manoeuvre in the event of an emergency, or in the not too unlikely event that another driver simply adjusts his position, for a better view, without observing the overtaking vehicle.

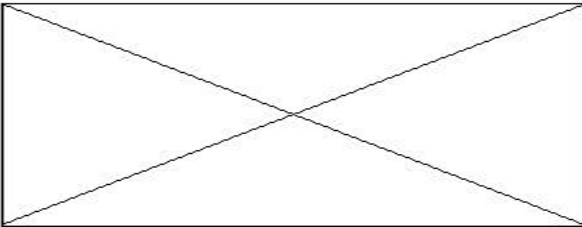
So what guidance can we offer about adopting a suitable position? Firstly we start by recognising that the normal running position, in as far as there is such a thing, is the centre of your lane. This position is adjusted for various reasons, often get a better view but should never be at the expense of compromising safety or stability. Sometimes this is known as Positioning for SVS (Safety, Vision and Stability).

The next photo shows a camper van doing nearly 60mph, approaching a bend, almost on the edge line, as indeed is the heavy on the opposing lane. Such a position cannot be recommended as it will potentially encourage following and oncoming traffic to form a third lane with the attendant dangers for all concerned. Incidentally it is also likely to encourage other drivers to speed, although it should be stressed that it is not our job to enforce the speed limit.



Taking into account these factors we can advise a driver to:

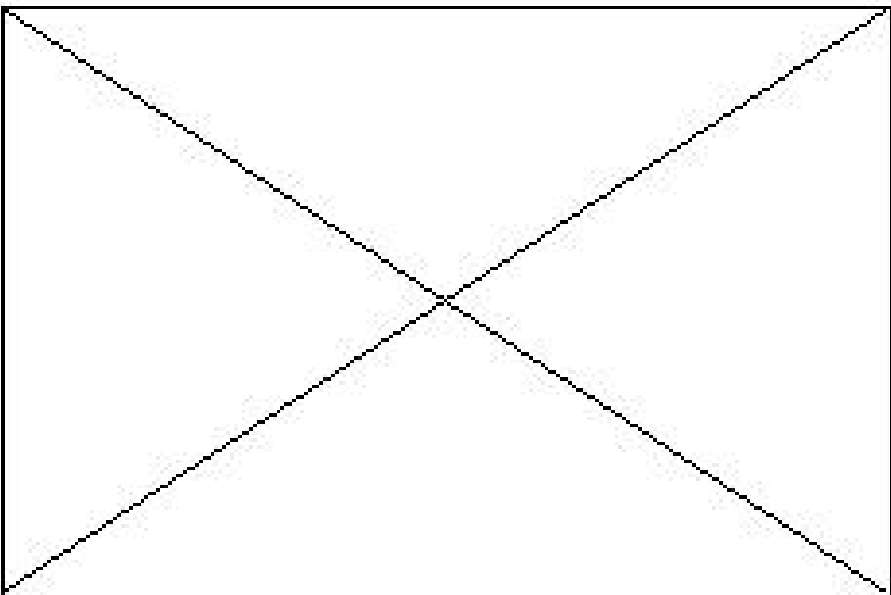
- Generally aim to use the normal running position, adjusted to suit the conditions e.g. at bends, junctions, but taking into account other road users.
- Maintain a safe distance from the vehicle in front.
- Don't position to encourage others to form three lines of traffic.
- Use observation skills to closely monitor the actions of others and adjust your position accordingly. If say a following vehicle commits to an overtake, in the face of oncoming traffic, then your position should be adjusted and possibly your vehicle slowed to allow the 'overtaker' to pass safely.
- Similarly if an oncoming vehicle commits to an overtake then adjust your position to avoid conflicting with it. Don't force it to drive dangerously close to the vehicle it is trying to overtake, if things do go wrong you want to be further away from the source of potential danger. See following paragraph.



The last photo shows a van moving into the face of oncoming traffic and forming a third lane. The camera car, which had been running in the normal position consequently

adjusted position towards the nearside and following traffic was also forced to the left. Note of all three photos this was the only vehicle using its indicators!

**How's your observation?** - Did you spot all these or more?



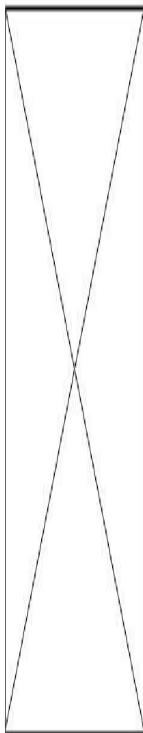
## Clarification of Advanced Test matters

*Seat belts and head restraints:* IAM policy is that Examiners are not expected to conduct Advanced Tests in vehicles without seat belts fitted, even if the vehicle is exempt because of its age. Similarly they are not expected to conduct a test in a car without a head restraint fitted for the Examiner. This confirms that the Advanced Test is in line with the Driving Test which has been subject to similar rules for some time.

*Excess speed on an Advanced Test:* In certain circumstances the Examiner may intervene verbally on an IAM Test, if the candidate's speed is likely to incur a legal penalty. If such an intervention does take place, the candidate will fail the Advanced Driving or Advanced Motorcycling Test.

**From the Aberdeen Evening Express:** At the height of the gale, the harbourmaster radioed a coastguard on the spot and asked him to estimate the wind speed. He replied that he was sorry, but he didn't have a gauge. However, if it was any help, the wind had just blown his Land Rover off the cliff.

## Whiplash injuries on the rise



Whiplash injuries continue to rise and occur due to the differential motion between the occupant's torso and head during an impact. Apparently those most at risk are women in the 20 to 50 age group. The symptoms involve stiffness and tenderness of muscles in the upper back and neck, headaches and dizziness.

When a vehicle is struck from behind, the vehicle is pushed forward. The seat is also pushed forward and the occupant's body begins to accelerate but due to inertia, their head tends to remain in place, as shown in the second picture.

This lag causes the neck to deform into an 'S' shape (3rd picture). The head will then begin to bend backwards, as it begins to catch up with the accelerating torso.

If a poor (or no) head restraint is in use then the hyperextension phase can occur as shown in the bottom picture. Checks have shown that the vast majority of drivers fail to adjust their head restraints properly.

For a head restraint to offer adequate protection it should be as high as the top of the head and as close as possible to the back of the head (ideally touching). It is extremely important that head restraints are positioned correctly to prevent deformity of the neck and minimise injury.

***This newsletter was published by the Dumfries Group of Advanced Motorists; more details of our activities can be found on our web site at:***

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