

WELCOME TO

**DUMFRIES GROUP
OF ADVANCED MOTORISTS**

Winter 2003/04

NEWSLETTER

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

Chairman's Report by Alan Jones

You may wonder why I'm writing this report? Well, it's because Iain Norel-Wilson has had to resign as Chairman because of his work commitments, which now take him to Germany on a regular basis. Consequently, what little time he has at home he naturally wants to spend it with his family. I'm sure we all understand and appreciate his situation and wish him well for the future.

Now for the good news. I am delighted to be able to tell you that we have just been awarded the maximum grant of £5,000, from Awards for All, Scotland. This money will make a really big difference to the Group. For instance, by the time I write the next Chairman's Report, Graeme McColm hopefully will be a Senior Observer and he and Andrew Bird will be the proud users of state of the art 2-way radios, so that they can become much more effective in Observing our motorcyclist Associates. The remainder of the award will go towards buying a high spec laptop, a digital video camera and an LCD projector. The DV camera will be used to develop live and simulated training material, which can be used in our Associate and Observer training programmes. This material, together with the computer and projector, will make it easier for the Group to present the work we do, to a much wider audience.



Stephen Shepley presents the “Awards for All” certificate to Alan Jones and a selection of Dumfries Group members

Continuing the theme of access to wider audiences, I am also pleased that the Group has been able to be represented at several national and local conferences, over the past few months. John Pearson was able to attend the IAM National Conference on our behalf while Graeme McColm and Andrew Bird attended both the Scottish-Northern Ireland Groups Association meeting and the Motorcycle Forum. I want to thank them for taking the time to attend these events. It helps to get our Group known and it also helps to network and bring new ideas back to stimulate the work we do with some fresh thinking.

While continuing in with this congratulatory mood let me thank everyone who attended the Annual Quiz night with the Carlisle Group, and brought back the cup to Dumfries, well done!

Also congratulations to those who won the trophy back for our group at the 10 pin bowling tournament against Carlisle on 13 November. I'm told that both events were fun evenings and did much to add, in a light-hearted way, to the inter-Group rivalry.

This year's lectures have gone well, with good attendance at each one. I want to thank the Members who turn up for these events and to encourage those who don't, or can't for some reason, just to try a little harder. These meetings are part of the "lifblood" of the Group and much can be learnt and gained by participating. For my own part, I can only say that anyone who missed the presentation by Malcolm Polhill, of DFDS Transport, missed one of the best lectures ever. The humorous manner in which he delivered his lecture had to be seen to be believed.

Finally, let me say a few words about our Observer capability. At one stage we had to allocate 2 Associates to each Observer, because of the limited number of Observers. I'm pleased to say that over the past 12 months that situation has changed. We now have a significant number of Qualified Observers, which means that we are able to provide training on a one to one basis. Of course, the problem we have now is that we don't have the same number of Associates in the background, that we used to have before! Your committee will be addressing this problem over the coming months. In the meanwhile, if you know of anyone who is interested in becoming an Associate, please let Helen know.

Before I close my report let me give you more good news. Dean of Dumfries have agreed to sponsor the cost of publishing the Winter 2003 newsletter. Our Group exists on the minimum of budgets and any additional income like this is much appreciated.

Finally, Can I wish you all a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year.

Update on Euro RAP

In the Autumn 2002 newsletter we brought you news of the European Road Assessment Programme which concluded that the most dangerous section of major road in the UK was the A889 near Dalwhinnie.

The latest Euro RAP report highlights the 13 most improved UK roads in terms of safety. The annual death and injury toll on these roads has been cut by almost half following engineering improvements such as changes to junctions, signs, road markings and the introduction of safety barriers and speed cameras. In human terms it is assessed that these benefits equate to 20 saved and 180 serious injuries prevented. At an average cost, to society, of £52,000 for each personal injury accident this represents a significant saving.

One example of the type of improvements made is the A323 in Fleet where the accident rate has been reduced by around seventy percent in 18 months since the application of noise and vibration optimised surfacing which helps drivers to recognise areas of danger and so limit their speed accordingly.

Some question organisations such as Euro RAP and the worth of their reports on the safety of roads, arguing that there is no such thing as an unsafe road, only unsafe drivers.



Of course there is an element of truth in this but the same could be said of Euro NCAP who test cars. As a result manufacturers have sought to improve the safety of their vehicles, to the benefit of all. Do we really want to move to an age where cars and roads are engineered with fewer safety features, on the basis that the more dangerous they are the safer we will drive?

