

IAM
DRIVING ROAD SAFETY



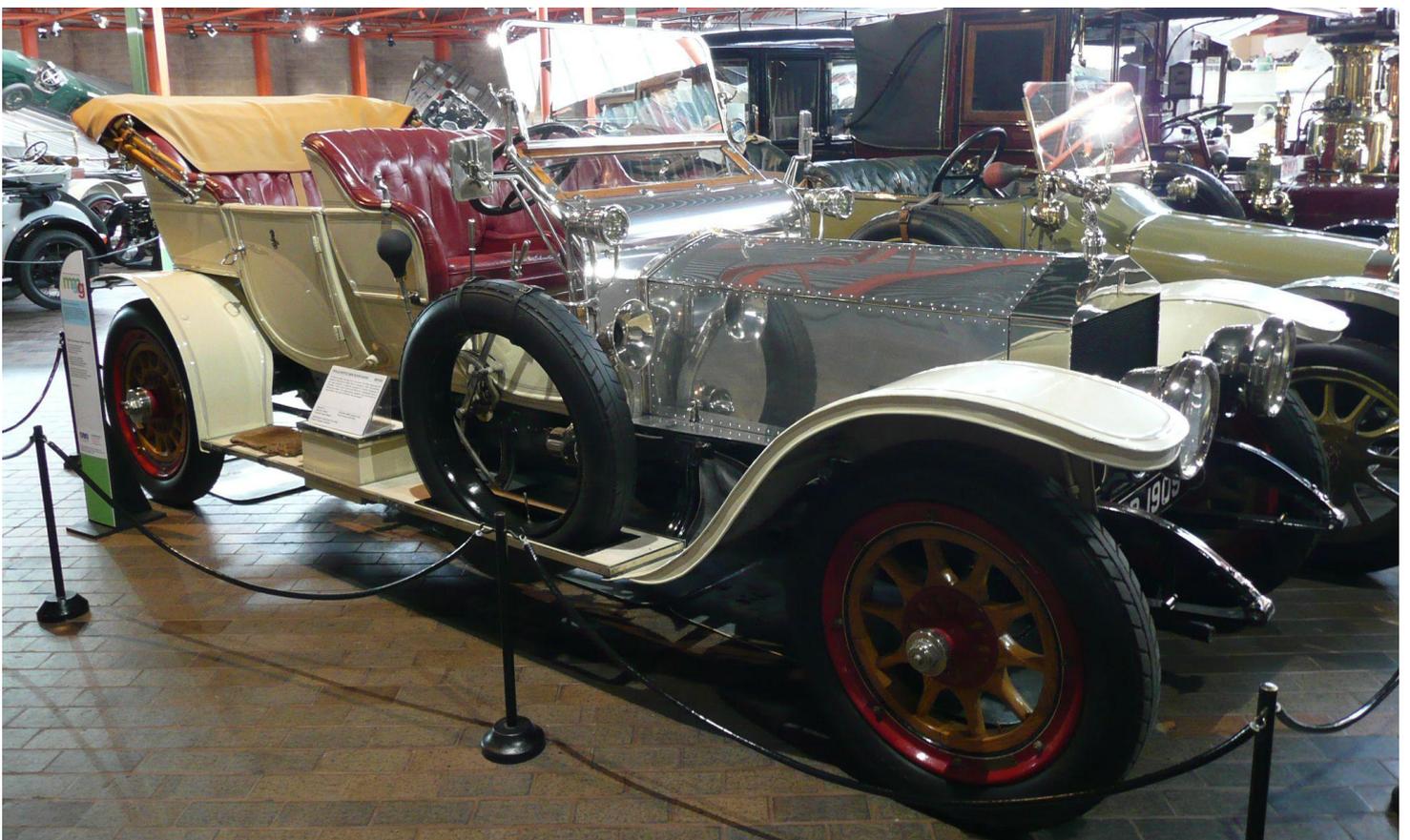
**TAUNTON GROUP OF
ADVANCED MOTORISTS
NEWSLETTER**

Number 117 December, 2010

ROLLS-ROYCE PHOTO GALLERY



1905 Rolls-Royce 10hp (see article on Page 38)



1909 Rolls-Royce Silver Ghost

TAUNTON GROUP OF ADVANCED MOTORISTS

NEWSLETTER

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DATA PROTECTION ACT

Members' details, i.e. names, addresses and telephone numbers, are kept on computer for convenience. This information will only be used to further the aims and objectives of the IAM and is only available to Committee Members BUT can be inspected at any suitable time provided just cause can be proven.

THE COMMITTEE

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Committee meetings (for Committee Members ONLY) are held at 7:30pm on the second Thursday of the month at Hatch Beauchamp Village Hall. If, as a Group Member, you need to raise any issue at Committee level, then please feel free to contact any Committee Member to put your views to the next Committee Meeting.

CONTENTS

- Cover Photo: Frank Richards on the Thruxton circuit in a Porsche Cayman (see story on Page 36)
- 2 **PHOTO GALLERY** – Early Rolls Royces (see also Page 38)
- 3 Photo: Frank Richards on the Thruxton circuit in a Renault single seater (see story on Page 36)
- 4 **THE COMMITTEE**
- 6 **EDITORIAL**
- 8 **FROM THE PRESIDENT**
- 10 **FROM THE CHAIRMAN**
- 13 **'STRAIGHT ON'**
- 17 **CALENDAR**
- 18 **GROUP OBSERVERS**
- 19 **MEMBERS' PAGE**
- 20 Inter Group Quiz, 14th September
- 22 Members' Meeting, 15th September
- 23 Annual General Meeting, 20th October
- 26 AGM Chairman's Award
- 27 Frankly speaking
- 28 Guardian Angel
- 29 One eyed Monster
- 31 Longest owned car
- 32 Letter to the Editor
- 33 **MEMBERS' CARS**
- 36 Thruxton
- 40 **FROM THE PAST**
- 41 **HIGHWAY CODE** - Mini Roundabouts
- 42 **MEET YOUR COMMITTEE MEMBERS**
- 43 **PHOTO GALLERY** – Early Rolls Royces (see also Page 38)

EDITORIAL

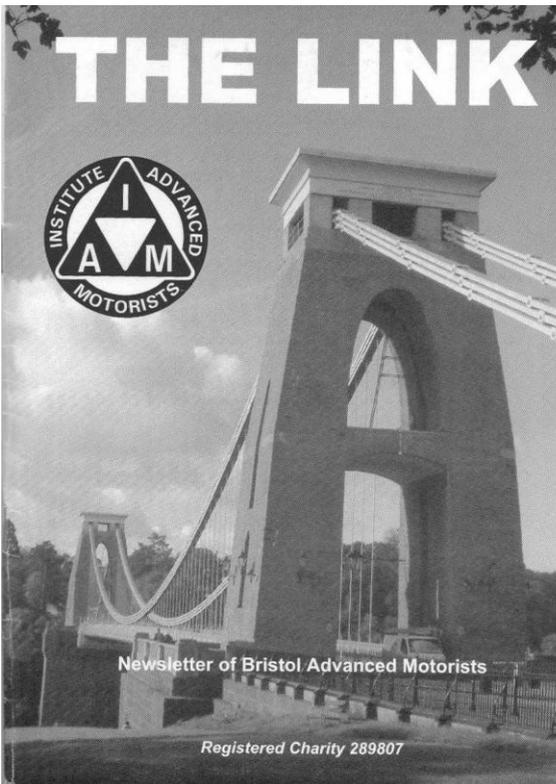
By John Gilbert

IT was at about this time last year that we were delighted to hear that the TGAM Newsletter had been judged to be runner up, equal with the Leeds group, in the national IAM group newsletter competition for 2009. The winner of the competition was the Skipton and Craven Group which produces a very professional newsletter indeed.

At this year's National Car Conference the winning newsletter was announced to be *The Link*, the newsletter produced by the nearby Bristol group. This newsletter sports a very impressive cover and is jam packed full with interesting articles. Bristol's Newsletter Editor, Paul Hunt, was at the conference to receive the award from IAM Chief Executive, Simon Best. Our congratulations go to Paul and his team.



Paul Hunt receives the award for best newsletter from Simon Best



Bristol's *The Link*, this year's winning newsletter

As for our own newsletter, hopefully, if all goes to plan, you will notice an improvement in the print quality of our winter issue. This should come about as a result of our selecting a new printer who will print directly from a Word file rather than printing a master and then copying it, as was done before. However this would be an appropriate time to thank both Frank Richards and the Heathfield Community School for providing us with an excellent printing service in the past.

For various reasons I have recently been taking a close look at the newsletters of our neighbouring IAM groups here in the south west. It was interesting to note that the content of those newsletters originating from the general membership was typically 15 to 20%. In our case the content supplied by our general membership is usually below 10%. This month it is zero, our already

overworked officers are having to do all of the work. Please do consider submitting articles, *Letters to the Editor*, etc., or this newsletter is in danger of being substantially slimmer and less interesting in the future.

As for the content of this month's issue, you will again find most of our regular monthly items. In my first issue as Editor, back in May, 2008, I included an article called **HIGHWAY CODE REFRESHER** which I had intended to continue in each issue. Unfortunately that didn't happen so I have rectified that this month. We do have a good ongoing programme of driver improvement at TGAM now, and this publication can certainly play a part in that. Hopefully from now on I will include some educational articles on some of the more controversial driving issues.

Another addition this month is the **FROM THE PAST** article. Again I hope that this will be a continuing item highlighting interesting events from the world of driving over the last century and would welcome contributions from the readership for this item. As this month's article is on the subject of Charles Rolls and his partnership with Henry Royce I have chosen early Rolls-Royces as the subject of this month's **PHOTO GALLERY**. The cars date from 1905 to 1912, the time of the Rolls-Royce partnership before Rolls' untimely death.

