

e-NEWSLETTER



IAM
DRIVING ROAD SAFETY



DECADE OF ACTION FOR
ROAD SAFETY 2011-2020

**TAUNTON GROUP OF
ADVANCED MOTORISTS**

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TAUNTON GROUP OF ADVANCED MOTORISTS

e-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.

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THE COMMITTEE

Committee meetings (for Committee Members ONLY) are held bimonthly at 7:30pm on the 2nd 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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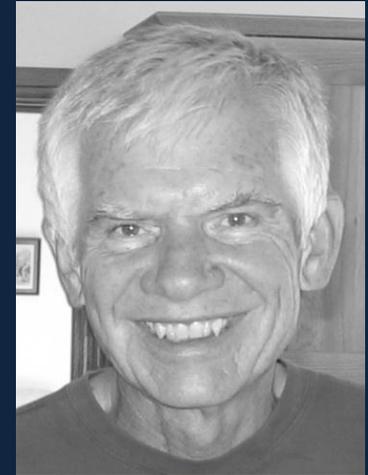
EDITORIAL



It was gratifying to receive so many complimentary comments on our first electronic Newsletter. This was despite that edition being rather short of copy due to being rushed out in only six days from when the decision was made to go electronic, and also because the publication date had been brought forward by one month.

This edition is back to the level of content that you have been accustomed to in our previous paper newsletters. In this edition you will find all of our regular features, and various articles contributed by members such as the continuing story of Stuart Bullock's Touring experiences. I have also resurrected the historical item "100 Years Ago" and hope you find that interesting.

**By John Gilbert
Newsletter Editor**



We are fortunate in having a chairman who is widely experienced in driving and in the motor industry and is passionate about cars. This has resulted in a plethora of articles written by him with authority on a wide range of motoring issues. I cannot match that, my passion is aviation. Of course I am not going to write about aviation in this publication but I am planning to write a series called "Wings & Wheels" which discusses areas in which the motor and aviation are very closely connected. Enjoy your reading.



FROM THE CHAIRMAN



Direct from the Driving Seat ... Or Chair, man!

By Kevin G. Grose
Chairman

Ladies and Gentlemen, this is our second e-newsletter and the overall response for our initial first e-newsletter has been extremely positive so far but I do understand that our non connected members are missing out on all the information contained in the full electronic version. Please, please let us know if we can email your copy to a friend or relative who can then let you see the full version. _____



Right, I am writing this as the fuel shortage/ strike is taking place ... or rather is not taking place ... or is it? Why do people panic so much? By succumbing to the general media induced panic, YOU cause the problem to escalate beyond control and therefore YOU have caused a situation to occur that was never there in the first place. Fuel sales are down because the liquid gold stuff we need for our cars is now so extremely expensive, the majority of common sense users are using much less of the stuff.





We now walk a bit more; cadge lifts; share cars; bicycle a bit; downgrade the gas guzzler for a fuel sipper; think twice before we need to make a journey; plan to do several things on one journey instead of making several unnecessary shorter journeys so it stands to reason, the average motorist is using less fuel and it's not just because it now costs TOO much. It appears everything we now do is related to the cost of a gallon of fuel. Food costs have escalated because the vehicles that need to make the deliveries use fuel – they don't use more fuel, they use just the same amount but it now costs more.

Any activity that involves getting from A to B that uses fuel, now has to be considered if it's really necessary. No more just popping up to the post box to post that one letter – I'll leave it until I need to go somewhere else now and there lies another issue – the cost of postage is going up, not just a little bit, oh no – it's going up a massive bit and apparently the number of letters now sent are much less – I wonder why – couldn't be anything to do with the fact that to post two letters soon will cost me a pound – yes, one whole pound – blimey, I can almost buy three quarters of a litre of fuel for that! _____

Things have got to change for the better; for the environment; for the consumer; for the High Street; for the people, etc., but I am not sure when or if this will ever happen soon as long as YOU, the motorist continue to pay far too much for the required necessities to enable you to continue in your chosen role as a motorist and as a motorist, we pay all the time whether you use your car or not.

Rant time over – have you had your eyes checked recently? How old can you be to undertake an IAM Advanced Driving Test? Old friends and soap box races; Drivers antics on Traffic Surveys; etc., this and much more to be found elsewhere in this second e-newsletter.

Got your diary handy then please make a date for the Taunton Group Annual Christmas Luncheon at Oake Manor Golf Club on Saturday, 8th December 2012 from 12.00 noon.

Did you know we've got a mention in the Bristol Group Newsletter – The Link, yes and on the very subject of having an e-newsletter. Many IAM Motorcycle Groups already have e-newsletters and we may be the first Car Group in the area to follow suit and many more may now follow us with the proposed massive





postal cost increases making facilitating hard copy Newsletters unsustainable.

So, a fairly short report here again and all other above details should be found elsewhere in our second e-newsletter – good hunting, read and enjoy!

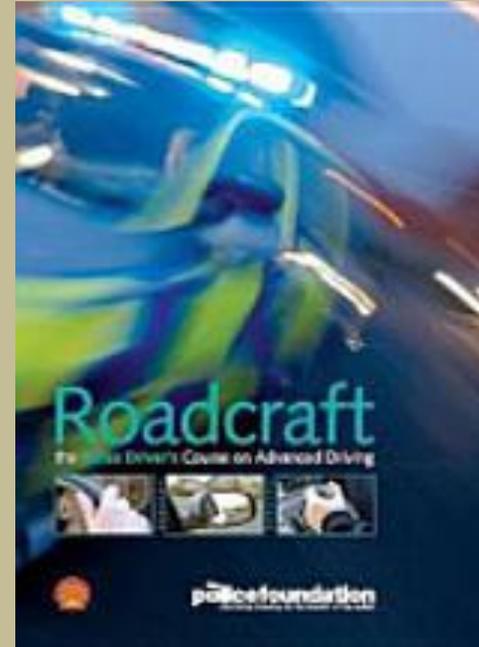
Kevin Grose - Group Chairman (now, where's that application for being a Petrol Tanker Driver...)

Any articles, "Letters to the Editor", photographs or suggestions would be most welcome.



Please help to make your newsletter the best it can be.

MAY MEMBERS' EVENING Presents



EXCERPTS FROM THE ROADCRAFT DVD

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



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 or encounter any problems please contact our Group Chairman, Kevin Grose.

	TEAM WEST	TEAM EAST
TEAM LEADERS	Colin White 01823 257196	Alan Thomson 01460 55919
SENIOR OBSERVER	Colin White	
TRAINEE SENIOR OBSERVERS		Alan Thomson John Gilbert
OBSERVERS	Guy Denton 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
Membership Secretary**



Many thanks to you all for renewing your membership with TGAM this year.

As of 5th April 2012, we have 112 fully paid up TGAM members, including 8 new members who have joined us since 1st October 2011.

We continue to notice the economic climate we find ourselves in, but we are still in a healthy position and we fully appreciate and value your support.

However, we are now fast approaching a new membership year. October 1st seems a long way off, but it is surprising how quickly it arrives, so please make a note to renew with us. For a very modest subscription you not only get the chance to enjoy our monthly Members' Evenings, but our absolutely brilliant new e-newsletter (as long you have e-mail that is)!

Our Editor, John Gilbert, greatly appreciates input from YOU – the members, so your contributions will be warmly welcomed.

Please tell your friends and family about us – show them our newsletter, and bring them along to our Members' Evenings where they will enjoy an informative and entertaining evening, along with FREE tea, coffee and biscuits – spread the word!

Many thanks for your continued support – and most of all, safe and happy motoring.



MEMBERS' PAGES



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>
Michael Hall	Cullompton	Associate
Alistair Hawes	Bishops Hull	Associate

Advanced Driving Test Passes

Congratulations to the following who have recently passed their Advanced Driving Tests

	<u>OBSERVED BY</u>
Joanne Clements	Colin White
Isobel Jennings	Faye Markham
Mike Keough	Russ Williams

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.