The real world of observer training Coming up in the next issue of the newsletter we'll be bringing you an insight into the Observer Training Scheme by someone who has experienced it from the 'sharp end'!

Bikesafe Scotland - research published

Research to evaluate the effectiveness of Bikesafe Scotland in improving motorcyclists' attitudes to road safety and their riding behaviour has been published. The study also aims to provide guidance on the format of future education and publicity initiatives aimed at motorcyclists.

Bikesafe Scotland is a multi-agency initiative involving Scottish police forces, motorcycling organisations and the Scottish Road Safety Campaign (SRSC). It aims to reduce the number and severity of crashes involving motorcyclists.

The research found that Bikesafe appears to be successful in attracting 'vulnerable' groups of motorcyclists. It also found that participants find the programme useful and that it has a beneficial impact on improving their bike control and encourages more defensive riding.

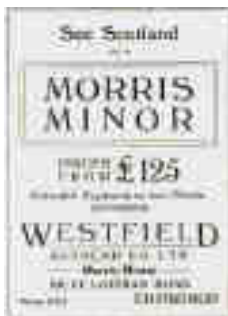
The study suggests that Bikesafe might be improved by focusing more on attitudes to riding and by further promotion of the advanced training message.

In our area, over the summer, Dumfries and Galloway Police Motorcycle Unit trained 32 motorcyclists under the Bikesafe scheme.

Are you a car driver or motorcyclist but not a member of the Institute of Advanced Motorists? Why not consider reducing your chances of becoming involved in an accident? You can improve your driving and riding skills by preparing for the Advanced Test. Find out more by visiting [our web site](#) or [contact the group secretary](#) - see back cover for details.



This is what car adverts looked like in the 1930's. The one above is from 1934 the one below from 1932.



Listen to this

One of the latest developments in car design is 'active noise control'. This allows engine sounds to be adjusted electronically and generate the required sound. The system uses a microphone in the air intake system to measure engine sounds, the original sounds are then either counteracted or adjusted by a loud-speaker that generates the desired frequencies.

It has the ability to suppress or amplify individual frequencies so giving manufacturers the ability to adapt a vehicle's sound to its character and image. The result apparently significantly influences driver enjoyment and comfort. Maybe soon you'll be able to hit a button to enter 'sport mode' which will just change the noise but not necessarily the power available, a sort of go faster stripe of the 21st century!

UN wants better road safety

United Nations secretary-general **Kofi Annan** has called on Member States to achieve a high level of commitment in tackling road traffic injuries. "Improving road safety requires strong political will on the part of Governments," he said.

An estimated 1.26m people worldwide died as a result of road traffic injuries in 2000 - 25 per cent of all deaths due to injury. The UN World Health Organisation (WHO) estimates that by 2020 road traffic injuries could rank third among the cause of death - ahead of malaria, tuberculosis and AIDS.

My road to advanced driving (Stuart Cowan reports)

On the 28th May 2003, I passed my IAM Driving Test and was recommended for membership to the Institute. Becoming an advanced motorist is something I'd been meaning to do for a while, but kept putting off. I suppose, like most drivers, I thought I was reasonably competent behind the wheel and not overly keen to be told otherwise! However, the desire to become a better, safer driver overtook any fear and I took the plunge last year.

The course started with classroom sessions covering the basic principles of advanced motoring; cornering lines and IPSGA are drilled into our systems. This was then followed by the first observed drive, designed to see where our weak areas are. I tried to drive as normal, and see what happened. I won't lie and say that I wasn't a bit miffed on hearing my acceleration was erratic and my steering and clutch control left a lot to be desired, but it's all part of the learning process. However, my braking was nice and smooth and I stuck to speed limits!

Many observed drives followed. Sandy Callander had the task of taking me on first and got to work on my clutch control. My problem was that I had the habit of shadowing the clutch while I drove, and engaging it when it served no purpose. This was causing a slight lack of control. It wasn't easy to leave it alone, but determination on both our parts won through in the end. Steering was also another area for concern at first. I wasn't crossing my hands, but I did tend just to turn with static hands rather than feed the wheel. The moment I mastered that was nothing short of revolutionary. Taking corners becomes so much smoother, easier and (whisper this one) makes it possible to carry more speed through any bend. I can't pretend it's something I now do 100% of the time, but when I do the car and I corner so much better. Keep practicing, Stuart.

