

# e-NEWSLETTER



**IAM**  
DRIVING ROAD SAFETY



DECADE OF ACTION FOR  
ROAD SAFETY 2011-2020

**TAUNTON GROUP OF  
ADVANCED MOTORISTS**

**[www.tgam.org.uk](http://www.tgam.org.uk)**

**Number 124**

**Autumn 2012**



**TAUNTON GROUP OF ADVANCED MOTORISTS**

# **e-NEWSLETTER**

**Published Quarterly**

**Editor: David Walton**

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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.

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# THE COMMITTEE

Committee meetings (for Committee Members ONLY) are held bimonthly at 7:30pm on the 2<sup>nd</sup> 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.



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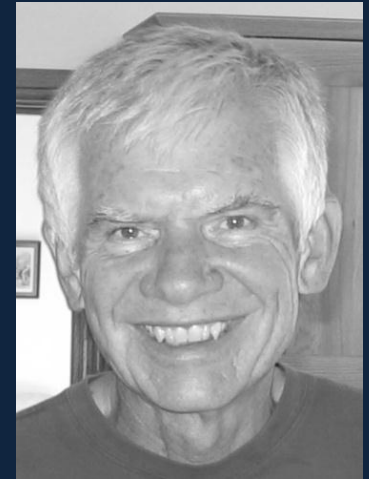
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# EDITORIAL



**By John Gilbert**  
**Former Newsletter Editor**



The Summer newsletter was my last as Editor. I recently “celebrated”, if that is the appropriate word, one of those awful birthdays with a zero as the last digit. This caused me to reflect on ambitions not yet achieved, how little time is left to do so, and what I really want to do with the rest of my life. For that reason I have decided to drop some of the many activities that I am currently involved in to concentrate on those that are really important to me. Regretfully the Editorship of this newsletter is one of those activities that I have decided to drop.

During my five years as Editor I have attempted to apply a process of continuous improvement to the newsletter. I hope that you have enjoyed the end product and that it has met the needs of TGAM and its membership.

However it is inevitable that one does get into a rut after a while. I do believe that a change in the editorship will provide the opportunity to breathe new life into the newsletter making it even better than ever. Fortunately David Walton, one of our long standing members, has volunteered to take over the Editorship, starting with this edition. I have every confidence that David will produce very fine newsletters. Please make his job as easy as possible by providing him with interesting articles in a timely fashion. Thank you.



# FROM THE RETIRING CHAIRMAN



By Kevin G. Grose  
Chairman

## Direct from the Driving Seat (for the last time)... Or Chair, man!



Here we go again and what lovely weather we have been having. I certainly don't think there's any drought warnings now – more like flash flood warnings, what a difference a few weeks can make. I don't think I have managed to carry out a single traffic survey yet this year without enduring lashings of rain, wind and cold. Maybe we will get a warmer winter to make up for all this inclemency.

Articles in this edition include yours truly at the Emergency Services Day in April; yours truly at the RLF AGM and observing Roadcraft in May; yours truly at Brizzle Airport (Bristol) and the Classic Car Evening in June and finally,





yours truly watching roundabouts in July – what an exciting life I lead! There's also an article on the new Land Rover Freelander; what's happening with some of the IAM Groups; it's an "L" of a time to take a test and "Which is best?" Haven't got a clue what I am talking about, then you must read ALL the e-newsletter to find out the fuller details.

We also have a change or two in the ranks of the TGAM Committee – we have changed Newsletter Editor and by the time you read this, I will have stood down as the Group Chairman due to both work and private commitments. This will be all for the better and future security of the Group.

Whilst in the role of Chairman, we are now involved with offering free assessment / observed runs with the Red Cross voluntary drivers; the U3A organisation and our own Group Members – all this taking place as I write this article and continuing until all finished. I must thank a few key Group Members who have taken up the reins on these issues in organising them and administering the process and thank all our Group Observers for freely giving up their very valuable time to facilitate all this – without all your input, things just do not happen or continue to happen.

On that note, this year's Classic Car evening was almost rained off as only four classic vehicles and one classic motorcycle arrived. It did rain and we had an intermittent village cricket match to contend with at the same time but still thirty people turned up in those conditions – again, without your input, things just would not happen. I've also noticed that present fuel costs and the distances covered to attend Classic Car events have rocketed – many owners are very reluctant to venture that far now and this is hugely effecting the numbers and enjoyment of such events and of course, there's the weather as well, rain, rain and even more rain – I'm just glad my old car has a roof on it!

Most outside events this year have been dramatically affected; many major events cancelled causing huge financial burden to those involved. So, unless you are a city banker; a politician or a bank robber, then the economic crisis is having its effect on us all. It's affecting the IAM and all the Groups through new Associates not signing up; postage rates increasing; fuel costs; travel expenses – it all adds up at the end of the day. BUT, the Taunton Group is still here; we are still looking for ways to save money and we are still looking for ways to offer you more for your money.







We have made a few new purchases of advanced driving DVD's; all our signs have been updated with the new Skill for Life / RAC related offer; we have some new presentations; our Observers are attending Skid Control Courses; our Group equipment is looking good with IAM logos, etc., and your Committee and Group Observers continue to strive to offer an excellent service for a minimal cost factor. Please continue to fully support this excellent facility.

There are many new incentives and offers in the pipeline to encourage new Associates / Members and other interested parties to partake in improving their driving skills for the rest of their lives – the clue is in the name – it's a "Skill for Life" programme and it gives you just that, a skill for life. Why not come along to our excellent Member's Evenings every month and see what we do and remember – it's all FREE. If we aren't doing it right – tell us and we will try to accommodate your request. Better still, if you have something to offer the Group, join us and help many others. Age is not a limit, it's state of mind that matters and we welcome all ages, young and old, no problem. The more people who help out, the more everybody gains.

So, that's really it from me for now folks. I thank everybody for all your continued support, time and effort extended to me during my role as your Taunton Group Chairman – time for new blood, new ideas, new future and all the items mentioned above are elsewhere in this edition – good hunting!

Kevin Grose – ex Group Chairman (now, where's my waders, umbrella, hat and snow parka - well, it is summer!)



