

DUMFRIES GROUP
OF ADVANCED MOTORISTS

NEWSLETTER
Autumn 2004

**STEERING A COURSE FOR SAFER
DRIVING AND RIDING**

Chairman's Report

Welcome to the latest edition of our quarterly Newsletter, the aim of which is to keep all our members in touch with the developments and activities of the Dumfries Group as well as to provide a forum for general road safety matters.

Since the last Newsletter I am pleased to say that our numbers have increased. Michael Churm, Liz Houlison, Jenny Terras, Ann Lind and Megan Muirhead have passed the IAM test in their cars while Alan Pitkeithley and John Worsley have passed the motorbike test. Congratulations to you all and I look forward to welcoming you as Members at our September meeting. Our thanks and appreciation also go to their Observers, without whose unstinting assistance, none of this would be possible.

The other news I want to share with you is that Graeme McColm has now become a Senior Observer for Motor Cycles. This is great news and we are very pleased for Graeme. Of course he will not be sitting on his laurels, and his work has now begun officially, in coaching a number of his team to becoming Qualified Observers. Soon we expect to see Andrew Bird, Scott Anderson and one or two other colleagues all becoming qualified. This will really give the motorbike section a boost!

As well as those who have recently passed their test I should also mention that we have another 5 car drivers and 6 motorcycle Associates getting close to taking their test. There are also motorcyclists in a waiting list ready to begin training once the current group are complete. In addition, we have teamed up with a Police initiative, called Safer Wheels and we now have a further 9 Associates, many of whom are in their late teens, all training to take their car test.

This is all good news and encouraging for the Dumfries Group. I can see us reaching that magic target of 100 Members within the next 4 years, if we continue at this pace. However, it does place a load on the existing Observers and I would encourage anyone who feels they want to upgrade their skills, to consider training to becoming a Qualified Observer.

On a regional basis we are also doing well. As one of the 9 Groups in the SW Forum we are standing joint 2nd in the number of test applications submitted for Q2 2004 and 3rd for the past 12 months. If you consider that our Group is small in comparison with Glasgow North and Glasgow South we are doing extremely well, and we should be justly proud of our achievements.

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The Group now has a number of DVD's, which deal with various elements of the System. There will soon be a further DVD, which covers the Commentary. I use these training aids with my Associates and I would encourage you all, even if for just for general interest, to obtain one of these excellent productions from our secretary, Helen. Our appreciation and thanks go to Graham Watson who has gained something of a reputation in producing these valuable aids. I am told that the Motorcycle section will soon have something similar to assist their Associates.

Finally, let me mention the forthcoming programme of events for 2004/2005. We aim to provide something for everyone and I hope you will enjoy attending our meetings and joining in the discussions with your fellow members. I look forward to seeing you at our first meeting of the new season, in September.

Regards, Alan Jones

Secretary's report

As we set out into the new programme for the next session I would like to encourage as many full and associate members as possible to attend some, or all of our monthly meetings. Our committee has worked extremely hard over the summer months to organise these events and bring a varied programme for the year ahead. If there is a particular topic or visit that you think would be enjoyed by other members then please suggest it to someone on the committee - contacts are on the back of the newsletter.

Charlie Allman, a committee member for the past year has been ill over the summer but I'm glad to say he is now well on the way to recovery. Charlie has taken an active role over the past few years and his temporary absence is greatly missed. It will be good to see him back to full health as soon as possible.

Over the next few months we will be challenging the Carlisle and Westmoreland groups to a quiz and also a 10-pin bowling match. We are the holder of both titles so I would like to thank our teams of last year and also invite anyone who would like to participate or support the group to let me know as soon as possible. The proposed dates for these events are Monday 25 October for the quiz and Wednesday 10 November for the bowling.

As our Chairman says, the best way to keep up your driving standards is to become an Observer, please consider it as I always have problems finding sufficient Observers to cover courses and 'one to one' drives. More qualified observers would also mean that existing observers could have a break, at times, instead of going from one associate to another without a break.

I hope we all enjoy the new session and look forward to seeing lots of new faces.

Motoring in Iceland

If you find yourself motoring in Iceland you may come across some of these signs - can you work out what they mean? Apparently they do have an extensive road network. The answers appear later in the newsletter.



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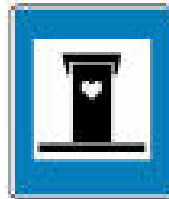
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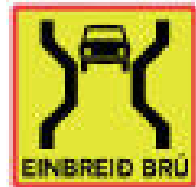
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Dumfries & Galloway statistics

Vehicle related offences	2003/2004	2002/2003
Dangerous and careless driving	452	418
Drink/drugs driving	266	266
Speeding	13,410	7,440
Unlawful use of vehicle	3,387	3,332
Vehicle defect offences	666	666
Other	950	722
Total	19,131	12,844

Here are comparative statistics produced by Dumfries & Galloway Constabulary - the figures speak for themselves.



Drinking and driving

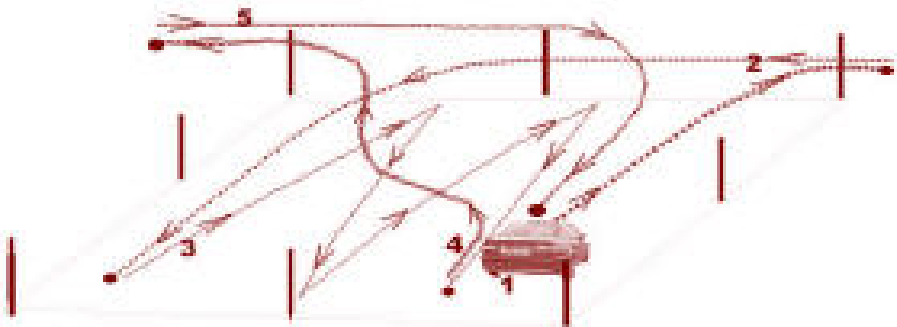
The Association of Chief Police Officers for Scotland (ACPOS) says that research has shown that on average one in every six fatalities and one in every 18 casualties in road crashes in Scotland is as a result of drink driving. For the year 2001 there were 1,190 people injured in drink driving accidents with 70 of them dying. In 2002 in the UK there were 560 deaths and 2,800 serious injuries in drink-drive accidents.

