

DUMFRIES GROUP
OF ADVANCED MOTORISTS

Winter 2004

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

Dear Member (*Chairman's Report by Alan Jones*)

Welcome to our Winter Newsletter. We are almost at the halfway mark in our programme of activity for 2004/2005 and before we move into the next half of our programme it is worth reflecting on the events we have held so far this year.

We began the year with a talk by the Motorcycle Examiner, Mike Stephens, from Penrith. Mike remarked on his surprise at how fast we were attracting motorcyclists to the Group and getting them through their Test. We then had an interesting visit to the Fire Station where we saw an Audi being taken to pieces in a simulated attempt to free a road traffic accident victim (have a look at the gallery on our web site for a full photographic record). This was followed by our Group hosting a Road Safety Quiz with the Penrith and Carlisle Groups. We came second but the main point is that everyone enjoyed themselves.

Our latest event was given by Dougie McDonald who is a Scottish Premiership Referee by hobby, and whose day job is a consultant Transport Planner. Dougie gave a very informative talk and although our numbers were small by comparison with our usual turnout, the questions he received left him in no doubt that he had an interested audience. He has agreed to return next year and talk about his day job. Finally, and by the time you read this Newsletter, we will have also have held an Observer Training evening.



Dougie is pictured here with some of the members.

For those members, who for various reasons have not able to attend these events, I want you to know that your Group is very active, both in holding these events and also in coaching Associates to Test standard. I would like to offer my thanks to all the members who put so much time into making these activities happen.

I hope you may have noticed the publicity we have been receiving of late, with articles in the Standard and also the Advanced Driving magazine. My thanks to Scott Anderson, our new Publicity Officer and also to Graham Watson for keeping the IAM primed on what we are up to here in Dumfries. Also, with respect to publicity, you may have seen our Motorcycle Group members in or around the town sporting their new tabards. These tabards have been bought with recent charitable donations from BNFL (£250) and DuPont Teijin Films (£150) and are helping to increase the profile of the Group as well as attract more members.

Talking of members, you will be pleased to know that our membership is now standing at 74 and growing rapidly. We offer our congratulations to Paul Carson, John Muirhead, Tom Mair, Phil Kirby, Nev Parker, Jim Hunter and

Stuart Pitkeathly all of whom have recently passed their Motorcycle Test. Thanks to Graeme McColm and his 3 Motorcycle Qualified Observers who have another 6 Associates under training.

In the Driving section we also have a group of Associates under training, so by the time you read the next Newsletter I am hopeful that our numbers will have swelled even further.

The DVDs, which Graham Watson has produced, are selling well. These DVDs cover different aspects of the Planned System of Driving and are economically priced to Group members. Let me encourage everyone to buy one or more of these DVDs as a means of increasing your driving skills. Christmas is coming and they will make an ideal present!

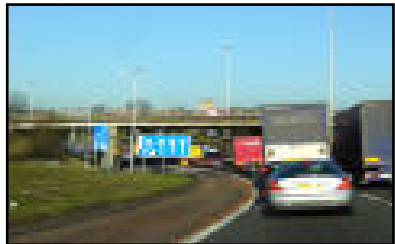
Let me also thank Scott Anderson for representing our Group at the National Conference in Birmingham and, together with Andrew Bird, for both representing the Group and giving information to the Scottish Northern Ireland Groups Association about our £5000 Awards for All grant. These activities are all helping to put your Group "on the map".

Finally, just a reminder that our own Russell Wears will be giving a presentation on the 13 December 2004 on the Dumfries & Galloway Strategic Transport plan. I hope you will all make an effort to attend and support Russell.

I hope you all have a Happy Christmas.

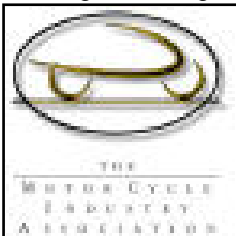
Motorways

Did you know motorways in the UK account for about 1% of the total road network but carry around 20% of total car traffic? The first section of motorway to open was at Preston in Dec 1958 and 45 years later saw the opening of the M6 toll road.



New DVD from MCI

The Motor Cycle Industry Association (MCI) has committed to partnership working with the government, media and other bodies to develop a DVD which will be distributed with new and used motorcycles.



The DVD will offer riders practical tips and help raise awareness about how to protect themselves on the roads. The MCI have no desire to wag their fingers at riders in an old school style, but hope to help people get more from their riding experience as their knowledge and confidence increases.

Research carried out at Huddersfield University found that riders who had some form of skill development or training said that they have enhanced esteem amongst fellow riders. Ninety five percent of those interviewed agreed that participating in training had made them more confident when motorcycling.

Japanese drivers have the ability to see in the dark

Did you know there are twice the number of pedestrian fatalities during the winter months of November, December and January compared with the summer months? Honda has developed the world's first Intelligent Night Vision System which could cut night time pedestrian casualties.

The new system uses "far infrared" cameras to detect pedestrians in or approaching the vehicle's path and provides the driver with visual and audio cautions to help prevent accidents involving pedestrians. The Intelligent Night Vision System uses images obtained from two far infrared cameras positioned in the lower section of the front bumper to detect the position and movement



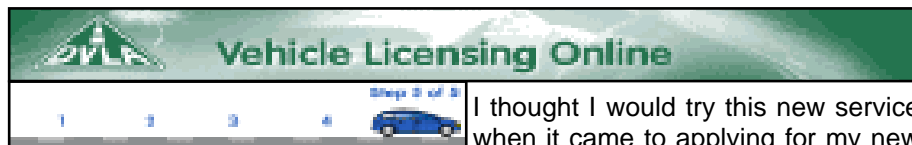
of infrared heat-emitting objects and determine whether they are in or approaching the vehicle's path.