.....approaching a new speed zone, checking my mirror, adjusting my speed to...er...um... what does Roadcraft suggest for this?

(Seen in Coultings, Somerset recently)





# FROM THE NEW CHAIRMAN



By Brian L Howe

## From the (Acting) Chairman Oh dear Mother, what have I done??

Having been seconded onto the Group Committee, with a view to promoting the IAM Advanced Cycling initiative, which I have recently joined, I find myself at my first Committee meeting being nominated as Acting Group Chairman for the Taunton Group of Advanced Motorists. To be fair I did offer my services, but for a short period to assist the Group.

For those of you who don't know me yet, I am 63 years young'ish, and have been happily married to Alice for 44 years. I am a part time PCV driver for Taunton Minibuses Ltd. I have been driving minibuses, buses and coaches for 21 years on and off. 23 years if you include my time at Brendon Motors of Bishops Lydeard where I drove 8 seat school minibuses. PCV licence not required for 8 passenger

seats, no matter what size the vehicle. I passed my PSV4 (9 – 16 seat minibuses) in 1991 and went on to upgrade to full bus/coach licence in 1995 whilst driving for Cook's Coaches of Whiteball, Wellington. During these years I have also driven, professionally, Private Hire cars, Taxi Cabs and American stretched Lincoln Town Car limousines. I still have the Chauffeur's cap and "Supreme Limousines" company badges.

Between 2005 and 2008, I was very privileged to drive a variety of buses from the Quantock Motor Services Ltd, Heritage fleet, including driving a London Transport Routemaster bus to Bath City for a wedding party. While I was there I also drove the new Scania Omnidekka, open top bus which is still used on the Service 300 route from Minehead to Lynmouth via





Porlock Hill. One of the prettiest coastal bus routes in the country.

I joined the IAM and TGAM after a visit to the 1996 Motor Show and passed my ADT 18th January 1997. 7 years later I passed the IAM Commercial ADT in a 33 seat coach on 28th February 2004. I was a Taunton Group Qualified Observer for several years and held the post of Group Chairman of the TGAM for 6 years. Unfortunately, after heart problems caught up with me, resulting in a double bypass and Mitral valve repair in 2007, I found that I could no longer fulfil my obligations to the Group, so I retired as an Observer, and later that year stood down as Group Chairman on health grounds. My health is thankfully, reasonably stable at the moment, and as I am only working part time, I feel that I can once more contribute to the TGAM, Although I am somewhat reluctant to commit fully and permanently to the role of Group Chairman. I will do my best for the Taunton Group, as far as I am able and I would like to take this opportunity to thank your Group Committee for their faith and confidence in my abilities.

Kevin, you are going to be a hard act to follow! Good luck in whatever you are doing now.

## John Gilbert

by Serena Lonton, Group/Membership Secretary

John has decided to step down as our Newsletter Editor after many years in that role. He joined TGAM in February 2006 and assumed the role of Newsletter Editor following Julia Steer's departure, Julia having been the editor since the group started in 1981, a period of 25 years.

With new technology and personal input, John moved our Newsletter on to great things, winning the group joint first prize a few years ago. From there John progressed the Newsletter to an e-letter as postal and printing costs had increased so much that it was no longer viable to continue as before.

Now we have a willing successor in David Walton, a member of many years, who has taken on this most important role and we wish him every success.

John will be continuing as a group member and observer, so we are not losing him, but we wish him well for the future.

Many thanks John – best wishes.



# GROUP OBSERVERS



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 any problems please contact our Training Officer, Alan Thompson.

	TEAM WEST	TEAM EAST
TEAM LEADERS	Colin White 01823 618714	Alan Thomson 01460 55919
SENIOR OBSERVER	Colin White	Andrew Griffiths
TRAINEE SENIOR OBSERVERS		Alan Thomson John Gilbert
OBSERVERS	Tony Hucker Faye Markham Russ Williams	Ron Holdom Janet Loader Allan Wellwood

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

Guy Denton	01984 633467	also TGAM Observer
Tudor Humphreys	01823 277353	
Nigel Steady	01278 722944	
Nick Tapp	07900 900678	

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 contact the Group Secretary or the Newsletter Editor. (NB: You MUST remain FULL IAM & TGAM members at all times.)



# MEMBERS' PAGES



**By Serena Lonton  
Group/Membership Secretary**



Yes, it has come around again! Tempus fugit as they say! Subscriptions are now due for the year commencing 1<sup>st</sup> October 2012.

If you joined TGAM before 1<sup>st</sup> November 2011, the fees are £7.50 for Full members (i.e. you have passed the IAM Test and are a fully paid up national IAM member), or £10.00 for Associate members (i.e. you have not yet passed the IAM Test).

If you joined Taunton Group on or after 1<sup>st</sup> November 2011 on the Skill for Life programme, you will be pleased to know that your subscription for this coming year is covered by your initial payment when you first enrolled. Please check your Group membership card if you are not sure. Please contact me if you have any queries.

We look forward to receiving your subscription, so if you have email, please print off the attached form, complete it and send it to me with your subscription. If you have received this by post, please complete it and send it as above.

If for any reason you are not renewing your membership, please let me know as early as possible as this will save the cost of stationery and postage in sending reminders.



# MEMBERS' PAGES



We do hope you will all continue to support the Group and thank you for your continued support.

Finally, we must stress again that if your subscription is not paid you may not be covered for Insurance. Those renewing as full members must also be fully paid-up national IAM members.

This particularly applies to Observers, who are strictly forbidden to take an Associate out on a drive if this is not complied with.

Observers must also always check that their Associate has an up-to-date membership card before departing for a drive.

Many thanks and happy motoring.

## The Membership Register

This quarter we have two new group members. 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>
Owen Jones	Bridgwater	Associate
Andrew Griffiths	Bridgwater	Full Member

## Advanced Driving Test Passes

Congratulations to Paul who has recently passed his Advanced Driving Test.

	<u>OBSERVED BY</u>
Paul Youd	Allan Wellwood

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. We would like to present successful candidates with their pass certificates at one of our Members' Evenings.