Driving Licence in China

The Editor's foreign correspondent has now moved to Shanghai. There the prospect of driving is quite daunting so the services of a driver have been used while an assessment of the rules of the road is made.

To get a Chinese driving licence it seems you have to first complete a theory test, well in Shanghai anyway. In many centres, just like the UK, this is done on a computer but equipped with finger print recognition and a camera. You cannot sit the theory test until you have proved that you have attended enough computer training sessions. You also have to complete some basic physical and coordination tests.

After successfully completing the theory test you move on to the field test, this is held in an area marked by 8 poles. Five manoeuvres have to be completed.



Your next hurdle is the road test which can be very short and may be little more than a practical demonstration of your ability to start, turn right/left and stop. Once you have passed you move on to the real test; driving alongside other road users - vehicles, bicycles and pedestrians.

Off-duty officers to report drivers using mobiles

Thames Valley Police have asked off-duty officers to record number plates of anyone seen defying the ban on the use of mobile phones whilst driving. Motorists seen talking on the phone while driving will receive a warning letter.

Fancy a new Montego?

It may bring a smile to your face to hear that the new Montego was unveiled recently. It is powered by a 3.0 litre V6 engine and comes either with a CVT or automatic gearbox.

You are unlikely to get your hands on one however as they are only available in the USA and manufactured by Mercury (part of Ford).



Unlucky for some - bikers

A study by the AA Motoring Trust has revealed that six out of the thirteen of the most dangerous roads for motorcyclists in Britain are located in the north west of England.



Of the 856 open roads making up the primary route network they discovered that 149 of them had accident records where at least one third of the fatal and serious accidents involve bikers. Many motorcyclists fell victim to roads popular with bikers which they had chosen because they are seen as challenging.

Forty percent of biker fatalities were at junctions, most in collisions with cars whilst a similar percentage were killed on bends. New biker-friendly crash barriers are in use in France and Germany and trials are due to be started soon in the UK

60 per cent of bikers die on roads outside built-up areas, mostly on larger-engined machines. The peak age group for motorcycle deaths is 30-34, but the biggest increase in deaths recently was in the 30-49 age group.

Drivers and riders who use and maintain their advanced skills can reduce their chances of joining these statistics.

Colourful news

By the time you read this our web site should have been updated to allow access to this newsletters in colour. Why not spread the word to your circle of contacts? Go to: <http://www.iamdumfries.f9.co.uk/page11.html>

New Italian and Spanish Laws

Under a new law, from April 1 2004 drivers and passengers in Italy are required to wear high visibility jackets if they break down and they get out of their vehicle at night or in poor visibility. A similar law came into effect in Spain on July 24. Fines for failure to comply are 138 and 91 euros respectively.

Perhaps you should check you've got this safety equipment when you pick up a holiday hire car or maybe invest in a high vis jacket for use here in the UK?

No P plates



The Government has rejected the mandatory use of "P" plates for new drivers following consultation which failed to show any positive benefit to road safety would follow their implementation.

View behind to get better.

The EU is bringing in new standards for rear view mirrors on all types of vehicles to increase the fields of vision and so reduce blind spots. The new standards will include the requirement for cameras and/or proximity monitors to be fitted on some commercial vehicles.



New models will start to incorporate these changes in 2005 while some vehicles already have been fitted with the new technology, like the lorry in the photo above, where a rear view camera has been installed.

You cannae soar with the eagles

Evidence shows that driver fatigue plays a part in a lot of traffic collisions. Investigations have suggested that drowsiness played a part in 10-16% of all crashes and more than 20% of motorway crashes. Up to 10 deaths a week in the UK could be as a result of driver fatigue.

Fatigue related accidents tend to be more severe than others and occur more often on faster roads with less stimulus for the driver. They often involve running off the road and high speed impact because the driver was close to, or was, asleep and so failed to react to hazards. Those at most risk are male drivers under 30 years old, shift workers, drivers who have sleep problems or those who have just missed out on a good night's sleep.

The time of day is an important factor in fatigue related crashes. Humans are at the greatest risk in the middle of the afternoon and during the small hours of the night. This is an entirely natural reaction caused by your body clock telling you to sleep; you might think you can overcome this by willpower alone but studies have shown this not to be the case.

You won't fall asleep, at the wheel, without warning but you must take action straight away to stay safe. Prior to falling asleep you may experience a range of symptoms such as: sore and heavy eyes, yawning, day dreaming, constant

blinking, staring, slower reactions, shaking your head, sounds become muffled or your vehicle wanders on the road.

FELL ASLEEP AT WHEEL

Car Ran Into Crowd: Banned Man Allowed to Drive Home

How a motorist fell asleep at the wheel and crashed into a crowd of workers waiting outside a factory was described at High Wycombe police court to-day when David Scott Moncrieff, of Lancaster-mews, W., was fined £10 for careless driving and disqualified for a month.

It was stated that Moncrieff, who pleaded guilty to careless driving, had been up all night and had fallen asleep while passing a crowd of workers outside Marsh Mill at High Wycombe. Several of the men were injured.

The magistrates allowed Moncrieff to drive his car home before the disqualification took effect.

There's nothing new - this article appeared in The Evening News July 9 1938

So what should you do at the first sign of tiredness? Well winding down the window won't help much, it may only make a difference for a few minutes but can help you to take action. You should stop as soon as as you can do safely.