Manoeuvres are things most drivers don't think about much, but a LH reverse, 3-point turn and reverse park can all crop up in an IAM test. Living without a drive means I have to reverse park every day and my 3 point turns are hampered more by my Mondeo's poor turning circle than anything else. But my LH reverse . . . Oh dear! Sandy seemed to insist in taking me to the hardest

The advanced driver always allows plenty of time for the journey, often arriving first at the ferry...



one in the town (near Nunholm) saying that if I can do it here, I could do it anywhere. It took many, many, many frustrated attempts, but he was right. No LH reverse can scare me now. The secret is to get your mirrors positioned correctly; remember that and you're laughing.

In December 2002, my route to becoming a member of the Institute hit a stumbling block - I failed my IAM test. Upset though I was, reapplying was never in doubt. The principal reason for not being accepted (they never actually utter the word 'fail') was that I didn't make sufficient progress. I think I just lacked judgement of how much speed I could safely carry through the bends and overcompensated. An observed drive with the group's senior observer, Graham Watson, would confirm this and more. One of the reasons I may have been seen as slow was that I was changing gear too early and sitting in 5th when I really shouldn't be touching it. Taking my gear changes later wasn't a difficult thing to get used to but starving myself of 5th was. Doing it makes a huge difference, though. The extra engine braking potential means you can just lightly ease off for slower traffic, while your 5th gear cronies leap on their brakes, and the acceleration is always there whenever it's required. Yet another revelation and something I now do without thinking.

Helen Cameron then took on the task of making me ready for retaking the test. She took me down a variety of quiet back roads to nip my insufficient progress in the bud. Unfortunately, in taking side turnings it would appear my friend the clutch foot was up to its tricks again. It was still holding on to the left pedal while I started to take the turn. Not good. If that wasn't bad enough, I also had to learn how to separate my braking and gear change before reaching any corner or turning. Keeping the foot off the clutch when turning is a matter of timing, but this using 3 pedals but only having 2 feet problem took a fair bit of ironing out. It's becoming second nature now and boy has my driving improved because of it.

It's the 28th May and I'm sitting in the Safeway car park, with my infamous clutch foot doing that twitching thing it did over 8 years ago when I sat my L-test. This being my second attempt I already know the examiner to be a human being. We head out on the low road to Annan and I manage to take the

The advanced driver leads other vehicles up the access ramp as directed by ferry personnel.....



right turn to Greenlea using 2 feet to utilise 3 pedals nicely. Maintaining progress on the B725 wasn't difficult as I sometimes use it to go to work. More reasonable progress on a not so familiar road was followed by a short motorway stint. I was actually able to overtake for him there, without breaking the speed limit. Did a reverse park (quite a tight space) and LH reverse (definitely done better) in Lockerbie.

I feared the worst when I saw him scribbling away as I headed back to the car park, but I needn't have worried. It was more relief than joy at first, but it's started to sink in now. So has the responsibility of being a member. It's now my duty to promote the Institute by upholding my driving standards at all times. Gulp!

Motorcycle Section News: Three m/c Associates pass

On Saturday 25th October Tom Little of Lochmaben and Scott Anderson of Dumfries successfully passed their motorcycle test. It would have been a hat trick that day if Graham Abrines from Dumfries hadn't come down with the flu, however Graham sat his test on Saturday the 1st of November and he too passed. Congratulations to all three new motorcycle members.



A label for everything

More new technology is on the way, this time smart labels that can be used to label just about anything and everything. These labels are in fact microchips no larger than a grain of sand which can be used to identify and track items. Initially they are being used to identify items to be sold in shops; you may have read about trials conducted by Tesco and Marks and Spencers. Versions of these chips are available with a small battery which will broadcast information and in the near future they may be attached to your new car!

ACPO is currently investigating the potential use of electronic vehicle identification whereby vehicles would be chipped and roadside sensors used to read data. Apparently almost 50 motoring offences could be detected using the system which could become a European standard.

The advanced driver always checks his mirrors before swerving to miss oncoming 40 t lorries.



New road signs to put motorists in the picture

New road signs that display pictures as well as text were switched on in October, on the M4. The 36 signs are on trial until the end of 2004 before being installed elsewhere on the motorway network.

The signs will provide motorists with images about road conditions including high winds, snow and skidding. They will also indicate accidents, advisory speed limits and details of any lane closures.

The picture displays are consistent with those used across Europe and will also help foreign drivers using Britain's motorways and road network.



It will probably be no surprise to you to learn that these new signs incorporate traffic monitoring cameras!

How roads and journey times have changed

The speed of travel depends not only on the type of vehicle but also on the state of the road being used. The first 'roads' no doubt started with early man who used primitive track ways to help him meet up with his neighbours. In the UK it was the Romans who were the first to build roads as we know them today.