The system is already available in the Japanese market Honda Legend but Honda cannot confirm when and if "Intelligent Night Vision" will be available in Britain. The photograph shows the dashboard screen displaying the 'infrared picture'. The screen can be retracted into the dashboard during daylight hours.

Membership renewals

If you've not yet renewed your group membership this year it would help the treasurer if you could do so as soon as possible. Help us to help other drivers!

Editor taxes car online



I thought I would try this new service when it came to applying for my new tax disc this year. The exercise was quite simple and took a total of 6 minutes from start to finish including walking out to the car to record the car's mileage.

Once you get to the start page you work through 5 steps, the first of which involves typing in your reference number. Your insurance and MOT details are

verified automatically on line. Another step allows you to choose the duration of the new tax disc, you enter your debit card details (credit cards won't be accepted until next year) and that's it - apart from waiting up to 5 days for the new tax disc to arrive in the post - mine arrived four days later.

Can you see clearly?

A recent survey of car owners, by Comma who produce car care products, found 70 percent of motorists interviewed admit to starting or continuing a journey without sufficient reserves of washer fluid to clean their windscreen.

Those least likely to run out were drivers over 55, while those aged 26 - 35 were the worst offenders.

Don't forget to use your winter antifreeze additive in the water! ... Ed

Tougher test for bikers on the way



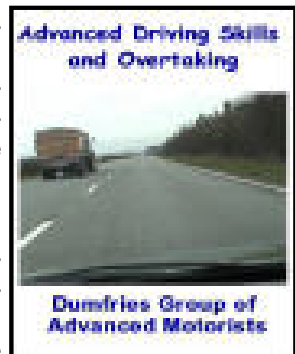
The European Commission Directive of 2000 prescribed higher standards for driving tests across Europe. Most of the changes took place in 2003 and covered a variety of issues relating to commercial vehicle driver tests, including elements such as coupling and de-coupling of trailers and reversing up to a simulated loading bay.

The changes for car drivers and motorcycle riders now require candidates to undertake 'vehicle safety checks' at the start of the test. Candidates are required to either show or tell the examiner what they would do to carry out the vehicle safety checks.

More changes to be implemented by autumn 2008 cover new and more demanding specific manoeuvres in practical motorcycle tests.

New - Advanced Driving Skills & Overtaking

This new production seeks to help drivers understand and develop safe techniques for overtaking. Topics covered include assessing the need to overtake and the factors affecting the decision to overtake. The two safe methods of overtaking on single carriageway roads are looked at in detail with the aid of explanatory graphics and in-car footage.



Overtaking on motorways and other dual carriageways is also covered, and many examples of overtaking on single and dual carriageways are shown, with an associated commentary or explanation of the driver's actions. Running time 44 mins, includes 'The Overtaker's Companion' helpsheet. Price to group members just £3. Helen Cameron will take your order.

Driving through roadworks

Did you know that you are twice as likely to have an accident on a stretch of road with roadworks on it, as on a stretch without?



It's true that roadworks can be an inconvenience – forcing you to slow down when you need to get somewhere in a hurry, or having to change lanes when you're trying to concentrate on where you're heading.

It's the Scottish Executive that operates and manages the traffic on Scotland's motorways and trunk road network and the Highways Agency who do similar work in England. Around two-thirds of all freight traffic uses these roads.

Maintenance staff work at night and day, often within just a few feet of fast-moving traffic. In fact, research suggests that roadworkers have the 16th most hazardous occupation in Great Britain – it's even more dangerous than being in the military! A campaign from the Highways Agency aims to encourage safer driving through roadworks. There are six key messages to remind drivers of the importance of driving safely at all times, and in particular at roadworks:

1. Keep to the speed limit – it's there for your safety.
2. Get into the correct lane in good time – don't keep switching.
3. Concentrate on the road ahead, not on the roadworks.
4. Be alert for works traffic leaving or entering roadworks.
5. Keep a safe distance from the car in front – there could be queues ahead.
6. Observe all signs – they're there to help you.

Surprisingly the Highways Agency say that a quarter of all congestion is actually caused by crashes but only 10 per cent is by roadworks. The major cause of congestion (65 percent) results from sheer volume of traffic.

Rural road dangers ... Ed

Did you know that 60% of all road casualties occur on rural roads? That equates to around 16,000 people killed or seriously injured on rural A roads and other rural roads per annum.

A recent survey by the DfT found that 24% of women and 40% of men believed there were fewer crashes on rural roads because they are quieter. This led to some drivers believing that they could afford to take more risks and, for example, drive faster at night because they will be able to see oncoming headlights.

Sensible drivers of course recognise the importance of always driving so that they can stop comfortably, on their side of the road, in the distance they can

see to be clear, or half that distance on a single track road. On single track roads keeping to this rule can still lead to problems however, because it relies on the other driver reacting correctly when he sees you.

The other day I was driving up a fairly steep hill on a single track road approaching a left hand bend. Allowing a little more than the single track safe



stopping rule - because 'oncomers' would be coming downhill I proceeded slowly and with caution. An oncoming vehicle came into view, the driver evidently was not paying full attention to the road ahead.