Studies by Loughborough University found that the only effective measures (i.e. lasting longer than 10-15 minutes) were a significant intake of caffeine and a 15 minute nap. Turning up the air conditioning, listening to the radio, talking to passengers and taking exercise all had little long term effect. Drinking strong coffee or a high-energy drink with caffeine helps but it takes about 30 minutes to have an effect which will be limited maybe to only an hour.

To reduce your chances of being affected by fatigue, plan at least a 15 minute break every 2 hours, don't drive when you would normally be asleep and especially avoid long trips between midnight and 6 a.m. Not starting out when you are already tired and sharing the driving when you can will help.

It is important to get enough sleep before driving - remember as your granny might have said '***you cannae soar with the eagles in the day if you hoot with the owls at night!***'

Horn of dilemma

Before passing a cyclist in Ohio motorists must sound their horn; a motorist is negligent if he doesn't. On the other hand courts have also held that untimely use of the horn which scares a cyclist and causes a wobble or loss of control is also negligent.



In one case a cyclist hearing a horn close behind turned to look and moved into the path of the passing car. The jury found the cyclist to be 95% responsible for the accident, but the trial judge reversed the jury's findings and found the motorist to be 75% responsible!

Living with a Goddess by Mark Ranshaw

Yes, my wife is truly wonderful but the goddess I'm referring to in this case is a car. My car. A Citroën DS. "DS" when pronounced in French sounds like "déesse" which translates into English as "goddess". The name admirably describes the sheer presence and towering abilities of this most female of automotive designs. When the goddess made its debut at the Paris Car Show of 1955 a staggering 12,000 orders were taken on the first day! Production would last for 20 years and nearly 1.5 million cars sold. Rarely, if ever, has so much effort been put into the design and development of a mass-market saloon car, a process that had begun secretly during the dark years of the war-time Nazi occupation of France.

My own love affair with the DS dates back to 1971 when I was lucky enough to win a school prize (£50 if I remember correctly!) which took me, aged 16, to Paris in order to study the works of the post impressionists for my A-level art course.



Coming from a dreary corner of the English Midlands, my encounter with "la différence" of an exciting and cosmopolitan foreign city was a defining moment. No less unusual was the sight of the numerous weird and wonderful big Citroëns - dominating the roads, gliding along at great speeds as if on a cushion of air (which, of course, they were!).

Years later, and having noted the almost religious enthusiasm for "old school" Citroëns of friends and acquaintances, I acquired my first Citroën. It was an elderly and battered GSA for which I paid the sum of £150. What was so apparent from this car was how little had to be sacrificed in terms of the performance available from contemporary "hot hatches" in order to gain a pleasingly "different" driving experience. I realised then that what I really needed was the ultimate Citroën - a DS, a "goddess".

But the naysayers warned of massive unreliability and crippling repair bills due to the complicated construction and hydraulic systems, not to mention the difficulty of obtaining parts for a now long defunct model. Part of me felt that it would be possible to use a DS as a daily driver despite its venerability (and vulnerability!), the other part prevaricated because of more pressing requirements, and as time passed the values of these increasingly rare classics rose. Eventually, four years ago, I cashed in some savings and bought a restored left-hand drive South of France import and now keep it for occasional weekend and sunny day use. In between times, it slumbers in its dedicated "airflow" chamber which does a great job of keeping the rust at bay. I found someone who could look after the vehicle for me (I'm no mechanic!); it is essential to have a knowledgeable and sympathetic engineer on hand for these cars, in this case IAM member Matthew Roberts of Moffat (Tel: 07747 796406).

Having said that, it has been very reliable and has only required some judicious replacement of worn parts well in advance of their failure in order to avoid "embarrassment at the roadside"! A thriving owners club also ensures a good parts availability.

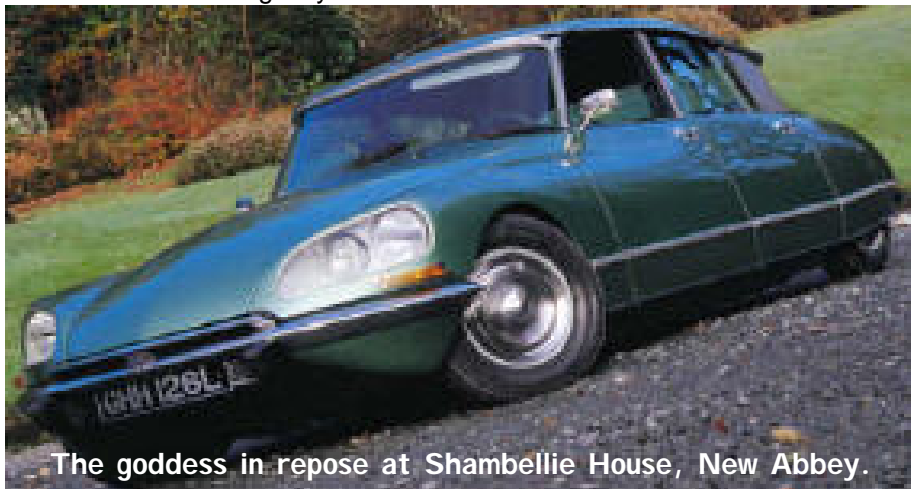
So how does the goddess stand up in today's motoring climate? Well, it's an absolute delight. All great cars should have something about them which is really memorable, which raises the pulse everytime you look at or use it, be it great looks, handling, performance, or something that seems to define the age and culture it comes from. The DS has most of these attributes although even its most ardent admirers would not make a case for its blistering acceleration. But its most remarkable feature is the fantastic sensation of comfort which envelopes you the moment you step into the car. I have never come across anyone who has not involuntarily uttered an 'ooh' or an 'ah' as they sink into its sofa-like armchairs and feel the softness of the floor covering (wool carpet over two inch thick "Dunlopillo" foam underlay) beneath their feet. If the suspension system is pressurised you will feel the car gently sink and then miraculously rise back up to its correct ride height. It's a totally unique experience and one which immediately puts the driver into a relaxed frame of mind for the drive ahead. It never fails to put a smile onto my face, it's like the car is a living entity.