The Romans initially built roads to allow them to get soldiers and their supplies easily to all points of the empire. The first Roman main road was the Via Appia, which by around 312 B.C. crossed 6,000 km of mainland Europe. Roman Soldiers were trained to march at speed and could, when necessary, cover around 18.5 miles per day. Horse harnesses had not been invented so carts were pulled by horses or by oxen both using yokes. Oxen travelled at 1 mph while horses and mules managed 3 or 4 mph. On this basis a Roman soldier riding in a light cart could cover the distance from Edinburgh to London in 23 days providing, of course, that there was a safe road in existence covering the route.

In Britain the Roman's legacy of roads lasted centuries but had largely fallen into disrepair, by the 5th century, as there was no system of maintenance. Thereafter the overall state of roads, for hundreds of years, is hard to ascertain; upkeep was dealt with on a local basis and consequently very varied.

By the 18th century a revolution in transport started with significant increases in the use of wheeled vehicles, perhaps with parallels to our present day ever increasing traffic and demand for road capacity. The roads of the day were just not of a standard to cope with this extra traffic. For example in the early 1700s it took almost a fortnight to travel from London to Edinburgh by coach.

Many roads on the route from Edinburgh to London were improved through the formation of 'turnpike trusts'; sections of road improved or newly built, paid for and maintained through the collection of tolls. Over 1000 turnpike trusts had been formed, in England by 1830 (the first turnpike was established in Scotland in 1750), the improvements to the road system allowed much easier travel



and promoted the setting up of stagecoach services. So around this time the journey between Edinburgh and London could be completed in just two days.

Although the roads had improved there was no common standard, road conditions varied depending on the wealth and energy of the particular turnpike trust. Engineers such as Telford and Mc Adam, developed better methods of road construction and this led not only to increased speeds but improved life expectancy of the horses used to pull the coaches. In fact between the late 18th and early 19th century it increased from 8 to 12 years! Britain started to build its rail network at much the same time as the roads improved; trains had great benefits for the travelling public who preferred the relative safety of rail travel compared with the risk of encountering highwaymen on the road system. So provision and maintenance of roads risked falling into decline again, in fact Turnpike trusts started to go out of business and the last one to wind up in England was in 1895.

With the introduction of the motor car and lorry, demand for good roads increased. The stone surface of the old roads worked well for the iron shod wheels of horse drawn vehicles, as they tended to grind the surface, creating stone dust which cemented the surface together. This did not happen with rubber tyres so tar macadam using bitumen to bind the stone together was introduced from the end of the 19th century.

During the 20th century, of course, there was an enormous growth in road traffic, requiring initially improvement and expansion of the existing road network followed by the introduction of the motorway network from 1958. Since the first Roman roads, which supported mainly foot traffic, the existing road network had been built up and improved over hundreds of years to support the needs of horse drawn vehicles. Over the past 100 years or so they have been converted to suit the needs of motor vehicles but still retain many of the



features from history which lead to the severe difficulties coping with the demands of increasing traffic volumes that we see today.

The motorway network however has been designed from the start with motor vehicles in mind and copes far better with higher traffic volumes,

many of the congestion problems being related to locations where traffic has to re-enter the old road system.

Today our road journey between Edinburgh and London is often affected by congestion and can take several hours longer than the journey time of the 1980's where the 400 or so miles could be consistently covered in less than 7 hours.



IAM News releases.

Since the beginning of August several news releases have been made by the IAM covering the following subjects:

- IAM Fleet wins HSE Driver Training Contract.
- "4x4" Mums asked to take extra care on School Run.
- Army Bikers join forces with Thames Vale Advncd M/cyclists (see AD mag)
- Rd safety awards for Chelmsford, Inverness and Skipton Groups.
- IAM Seeks Safe Drivers in Mid Wales (New group set up)
- IAM Fleet throws business a lifeline as HSE tackles work road deaths.
- Drivers should watch the Clock, says IAM (see P20).
- Young Drivers get Roadwise in new IAM Safety Drive (Northern Ireland).
- Hands Free not Scot Free says IAM (see Advanced Driving mag).
- Box clever this Christmas with an Advanced Driving Course (see P20).

Details of some of these items can be found in Advanced Driving magazine or in this newsletter but space prevents us reprinting them in full here. Full details of all news releases and fact sheets issued by the IAM can be found on their web site - <http://www.iam.org.uk>.