De Mortuis – Grace England, 1923-2012

Grace passed away on 17th February at the age of 88 after a long illness. She had been a long-term member of IAM and very much a prominent member of TGAM.

Before TGAM was formed, Grace was a member of Exeter & Torbay group where her observer was Sue Butt. Taunton was a sub-group within Exeter group at that time. Grace made the weekly trip to Exeter for her observed drives passing her ADT in 1980.

When TGAM became an independent group in 1981, Grace became a committee member, then Group Treasurer in 1982 until 1991. She was also Membership Secretary from 1986 to 1988.

Throughout these years Grace was also one of TGAM's leading observers, helping many associates to pass their ADT.

In addition to this Grace was congratulated on gaining a Gold (Class 1) RoSPA award, having taken a re-test in March 1993.

Following the sad death of her husband, Grace moved to Wiltshire to be nearer her son Richard and his family, but remained a loyal TGAM member until she died.

From Julia Steer:

I was extremely sorry to hear that Grace England had died. My association with Grace goes back to before the Taunton Group of Advanced Motorists was formed. In fact we were part of the Exeter Group.

Grace must have taken her IAM Test some time before I got to know her, as when I joined in 1979 she became my observer, a friendship we kept going right up to her death. Grace was in her own way absolutely dedicated to driving.

Some time after her husband died in 1998, Grace decided to move up to Chippenham to be nearer her son, but we still kept in touch with each other. So Grace, wherever you are, I shall really miss those long chats on the phone.

Now all the fun, joy, tears and laughter are over, rest in peace. You won't be forgotten.

I wish to thank Grace for all her commitment, devotion, hard work and support given to the Taunton Group over so many years and I send my sincere condolences to her son and family. Grace, you are sadly gone but not forgotten, I sincerely thank you. – Kevin Grose



A time to say a very big Thank You

There are times when things really need to be said and I just want to say a very BIG thank you to the following people:

Firstly – to two gentlemen who recently undertook an assessment drive each, with different Taunton Group Observers. Both gentlemen had expressed their present concerns and wishes, at one of our Members' Evenings and “a deal was done” to help suppress those fears. After an excellent job done by two of our Group Observers, both gentlemen were so very pleased with the results that they made a generous donation each to the Group funds - I thank you both and should you either need our help ever again, you know where we are.

Secondly – to both the Observers who offered to help out and demonstrated their prompt, professional attitude to the above cause – thank you both.

Thirdly – all the helpers (especially the regular “few”) who always turn up just that little bit

earlier to help set things up on our monthly Members' Evenings – the chairs, the tea cups, the washing up, clearing up and packing away – it really is appreciated and thank you all.

Fourthly – the Group Committee who continue to carry out all the necessary work, often behind the scenes to enable the Group to continue to function efficiently and progressively – thank you.

Fifthly – all the Taunton Group Observers for their continuing commitment and “drive” for the IAM cause – without this dedicated effort, there is no Group – thank you all.

Lastly – all the Taunton Group Members, Associates and Supporters who attend our Members' Evenings and outside events. They continue to spread the word of the IAM and hopefully encourage many others to consider taking up the cause – thank you all.

Kevin Grose – Group Chairman





Drivers with Disabilities

We were approached recently about having our Group contact details held on a new website. This website is a one stop shop type website for anyone with a disability which will hopefully lead them to find information in whatever area they seek. Although there may be a very few limiting factors in respect of undertaking advanced driving with certain disabilities, I feel as a Group, we should never deter anyone whatsoever from seeking to improve their level and standard of driving. We would be pleased to offer advice and welcome any and all to participate in any of our Group activities.

The new website is at: www.compassdisability.org.uk and the section is called: Compass Know How, *“enabling an online searchable database for service users and professionals to use as a tool to identify services that support them with their daily living”* and we are pleased to offer our support in any way we can help. If you know anyone who may be seeking appropriate advice, then please guide them to this valuable website. Thank you.

Kevin Grose, Group Chairman



CALENDAR

COMMITTEE MEETINGS

14 June

9 August

11 October



MAY

16	W	7:30 pm	Members' Evening – Excerpts from Roadcraft DVD
19	Sa		Regional Liaison Forum (RLF) AGM at the Clay Pigeon

JUNE

20	W	7:30 pm	Members' Evening – Classic Car Evening
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JULY

18	W	7:30 pm	Members' Evening
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AUGUST

15	W	7:30 pm	Members' Evening
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SEPTEMBER

19	W	7:30 pm	Members' Evening
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OCTOBER

17	W	7:30 pm	Members' Evening – Annual General Meeting
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MEMBERS' EVENING

By John Gilbert
Newsletter Editor



15th February Car Mechanics

The first item on the agenda was the presentation of an Advanced Driving Test Pass Certificate to Alan Baker by his Observer, John Gilbert. Chairman Kevin Grose then read out some items of interest. These included news that Nigel Mansell had been awarded the CBE and that three Observers would be going for a skid pan course in the near future (see report on page 16 of this newsletter).

Kevin then made a presentation on Car Mechanics drawing on his vast experience in the motor trade. This was based on 'POWDER' but went into much more detail. A sample of his slides are shown below.