The same feeling of well-being continues once on the move. Passengers can enjoy the smooth ride with its gentle, almost boat-like motion and considerable legroom (particularly in the rear), whilst the driver can "man the tiller" from an ergonomically near-perfect driving position with outstanding all round visibility. And in my case I'm even doing it from the wrong side of the car!

Stability is impressive and it would take some pretty reckless driving (beyond the thoughts of all right thinking advanced motorists!) to cause the tyres to lose their grip. The powered steering reacts quickly and accurately and is not upset by potholes, bumps or adverse cambers in the road. This is largely due to the sophisticated steering geometry which places the axis of steering movement through the exact centre point of contact between the tyre and the road which ensures this level of control. Not even a high speed front tyre blow-out will cause the DS to waver from its course - the car can still be safely controlled, braked and steered to a standstill. It has to be said I have no personal experience of this; but General de Gaulle had reason to believe this system saved his life when, under bullet fire from assassins, his presidential DS was able to speed away to safety with two flat tyres!

Once again the DS does not lag far behind the standards of modern cars when it comes to braking. The front disc and load dependent rear drum brakes are very effective and are powered off the same high pressure hydro-pneumatic system which works the suspension and steering. The application of the brakes takes a while to get accustomed to because there is no conventional

brake pedal, merely a mushroom shaped button with very little travel in it. This device measures the pressure being applied to it by the driver's foot, braking effort being proportional. The lack of "pedal feel" leads the driver to stamp hard on the "mushroom" which results in the vehicle coming to an extremely abrupt standstill - even from very high speeds. These brakes really do work! The technique, once learned, is of course classic advanced driving stuff - gentle at first and then progressively apply more pressure until the desired speed loss is achieved and then gently release.



The goddess in repose at Shambellie House, New Abbey.

The only disappointment is the rather coarse sounding 2175cc 4-cylinder engine, which is in many ways a throwback to its original incarnation in the Traction Avant of 1934. However, that still allows for relaxed cruising at legal speeds especially with the 5-speed gear box which my car has. On the other hand, it's quiet at tick over, reasonably lively and flexible and phenomenally durable. It is quite common for these engines to cover a quarter of a million miles before requiring an extensive rebuild.

The aerodynamic shape is not only "clean" above sill level but its underside is virtually flat. All this assists the engine in its efforts to maintain progress (and, yes, you do have to keep an eye on that speedometer!). It also helps to return 30mpg "on a run", very respectable for a large car of 1950s origin. The curved screens (front and back) assist in dispersing rain water which makes up for the "toy town" windscreen wipers! The novel swivelling headlights which are coupled to the steering linkages really do work a treat at night, especially on the country lanes around these parts.

Many people say to me that they think it's a shame "they" don't make anything like this today and I know what they mean. Despite the many attractive, efficient and safe vehicles we now have to choose from nothing quite has the panache and style of the "goddess".



The wait is over. The New Octavia has arrived at our showroom.

Starting at just £10,750^{inc}

Standard features include:

- Front electric windows
- ABS, ESP, MSR and ASR
- Central locking
- CD player
- Driver and passenger
front and side airbags



Visit our showroom to experience the New Octavia!



**Edinburgh Road,
Heathhall
Dumfries, DG1 3NU
Tel: 01387 263817**

Official fuel consumption for New Octavia range in mpg (litres/100km) Urban 28.2 (10.0) - 42.9 (6.6), Extra-urban 47.9 (5.9) - 62.8 (4.5), Combined 38.7 (7.4) - 53.3 (5.3)
CO₂ emissions (g/km): 143 - 107

Model shown is New Octavia Elegance 1.6FS 137Bhp £14,315^{inc} including optional Metallic Paint of £375

www.skoda.co.uk

DRIVING AT WORK & WORK RELATED ROAD SAFETY

Did you know that road accidents involving people at work are the biggest cause of work related accidental death? Between 800 and 1000 people are being killed annually in work related road traffic accidents (that's 16 - 20 deaths per week!) as opposed to around 450 fatalities which are currently being notified annually under the Reporting of Injuries Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations.

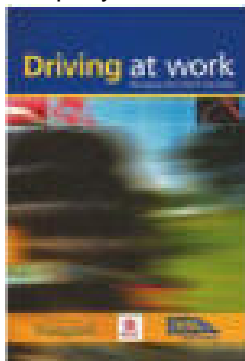
RoSPA estimates that several million working days are likely to be lost annually as a result of employees being injured in 'at work' road crashes. Did you know that car and van drivers who cover 25,000 miles a year as part of their job are at virtually the same risk of being killed, at work, as coal miners?



Health and safety law applies to on-the-road work activities and so risks should be assessed and actively managed by the employer. To help with this the HSE published a guide to MORR (Management of Occupational Road risk) in September 2003 suggesting ways to manage the risk to drivers' health and safety. This guidance applies to employers, managers or supervisors with staff who drive, or ride a motorcycle or bicycle at work. It also applies to self-employed people. It covers not only people whose main job is driving but those who drive or ride only occasionally or for short distances.

Case histories have shown that companies which take action to promote the safety of their staff while driving can reduce accident related costs, reduce running costs and minimise downtime.

On average many business drivers do considerably more miles annually than the private motorist – 21,900 compared with 8,600. This means that a company car driver is two-and-a-half times more likely to be caught speeding than a private motorist without taking into account the added pressures of driving to a schedule. This could translate this year to one in four company car drivers being prosecuted for speeding.



