

# 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 125**

**Winter 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.

|                       |  |
|-----------------------|--|
| Chairman              | Andrew Griffiths, Steppes House, Charlynch, Bridgwater TA5 2PG, 01278671659<br><a href="mailto:chair@tgam.org.uk">chair@tgam.org.uk</a>  |
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# FROM THE NEW CHAIRMAN



## An introduction from Andrew Griffiths

As a recently joined member of the Group and as newly elected Chairman, I thought I'd take the opportunity to introduce myself to you. So firstly a bit of background. I've been a Civil Servant for 36 years, until 2010 when I decided to take early retirement from the cut and thrust of Whitehall and enjoy a less stressful life in the country. My wife, Katie, and I had always planned to move to the West when we'd both retired – I'm originally from South Wales and she's originally from Devon. So in April 2012 we relocated from Cheam in Surrey to Charlynch just outside Bridgwater.





Back in Surrey I was an active member, Senior Observer and Chairman of the IAM South of London Advanced Motorists (SLAM – an acronym I have always thought of as amusing for an advanced driving group!). I had to leave that behind when we relocated. SLAM was and still is a very busy Group with around 30 or so Associates going through the Skills for Life programme at any one time – a pretty healthy state to be in, given the current economic climate.

I joined TGAM because of my continued passion for observing, mentoring Associates and meeting people with a common interest – safe, smooth, systematic and enjoyable motoring. I would have liked to have settled into the Group a while longer, getting to know the people, how the Group operates, its idiosyncrasies and the like, before taking on an executive role. But life isn't like that and TGAM needed a new Chairman; I couldn't stand by when help was needed. I bring with me the experience of running an IAM Group, my experience as a Senior Observer – and also my experience of chairing more Whitehall meetings than I care to remember (but I will not be inflicting Whitehall methodology on the TGAM Committee... I can

hear their sighs of relief from Charlynch!).

Things are very different for IAM Groups away from London and its suburbs and one of my priorities is to explore with the Committee, opportunities for increasing the number of Associates coming through TGAM. I said at the AGM that I will work with the Committee to determine how we think TGAM needs to be developed and then as a priority, create and embark on a rolling programme of work to help get us there over a realistic and achievable timescale. This will take time and effort and at some stage, I will be making a shameless plea for “pairs of hands” to help the Committee take things forward. If everyone does just a little bit, the tasks won't be an onerous drain on day-to-day life.

I'm not a “petrol-head” but I have always loved cars and driving and got into advanced motoring when my wife bought me the IAM Skills for Life package for a birthday present (I'm still not quite sure what message she was trying to convey at the time). I passed my ADT in 2007 then trained to become an Observer. I subsequently trained to become a Senior Observer and passed the test in 2009; I have found the role thoroughly enjoyable. I still remain in contact with one or two ex-colleagues in SLAM to keep up with the







Group news. If you'd like to see what SLAM gets up to, why not check out their website?

[www.slam-iam.co.uk](http://www.slam-iam.co.uk)

I like classic cars and own a 31yr old 5 litre Mercedes SL. Last year, my wife (Katie) and I went to Cuba, a country which always conjures up images of the old American classics of the 50's and 60's. These were in abundance in Havana but rare in the resorts on the Cayos (Cayo Coco and Cayo Guillermo) where we stayed. So we took a flight to Havana to see some of the fantastically restored old Colonial buildings, visit the club Tropicana and to tour around the city seeing some of these American beauties.

Buicks, Dodges, Impalas, Oldsmobiles and the like are mainly – but not exclusively – used as taxis whereas the rarer Edsels were privately owned. All was not as it appeared; the American V8 engines had been replaced some years ago with, basically, anything that would fit in the engine bay, usually of Russian origin. The exhaust pipes were all of the same size and profile and what was puffing out of them looked decidedly dodgy. Their interiors had been reduced to bare metal door panels.

Wheels often didn't match around the car. On closer inspection, what looked like pristine bodywork was actually a lot of filler and often the chrome-work had been salvaged from other cars to make "a good 'un". They had been resprayed in bright colours so to a casual observer they'd look like a true icon of the 50's and 60's. But the Cubans were very proud of their icons and loved them; they did all they could to keep them going and relied on a handful of mechanics who sourced parts from Russia – or from other cars.



A taxi rank in Havana





One of my memorable photos was this Oldsmobile we came across left by a worker under the shade of a tree on a sugarcane plantation near Moron. It was one of the better examples we saw but the interior had seen better days.



**Oldsmobile in a sugarcane plantation**

And finally, my wife Katie captured the moment I was accosted by two Cuban girls as our tour group was about to leave for Havana airport for our flight back to the Cayos.

Outside Havana the roads were generally in a poor state of repair and the skilled coach drivers used the full width of the road to try to

avoid potholes and sometimes the lack of tarmac – of course, only when it was safe to do so, which with the traffic being so light, was most of the time. Cubans were very nice courteous people, very rhythmic, very colourful and very relaxed. They were very proud of their country and of its history, with images of Che Guevara cropping up in many places. They loved engaging with tourists and were keen to please; apart from cigars, rum and sugar, tourism was a main source of the country's income. I'm not one to revisit a holiday destination but Katie and I loved Cuba so much that we're planning another holiday there in 2013.



**Accosted!**





# 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<br>01823 618714                  | Alan Thomson<br>01460 55919                                  |
| Senior Observers         | Colin White                                  | Andrew Griffiths   |
| Trainee Senior Observers |  | John Gilbert   |
| Observers                | Tony Hucker<br>Faye Markham<br>Russ Williams | Ron Holdom<br>Janet Loader<br>Alan Thomson<br>Allan Wellwood |

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

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**



Here we are again – hurtling towards Christmas (but not speeding I hope)! This of course is the first Winter edition of the wonderful e-newsletter where we attached the annual renewal form along with various other items. Apologies if there was rather a lot to plough through!

This different format may be why fewer people have renewed their membership than at this time last year, bearing in mind that the newsletter now goes out in November, February, May and August, a month earlier each time than in previous years. It takes a bit of getting used to, but has saved the group hundreds of pounds in costs.

We have therefore decided to send the membership renewal form and Christmas lunch menu by post in future – it is only once a year and should make it easier for members to deal with.

So far, since 1<sup>st</sup> October, we have 86 fully paid up members with 32 who have not yet renewed their membership from last year. Included in the 86 are 3 new members who have joined TGAM.

Those who have not yet renewed your membership, please do so as soon as you can – we need your support more than ever in these difficult economic times. The renewal fees are very reasonable and road safety is vitally important.



# MEMBERS' PAGES



The "Skill for Life" programme is always a worthwhile experience, with the benefits of being able to drive safely and economically, so tell everyone you know about it!

Hopefully that will lead to our numbers increasing and more people enjoying our excellent Newsletter.

Many thanks for your continued support.

Happy and safe motoring!

## Advanced Driving Test Passes

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

Michael Hall

## OBSERVED BY

Janet Loader

## The Membership Register

This quarter we have six 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> |
|------------------|-------------|--------------|
| Dawn Brimson     | Bridgwater  | Associate    |
| David Cowling    | Taunton     | Associate    |
| David Lloyd      | Taunton     | Associate    |
| Anna Morris      | Bridgwater  | Associate    |
| Madeleine Thomas | Bridgwater  | Associate    |
| Trevor Wall      | Bridgwater  | Associate    |

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

13 December

14 February

11 April



|    |    |          |  |
|----|----|----------|--|
|    |    |          | <b>NOVEMBER</b>  |
| 21 | W  | 7:30 pm  | Members' Evening – Double Bill – IAM Cycling and Silverstone Track Day |
|    |    |          | <b>DECEMBER</b>  |
| 8  | Sa | 12:30 pm | Christmas Dinner   |
| 19 | W  | 7:30 pm  | Members' Evening – “One Horse Power” Tiverton canal horse drawn barge  |
|    |    |          | <b>JANUARY</b>   |
|    |    |          | No Members' Evening in January   |
|    |    |          | <b>FEBRUARY</b>  |
| 20 | W  | 7:30 pm  | Members' Evening – Spring Quiz   |
|    |    |          | <b>MARCH</b>   |
| 20 | W  | 7:30 pm  | Members' Evening   |



# MEMBERS' EVENING



## 15<sup>th</sup> August - Members' Forum

by Serena Lonton

At a previous members' evening, TGAM member Andy Mayes offered to run a "members' forum", where any motoring issues could be raised and discussed with a view to submitting them to IAM Chiswick via our next Regional Liaison Forum.