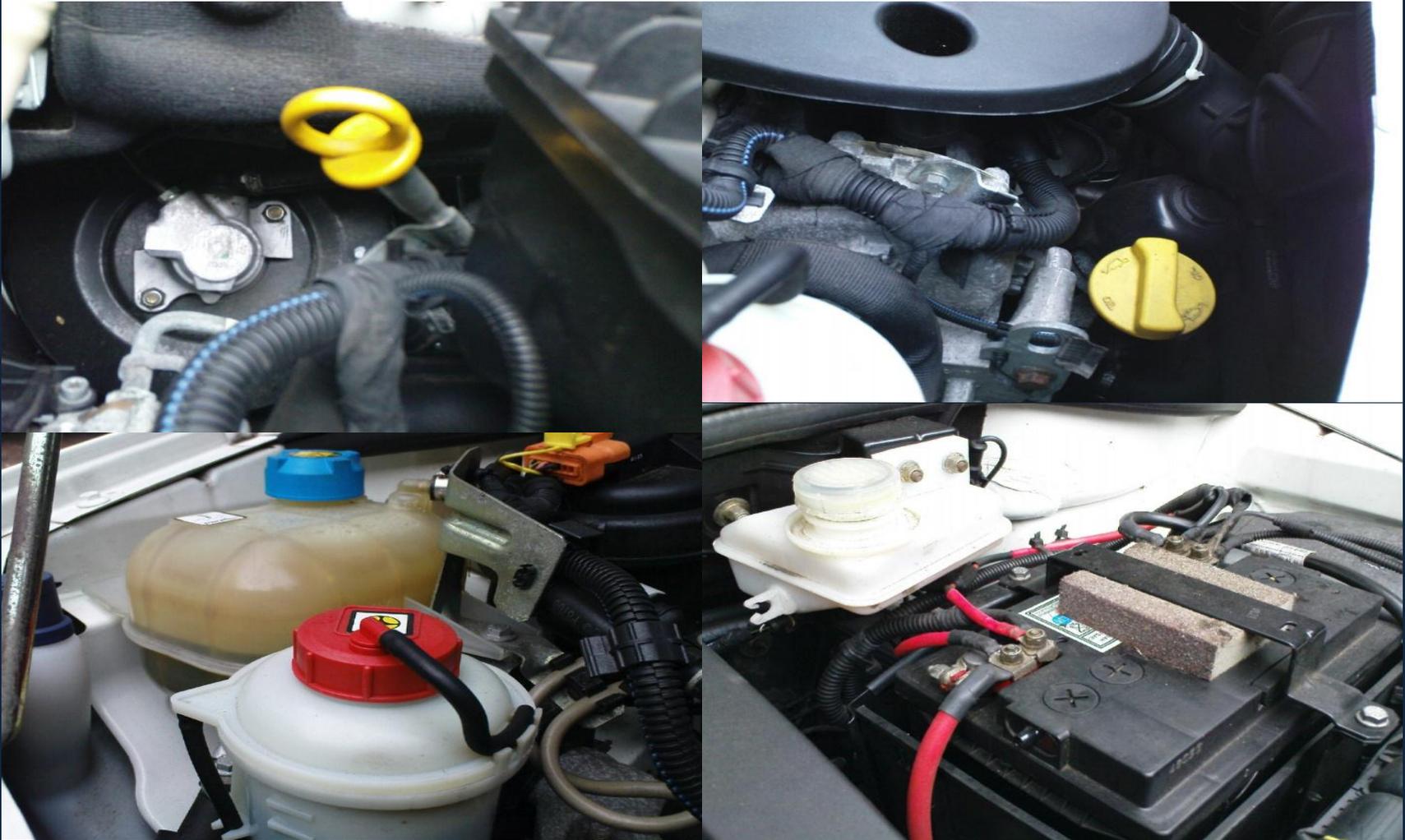


Alan Baker receives his ADT Certificate
from his Observer, John Gilbert



UNDER BONNET TASKS

FIAT DOBLO 2005



DAMAGE – RUBBER





FINALLY.....

ALWAYS DO A VISUAL CHECK AND
WALK AROUND YOUR VEHICLE EVERY TIME

BEFORE YOU DRIVE AWAY AS YOU
NEVER KNOW WHAT HAS HAPPENED

TO YOUR VEHICLE WHILST PARKED
USE YOUR EYES TO AVOID A SURPRISE!

THANK YOU FOR LISTENING



MEMBERS' EVENING

By John Gilbert
Newsletter Editor

21st March Nursing in Northern Canada

To start off the monthly meeting two Advanced Driving Certificates were presented. The first was presented to Isobel Jennings by her Observer, Faye Markham. The second went to Robert Cartman who had been observed by Tony Hucker. Robert was Tony's first Associate. Our congratulations go to all involved.

Kevin Grose then read out a few notices of interest. Chiswick has now decided that the £25 DriveCheck will be discontinued but the £35 DriveCheck will carry on, applicants being checked by an IAM Examiner. The IAM is



Isobel Jennings receives her ADT Certificate
from her Observer, Faye Markham





Robert Cartman receives his ADT from Kevin Grose while Observer, Tony Hucker, looks on

offering discounts on Fiat cars and RAC membership which has now replaced the AA. There are now over one million drivers over the age of 80 in the UK, the oldest being 106. Peter Roger, the IAM's Chief Examiner has been officially named as Britain's top advanced driver. Kevin also reminded online members that, if they are not already receiving Insight and Members' News, they should contact the IAM to arrange delivery.

The main event of the evening was a talk by TGAM Observer Janet Loader on her experiences as a nurse in Northern Canada. Janet went to Toronto



Janet Loader in her mukluks, snow shoes made from moose hide or caribou





with a friend who, unfortunately, returned three months later leaving Janet on her own. She then met some Australian nurses who invited her to go back to Australia but she didn't have enough money for the fare. At this point they advised her to go to Northern Canada where she would earn isolation pay as well as a salary. Janet decided to go, along with one of the Australians, and applied to the Department of National Health and Welfare, and ended up with an assignment at Split Lake in northern Manitoba.

There being no roads in this part of Canada the final part of the journey was by a small, four seat Cessna aircraft and, on arrival, she found herself at an Indian Reservation of 400 people and just 8 white people, and the nearest doctor 400 air miles away. The nurses were therefore responsible for everything: delivering babies, pulling teeth, suturing, etc. All supplies (oil, food, medical supplies, etc.) were brought in just once a year by what was known as a tractor train. During ice break up in the spring, and again as winter approached there would be no contact with the outside world except by two way radio, which didn't always work.



An aerial view of Bearskin Lake

While at Split Lake Janet met a gentleman who would become her husband. He arrived as a relief manager for the Hudson Bay Company but was based at Bearskin Lake in Ontario. The couple married in England and then returned to Bearskin Lake, about 260 miles south east of Split Lake, to start their married life. After she had been at Bearskin Lake for just a month Janet was told that she would have to compile a list of the necessary supplies for the entire next year which would be arriving on the next tractor train. She had to





order everything for the year ahead, fuel, food, drugs, dressings, etc., a very daunting task. The tractor train would be coming up from Winnipeg.



One of Janet's happiest memories, the school children riding the tractor train back into Bearskin Lake

Janet next moved way down south to Grassy Narrows in Ontario, about 140 miles east of Winnipeg. This settlement even had a road, actually a logging road, which was only usable during the winter when it was frozen becoming a mud bath in the summer. They felt much closer to civilization here, being only 32 miles from Kenora which had roads and even a railhead.

Finally they moved back up north to Big Trout Lake, Ontario which was not far from Bearskin Lake. The final year she was there was the first year they were able to bring in a truck and they were able to bring in timber for the construction of a new store.

Janet had to adjust to living in the north in many ways. She had to get used to only having wood stoves for heating and cooking and having to make her own bread. There were periods during winters when there was no running water, electricity, and for a while her outside loo was not working either. The lack of running water meant that she had to get water from under the ice on the lake. Transportation was almost entirely by air using some rather dilapidated aeroplanes.

Typical of these was a Bellanca Airmaster, a noisy and uncomfortable aircraft but it could carry an impressive load at about 140 mph. This aircraft now resides in a museum in the US, the only remaining flyable example of this type of aircraft. When Janet first arrived in the north there were no runways at all, they used the lakes for landing and takeoff but by the time she left Big Trout Lake, after a total of ten years in the north, the first runways were





appearing and now every settlement she worked at has a runway.



The Bellanca Airmaster

Janet's talk was enjoyed immensely by the group members who were present and I believe we were all very impressed with her resourcefulness working under sometimes, very primitive conditions. Although we do, of course, focus on driving matters at our members' meetings we will, hopefully, have more presentations like Janet's in the future featuring the interesting careers that many of our members have had in the past in various walks of life.



Janet's eldest son in a tikanoggin



MEMBERS' EVENING

By John Gilbert
Newsletter Editor



18th April Observation

The meeting opened with Chairman, Kevin Grose, giving us an update on IAM matters. Firstly he announced that the Christmas Lunch had now been booked for Saturday, 8th December at Oake Manor Golf Club. Next he mentioned that TGAM will be purchasing a number of DVDs and had already obtained the Roadcraft DVD which will be featured at our May Members' Evening.

Following two free assessment drives carried out by two of our Observers the two recipients were so pleased with their experiences that they both made generous donations to the group.

It was interesting to hear that two other local IAM groups have now, apparently, followed our lead and have changed from a printed to an electronic newsletter. Many in the audience were amused to hear that the Department of Transport had recently issued guidelines to the users of mobility scooters which included a recommendation that they should not be driven by blind persons. Kevin also mentioned that 27 police forces had purchased 3-D scanning equipment which should greatly reduce the time taken to take measurements at crash sites, hence allowing roads to be opened up to traffic quicker after accidents.

The main event of the evening was a presentation by our Chairman on Observation. The audience was invited to discuss the potential threats and hazards illustrated in a series of slides, some of which are shown on the next page.





OBSERVATION

EARLY VISION, EARLY DECISION

IS IT A THREAT OR A HAZARD?

BRAKES TO SLOW, GEARS TO GO

ALWAYS EXPECT THE UNEXPECTED





Skid Pan Course

By Janet Loader

On Wednesday 15th February 2012, Allan Wellwood, Tony Hucker and I attended the Skid Prevention and Control standard course at the Devon Drivers' Centre, Exeter. I have to admit that I was rather apprehensive but also quite excited!