I stopped and the 'oncomer' braked late but being concerned that he had insufficient room to stop, the driver steered onto the

narrow verge where, of course, he lost friction so could not slow so quickly. I rapidly selected reverse, checked behind and moved backwards to make more room. The other driver stopped, got out, looked all round his car then walked over to thank me for my swift actions. Refreshingly that was someone who recognised the potential consequences of the situation and was not afraid to acknowledge another driver's actions to help. Although nine times out of ten you may get away with ignoring the safe stopping rule, it is a situation like this where maintaining your standards can pay dividends.

Road rage

You may think that road rage is a curse of modern life but in 1817 Lord Byron owned up to "boxing the ear" of a man in a carriage who was "impudent to his horse". In London 24 and 18 instances of furious driving, by horse drawn cabs, were recorded in the years 1853 and 1854 respectively. By 1861, 34 years before the first car arrived in the UK, the situation was such that the Offences Against the Person Act included the offence of "wanton and furious driving".

Don't walk in China

Shanghai is one of several cities in China that have grown up with local rules absolving a driver from all responsibility for hitting a pedestrian if the pedestrian is violating a traffic law (crossing outside of a pedestrian crossing, against the light, etc.).



The Government of China have considered a national law which would make the driver responsible for hitting a pedestrian whether the pedestrian is at fault



or not. Any fine on a driver would be reduced if the pedestrian were at fault.

Traffic crashes in China killed more than 109,000 people in 2002 (up from 106,000 deaths in 2001). China's Ministry of Public Security estimated that 77 percent of traffic deaths were caused by drivers who did not follow traffic rules.



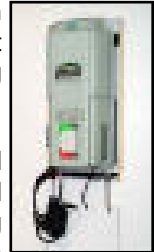
You may think this has nothing to do with you but the possibility of similar laws of liability have been suggested in this country - it has the effect of shifting the cost of hospital care from

the State to the driver (if he or /she is insured or has money).

The first two photos show junctions in Beijing and Shanghai, how would you fancy driving through these let alone cross as a pedestrian? The last photo shows a possible alternative to walking - a bus in the provinces, complete with exposed flywheel and transmission belt!

Honda invents the car you can fill up at home!

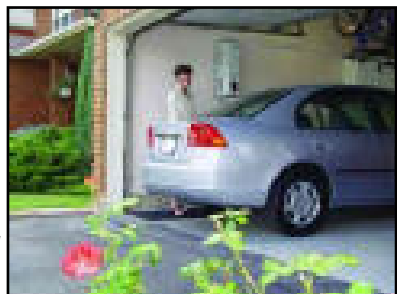
What if you never had to visit a petrol station again? What if you never had to worry about oil price rises affecting the cost of your motoring? In the US, this is about to become a reality: a Honda Civic GX that runs on compressed natural gas (CNG) with a home refuelling appliance to go with it, will be available next spring.



Honda in alliance with FuelMaker Corporation, have announced plans to begin retail sales of the Phill(tm) refuelling appliance and the Civic GX natural gas vehicle beginning in California, in spring 2005. The refuelling appliance takes advantage of natural gas supplied to homes and compresses it to the very high pressure needed by the car. Up to now the car has been sold only to fleets.

There are no plans to market either the Civic GX or Phill (tm) refuelling appliance in Britain at the moment.

The pictures show the Phill(tm) refueling appliance (top) and a typical installation mounted on a garage wall.



MAIDS (Motorcycle Accidents In Depth Survey)

This ongoing project to analyse police motorcycle accident records produced interim findings which show:

74% of the accidents were in urban areas. Rural accidents were over 1½ times more likely to be serious and over 3 times more likely to be fatal. Peak age groups for accident involvement were 16–20 and 31–35 years.

38% of accidents involve right of way violations. Under 20% of these involved a motorcyclist who was partly or totally to blame. Often there was a failure in the observation with drivers failing to see a motorcyclist. Many accidents occurred at T-junctions when a car pulled out into the path of a Motorcyclist.



15% of accidents involved loss of control on bends. These accidents were usually primarily the fault of the motorcyclist, and are more associated with riding for pleasure. Riders who have this type of accident are nearly three times more likely to be inexperienced. 20% of the accidents involving 16–20 year old riders involve going out of control on a bend. There was

also a group of “returning” riders involved in this type of accident. Though excessive or inappropriate speed is implicated in a large number of cases, there are also some where inexperience alone seemed the primary failure, and there is also some evidence of riders hitting oil, gravel and mud on bends.

11% of accidents in the sample were rear end shunts, which typically were judged to be the rider’s fault. At fault riders in these accidents tended to be younger and more inexperienced, and 40% were riding scooters or mopeds.

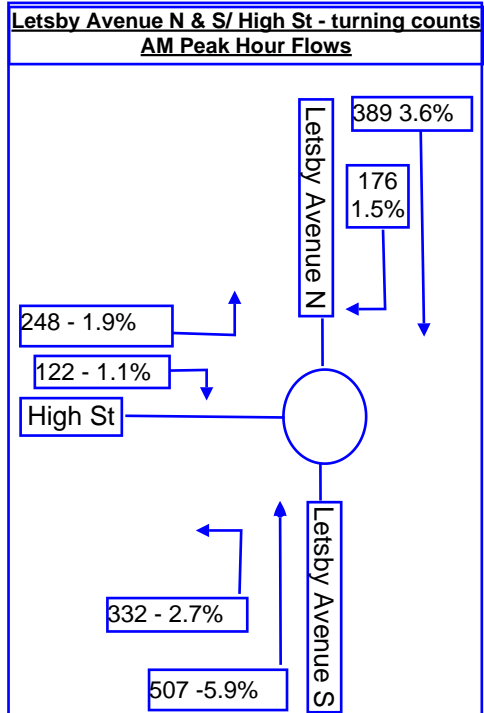
Although this project is not yet complete, some initial conclusions can be drawn. Riders were found to be at least partially at fault in half the accidents, suggesting that both riders and other road users need to be targeted by any countermeasures. There are marked problems with other drivers either failing to see a motorcyclist, or failing to take into account the possible manoeuvres of riders, and the possibility that they may do what to the driver, seems unexpected. For accidents such as loss of control on bends, the riders attitudes to risk or their lack of experience needs to be addressed.