Investigations by MIRA found that keeping to the speed limits only increased journey times by one-and-a-half minutes every hour.

The HSE/DFT guidance booklet 'Driving at Work - managing work-related road safety' is a source of practical assistance to the management of occupational road risk.

Income and Expenditure Account (for period to 30 April 2004)

<u>INCOME</u>	<u>2003</u>	<u>2004</u>
	£	£
Membership Subscriptions	448.00	618.50
Course fees	128.00	424.00
Bank Account Interest	8.51	17.80
Sale of R'craft, H'way Code & PYADT	32.00	160.00
Refund of SGA Travel Expenses	33.30	33.30
Refund of uncleared cheque	10.00	Nil
Donation	Nil	40.00
Catering Income from Treasure Hunt	Nil	20.00
Newsletter Sponsorship	Nil	70.00
	<u>659.81</u>	<u>1383.60</u>
Restricted Fund (Awards for All - lottery grant)	Nil	5000.00
<i>(Restricted Fund is not to be included in the general funds)</i>	<u>659.81</u>	<u>6383.60</u>
EXPENDITURE		
Chairman's Expenses	Nil	Nil
Secretary's Expenses	12.00	5.00
Events Secretary's Expenses	Nil	Nil
Treasurer's Expenses	6.40	10.75
Group Meeting Expenses	70.00	126.75
Course Expenses - Room Rent	Nil	60.00
Printing Syllabus cards	Nil	13.00
Insurance	271.95	288.72
SGA Affiliation Fees	25.90	22.40
Gifts/prizes	58.44	48.27
Stamps	44.42	53.91
Newsletter Photocopying	91.73	93.00
SGA travel expenses	33.30	33.30
Observer training manuals	59.00	20.00
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	9.00
PYADT	Nil	59.93
Highway Code	Nil	5.98
Roadcraft Videos	Nil	88.39
Engraving of trophy	Nil	3.50
Flexibase Video	Nil	10.00
Videos - Police Advanced Driving	Nil	32.43
Course Stationery	Nil	2.20
SNIGA Delegate Fee	Nil	32.00
Catering for Treasure Hunt	Nil	20.00
Exhibition Stand Fee	Nil	25.00
Group Contribution to Purchase of Laptop	Nil	300.00
	<u>796.64</u>	<u>1363.53</u>
Restricted Fund - of which:-		
Purchase of Radios for Motorcycles	Nil	1500.00
Purchase of Projector	Nil	858.67
Purchase of Laptop PC	Nil	1335.62
Purchase of Video Camera	Nil	589.00
Total of Restricted Fund Spend	<u>Nil</u>	<u>4283.29</u>
Amount shown as "Restricted Fund" is the grant from the "Awards for All" scheme and as such is not included in the general funds.	<u>796.64</u>	<u>5646.82</u>

Income and Expenditure Account (for period to 30 April 2004) - continuation

General Funds

	£	£
Bank Balance at 30 April 2002	851.06	
Bank Balance at 30 April 2003	714.23	714.23
Bank Balance at 30 April 2004		734.30
Funds Deficit at 30 April 2003	136.83	
Funds Surplus at 30 April 2004		20.07

Restricted Funds

Bank Balance at 30 April 2002	Nil	
Bank Balance at 30 April 2003	Nil	Nil
Bank Balance at 30 April 2004	Nil	716.71
Funds Surplus at 30 April 2003	Nil	
Funds Surplus at 30 April 2004		716.71

Total Funds

Bank Balance at 30 April 2002	851.06	
Bank Balance at 30 April 2003	714.23	714.23
Bank Balance at 30 April 2004		1451.01
Funds Deficit at 30 April 2003	136.83	
Funds Surplus at 30 April 2004		736.78

Amount shown as "Restricted Fund" is the grant from the "Awards for All" scheme under Lottery funding and as such is not included in the general funds.

Membership of the Dumfries Group of Advanced Motorists was 74 for the year ended 30 April 2004. These accounts were approved by the Auditors on 17 April 2004.

Icelandic roadsigns

Below are the definitions of the Icelandic signs shown on page 3:

1. Blind summit - a very common occurrence.
2. Un-bridged river - many country roads are un surfaced & have no bridges.
3. Increased accident risk - many Icelandic roads are raised on embankments against winter snows, roll-over accidents are more likely.
4. Only vehicles higher than normal cars and with 4WD may use this road.
5. End of tarmac surfacing - many roads are gravel surfaced.
6. Snow scooters for hire - use of helmets is compulsory.
7. Thunder box toilet!
8. Single width bridge.

Crashing your way to sleep.

Residents in Montreal, Canada have been successfully helped to sleep through the noise of nearby road works by playing the sounds of crashing waves through loudspeakers set up in the street.



Nothing deadlier than the male

The Home Office has released statistics which confirm that men commit around nine times more motoring offences than women. For serious offences the differences are even more marked with 94% of 'causing death by dangerous driving' or 'bodily harm' driving offences committed by men!

OBSERVERS CORNER

This section is intended to help when considering the best course of action. It is up to every driver to actively assess each scenario.

Is brake/gear overlap acceptable in Advanced Driving?

From an Observer's perspective one of the most difficult aspects of Advanced Driving, to get an Associate to understand, and carry out, is the concept of separating braking and gear changing activities.

Simply telling an Associate to follow the System may not have good results when he or she may never have been taught that overlapping brakes and gear was inadvisable and/or if their driving techniques have deteriorated with time.

The chapter of PYADT (or HTBAAD - see p22) concerned with the Planned System of Driving can lead to an element of misinterpretation. This chapter does tell the reader to select the correct gear after adjustment of speed but there is no explanation as to why this is the best course of action. This same section also states "if time is short, you may need to change gear shortly before you finish braking" perhaps implying an element of brake/gear overlap is acceptable as a matter of course. Confirmation that a driver should aim to separate these activities appears in the 'What the examiner looks for' box.