Janet Loader, Allan Wellwood and Tony Hucker with the skid car

The course aims to teach recognition of conditions likely to lead to skidding and the possibility of controlling skids.

After a short wait we were greeted by our

instructor Chris Pope ADI (Approved Driving Instructor) who took us to the "Skid Car". This is a car mounted in a framework which causes the appropriate car wheels to be lifted off the road surface so simulating a variety of hazardous conditions.



The Ford Mondeo Skid Car

For each manoeuvre Chris gave a quick demonstration and we then took it in turns to 'have a go'. The first session had the effect of a front-wheel drive. We had to drive round a circular track in 2nd gear and spin the car then regain control. Chris made this look easy but at first I found that I didn't go fast enough to spin the car (Alan Thomson will understand





My feelings about this!); eventually I did make the car spin. Following this I drove around a circuit with sharp left and right bends. I was pleased the edges were only white lines as I could imagine hitting many hedges! Allan and Tony made the car spin so much it was as if as if we were on a giddy fairground ride.



Observer Allan Wellwood takes the wheel

I found that controlling the effect of a rear-wheel drive was much more difficult; there was a lot of spinning involved and changing drivers proved quite a relief as we could have a breath of fresh air and recover our equilibrium.

We also covered emergency braking with and without ABS (no skidding!), and pulling away uphill in snow.

The afternoon passed very quickly so obviously we enjoyed ourselves. I recommend this course for everyone; the three of us agreed that we would like to repeat the course in a year or so to refresh the skills we practised. It was a wonderful experience; one that I would not want to have missed.



The skid mechanism mounted inside the boot of the skid car

There will be another Skid Course soon –Ed.





How do you celebrate a Special Birthday?

By Kevin G. Grose

I read recently about an elderly chap passing his IAM Advanced Driving Test. Nothing unusual in that you might say apart from the fact he's aged 90. He decided he wanted to do something for his 90th year so he did the test. He had been driving since aged 16 and had spent more than 70 years behind the wheel – not all in a continuous time frame I hasten to add! Yes – a Great Grandfather of 90 years of age decided to do something for his 90th year and his verdict on the IAM Advanced Driving Test – “It's not too bad, there's no writing, just driving and questions”.

So there you have it, ladies and gentleman – that's all there is to it, but why wait until you are 90 years old? Why not do something for your 80th year; 70th year; 60, 50...why not every 10 years starting at 20 years old – it would make perfectly acceptable sense, you could celebrate every 10 years by ensuring your driving is

STILL up to an advanced driving level if you started at 20 years old.

What I also liked was the fact that the gentleman in question was fairly local to the Taunton Group only living in Dorchester, Dorset which is not a million miles away, is it? So, well done to Cyril our 90 year old Great Grandfather; well done to the Dorset Group and well done to the local paper for including this article.

Age is not the issue but the ability to continue to drive safely at an advanced level at ANY age is – from aged 17 to 106...why 106 – well, I believe that the eldest recorded holder of a driver holding a UK licence – who knows, maybe that driver will celebrate their 110th birthday by doing the IAM Test!

Kevin Grose – (extremely young...) Group Chairman





One Hundred Years Ago – 1912 Highlights

A Big Year for Singer

George Singer started his cycle business in 1875, and it was he who patented the idea of curving the front forks of bicycles as an aid to steering. By the turn of the century Singer had become the largest manufacturer of bikes in the world, but their thoughts were turning to the internal combustion engine.

The company's first powered offering was the the Motor-wheel, basically a bike with an engine contained in the wheel. There followed an evolution into three wheeled light cars. In 1905 production of license built cars was started but the real turning point was in 1912 when Singer brought out the Singer Ten, described by the press of the time as "The Rolls-Royce of cyclecars"

An apprentice at Singers at the time, Billy Rootes, left to set up in business on his own buying ten of the Singer Tens. This was the start of his Rootes empire which would eventually take over the Singer Car Company.

Wireless from the Motor Car

It was reported in the Manchester Guardian for 18th April, 1912 that it was then possible to receive and transmit radio messages from a motor car over short distances to other cars or to wireless stations within a distance of 20 miles. This had come about because the equipment had become so compact and cheap.

It was a matter of conjecture as to the usefulness of such a capability. By 1912 cars were considered as becoming so reliable that it might be considered not worth the cost to install such a device although there might be times when it would be most useful to be able to radio a distress message to the nearest service garage in the event of a breakdown, or to communicate with other cars.

The cost of installing radio equipment in a motor car would have been a fairly modest £5. The car would have had to be fitted with a telescopic pole to aid radio reception.



One Hundred Years Ago – Cars of 1912

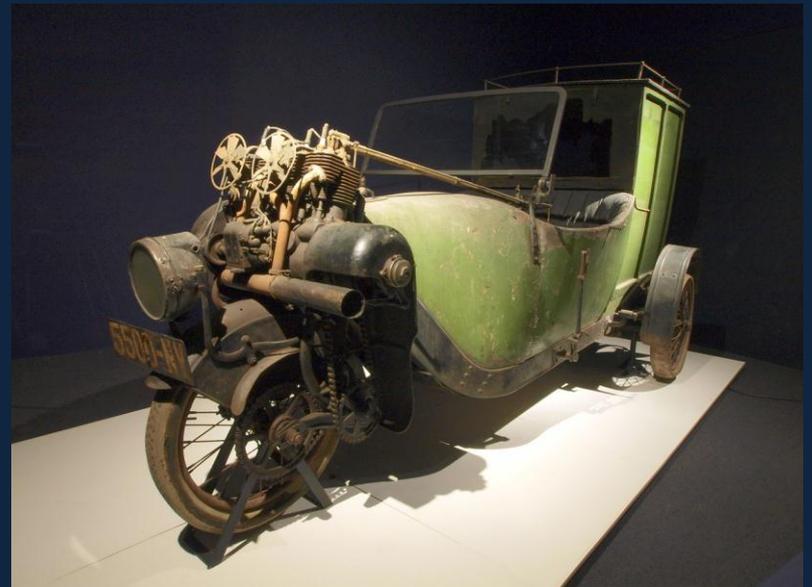


The Panhard & Levassor X19 Labourdette Skiff-Torpedo (Photo by Alfvan Beem)

Jean-Henri Labourdette unveiled his Skiff design in 1912. The car had a sleek, nautically themed body unlike that of any other car of its period. It had no doors. The body was constructed from triple layers of mahogany riveted to an ash frame.

Subsequently Labourdette applied Skiff bodies to cars made by Rolls Royce, Mercedes Benz, Hispano Suiza, Renault and Peugeot.

The German Phänomen Company, originally a bicycle and motorbike manufacturer, started producing three wheel cars in 1907. The 1912 Phänomobil was powered by a 1536 cc four cylinder engine. Because it was very economical it proved to be very popular and remained in production until 1927 when the company concentrated on their four wheelers.



1912 Phänomobil at the Lourman Museum in Holland (Photo by Alfvan Beem)





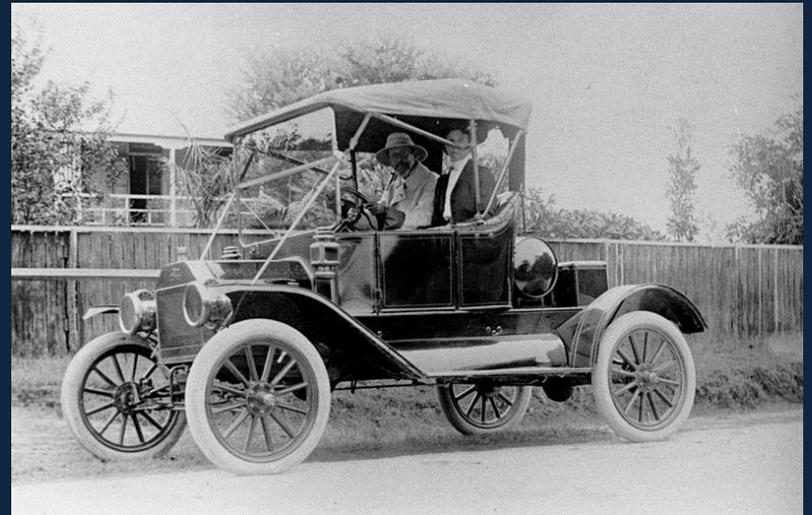
One Hundred Years Ago – Cars of 1912



**A 1912 Stanley Steam Car
(Photo by Stephen Foskett)**

The Stanley brothers produced their first steam car in the US in 1897 and continued until the factory closed in 1924. In 1906 a Stanley Steamer set the world record for the fastest mile in an automobile at 28.2 sec. Stanley Steamers were sometimes known as Flying Teapots.