# CALENDAR

## COMMITTEE MEETINGS

9 August

11 October

13 December



			SEPTEMBER
19	W	7:30 pm	Members' Evening – We are hosting the Inter Group Quiz
			OCTOBER
17	W	7:30 pm	Members' Evening – Annual General Meeting
20	Sa		Regional Liaison Forum (RLF)
			NOVEMBER
21	W	7:30 pm	Members' Evening
			DECEMBER
8	Sa	12:30 pm	Christmas Dinner
19	W	7:30 pm	Members' Evening
			JANUARY
16	W	7:30 pm	Members' Evening





# Is the writing on the wall?

I'm not making comment on the explosion of tagged graffiti appearing in and around our towns and cities recently but I was just reading one of our mutual IAM partner's newsletters and it doesn't look good – no, I don't mean the content of the newsletter but an article on the future of advanced driving.

They had had a special meeting and after much debate they concluded the downturn in the economic climate was the main culprit and this was arrived at by analysing the details and data accumulated over the last 30 years of existence.

One point raised was the present cost, as in earlier times this was broken down into segments, instead of the full Skill for Life price now required all in one go. So they tried a discounted price but it didn't work. They tried the fuel economy route but that didn't work. They tried the improved safety aspect but that didn't work either. They improved their publicity awareness – local press, photographs, radio interviews, etc., but guess what – it didn't work. They put up more posters;

they put many more dispensers in motor / driving related outlets – they didn't work. They even have their own MDU (Mobile Display Unit) which appeared at many high profile public events but again, it didn't work.

Ok, no IAM Group has queues of people knocking down their doors to undertake the Skill for Life programme but they have all experienced a reasonable flow of new Associates filtering through their groups until now and even with more incentives and various cash saving ideas, the flow has stemmed and sometimes, completely stopped in some Groups.

Why? The answer is money or rather the lack of it. Youngsters can barely afford the cost of just obtaining a full driving licence let alone any further advanced driving guidance. Then they have to get a car; insure it; tax it; MOT it; tyres, etc., then they have to put fuel in it – this is not an easy task now, even with parents or grandparents helping out, because they too are feeling the pinch – there is not enough spare cash flowing about. It is a huge financial







burden to be a car owner these days. Also, with continuing improvements to vehicles' overall safety, people are now surviving more extensive crashes and therefore they feel they don't need to improve their driver training – it's just an inconvenience with an insurance issue; they crash; they walk away and their insurance company “gives” them another vehicle. It's a modern way of thinking – it's not their fault as it's always someone else or something else that caused the incident and someone else always foots the bill. The culprit walks away free from any real inconvenience or financial hardship and is usually arrogant enough to completely refuse any guidance or help in improving their driving skills – they don't need it as they're already too damn good! They sometimes even get a better replacement vehicle because of their complete incompetence – bargain!

So, there we have it – many Groups have tried many things and it's not working. It's a law you must have a driving licence to drive certain types / classes of vehicles on the roads – what about having to have an advanced driving licence to drive all / most types of vehicles? If you don't undertake an advanced driving programme / course, you are limited to

certain vehicles. If you want to drive a flash / fast / expensive car, then the cost of the Skill for Life won't be an issue then – if you can afford that type of car, then you can afford the £139.00 (plus FREE RAC OFFER) for a Skill for Life programme.

Remember, £139.00 will hardly fill some luxury cars fuel tanks even once now. Another thing, if you encounter an incident / crash, why don't insurance companies insist on their clients undertaking an advanced driving course BEFORE they hand over any money for another car – it might make the careless / so what / not my fault people amongst us sit up and listen a bit more and maybe they'll just open their eyes as well and observe their surroundings a bit more cautiously. Saying “NO” sometimes might just work. Still, they can always get on their bikes if they are not happy... provided they undertake the IAM Cycling course – only £15.00 and you get a blue badge. Now, where's my spray cans and the nearest wall – I think I'll use “I AM” as my tag!

Well.i.am ... Kevin Grose – Group Chairman



# An “**L**” of a time to be put to the test!

By Kevin G. Grose

Taunton has a new DSA testing centre now situated on the Priorswood Industrial Estate which I believe is a wise move from its old location in Bindon Road – sometimes a traffic gridlocked area. So, new building; new location; new test routes; new roads to use and hopefully, not too many hold ups traffic wise. It all looks good news for new learner drivers in and around Taunton, but is it all good news?

A recent comment I was made aware of worries me. A young lady who lives in the Tiverton area is learning to drive. She is being instructed by an appropriate DSA ADI driving instructor. After many lessons, she applies for her test and is told it will be in Taunton, or Exeter is also another option. Fine you may think, but this young lady has never driven in Taunton, ever. She has never driven around Taunton. She doesn't know Taunton at all. So what, I hear all you experienced IAM members shout, you should be able to drive anywhere in the UK! Yes, I agree entirely at an advanced level, that should be the case, but how many

of you long term, experienced IAM members have found yourselves in a strange town and maybe being slightly confused by certain road markings, traffic lights, sign locations, etc. You would deal with it all appropriately and continue on your journey. But, what about this young lady, bearing in mind she has a DSA examiner sat alongside her, in a strange town, driving in an alien environment and undertaking her driving test all at the same time – dead easy, isn't it?





Ok, that's the scenario, but what really annoys me the most is that her driving instructor has allegedly not once conducted any driving lessons in and around Taunton... or Exeter. I fully understand the present economic climate and usually any driving lessons take place nearer to home but surely, once a test location is known, efforts should be made to accommodate this? The longer drive needed to travel to Taunton and back would be a sobering experience alone, just to show an inexperienced, young driver what really is involved in an extended journey in a strange town. Taunton has many roundabouts; faster dual carriageway type roads; extremely busy A roads; gridlocked B roads; motorway access roads; industrial estates and commercial traffic on a larger scale; etc., etc. Many of these traffic environments may be completely alien to some younger, inexperienced drivers bearing in mind you only really learn to drive AFTER you have passed your DSA Test!