You have to refer to the Braking and Gears sections for further confirmation that braking should ordinarily be completed before gear changing.

Although PYADT (HTBAAD) tells us the System is not rigid how exactly should "if time is short, you may need to change gear shortly before you finish braking" be interpreted, both in terms of how to overlap the two phases and also when it is acceptable so to do? Inevitably a little more explanation will be needed to explain how to deal with this crucial aspect.



Lets first of all look at what benefits come from our method of vehicle control:

- Braking and gear changing in a straight line gives greater stability.
- There's more control when braking as both hands are on the wheel.
- There's more control when steering as both hands are on the wheel.
- You are in the right (appropriate) gear to drive through the hazard.
- There's reduced strain on the engine, clutch and transmission.
- Passenger comfort is maximised.

The chapter on braking tells us that if there is no time to brake, gear change, and steer, in sequence, then a compromise will have to be made by overlapping gear change and braking, and not by overlapping the gear change and steering. Lack of time may occur because of an error in planning or a sudden change in conditions but **ordinarily the only time brake/gear overlap (BGOL) should take place is as a result of a planned event**.

Whilst overlapping is often an Associates inherent method of car control it is rarely carried out safely. The biggest hurdle is getting the Associate to recognise that BGOL is not just overlapping two phases: **it is a skill in itself**. It can't be done correctly and safely until consistently good use of steering, braking and gears is achieved; only then can the System be safely condensed. You should therefore offer guidance by encouraging them to concentrate on practicing the skills making up the system of car control.

So how is the planned BGOL carried out? As with all things it starts with the Information phase where situations which may warrant the use of BGOL are identified. Importantly all the phases are still considered in turn leading to the selection of the gear to enable you to pass through the hazard. Being in an appropriate gear at the point acceleration is required remains an essential.

BGOL is executed by tapering the braking and at the point where the braking is ending, the gear is selected. In good dry road conditions safety and stability are only marginally compromised. Importantly the driver should have assessed the circumstances and identified the consequences of getting it wrong, particularly if road surface conditions are variable and friction is reduced.

So when would an examiner expect to see a brake/gear overlap? An example of a suitable circumstances would be that you intend to turn off, you have observed all round and you believe that you could be at risk from a fast approaching vehicle or one where the driver appears not to be paying attention to you and the circumstance requires you to complete your manoeuvre quickly to remove yourself from danger.

Another circumstance could be when travelling downhill where to exert control over your speed you brake and change gear at the end of the braking phase to engage a lower gear and so enabling you to more effectively control your vehicle speed. In all cases maintaining vehicle stability and control are all important factors.

To sum up there is no place for routine brake/gear overlap on an Advanced Test or in day to day Advanced Driving.



Advanced stop lines at junctions

Dealing with advanced stop lines (ASL) correctly at traffic light controlled junctions should be quite straightforward but sometimes some Associates seem to display little knowledge about how to correctly deal with them.

ASLs were first introduced in the UK in the late 1980's to allow cyclists to get a head start at traffic lights, especially those wishing to turn right. The original layout relied on two sets of traffic light heads, one at each stop line. The layout became simplified to only use a single traffic light head and later a coloured road surface and bicycle logo were incorporated.

The Highway Code tells you as a driver or motorcyclist you must wait behind the first stop line, **even if there are no cyclists waiting**, you must not encroach in the cyclists area and must allow time for the cyclists to move off once the lights change.

The legal position of ASLs is covered in the The Traffic Signs Regulations and General Directions 2002 which confirms that it is an offence for vehicles other than cyclists to cross the first stop line and wait in the reservoir between the stop lines, except if unable to stop safely otherwise.

There has been pressure on the Government to allow motorcycles to use ASL's (and bus lanes) but so far the rules have not been changed.

National Motorway Survey

Members of IAM groups, in conjunction with the RAC, Auto Express, BSM and the Highways Agency were involved recently in a national motorway survey. Selected sections of motorway were chosen (but not our area!) and surveyed for two daytime hours on July 7th with examples of tailgating being recorded.

A total sample of about 15,000 vehicles was surveyed with around 41% recorded as tailgating. The results below show the percentage of vehicles tailgating by motorway route.



Location	%	Location	%	Location	%
M4 nr Maidenhead	70	M4 nr Port Talbot	50	M40 Stratford on Avon	26
M1 nr Milton Keynes	67	A1M nr Durham	39	M8 nr Glasgow	27
M2 nr Medway	65	M3 nr Basingstoke	34	M6 nr Preston	28
M25 nr Potters Bar	60	M6 nr Walsall	33	M25 nr Leatherhead	11
M25 nr Thurrock	56	M5 nr Bristol	32	M62 nr Rochdale	10

Controlling safe following distance?

In the Autumn 2002 Newsletter Observer's Corner section (see our web site) we explained why a 2 second following distance is an absolute minimum and suggested that you should consider increasing this just about everywhere.

You'll have read, on the previous page, the 2004 national motorway survey found that, on average, around 40% of vehicles were driving too close on the motorway. This rose to around 70% where traffic was bunched. In May this year we were also told that Police were looking at introducing new roadside cameras to identify and punish drivers who tailgate.



This type of camera technology is already in use in Israel where regulations were introduced requiring drivers to maintain a minimum distance of one second from the vehicle in front of them. Although 1 second is dangerously close as a following distance you've only got to drive a short distance on our roads to see many examples of even closer following distances.

The Israeli system uses roadside cameras linked to a pair of loops in the carriageway which detect vehicle speeds and the gap between them. The number plates are photographed and fines issued when there is less than a 1 second following distance (where faster than 50km/h) or the speed limit is exceeded. Vehicles which are accelerating or braking sharply are ignored. Around 10,000 tickets have been issued annually in Israel per camera set with around 75% related to tailgating and the rest for speeding offences.