More Associates welcomed

The group have made good progress training new Observers and for the first time for several years we have now almost cleared our Associate waiting list.

We are asking all members to help with recruitment of new Associates so now is the time to spread the advanced driving word to friends, neighbours and colleagues: please put anyone interested in touch with Helen Cameron. Any help or ideas for recruitment would also be appreciated.

More cameras watching you on the road

Have you ever noticed a pair of yellow mobile trailers on the verge of the M8 or A720 Edinburgh City Bypass, one with a large variable message display?



These form an automatic Mobile Journey Time System (MJTS) which is used to monitor traffic delays through roadworks. The MJTS is currently being trialed at various roadworks in Scotland and they are also in use at locations elsewhere in the UK.

The MJTS consists of a pair of trailers, each with an automatic number plate camera/ reader, sited before and after a roadworks site. Each camera records the number plates of passing vehicles and then the time taken to pass between the two cameras is calculated.



Any delay compared to the normal journey time can then trigger a report to the National Network Control Centre and a warning on the variable message display advising approaching traffic of delays.

New Motorway signs

New marker posts are being erected on the M6 in Cheshire in a trial to improve emergency services ability to get to incidents quickly.



Often motorists on a long journey do not know which county they are in or even which motorway they are on. This can lead to delays for emergency services, for instance when crashes are reported, because of an inability to describe the accident location satisfactorily. At about 1m square they should stand out better than the existing marker posts.

UK is road rage capital of the world

The UK is the 'road rage' capital of the world, according to a survey for the RAC Foundation.

The survey by motoring magazine Max Power and the RAC Foundation found 87 per cent of the 1000 respondents claimed they had been a victim of road rage and 71 per cent admitted they had committed it themselves.

Britain has the busiest roads

Britain has the busiest roads of any of the world's most developed nations - and yet has one of the lowest levels of car ownership, according to interna-

tional research on the car and society by the FIA Foundation and the AA Motoring Trust.

Traffic flows on Britain's motorways were found to be higher than any other G7 country (Great Britain, USA, Canada, France, Germany, Italy Japan) indeed, 50 per cent higher than the next busiest, Germany, and almost twice as high as the USA or Japan. Average traffic flows on all roads were also found to be higher in Britain than the other G7 countries.

Petrol Forecourts in the UK

Do you think that there are fewer petrol stations now than there used to be just a few years ago? According to the Institute of Petroleum fuel stations close at the rate of about two per day! The numbers of petrol filling stations in the UK over the past few years were as follows:



1997 ~ 14,824

2000 ~ 13,043

2001 ~ 12,201

2002 ~ 11,423

Even more new digital road signs

In an apparent move to generate revenue from street furniture new digital message signs which can show full colour, near-video quality advertisements, as well as traffic information, are to be trialled for 6 months, starting this month in London and the northwest of England.

Measuring about 2m square, the variable message signs will be fixed 3m from the ground on adapted lighting columns and enclosed in vandal-proof displays. The LED screens will display moving and static images as well as text and could have a range of uses - including warning drivers of speed limits, providing real-time information on traffic diversions, and signing routes to local events. The signs are expected available for general use later in 2004.

Your opportunity to help

Following our grant award there will be opportunities for members to help in the production of training materials. This could be your chance, not only to help the aims of the group, but to use some state of the art camera and editing equipment. Please contact the Chairman if you are interested.

Scottish motorists defy speed limits.

Scottish Executive research on drivers' attitudes to speed limits shows that motorists are now more likely to speed on motorways and dual carriageways.

Only 29% reported never driving at 10mph above the speed limit on such roads compared with 36% in 1991. Additionally only 58% of respondents said they had never driven at 90mph in a 70mph zone compared with 65% in 1991.

Accident statistics in Dumfries and Galloway

Last year on the roads in our area there were 14 deaths, 129 serious injuries and around 415 road collisions reported. In the 6 months, April to September, of this year there have been 6 fatalities and 51 serious injuries with almost 240 Road collisions reported.

Police investigation of the 16 serious injury crashes in July - September 2003 show the overriding reasons for these crashes were related to loss of control, possibly speed related, and inattention. Three crashes involved motorcyclists injured by car drivers turning right having not seen the motorcycle. One crash involved a stationary vehicle on the hard shoulder of the A74(M).



Want to see something different?

If you would like to see something included in the next edition of the newsletter send your suggestions or articles to the Editor (details on back cover).

Andrew Dale to receive Award

One of our members, Andrew Dale from Gatehouse who is on the route to Qualified Observer status, is to receive an award, given by the Royal Humane Society, for his part in an attempted rescue at Bruar Falls in Perthshire.