This went ahead as planned at our August members' evening and, although attendance was poor, several points were raised, the main ones being: -

- Cyclists ignoring red lights and riding with headphones on.
- New drivers should be better trained, instead of just being taught to pass the standard driving test – motorway training, night driving, mandatory "P" plate for 12 months, one passenger with a full license for 12 months.

- Older drivers should be tested again at age 70 to restore confidence and ability; IAM groups could assist.
- Trees on roundabouts (!) can obstruct view across the roundabout – lorries need to keep moving as much as possible as they take much longer to recover their speed.
- Communication problems from Chiswick – some associates directed to the wrong area.
- Headlights – left-hand side illumination can dazzle a driver being overtaken by shining in the mirror.

This was a valuable exercise and most enjoyable with lively discussion and much useful input, which with good numbers attending would be well worth repeating at some stage.

Please support our members' evenings – they are there for YOU, FREE of charge, FREE refreshments and a chance to meet your fellow members and committee.

Many thanks to Andy for running the evening and Faye Markham for the tea, coffee & biscuits, and to all those regular attendees who help with setting up and putting away afterwards.





# MEMBERS' EVENING

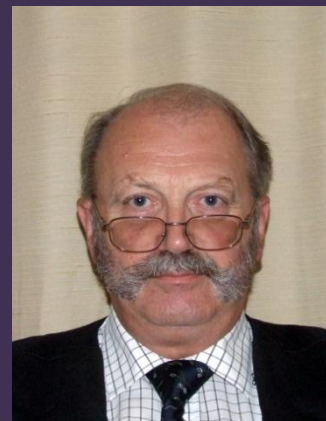


## 19<sup>th</sup> September Annual Inter-group Quiz

At our Social Evening of 19<sup>th</sup> September we hosted the Annual Inter-Group Quiz. The Groups invited to take part were, Barnstaple & North Devon, Bath & District, Bristol, Camelot (Yeovil), Cheddar Valley, Exeter & Torbay and, of course, our own Group, Taunton. Apologies were received from, Barnstaple & North Devon, Bristol, Camelot (Yeovil) and Exeter & Torbay. Bath Group brought some supporters with them, so they were invited to field a 2<sup>nd</sup> team. Taking part is so much more fun than sitting on the side-lines. By the end of the evening we wished that we hadn't done so.

The Quiz Master for the evening was yours truly, Brian Howe, Acting Chairman for the Taunton Group. Our Adjudicator was David Walton, our

By Brian Howe  
'Quiz Master'



new eNewsletter Editor, ably assisted by Tony Hucker, Group Committee Member. Our team members were John Gilbert, former Newsletter Editor, Paul Youd, who recently passed his ADT, congratulations Paul, and Andrew Griffiths who recently left the Smoke, South London, for clean Somerset air. Andrew was a Senior Observer and former Group Chairman and I believe he has agreed to join our team of Observers. Welcome to the Taunton Group Andrew.

Scoring was kept electronically via David's laptop through the Group's projector on to the wall in what looked like cinema widescreen. It





was EPIC!! Well, pretty big anyway. There were 4 rounds of 3 sections with 6 questions per section, with the questions covering a wide scale of subjects. There were 2 “Jokers” available to each team, to play on whatever they decided were their strongest subjects. We stopped for refreshments after the 3<sup>rd</sup> round as there was quite a lot of head scratching and pained expressions by then. There’s nothing like a good cuppa to refresh mind, spirit and body, although a chocolate biscuit helps as well. Refreshments were provided by Faye Markham, Group Committee Member, and Janet Loader, also a Group Committee Member. The scoring was kept up to date during the quiz so that the teams could see how they were faring after each round. After the final round we had another cup of tea whilst the scores were updated and ratified. The final results were as follows:

| Team                     | 1  | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7  | 8  | 9  | 10 | 11 | 12 | 13 | 14 | 15 | Total |
|--------------------------|----|---|---|---|---|---|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|-------|
| Bath & District 2nd team | 4  | 5 | 4 | 6 | 6 | 5 | 4  | 12 | 12 | 5  | 6  | 6  | 4  | 3  | 2  | 84    |
| Bath & District          | 12 | 6 | 5 | 6 | 6 | 5 | 3  | 6  | 4  | 5  | 6  | 5  | 2  | 8  | 4  | 83    |
| Taunton                  | 2  | 6 | 2 | 6 | 6 | 6 | 4  | 12 | 4  | 3  | 6  | 4  | 4  | 8  | 3  | 76    |
| Weston & Mendip          | 4  | 5 | 2 | 4 | 6 | 4 | 4  | 5  | 8  | 4  | 4  | 4  | 4  | 3  | 8  | 69    |
| Cheddar Valley           | 5  | 5 | 4 | 3 | 4 | 4 | 10 | 5  | 5  | 3  | 2  | 4  | 4  | 2  | 2  | 62    |

As you can see, Cheddar Valley were bottom of the table with a valiant effort, and a score of 62. To be fair to Cheddar, they only had 2 team

members so we magnanimously lent them Mary. Weston and Mendip were next at 69 with Taunton a respectable 76 for an effective 2<sup>nd</sup> place. Bath & District’s First team scored 83 with their Second team winning with a fine score of 84. I declared Bath & District winners of the evening and the trophy will be supplied direct to them from last year’s winners.

Everyone said they had enjoyed themselves and I brought the evening to a close by thanking everyone for making the effort to get there and for taking part. I would like to record a special thanks to David Walton for taking over the organising during Serena’s holiday and for having everything all set up and ready to roll by five past seven.

Did you detect the underlying, subliminal message in this report? All bar 2 or 3 participants are Group Committee Members. Come on everybody else, where is your sense of adventure? Join us at future social events. The clue is in the title, “SOCIAL EVENT”. We don’t preach road safety to you. You are already Advanced Motorists. The idea is to have social time together with like-minded people. If you do have a query, I am sure that someone will be able to answer it for you, or get the answer for you from a higher source if required. Plus we have FREE TEA, FREE COFFEE, FREE BISCUITS and FREE ADVICE.



# Annual General Meeting

By David Walton

## Annual General Meeting of Taunton Group of Advanced Motorists Held at Hatch Beauchamp Village Hall on Wednesday 17<sup>th</sup> October 2012

Brian Howe, Acting Chairman, welcomed our IAM guests and those from visiting groups as well as our own group members. There was then the usual preliminary business of apologies and reading of last year's minutes; duly signed with no matters arising.

Andy Ware presented ADT pass certificates to Michael Hall and Paul Youd. Paul thanked Observers Kevin Grose, Guy Denton and Alan Thomson for all their input.

Brian Howe then presented the annual Chairman's award to Alan Thomson for all his hard work as Training Officer under sometimes difficult circumstances.



Michael Hall receiving his ADT certificate from Andy Ware and Janet Loader, his observer





**Alan Thompson receiving the annual Chairman's Award from Andy Poulton**

Brian Howe then read out Kevin Grose's Chairman's report in Kevin's absence, followed by his own report, having taken over as acting Chairman part way through the year. (See both reports below.)

This was followed by Geoffrey Stoate presenting his Treasurer's report, which was adopted nem con. (again see accounts printed below.)

Next came the election of officers. Andrew Griffiths was elected Chairman, Serena Lonton was re-elected Secretary and Geoffrey Stoate was re-elected as Treasurer.

Faye Markham, the only committee member retiring by rotation, was re-elected. The remainder of the committee not retiring are Tony Hucker, Alan Thomson, Paul Willitt, Janet Loader, David Walton and Brian Howe.



**Paul Youd receiving his ADT certificate from Andy Ware**







Andrew Griffiths, our new Chairman, introduced himself with a brief resume. He joined TGAM after re-locating from South London to Somerset. Born in South Wales, he worked for the Ministry of Defence in Whitehall for many years and was Chairman of South London Advanced Motorists for 3 years. He thanked everyone for the warm welcome, saying he will be getting to know TGAM and where we want to be as a group.

Next came "Any Other Business": There was concern at low attendances at members' evenings. It was agreed that January and August members' evenings be dropped as they are poorly attended. It was also agreed that these events do not have to be motoring-related.

Tony Hucker has arranged for a speaker at the members' evening on 21<sup>st</sup> November on "One horse-power", which is about the sole remaining horse-drawn canal barge in the West Country. *(Since postponed until the December meeting due to family bereavement. Ed)*

There being no other business the meeting closed at 8:50pm. There followed a break for tea, coffee and biscuits.