Now, I know there are many very experienced, considerate and accommodating DSA ADI's out there who would use every scenario or event to help improve their clients' skills and experience of driving in all situations and traffic climates, but there are a few who miss these great opportunities and thereby, let their

fee paying clients down drastically. It may be a shame but it could also be extremely costly for the young driver as a few more informative and constructed lessons before the test in a different town or location might just save them a fortune in the long run. Young drivers need all the help they can get, so let us all try and accommodate that.

What's a few more miles (and pounds) added on now in a lifetime of travel along with the driving experience of Taunton – it's not that bad, really – try driving around it sometime... please!

## **SEPTEMBER MEMBERS' EVENING**

**Presents**

# **Inter Group Quiz**

**This year the Taunton Group are hosting the Inter Group Quiz at Hatch Beauchamp – come and support our team**

**Wednesday, 19<sup>th</sup> September at 7:30 pm  
at Hatch Beauchamp Village Hall**



# MEMBERS' EVENING

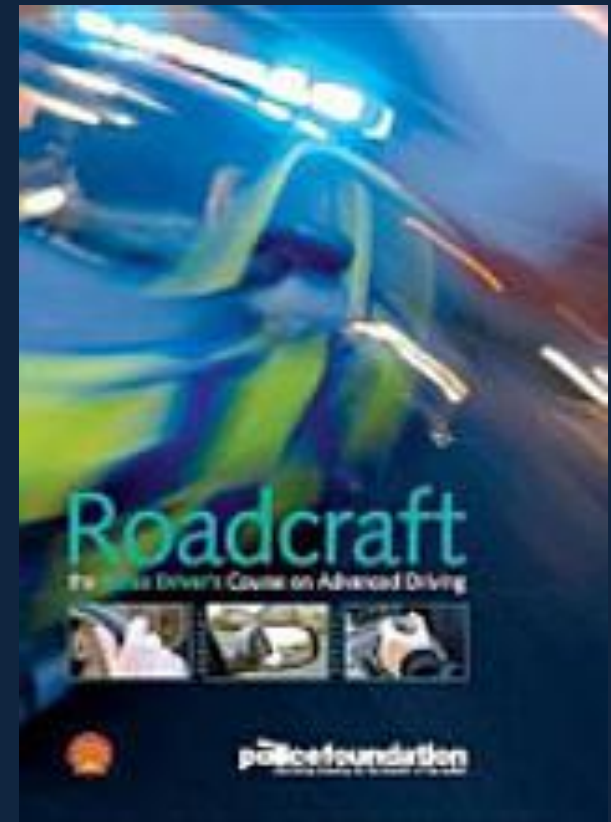
By John Gilbert



## 16<sup>th</sup> May Roadcraft DVD

Our Chairman, Kevin Grose, opened the May Members' Meeting with a few notices concerning recent events. The group had recently taken part in the Emergency Services Day In Taunton's Vivary Park. The event had been organised by Somerset Road Safety in aid of the Dorset & Somerset Air Ambulance. Kevin reported a lot of interaction with the public when they came into the tents to escape the rain.

The main event of the evening was the Roadcraft DVD which the group has recently purchased. The DVD was based on the Roadcraft book and covered all of the usual aspects of advanced driving. However it was presented in a novel way by following the progress of police officers as they took part in a training programme at the Police Driving School in Hendon. It was much enjoyed by the 15 members present.





# MEMBERS' EVENING

By David Walton  
Photos – Faye Markham



## 20<sup>th</sup> June Classic Car Evening

Once again the group held its annual Classic Car Evening at the June members' meeting. All day the weather had been poor, which probably explained the lower than usual turnout of interesting autos.

Before viewing got underway, Group Chairman Kevin Grose presented Michael Keough with his ADT Certificate and ran through various notices and announcements. We then all moved outside to view the exhibits shown in the attached photographs.



**Michael Keough receives his ADT Certificate  
from Group Chairman Kevin Grose**





No details of the cars or bikes this time I am afraid as your retiring editor was away that evening and I didn't know I was getting the job!

A big thank you to the owners who braved the weather to show us their cherished transport. Lets hope the weather is kinder next year and that we can persuade members and non-members alike to bring their shining steeds for us to admire.





# MEMBERS' EVENING

By David Walton  
Newsletter Editor



## 18th July Ultimate Driving Craft DVD by Chris Gilbert

Chris Gilbert is a retired high speed advanced driving instructor from the Metropolitan Police. In 2007 he released a DVD; Ultimate Driving Craft, which covered not only commentary driving but town and city driving, motorways, country roads, bad weather driving, making safe progress and positioning; all demonstrated with in-car footage and instructor's commentary. He has now released a double DVD set as a follow on, which covers day and night driving.

After a late start due to technical issues (we had the DVD's but no computer to show them on!), we watched various sections of the 'day' DVD covering the dangers of air bag deployment







relative to steering method and gear lever grip. We had an early break for tea, coffee and biscuits then continued with the police method of cornering, overtaking and commentary driving.

Cornering was explained in detail, broken down into three phases; the approach, the curve and the exit. The limit point method was clearly described.

Various overtaking scenarios were shown and discussed. The section on commentary driving emphasised the need to drive with eyes on 'full beam' to give more information, more time to assess hazards and enable unhurried decision making.

There followed a short time for feedback and discussion.



## **OCTOBER MEMBERS' EVENING**

**Presents**



## **TAUNTON GROUP ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING**

**Wednesday, 17<sup>th</sup> October at 7:30 pm  
at Hatch Beauchamp Village Hall**





# Which Is Best?

**Kevin Grose – Group Chairman**

With over 200 IAM Groups throughout the UK, there is bound to be a difference in the way they all operate but do any of them perform the best – what I mean is: What is the best way to supply the experience and necessary skills to enable a complete outsider to pass the IAM Advanced Driving Test (ADT)?

Some Groups hold intensive classroom based sessions, discussing every detail in the IAM “How to be a better driver” book. They then follow a structured timed sequence in various driving techniques followed in a tick box list type manner. Then an informal meeting with an IAM Examiner; a few more lessons – maybe a “brush up” session, then the Test, etc. This route can sometimes take about 6 months on a roughly weekly basis – that equals about 26 sessions in all – not bad for £139.00

Other Groups get in contact with a new Associate; ask a few relevant questions; arrange a mutually convenient meet; get in the car and start driving – again on a weekly / fortnightly / ad hoc basis. No classroom sessions – just getting out there and driving. This route could be completed in four weeks;

usually six to ten weeks normally from complete novice to advanced driver – BUT, which is best?