Another AGM has come and gone and I am sure that those of you who attended would agree that it was handled very professionally. There was a lot of good news items to report. Our ADT pass rate is very high, we are allocating Observers to Associates very quickly, within a couple of days, and we have an excellent ongoing training process for our Observers and our members. There is, however, one area of concern.

Our committee has been shrinking and the hoped for influx of new members at the AGM did not materialize. The result is that existing committee members, most of whom are also Observers, are doubling up on tasks; in fact one committee member has now taken on three roles. Now this just isn't fair and it is a situation which cannot be allowed to continue. On perusing the newsletters of nine IAM groups in the south west I discovered that the average number of officers in those groups is twelve, and they all have at least eleven. We currently have just seven. To paraphrase Ted Sorensen (John Kennedy's speech writer) who has sadly just passed away, "Now is the time not to ask not what my IAM group can do for me but what can I do for my IAM group".

The most critical vacant committee position at this time is that of Treasurer. If any of our members have even a minimal capability to do sums and keep records and could spare just a very few hours each month to attend one committee meeting and handle a very small number of transactions we would be very grateful for your help. The other vacant position is that of Events Coordinator for which the main duty would be to arrange speakers for our Members' Evenings and, perhaps, some events out in the field. In addition the roles of Secretary and Membership Secretary are both being performed by one person at the moment so any help there would also be appreciated. The committee is currently very thinly stretched. It would only take the loss of just one more committee member to present our group with a very real problem so please help if you can.

FROM THE PRESIDENT

By John Pentney, M.A.

FRANK RICHARDS

ONE of the first members of the Taunton Group I encountered when I joined in the early 1990s was Frank Richards. He was the Group's Treasurer and an Observer, roles in which he has faithfully continued until this year's AGM. He had also served as Chairman, having been a member of the Taunton Group virtually from its inception. Frank took me on one of my observed drives when I was preparing for my advanced test, and his advice was succinct and to the point. With his help and that of other observers, I soon passed the test and was shortly afterwards co-opted to the committee. Since then I have had regular contact with Frank and was always impressed with the professionalism he brought to his job of Treasurer. His style was always laid back, but this was symptomatic of his utter unflappability and quiet efficiency. His sage counsel in matters both financial and non-financial has helped to guide the Group over many years and is one of the keystones of our current success. His day job as Bursar of Monkton Heathfield Community School also benefited the Group as we had free use of rooms and equipment for committee meetings, Observer training course etc., plus Newsletter printing at cost price.

For family reasons, Frank has now uprooted himself and moved with his wife Lesley to Dover, and has necessarily had to relinquish his active role in the Group, but I'm sure he will continue to avidly follow our activities through the pages of this Newsletter. It would be quite remiss of me not to pay this sincere tribute to Frank's hard work on behalf of the Group and I wish him and Lesley every happiness in their new life together.



Frank Richards

For more Tributes see Frankly Speaking on Page 27

SENIOR OBSERVER BANNED FROM DRIVING!

FOUR years ago I was banned from driving for a period of six weeks following a cutting-up incident in Bristol. The cutting-up, plus some bone sawing, was performed by a team of surgeons at Bristol Royal Infirmary and my driving licence remains clean to this day. I was advised not to

drive for six weeks after discharge from hospital because of the long deep incision on my neck and chest – impact with a steering wheel in an accident would have been extra hazardous. Although it was not a legal ban, to have driven contrary to medical advice might have invalidated my insurance. Including the fortnight I was in hospital, the eight weeks I was unable to drive was one of the most frustrating in my life for I have always enjoyed driving, having had a car since I was 18, and enjoyed the other activities that car-mobility has facilitated.

Unless one lives in a big city with good public transport (and I prefer to take the train from Crewkerne to London for my quarterly medical appointments in Chelsea), an inability to drive can be a great handicap, limiting one's social life and hobbies. I would go so far as to say that a normal modern lifestyle in many ways requires one to drive as so much of the economic infrastructure like out-of-town shopping facilities puts the non-car driver at a distinct disadvantage. Without the car, enabling many people to commute to work in nearby towns, many country villages would not function as viable communities since agriculture, once the mainstay of the rural economy, now employs very few people compared with the past.

Did I drive during my ban? On two occasions I had to manoeuvre the car into a tight off-road parking space for my wife who was acting as my chauffeur, since, as she would readily admit, parking in confined spaces is not her forte. Being driven by my wife meant that I had to be a tactfully silent Observer, for I find that being an IAM Observer means that in a sense I'm always an Observer when travelling as a car passenger, even if it's not a formal IAM training drive. Once an Observer, always an Observer. On other occasions I had to rely on the bus to get into Taunton. The main advantage of a bus is that you don't have to find somewhere to park it, but the timetable on one's local route is not always convenient; and bus fares are relatively expensive for short journeys, even if after the morning peak you can buy a bargain all-day ticket which is all very well if you want to ride around on buses for the rest of the day. Unless the government withdraws the concession as part of its spending review, I shall qualify for my bus pass next year, but I doubt if I shall make much use of it.

When my medical driving ban at last came to an end, it was with a great sense of relief and renewed freedom that I found myself back in one of my favourite places – behind the wheel of my car. One can understand why some elderly people are reluctant to give up their cars, even though their driving ability has declined.

As responsible motorists, we IAM members should unapologetically celebrate the freedom and almost limitless horizons that motoring offers. My life has been enriched by the ability to visit many beautiful and interesting places that would be difficult to reach by public transport; and it was the car that enabled me to conduct my long-distance courtship of the lady who is now my wife when I lived at Langport and she at Winchester.

FROM THE CHAIRMAN

DIRECT FROM THE DRIVING SEAT.....OR CHAIR, MAN !

By Kevin Grose

The Chairman's Report given at the 29th AGM of TGAM, held on 20th October, 2010, is presented here in its entirety

THIS is my second annual report as your Chairman of the Taunton Group of Advanced Motorists and I hope it will be accepted as an accurate, true and valid indication of the current activities, aims and results of the Group to date. The Group continues to thrive, survive and aims to continue to improve within the present economic climate.

However, on the negative side, we now have less Committee Members than in 2009. We have attended fewer events than in 2009. We have had less income from subscriptions, no social fund money this year and our Gift Aid subscriptions have not been processed yet. We have slightly more to pay for our IAM Group Insurance and our Newsletter costs are slightly up.

BUT and it is a big BUT – on the more positive side, you will see from the presented accounts that we have spent less money on equipment and books than in 2009. We have spent less on postage; managed to get a slight reduction on hall fees and spent less on Conferences, Training, Telephone, Travel Expenses and Refreshments. We have maintained our overall number of Members. We have supplied 12 entertaining Members' Evenings. We have supplied at those Members' Evenings FREE tea, coffee, biscuits, parking, leaflets, advice, and information. Our Group Observers are maintaining and improving the level and standard of guidance being offered from the Group. Our Observers are being better trained. Our newsletter continues to impress as a quality product. Our Committee Members continue to supply a fairly efficient level of service to our Members. We continue to maintain and forge new links throughout the many partners within the Somerset Road Safety Partnership and we will continue to progress and achieve where ever we can. Not too bad, I think!

Who do we thank for all this?

Firstly – all the Committee, Frank Richards – Founder member, 32 years service, former Chairman, Treasurer and Observer/Team Leader/Trainee Senior Observer; Bill Coltham – Chief Senior Observer – for all his tireless work in respect of our Observers and processing new Associates; John Gilbert – for his immense commitment to our Newsletter and for being an Observer/Trainee Senior Observer; Alan Thomson – taking on the role of Training Officer and for being an Observer / Trainee Senior Observer; Serena Lonton – our Membership Secretary since middle 1990's and for processing all those new applicants and Faye Markham – who runs

the "cafe" at every Member's Evening and for being our ONLY lady Observer.

The above details only mention some of the activities undertaken to keep this Group going as they all do so much more than most people ever realise.

Secondly – Our Group President, John Pentney – for being an active President, continuing Group Observer, regular Members' Evening supporter and regular Committee attendee.

Thirdly – All our Group Observers – those already mentioned above and the following: Colin White (Senior Observer & Team Leader); Guy Denton; Russ Williams; Ron Holdom; Steve Selby along with our two "paused" Observers – Tudor Humphreys and George Parker. We have one new Trainee Observer – Allan Wellwood. Without all these dedicated volunteer Observers within our Group, there would be NO Group as we would not be able to process any new Associates – no new Associates, NO Group! I thank you all.

Fourthly – YOU, the Group Members – without your continued support and presence, there would be no need for a Group. We are here because you make an effort to support what we do – YOU turn up for our Members' Evenings; Classic Car Show; "Reversing" Evening, that rambling idiot Chairman, etc., I sincerely thank you all for being there.

Lastly, I just need to thank all our Guest Speakers and Presenters over the last year. These include: Driving Standards Agency; St John's Ambulance; Taunton Jaguar; Peter Malim on Bee Keeping; Paul Willet on TGAM Website; Jenny Thomas; Ken Crane; and many more – even some of our own Committee Members presenting some evenings

It has been another interesting year for the IAM at a National level. We have many new products, leaflets and new avenues to follow! You know the IAM cater for cars, commercials and motorcycles but now they cater for cyclists and scooter riders. The IAM are also progressing within the media circus with many new links and partnerships: Fiat/Alfa Romeo for one; IAM Drive and Survive win top national award; IAM Surety Insurance Company; IAM Track Days; IAM & Electric cars; Arsenal's young Football Team; the AA; Halfords; National Tyres; Garmin Satnav; MBNA/ IAM credit card; plus much, much more.