Andrew scaled sixty feet down the dangerous side of the gorge, without any safety equipment, to get to a young boy who had fallen in. Tragically the boy did not survive the fall. The award of the Testimonial on Vellum is only made where someone puts themselves in considerable danger to rescue someone else. Well done Andrew, its an honour to have you as part of our group.

Membership - a small price to pay



A few of you in receipt of this newsletter, have yet to renew your membership. It would be appreciated if you could pay your membership fee as soon as possible to enable the Treasurer to complete the associated administration and returns to IAM House.

Importantly, although the membership fee is only a modest sum (& much cheaper than most other group's fees) it does have a significant impact on your Group's ability to help motorists raise their driving standards, something as an advanced driver no doubt you will be interested in - because it is other motorists who you meet everyday on the road!

Please consider completing the 'Gift Aid' declaration as this will help us maximise the receipts for our Group. If you need a new renewal/ gift aid form they are available from the Treasurer or the Group Secretary (see back cover for contact details). Can't remember if you've paid? Just ring the Treasurer.

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.

Positioning when passing parked vehicles

The seemingly simple task of passing a parked vehicle on the road ahead can be made smoother and safer by actively considering your position on approach and whilst carrying out the manoeuvre.



Compare these two positions - Keeping well back allows more forward vision and early sight of the oncoming car. Getting too close (below) means forward vision is restricted and the oncoming car only comes into view once it is very close.



As with most other situations it is best to adopt a position that gives you the best view for the furthest distance ahead so maximising the time available for planning your actions. Adopting your position early helps following traffic to clearly understand your intentions.

Having got your your view early you should maintain it, unless you risk conflicting with other road users, then you should sacrifice your position for safety.

Sketch A shows just how much your drive is compromised by adopting a position with a reducing view on approach.

Sketch B shows how much better forward vision can be maintained if you wait for traffic to clear from a position further back.

Sketch C shows the benefit to forward vision when it is possible to adopt and maintain an early position well to the offside.



Remember:

Adopt your position early - getting the best vision early allows early decisions.

Your position can help let others clearly understand your intentions.

Position to let others see you, e.g. in the mirrors of the vehicle to be passed.

Maintain vision except when you risk conflicting with others, then sacrifice position for safety.

Whilst this article deals with passing a parked vehicle much of these principles of positioning equally apply to overtaking slow moving vehicles.

EC publishes road safety action programme

The European Commission has published its European Road Safety Action Programme, 'Halving the number of road accident victims in the European Union by 2010: A shared Responsibility'.

Over 40,000 people are killed and 1,700 000 injured each year, a sad testimony to the lack of safety on the roads in the EU. The European Commission insist they will not accept this carnage, and is backing Member States in their efforts to put an end to this tragedy. In the European Road Safety Action Programme 2003-2010, recently presented, the Commission is pursuing an ambitious overall objective - that of halving the number of people killed on the roads by 2010."

Scotland plans 20mph zones for every school

The Scottish Executive is to give local authorities the money to introduce 20mph zones around every school in Scotland. Under the programme £27m will be distributed to councils over three years, accompanied by increases in resource funding.

For this year, councils are to receive £5m in new capital grants followed by £11m per year in 2004-5 and 2005-06.



Recent photos from the editor's correspondent in Cambodia show the state of road transport - above main road to Thai border (no tarmac), below sights of Phnom Penn.



Secretary's report

Our new venue has been welcomed by the group and so the attendance at our monthly meetings has been encouraging, but there is always room for more.

The group took part in the "three way quiz" but there were only two teams, Carlisle and Dumfries, as Westmoreland couldn't muster a team. I would like to thank Margaret Vaughan, Andy Hastings, Stewart Cameron and Graham Watson for forming our team. I'm delighted to say that we retained the cup. I would like to ask our motorcycle members to offer their services for next year as there are usually a few motorcycle questions which are a struggle for car drivers to answer.



I have been very remiss and not mentioned those associates who have passed their tests in the last year. Congratulations to:- Peter Dodds, Stuart Cowan, Dick Bruce, Donald Cummings, Andrew Dale, Hazel McNinch and Mark Ranshaw who have all passed their car test. Congratulations also go to three motorcycle associates - see separate article for details.

Our waiting list at present is under control but we will need more associates for the spring course so if you have any aunts, uncles, cousins or friends who might be interested then please put them in touch.

I hope to see more new faces at our future meetings; so far this season the speakers have been great so why not come along and join us?