Andy Poulton then gave a humorous run-down of the modern equipment and features on new vehicles, which was enjoyed by everyone.

## Kevin Grose – Chairman's Report

This is my fourth annual report as your Chairman of the Taunton Group of Advanced Motorists and I hope it will be accepted as an accurate, true and valid indication of the current activities, aims and results of the Group up until my leaving date of 16<sup>th</sup> July 2012.

The Group has had to encompass many changes both at this level and at national level. The new envisaged plans for all Groups, Observers, IAM Examiners, etc., will need a massive input from everybody involved to ensure a more solid future for the IAM and because I am unable to personally commit that amount of time needed, due to my every changing work commitments, I have stood down as your Group Chairman to enable a more suitable and available person to take up this role and help lead the Taunton Group forward. It is not fair for me to mislead anyone and just be an absent figurehead of a Group as the future role will certainly need a more hands on approach, which I will hope you will agree, I have tried my utmost to provide over the last few years as your Chairman. Fortunately, a saviour arrived in the form of Brian Howe, who quickly stepped into the role







of Acting Chairman to maintain the status quo of the Group up until this AGM date, today. I really thank you for this, Brian.

I believe I am correct in stating that the Group has certainly held its head above water for this AGM year (until my leaving!). There has been a complete lack of new Associates this year – this has affected all the IAM Groups and is not just a Taunton Group issue. The Committee have strived to kept outgoing costs down to a minimum and have cut costs where they can but you can only take that so far before having a major effect on the Group and its Members. To continue supplying a quality service costs money; supplying a reasonable venue to attend costs money; supplying quality presenters costs mega money; excessive postage is now not viable; attending outside events is unbelievable in entrance / site fees; etc., etc., and YES, we could continue to just pay out these costs without any real thought but the Group will be financially bankrupt in a very short time indeed. It's only because your Committee has sought ways to kerb costs and still supply a quality service / item that we are still here and solvent.

The Taunton Group is still one of the CHEAPEST

Groups to belong to, throughout the whole of the IAM. I think the whole Committee deserves a huge slap on the back in maintaining an excellent service for all its Members during very difficult times. The IAM are introducing many new items and services – “perks” to the IAM Members, so please make full use of any available that suit your needs as a huge amount of work goes into setting these things up for you – you have paid all your fees so please continue to enjoy the benefits, new or otherwise.

I will leave Brian to update you on the more recent issues but I must truly thank Serena Lonton for not only being the Group Secretary but also being the Membership Secretary and the joint Group Treasurer for part of the last year. Most importantly, I sincerely thank Serena for allowing me to “dump” everything onto her when I stood down, to enable the Group activities to continue in a secure, official and controlled way - you all owe a lot to Serena for keeping everything going. I thank you all for your support given to me over so many years and I am sorry I can't be here tonight due to my work commitments.

Kevin Grose (ex Chairman)





## Brian Howe – Chairman's Report

Things have changed since I was last the Chairman of Taunton Group of Advanced Motorists. Time marches on and we all get older. I am probably a little less fit now than I was when I resigned as Group Chairman, I think, 5 years ago. But that is beside the point when duty calls, and I felt that I couldn't re-join the Group Committee and then refuse help when it was required.

The main development has been in Information Technology, and it shows in what is now available from the IAM website. Having printed out a copy of the September 2012 Group News, I was amazed at the content available. There are Group Documents, Press Releases and Member Benefits. There is a new set of sheets explaining the hidden mysteries of I.P.S.G.A. You can even find information giving tips to help Associates to benefit from the free RAC cover. Did you know that if the Associate really doesn't want RAC membership, they can pass it on to a family member? You can even buy goods to give away at events.

Do we still attend events? Are they too expensive for our purse? I promise you that our Group Committee will look into this to see if we can raise our profile as a local Road Safety Charity, especially now that we don't have the prohibitive costs of producing, printing and posting a paper newsletter. We are not here to make a profit, but whatever finance comes our way, we are charged to

spend it wisely to promote the cause of the IAM.

Speaking of newsletters, I have now managed to download, or is it upload, the last two e-newsletters to my Kobo e-reader. If I can do that, being not quite a technophobe, what can you do? Surely, you can put it on your Kobo, Kindle, I phone, I pad, Samsung, HTC, smart phone, pad, notebook and whatever other new technologies are waiting for us just round the corner. Never be without something to read. Your wife should be pleased that there will no longer be a paper newsletter lying on the coffee table gathering dust. No longer will your newsletter be hidden under the TV mag. And, WHAT'S THIS? Did I read somewhere that the IAM newsletter, Advanced Driving, is, or has already, gone digital? You didn't expect to see that now, did you? Load it onto your smart phone, e-reader or pad and shove it in yer' pocket mate. Sorry, am I ranting? Somebody stop me. But before you do, I've joined IAM Cycling. Have you? That's why I agreed to re-join the Group Committee. Don't forget to have fun promoting road safety.

Please don't forget that your membership to TGAM is now overdue. If you have not renewed yet, please do so as soon as is practical. WE NEED YOU! While you have your cheque book out, why not book your tickets for the Christmas lunch? It's quite easy, all you do is check the menu, choose your fare and write the cheque out.





## ACCOUNT SUMMARY

1<sup>st</sup> Oct 2011 - 30<sup>th</sup> September 2012

Bank balance at 30 September 2011      3,679.56

### Receipts

|                                  |        |                 |
|----------------------------------|--------|-----------------|
| Cash balance transferred to Bank | 3.22   |                 |
| Subscription renewals            | 744.28 |                 |
| IAM Subscriptions Sfl            | 372.00 |                 |
| IAM Group Expenses               | 69.12  |                 |
| Raffle                           | 93.00  |                 |
| Gifts                            | 65.00  |                 |
| Oake Manor                       | 543.60 |                 |
| Unpresented cheque               | 24.00  | <u>1,914.22</u> |
| <b>Sub total</b>                 |        | <b>5,593.78</b> |

### Less expenditure

|                     |        |                 |
|---------------------|--------|-----------------|
| Postages            | 125.55 |                 |
| Equipment           | 57.50  |                 |
| Newsletter          | 119.00 |                 |
| Stationery/Printing | 54.14  |                 |
| Hall hire           | 225.00 |                 |
| Insurance           | 60.00  |                 |
| Conferences         | 70.84  |                 |
| Training            | 117.95 |                 |
| Travel              | 36.96  |                 |
| Web page            | 15.00  |                 |
| Refreshments        | 68.69  |                 |
| Oake Manor          | 953.69 |                 |
| Miscellaneous       | 23.35  | <u>1,927.67</u> |

**Total**      **3,666.11**

Bank balance at 30 September 2012      **3,666.11**

## TGAM CHRISTMAS LUNCHEON



**Saturday 8<sup>th</sup> December**  
**12 noon for 12:30pm**  
**at Oake Manor Golf Club**



# HAVE YOU SEEN A “FLASHER” RECENTLY?

By Kevin Grose

I am carrying out yet another (boring!) traffic flow survey near the Burlescombe turning on the A38 (above the M5 Motorway) which I notice has a flashing “SLOW DOWN” sign, if you are travelling towards Wellington (and another going the other way. Ed) I don’t know at what speed this sign is set to trigger its safety related message – the road is a two lane carriageway with two solid white lines down the middle and indicates a 60 mph national speed limit, but it’s obvious this sign is needed as it appears about 75% of the traffic immediately activates its prompt warning that there is an element of danger just around the corner. I must admit that this flashing sign does in fact slightly obscure the precise relevant details by partially hiding the national regulated white type information sign behind it!

It didn’t appear to matter what type of vehicle activated the sign either – motorbike, car, van, lorry, coaches, even some tractors... no, I’m joking about the tractors but everything else appeared to trigger off the flashing sign!



So, does this flashing sign work? Does it actually have any effect on the speeding motorists? Do they take any notice? Do they care? Or is it just a gimmick to most (local) motorists who speed up just to put the sign on? Well, about 50% of the motorists who triggered the sign appeared to react and by them actually triggering the sign, the following motorists (some following way too close) also reacted and slowed down as well, so it does sort of work for half the time! Again, the local





drivers most likely ignore this sign but it does help the strangers or tourists driving in the area. I don't know what these signs cost but I bet it's into the £1,000's – still, that's a whole lot cheaper than the cost of a two/three car pile-up at the crossroads just around the corner.