The Ford Model T, sometimes known as “The Tin Lizzie”, was in continuous production from 1908 until 1927. It was the first car to be mass produced using a moving assembly line and was regarded as the world’s first affordable motor car. It’s four cylinder side valve engine was the first in the world to have a detachable head making servicing such as valve jobs much easier. More than 15 million Model Ts were produced, a record finally beaten by the VW Beetle in 1972.



Contemporary photo of a 1912 Ford Model T





All in a days work for a Traffic Data Collector!

By Kevin G. Grose

I am carrying out another Traffic Flow survey sat outside a well established local company just outside Ilminster, Somerset. Fairly busy road at times – normal pattern, rush hour intense traffic then moderate flow for type of road and location but most interesting and entertaining are the antics of the personnel working at this establishment.

The early morning entry of various vehicles is slow, controlled and courteous filtering in over a hour or so, slotting into the vast amount of car parking spaces. I notice a great number of drivers reversing into their chosen spaces. There's a few bikes and many pedestrians and it all works very well and is highly commendable. During the day, many couriers, suppliers and works related vehicles enter and leave the site – absolutely no problems whatsoever – in fact, very impressive indeed, even lunchtime traffic was fine.

However, eight and a half hours later – had I missed something? Had a bomb warning gone off? Had the old Grand Prix start been

reintroduced? Was the boss prowling about and would sack anyone still on the premises after 4.30pm? I think the whole car park emptied in about 2 minutes flat. Virtually every vehicle tried to replicate its manufacturers “0 to 60” indicated times. Quite a few induced loss of grip through violent wheel spin and quite a few demonstrated a seemingly lack of due care and attention to other road users. Only about two or three vehicles left the premises safely and lawfully!

Why would you drive to work daily in an entirely safe and controlled manner – do a good days work, then drive like a complete lunatic when you leave? Why? Is the desire to get home that desperate that you forget to drive safely, considerately and carefully? I have noted such antics before on other surveys and unless you personally witness such events over a full 12 hour period from 7.00 am to 7.00 pm, then you may dispute what I saw – but it is entirely true. I think I would drive much more cautiously and carefully, especially at the end of a full working day





when you are more tired than when you arrived first thing in the morning.

I must admit I have also witnessed some atrocious driving very early in the morning as well, on the way to carry out a traffic flow survey – why do people do this? On the way to Frome very early one day, there's a silver Ford Transit van dawdling along at about 40 mph. He's doing 40 mph where ever he is – when it allows 60 mph, he's doing 40 mph; when it's 20 mph past a school, he's doing 40 mph; 30 mph – yes, he's doing 40 mph. Several times, I attempt a safe overtake but he wanders across the road blocking my chosen route. At the bottom of a hill, he slows down; halfway up the hill, he suddenly speeds up – well he speeds up to 40 mph and stays there; top of the hill – yep, still 40 mph and still wandering across my overtaking route. After several miles of this, I do finally get pass him and leave him far behind to contemplate his life at 40 mph!

Further on, I am travelling safely at the permitted 60 mph. I am a very long way along two fairly long straight bits of roads with a slight bend in the middle and I glimpse some headlights a very long way back. I continue at

60 mph and these lights are gaining on me extremely fast. I am now entering a village at 30 mph and these lights are now virtually embedded into my rear tailgate – he must be parked on my tow bar! I can see there's a slight “agitation” in the demeanour of this vehicle/driver and he can't get pass me because of the way all the cars are parked along this village main street. A few yards from the national speed limit sign and he's gone past me like a rocket – actually more like a very tatty “lodgery Crysslurr” (have you seen the latest Chrysler adverts on TV) Voyager to be more precise, but he was flat out and really on a mission – he was gone, man – solid gone!

About a mile down the road, there he was again waiting at the crossroad traffic lights. They are RED but “Crysslurr” man is creeping forward. They are still RED but “Crysslurr” man in now halfway over the solid white STOP line. They remain RED and “Crysslurr” man in now completely past the solid white STOP line and edging nearer and nearer to the crossroad intersection. The vehicle is rocking against the handbrake but moving forward on the gearbox. “Crysslurr” man is definitely on a major mission against the RED STOP light and within a millisecond of the ORANGE light





appearing, there's a massive squeal of tyres scabbling for grip from the "lodgery Crysslurr". It wobbles and weaves off the line and disappears extremely quickly – gone like a rocket again and I'm just glad no one had left it too late coming through the lights from the other way.

So not too bad really, only a few laws broken: Speeding (several times); Tailgating; Driving without due care and attention; Failing to STOP at a RED light; Failing to STOP behind solid white STOP line; Driving in an aggravated manner; etc., etc., all managed within a few miles – I wonder what "Crysslurr" mans total of misdemeanours would be by the time he got home...if he ever got home!

It is very worrying how many of these idiots and imbeciles are out there causing untold mayhem and unnecessary stress to the many law abiding, safe, courteous and responsible drivers on our roads? I don't know the exact number but I bet it's way too many! Being a Traffic Data Collector and doing Traffic Flow Surveys can be very entertaining at times – especially the journeys to and from the site. Kevin Grose – Group Chairman (owner of a luxury Scenic but not a "lodgery Crysslurr")

JUNE MEMBERS' EVENING

Presents



CLASSIC CAR EVENING

*If you've got one – bring it.
If you don't – bring someone
else's!*

**Wednesday, 20th June at 7:30 pm
at Hatch Beauchamp Village Hall**





Petrol Crisis – what Petrol Crisis?

By Kevin G. Grose

Having heard a few unbelievable stories recently about people trying to stock pile fuel, especially petrol, I thought you might be interested in a few true stories involving the “magic jungle juice” or “liquid gold” commonly known as petroleum spirit.

Years ago, whilst working in a Bridgwater garage, there was a three litre V6 Ford Capri on my boss’s ramp, which appeared to have an erratic misfire – maybe a fuel blockage or a bit of dirt in the carburettor or something. My boss was fiddling around with this and that but the misfire was still there. “Kev, come over here and work the throttle so I can look down the carb”, he said so I duly oblige, gently pressing the throttle pedal up and down whilst he looks down the carburettor. “Press it a bit more”, he said, “Go on, give it some welly”, so I did - brooom, broooooom, BROOOM, BROOOOOOOOOOOOM, then all of a sudden, there’s an almighty BANG and a huge blue flash of light accompanied by an intense burning smell.



I immediately killed the ignition and ran around to the front of the Capri. My boss was just stood there, slightly bemused but looking quite red faced with very fine wisps of white smoke rising from around his head. His eyebrows were all singed and curly; the front of his hair was all wispy, curly and smoking; his face was bright red with traces of black smuts all around and then I noticed the





remains of a half burnt smouldering cigarette in his slightly charred mouth. You may have guessed what had happened.