A quick look at safe following distance advice from around the world shows many countries refer to the two second rule but almost as many, if not more, advise 3 seconds as the minimum safe gap for car drivers. South Dakota Highway Patrol recommend the **6 second rule** with an extra second added in poor conditions, but maybe they have low enough traffic densities to accommodate such a large gap! Generally an absolute minimum of 4 seconds for lorries, in good conditions, is advised.

The only sensible advice still remains to treat the 2 second rule as an absolute minimum but for your own safety try maintaining a 3 second or more gap, even in good conditions, wherever you can. A 2 second following distance has been described as like buying the cheapest crash helmet or bullet -proof vest you can find: OK it will give some protection but if you really want to be safe, you'll upgrade to something better.

Programme of events 2004/05

Don't forget your annual programme of events commences at 7:30pm on September 14 at the Dalston House Hotel, Laurieknowe, Dumfries. Your Syllabus Card details what's on for the year which starts off with a talk by Mike Stevens (Motorcycle Examiner), followed by a visit to the Fire Brigade training facilities in October and the three 3way quiz which will be held this year at the Dalston House Hotel on October 25.

If you haven't been for a while or you are new to the Group please come along. Meetings are open to full members and associates, we are also pleased to welcome anyone who is considering joining the group and wants to find out more about us.

Trials underway to tax your car online

The Government intends to allow the public to access its services in new ways and from February 2004, the DVLA introduced a new pilot scheme to allow vehicle re-licensing via the phone or Internet.



Instead of going to the Post Office to get a new tax disc the new electronic service will use the Motor Insurer's Database to make a check on whether there is valid insurance on the day the new licence starts. The final scheme will be available for most vehicles and should be up and running nationwide by the end of 2005.

Deer reminder

Just a reminder that October to December is a peak risk period for accidents with deer. Tips for reducing your risk can be found in the Spring 2004 newsletter which is available on our web site.



New camera technology at junctions

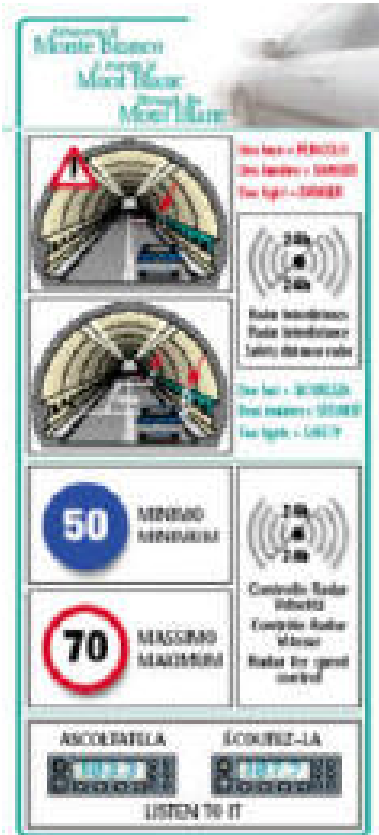
More new enforcement camera technology may soon be on the way at traffic lights. Loop detectors will be set into each lane, just before and just after the stop line. Once the lights change to red then any vehicle that passes after that time is photographed twice in quick succession. The first photo shows the offence, the second confirms that the vehicle was actually moving. The camera will be pole mounted before the junction so that the red light is also visible in the picture and photographs vehicles and motorcycles from the rear.



The traffic light cameras can also be used to detect vehicle speeds when the lights are showing green (or amber and red). Using loop detectors means that the system can distinguish between cars and commercial vehicles and different speed triggers can be programmed for different classes of vehicle.

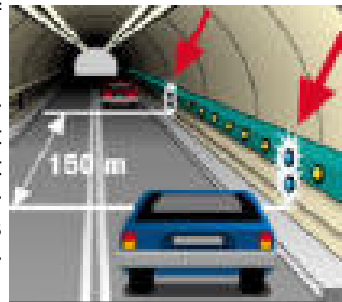
Monte Bianco or bust

In 1999 a fire occurred in the 6.4km long Tauern Tunnel (Austria). At the time of the accident, there were temporary traffic lights set up in the tunnel. A lorry travelling north drove into the end of the tailback at high speed and pushed four cars under the lorry in front of them. This initially cost eight lives and resulted in the lorry catching fire. Attempts to extinguish the blaze were unsuccessful and, as a result, the flames spread to a lorry carrying, among other things, aerosols containing hair spray. Altogether, 14 lorries and 26 cars were destroyed by the fire storm with 12 dead and 49 injured. Safety in tunnels was highlighted by this and other incidents.



Also in 1999, a refrigerator lorry carrying nine tonnes of margarine and 12 tonnes of flour caught fire in the 11.6km long Mont Blanc tunnel, spreading to 23 lorries and 10 cars - 39 people died. It took 50 hours to extinguish the fire and about 3 years to rebuild the tunnel and enhance its safety.

If you are driving to Italy from France taking the Mont Blanc tunnel (aka Monte Bianco on Italian side) it can be a sobering experience when handed the safety card on entry, (see left) especially if you are aware of the history of the site. As well as detailing the maximum and minimum speeds it advises you to tune your radio to one of the 12 stations which work underground, broadcasting safety information and advising what to do if there are problems. Your speed and following distance is monitored throughout the journey. To inform you about safe following distances radar triggers either one light or two at the side of the road rather like the chevron lane markings on some of our motorways.



Separation distance monitoring first was introduced in Mont Blanc tunnel from its opening in the 1960's but was disabled after suffering maintenance problems and when it was found that some drivers deliberately set about triggering the original audible warnings for fun!