So, without the sign there's no warning at all of a road junction with a history of very near misses and many near fatal incidents over the years. I do believe they do help a motorist provided that motorist observes the information given and REACTS to it – so don't ignore it, it's there for a reason and has been put there because there is a problem you may need to know about – USE it and don't ABUSE it. I think this type of sign really works well at most times – like a flashing 30 mph sign – it's an instant, driver friendly, problem highlighter that illuminates an issue and warns the oblivious driver that they need to react to something NOW, besides it's one of the only forms of flashing you can't get arrested for! Drive safely and observe the flashing signs.

## **NOVEMBER MEMBERS' EVENING**

# **Double Bill**



**Find all about the IAM's work in cycling, details of on-road training and IAM cycling publications from our cycling enthusiast Brian Howe.**

## **Silverstone Skills Day**

**You can read John Gilbert's article about the skills day elsewhere in the newsletter. Come and hear lots more about John's exciting and rewarding day.**

**Wednesday 21<sup>st</sup> November  
7:30pm  
at Hatch Beauchamp Village Hall**







# Silverstone Skills Day

By John Gilbert

I had been considering taking part in an IAM Skills Day for some time and when I saw that it was going to be held at Silverstone and that the price had been reduced by £60 I couldn't resist. I decided to take part in the morning session and drove up the day before, staying at the Premier Inn Silverstone overnight so that I would be fresh for the morning's driving.

When I awoke during the night, due to an extremely uncomfortable bed, I noticed that it was raining torrentially – not a good omen for the next day's activities. After a full English breakfast I pulled out of the parking area, followed by a very smart black Porsche Cayman S. On arrival at the main gate I asked for directions to the Stowe Circuit. "Just turn left and follow the signs", said the guard. I turned left and saw a plethora of signs, but not one to the Stowe Circuit, so I just followed my nose, and eventually found my destination. The Joining Instructions said that on arrival I would be instructed where to park. There was nobody parking cars so I just parked anywhere and looked for where the event might be

taking place. I was not surprised to see the Cayman S pulling in behind me, the driver in an equally confused state.

Registration went very smoothly and I was one of two participants to be allocated to Instructor Bob Farish, Chairman of the Leeds IAM Group. However the windscreen stickers mentioned in the Joining Instructions were not given out. At 8:30 we attended the safety briefing which consisted of a brief video. Unfortunately the big screens around the room were not working, and nor was the microphone system, so the organizer, John Lickley, had to shout the safety briefing. The wrist bands mentioned in the Joining Instructions, to show that drivers had attended the Safety Briefing, were not given out.

We were then informed that, due to flooding of the track on the first curve out of the back straight there would be no driving until 11:00 am, much to the relief of one Porsche driver who couldn't get his car started so he had some time to sort out the problem.



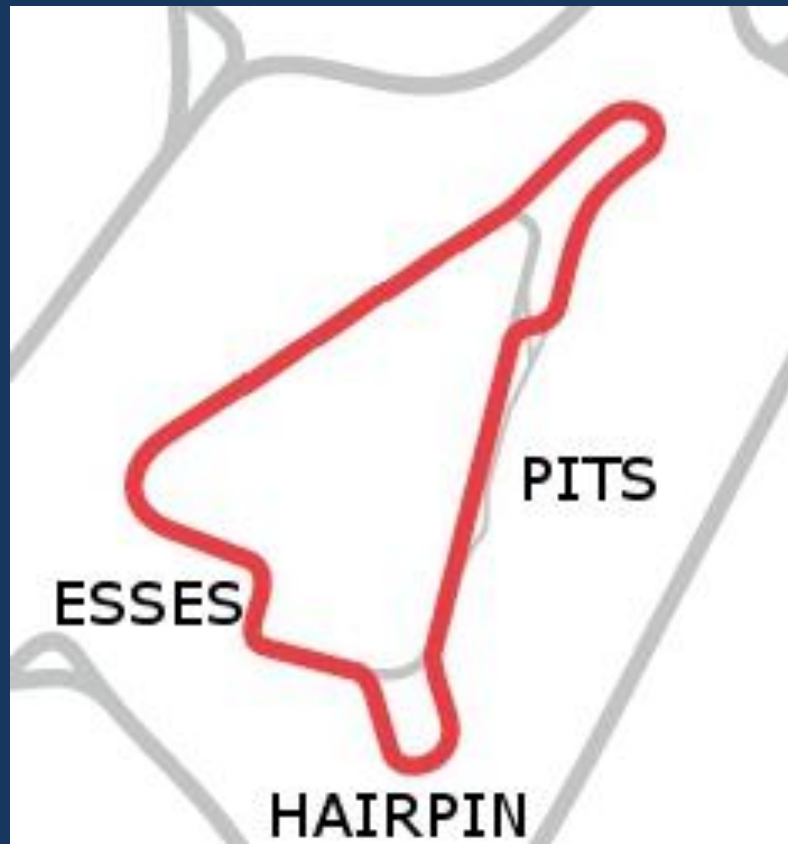


**Removing water from the Esses**

Unfortunately the driver who was paired with me had to pull out because of the delay but that was good news for me, it meant that I had Bob Farish to myself all morning. Apparently sluice gates could be opened to drain the water and I also saw a tanker at the scene sucking up water. The operation must have gone well as we finally started driving at 10:00 am, just an hour late. We were also told that driving would end at 1:00 pm instead of 12:30 pm so that the morning and afternoon drivers would share the lost hour equally.

Quickly Bob and I headed for my BMW and we were one of the very first out onto the track.

The first lap was really to familiarise the driver with the layout. Bob pointed out the large red cones which indicated where to brake for the bends and the yellow and green cones which indicated aiming points while negotiating the bends. Going into the second lap the driving got a little more serious and Bob gave



**The Stowe Circuit, inside the GP circuit**





**Coming through the hairpin**

excellent instructions on when to brake, the line to take through the bends, when to change gear and when to put on the power when exiting the bend, and also to forget about pull push steering when appropriate. I had gone into this activity simply wishing to push my car and myself a little more than possible on public roads and took to heart the words of the safety briefing: there will be no racing, there will be no timing, this is not competitive. But by the end of my first session, having overtaken four or five cars and not being overtaken myself, I surprised myself by becoming extremely competitive, I

just got caught up in the excitement. When someone asked me which car I had been driving and I told him the silver BMW he said, “you were going rather well, weren’t you”; this only spurred me on.

On leaving the pits drivers joined the circuit when given a green flag by a marshal. During the morning it became obvious that this marshal was not taking his job too seriously and was often found to be day dreaming or talking to his mates, leaving the decision to the driver. I couldn’t wait to get started on my second session but there was a little more traffic on the track this time and I found myself



**Overtaking was to the left, and only on the straights**







frustratingly getting slowed down on the bends by a rather dull grey Subaru (with a fire breathing dragon painted on the side). Determined to take him on the pit straight I pulled out to the left coming out of the hairpin but the Subaru took off like a bat out of hell. It didn't take me long to catch him up on the bends but then, on the back straight, the same thing happened again. I never did manage to get past him. I later discovered that the petrol head driver of this Subaru had installed 400 hp under the bonnet.

I had intended to make notes for this article during the course of the morning while I was resting and take a lot of photos but I have to admit that I completely failed to do either, and got so caught up in the event I just wanted to savour every minute, so my recollections may not be too accurate, and I am going to have to rely on the official event photographer for any images.

Both cars and drivers were an eclectic mix. Male, female, young, old, cooking saloons, BMWs, Audis, Porsches, a McLaren P1 and a taxi. One lady was driving an Audi R8. Apparently she had gone to the showroom and said, "Oh, that one looks nice, I'll have that

one". Her performance was less than sparkling. On one circuit I pulled over to the right on the pit straight to let the MacLaren pass then followed him through the bends. On the back straight he obviously left me standing again but it was an impressive sight seeing that big airbrake coming up on the rear of the car as he braked for the esses. Another high performer was a black BMW M5.

Fortunately there were no incidents during the day. I did come off the track once running over the red and white rumble surface on the apex of a bend but thankfully didn't get as far as the grass. On one circuit Bob suggested I turn off



**"Switch off the DTC!"**





my DTC (Dynamic Traction Control) to see what difference that would make. I took the bend as before and the car went into a tyre squealing fishtail which I thought I controlled rather well, but it did demonstrate how effective these systems are. Subsequently I found that the switch had not actually switched off the DTC, only the DSC (Dynamic Stability Control) but had left the DTC and CBC (Cornering Braking Control) active.