Our involvement with our local Somerset Road Safety Partnership and the Max Control Contest for under 25 year olds – the final winner was Jos Bennett – not only did he win a brand new car he also passed his IAM Advanced Driving Test with us – congratulations to both Jos and Ron Holdom (TGAM Group Observer) for guiding Jos towards his advanced level driving standard. We also processed many other youngsters (under 25) through some of the IAM process, hopefully making them somewhat safer when they again venture out onto our roads. If one youngster can put one thing into practice and avoid an incident, then that's one less casualty on our roads – JOB DONE!

So, I hope you will all realise that we are doing the very best we can with the very little that we have got. We will continue to try and improve things whilst ensuring a value for money policy for all our Members. There are many things we want to do but they all cost money – a lot of money. There are some things we HAVE to do that will cost us money and there are things we will need to do that are going to cost us more money and this is the point that I need to inform you all that we will need to raise our Group Full Membership fees from the Oct. 2011 renewal date from £5.00 presently to £7.50. The Associate Membership fees will not alter and remain at £10.00 per year. The Taunton Group has one of the lowest Group Membership fees throughout the whole of the IAM and our fees have not been raised for many years. Some of our Members want more from us and we can only supply these needs by increasing some of our fees. I sincerely hope that we are worth the extra £2.50 per FULL Member we are asking for, from next Oct. 2011 renewal date and that you will support this required increase. I think this is the fairest way to introduce this requirement as it does not affect anything for this current ongoing year. Thank you.

I hope I don't need to say any more at the moment. If you were unable to attend the AGM then please take a minute to look through everything and if there are any matters you are not happy with then please contact me and I will try and answer your queries.

You may also find other comments and/or reports on the AGM so please read them all as they may contain the answers you are looking for – if not, then get in touch.

DECEMBER MEMBERS' EVENING

Presents

A CHRISTMAS EVENING

**Wednesday, 15th December at 7:30 pm
at Hatch Beauchamp Village Hall**

'STRAIGHT ON'

By Bill Coltham

The Chief Senior Observer's Report given at the 29th AGM of TGAM, held on 20th October, 2010, is presented here in its entirety

Opening

I am now starting my third year as your Chief Senior Observer, having been elected by Observers when we agreed to set up the post in May, 2008. For a healthy Group, I do believe that the occupant of this post should be elected by Observers regularly, so have offered myself up for election, with no takers as yet. I will stand down next year to give Observers an opportunity to elect another if they wish.

What is the role of the Chief Senior Observer in this Group?

- *Manage the Observers Teams through the Senior Observers.*
- *Provide support and help to Senior Observers and Observers.*
- *Troubleshoot problems unable to be dealt with by the Senior Observers.*
- *Arrange training for Observers*
- *Arrange re-qualification for teams.*
- *Encourage consistency.*
- *Ensure appropriate record keeping.*
- *Be a link between the teams and the committee.*
- *Provide adequate equipment and training aids.*
- *Encourage Associates to train to become Observers.*
- *Undertake own Associate Drives and Check Drives.*
- *Act as Team Leader in the absence of a Senior Observer.*
- *Attend training and activities to enhance personal development.*
- *Attend Group publicity activities and events.*

In addition, I allocate Associates to Observers, through a system agreed with the Membership Secretary. This keeps me in touch with what is going on in the Group, and with issues of Observers training needs. More later.

Past Observers

Two Observers have left us this past year, both for personal reasons. I believe it is healthy for a certain amount of movement to occur in any group, as people change their interests and move on in their lives.

May I thank Tudor Humphreys, and Frank Richards for their commitment and enthusiasm during their time with us? All have given sterling service as Observers, and many Associates have reason to be very grateful for their diligence and attention. Observer George Parker is still recovering from illness and remains on our books although he is not active as an Observer.

Current Observers

We have twelve current Observers, with one joining us this past year. Associate Alan Wellwood is under training. Two Seniors, Colin, who re-qualified this time last year, and myself, who will need to take a local re-qualification next year.

Observer Teams

The two teams are led by a Senior Observer or a Trainee Senior Observer. Colin White continues to lead the West team. Frank Richards led the East Team during the year, but was replaced by Trainee Senior Observer Alan Thomson in recent weeks.

Each Associate undergoes a Pre Test Assessment Drive with the appropriate Team Leader before being advised to apply for their test, so both Colin and Frank have, in addition to their personal list, and I too, have done a number of such drives.

Observers have been occupied for most of their time during the year. Some have had more than one Associate at a time. Team Leaders have been undertaking other tasks such as Pre Test Drives, or have helped out with a 'slow learner'. I keep a check on what is happening at any one time, as far as possible, and can offer advice where there is a need for standardisation.

A majority of observers are due for a re-qualification test in 2011. I am visiting them now to check standards and offer training advice to those who may need it, to ensure we don't have any surprises at the re-qualification drive.

One Observer took the Senior Observers Test during the year, but sadly, just missed passing. I am most grateful for the feedback from the Staff Examiner, but am more grateful to our Observer who put himself on the line for the Group, knowing that a failure might occur. We will support him for a second stab in a few months.

My grateful thanks to Colin and Frank for their commitment and to all Observers for their support, and the Best of Luck to Alan for the future.

Statistics

During the previous AGM year, we observed 38 Associates during the October to October period. In that time we had 19 ADT passes.

We expected a drop in new Associates this year and it has proven to be true. Our figures show 28 new Associates on the books during that period, with a total of 14 passes. Of course this is not a 50% pass rate as we still have 18 from both the previous and this year who have still to take the ADT or who have decided not to take the test at all. So we have carried out drives for a total of 46 Associates this year, compared to 38 last year - a big increase. Many of this group have still to take their ADT.

There have been no failures in that time but several Associates have moved on without taking a test, or who have put their drives on hold

whilst they have 'gone to university' or other reasons. They will have moved on with all the experience and skills of their observers under their belts and will be better and safer drivers because of it.

There seems to be an increase in the number of Associates who pay the money for the SFL, but who do not complete. A few of the reasons in this Group include, going to university, selling the car, having six points on a licence, just taking the course to retain a licence before going for a DLA medical, and not having an Observer on your doorstep. As the ages of new Associates goes up, there is clearly going to be more effort needed to be given by Associates and Observers alike, with drives numbering in the 20's and changes of Observers being required. Something the IAM HQ chaps/esses need to address.

We don't keep records of ages of Associates, but anecdotally we can see an increase in older drivers, with associated driving needs, and this is causing a change in the way we have to respond.

Drive Checks

Changes in the way that HQ operate Drive Checks mean that we have had only one this year. We had carried out a couple of local, informal drives for potential Associates, but we have lost a potential source of interest being generated for a local Group. There also needs some re-thinking by HQ too.

Max Control

A new departure from previous years has been our involvement in Max Control scheme. Run by the Somerset Road Safety Partnership, it was a competition for young drivers we were involved by our Observers undertaking a number of observed drives by the participants.

*Five TGAM Observers were involved for a total of 14 drives. Our Chairman, **Kevin Grose**, undertook the considerable administration and made numerous phone calls and made appointments for the participants. A great deal of work was involved. The winner, Jos Bennett, went on to take the SFL and passed his ADT.*

Training Matters, and it does.

***Trainee Senior Observer Alan Thomson** is our Training Officer, working with me to run our own courses for Observers, and for Members. He is also managing the new training scheme that we have introduced for new Observers, of which Associate Alan Wellwood is currently undergoing. Observer Steve Selby is a graduate of our scheme and is now Observing Associates.*

I have recently taken part in a Regional Scheme for Senior Observers and am now 'qualified' to be part of Andy Poulton's 'Flying Squad' of Regional Trainers.

Training Events

We have run four events for Observers and for Members during the past year.

A two part evening course for Night Driving, which was very well received, an Observers training evening on Styles of Training, and a Reversing evening for all. In addition, we have injected driving issues into the Members evenings at Hatch Beauchamp Village Hall and kept the purpose of it all, Better Driving, to the forefront with Members.

It is interesting to note that training is now being accepted as realisation creeps in that we need to keep up to date with driving issues, and our pass record (100%) lends some support to the thought that our standard of Observing has steadily improved.

Again, may I thank all our hard working Observers for their support and enthusiasm this past year. And also our Examiners, the Andys, the Wares, Rogers and Richards and all in between who have always given superb service, advice and support whenever we have asked.

And finally

As last year, I would like to make a special comment about one of our Observers.

Always very busy, happy to observe any number of Associates at any one time, this Observer is the mainstay of our dedicated team. He has an encyclopaedic knowledge of advanced driving, is keen to push his Associates to the point of passing the ADT at a high level, and runs his team with increasing dedication.

What the Group would do without him, I don't know! Thanks, Colin.

JANUARY MEMBERS' EVENING

Presents

TERRY BEALE

Road Traffic Incident Investigator

**Wednesday, 19th January at 7:30 pm
at Hatch Beauchamp Village Hall**

CALENDAR

All displays, events and talks, etc., are always open to you as Members, your family and friends. We welcome as many new faces as possible to come and join us. We endeavour to make sure that full details are made available in each Newsletter. The latest news on events can be found on the up to date Events page of the Group Website at www.tgam.org.uk or by contacting any of the Committee Members (please see Page 4).

MEMBERS' EVENINGS ARE HELD EVERY THIRD WEDNESDAY OF THE MONTH AT HATCH BEAUCHAMP VILLAGE HALL, TA3 6SG, AND ARE OPEN TO ALL MEMBERS AND THEIR FAMILY, FRIENDS AND NEIGHBOURS, FROM 7:30 PM TO 9:30 PM.