He had removed the air cleaner unit completely and had been looking down the huge exposed twin choke carburettor when a bit of his fag had fell off straight into the massively petrol filled area when I had been instructed to “Give it some welly”. BANG it went, a very BIG BANG. He was perfectly fine apart from singed eyebrows and his burnt forelock. We both, then fell about laughing and I can still see the expression on his face now. Thankfully, everything was ok but he could have been seriously burned; he could have set the car alight; he could have burnt the garage down and we had four sets of triple petrol pumps! There was a lot of could haves but fortunately, we had all had a very lucky escape and the resulting explosion had somehow sorted the original misfire as well, so job well done overall, although I would certainly not recommend you try this method...ever again!

Recently, I filled my Opel Manta right up with fuel making it ready for its annual MOT test. I got home and parked it with its nose up in the air on a raised part of my driveway. I jumped

out and started to walk away when I smelt petrol fumes – very strong petrol fumes. I looked around my car and at the rear I found the answer - petrol was dripping alarmingly into a puddle on the concrete. I looked underneath and it was pouring out from the rear of the fuel tank – oh no, major problem on a Manta!

I quickly turned the car around thinking I had a hole just in the rear of the tank but to no avail, petrol was still pouring out even though the rear of the car/tank were now higher up. I ran to find something to catch the petrol and quickly found an old baking tray and placed it underneath just as the flow started to ebb but I suppose I must have lost about two gallons of the stuff by now. Luckily, I have a pit in my barn, so the Manta was duly placed over this to investigate this major disaster.

The actual tank was fine – no holes, dents or marks but where was all this fuel leaking from? I checked all the main fuel lines but all appears fine and then I notice an overflow pipe which runs around the tank about half way up – again, all’s fine but it is also connected to another very obscured overflow pipe on a “T” junction joiner. Whilst fumbling about around





this hidden little pipe, seepage of fuel is evident and hopefully I've found the leak. This tiny little pipe had cracked through age (see photo) and needed replacing which is easier said than done in this awkward, inaccessible place.



Anyway, job finally done and then fully tested – no leaks! What's annoying is the fact that this tiny little bit of pipe cost a few pennies but it had lost me about two gallons of fuel - £13.00 and how long had it been leaking and how much had I really lost over a period of time? A leaking fuel tank is a BIG NO NO – it's

an explosion waiting to happen – a throwaway cigarette; a spark and BANG – no car at the very least but it could cause so much, much more of a problem. Smell fuel, then investigate it.

Some time ago, there was an explosion in a shed. The occupant had been filling up his lawn mower and somehow, it had ignited, exploded and killed the occupant, burnt down the shed and caused massive consequences to all related to this tragic event. He was only trying to cut his lawn.

One last story – about 37 years ago, I was working in my grandfather's scrap yard as did one of my uncles. He was using oxy acetylene cutting equipment to cut the springs off of an old Bedford Utility Van (Minibus) with sparks flying everywhere. We then noticed he was stood on the now exposed fuel tank of this upturned vehicle and we shout and wave to warn him but he continues cutting and ignores us. Sparks are everywhere and the inevitable happens – BANG and uncle sails through the air and lands on his back in a very muddy puddle still holding the burning oxy acetylene torch; half a fag in his mouth and the bottom part of his boiler suit slowly smouldering





nicely. I rush over and turn everything off. Surprisingly, he is completely unharmed. Hepuffs on his fag, gets up and starts cussing and swearing...he is half covered in mud and still smouldering nicely so I have to throw some water over his lower half! The tank he was stood on is now in many bits; this is the first time uncle has ever flown anywhere at any time; he now needs a new pair of overalls...and a wash – we all pause for a few seconds and think of what if...and then see what's before us and fall about laughing. This could have been extremely disastrous – in fact a major disaster in a scrap yard – the whole lot could have gone up. Luckily all the vehicles around him had had their fuel tanks previously removed as you only need one small spark to start a major catastrophe.

Simple message - don't mess with fuel, especially petrol – it can ignite, it will ignite and that's because it was designed to do just that – ignite, that's what it does in your engine because that's its job, it ignites. So don't go storing it in jam jars or decanting it in your kitchen – as recently reported, it is an explosive liquid - what on earth were these people thinking – well, they're NOT thinking, are they!

OCTOBER MEMBERS' EVENING

Presents



TAUNTON GROUP ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

Wednesday, 17th October at 7:30 pm
at Hatch Beauchamp Village Hall





Wings & Wheels – The Event

By John Gilbert

This is the first in a series of articles about the strong connections between aviation and the motor car. It has been my experience, from being intimately involved with both aviation museums and car shows, that most car enthusiasts also like aeroplanes and aviation enthusiasts tend to have an interest in hot cars. My first article, then, concerns the Wings & Wheels events where car and aviation enthusiasts come together.



A Mustang Wings & Wheels event

My involvement began in the 1990s as a volunteer at the Museum of Flying in Santa Monica, California. Being concerned at the lack of events at the museum and the loss of key staff members who might have organized such events I made the suggestion that we encourage car clubs to visit the museum. The plan was to move our aircraft out of the museum for the day and display the cars instead. This would allow us to advertise an event which would hopefully attract more visitors to the museum.

My suggestion was accepted by the Executive Director and my first show was a display of Ford Mustangs from a local Mustang club. Part of the attraction for the drivers was that they would have a photo of their car in front of the Museum's P-51 Mustang. One of the club's requests was that we have several Mustangs on hand so that they could match the colour of their car with the colour of the aircraft's propeller spinner. I had to explain that it would cost approximately \$1000 each to fly in extra aircraft, clearly out of the question, and they





would have to make do with our P-51's red spinner. This did, however, plant a seed in my brain – perhaps we could bring in several P-51s if we were to attract all of the classic Mustangs in the Los Angeles area and run the show on a commercial basis. And that's exactly what we did. Starting with 30 Mustangs and one P-51 the first year we had built up to 250 Mustangs and 9 P-51s by the third year, and made a profit.



A 1966 Shelby Mustang GT350 lines up in front of a P-51D for a photo shoot

One of my early problems was that, as the cars had their photos taken on entry to the event, it was taking so long to position the cars that a long traffic jam was building up outside the museum and blocking a main Santa Monica route resulting in a visit from the police

threatening to close us down. I soon learned to mark tyre positions on the tarmac and we got the photo taking down to a fine art, as shown in the photo.

Another major event at the museum was the British Wings & Wheels normally held in September to celebrate the Battle of Britain. British aircraft flew in to join the Museum's own Spitfires and Hurricane and many marques of British cars were represented, the cars being organised by Moss Motors. One of the most active British car clubs in the Los Angeles area was the Land Rover Club who would arrive with their appropriately dressed mascots.



The Land Rover Club's aeronautical mascots





A Triumph TR-3. MGA, MGB, Frogeye Sprite and Triumph TR-4 in front of a Spitfire Mk.16 at a British Wings & Wheels Weekend

Many Southern California Car Clubs chose to hold their major annual car shows at the Museum. These included the Late fifties Chevy Club and the Ferrari Club amongst others.

The links between aviation and the motor industry were highlighted when the California branch of the Packard Club decided to hold its big centennial celebration at the museum. Perhaps Packard's most well known contribution to aviation was its license

production of the superb Rolls Royce Merlin during World War II after Henry Ford turned down that opportunity. The US built Merlins, known as the Packard V-1650 by them, powered the brilliant P-51 Mustang fighter and were also used in certain British and Canadian built aircraft. However the Packard Company had made many earlier outstanding contributions to aviation and they will be the subject of a future article in this Wings & Wheels series.





A Sight for Sore Eyes – Maybe a Viewpoint?

By Kevin G. Grose

I was summoned very recently to attend my bi-annual official eye test but due to some recent/past incidents and other friends and family experiences with my concurrent and long standing same optician, I opted to go elsewhere this time. Why would you do that, you may ask?