The findings seem to have lessons for both motorcyclists and drivers and highlight the need for both Advanced Motorists and Advanced Motorcyclists to continue to raise road users awareness and skill in control of their respective machines and to identify the needs of other classes of road users.

Getting paid to count cars

From time to time you probably will have seen people sitting in their cars parked on the verge near junctions or maybe even sitting by the side of the road in a folding chair. These people are probably armed with a clipboard and a counter, but what are they doing?

Well they may just be involved in a traffic count. If so, they are recording the flow of traffic at the junction and noting in which direction the vehicles turn. Typically records are taken for the peak am and pm periods (rush hours) and the period between. These are compared with the all traffic count which can be recorded automatically using the often seen black tube, nailed to the road and connected to a register typically housed in a metal box chained to a lamppost.



The details for all the significant junctions on an urban route are recorded and plotted on a map. The information is taken into account when designing the route through an area and is fundamental in identifying the need for improved junction layouts, traffic lights (and their timings), provision of pedestrian crossings, one way systems and the like. Traffic counts are also taken for environmental pollution monitoring reasons. The sketch above shows what a typical turning count may look like, although, unsurprisingly, many such counts can now be taken automatically when suitably positioned cameras are available. The percentages relate to the total traffic flow through the junction.

School drives up standards

Bruton School for Girls is the only school in the country to have its own Driving Instructor and dual-controlled car offering a unique and comprehensive Driver Training and Education programme.

All members of the Sixth Form participate in classroom Driver Education lessons which provide an environment in which the various areas of knowledge, skill and attitude needed to create safe, competent drivers can be taught. Practical lessons are then available in the School's own vehicle.

Sign of the times

More news from China, this time a translation of a sign at a work place.

“Employees of our company are forbidden to buy Japanese cars.

Japanese cars are not allowed to be parked in this garage. 50 RMB fine and a good beating will be given to those who disobey this rule. We will deflate your four tyres if you are caught the second time”!



Some Chinese apparently don't like the Japanese or their cars!

55th anniversary of the handover of VW by British

On 8 October 1949, the British military government in Germany placed the Volkswagen factory into the trust of the German government.

In 1945, REME officer Major Ivan Hirst, acting on the orders of the British military government, set about rebuilding the bombed VW factory and started production of the VW beetle by the end of that year.

The company operating under British supervision set up export markets with the first cars going to the Netherlands in 1947. In the year

that the factory passed into German hands, the workforce of 10,227 produced 46,154 Type 1 cars, of which 7,128 went abroad. The rest is history, of course.



The picture shows the 1,000th Volkswagen leaving the assembly line, driven by Major Ivan Hirst - March 1946.

White Friday

You may have heard of Black Monday when the stock markets took a tumble but have you heard of White Friday?

The Highways Agency (England and Wales) are requiring maintenance contractors to conform to a new Winter Service Maintenance Plan to prevent a repeat of White Friday when large sections of the M11 and M25 came to a standstill for many hours in January 2003 because of snow and ice.



Making crash barriers safer for bikers

Trials have been started in the UK on the use of crash barriers providing better protection for motorcyclists. Their use has already been trialled and established in some European countries. Up to date figures are hard to come by but in 1995 it was reckoned that across Europe, of 10 million motorcyclists, some 1500 were killed following impact with crash barriers.

Here's a run down of some of the barriers you might expect to see in the future deployed on the outside faces of barriers at bends.

The continuous flat metal post shield (top picture) - this has a metal shield or plate fixed under existing guardrails to cover the barrier posts. It is better than just fixing another w-beam below the normal one (another solution), as it has a flexible flat surface which helps absorb impact energy.



The continuous plastic post shield (centre picture) - consists of a soft plastic fence covering barrier posts that can be fitted to existing barrier systems. It aims to combine both energy absorption properties and impact spreading properties.



The continuous pipe shield (bottom picture) - consists of plastic pipes covering the barrier posts and fitted below the existing barrier.



Non continuous tensioned netting (not pictured) - consists of individual foam post protectors which are clipped around each post and used in conjunction with netting panels tensioned between the posts.

Fire!

Did you know there are over 25,000 accidental car fires each year in the UK? Are you prepared for the worst? Do you have an extinguisher?

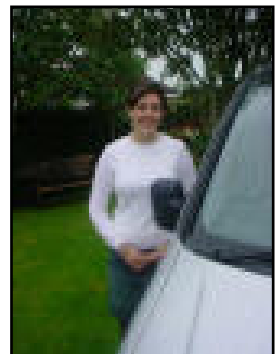
Dumfries Group stays on the right side of the Law

My name is Lucy Best and I am a 19-year-old student from Dumfries & Galloway, reading law at Edinburgh University. I was introduced to the IAM after taking a driving course through an initiative called “Safer Wheels,” which is run by PC Ian Howie from Stewartry Police. I thought this article might be interesting to other young drivers who are thinking about undergoing IAM training. I hope to write the second part of this article when I complete my training and have taken, and hopefully passed the IAM Test.