POP ALONG AND SEE WHAT WE ARE ALL ABOUT OR HAVE A LOOK ON: www.tgam.org.uk

DECEMBER

4	Sa	12:00 pm	TGAM Christmas Luncheon at Oake Manor Golf Club
9	Th	7:30 pm	Committee Meeting (Committee Members only)
15	W	7:30 pm	Members' Evening – A Christmas Evening

JANUARY 2011

13	Th	7:30 pm	Committee Meeting (Committee Members only)
19	W	7:30 pm	Members' Evening–Road Traffic Incident Investigator

FEBRUARY

10	Th	7:30 pm	Committee Meeting (Committee Members only)
16	W	7:30 pm	Members' Evening – Rowes Honda (to be confirmed)

MARCH

10	Th	7:30 pm	Committee Meeting (Committee Members only)
16	W	7:30 pm	Members' Evening - Shelterbox
31	Th		IAM Track based Skills Day at Silverstone

APRIL

14	Th	7:30 pm	Committee Meeting (Committee Members only)
20	W	7:30 pm	Members' Evening – Truck Driving (to be confirmed)

MAY

10	Tu		IAM Track based Skills Day at Pembury
12	Th	7:30 pm	Committee Meeting (Committee Members only)
18	W	7:30 pm	Members' Evening

JUNE

9	Th	7:30 pm	Committee Meeting (Committee Members only)
15	W	7:30 pm	Members' Evening
29	W		IAM Track based Skills Day at Knockhill

GROUP OBSERVERS

CHIEF SENIOR OBSERVER

Bill Coltham 01297 631818

TEAM WEST **SENIOR OBSERVER** **& TEAM LEADER**

Colin White 01823 257196

OBSERVERS

Guy Denton
Kevin Grose
Faye Markham
Russ Williams

TEAM EAST **TRAINEE SENIOR OBSERVER** **& TEAM LEADER**

Alan Thomson 01460 55919

TRAINEE SENIOR OBSERVER

John Gilbert

OBSERVERS

Ron Holdom
George Parker (**PAUSED**)
John Pentney
Steve Selby
Allan Wellwood (**TRAINEE**)

Group Observers must be fully paid up Taunton Group Members AND fully paid up National IAM members at ALL times to carry out your vital Observer roles. There are NO exceptions. You must always check that your Associate has an up to date membership card before departing on any observed drives. Please try to make and maintain contact with your new Associates, and listen to any concerns or fears they may have. When Associates pass their Advanced Driving Test, PLEASE inform your Team Leader as soon as possible as we have a duty to keep accurate and up to date records. All new Associate Members are normally teamed up with a conveniently placed Observer. If you have or encounter any problems please contact our Chief Senior Observer, Bill Coltham, or the Group Chairman.

TGAM & LOCAL DRIVING INSTRUCTORS

The following IAM & TGAM members are Driving Standards Agency/ Approved Driving Instructors:

Guy Denton 01984 633467 also a TGAM Qualified Observer
Tudor Humphreys 01823 277353
Nigel Steady 01278 722944

Members and/or enquirers must establish their own facts and details when contacting a Driving Instructor. If any other IAM & TGAM Full Member Driving Instructors wish to be on the above list, then please contact the Group Secretary or the Newsletter Editor. (Note: You MUST remain FULL IAM & TGAM members at all times.)

MEMBERS' PAGE

ADVANCED DRIVING TEST PASSES

CONGRATULATIONS to the following who have recently passed their Advanced Driving Tests.

Spencer Modica
Geoff Beechey
Shirley Gover
Tony Hawkins

OBSERVED BY

Guy Denton
Alan Thomson
Ron Holdom
John Gilbert

NOTE: If you have passed the test recently but your name is not on the above list please make sure that you inform Serena Lonton, the Membership Secretary. Also, in a change from our previous procedure, we would, in future, like to present successful candidates with their pass certificates at one of our Members' Evenings.

MEMBERSHIP MATTERS

By Serena Lonton

JUST a little update – we have had a very good number of membership renewals since 1st October, so as it stands we have 115 fully paid up members with 52 who have not yet renewed their membership from last year. Included in the 115 are 4 new members who have joined TGAM.

If you have decided not to renew your membership, it would be a great help if you could let me know. I will then take your name off the Group mailing list and you will not be troubled further.

If however you would like to renew your membership, please complete the renewal form which was enclosed with your September newsletter and send it back to me with your cheque for £5.00 as soon as possible. This will prevent your membership from lapsing, and guarantee that you continue to receive our superb newsletter, which I am sure you will agree is always a very good read. Many thanks for your continued support.

THE MEMBERSHIP REGISTER

THE following have recently joined the group. We hope you enjoy your association with the Taunton Group and we look forward to welcoming you to our meetings, events and activities.

	<u>TOWN</u>	<u>LEVEL</u>
Robert Leadbeater	Ashill	Associate
Paul Youd	Monkton Heathfield	Associate
Michael Hawkins	Ferndown	Associate
Rina Cameron	Taunton	Associate
Barry Farmer	Taunton	Full Member
Russell Pearce	Stoke St. Mary	Associate
James Hickman	Stoke St. Gregory	Full Member
Roderick Hastings	Bathpool	Associate
Derek Hearl	Tiverton	Associate

INTER GROUP QUIZ, 14th SEPTEMBER

By John Gilbert

UNFORTUNATELY, due to holidays and other commitments, I was the only member of last year's quiz team to be available to take part in this year's competition. This meant a last minute plea to our membership for help. Many thanks to Member Beth Webb and brand new Associate Member Paul Youd for agreeing to come forward at the very last minute.

Having learned my lesson last year about allowing enough time to drive to Bath I arranged to meet my team mates at an early hour. Knowing the roads between here and Bath rather well, Beth navigated while I did the driving. As we set off I was very impressed to see my team mates warming up their brain cells with the aid of a deck of Trivial Pursuit cards.

Arriving in plenty of time I was pleased to see that, unlike last year, we were expected this year and a table had been prepared for us. After settling down at our table our first task was to decide which of the ten categories we would pick as our joker. We each selected our three most favoured categories. The only category which we all selected was round 4, the geographic questions so obviously that would be when we would play our joker.



The TGAM team, Paul Youd, John Gilbert and Beth Webb
(Photo by Pat Hemmens)

Our team got off to a very shaky start, our score of 4 out of 10 for the "Misnomers" category putting us well and truly into last place. It was time for some morale boosting and sure enough our performance improved for the "Once upon a Time" category. We even did much better than we expected in the "Sport" category.



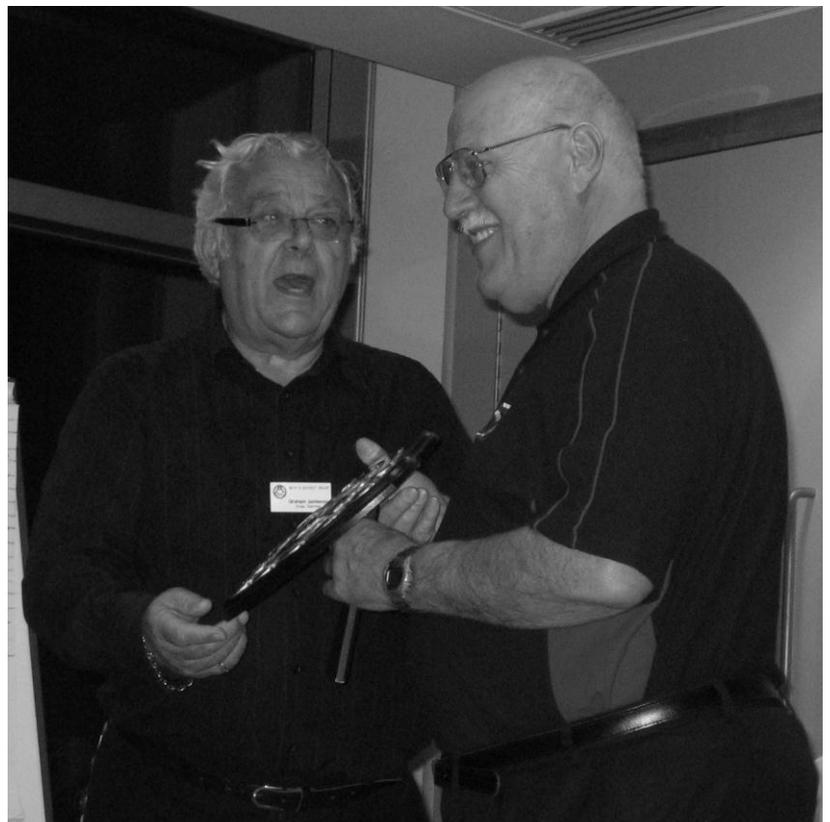
The winning Weston & Mendip team, Dave Gough (Chief Observer), Gary James (Chairman) and Ken Crane (Vice Chairman & Course Coordinator)

Next came "Where in the World" and time to play our joker. Our selection paid off, after several minutes of intense concentration we scored a clean sweep, a solid 20 points, and shot into the lead. In fact we were the only team to score a maximum 20 points in one round. Sadly our lead was short lived and, after the "Car Stuff" and "It's Only Natural" rounds we had dropped to second place.

By now it was a very tight three horse race between Bath, Weston and ourselves, with Bristol a distant fourth. Despite scoring a consistent row of nines, after the end of the "Eat, Drink and be Merry" and "Art & Literature" rounds we found ourselves back down in third position but still very close to the leaders.

The penultimate round, "TV & Film" found us clawing our way back into second place with a victory still very much on the cards. However the final round, a visual round featuring aerial views of famous places saw us dropping back into third place. After a very tight contest Weston & Mendip were the winners with 98 points, Bath second with 96 points, Taunton third with 95 points and Bristol bringing up the rear with 78 points.