Bob had mentioned that we should be able to get up to a maximum speed of 100 mph but no matter how I tried, on the back straight (the fastest part of the circuit) I couldn't get beyond 85 mph with my 170 hp before reaching the braking zone for the esses. The entire circuit was driven in either 2<sup>nd</sup> or 3<sup>rd</sup> gear.

Not all of the driving was in my BMW. Bob kindly offered to do some demonstration laps in his own car which was very impressive and informative. It was noticeable that Bob was using much more severe braking than I had on my earlier sessions. I also had the opportunity to do a few laps in an Alfa Giulietta for which I had to make a quick switch from a LHD automatic to a RHD manual.

On my later sessions I seemed to get caught up in a lot of slow traffic on the bends quite often and the only sensible course of action then was to just come into the pits and wait for the traffic to clear. On my last session I felt that my concentration was starting to fail, and as there was only about a quarter of an hour to go I decided to call it a day.

The entire experience was absolutely fantastic and I wouldn't hesitate to recommend it to anyone. Not only was it the most fun I've had for a long time, it showed me where my limits and the limits of my car are and has given me much more confidence in my normal driving. So was it worth it?.....



.....the big grin says it all!







## DECEMBER MEMBERS' EVENING



**Come and hear all about the  
last Horse-Drawn Barge in  
the West Country**



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

## JUST A FEW WORDS...

Can I just say a massive thank you to all the Committee Members, Group Observers, IAM Examiners and Taunton Group Members and Associates who sent me their kind words, messages and good wishes for the future since my work related enforced standing down as your Group Chairman. I am very sorry I have not replied to you all individually but rest assured, everything said and conveyed to me was gratefully appreciated.

I have already renewed my group membership and I hope to attend a few of the Member's Evenings and other events in the future when things slow down a bit and allow me the time to participate again.

I hope you will all continue to fully support the Taunton Group Committee and Observers in their quest to move forward with the times – remember, they are ALL volunteers who give so much of their valuable time so freely to enable the Group to continue to improve, participate and perform to the best of their abilities in the given circumstances and they do all that for YOU!

I thank you all and hope to see you again in the not too distant future.

Kevin Grose





# Nobody stopped. Would you stop?

By Brian Howe

I had the misfortune to suffer two setbacks or “incidents” on Monday, 10<sup>th</sup> September. The morning started as usual, rising just after 06.00hrs, with a wash and shave etc, followed by breakfast and a lovely cup of tea. I do like a good cup of tea to start the day and I don’t like to rush first thing in the morning. Come to think of it, I don’t like to rush anywhere at any time. 07.20hrs time to leave home for the two mile drive to work (you can’t get a bus from Wellsprings to Cross Keys with a free bus pass at that time of the morning) arriving at the yard by 07.30hrs. The minibus I have today is ‘08 reg and is fitted with a digital tachograph, which means the very first job is to turn on the ignition to be able to insert the V.O.S.A. required digi-card to record when I start and finish work, and whatever I do in between. As the minibus was used at the weekend for private hires, it’s wise to make sure all the levels are checked under the bonnet before starting the engine.

That’s the start of the **POWER** check. **P**etrol, or in this case diesel, you can see the level with

the ignition on but engine not started. **O**il and **W**ater as well as all the other fluid levels, especially windscreen wash with the autumn weather approaching. I don’t want the low morning sun shining through a dirty, fly covered windscreen. Next comes the **E**lectrics, checking all lights, side, dipped beam, fog and main beam lights including headlamp flash, hazard flashers and indicators, all marker lights (usually orange and placed along both sides of the vehicle, rear lights. I normally try to catch the reflection of brake lights and reversing lights in the screen or headlights of the vehicle parked behind. Moving inside the vehicle, all interior lights, dash warning lights, horn, wipers and screen washers are checked. Back outside we check the **R**ubber.

This vehicle has a twin wheel rear axle so six tyres to check plus wiper blades front and rear. This being a PCV or passenger carrying vehicle, there are other things to check as well. I always look under the front of the vehicle for signs of fluids leaking onto the ground and always check ALL passenger entrance





doors and emergency doors. They don't only have to be unlocked but they also have to close securely. Back inside the vehicle once more, it's the turn of the seat belts to be checked, making sure that they pull out smoothly and lock in and release properly. Now I'm in the driving seat I complete the "Daily Check" sheet and make sure that I haven't forgotten anything.

This morning I'm lucky, nothing needs topping up so a few minutes of reading my current favourite detective novel before leaving the yard at 07.50hrs. Onwards to Crowcombe for the first pick up, turn around and head back to Flaxpool Garage and a right turn past Crowcombe Heathfield railway station, over the bridge, round the right hand bend and straight ahead for Lower Vexford with wits about me all the time because the lane isn't much wider than the minibus. In fact, going through the deeper cuttings the hedges are rubbing both door mirrors at the same time. Second pick up safely completed. Head down to the tee junction and turn right for Stogumber. I haven't met any oncoming traffic at all this morning. I continue on through the bends and up the only straight bit, which is a fairly stiff climb, around the bend and BANG!!! Sod it!! I spoke too soon. On the crown of the

hill in the middle of a blind bend on a lane less than 7ft 6ins wide with banks reaching up approximately 10 to 12 feet or more, I hit the brakes and prayed. It wasn't enough and a frontal collision occurred leaving a seriously deep Vee dent to the left side of the front number plate. The Land Rover Defender looked remarkably well except the front bumper was tucked up under its L/H wing. And, all the lights were still intact and functioning on both vehicles.

*I realise that I am baring my soul here and will probably leave myself open to criticism, but that is a small price to pay to stop you suffering similarly. Although I'm not sure what else I could have done in the circumstances.*

Having removed the damaged minibus to a safer location in Stogumber village, myself and my two charges, shaken up a bit, but otherwise ok, we were offered sanctuary and tea in the house of a very kind lady that I only know as Alison. Thank you Alison for putting yourself out and helping someone in distress until my charges were collected by a grateful parent. ALISON DID STOP. ALISON DID HELP.

I continued my journey to school with another charge, in a spare minibus, who was not involved but was still patiently waiting at his allotted stop. I dropped him at his school and





started to make my way back to the yard. Then the second misfortune struck. The adrenalin faded to be replaced by a quite severe angina attack coupled with a couple of sudden dizzy spells. I got no further than the main crossroads at Bishops Lydeard on the A358. Gasping for breath I tried to calm my breathing to no avail. I pulled up with two wheels on the grass verge and switched on the hazard lights. **NOBODY STOPPED. NOBODY HELPED.** I managed to extract my mobile from a pocket and called 999. The operator was very helpful in trying to calm my breathing and told me to take a puff of my GTN spray. This has quite an interesting affect. It dilates all of the major blood vessels in the body and the brain, and lowers the blood pressure quite significantly. Now as my blood pressure and heart rate are already kept fairly low by medication, the affect of the GTN spray sends my head in a complete spin and often causes me to black out momentarily. I somehow managed to hang my hi-viz vest on the driver's door and got out of the bus to lay on the ground to try to stop my head from spinning out of control. I am now laying in the slip road of a busy junction next to a minibus with hazards flashing and a hi-viz hanging on the door. **NOBODY STOPPED.**

**NOBODY HELPED.** The next thing I remembered was a para-medical leaning over my face talking to me. I moved my eyes and saw what looked like an upside-down ambulance (I was laying in the road looking up at the sky, it alters your perspective somewhat). **THE PARA-MEDIC STOPPED. THE PARA-MEDIC HELPED.**

The result was almost two days in Musgrove undergoing tests and treatment. Thankfully there was no damage to my heart, or no extra damage, anyway. **PHEW!!** The only drawback is that I am now facing 3 months without a driving licence, and because of dizziness at the wheel, possibly the permanent loss of my vocational licence, maybe car as well. My main method of propulsion now is two walking sticks to try to keep me upright. But, please don't show pity. I would far rather surrender my licence to DVLA voluntarily, than put anyone else or myself at risk. **NOBODY STOPPED. NOBODY HELPED.**

**WILL YOU STOP THE NEXT TIME YOU SEE SOMEONE IN DISTRESS? WILL YOU HELP?**

**I CERTAINLY WILL!!** Now, where has that puzzle mat got to? I think there's a kettle and teapot somewhere as well.







# A brief history of THE HIGHWAY CODE

The first edition of the Highway Code was distributed on 14<sup>th</sup> April 1931. It was in fact developed from a booklet published in 1924 by the National Safety First Association, which eventually became the Royal Society for the Prevention of Accidents (RoSPA).

