



## IAM Skills Day at Croft by Bill Peck

The opportunity to legally drive your own car as fast as possible can only be taken on a racing circuit. IAM provide that opportunity with a series of Skills days which are advertised in the news sheets. These news sheets are regularly published on-line.

I went to the Croft Circuit in North Yorkshire in 2013 and enjoyed a really worthwhile day, taking into account that it is a two hour drive away from Peterborough, up the busy A1 and that numbers are limited for each Track day, so pre-booking is essential. When pre-booking you are allocated either a morning or afternoon session.

On arrival you are paired with another driver and one of the team of instructors. Each driver takes a turn to have about 12 to 15 minutes on the track with the instructor who guides you round the circuit advising on the best racing line to get the best out of your car.

Croft is quite a short track, only 2.1 miles in length, so you find yourself back where you started pretty quickly! There are two straights where overtaking is allowed, the corners are quite tight and demand good positioning and forward planning, with your eyes on "main beam!"

I had six sessions on the track, and gradually learned more about my car and myself, in terms of what I could do and how best to do it!

There were probably eight or ten cars on the track at any one time, so I had to be very alert and prepared to be overtaken by the more powerful machinery on the two straights. My picture shows me preparing to take the Hawthorn bend, a little rain on the surface and a nice bit of skid correction on the exit!



IAM run Track Skills Days at Croft, Thruxton, Mallory Park, Silverstone and Goodwood, with the prices varying according to venue. The day at Croft cost me £125(2013), which was a special rate, and for me a good day out. To learn more about what is on offer at

the track go onto the Croft Circuit web site. <http://www.croftcircuit.co.uk> and for further details of IAM Circuit based Skills Days go to <http://iam.org.uk/drivers/motorists-courses/driving-assessment/skills-days>

Extract from IAM Inform: Weekly News - Issue 56  
30/9/15

### Great feedback from recent Skills Day at Croft



Here is some excellent feedback from the IAM Skills Day which took place at Croft circuit on 23 September from attendee Kevin Linklater: "What a fantastic day at Croft: great instructors, great IAM members, great weather. This has helped so much to enjoy my riding safely. I could say lots more as I am still on a high from the experience. All the members performed with understanding to each other."

**Remainder of IAMS Group Meetings for 2015/16 and other information**

All meetings are on the first Thursday of each month at Peterborough Milton Golf Club starting at 8pm, unless otherwise stated.

November 5 <sup>th</sup>	News from the IAM National Conference
December 3 <sup>rd</sup>	Annual Buffet and Quiz
January	No Meeting
February 5 <sup>th</sup>	TBA
March 3 <sup>rd</sup>	AGM


The newly designed website (address at bottom of page) is now up and running, with kind thanks to Robin Sutton

**Feedback on Meetings This Year**May

Stuart Earle and Bill Peck shared with us their experience of the Masters Test, together with Andy McManus who was Stuart's examiner.

June

A warm welcome was given to Amanda Wells who is considering joining our group, and also to Tony, Jan and Richard from the Peterborough Motor Club.

The evening consisted of a drive to exercise your mind which was a drive around areas of Fletton, then Stanground to Ramsey Mereside into Thorney, through Eye and back to the club room for a buffet. Along the way there were clues to unravel, as well as driving questions to answer and road signs to decipher. All this and edible clues 

The trail took about 2 hours and was good fun, though in some places very challenging.

Many thanks and Well Done to Stuart and partner for such an innovative challenge and to Prue for organising the buffet

July

Maps and directions were provided by the Club Secretary to go for a Drive Out from the Peterborough Milton Golf Club. Members were invited (to take advantage of the lighter evening) to go for a drive with another member or guest as navigator/driver. This also provided a good opportunity for Associates to go on a run with a different Observer. Thanks to club secretary Leon for providing maps.

August

Ball and plate Low speed manoeuvring  
On a sunny evening in early August a group of around 15 gathered at The Golf Club. Our Treasurer Bill had procured the use of an electric golf cart for us to have some fun.

The Ball in the Plate entails securing a plate on the vehicle, placing a tennis ball on the plate and driving around a pre-set course whilst avoiding the cones which mark the course.

If the ball falls off you have to stop and retrieve it which adds to your time. In the past we have used a small car but this year it was the golf cart.