This is the beginning of my fifth week of Advanced Driving tuition, just over half way through the course, and therefore an exam will soon follow: a prospect I feel neither prepared nor confident to take part in, although I am assured by my Observer I will be prepared, and I will feel more confident as the Observed Drives continue.

My lack of confidence in my driving was one of the reasons I agreed to take part in the course: I could easily have declined and enjoyed my summer free of any demands, commitments or yet another exam! But in truth I am glad I didn't. Gradually as the weeks have passed I have subconsciously adopted the techniques, which come from being an advanced driver. Some of these techniques I have to admit I have not enjoyed or seen the necessity in adopting, for instance the continual commentary which accompanies a drive. I have struggled with this technique as my Observer will testify and came home regularly to complain about it, but in this case I seem to be wrong. I now see the benefits of commentating, as it helps keep your concentration whilst driving, which is of course essential. It may take time as I am sure you all understand since it is a difficult technique to pick up and adopt easily, but I know it will be beneficial to my driving in the long term.

Another technique essential to being an advanced driver is the planned system of driving, which once understood and memorised becomes an automatic response in dealing with any hazard. This five point system: information, position, speed, gear and acceleration, when applied, come as close as possible to a fool proof system at avoiding hazards. However, yet again I admit this system of driving has not come as naturally or as quickly to me as I had hoped, but I know it is crucial and I will continue to persevere.



Not using my indicators un-necessarily is something, which I found bizarre and I admit, dangerous. I was under the impression that it is always better to indicate, whether it is for any drivers benefit or not, because if you didn't I feared there could be just one instance where you forgot which in turn could

lead to a potentially dangerous situation. I now understand that not indicating un-necessarily is an indication of a better driver, not a careless driver, an advanced driver who chooses when and where to use his or her indicators is a driver who is more aware of the surrounding area - he is the more alert driver. At first my friends and family would criticise this technique as un-safe, but I now know who is the safer driver.

There are of course many other techniques which I have been introduced to, many that I still have to learn, I guess we keep on learning with regard to driving, and we can never presume to be perfect or, indeed, to know it all. It is a skill where there is always an element of risk, but hopefully by doing this advanced driving course I have minimised my risk level and will in time become a more accomplished, safer and more confident driver. In short, let us hope I pass the exam, which I will reluctantly have to sit to become a member of the Institute of Advanced Motorists. Lucy is currently back at university we're hoping she can complete the course in the holidays.

Road safety - Finland style

A road safety tax has been levied on compulsory vehicle insurance for about 40 years in Finland. The levy of about 1 percent is charged on premiums and raises around US\$ 8 million per annum. The fund is used to finance the main government organisation working in the field of public education, road user information and road safety promotion.

Death toll on Thailand's roads hits 569 during 5 day festival

The Thailand correspondent tells that Thais are more likely to die of a road accident than anything else. 569 deaths and 39,151 injuries were reported during the 5 day 2004 Songkran festival.



Most of those injured were aged between 15 and 29, and 53 per cent of the accidents took place on inter-provincial roads in rural areas; 87 per cent involved motorcycles. Around 91 per cent of motorcycle injuries involved motorists not wearing helmets, although legally obliged to do so.

On average annually every tenth citizen of Thailand is injured in traffic and every hour, three people die in traffic collisions.

In Bangkok the public hospitals can only afford 2 or 3 ambulances so two charity organisations collect dead and injured from the streets and take them to hospital. If nobody collected the dead, the bodies would become food for dogs! Every day in Bangkok 20 people die in traffic crashes and the charities often have to go to great lengths to identify the victims. 20 per cent of the dead are buried in unnamed graves, their identities unknown!



Take 3 bags of flour (but don't try this yourself)

Ever come across someone who never adjusts their head restraint to the optimum height or refuses to wear a seat belt? Perhaps they say they can brace themselves in event of a collision.



The average bag of flour weighs in at 1.5 kg, if you take three of these then this would be about the same weight as the average adult head - surprisingly heavy. Try putting three bags into a carrier bag to see how it feels. This weight is supported by your neck alone and in event of an impact your muscles are just not strong enough to hold it steady, even if you can see the collision coming. This should help explain the importance of wearing a seat belt at all times and adjusting the head restraint correctly.

By the way, if these bags of flour were swung at the windscreen of a car, to replicate what may happen in a collision the result would likely be less severe than in a real collision. Apart from breaking the bags, sending flour everywhere they'll probably break the windscreen. This of course would be very unscientific but the big difference is that, at least, at the end of the experiment although you may still end up 'ashen faced' you could safely walk away - completely unharmed!



Motoring is going to cost you more!

The DVLA plans to increase income from motorists and has published a fee proposal consultation to interested parties. These plans include:

The introduction of a 'change of keeper' fee set at up to £7.50, for the 7.5 million used car transactions each year. This will raise £56 million per annum.

An annual registration fee for the UK's 29 million cars of between £2.50 and £4.50, generating up to an additional £130 million. This is in addition to annual road tax which raises around £4.4 billion per year

The ten year photo card licence renewal is to be set at a cost of around £19.00.