A quick comparison over its 80 year history shows the first edition to have 24 pages with 31 rules of advice and no road signs. The current code (published in 2007) has 145 pages, over 300 paragraphs of advice and 226 traffic signs and road markings. Although historically 15 editions have been published, only 11 different covers have been used meaning amendments or revisions account for 4 editions.

Between 1918 and 1928 road traffic accidents had increased from 15,000 to 100,000. With less than two and a half million vehicles on the road the death toll was running in excess of 7,000. Today, with over 30 million vehicles registered, the death toll is half that with 3,500. One cannot put this figure solely at the door of the Code however. Over the past 80 years the driving test, compulsory from June 1 1935, has

led to a better educated road user. Better road design and signs and markings have contributed to safer roads. Modern technology with motorcars has also assisted with fewer deaths.

The Road Traffic Act of 1930 laid down the legal framework for the Highway Code. Then, as now, the Code carried no legal force but could be quoted in a court of law. It was issued by the Ministry of Transport “with the authority of Parliament” and was intended to make the roads safer.

The 1931 FIRST edition made no mention of traffic lights, which had been in force since 1926. However its over-riding message was one of safety for all road users and stated that: “good manners and consideration for others are as desirable and as much appreciated on the road as elsewhere.” The cost of just one penny was an encouragement for people to buy the Code. It obviously succeeded as it was published four more times up to and including April 1935.







The **SECOND** edition was published some time after May 1935. A foreword was included from the then Minister of Transport Leslie Hoare-Belisha which stated that: "Respect for the Code and for the spirit underlying it is so much a moral duty that its practice should become a habit and its breach a reproach." This edition included the current traffic signs and the new 30 mph speed limit in built up areas. Mention was made of tiredness and fatigue whilst driving and also the use of alcohol. This was the first edition to number the rules. The price was kept at one penny. This Code was published through to 1946 and as such covered the war years, 1939 to 1945. The Code itself did not change, but probably round about 1943 advice was printed on the rear cover relating to "Salvage". It related to salvaging paper, metal, rubber, etc. and had 18 points on how to save fuel and tyres on motor vehicles. (Recycling and eco driving!!)



The **THIRD** edition was published in May 1946. For the first time stopping distances were shown in a table inside the rear cover. The Code now had 32 pages and a new format showing 15 traffic signs. Acts and various Regulations covering drivers, motor cyclists, horse drawn



vehicles and pedal cyclists and legislation regarding pedestrians were all included. Parents were advised: "Do not let your children play in the streets. Children under seven should be accompanied by an older person when using busy roads." No school run in those days. The price was still kept at one penny.



The 1954 **FOURTH** edition was the first to be in colour. 31 traffic signs were now shown as was a coloured zebra crossing. Information on First Aid was included as was the Country Code. Advice re use of signals expanded to include flashing indicators. The price, held for 23 years, was still one penny.





Edition FIVE for 1959 was priced at sixpence. It now included a new section on motorway driving. The techniques for entering and using motorways, which were first opened in the late 50's, were explained. Illustrations were now shown alongside the various rules. Extra advice was offered to pedestrians in the use of pedestrian crossings and crossing the road in general. Roundabouts: "There are no rights of way in general at roundabouts."

The SIXTH edition for 1969 was increased to one shilling and three pence (6p new money). This had now grown to 54 pages. It also started the format for future Codes. Mirror Signal Manoeuvre routine first mentioned. Illustrations were now in full colour with models and photographs. Advice re breakdowns and accidents was offered. Four further issues were printed and the final one dated August 1976 had seen the price double to 12p.



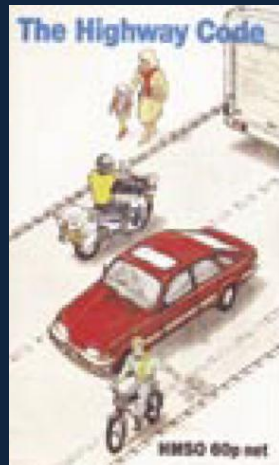
The SEVENTH Code was published in March 1978 at a price of 25p. It was now in larger format with 70 pages and signs and markings increased to 179. A multitude of new items appeared: Pelican crossings, Green Cross Code, child seats, mini roundabouts and although not compulsory seat belts being worn to prevent serious injury or death. Eight further issues were published and the final one in 1985 had increased to 50p – giving some idea of inflation.

In 1974 a Green Paper as issued by the Department of the Environment entitled: "A proposed new Highway Code." This was the first consultation document open to the public to make suggestions for the new Code.





The EIGHTH Code was published in February 1987. This had the same format as the previous Code. However greater emphasis was made in relation to seat belts, drinking and driving and a new paragraph on the use and danger of car telephones. New legislation had been introduced regarding maximum speeds for different types of vehicles on various roads and a chart was shown advising about the rules.



| Speed limits                               |                    |                  |          |       |
|--|--------------------|------------------|----------|-------|
|  | Single carriageway | Dual carriageway | Motorway | Urban |
| Motor vehicles                             | 30                 | 60               | 70       | 70    |
| Motor vehicles towing a trailer            | 30                 | 50               | 60       | 60    |
| Motor vehicles towing a caravan            | 30                 | 50               | 60       | 70    |
| Motor vehicles towing a trailer or caravan | 30                 | 50               | 60       | 70    |
| Motor vehicles towing a trailer or caravan | 30                 | 40               | 50       | 60    |

The Code had now increased to 74 pages and now cost 60p. Five further issues were published.

In October 1991 a further Consultation Document was issued.

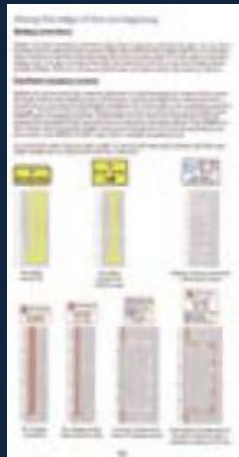
The NINTH Code was published in January 1993. This was a much larger Code with a complete new design. Advisory paragraphs had increased from 198 to 242. A penalty table was now issued warning of fines and licence points. Format was easier to read and although Legislation had been reduced from 32 items to 23 now starting from 1962, pages had increased from 74 to 76. The price was now 99p. Five further issues were published and these included New Legislation introduced in 1994 (1995 edition) and a 1996 edition, which included information for the new driver theory test and driving test.







The TENTH New expanded edition was published in February 1999. Updates during the life of this Code referred to changes in technology; danger of using mobile phones and other casualty statistics. For the first time **MUST** and **MUST NOT** were emphasised in red capitals. Pages



were increased to 100 and paragraphs to 278. This was revised for 2004 and included a new logo for the Highway Code. By January 2006 the cost of this had increased from £1.49 to £1.99. A website was now included on the cover.

ELEVENTH edition published in 2007 but no publication date shown. Price increased to £2.50. Pages increased from 100 to 145 and paragraphs from 287 to 307. This Code seems to have gone from one of using common sense advice to almost being one of instruction. Almost everything is spelled out in detail. A new format makes for easier reading. Pages now have a content title at the top of the page. Advice now offered to those using powered wheelchairs/mobility scooters (11 paragraphs). Road users requiring extra care: pedestrians, shopping areas, schools, horse riders, elderly drivers and learner drivers, etc (22 paragraphs). Driving in adverse weather conditions (12 paragraphs). Breakdowns and incidents (26 paragraphs). Traffic signs and markings are increased to 226 and Road User Law increased from 22 to 37 items. A 7th impression of this was published in 2009, but no changes.

**By John Dowell BA (Psychology OU) Master of Motoring/AA  
Approved Driving Instructors National Joint Council Tutor of Driving Instructors  
Institute of Advanced Motorists Fleet Training Trainer  
Qualified Rolls-Royce Chauffeur and Trainer  
IAM Advanced Examiner**





# “I DON’T BELIEVE IT!”

By Kevin G. Grose

Occasionally, I am asked to carry out a traffic flow survey which has been recorded onto several DVD discs. DVD surveys are usually used where there is a health and safety issue or it’s virtually impossible to put a survey team in place. DVD is used when all other avenues do not work. The equipment is set up before 07.00 hours in the morning and runs for a full 12 hours finishing at 19.00 hours in the evening.

DVD surveys are very remote because you are not actually there on site – you feel isolated and appear to be just watching a sort of documentary film at one particular spot. However, things do change throughout the day – the sun’s position; the shadows; the wind in the trees; rain appears and disappears but the viewpoint NEVER changes as the camera is fully fixed in position although the wind does sometimes cause a shaking movement at times.