Two major factors – it depends on the Group and it depends on the Associate. Firstly, the Group – do they have the available manpower to facilitate the more intensively engineered and structured longer learning plan? Groups with limited manpower cannot facilitate this, but are maybe, more committed in a shorter, more direct and quicker approach. Now, the Associates – some learn fast; some commit themselves to passing the ADT; some have to pass the ADT; some desire and must pass the ADT and will devote all their effort and time to achieve this goal. Other Associates will pass their ADT but it's more a social thing – it's something new to do now and again and if they pass as well, then that's an added bonus.

So, that question again – Which is best? It's simple, neither is best and both are best depending on you – the Associate. I believe everybody is fully happy if whatever route you take, you end up a better driver and pass your ADT... and that's the answer that's BEST!





# One Hundred Years Ago

## The First Motor Museum

Edmund Dangerfield, the editor of The Motor magazine, opened a motor museum in Oxford Street in May 1912. It contained over forty vehicles built before 1903. It closed after two months but reopened in March 1914 at the Crystal Palace where it remained until the building was taken over by the Admiralty as a recruiting and training centre for the Royal Naval Volunteers. The contents were then returned to their owners, went to other government museums or were dumped on waste ground. Five of the saved cars were displayed at Beaulieu when the National Motor Museum opened in 1972.



## RAC Phone Boxes

Following the lead of the AA, the RAC installed roadside telephone boxes in laybys and on the junctions of main trunk roads for members to summon help. Although they were never as numerous as AA boxes there was a measure of cooperation between the two motoring Clubs – keys fitted both types of box and members' messages were passed on. The telephones were installed in locked boxes painted in royal blue with the RAC logo badge mounted on the top of the box. Members were provided with a key to the boxes when they joined the club. RAC telephone boxes were withdrawn from service due to wider mobile phone ownership and by the 1990's only a handful still operated on holiday routes in the West Country.





# One Hundred Years Ago

## Fewer Forecourts than in 1912

There are now less than nine thousand five hundred petrol stations in the UK; fewer than in 1912. Urban as well as rural forecourts have closed in large numbers largely as a result of growth in cut price supermarket outlets since 1990.

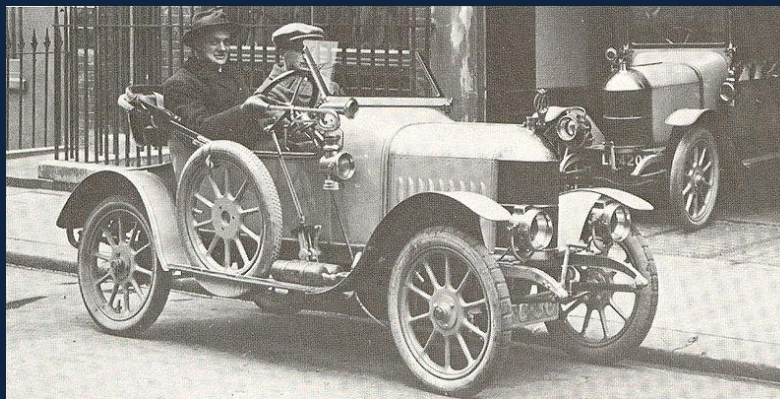
## Nothing Changes

Extracts from the Melbourne Argus 4<sup>th</sup> Dec 1912

“Early last week the Chief Secretary issued instructions directing the police to keep a sharp look-out for motor cars which might be deemed to be travelling at an excessive speed... A zealous, but ill-informed, suburban police sergeant has suggested the absurdly low speed limit of 11 m.p.h. in a report to the chief commissioner of police... Speed is sometimes alleged as the contributing, but hardly ever as the main cause of a mishap... a greater number occur to cars travelling at a lower speed than 12 m.p.h. This is, no doubt, due to the fact that it is impossible to travel at a much greater speed in crowded streets, where most accidents take place...”

## The First Morris Car

William Morris' first car was called the Oxford in recognition of its home city. To keep costs down virtually all components were bought-in and assembled by Morris. It was a small car with a 1018 cc four-cylinder side-valve engine with magneto ignition. The chassis was of pressed-steel construction and suspension was by semi-elliptic leaf springs at the front and three-quarter ones at the rear. The brakes were only on the rear wheels. A three-forward and reverse gearbox was fitted. The headlights were acetylene and the side and tail lamps oil.



**Morris Oxford “Bullnose” 1912**







# Is this an advancement or not?

By Kevin G. Grose

I drove an almost brand new (4 months old) Land Rover Freelander 2 TD4 XS recently from Bristol Airport (or Brizzell, for the locals!) back to its home near Bridgwater and it is also the latest Stop-Go ECO model. I have driven many Land Rovers over many years, right from the series 1, 11, 11A, etc., then the Defender models, Range Rovers and the earlier Freelander types. I've also driven many other 4x4 makes and also driven them all extensively on-road and to certain extremes, off-road at times. I also have a few mates who drive 4x4's beyond the normal extremes that 4x4's are normally subjected too. I therefore feel I should be in a reasonable position to give a valid initial opinion or verdict on my short experience with one of Land Rover's latest offerings.

This is a £30,000 vehicle – some early Land Rovers I drove were £300 vehicles. This vehicle has virtually everything you need on a car and a great many things you don't need – see photos. Anyway, future son-in-law (and



daughter) tells me just as they are leaving for a Mexico vacation, “Oh, to start it, you must depress the clutch and push the button. Bye, see you in a week” and they're gone. I jump in and look for the keys in the ignition – there aren't any. Oh....ah – big plastic fob thing stuffed in a hole in the dash with a hundredweight of other keys hanging from it. That will do, right – push clutch in – fine if I





could reach the pedal (future son-in-law is a six footer). Ok, adjust the seat and I search for the levers – no levers as its all electric. Fiddle, tug, up, down, sideways... the seat does everything except move forward. It must be here somewhere – finally, the most inappropriate switch moves the seat forward – great, I can finally go. Clutch in, push button and it starts – no need to adjust the exterior mirrors as there are really MASSIVE and give an excellent rearward view. I proceed from the “stalag type” airport drop off zone car park that rips you off for a £1.00 and so much more even though you may have only been there for less than 2 minutes!