Brakes, maybe: visibility, excellent, if you move around the cockpit: safety features, NIL. Some participants wanted a test run on the golf cart and Prue disappeared completely, heading perhaps to tee off or Hole 19. Our regional

organizer Ian joined us for the evening and looked to have a competitive spirit. After two rounds of the course a winner was declared based on the fewest cones demolished and the fastest time. The evening was great fun which tested our skills! Many thanks to Bill, Sandy and Prue who organised the vehicle, course and prizes.

September

Motorway Driving: Lew Whittaker IAM Examiner and former Class 1 Police Driver gave an interesting presentation with slides and video footage, analysing likely causes of accidents. A group discussion followed including suggestions for safer driving.

October

A warm welcome was given to Johnathan Wilson who attended as a guest. Sandy Reid gave a short synopsis on the new Ultimate Driving Craft DVD by Chris Gilbert but due to a machine malfunction it was agreed to view the DVD at a later meeting.

**Events & Meetings 2016**

What would you like to do?

Please contact Prue: [pruelester@hotmail.com](mailto:pruelester@hotmail.com) with ideas for speakers for your monthly meetings or suggestions for events.



Anyone up for Tank Paintball?

**Words from the Editors:**

Visit the IAMs web site for some winter night reading on the following items:

<http://iam.org.uk>

Enter weekly news or the item you are searching for into the search bar:

This season's items of particular interest:

No drink, no doubt(2014)

Foggy Vision(2013)

Oil Checks(2013)

Winter driving campaign(2012)(Wheels in Winter)

As this will be the last newsletter of 2015, we wish you a season of safe autumn driving and with only 9 weeks to go a Happy Christmas and Prosperous New Year.



Please forward contributions articles, news clippings, photos for the next newsletter to:

Chrissy Emery([Chrissy.mre@gmail.com](mailto:Chrissy.mre@gmail.com)) or Marian Cross ([mariancrossstalk@gmail.com](mailto:mariancrossstalk@gmail.com)) by 5 January 2016 latest.



The Editors felt that this was a particularly relevant extract at this time of year.

## Why you should never drive with under a quarter of a tank of fuel.

Extract from Nene Living September issue

by Guy  
Walters



**A**RE YOU one of those drivers who likes to play the motoring equivalent of Russian Roulette with your car's fuel gauge? If so, you are far from alone.

It emerged yesterday that every year 827,000 of us ignore the helpful glow of the warning light, run out of fuel and — surprise, surprise — break down.

A survey carried out by an insurance firm revealed that a quarter of drivers believe they can eke out at least another 40 miles when the light is showing. Two million drivers even admitted to driving with the warning light on almost permanently, mainly in the hope of finding cheaper fuel.

Men are the biggest culprits, on average tending to believe that the car still has enough fuel for another 32 miles.

Women, more cautious, suspect the engine will conk out after 24

## Running out of petrol can ruin modern cars

miles. As a result, six out ten drivers who run out are from the more optimistic (make that 'more foolish') sex.

Running out of fuel is no laughing matter and can be far more serious than having to make either a sheepish call to the AA or a lonely trudge to the petrol station where you will be fleeced for a Jerry can. You are risking costly damage to your car, as well as putting yourself in danger.

In fact, the driving test should arguably involve being quizzed on the perils of running out of petrol rather than being made to reverse around a corner: under-35s were revealed as making up two-thirds of the drivers you will see standing glum, and vulnerable, by the roadside having exhausted their petrol.

So what are the risks and if you are a long way from a forecourt, what is the best way to conserve

the last drops?

The first thing to realise is that fuel gauges are not precise instruments. Even in the most modern and snazzy cars, the technology is relatively basic: the level in the tank is measured by a float, like the ballcock in a lavatory cistern.

The height of this float is then relayed to your gauge either electronically, or through the use of metallic strips and coils.

It explains why the level of petrol in your tank can fall or rise depending if your car is on a gradient. And it means that when your car tells you how many miles you have left in the tank, or that you are about to run out, it can only ever be a rough guide.

To add to the uncertainty, the distance that a car can travel after that light first pops up varies wildly. A Mercedes C-Class, for example, can cruise along for an average of 46 miles, whereas a Vauxhall Astra will more likely give up at 26 miles.

So it's best to head straight to the nearest pump. If you don't, because you are trying to nurse the car back to that garage near home where fuel costs a whole 2p less per litre, bear this in mind: exhausting your petrol can cause a lot of damage to your car and your wallet. Diesel drivers face an even higher bill.