Well, I know this only involves maybe an half hour or hour of my time – nothing really in the timescale of two years but the level of service given over many years has appeared to become more stressed and more engineered towards the pressure selling of their wares and therefore, it appears that many people are buying new frames/glasses, etc., when they are not really needed, especially when nothing has changed in your prescription – it can be very expensive to achieve nothing!

So, off I went to my new optician – made my appointment and then duly attended the next week. What a difference in approach and service given – all very relaxed but truly professional. I was allowed to “play” the

various games on the different machines and even attained the score of 53 out of 54 on one – “exceptional” was the relayed conclusion. I passed all the three parts with flying colours, “good game, good game” as Uncle Brucie (Forsyth) might say.

Right, games over, now the proper part – can you read the top line? Yes; can you read the next line? Yes; the next? Yes; the fourth line? Yes; fifth line? Yes, all fine no problem. The optician then switches to the next page of the laser projected image of lines of letters – again, first line, second, third – no problem, fourth line, only three of the five letters are clear; fifth line – not really clear at enough so I didn’t guess and told the optician I couldn’t read them clearly. Brilliant, she said – you are not supposed to be able to read the last fifth line – it’s to catch people out who try and memorise the whole sequence! How do you memorise a sequence of letters you haven’t seen for over two years and why would you lie? If you cannot see the letters, say so – that’s what the eye test is all about, being able





to see clearly. Then the next part was conducted with the four quarterly movements of the eyes – up, down, left then right to establish correct eye muscle movement, etc., and all passed proficiently.

Now, there's good news and bad news. Bad news first – although my prescription has altered a miniscule bit, it is within the accepted optical limits and I therefore, don't need any new glasses, which I suppose is really good news for my constantly battered wallet! Now the good news – I still have the eyes of a 20 year old (if only the rest of my body conformed); my vision is truly acceptable and commendable for my age (I'm 54 this year); both my eyes work, perform and operate as they should (best news ever especially due to a past welding accident through my own stupidity) and I am not really old enough to start wearing bifocals yet!

What a lovely lady optician – I went in dreading the worse that my driving days may be declared over – optically or I'd have to have some incredibly expensive "optics" to correct my age related deteriorating eye sight, etc., etc., BUT no – I get to play on a few optical game machines; I'm told I am like a 20 year old



(well, eye wise certainly) and I'm not old enough for bifocals. I walk in on the floor and float out on the ceiling - I like what I hear and it's all, only cost me £15 – what a bargain!

So, please take it from me – if you have any eye related issues at all, go and get them checked out. If you cannot see very well, are you going to see the red stop light at the traffic lights? Are you going to see the cyclist? Are you going to see the young child running out into the road? Please don't wait to find out - £15 is a miniscule amount compared to the cost of an accident or someone's life if you can't see properly. It's YOUR responsibility as a car driver to make sure YOUR eyesight is acceptable – it's a legal requirement, so if you have any worries whatsoever, seek professional advice – I did and I'm now declared a 20 year old... well ok, until I look in the mirror and see an old grey man looking back - I can't even blame that on bad eyesight now, can I?





That Johnny Forriner has been at it again

Submitted by Stuart Bullock (*Stuart's comments in italics*)

* From July 1st, 2012 new French law will enforce drivers to carry a device for testing alcohol in their breath. The equipment is compulsory for all cars on French roads, with anyone caught without the equipment facing an 11 euro (£9.20) fine.

Around three million of us Brits a year take their car abroad and this offence comes into force as the holiday season approaches its height. I have not seen anything about bikes being exempt. The kits cost up to £2 and are expected to be available at Channel ports. They will enable motorists to see if they are under the French limit of 50 mg per 100ml of blood which is 30 mg lower than in the UK.

Any devices would have to comply with safety standards set by the French authorities. It is the latest in a series of requirements imposed on drivers by the French Government. Motorists are also legally obliged to carry a warning triangle and fluorescent vest as well as displaying a GB plate and adjusting their headlights to avoid dazzling oncoming drivers. But, there is also...

* From 4th January, 2012 it has been illegal to be warned about the location of speed cameras while you are driving/riding in France. Other countries have similar, but not quite the same, laws. You may be able to keep your Sat Nav and stay legal by either:

Disable speed camera alerts for France.

B. Update your device with the latest Speed Camera alerts, which should remove alerts for France. If in doubt contact your device manufacturer. *Now about that ride across Europe; got a map?*

* The proposal that all riders of motorcycles in France with a machine exceeding 125cc need to wear a reflective garment is still being developed and will not be made law before 1st January, 2013. It appears that the French authorities have yet to define the criteria for 'reflective garments'. *Given that no-one in the last 10 years has been able to agree on a standard retro reflective style for motorcyclists, bon chance on that one!*





* At home, the Driving Standards Agency have produced two major documents concerning the development of riding and training standards in the UK. (Car drivers and instructors have the ADI system). If you are in the training industry, either as a commercial operator or as a volunteer tutor, you need to know what the future holds. The standards apply to all riders and instructors, from the learner world to advanced. Check out the documents at <http://www.dft.gov.uk/dsa/core-driving-standards/>. Along the same lines the Government have produced five guides related to a motorcycle instructor and an approved training body. Check out their website at businesslink.gov.uk/atb. *The main thrust is that someone with huge authority has concluded that the best way to reduce serious and fatal accidents is to educate drivers and riders and ensure their trainers have a basic education. When was Roadcraft first written??*

* The theory test questions book has not been available for candidates from 23rd January, 2012. Apparently candidates were learning the Qs & As by heart without actually understanding what they mean. *Noooo!!*

* A bill to create a new law of Causing Death by Dangerous Cycling, under a private members Bill of Dangerous and Reckless Cycling, has failed to get a second reading. Andrea Leadsom, MP for South Northamptonshire has said she will "continue to keep pressure on the (transport) Minister who I know takes a keen interest". *What, a Minister for Transport with an interest in road users? Novel!!*

* The Government has dropped plans to change the frequency of MOT tests to every 2 years. There will be a move to increase the type of checks already made on garages who provide the checks to ensure each check is carried out correctly. *OK, you can all let that breath out you were holding.*

My grateful thanks to the research carried out by The Telegraph, Driving Instructors Association, plus Alan and Sue Cole from Somerset Advanced Motorcyclists.

Don't take our word for it, check it out for yourself.





Memories of a Very Dear Friend

By Kevin G. Grose

Recently, a very dear long term family friend passed away unexpectedly. It has been a massive shock to his family and although most funerals are always extremely sad, this funeral was even more poignant than ever. As always, old memories flood back and I would just like to tell you of one such event many years ago – you will see by the pictures, we are talking many moons ago.

There was to be a soap box cart derby being held at what were the Sherford Camp Officers living quarters at Trull, near Queens College, Taunton. So, two soap box carts were designed, prepared and made to compete in two different classes. My father and his best friend put both of these vehicles together and duly painted them in their works colours. Their firm was also sponsoring this event so a lot was hanging on the quality and preparation of both these soap box carts – there was a reputation to uphold! The carts were duly tried and tested, modifications made and all was well for the race day.



Kevin in his oversized helmet

I remember it was sunny, warm and a really lovely day. All the competitors arrived one by one and huge arrays of very different soap boxes were soon evident. Some were very crude like a steel girder with four wheels with steering by a wooden plank moved by your feet! Others were very sophisticated almost up to Lotus Engineering standards and I suppose our two entries were somewhere in the middle





erring towards the Lotus end...! You will note from the pictures the two different sizes of soap box carts – one being “HD 1” and the other one “HFD 1” and I seem to remember there was a Senior Class and a Junior Class so you can guess which one I was in - yes, that is me in the oversized helmet and light green shirt (I know the photos are black and white but I was there...!).