So, I am watching the first disc of the five DVD’s and the traffic is flowing reasonably well. There is a variation of traffic speeds, flows and types which is the data I now record for the Department of Transport (DfT) to use as it deems fit. The traffic flow slows down and I notice a lone, elderly gentleman on a light coloured bicycle appearing from the bottom of the screen making his way towards the top of the screen along the road layout I can see. He is also wearing a hi-vis vest, a light coloured hat and light coloured trousers. He’s gently pedalling along and minding his own business. He is extremely visible and has taken all steps to make sure he can be seen. He is riding safely, considerately and is keeping to his side of the road near to the edge of the road to allow traffic to pass safely, which they all do. Then, there is no traffic – just this elderly cyclist pottering along. No traffic at all – just him.







Then, as the title of this article states, “I don’t believe it!” - a car appears from the left side road of this T junction and just drives straight into the cyclist. The impact is colossal. The car stops and the driver leaps out in what appears to be a mad panic. The driver jumps up and down, stamping their feet and starts running up and down – a complete mad panic. I can’t say whether the driver was male or female as the quality of the recording is a bit limited and does not contain such fine detail. I am in such disbelief in what I have just seen that I rewind the DVD to watch it again... and I watch it again and again – “I don’t believe it!” but it really has just happened and the DVD states the time and date to confirm the incident.

At the precise moment of impact, there is absolutely no other vehicle or person around apart from the driver, their car and the elderly cyclist. There is no other person or vehicles for about a minute or two. The cyclist does not move and I am not quite sure if he is under the car or by the side of the car but it does look horrific and fatal. The cyclist did not stand a chance as he never even saw

what was coming. The car hit him from behind and appeared to be accelerating when the impact took place. I have watched this incident many times but cannot add any further fine detail due to the quality of the recording – as you know, I am ONLY counting the cars, etc.!

After a while, a few other vehicles arrive at the scene and they try to assess the situation and deal with the aftermath. Further to my initial shock and amazement, were the number of vehicles that completely ignored what had just happened. There was a cyclist lying in the road; his bike mangled and destroyed yet they just continued on their journey and even carried out vehicular movements that could have caused a more devastating incident involving further vehicles – a big, red Parcel Force van hardly slowed from his assumed 60 mph cruising speed (national road speed limit at this point), took avoiding action and rounded this bend on the wrong side of the road, driving completely blind – it appeared completely oblivious to any incident that had occurred. If anything had been coming the opposite way, there would have been a 120





mph head on crash – again, “I don’t believe it!”.

The Police, Ambulance, etc., arrive and do their duty and take over from the few concerned and considerate motorists who actually stopped to help out, who redirected traffic; tried to help the cyclist; tried to calm down the driver; etc. From the lack of urgency from the paramedics, I assumed the cyclist must have been dead.

Within an hour, the road was clear and everything was back to normal. Any driver travelling along that road now had no idea what had happened just earlier or what I had witnessed on the DVD – there was no evidence of anything that had taken place and that is my point I wish to make as without this DVD video evidence, the driver could have told any story, especially if the cyclist was indeed dead. The cyclist had no witnesses whatsoever – if he was dead, no one could tell his side of the story. As I do not “own” the DVD, I have recorded the incident and handed all the details to my employer – this evidence may be the only correct piece of evidence available to establish the true facts. I truly hope my observations help out.

## **FEBRUARY MEMBERS’ EVENING**

# **Spring Quiz**

**If you missed the Inter-Group Quiz, which most of you did, then don’t miss our Spring Quiz.**

**This will be a light hearted individual quiz with a mixture of general knowledge and motoring related questions.**

**Come and have an entertaining evening and support your Group.**

**Wednesday, 20<sup>th</sup> February**

**7:30 pm**

**at Hatch Beauchamp Village Hall**





# Regional Liaison Forum - 20<sup>th</sup> October 2012

By Serena Lonton

Our new Chairman, Andrew Griffiths, accompanied by former Acting Chairman, Brian Howe, and old Secretary (me!) attended this event which was held at the Blunsdon House Hotel, Blunsdon, Swindon. After registration and refreshments the following points arose:

- Membership is down nationally – economic climate being the main reason.
- Insight should be emailed to all members – addresses to be checked by groups.
- New Driver Training/Examination computer system (DTE) for groups to use to update records at Chiswick is still “work in progress”, but progressing well.
- IMI (Institute of the Motoring Industry) awards – covers all aspects of the motor industry, with the driving qualification local Observers can progress to national Observers. Basic IMI award requires 40 points minimum, Masters 70 points, Distinction 80 points.



Venue: The Blunsdon House Hotel

- IAM membership fee increase to £34.00 unpopular – see IAM website.
- Older IAM members more likely to stay with IAM longer, but younger drivers should still be encouraged to do Skill for Life.
- IAM products: Basic Momentum (under 26), Skill for Life (26-55), Drivecheck 55+ (56 & above). All details on IAM website.





After a delicious 3-course carvery lunch, there followed a most informative presentation by Jane Climpson entitled “Sharing the Road with Horses”. Jane is a highly qualified psychologist, currently studying Equine Psychology as she is a horse owner and rider. She explained the way horses see differently to humans and how they react to what they perceive as threatening or predatory situations.

Two short videos on how a horse can be desensitised to these threats by expert training were shown – quite remarkable.

Did you know that a horse has 350 degrees of vision, with two blind spots – one directly ahead and one directly behind its head? So when you approach a horse in your car from behind, it knows you are there as it can detect the right-hand side of the vehicle. It also has a kind of bi-focal vision – only in reverse! It will lower its head right down to see distant objects, and raise it high to see closer ones.

The rider has no control over the horse’s reaction – it will do what it thinks is right, which may be bolting off into the sunset, or freezing, or kicking out with its hind legs. So take care – you don’t want a horse’s hoof in your door or window as it will damage you too!

This is just a brief summary of the presentation, but the message is ALWAYS obey any signal by the rider – they know the horse. ALWAYS be prepared to stop and let the horse proceed, especially in narrow lanes/confined areas, and ALWAYS slow down anyway – a spooked horse is potentially a lethal weapon.

And above all, respect the horse and rider – they do not want to cause you any problem. Remember, they have every right to be there too.

The forum ended at 3:45pm followed by more refreshments before departure.

## **Your Newsletter Needs You!**

The Editor would very much like to see more contributions to the Newsletter from the general membership, whether they be articles, “Letters to the Editor” or photographs, etc. The committee do a great job in providing copy, edition after edition, but we have a varied membership with many interests and points of view – please let’s hear some of them. Thank you.







# Grand Touring 2007 – Part 4

By Stuart Bullock

[pictures - Wikimedia Commons](#)

Our journey on the next morning was to Budapest in Hungary, 250 miles away. At the border we saw with our own eyes the coaches full of migrating workers from all parts of Eastern Europe, looking for work in Western Europe. Crossing into Hungary emphasised just how poor Romania is. There is little farming other than smallholdings. Mostly this appears to be because there is no irrigation. Hungary irrigates on a grand scale with huge metal structures transferring water across large tracts of land. Romania will be worth visiting in 10 years to see how it has developed.

Budapest, like Berlin, has changed a lot in the last 11 years. The city and its buildings are much cleaner with modern trams and buses. The shops are more modern with many recognisable names and the whole place is more comfortable. I guess there is a danger of everywhere becoming the same, so it remains for local governments to maintain the integrity of their own culture and history. Budapest

rates with Venice, New York, Berlin and Lyme Regis, in order of my favourites

The government parliament buildings are fantastic but best seen from the Danube and even better at night.



**The Hungarian Parliament Building  
from the Danube**







After the day of arrival we had the following day to explore. It's too much to go into here but the city is actually 2 cities, Buda on the West bank of the Danube and Pest on the East bank. They became one city in 1873. We took another tour. This one was just for 7 people and our own guide. We toured through the city and walked around the main sites, like heroes square with the fabulous statues. We checked out the more notable buildings like the opera house, Buda Castle and the Gellért baths. The latter famous for the healing qualities of the water and where you can get a refreshing massage.



**The effervescent swimming pool in Gellért Baths**



**The entrance hall to the Gellért Baths complex**

Mind, you will feel as though you have gone ten rounds with Amir Khan afterwards. We finished the day off with a meal on a river cruise-boat, where we met other travellers from other parts of the world. Seeing the city lit up at night was just superb. Another planning session was required that evening as the next two days would take us 270 miles to Linz, Austria, 340 miles to Wiesbaden, Germany and 350 miles to Calais and the ferry home.