The contest was very well run indeed by Ray Robbetts, Bath's secretary. As winners, Weston & Mendip will be hosting the competition next year.



Weston & Mendip's Chief Observer, Dave Gough, receives the trophy from Bath's Chairman, Graham Jamieson

MEMBERS' MEETING, 15th SEPTEMBER

By John Gilbert

ALTHOUGH most of our evening talks concentrate on various aspects of cars and driving we do occasionally feature one of our own members, many of whom have very interesting backgrounds in other fields. So it was at our September meeting when advanced driver Peter Malim spoke to us on the subject of beekeeping.

Perhaps in order to keep us alert and on our toes, Peter introduced each topic of his fascinating talk with a multiple choice question such as "How many bees do you think live in a hive?" or "How far do you think a bee roams from its hive when searching for pollen?".

The members were very active in taking part in Peter's quizzes and were fascinated by his very comprehensive presentation. It was

then time to take our usual refreshment break.

After the interval Peter showed us many interesting exhibits which he had brought along with him. These included many parts of hives but not, much to everybody's disappointment, his beekeeper's suit which Peter had forgotten to bring, or so he claimed.

Amongst the audience were several amateur beekeepers; I am sure that they obtained much useful information from Peter's talk. If any of you have interests, skills or careers that might be of interest to our group and would like to give a presentation at one of our Members' Evenings then please do let us know.



Peter Malim, OBE



A jar of Peter's excellent honey

Peter Malim, OBE is the Vice Chairman of the Quantock Division of the Somerset Beekeepers' Association. He worked for the Ministry of Defence for about 35 years and was awarded his OBE, in particular, for his role in the Procurement Department during operations in Iraq and Afghanistan. Peter also helps his wife in her work running the highly respected Labrador Rescue Trust from their home in Wick.

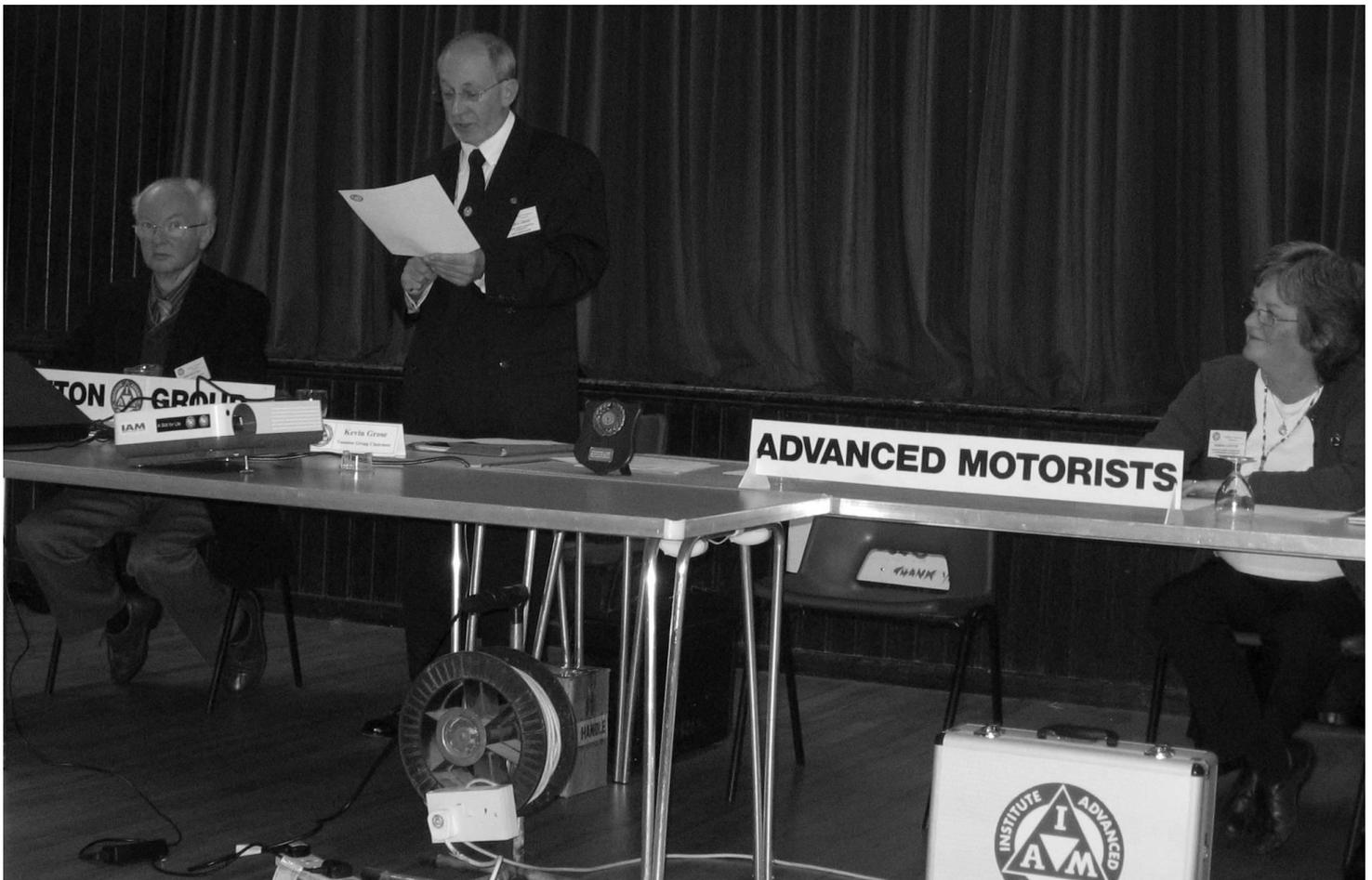
ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING, 20th OCTOBER

By John Gilbert

THE first half of the October Members' Meeting was taken up by the Annual General Meeting. A number of visitors were welcomed including Andy Ware, IAM Examiner, Ray Robbets from the Bath & District Group and Gary James and Stella Pickering from the Weston & Mendip Group. Taunton Group Members Ron Blake, Jude & Keith Hammond, Lorna Head, Ron Holdom, Brian & Alice Howe, Tony Hucker, Andrew Mayes, Julia Steer, David Walton, Alan Wellwood, Geoff Worby were then welcomed, as were all others in attendance.

Apologies had been received from Richard Furneaux, IAM Regional Coordinator, the Bristol Advanced Motorists Group, David Perkins of the Camelot Group, Andy Poulton, IAM Staff Examiner, the Exeter & Torbay Group, Rina Cameron & Jim Newman of the Somerset Road Safety Partnership, Stuart Bullock of RoSPA and group members Kerry Dougal, Janet Franklin, Elizabeth Gibbs, Henry Haslam, David Ledger, Lesley Leeds, Kirsty Mayes, John Miles, Ray Scott, Mary Piper, Maureen Shearlaw, Steve Slyfield, Colin White, Russ Williams, and Paul Youd.

Proposers and seconders for the approval of the 2009 AGM minutes were then requested and obtained, and the minutes signed off as an accurate account of that meeting.



The Top Table – John Pentney (President), Kevin Grose (Chairman) and Serena Lonton (Membership Secretary)

Kevin Grose then presented the Chairman's Report. The full text of that report can be seen in **FROM THE CHAIRMAN** on Pages 10 to 12 of this issue.

In Frank Richards' absence, due to his relocation, Kevin also read out the Treasurer's report which was duly approved. The balance on 30th September was £3697.16 compared to £3207.12 one year earlier. The increase in funds was largely accounted for by a reduction in the purchase of books and equipment this year although general costs had increased somewhat.

This was followed by the election of officers. Our President, John Pentney, briefly took over the meeting for the election of Chairman. Kevin Grose was unanimously re-elected. At this point Kevin took over the meeting again and Serena Lonton was unanimously elected to the position of Secretary. Faye Markham and John Gilbert were nominated for the position of Treasurer but both politely, or not so politely, declined to stand.

The official business of the AGM being completed a number of other speakers took the floor. First up was Andy Ware, our local examiner, who, as usual, had some interesting and amusing anecdotes to relate.

Next came a presentation by Bill Coltham, our Chief Senior Observer, on the year's activities within the Observer body. The full text of that report can be seen in the **'STRAIGHT ON'** column on Pages 13 to 16 of this issue.

Finally a couple of awards were announced. Firstly Kevin presented the Chairman's Award to Serena Lonton for her long service as Membership Secretary, and a full account of Kevin's comments can be seen on Page 10 of this issue.

Finally the Chief Senior Observer's award was made to Colin White (in his absence) for his outstanding work as an Observer, his enthusiasm and his encyclopaedic knowledge. For more comments on this award please see Page 16 of this issue.

Following a refreshment break Kevin introduced the speaker for the evening, Dr. James Hickman of the Somerset Accident Voluntary Emergency Service (SAVES). Dr. Hickman explained that he had passed the IAM Advanced Driving Test in 1993 and had now just joined the Taunton Group as a Full Member. He is a General Practitioner based in North Curry and first volunteered for SAVES in 1998.



Dr. James Hickman of the Somerset Accident Voluntary Emergency Service

Dr. Hickman started his presentation with some history of various care organisations. The origins of immediate care doctors go back to 1774. At this time the Royal Humane Society was started by two doctors, William Hawes and Thomas Cogan who promoted the new technique of resuscitation, particularly for saving people who had apparently drowned in rivers. In 1967 Dr. Kenneth Easton founded Road Accident Aftercare (RAAC) based in North Yorkshire. SAVES, one of the first local organizations was formed by two doctors in Frome in 1971 and made its first call on 2nd August 1972. The national organization, of which SAVES is a part, is known as The British Association for Immediate Care (BASICS) and was formed in 1977.