Renewable energy to power our roads

A large scale trial is to start at junction 9 of the M27 near Portsmouth where solar energy will be used for powering road signs and street lighting. The 12 month trial will look at the feasibility of increasing the use of solar power on our roads.

Another development being considered is the installation of pipes beneath slip roads used to cool roads in summer and collect heat for service stations. The same pipes could be used in winter to warm the road and prevent icing. The jargon for this system is IHTS or Inter-seasonal Heat Transfer System.

Which side of the road is best?

Why do we drive on the left? Well in Roman times apparently everyone in Europe travelled on the left because the Romans decreed it. No-one really knows why; there are several theories most notable being the one related to the majority of people being right handed, so for defensive reasons passing oncomers on the left, put them in the best defensive position.

During the age of colonization and empires, colonial powers normally imposed their driving customs on their colonies worldwide. Many countries which drive on the left today do so because of the British Empire (except the USA and Canada). Napoleon's conquests in Europe forced most of the continent to drive on the right in conformance with French practice, if they did not already do so. He did not however conquer Britain, Denmark or Sweden, so the Danes, Swedes and British continued to travel on the left. Sweden changed to driving on the right in 1969 for economic reasons. Denmark changed to the right much earlier. Austria, Czechoslovakia, Hungary, and the Channel Islands changed sides from left to right to conform to German practice during World War II.



Today about a third of the world population drive on the left and around three-quarters of the world's highways are found in countries where traffic drives on the right.

So the side of the road we use is largely a result of political influences, but studies in Canada have suggested that it might be slightly safer to drive on the left (providing the rest of the vehicles on the road also do likewise!). This is because driving on the left means we have to overtake on the right. The majority of people are right-eyed and right-handed and apparently this means our right eyes have a slightly wider field of view than our left eyes. This improves our ability to make judgements about the speed and movements of oncoming traffic and so it is a slight advantage when assessing the possibilities of, and carrying out an overtaking manoeuvre.



DID YOU KNOW THAT TRAFFIC IS THE BIGGEST SINGLE KILLER OF 12 - 16 YEAR OLDS?

Which way round?

Britain's first roundabout was built in Letchworth, Hertfordshire as part of the new Garden City being constructed in 1910. The Sollershott Circus roundabout was known as an 'intersection for gyratory movement' before the term roundabout came into use.

Apparently, for the first twenty years of its existence there was no indication which way round traffic should drive - although there are no records of any accidents at the junction.

Drivers should watch the clock says IAM

"It is one of the principles of good driving that you should always be able to stop safely within the distance you can see to be clear. As the days grow shorter, drivers should be prepared to alter their behaviour and drive according to the conditions," said Mr Lunn. Other driver safety suggestions include:

- * Don't wait until it's fully dark to turn your lights on: "see and be seen".
- * Take particular care where children may be playing as light fades, particularly between 4pm and 6pm.
- * Clear all ice and snow from your windows before you start driving.
- * Keep the reservoir topped up. Keep the windscreen clear.
- * Carry a spare pair of shoes in your car as dry soles make it easier to drive.
- * Wipe your head lights and tail lights to keep them bright.
- * Check your lights and tyres, including your spare tyre and carry a spare set of light bulbs.

Vehicle offences

Did you know that on average over 1000 motor vehicle offences are detected by the police every month in Dumfries and Galloway? These result from investigations following crashes or incidents, normal day to day policing and the targeting of specific offences.

This year two motorists were detected driving in excess of 90mph on the A75 during the "Let's have a safer summer campaign" and several 'boy racers' were detected committing offences in operations to curb their activities; one Dumfries youth was even caught committing 3 speeding offences in 2 days!

Don't forget, don't phone

1 December saw the use of a hand-held mobile phone, while driving, becoming a criminal offence. Employers may also be prosecuted if they require employees to use a mobile phone when driving.



It's refreshing to see that some companies have recognised that any phone use can compromise safe driving and have started to specify not only that phones should not be used on the move, but are even removing fixed phone installations from vehicles.

Skill for Life Gift Box

The IAM has introduced a new-look Skill for Life gift pack, which includes 'Pass your Advanced Driving Test', a gift token and details of the various groups around the UK. The gift box is available for either car drivers or motorcyclists.



Contact IAM House direct on 020 8996 9600 for details.

What is SNIGA? Andrew Bird reports

I thought this to myself when asked if I would attend the annual meeting at Tulliallan Police College; well I now know that it's the Scottish and Northern Irish Groups Association of the IAM. So what actually does SNIGA do?