We did some on country roads, some on main roads and some on motorways. We saw some fabulous scenery and some dopey drivers but





the weather stayed hot and we had a great time. Linz was a very nice town but unfortunately someone jumped off a nearby bridge over the Danube and we watched the police and fire services turn out to attempt a rescue. Wiesbaden was equally nice although we were on the 12th floor of our hotel. The air is very thin up there, you know.

One of our greatest pleasures is to travel. Add the bike and it is a perfect way to broaden our horizons and we hope to keep touring for many years to come. This trip was great and well worth the time and effort. Door to door we covered a smidge over 4000 (s)miles.

We have travelled across a lot of Europe and always found good hotels with ease. We have also been met with friendship, courtesy and helpfulness. We always do a bit of research and learn some basic phrases and numbers as well as how the local currency works. It's always good to be able to greet people in their language, or our version of it. Our efforts always appear to be worthwhile as many people have responded well to us and we have never found any serious problem to language. If you have never travelled abroad before, I would encourage you to have a go. Car drivers can find good travel plans with companies like

Brittany Ferries that include hotels, ferries and suggested routes. Brittany is actually quite fantastic and very like the South West of England. Just remember the Bretons are Gaelic and not pure French.

A Hampshire company, HC Travel is also good for further a field and will find accommodation and suggest routes for you. France obviously has a lot of attractions. Big cities, wild country, fast roads, broad beaches as well as the taste of good food and wine. About the same population as the UK in much more space means space for driving and riding in much less restricted places than in the UK.

Spain is also fantastic for wide-open sweeping roads and the most brilliant scenery in places like the Picos De Europa. Italy is more expensive but has snowy mountains for skiing and huge lakes for James Bond films. Further south there are wild mountains, great beaches and of course ancient monuments. It's easy to miss the huge effect Italy had on Britain and if you feel at home in Italy then it might just be your roots calling.

The best advantage to take with you is a sense of adventure and a sense of humour. Then all you need is a map to set you off on your own crusade.





# Motorists want rule change for emergency vehicles

IAM Press Office

Almost half of motorists believe that traffic stopped at an incident should keep a lane space free for emergency service vehicles, according to the latest poll by the IAM. They also agree that those who fail to get out of the way of an emergency vehicle should be fined. This approach is being trialled in Europe.

Thirty-five per cent of respondents admit that they don't know the current rules on how to deal with an approaching emergency service vehicle. This is reflected in the results with a quarter of people saying they would go through a red light to let an emergency vehicle through, which is illegal, and almost a third have entered a bus lane to allow access to an emergency vehicle which often results in fines.

Forty-four per cent of motorists believe that it is unfair to prosecute someone who crosses a red light to let an emergency services vehicle through. A further 31 per cent of people feel that this should be made legal. But, overall the largest group of respondents (41 per cent) believe that the law should not be changed in regards to crossing red lights for emergency vehicles.

It is illegal to enter a bus lane during its active hours of operation to let an emergency vehicle past, and you can be fined if you do. Eighty-six per cent of motorists believe that this is unfair.

Other results show:

- 74 per cent of people will pull over where possible when they see an emergency vehicle approaching.
- Half of motorists would not drive through a red light if an emergency vehicle approached them from behind.
- 82 per cent of people are aware that it is illegal to cross a red light to let an emergency services vehicle past.

Findings reveal that, while most people are aware of the laws surrounding emergency vehicles, around half are willing to flout them to let the emergency services through.

IAM chief executive Simon Best said: "Fining people for pulling into empty bus lanes so that life-saving services can get through is just plain wrong. Most drivers quite rightly want to get out of the way. Simply catching and penalising drivers who break the rules to let emergency vehicles pass will not serve to educate them – people must understand the rules to abide by them.

"Road users must be on the look-out for emergency service vehicles and move out of the way where possible but laws have been put in place for the safety of all road users. Our survey shows clear support for more clarity and new ways of ensuring police, fire and ambulance personnel get to incidents with maximum speed and minimum risk to themselves and others."





# The Ice Gauge

IAM Press Office

The IAM is offering weekly motoring tips from Britain's top advanced driver, Peter Rodger. This week, with temperatures nearing freezing, he is advising on driving on frost and ice.

IAM chief examiner Peter Rodger said: "Now is the time to start thinking about how to adapt your driving to the wintry weather, so that when conditions become dangerously slippery you are ready to react safely."

Rodger offers six tips to drive confidently in icy conditions:

1. Before setting off, make sure you clean any ice or condensation from all the windows to optimise visibility, not just the windscreen, but your side and rear windows as well.
2. When you set off, if you are on ice do so in second gear, releasing the clutch and accelerating gently, avoiding high revs – this will prevent wheel spin. In an automatic be very gentle, and if it has a "winter mode" use it.
3. As you drive, stay in higher gears and don't drive too fast to keep in control.
4. Stopping distances are increased by up to 10 times in icy conditions, so leave plenty of distance between your car and the car in front, and slow down much earlier than you would normally.
5. If your car loses grip, take your foot off the accelerator, and point the front wheels where you want to go.
6. Keep to the main roads as they're more likely to be gritted. Also bear in mind that after the frost has gone, ice can remain in areas which are shaded by trees and buildings, and in dips especially.

Rodger said: "When the roads are icy the best advice is to drive as if you're walking on eggshells. Be prepared for the worst – icy conditions can affect accelerating, steering and braking dramatically. Being mentally prepared as well as having the right equipment is vital, so think about any problems you encountered last winter, and what you need to do to overcome them if they recur this year."







# IAM Comment on Quarter Two Road Casualty Statistics

IAM Press Office

The latest Department for Transport road casualty statistics released today show a decrease in casualties for vulnerable road users.

There has been a fall in vulnerable road user casualties when April-June 2011 is compared to April-June 2012; however there has been a significant rise over the year.

- The number of cyclists killed or seriously injured rose 9 per cent from 2,950 in 2010/11 to 3,210 in 2011/12. This is 27 per cent more than the average between 2005-2009.
- The number of motorcyclists killed or seriously injured rose 5 per cent from 5,207 in 2010/11 to 5,450 in 2011/12
- The number of pedestrians killed or seriously injured rose 5 per cent from 5,701 in 2010/11 to 5,970 in 2011/12

IAM director of policy and research Neil Greig said: "In the six months before these results there were increases in the numbers killed and seriously injured. This drop has not made up for that. We need to do much more to turn this quarter's figures into a trend. Upgrading roads, targeted safety campaigns and measures to improve road user awareness among new drivers are needed too."

"The drop in road casualties is really good news but the Department for Transport admits that it is likely to be linked to this year's wet weather. We shouldn't rely on a few months of dodgy weather to get cyclists and motorcyclists casualties down."







# No cold stalling

IAM Press Office

Road safety charity the IAM is offering weekly motoring tips from Britain's top advanced driver, Peter Rodger. This week he is advising motorists on how to get a cold car going in the bleak mid-winter.

IAM chief examiner Peter Rodger said: "If the weather is really bad, think about whether you really need to make the journey before travelling. If so, ensure you take out the time to prepare your car for the elements you may face."

Rodger offers six tips to avoid seasonal car problems:

- Don't switch on the engine until you are ready to go; a modern car does not need to warm the engine up. But do put the engine on if you need to run the heater/demister before you move off.
- Clean any snow off the car's roof and bonnet as well as windows.
- When you get in the car, make sure all extras such as lights, heaters and the radio are turned off before you try starting it.

- Clean your windows inside and out – a dirty screen will cause the windows to mist up much quicker.
- When you're ready to go, switch the engine and heater on (air con if you have fitted; it keeps the screen dry) so that the windows don't steam up.
- Use the 'ice' setting if your car has one and it's cold enough.

Rodger said: "Spending time preparing your car for the weather conditions is important so that it copes well throughout your journey. Now is the time to check the battery is in good condition and that your screen wash has a freeze-resistant additive."

To help drivers stay safe this winter, the IAM has launched its winter driving campaign which includes a dedicated website, [drivingadvice.org.uk](http://drivingadvice.org.uk), with traffic updates, weather forecasts and tips on how to drive safely in winter.

Tips there cover rain, snow, ice, fog and wind – everything you can expect in a typically unpredictable British winter. Check it out before you travel.





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

**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  
by mail to David Walton at  
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