As I leave the airport, I remember there's a perimeter road from where you can see the planes arrive or depart and will give me a few miles on a fairly deserted road to get used to this expensive 4x4 item and the first thing I notice is that you do sit fairly high which gives you a commanding position but there's not a lot of room around you and I'm only “little” – I found it a bit claustrophobic. I turn off the “B” road onto the bridle path indicated airport perimeter road. It's a bit rough; a few potholes here and there; single track with dips and peaks; small flooded areas to ford, etc. – all good stuff for an expensive 4x4. Obviously, it





coped with everything very well – maybe too well. I parked up for a short while and watched a few planes arrive and depart. Then, completely out of the blue, the Freelander starts itself... all by itself – I didn't touch anything at all, nothing! I'm just sat there and it starts all by itself. After the initial shock, I quickly press the engine/start/off button and it stops.

Now, why on earth do you want a vehicle to start itself when it feels like it? This is extremely dangerous and completely unnecessary. I watch a few more planes, then leave for Bridgwater and the journey is quite uneventful really. The Freelander does what it should do on the road and it does what it should do slightly off road and that's it really, there was no sense of something different. It didn't feel like a 4x4, it didn't feel like anything different – just a bit disappointing apart from its start/go programme. You roll up to a traffic light and stop and so does the car. The light changes, you release the clutch and it starts and goes but there is a slight delay, maybe a second or two and it's a second or two where you think is it going to go or am I going to look stupid in my £30,000 Freelander when I inadvertently stall it or is the bloke behind who can't wait for those few seconds, going to start



blasting his horn and giving certain signals not usually recorded in the Highway Code! It also has 6 gears – why it has 6 gears, I don't know really because hardly any of them make any real difference due to the turbo lag which occurs exactly where you do not want it to occur – like pulling away cleanly.

So, I wasn't impressed at all but maybe that's its USP (Unique Selling Point) – it just does everything but doesn't tell you that's what it is doing – you're completely isolated from any experience of any real driving. That's why I love my old Opel Manta so much – it's a real car for a real driver on a real road and it tells you everything it does and it only does what you tell it to do. Unfortunately, the Freelander doesn't and it also does things you don't want it to do – clever technology, is it an advancement?

Kevin Grose – (Let's go off road...) Group Chairman







# Emergency Services Day - Sunday 22<sup>nd</sup> April 2012

By Kevin G. Grose

At the invitation of the Somerset Road Safety Team (SRS), the Taunton Group of Advanced Motorists (TGAM) duly attended this event to help spread the IAM word amongst all those who came along to this FREE show to see what some of the Emergency Services comprise .

We had the Police in various guises; the Fire Brigade; NHS; Red Cross; SRS (car, motorcycle and bicycle); Blood Bikes; 4 x 4 Group; RoSPA, Burnham Hovercraft and many more along with the star of the show – the Somerset and Dorset Air Ambulance for which this event was raising some extra funds.

Serena Lonton, Janet Loader and I all attended only using one vehicle – very green! We set up shop within the SRS shelter, donned our hi-vis IAM logo'd jackets and Janet was off like a shot telling all who would listen about the IAM cause. Serena and I established contact with all joint minded participants, building bridges to help promote a universal approach to road safety no matter who or where the general public sought their advice – we are all aiming



for the same goal, so it's much better to work as a team to get the message of road safety across.

The day went very well considering the very inclement weather aspect – many, many showers but the events still took place and the public stayed even though the rain did it's best to drown everyone several times throughout the day – we did have the Burnham-on-Sea Hovercraft on standby in case the water level did rise considerably!





We had several chip pan fire demonstrations; we cut roofs off several cars and rescued the occupants; we recovered “drowning” people with the hovercraft and landed the Air Ambulance for all the public to see – a thoroughly entertaining day for all and completely FREE. The day finished with a combined effort from a Scottish themed bagpipe team along with a marching drum based band and the sounds made were very memorable as they travelled and echoed all around Vivary Park and the weather did hold off long enough for them to remain dry. At about 3:30 pm the day started to close down and supporters, the public and the Emergency Services began to disperse.

It was an ideal event to involve all who attended in



getting really up close to all the brave and dedicated members of our excellent and honourable Emergency Services – a very worthy and FREE show for all the family – that was the original remit and that’s exactly what it did – RESULT. A week later, Vivary Park is reported to be under about a foot of water due to the excessive April rainfall and the stream bursting its banks – better call the emergency services!







Our thanks to Rina Cameron and all her team at SRS for our invitation and accommodation during the day and thanks to all the “extras” who attended and helped out during the day (Faye, Alan & Chris) and to all the various emergency services who supplied such an excellent show for all to see... for FREE.

Hopefully, there will be another similar show next year – when I know, I’ll let you all know.

Kevin Grose – (your FREE show wandering) Group Chairman

Photos by Janet Loader





# Members' Evenings

## Format and Topics

Please, please let us have feedback ideas on format and topics that you would like for members evenings. During the year we have the AGM, a Classic Car Show and a Christmas Quiz. We have guest speakers on a wide range of topics, mostly motoring related. What else would interest you?

We have had training evenings, both 'classroom' and practical. Do you want more of these and on what topics?

Please forward your suggestion's to a committee member or the editor.

## WANTED

Articles, "Letters to the Editor", photographs or suggestions would be most welcome. It has been said that everyone has one book in them. If not a book then why not an item for the newsletter! It can be long, short, factual, controversial, serious or humorous. We have a wide variety of members so almost anything will be of interest to some of us.

Ed.