In the 1980s paramedics began to appear and there was some question as to whether organisations such as SAVES and BASICS were still required. However there has recently been a rejuvenation of SAVES and there are currently six specially trained doctors in the organization throughout Somerset together with some paramedics.

Both Trauma and medical emergencies are dealt with. The doctors are responsible for organization and scene management. Their duties include triage, discharge, liaising with local hospitals and acting as medical commanders. When they are acting as medical commanders they work alongside Ambulance Commanders to manage the medical resources at the scene and are not allowed to actually touch the patients.

Green lights on the tops of cars denote a medical practitioner. However the organization's doctors now use blue lights. The doctors are required to hold either the IAM or RoSPA (silver or gold) qualification, to complete a one week ambulance service driving course, to take a theory and road signs examination and to undergo 3-5 yearly assessment drives. Driving on blue lights allows the doctors to break the speed limit (when necessary), treat red traffic lights as a give way and go to the left or right of keep left and keep right bollards. However all other traffic regulations have to be complied with in the usual way.

SAVES doctors are responsible for the recruitment of and managing the training of immediate care doctors. Typically the doctors will be carrying about £6,000 of equipment in their cars.

SAVES is a registered charity (charity number 264354). Donations may be made online at <http://www.charitychoice.co.uk/> or by cheque to Dr. Shirley Gover at Ford Farm, Bicknoller, TA4 4EH.

Closing Date for the March, 2011 issue of the TGAM Newsletter is Friday, 4th February.

All contributions would be very welcome.

All items should be sent to "The Editor" at ed@tgam.org.uk or, if you do not have e-mail, by mail to John Gilbert at The Coach House, Stockland Bristol, Bridgwater, TA5 2QA.

THE ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING CHAIRMAN'S AWARD

Shown below is a statement which was read out by our Chairman, Kevin Grose, at the Annual General Meeting held on 20th October

"This is the third year for this award; in 2008, it was me, in 2009 it was Frank Richards and this year, it's...! Right, before I announce the winner for this year, I must say it does not get any easier to choose the most appropriate and deserving person. I think everybody should get an award for all their time and effort devoted to the Taunton Group.

However, there are no written criteria – there is no points system – no voting system but the clue is in the award title – it's the CHAIRMAN'S award. Maybe in 2008 it went to the right person, only you can answer that. In 2009 I believe the award definitely went to the right person especially as Frank has now fully retired to Kent but, rest assured, I did not let him go until he had handed it over!

So – 2010 – who has won this year? This person has always been there working away in the background for many years now. Without this member's continuing input, the Group would have major problems every year. This person is now one of the longest serving Committee Members – maybe the longest? No matter – the award is not just for being the longest serving Committee Member. It is for all the time and effort given to that role and carried out over all that time.

The Chairman's award for 2010 goes to the person who has held the important role of Group Membership Secretary since the mid 1990s. Please put your hands together for Serena Lonton"

"I fully hope that all our Members may agree with my choice this year. As I have already said, it does not get any easier, each year.

Congratulations to Serena and I hope she accepts the Chairman's Award as a small token in respect of all her continuing effort and time in making sure the Group Membership runs smoothly."

Kevin Grose
Chairman



Membership Secretary Serena Lonton accepts the Chairman's Award for 2010 from Kevin Grose

FRANKLY SPEAKING...

...Frank Richards, our former Treasurer, to be precise. Sadly for TGAM, Frank has now moved to pastures new and has left a gaping hole in our committee, however we all wish him well in his new home.

Frank was always a very laid back character in every sense of the word. He would deliver his report at committee meetings calmly and quietly whilst rocking back and forward on his chair, which on one occasion some years ago nearly resulted in disaster! I am sure he thought no-one noticed the rapid grab at the table when he almost rocked back too far.

I remember doing my best not to laugh, but was aching inside through sheer effort.

*We will all miss Frank and thank him for all he has done for the group over many years, both as Treasurer and Observer...**Serena Lonton***

*...What can I say about Frank? Well, he's been a rock to the Taunton Group since its inception as very few people have ever realised how much effort and work Frank has put into the Group over all that time. His laid back demeanour and thoughtful presence has given many moments of enlightenment, laughter and truth whilst constantly striving away in the background. He has a knack of appearing to "bumble" through things in what looks like to be a haphazard way sometimes but it always comes good in the end - I remember once doing a check drive with Frank before he retook his ROSPA test - attentive, well sort of; entertaining, very; productive, well, finally - as I said, it always comes good in the end as Frank DID pass his ROSPA test again the next day! Our huge loss but maybe Dover's great gain. Enjoy your retirement and best wishes to both you and Lesley for your new life in Kent...**Kevin Grose***

..."Mmmmmmm" was the usual reply that we got from Frank at Committee meetings! That meant he was thinking. Then it was..."well then, it's possible that..."

Frank wasn't an instant pundit on any matters when sought for an opinion. He thought long and hard. Spun it around in his head, and then delivered his judgement. And was always right.

Whether as a long standing Treasurer, Observer or just a valued friend Frank was reliable and straight. He had the values of honesty and hard work. Always responded to me when I asked him to take on another Associate that he would and did a super job, discussing the difficulties if and when they arrived.

*We'll miss him, and the group will miss him too, although as a Treasurer they don't really know what he did. He just did it, well and responsibly, no fuss, no bother. Thanks a bundle Frank and come back - we need you!...**Bill Coltham***

...As an Observer I couldn't have asked for a better Team Leader. Frank was always cooperative, helpful and wise. Whenever I asked him to check drive one of my Associates prior to their ADT he would e-mail me a comprehensive report, it seemed, within minutes of the completion of the drive.

*As the Newsletter Editor I have to thank Frank for doing half of my job; organizing the printing of the newsletter and then stuffing envelopes and mailing them off. Now I've got to grow up and do the job myself. Yes, Frank, you will be sorely missed...**John Gilbert***

GUARDIAN ANGEL OR WHAT?

By Kevin Grose

I know a very lucky person. A young man who has just had a major incident involving rolling his car over three times. I will not mention names, neither his or the car, but having seen the aftermath and declared evidence, I believe that someone special must have been watching over him and I mean REALLY watching over him on that day!

I am informed the incident happened due to a heavy lorry very near or on the centre of the road on a reasonable bend. The young man gave way to accommodate the lorry by moving over slightly to the left side of the road.

However, with the amount of loose gravel, etc., in the gutter area, the rear of the car moved unintentionally towards the kerbstones edging the road. The inevitable happened – the rear wheel clipped the kerb, which acted like a pendulum and swung the whole car fully into the kerb. On having made contact with both nearside wheels, the car flipped up and right over the farmer's field hedge. After landing once in the field, the car continued to flip or roll over twice more – side to side, end over end, corner to corner!

It then stopped on its nearside flank leaving the seat belted owner up in the air still in the driver's seat. At that moment in time, the driver was completely uninjured – not a scratch! Look at the enclosed photos and you may find that hard to believe.



After vehicle was retrieved back onto main road

Once the driver realised he was ok, the first thing he did was quickly release the seat belt.....without thinking how high up he was whilst the car was in this position. Anyway, gravity took over and he finally scrabbles out of the car and mildly scratches his leg while exiting – one minor scratch, that's all.

He hastily rings the emergency services, etc., who arrive extremely promptly and then strapped him onto a spinal board, put him into an ambulance and took him off to hospital fairly quickly. 3-4 hours later after

many thorough checks and the appropriate examinations, he was sent home with a slightly stiff neck due to the sideways whiplash effect of the "rolls" and of course – the very minor scratch to his leg.

The end result could have been much worse – in fact, it could have been fatal. The car was a modern sports convertible, rear wheel drive and fairly quick. It was only a few years old and absolutely immaculate – well it was before the incident. It now has one rear wheel assembly ripped from its mountings. Most of the lights and bumpers are gone – front and back; all the wings, bonnet, boot lid, etc., are almost unrecognisable; the windscreen is completely smashed with a hole through the middle area; the windscreen surround is severely dented in the middle; the only body panel barely untouched is the driver's door – it is a total write off in insurance terms.

How someone walks away from such a major incident is really beyond belief. Someone special really must have been watching over him that day!

BEWARE THE "ONE EYED MONSTER"!

By Kevin Grose

THURSDAY 20th October 2010 – this was my last ever road traffic survey for the company I have worked for over the last three years, due to having just been made redundant again for the second time within my working career.

Anyway, another 12 hour survey from 7:00 am to 7:00 pm and at this time of the year, it is dark when you start and it is dark when you finish so you must keep a watchful eye out for the dreaded "One eyed monster" – the vehicle with ONLY one headlight working properly. It can cause two effects – one fairly minor and one drastically major.



The minor effect is being mistaken for a motorcycle or scooter when logging details within a road traffic survey. It is dark and you can see for quite a distance but is it really a motorcycle or scooter? It is so dark, it really is hard to tell – in fact, it is sometimes so hard to tell that the "One eyed monster" has to be almost alongside your own vehicle before you then realise it "IS" a car, or a van, or a small lorry...maybe even a tractor!

If it is raining as well, then it is almost impossible to tell until it whizzes past you a few feet away. OK, as I said it is not a major problem but it could be and sometimes it does mess up an accurate and valid traffic flow survey by confusing its initial identity! Need I say that some of our "Traffic Enumerators" eyesight may not be as good as some of the others, especially when it is dark!