Primarily it is to "help the IAM in Scotland improve, by groups helping each other and allowing, among other things, problems, issues and proposals to be discussed before any forums or meetings - so that the Forums and meetings can be more productive"

SNIGA funds the three forum groups in Scotland and one in NI. Scotland's forum groups are the North, South East and South West (meets at Strathclyde Park Sports Centre, Hamilton). These forums each have meetings throughout the year and at these forum meetings the representatives of the neighbouring groups can exchange ideas and views that could help in furthering the success of all the IAM groups across Scotland and Northern Ireland. Through SNIGA these ideas are then transmitted to all concerned in all of the areas.

Now that we know what SNIGA is, here is my report on this year's meeting.

The Chairman's report highlighted the regional forums work during the past year and the election of new SNIGA committee members however they always require more volunteers to help - anyone from Dumfries interested? Skills for life will, from next April, be the only way for an associate to access the IAM test.

The annual accounts were presented, followed by Ian Dallas, the Staff Examiner, giving an interesting presentation to the assembly covering most aspects of taking the IAM advanced test. For your information the national average of failed tests for cars in 2003 now stands at 21.28% compared to 18.5% for the same period in 2002, for motorcycles it is 2003 14.5% compared to 12.5% for the same period in 2002. Interestingly the number of motorcycle tests taken in Scotland rose compared to a national downward turn. Ian reported that the South East Forum had organised an observers training day at which group observers attended classroom and driving sessions with the examiners. The purpose being to assist each group to achieve a common standard of associate guidance. The North and South West forums are looking to organise similar days early in 2004 - get your name in now as places will be limited, especially if all of the South West forum groups want to join in.

After lunch the North forum gave an interesting presentation on the new RAC advanced driving course, carried out by BSM (owned by the RAC!) An assessment costing £43 is first carried out before signing up "pupils", after which training is charged at £22 per hour. The RAC had suggested that on average 16 hours of training would be needed to pass their test. The test is conducted

by a BSM examiner (cost £43), not an independent one as with the IAM. In conclusion these figures suggest it will cost a minimum of £438 to pass the RAC advanced test, isn't Skill for Life a bargain in comparison!

The BP driving skills competition is no more, BP pulled out as its popularity was declining with less groups attending. Therefore the South East forum is holding a Driving competition in Glenrothes town centre on the 14th of December. The group has been given the council building car parks to conduct manoeuvrability skills and the Fife Constabulary will provide the judges for the on the road assessment. The event is to be open to all members of any group and names were called for by Helen Cameron at the last meeting night.

Finally in 2006 it's the 50th birthday of the IAM test, suggestions are wanted for suitable Scottish Region events to celebrate our Golden anniversary.

In future, at group meetings, when invited to attend these meetings, at Tulliallan, you should seriously consider it. I can honestly report that it was an informative and enjoyable day out, and the lunch provided is first class!

Bowling Win for Dumfries



Chairman of Carlisle Group congratulates Helen Cameron, Secretary of Dumfries Group. Carlisle forgot to bring the trophy so a handshake had to suffice! We are assured the Trophy will be 'in the post'.

Automatic Number Plate Recognition trials a success

An Automatic Number Plate Recognition (ANPR) machine can check up to 3,000 number plates per hour on vehicles travelling at up to 100 mph, and check them against the Police National Computer, DVLA databases, local intelligence databases, etc.



During the first phase of trials, ANPR helped police seize more than £100,000 in illegal drugs and recover over 300 stolen vehicles (with a value in excess of £2 million) and £715,000 in stolen goods. More than 3,000 people were arrested, the majority of arrests being for serious crimes. Results show an officer using APNR makes 10 times the arrests of an officer without.

The second phase is now underway with 23 police forces in England and Wales assessing the equipment up to December 2003. It is anticipated that the system will be launched nationally in summer 2004.

What's on reminder

12 January..... Safe Driving with a global manufacturing organisation.

9 February First Aid in the home and on the road.

8 March A typical day with the Moffat Mountain Rescue Team.

12 April *Garage visit to James Haugh, St Mary's St, Dumfries 7pm.

10 May Table Top Rally & AGM

14 June..... *Treasure Hunt (meet at Dock Park)

Events start 7:30pm at Dalston House Hotel, Dumfries except where marked*

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



Have you had your eyes checked recently? You owe it to yourself.

Disclaimer:

The views expressed in this news letter are those of the contributors and not necessarily those of the Editor, Group or the Institute of Advanced Motorists, to which the Group is affiliated.
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