'Running out can cause a lot more damage to diesel engines,' says Ray Sparrow, a mechanic for nearly 40 years whose garage, Autowork, is in Salisbury, Wiltshire. 'The bills can run into thousands. That may be good news for a garage, not for the driver.'

Without getting too technical, the seals, pumps and injectors in a diesel engine can be damaged by the engine drawing just on air, rather than a rich, oily mix of diesel and lubricant. 'You may just get away with it,' says Mr Sparrow, 'but you'll be causing expensive problems down the line.'

Petrol engines fare a little better running on empty, and are less likely to suffer severe damage. But there is little to be complacent about — even if you do have petrol in the boot, or get some from a garage, you may find the car still won't start.

The likelihood is that air will

have built up in the system, stopping the fuel moving from tank to engine and, in that case, you will need a mechanic to 'bleed' the system, much as one has to bleed a malfunctioning radiator at home. The net result is that you're not going anywhere fast.

Also, by relying on fuel from the bottom of a petrol tank, you risk clogging up your filters and pumps with sediment. 'Think of it as the bottom 10 per cent of a bottle of decent red wine,' says Mr Sparrow. 'It's not the stuff you want to drink, is it?'

Modern cars will suffer worse than a jalopy. As Mr Sparrow says, newer car systems are more sensitive and the tolerances much tighter.

There is a further chapter in this cautionary tale: the temporary effect, when the engine stops, on power steering and brakes. Neither works as you are

## If the engine cuts out, the steering goes

used to, which makes pulling over more difficult. 'The brakes will require a lot more pressure and the steering wheel will be like a massive heavy wrench,' says Mr Sparrow. His advice is to drive around with a minimum of a quarter of a tank of fuel: 'There's no point in saving £20 today, to have to spend £2,000 tomorrow.'

This is what to do if you still find yourself running on vapour.

Try to drive as 'fuel-efficiently' as possible. Maintain an even speed of around 40-50 mph if it's legal, and avoid sudden braking and acceleration. Look at your rev counter, and try to pick a gear that keeps the engine running between 2,000 and 3,000 rpm.

Don't be tempted to freewheel; you can't accelerate and could end up with points on your licence if caught by the police for not being in control of your vehicle. Moreover, most modern cars use less fuel when they are in gear as long as the accelerator is not depressed. This is because when you put the car into neutral, it will go into 'tick-over' mode (as if you were idling at some traffic lights), which uses more fuel.

Turning the car off when stationary will save fuel but only if you stop for more than a minute. Starting a car uses the equivalent of about a minute's worth of fuel with the engine at 2,500 revs.

Best of all, remember the Jerry can. Those spare five litres may not only save your face, but also the cost of your next holiday.



Here are a few essential contacts and information about group meetings to help you get the most out of your local group.

## JOIN US FOR AN EVENT

Date: Meetings take place on the first Thursday of every month (excluding January) at Peterborough Milton Golf Club and start at 8pm unless otherwise stated in the newsletter.

Directions Milton Ferry, Peterborough PE6 7AG (just off the A47)

➔ From east, exit A47 via slip road to Castor (the first junction to the west of the Nene Parkway interchange at junction 15). Turn right at the T junction. After 150 yards turn left towards Marholm (signposted Golf Club). Entrance is immediately on right.

➔ From west, leave A47 at the third exit of the roundabout (signposted Castor) where the single carriageway becomes dual. Go through Ailsworth and Castor. Just over the bridge crossing the A47 turn towards Marholm (signposted Golf Club). Entrance is immediately on right.



## Group contacts

### President

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Registered Group No 7101 • Charity No 1067966 • Affiliated to the Institute of Advanced Motorists

The Group keeps records of the membership on a database. This database is not available to outside parties and no details are passed to other organisations or persons. However, if you do not wish your name and address to be kept on this database you should contact the Membership Secretary.

### Events Secretary

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### Website Administrator

Robin Sutton

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### Vacant positions

Offers invited.  
Please contact the secretary for more information.

### Public Relations

### IAM Regional Operations

Manager

Andy Bolton

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## and finally.....Motoring Mirth

As she slid behind the wheel for her first driving lesson, the teenager could not contain her excitement.

'You need to make adjustments so the car is comfortable for you as the driver' her father said. 'Now, what's the first thing you should do?'

'Change the radio station' she replied.