What about the major effect? If we mistake the offending "One eyed monster" for a motorcycle then at the very least it may cause a minor discrepancy in our figures, but what about if a motorist or motorcyclist mistakes a car, van, small lorry or a tractor for another motorcyclist? What if they misjudge the available distances because they believe it is only taking up a smaller proportion of the road? What if they have to leave it right to the last minute before they realise they are in the wrong place?

There is only one answer really – a MAJOR incident, sometimes fatal. No ifs or buts – it is MAJOR. Who's responsible for the incident – the "one eyed monster" or you? Well it must be the "one eyed monster" as he/she is breaking the law, surely? Yes, he/she is breaking the law under the hours of darkness as he/she has a legal duty to illuminate his/her vehicle, etc., to show other road users that he/she is there. Problem solved. Well, not really because you also have a legal duty to proceed accordingly in a safe and controlled manner. You have a legal duty to drive responsibly within the present road, weather and light conditions, safely and with consideration.

You see, neither drivers / riders are to blame, yet you could be both to blame if an incident happens. The "one eyed monster" is exactly that and the other driver is not paying full attention – he/she is not allowing that little bit extra space just in case – have they adjusted their speed or position to make allowances? Remember, it is now dark and things look very different. Just because for the last six months or so you have pleasantly cruised along the same bit of road at 60 mph in daylight or bright evening light doesn't mean you can do exactly the same in the dark – you have to make allowances.

"Always expect the unexpected" – think about your environment; your safety zone/area/margins; your speed; your visibility; your position; etc., and then you should not be involved in a MAJOR incident because you have made an allowance to accommodate the "one eyed monster" – is it a car; is it a van; is it a tractor; is it a small lorry; is it a child on a bike with a biggish front light – it's your decision, avoid the incident in the first place – THINK first – use ALL the information available before taking action. If the information is used properly, then the "one eyed monster" should not be a problem – if you tackle it head on then the consequences are serious, sometime fatal on all accounts. Go out and check you lights now and make sure they are all working. Check you have some spare lights on board because even if you cannot fit them yourself, a local friendly Police Officer or passer-by may be able to help – please don't become a "one eyed monster"!

HOW LONG HAVE YOU EVER OWNED A CAR?

Submitted by George Parker

MR. Allen Swift (Springfield, MA.) received this 1928 Rolls-Royce Picadilly P1 Roadster from his father, brand new, as a graduation gift in 1928. He drove it up until his death last year...*at the age of 102!*

He was the oldest living owner of a car from new. Just thought you'd like to see it. He donated it to a Springfield museum after his death. It has 170,000 miles on it, still runs like a Swiss watch, dead silent at any speed and is in perfect cosmetic condition. (82 years)

Just thought you would find this of interest...



**FEBRUARY MEMBERS' EVENING
Presents**

**A TALK BY ROWES HONDA
(to be confirmed)**

**Wednesday, 16th February at 7:30 pm
at Hatch Beauchamp Village Hall**

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

8th October 2010

Dear Editor,

THE Prime Minister has asked me to write to you to thank the Taunton Group of Advanced Motorists for their contribution to his Big Society Plan that is now sweeping the country in a fever of enthusiasm.

In particular, he would like to thank his Observer, Ed for his skill and attention to detail that enabled him to pass his Advanced Test recently. The Prime Minister would have obviously passed the ADT without any training whatsoever, but Ed did give him some tips that proved to be really useful on the day.

There is no doubt that Advanced Driving has proved to be one of the most successful initiatives that his Government has introduced in recent years, saving lives and contributing to a greater feeling of community cohesion. Indeed the removal of speed cameras from major roads is, in itself, proving to be highly effective in directing drivers towards taking their ADT, as standards drop and drivers compete to travel at the fastest speed at all times.

The Prime Minister does expect that the Taunton Group will grow from strength to strength, particularly as the economy will allow people to have more time and will need to fill their days with something useful.

Many thanks again from Dave, and of course, Samantha and the kids, and he hopes to meet Ed again at the palace when he receives his knighthood.

Yours sincerely,

(Signature undecipherable)

Private Secretary to the Prime Minister.

Before I get thrown into the Tower and left to rot I should stress that this letter is not really from the Private Secretary to the Prime Minister – Ed.

MARCH MEMBERS' EVENING

Presents

A TALK BY SHELTERBOX

**Wednesday, 16th March at 7:30 pm
at Hatch Beauchamp Village Hall**

MEMBERS' CARS

CARS I HAVEN'T SCORED IN!

Part 1- The 1952 Daimler Consort DB18

By Bill Coltham

JUST 18 years old, about to join Kent Police and no wheels suitable for a bit of hanky panky, I was really desperate.

Gorgeous though she was, my 198cc Tiger Cub motor bike was fine for the drive out into the country, and could be propped up by the hay barn, but only if the weather was warm and sunny - balmy romantic weather - yes, windy, stormy and wet - definitely no chance!

No money either as I was working as a rat catcher in the Tunbridge Wells area. Just



A Triumph Tiger Cub

temporary mind, not really a dyed in the wool hands on rodent operative, merely helping out the professionals until Kent Police let me join and take on the real rats. I carried and fetched, made tea, and put the bodies in the sack. Occasionally, up in a loft, I put my size nines through an old plaster and lather ceiling - not to the delight of my boss actually. However, I digress.

So, it was with great anticipation that I joined the Police, was sent to Sandgate in Folkestone for three months training (nowadays, three weeks if you are lucky) and had the money to find proper wheels to get me there with my large suitcase full of boots, helmet, gym shoes and socks. Oh, yes and one large police reference book called Moriarty - yes really, and I still have it.

Getting to know Sandgate and Folkestone, before I get back to the wheels bit, was fun, for we were only let out on a Wednesday evening for a bit of light R and R - shouts of glee as we headed off to the Woompa Hotel for the evening's entertainment. No disco and pints for us, it was a real band, and glasses of Mackeson (half pints of course - we really lived in those days).

But the real draw was the nurses who came in from the Queen Victoria hospital in Folkestone. Now they were something else! Not only used to handling patients, and I mean 'handling' patients, they were

gorgeous with it. Not stiff and starchy, they let their hair down with wild abandonment, pleased as they were to be let out by matron for their one day in the week. A quickstep or a slow waltz out on the dance floor, hot bodies clasped together in bewildering excitement (calm down here, Bill), for those days clasping a girl to your chest, and you to her bosom was not an everyday occurrence and one to be savoured. Particularly the bosom bit.

Get back to the car. Slow the breathing down now. Count to ten.

Back home it was discussion time with my parents. Father (yes we were really formal, it's being born in India that does it) I do need to get a car to get me to the Training School. So the 1952 Daimler Consort DB18 was purchased for £35 and worth every bit of £10. I paid.



1952 Daimler Consort DB18

Used for most of its life as a hotel pick up and dropping down car in Crowborough, Sussex, it had come to the end of its life about six months earlier, so the chauffeur was told to sell if for what he could and buy another old wreck for the driving duties from the station to the hotel. So a sucker like me

bought it for a song, the words I can't totally remember but they start off something like "you've been had..."

A straight six 2.5 litre engine, I only once opened the bonnet and got so frightened at what I saw closed it and never did it again. That is, unless I had to put some oil in it and I did very often. Eighteen miles to the gallon of petrol I could just afford on my £12 per week policeman's wage. But not 18 miles to the pint of oil. Oh no, that was too much. So I bought commercial oil, which was fine, being cheaper, but any car travelling behind me never knew what was in front for all they saw was the wall of blue smoke.

Pre-selector gear box which gave a sort of automatic feel about the car, it was huge, heavy and ponderous in all situations. So I drove it like a funeral car, which most ended their lives as. The back seat though was something else.

But back to the girl (let's call her Janet, it's not her real name, just to protect the innocent, you know how it is), I know you have been waiting for this.

I had arranged to meet Janet at the hospital. I had told her I had a new car, and that we could go out to the pictures - you know, the movie, cinema things that we all used to go to, the ones with the back seats full and no one in the front ones. But the special surprise treat were the chocolates I had bought and put in the huge cavernous back seat. You might have guessed why I put them there, and why the huge cavernous back seat was so important.

An evening like most evenings, filling in the bit of time in between picking her up and dropping her off was a bit boring for a now 19 year old. All I wanted to do was to 'say goodnight' to her, and present her with her reward of the chocolates for 'action beyond the call of duty'! So it was an evening of living in hope - all you fishermen will know the feeling.

So, at the grand old time of 10:25 pm, for we had to be back to the training school by 11 pm and I had quite a way to go (I would have had to climb in a window if I was late) I parked up in a suitable dark and 'romantic' spot near the hospital, ready to drop her off, but not before 'having a little chat' then giving her the chocolates with a nonchalant flourish!

Suggesting we move to the sitting room (the back seat of the Daimler), produced a very firm 'No' and my hand was removed. What? A well brought up girl, with a sense of responsibility for the future, and I had gone out with her? Just my luck, and I had spent nearly three shillings and sixpence on her that night, for the tickets, and the chocolates.

So a quick chat it was, a real chat and she darted out of the car and out of my life forever.

And the chocolates? We all ate them back at the training school later that night. Oh God, was I sick!

In Part 2, I'll tell you about my night out with a young widow in Whitstable in a 1953 Sunbeam Talbot 90. Bet you can't wait!