## Kevin Grose

by Serena Lonton, Group/Membership Secretary

As you will no doubt be aware, Kevin decided to stand down as group chairman with immediate effect on 16<sup>th</sup> July 2012. This came as quite a shock to us all, but we all know how things can catch up with us and hey presto – something has to give.

Kevin became group chairman in October 2008 having previously been group secretary since he was co-opted on to the committee in April 2004. He was also a group observer for many years.

In all roles, Kevin has worked tirelessly on behalf of TGAM and we will all miss his total commitment and effort, however he is at least remaining a TGAM member.

I wish Kevin all the very best for the future and I want him to know that as far as I am concerned, the door is always open.

Good luck Kevin – all the best.





# Do Roundabouts Turn Full Circle?

By Kevin G. Grose

I've just finished another traffic flow survey in Honiton, Devon situated on an out of town smaller roundabout near a large supermarket. How exciting is that, you may ask? Well, it's not exactly exciting but someone has to do it because the Department for Transport (DfT) have asked for it and I have an established record of not ever falling asleep whilst undertaking these types of surveys!

7 o'clock (am) start of survey and the local traffic embark on their journeys to work, etc. This is a four entry/exit road roundabout and out of two of the roads, one descends fairly rapidly and the opposite number ascends even more rapidly. I am located on one of the flatter entry/exit routes with the rapidly ascending road on my left. The local traffic flows and my colleague almost cannot believe his eyes – "Did you see that – that driver never even looked left", he shouts, "That was a near one".

There is obviously a fair amount of traffic also coming down the road on "our" left and the majority are travelling quite fast even though this is a 30 mph zone. My colleague gets even

more agitated, "Look, there's another one... and that one... I don't believe it... another one – no one is looking left at all" I have also observed all his surveillances and it's true – virtually nobody was looking to the left as they approached the roundabout where the fastest traffic was entering – NO ONE!

I also noticed that hardly anyone bothered with any form of indication whatsoever. Those that did indicate, didn't exactly indicate in the right place and therefore gave misleading information which in turn gave us even more entertainment – it was certainly a lively roundabout and this continued for most of the day. The most unusual thing was that absolutely no one sounded their horn, appeared to lose their temper or squealed to a halt or anything – it just sort of worked and there wasn't really a single major incident all day – 12 hours of entertainment for FREE! I just don't know how they managed it – there were so many very near misses that it appeared to be the normal thing to happen but absolutely no one evoked a red mist or angry response at all – unbelievable.







The only incident was much further down the road on another mini-roundabout where we gathered an elderly driver was taken ill and crashed into another car, therefore evoking a closed road section for 3 hours while the paramedics and recovery personnel did their jobs. This of course lead to much more entertainment on “our” roundabout as people still believed you can drive down a “Closed Road” with a Police car blocking it and a Police Officer doing his best to stop them – all this entertainment was for FREE and we thoroughly enjoyed it all. You would not have believed the antics and standard of driving displayed during the whole day and especially during the three hour road closure – I wish I had had my video camera with me as I could have made a few full length films from the hilarious outtakes.

At around five o'clock the road was opened again and all was back to normal with no one looking left; no indication; the wrong indication; and of course the need to get out of work and home within the shortest possible time ever added a little something extra to the mix. Then, a gentleman approached us and said, “Did you see that red car speeding down the hill?” to which I replied, “Well, which speeding red car did you mean as there had



been several?”. “The one I was chasing – I was doing nearly 60 mph in my sports car and I couldn’t catch him. That’s the trouble around here, people think this is a race track,

we’ve tried everything to get people to slow down!”

I didn’t really know what to say – this is a 30 mph zone; this is a local inhabitant who should know that, yet he chases a young lad in a red car up to 60 mph down a very steep road where only a few hours ago there was a major incident and in the vicinity of a major supermarket area where people, children, dog walkers, cyclists, etc., are very prevalent, along with a very fast flowing roundabout with hardly anyone looking left, indicating, not indicating, etc., and he wonders what anyone is going to do about it?

I rest my case, m’lord – you can help some people, some of the time, but you can’t help some people, at any time! Anyway, it was a young lad in a BLUE Corsa that was speeding excessively!

Kevin Grose – (always awake) Group Chairman





# RLF AGM - Saturday 19<sup>th</sup> May 2012

By Kevin G. Grose

The annual Regional Liaison Forum (RLF) AGM was held recently at the George Albert Hotel on the main A37 between Yeovil and Dorchester. Your elected attendees this year were Alan Thomson and myself and we travelled there in my eco tractor – the diesel Fiat Doblo 1.3 JTD. We decided to take this vehicle just in case the IAM had loads of “freebees” to give away as the Fiat has a rear fold down access ramp – much easier to load all the stuff in but it was a waste of time as we didn’t get any!

We made good time and arrived early for a cup of coffee before embarking on all the official requirements. Various issues were raised and dealt with professionally with all AGM processes sorted in due course. The Lona Williams trophy was this year awarded to Jane Percy for all her continuous work and effort in being the RLF Secretary and for all the Scottish related jokes, required translations and supplies of chocolate biscuits and sweets! Well done Jane – a very worthy and highly deserving recipient of this annual award especially with having to put up with all us lot on a regular basis.



Kevin’s ‘eco tractor’

Again, there appear to be many more new ideas being processed and again, it appears they are being implemented without proper dialogue with the many Groups and personnel who will be or are affected by this action. It was raised that many meetings take place behind seemingly closed doors; decisions made and then action directed without consultation taking place. Various disputed







figures were being quoted but as you all know, statistics can always be “adjusted” to suit any cause you choose – maybe it is time to actually adopt the real facts and only the facts, but then we all have to agree on them.

Anyway, lunchtime and the George Albert Hotel once again supplied an excellent two choice carvery meal and a lovely apple crumble dessert – real food that you can easily recognise, brilliant. After lunch, we were back to the main business with a Chiswick presentation on the new IAM data system coming into play. We had a few hiccups (things run much slower in sunny Dorset...) but in the end it all became clear what Chiswick was aiming for and the day closed with much for all the Groups to think about.