The first registration fee was introduced in 1998 and was designed to cover the administration costs throughout the life of the vehicle. The fee has increased from the original £25 in 1998 to the current £38. This 52% increase will raise an extra £32.5 million.

Last year, DVLA raised a record £74.9 million from the sale of personalised number plates.

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.

Alternative explanation of reverse parallel parking.

This alternative explanation of reverse parallel parking is brought to you courtesy of the Chief IAM Examiner for Scotland.

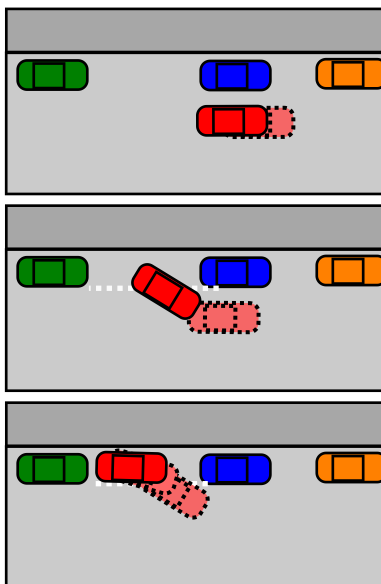
1. Stop a doors width away with your near-side mirror in line with front of parked car.

2. Reverse straight until the rears are in line.

3. Apply lock, car pivots about rear wheel, check swing out of front.

4. Once the rear offside corner of your car lines up with an imaginary line extended back from the offside of the parked car (-----) then apply opposite lock. Check the front clearance as you go.

Don't rely solely on your mirrors, use physical checks over your shoulders throughout the manoeuvre to cover the blind spots and ensure safety.



For a more detailed explanation go to the 'Group Guidance' web pages. Follow the link from the Group web site www.iamdumfries.f9.co.uk.

Self preservation through self observation

Former Chief Examiner, Ted Clements, is reported to have said that there were two empty glass cases at IAM headquarters. Examiners were instructed to look out for the perfect driver and rider. Once discovered they were to be taken to IAM House, where they would be stuffed and mounted in the cases so staff and members could salute them when entering and leaving the building.

Of course there is no such thing as a perfect driver, we are all fallible and make mistakes. What may be more important to maintaining good driving and riding

skills is being able to recognise when things have gone wrong and endeavouring not to make the same mistake again.

Some groups apparently advocate asking yourself (or your Associate), at the end of a drive or ride, to identify the most significant event that happened on that drive or ride (or may be up to two or three events). This may include good or bad events. The next step is then to ask yourself what action you could have taken to avoid any identified less than optimum performance and what you can do to prevent it happening again in similar circumstances. As far as good events are concerned you should ask yourself how you can repeat the good performance in the future.

Maybe you should try it, after all what have you got to lose? To help you get started you can download the Group's 'self observation report form' available from the Guidance Pages (www.dumfriesam.f9.co.uk).

Feedback from the Examiner

The Examiner reminds us about two important aspects of advanced driving which appear not to have been fully understood or acted upon during some of the tests undertaken this year.

The first relates to the control of speed; apparently several candidates could have been better at controlling their speed, especially in built up areas where there was a danger that the limit could have been exceeded significantly. The Examiner suggests more frequent speedometer checks should be made especially in town. Apart from the potential of being fined remember the Examiner has no choice but to fail candidates who exceed the limit.

The second area of concern relates to the use of indicators. Don't forget that although it is perfectly acceptable not to indicate, in the right circumstances, you should always indicate if there is the potential that another road user will benefit from such a signal. For instance, if you approach a roundabout with good vision of all the approach roads and you can be certain there are no other road users in the vicinity, then you do not have to signal. If on the other hand there are other road users in close proximity then often they will benefit from a signal. In these circumstances you should indicate. Look out for the following article which looks at signals in a little more detail.

Advanced driving is only subtly different from the Highway Code which refers to 'Mirrors - Signal - Manoeuvre' whereas we suggest 'Mirrors - consider the benefits of a signal - Manoeuvre'. When a driver signals for every manoeuvre there is a risk that this may be done automatically without the proper observational checks. It may be a good idea to incorporate the reasons why you are signaling, or not, within your commentary to counteract this risk.

A look at signals

Skillful use of signals is one of the hallmarks of an advanced driver. Here we are primarily considering the use of indicators and maybe hand signals. Signalling forms part of the Information phase of the planned system of driving (the system). You can review 'How to be an Advanced Driver' (PYADT) pages: 16 & 40-42 and The Highway Code for more information on giving signals. Roadcraft - The Police Driver's Handbook is also a useful source of reference.

Giving information is a key part of the information phase and signalling is the main way we inform other road users of our intentions. The information phase, of course, consists of three distinct phases:

Take information. Observe all round you. Scan the far, middle and near distances in front, behind and to the sides. Identify hazards.

Use information. Use what you have observed to plan how to deal with the identified hazards, anticipate what may happen, take into account what you can and can't see. Make contingency plans for dealing with the unexpected.

Give information. Consider if a signal would be helpful to other road users. Other road users include riders, drivers, cyclists etc i.e. anyone on or near the road (e.g. a skate boarder). A signal would most often simply be use of the indicators but you may also consider using arm signals, sounding your horn, flashing your headlights or even showing brake lights.

So to achieve and maintain a good driving standard we use a planned sequence, however often you will notice that other drivers signal and change direction at the same time, or signal after changing direction or just don't signal.