1953 Sunbeam Talbot 90

THRUXTON, Friday 22nd October 2010

By Frank Richards

THE story began when I opened my Christmas presents last year. One of them was from my wife Lesley and appeared to be just a card. As I opened it there was a sound of a racing car revving up. After a bit of reading I realised that I had been given a drive in a single seat formula Renault racing car together with some laps driving a Porsche Cayman at Thruxton, to be taken during the next year. I left it until the spring and found out that there were only a limited number of dates available and the weekend dates were already full. As we were planning to move to Dover and our house was up for sale we decided to wait until October when we would both be retired and living in Dover. I hoped the day would be dry and this was the case. On Friday 22nd October we set off from Dover planning to arrive at about 10:30 although I was not required to register until 12:30. This would give us the opportunity to look around. I had anticipated a quiet race-track and an empty car park and was surprised by the level of activity. The place was buzzing. There were Ferraris, Aston Martins, Lamborghinis and single seater racing cars on the track at the same time. Also I noticed that every few minutes a white BMW M3 would hurtle around the track and overtake everything. This car was the only one going sideways through the corners with smoke coming from its tyres. Who could it be – could it be The Stig?



Tom Onslow-Cole

After a while it was time for me to register and go in to the briefing to find out the do's and don'ts. Surprisingly there were not many don'ts but I think 'don't crash' might have been mentioned. The briefing included a video explaining about braking points, turn in points and apex points around the 2.4 mile circuit. These were marked on the track by strategically coloured cones. Also we were allowed to overtake with a few provisos. Next we were divided up into small groups. Three of us got in a Mazda 3 MPS as passengers and were shown the racing line to be taken and the positions of the various cones. I caught sight of a single seat racing car which had spun off and was a long way off the track on the grass up against a tyre wall. Our driver

increased the speed with each lap and maintained a commentary of what he was doing until he thought we were ready to tackle the track ourselves. As soon as we got out Lesley asked me if I knew who the driver was. I had not recognised Tom Onslow-Cole who is one of the leading Touring car drivers in the country - definitely a good instructor. Lesley managed to get his autograph.

We noticed that the BMW M3 was still on the circuit wearing out tyres at a rapid rate. It turned out that the mystery driver was none other than Tiff Needell (ex racing driver and presenter of 'Fifth Gear') and he was giving 3 lap exhibition drives to 'punters' for a fee. Lesley decided to get out her credit card and signed up although there was a two hour waiting list! In the meantime I moved on to my familiarisation laps in a Porsche Cayman. I was encouraged to go faster and got close to the appropriate cones. When I did what I was told I was praised and when I missed the line I was duly reprimanded. I remember catching up a single seat racing car and asked if I could overtake. I was surprised to be told I could and my instructor told me when and where to execute the manoeuvre.

I was now deemed to be ready to go 'solo' in the single seat racing car. I was given an appropriate helmet with a full face visor together with soft narrow shoes (the brake and accelerator pedals are very



Lesley and Tiff Needell in the BMW M3





Frank in the Renault single seater

close together) and squeezed in to the cockpit with a full racing harness. The car had a 1700cc Renault engine with a 4 speed gear box and a gear lever on the right. Revs were limited to avoid engine damage. The car was fired up and I had to put into practice everything I had been told. (Red flag/blue flag/yellow flag/pit board/cones etc) The 5 laps were over all too quickly and I was flagged to come in. I had driven as fast as I had dared and did as I had been instructed. It would have been nice to have known lap times or speeds – all I knew was that it seemed to be fast. I thought my day was over but it was back into the Mazda with a crash helmet. Lastly I

was given the experience of a fast lap as a passenger. The lap seemed to be at speeds which defied the laws of physics and I realised that I could probably have gone a bit faster in my drive a few minutes before!

By this time it was time for Lesley to have her drive with Tiff. From the moment the car left the pits it was clear Tiff was on a mission to overtake everything else on the track. I saw the smoke from the tyres across the other side of the circuit and heard the tyres squealing again on the next lap as the car exited a bend sideways. She got out smiling and said his driving was 'awesome'. She has a DVD filmed from inside the car which she can play and re-live the experience. She said the speedometer was reading 145 on the straight bit!

Our day was over and it was time to drive the 150 miles back to Dover. Unfortunately because of an accident on the M3 and a busy M25 the journey home was a long one but gave us an opportunity to recollect our experiences during the day and then it was it was back to 'Mirror, Signal, Manoeuvre and speed limits'.



Lesley with Tiff Needell

APRIL MEMBERS' EVENING
Presents
MEMOIRS OF A TRUCK DRIVER
by TGAM Member Andy Mayes
(to be confirmed)
Wednesday, 20th April at 7:30 pm
at Hatch Beauchamp Village Hall

FROM THE PAST

By John Gilbert

100 YEARS AGO...”Charles Rolls killed in Plane Crash”

ON 12th July, 1910, Charles Rolls was killed in a crash at Southbourne Airfield, near Bournemouth, when the tail of his French built Wright biplane broke off during a flying display. He was the first Briton to be killed in an aircraft accident.

Charles Rolls was a motoring and aviation pioneer. In 1896, while at Cambridge, at the age of 18, he went to Paris to buy his first car, a Peugeot Phaeton which was believed to have been the first car to be based in Cambridge. As an early motoring enthusiast he joined the Self-Propelled Traffic Association which campaigned against the Locomotive Act and was a founder of the Automobile Club of Great Britain.

Rolls graduated from Cambridge after which he worked on a steam yacht and for the London & North Western Railway. However he was talented as a salesman and started one of Britain’s first car dealerships, C.S. Rolls & Co., in Fulham in 1903 to sell Peugeots and Minervas.



Charles Rolls the Aviator



Charles Rolls

After being introduced to Henry Royce in 1904 Charles Rolls agreed to take all of the cars that Royce could manufacture. The first Rolls-Royce car, the 10 hp, was unveiled at the Paris Motor Show in December 1904 and the Rolls-Royce organization was formally created in 1906. In 1907 Rolls was appointed Managing Technical Director and provided the financial backing and business acumen to complement Henry Royce’s technical expertise.

By this time Rolls was becoming much more interested in aviation. Since 1903 he had been a successful balloonist and in 1909 he purchased his first aeroplane, a Short built Wright Flyer. He later purchased a French built Wright which he used to complete the first non-stop double crossing of the English Channel, on 2nd June 1910, between Dover and Sangette. It was in this aeroplane that he would lose his life just one month later.

HIGHWAY CODE REFRESHER

MINI-ROUNDBABOUTS

By John Gilbert

THIS is one of the more controversial driving issues and there seem to be at least two schools of thought on how to negotiate a mini-roundabout, specifically whether you can drive over the white circle and whether you can make a U-turn. But first let us take a look at three sources of information; the Highway Code, the DfT's Mini-Roundabout Good Practice Guide and the IAM's "How to be a better driver".

The Highway Code states that:

- All vehicles, except large vehicles which are unable to do so, **MUST** pass round the central circle. The **MUST** indicates a legal requirement and not complying means that you are committing a criminal offence.
- You should avoid making U-turns at mini-roundabouts and should beware of others doing so.

•

The DfT's Good Practice Guide states that:

- Only vehicles physically incapable of manoeuvring around the white circle may drive across it. Drivers who are able to manoeuvre around the white circle may be prosecuted if they drive over it.
- You may make a U-turn at a mini-roundabout but you are advised against it as it is an unexpected manoeuvre.

•

The IAM's "How to be a Better Driver" advises:

- Not putting a wheel into the central white circle.

So there you are, it's quite clear, isn't it? You must not put a wheel on the white circle if you can possibly avoid it. To do so is a criminal offence and can result in a prosecution. However you can make a U-turn but it really isn't advisable.

It may surprise you, then, that some of our more Senior Observers sing from a different hymn book. There are some who advise clipping the white circle, or even suggest that as long as you are to the left of the centre of the white circle then that is perfectly acceptable.

So what is the reason for this contradiction? They argue that drivers believe the body language of another vehicle, not the indication that its driver may be making. If you are taking the second exit from a mini-roundabout and drive around the white circle the driver of a vehicle waiting to enter the mini- from the first exit will expect you to take the first exit and will enter the mini- in front of you hence causing a collision.

So who is right? What should you do? What should our Observers be teaching our Associates? What should our Senior Observers be teaching our Observers? Please send us your views on this subject.

MEET YOUR COMMITTEE MEMBER

Name:	Serena Lonton	
Group Position:	TGAM Membership Secretary	
Drives:	Mazda MX-5 1.8 (yummee!) Ford Focus Estate 1.8	
Dream Car:	E-type Jaguar	
Current Job:	Part-time bookkeeper/office admin	
Hobbies:	Foreign holidays, Skittles, listening to music	
Pet likes:	Meals out or at home with friends, laughing, warm sunny weather, star-gazing.	
Pet dislikes:	The death of common sense, dishonesty, bad manners	
Favourite Food:	Spanish paella (cooked by me), anything Mediterranean	
Favourite Drink:	Chardonnay, Armagnac	
Favourite Actors:	Robert Shaw (deceased), Steve McQueen (deceased), Johnny Depp (alive and certainly kicking!) too many to mention really	
Favourite Actresses:	Maggie Smith, Judi Dench, Emma Thompson, Nicole Kidman	
Dream Date:	Oh dear, there's not much about is there! A fun night out would be with Victoria Wood as I love laughing! Maybe Dennis Waterman as he is a 60's and 70's fan like me	
Best TV Programmes:	All the CSI's, Poirot, Inspector Morse, Hustle, New Tricks, Jamie Oliver cooking, documentaries (various)	
Best Films:	Oceans 11, 12, 13, Jaws (original only), The Sting, Pirates of the Caribbean, anything hilarious like Pink Panther	
Best Group/Singer:	Queen, Josh Groban, Matt Monro, Frank Ifield, Michael Buble, Glen Miller, also trad jazz, pretty varied	
In car Radio/CD:	Don't play CD's in the car! Radio 2 or local channels for traffic updates	

ROLLS ROYCE PHOTO GALLERY



1911 Rolls-Royce Silver Ghost



1912 Rolls-Royce Silver Ghost

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