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D & G Constabulary 3 year plan 2004-2007

Below are extracts from the 3 year plan relating to road policing:

1. Focus enforcement on offences most likely to cause crashes resulting in casualties

- * Participate in ACPOS road safety campaigns
- * Respond to road safety concerns expressed by local communities
- * Consult with authorities regarding design & engineering road safety issues
- * Target factors where, and offenders whose, driving behaviour is most likely to cause crashes and casualties
- * Support the work of the Dumfries and Galloway Safety Camera Partnership

2. Provide focused road safety advice and encouragement to road users

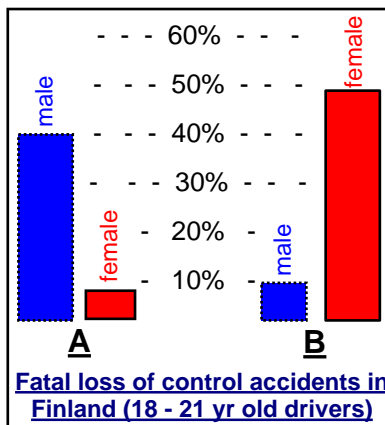
- * Assist schoolchildren participating in the Scottish Cycle Training Scheme
- * Provide road safety advice to pre-school, primary & secondary schools
- * Provide road safety advice when requested and where required
- * Increase public awareness of road safety
- * Support driver improvement schemes

Accident statistics for Finland

Here's an interesting table of young driver fatal accidents in Finland showing stark differences in the type of accidents between males and females.

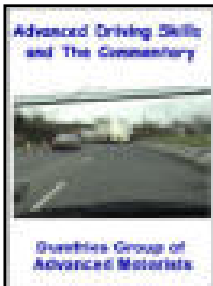
Investigations found young males tend to have single vehicle accidents whilst young females tend to be involved in collisions.

Accidents in columns A involved alcohol & speeding on non slippery roads whilst those in columns B involved no alcohol, no speeding and slippery conditions.



Statistics for the UK may well be similar - don't let it happen to you or yours!

Commentary Skills - New Group DVD



A new group DVD production "Advanced Driving Skills and The Commentary" is now available.

The 21 minute film uses footage in and around Dumfries and seeks to help drivers both to get started and to progress with the development of their skills in commentary. Copies are available for purchase or rent. Contact Helen Cameron on 01387 264005 (or dumfries@groups.iam.org.uk)

Book review

You may have noticed in the Summer 2004 edition of Advanced Driving magazine that “Pass Your Advanced Driving Test” has been re branded (PYAMT is also re branded).

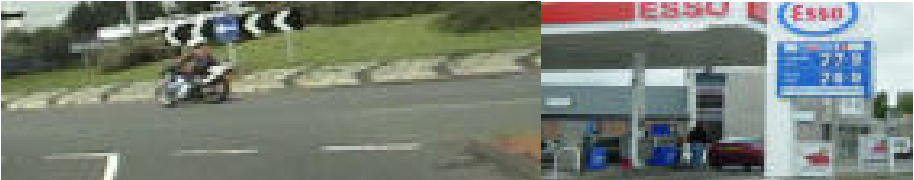
A study of the new driver’s publication reveals a new cover and the substitution of a few photographs inside; apart from this there is little or no change to the layout or substance of the book.



The only change to the wording of any consequence is the deletion of the reference to the use of a red warning triangle, on page 71, should you breakdown on a motorway hard shoulder.

Diesel dangers

Diesel spilt on the road surface is a treacherous hazard for motorcyclists. Bikers need to be vigilant at all times but all road users have a part to play especially drivers of diesel vehicles who should take care not to overfill their tank and to make sure the tank cap is correctly secured before moving off. Anyone spotting a vehicle leaking diesel onto the road should consider reporting the problem because it could be the difference between life and death to any road user but especially to motorcyclists.



Bikers and drivers you should look out for diesel everywhere but especially on roundabouts, junctions and corners and near fuel stations where fuel tanks are more likely to spill. Any wet patch on a dry road is suspect and long, dark lines should be avoided. Diesel does not evaporate, can linger a long time and it is very slippery on wet or dry roads. In the wet diesel may show as a rainbow coloured patches on the road. Often you can smell diesel before it is seen.

If you do come across diesel treat the road as an icy surface. If you can position to avoid the contaminated road surface. As a biker if you can't avoid it keep the bike as upright as possible, maintain a constant throttle and do NOT apply your brakes. If you are cornering try to stand the bike up and run a little wider to the other side of the slick. Do everything smoothly whether on a bike or in a car and you may be able to get through the problem area safely. Remember good observation and planning can help you identify and deal with hazards before you risk becoming 'unstuck'.

Notices

Membership Renewal

It's time to renew your membership for the forthcoming year and included with this newsletter is the annual renewal form. If you have not already completed a Gift Aid Declaration please consider doing so as it provides a significant benefit to the Group.

Please note that if you have completed the declaration in the past it is still valid so there is no need to complete the declaration section again.

The Inland Revenue remind those who have completed a gift aid declaration in the past that they must continue to pay income tax or CGT each year in excess of the value of the gift aid benefit for the declaration to be valid - otherwise let the Treasurer know.

Your Group Committee Members for 2004/05

Alan Jones (Chair)
Graeme McColm (Vice Chair)
Helen Cameron (Secretary)
Allan Graham (Treasurer)
John Pearson (Course Tutor)
Scott Anderson (Events Secretary)
Andrew Bird (Newsletter Distributor)
Andrew Hastings
Valerie Wilson
Charlie Allman Russell Wears Peter Dodds

Group Chief Observer 2004/2005: Alan Jones

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

www.iam.org.uk/groups/dumfries

Contact the Group Secretary: dumfries@groups.iam.org.uk

Newsletter comments and contributions to: editor@iamdumfries.f9.co.uk

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