Signals should be used to inform other road users but not to give orders to them. A signal never gives you the right to carry out a manoeuvre so don't assume that others will give way (or even see them!).

A skilful driver should consider the need to give a signal on the approach to each and every hazard, before a change of direction or speed and whenever it could benefit other road users. Make sure your signals are not misleading and look for confirmation that they have been seen and recognised by other road users.

So why don't we advocate just signalling for each and every manoeuvre anyway? We believe drivers should actively consider each situation and decide whether a signal will benefit another road user(s). The major benefit of doing this is that it encourages you, the driver, to be alert and aware of what is happening on the road all around the vehicle. You are actively considering your situation in relation to others.

If you consider how other road users will interpret your signals, and whether there will be a benefit to others, then this should result in signals that are less likely to be misinterpreted. Take the case of a parked car; in some instances there may be a benefit by signaling on approach, to warn others of its presence. In other situations however, signalling could be more open to misinterpretation, especially if there were to be an adjacent side road or entrance. Consider also the situation where you want to stop after a side road; if you do not signal until you are passing the road this could be potentially less misleading to other road users. If you were to signal earlier it may give the impression that you intend to turn into the side road.

You may be turning off into a side road and have poor visibility into the junction, there may be no other road users in sight but use of the indicators could be the best course of action because as you turn into the junction other road users may come into view. So it might be best to apply the indicators first, rather than applying them as you are actively steering. There is nothing inherently 'wrong' in signalling even if there is no other road user in view, the important thing is that you consider the need for, or benefits of, a signal rather than just automatically use the indicators.



This car is braking and indicating left. Is it intending to turn left at the roundabout or will it turn into the fuel station before the junction?

Although all this is fairly obvious even a relatively short trip can often reveal that a significant number of motorists do not think through the consequences of their signalling, or lack of it! Remember any signal you give, which can potentially benefit other road users, is likely to benefit you also.

This newsletter is available in full colour. To view it simply go to the group's web site: <http://www.iamdumfries.f9.co.uk/page11.html>

IAM News releases

The IAM have issued news releases on a variety of topics since our last newsletter went to press, here is a list of the most significant ones:

- BBC Radio 1 DJ's give Advanced Driving a Spin
- IAM leads new move to reduce young lives lost to "Daylight Robbery"
- Schools back alert from the IAM
- IAM Fleet adds Virtual Fleet Risk Manager to Driver Training Portfolio
- Motorists must wake up to Motorway Fatigue
- Top biker to join IAM Council

For full details go the IAM web site or contact the Secretary.



I was flashed by a safety camera! ... Ed

Driving south into parts of England can be a less than pleasant experience. The other week I spent several days in Northamptonshire, a place sporting many safety cameras, well over forty currently. These are made up of speed cameras and red light cameras at junctions, together with mobile cameras.

I did not notice any general improvement in driving standards. I did notice many vehicles slowing at camera positions to well below the speed limit with resultant tailgating. I also witnessed numerous examples of serious speeding, aggressive driving, poor overtaking, frustration in heavy traffic leading to overtaking using the pavement and across pedestrian crossings, poor observation and ignorance of the Highway Code.

Surprisingly enough (or may be not) despite the plethora of safety cameras, driving at the speed limit puts you at a serious disadvantage at times, from following vehicles pressurising you to speed, something that can happen to you anywhere of course. Care and courtesy also seemed to be at a premium probably because of the sheer volume of traffic. Some may say this is evidence of motorists under pressure to conform to speed limits in enforcement areas but without pressure (or sanction) to improve their driving skills.

All this means that you have to develop a more determined (or thick skinned) attitude to driving and not give in and let your standards drop to suit some of the others around you.

One big difference I did notice on my return was the way traffic joined a rural main road. Down south vehicles did unwisely pull out, from side roads into gaps which were really unsuitable, causing other drivers to slow but once out they did, by and large, accelerate hard to get up to speed. No doubt they were driven to pull out because, with the traffic densities prevailing, they could be there all day waiting for a suitable gap. In contrast as I returned along the A75, on a near empty road, cars pulled onto the main road in front of me, on three separate occasions, all of which required me to brake quite hard. For example, at Kinmount, I had to brake hard from 60mph to 20mph to avoid crossing a solid white line and accommodate a driver who had pulled out in front of me and two following cars (there were no other cars in sight). He then drove very slowly, well to the left, inviting me to overtake - over the solid white line!

So what of the headline to this piece? Well the safety camera triggered was a red light camera although I am positive that the traffic lights were on green when the front of the car crossed the line. OK maybe they did change to red before the rear crossed the line but I was in a 'stretched' limousine driving very slowly - you see I was a passenger in a funeral cortege.

Can you see that lorry?

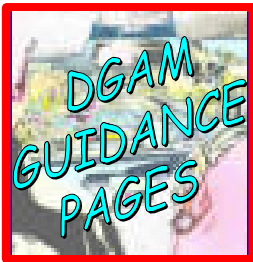
The Retroflective Equipment Manufacturers Association (REMA) say that the number of side impact collisions with LGVs could be reduced through better marking of all new vehicles.

Existing standards require retroflective markings to the rear of LGVs but not to the sides of such vehicles. REMA are campaigning for these standards to be applied to the sides as well as the rear of all new vehicles in the UK.



LGVs represent around 1.5 percent of all motor vehicles in the UK but they are involved in 10 percent of fatal accidents.

New web site launched



The Group have launched a new web site to complement the existing one. The intention of the new site is to provide easy access to a variety of guidance on advanced driving.