Anyway, the Junior Class races got under way and I was leading the class until pipped at the post by barely a soap box cart length and as a race is a race, I was then second. The Senior Class first race started and you will see by the photos, there was an incident as they say – not an accident, but an incident. Regardless to say, “HFD 1” was rendered useless but everybody else was ok...but were they? The St. John’s Ambulance man and the Police Officer were both extremely grief stricken as it appeared our best, long term friend had lost the lower part of his left arm and they both proceeded to try and find it. This was indeed a freak incident of alarming proportions. They could not make out why everybody else did not seem that concerned about their catastrophic discovery and most appeared to be laughing their heads off.



The incident

“Oh my god, I’m afraid you’ve lost part of your arm old buddy and I can’t seem to find it” says the St John’s man. The Police Officer is searching frantically for the missing part and is somewhat bemused by everybody’s apparent demeanour. By this time everybody is in fits of laughter and the bemused pair wonder what on earth is going on. Our friend then tells them he never had the lower part of his arm because he was born that way! We recover the trashed soap box cart “HFD 1” but it is beyond repair so what do we do now – simple, we adapt the smaller “HD 1” by moving the seat back and our one armed friend continues in the Senior Class in “my” little car. I can’t remember the actual results





now but it was an extremely fun day and one I shall remember forever, especially the incident on the first corner.



Vic Neale in HFD 1

The main point I wish to make was that our family friend, born with half of his left arm missing at birth never allowed that disability to hold him back. He rode a cycle and motorcycle with an adaption; he drove many different cars and vehicles with and without adaptations; he would swim like a fish; tie up shoe laces one handed; was a brilliant carpenter and many more things most people would have given up

on but most of all – he was a prolific milkman in and around the Taunton area for many, many years and carried the biggest loads of milk and one of the biggest rounds for decades. He never gave up when others would and this was clearly demonstrated on that day when the crash happened on his first race and I hope many of you who have undertaken your advanced driving courses/programmes/tests do not give up at the first hurdle. Our friend had a hurdle to jump right from the day he was first born but he didn't let that stop him – his determination, laughter and old jokes will be greatly missed.



Kevin Grose cornering in the Junior Class





Grand Touring 2007 – Part 2

By Stuart Bullock

Each evening we walked out to see the sites and find a meal. Naturally the best was on our last evening and very close to our hotel. So, the next day, a Monday, we set off southwards towards Nuremberg. Mostly a motorway day of around 270 miles that emphasised how much better most European service areas are than those in the UK. As we got nearer to our target the weather improved and became quite hot as we arrived at our hotel.

We were early enough to have time to explore this magnificent town. Crossing the river in the middle of the very attractive centre we walked uphill to the mediaeval area that includes a hilltop castle. From that lofty perch we could see across the rooftops and the original fortified town boundary. We wandered, chatted, ate fantastic cherries, sat over tea and ice cream and generally chilled out in a big way. Later we met the rest of the tour over an evening meal. 42 bikes and 63 people is a BIG tour. As ever there was an interesting mix of riders and bikes and the evening soon passed. I just have to tell you about the guy and his

wife who had not made any effort to check out the tour destination or travelling mileages. How can you go so far without any maps or any idea of the route? We did our usual late evening planning session for the next day and our next destination some 315 miles away, Vienna, Austria.

We were due to be in Vienna for 2 days and decided to use mostly motorway to get there. We wanted to get to the hotel in time to organise the laundry service. It does not do to pong more than one need to. Job done only to find no laundry service as the next day was a public holiday. Curses. We washed what we needed and hung our larges and smalls on the balcony to dry and went swimming in the hotel pool. A problem with an organised tour is having no influence over hotels and group meals. Fortunately the group meals were few and far between, leaving us to find our own. However, why no air-con in a European hotel in August is a puzzle to me, and one of our basic requirements when we book our own hotels.





Schönbrunn Palace and panorama of Vienna (Photo by Hagen Schönherr)

Vienna does not generally do it for me. Too many grand buildings I think. In order to sort things out we did a bus tour. This helped us to identify the more important buildings and areas of the city. We also had a great if hot time in the Schönbrunn Park and Castle. It was huge but more like a Palace than a castle. Magnificent grounds and gardens, with plenty of links to English history to keep us entertained. All too soon we were sat in the hotel bar planning our route to Arad, Romania over a glass of relaxant. It's a tough life this touring.

Although people on tour find out what suits them, we don't get up too early but try to set off between 8.30 and 9am after breakfast. We tend to travel for about an hour and a half to two hours and then find somewhere for a comfort stop. If we can top up with fuel at the same time, so much the better. Some of this

tours participants left at 6am, which seems a bit excessive to me. Then again, if you are on a Harley you may not cover the ground as we do. We rode the 350 miles to a rather bland Arad in good time, had a pleasant evening and the following day set out for our next target, Poiana Braşov, 275 miles away. This day tested our endurance to the limit as the main road through Romania, the A1, is undergoing refurbishment along its entire length. The first third of the route was pretty good. Nice flowing bends, even if the road surfaces were not always good.

After that, we found that about every 5 miles there were roadworks controlled by a variety of traffic lights, men with flags or 'baddest wins'. Traffic lights appear to be just a suggestion. Men with flags are apparently invisible to Romanians. At first we were our usual polite selves. We soon became bad.

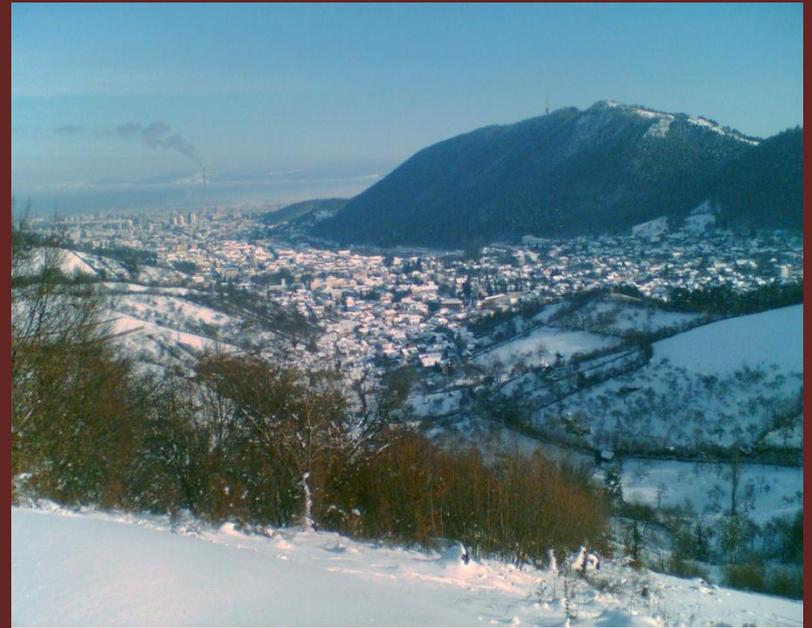




A1 in Romania (Photo by Bogdan Giușcă)

Very, very bad. I am often asked if The System is useful when riding abroad. My answer is that the concept of good early forward observation controlling road-speed is sound. Road position is based on the same principles and for cornering, 'left for right – right for left' still works. What you have to consider is local variations in road user behaviour. For instance, Romanian road users are not used to speeds over about 50mph. Their judgement of my approach speed above that will be suspect. It is therefore up to me to sort that out and not rely on them. What we call filtering is mostly

illegal in Europe. It was noticeable that passing lines of very slow or stationary traffic was acceptable to the vast majority. However, overtaking one vehicle in a line moving briskly would result in some form of retribution, and this was most unpredictable in Romania. Having passed one of a line of cars towing caravans, I was surprised when the one I had just passed drove with half of his vehicles on the pavement to re-pass me on the inside and push me into the oncoming traffic. It only happened once! **TO BE CONTINUED...**



Poiana Brașov (Photo by Pixi)





**Closing date for the Autumn Edition of
the TGAM e-Newsletter is
Friday, 20th July.**

**All contributions would be very
welcome.**

**All items should be sent to
“The Editor” at ed@tgam.org.uk or,
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