Lovely day, lovely grub, lovely surroundings – in fact all enjoyable and entertaining, job done and just to show you all that I was actually listening all day and not just there on a jolly, here are a few of the facts relayed during the day: there are 218 IAM Groups throughout the UK; there are 30 Air Ambulances throughout the UK; there is an IAM Motorcycle ride taking place from the Ace Cafe in London from 18<sup>th</sup> June to 25<sup>th</sup> June with the region one part taking route between Christchurch (Dorset) and

Birmingham (see IAM website for full details); Andy Poulton was ALWAYS first in the queue for lunch, dessert, chocolates, biscuits, etc.; 17,000 free IAM pens were handed out last year; next RLF will be at BAWA, Bristol in October; on average, over 3 RLF meetings – 30+ IAM Groups attended with 66 attendees and it appears that your Region 1 RLF meetings are the best supported regional meetings within the UK and lastly, your Chairman averaged 59.85 miles to the gallon in my tractor. It will be interesting to see what actually evolves before and for the next RLF meeting.

Kevin Grose – Group Chairman



Venue: The George Albert Hotel





# Grand Touring 2007 – Part 3

By Stuart Bullock

The picture you need to have is that a third of Romanians use a horse and cart as daily transport. They all appear to have been built by Colin Chapman of Lotus fame. His theory was that as a race car crosses the finish line it should collapse. If it doesn't then it was too strong and therefore too heavy. Most of the carts I saw had just crossed the finish line. Another third drive a car called a Dacia. It is really a Renault 12 of the mid 80's vintage but built under licence in Romania. They have an 850cc, 3-cylinder petrol engine. 0 to 30 takes all week and 50 mph is a distant wish for most. Therefore, once rolling they try not to stop. For anything. Remember, traffic lights are just a suggestion. Lane discipline (as we know it Jim) does not exist. To be fair, all roads are 2 lane, white markings are usually a faint memory and if no one is coming what does it matter where you are on the road. Hmm, quaint logic. The remaining third drive lorries. There is nothing I can contribute to these strange animals driving style that could be reproduced in this article. It isn't rude, just too



A Dacia 1300 in Poiana Brasov  
(Photo by Charles01)

many faults to explain. Always give right to might.

The riding day was 12 hours long. It was a weary three that arrived at the hotel, sited at the start of a ski lift and therefore suitably cooler. We had two clear days here and the hotel was not too bad, although the staff were noticeably surly. Asking for a clean cup at breakfast appeared to be a serious criminal offence. The town of Brasov, at the bottom of the mountain, is a strange





**Peles Castle (Photo by Erwan Martin)**

mix of seriously run down and startlingly new. The 'mediaeval' section includes a pedestrian area full of quaint shops, cafes and restaurants. Nearby there is a huge church named as the Black Church. We were advised that it was worth a visit so included it in our list. When we visited we found a sign on the outside of the church. **SUNDAY – CLOSED ALL DAY.** What day were we there?

We found a restaurant close to the hotel. Brollies at the ready we walked down and had a fantastic meal at a reasonable price. Time to go back coincided with a thunderstorm and heavy rain. Shortest taxi ride I have ever taken. Mind you, the driver took some persuading to leave his televised football match. I may have

paid him a week's wages in Romanian shrapnel, but we didn't get wet.

The next day we joined the majority of the group and visited two castles. The first, Castle Bran, was where the Dracula movie starring Tom Cruise was filmed. It was actually built by the Knights of the Teutonic Order in 1212. Remember most of Europe was on holiday as well as us and I think I was behind most of them. However, this is where the story of Dracula begins. The Castle was taken over by Vlad Tepes, King of Wallachia (an early name for the region). In Turkish his name is Vlad Draculea. He does not appear to have been a very forgiving sort of bloke, given to impaling people at the drop of a hat. His nick-name





therefore was Brad the Impaler and the imagination of Mr Stoker turned that into the Dracula that we know, who 'impales' his victims on a rather splendid set of gnashers. No NHS Dentist scheme in his day. An interesting place but too many 'grocks' for my liking. It was though, very very hot. Better than very very wet.

Later in the day we visited Peles Castle. Considered by many one of the most beautiful castles in all Europe, Peles Castle is a masterpiece of German new-Renaissance architecture. Commissioned by King Carol I in 1873 and completed in 1883, Peles' interiors are an opulent display of elegant design and historical artefact. Its 160 rooms are adorned with the finest examples of European art, Murano crystal chandeliers, German stained-glass windows, walls covered with Cordoba leather, Meissen and Sevres porcelains, ebony and ivory sculptures. This Castle was full of interest and history and we found it all fascinating. There were several splendid paintings of Venice that I took a liking to.

Sadly, time to leave came all too soon. Some of the main roads were poorly surfaced but the mountain roads were quite swoopy and

swoopy. We were very smooth, as ever. Back in Poiana Brasov we returned to our restaurant for another fine meal. This time we were joined in dribs and drabs by many others from the tour. Hotel dinner not good then? A very nice gesture was from the tour leaders and the hotel. This was a bottle of Champers for each of us as it was our birthdays. Yes, all 3 of us Leos!! Next day we set off for our last stop in Romania, Cluj-Napoca, a mere 170 miles away. It was another super hot day and after riding some 'interesting' roads we soon arrived on the town outskirts. We were greeted by a young lady who lifted her short skirt and waggled her bare bottom in our direction. I only just had a fleeting glimpse of course. Much too busy concentrating on other things. I'd like to think she greeted everyone in this way and hadn't waited out in the hot sun just for us. We had a spot of trouble identifying our hotel in this town. The route direction was to look for a hill in the town centre. We would have, had the buildings not been so tall! I detected a touch of 'no research' on the part of the route author here. However, resorting to a tried and tested tactic, a local taxi, soon put us right. It really never pays to rely on someone else when it comes to routes.

... TO BE CONTINUED







**Closing date for the Winter Edition of  
the TGAM e-Newsletter is  
Saturday, 20<sup>th</sup> October.**

**All contributions would be very  
welcome.**

**All items should be sent to  
“The Editor” at [ed@tgam.org.uk](mailto:ed@tgam.org.uk) or,  
if you do not have e-mail, by mail to  
David Walton at  
11 Stoke Road, North Curry,  
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