You can get access to the Group's helpsheets covering topics such as overtaking, manoeuvring, vehicle technical features, dealing with roundabouts, cornering and positioning etc. You can also view or download the latest colour versions of the Observer and Associate Handbooks.

To get there simply go to the Group's web site (www.iamdumfries.f9.co.uk) and follow the link to the DGAM Guidance Pages.

Local authorities face corporate manslaughter investigations.

At least five local authorities in the UK have been under investigation by the police following road crashes where no evidence of driver error or vehicle defect has been found. The investigations relate to potential charges under corporate manslaughter legislation.

Prosecution of a local authority for corporate manslaughter has to be done through the prosecution of an individual. In today's blame culture it is only a matter of time before someone in a 'roads department' is charged under this legislation in relation to perhaps a known 'accident blackspot'; simple erection of a warning sign by the local authority may not be enough.



Crashes are no accident

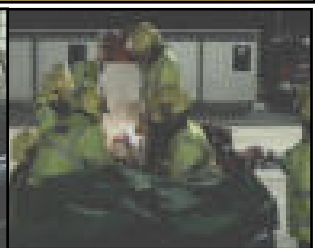
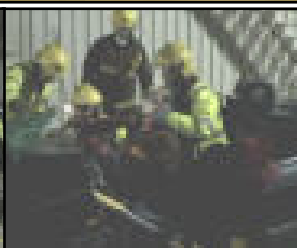
A car crash reconstruction took place outside the Manchester Town Hall in September to remind the public that 95 per cent of crashes involving vehicles are a result of human error - with some of the main contributing factors being drink driving, inattention, and speeding.

The reconstruction featured two injured 'victims' being cut out of a crashed car by Greater Manchester Fire Service, assisted by ambulance crews. A police helicopter also hovered overhead at the scene. The event was designed to remind the public about the consequences of carelessness on the roads and promote drivers to take care when out on the road hopefully reducing their risks of being involved in, or causing an accident. Rescue services were also involved in a similar crash display in Carlisle city centre during November.



Meanwhile, closer to home, October saw members of our group witnessing a rescue exercise held at Dumfries & Galloway Fire Brigade training facility. It was quite a sobering experience to watch as an Audi was cut apart to enable the driver to be extracted with the minimum of risk of further injury. May be it should be compulsory for all drivers to witness this sort of thing as part of ongoing training in the avoidance of risk?

Below are a selection of photos from the event, you can view the full rescue sequence by going to the gallery on the Group's web site.



Secretary's Report ... By Helen Cameron

Since our last newsletter life has been whizzing past at a frightening speed. IAM has taken a fair chunk of this time as we have had 3 group meetings, 2 committee meetings, a quiz, 10 pin bowling and an observer's meeting.

Unfortunately we didn't win the quiz but were delighted that once again it was a three way competition with Carlisle and 'Cumberland & Westmoreland' groups taking part. Tom Findlay was our quizmaster and had a tough job keeping every one in order. A good night was had by all and I'd like to thank those who came to support our team and ended up taking part (thanks Stuart).

We retained the 10 pin bowling cup even though we had 4 bowlers and Carlisle had 10!! We all enjoyed it and look forward to defending it next year. George Stewart always supports this event but unfortunately was unwell so unable to attend, our best wishes go to him for a speedy recovery.



Helen Cameron accepting the trophy on behalf of the victorious team.

On the car side congratulations go to Hamish Sellar on passing his test. He has now embarked on Observer training along with Ann Lind. We have a few tests imminent but unfortunately we have lost our Examiner and are at present relying on the Examiner from Cumbria until another is appointed.

Our last group meeting was Dougie McDonald, a premiership referee who had come from Glasgow to speak to us. We had a disappointing 10 members present. I was the lone female but I must say I thoroughly enjoyed it and found his talk extremely interesting. It is your group so if you have suggestions for future subjects you would like to cover please let a committee member know.

Looking forward to seeing as many as possible at our next meeting.

D&G Road Collisions: July, August September 2004

Dumfries & Galloway Constabulary report the following statistics in our area:

	No. Of Collisions	No. Of Casualties
Fatal	5	5
Serious	48	53
Slight	198	264
Total	251	322

Reduce your chances of becoming a victim by keeping up your standards or consider taking an Advanced Driving course if you have not already done so. Contact the Secretary to find out more.

'Skill for Life' course can make you safer on the road

Would you like to improve your driving or riding skills?

Would you like to be safer and more confident on the road?

Would you like to reduce your chances of having an accident?

Would you like your driving/riding to be more relaxed and enjoyable?



Dumfries Group of Advanced Motorists exists to promote road safety and the improvement of driving & riding standards to all motorists and motorcyclists through the provision of driving and riding courses.



So whether you're a newly qualified driver/riding or have had many years of experience on the road why not find out more?

Contact the Secretary, Helen Cameron, to find out more about how we can help you to help yourself - it's a 'skill for life'.

Your Group Committee Members for 2004/05

Alan Jones (Chair + Chief Obs) 820527; Graeme McColm (Vice Chair) 720425
Helen Cameron (Secretary) 264005; Allan Graham (Treasurer) 269421
John Pearson (Course Tutor) 720847; Scott Anderson (Events Sec) 257826
Andrew Bird (Newsletter Dist) 259500; Andrew Hastings 01556 611229
Valerie Wilson 710898; Charlie Allman 263750
Russell Wears 263893; Peter Dodds 261523

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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