

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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FROM THE CHAIRMAN



A Happy New Year to you all! I hope you all had an enjoyable Christmas and Santa was very kind to you. What hasn't been kind for many months is the weather.

First came the floods and then came the snow. I hope you've been using the skills you've developed as advanced motorists to stay safe on our treacherous roads. I don't expect we're out of the woods just yet and it's never too late to re-familiarise ourselves with all the good advice out there. I recommend the IAM's winter driving site at www.drivingadvice.org.uk where there's lots of great advice and you can download a free copy of their comprehensive winter driving guide (it's not just about snow but includes fog, flood, rain, wind, low sun!) Point your friends to the site too as they can benefit from this excellent advice.



By Andrew Griffiths
Chairman





Here are a few tips of my own:

- Winter takes its toll on batteries so it is worth the time to have your battery checked to ensure it is in good shape – such checks are often free. And remember, 3 years is a good life for a battery so anything older should be checked.
- When I last spoke to the Highways Agency, I was surprised to hear that a high percentage of drivers have no membership of a roadside recovery organisation. In the event of a breakdown on a motorway and where the driver has no such roadside recovery arrangements, the HA have the authority to remove the broken down car to the nearest safe haven. Whatever distance this might be (and it could be to a lay-by just a few yards from the nearest exit), the cost is significant and can equate to around 4 year's worth of membership of a motoring organisation! False economy? If you don't have roadside recovery, do consider getting it!
- Check that all lights are working and that the wiper blades are effective – if they squeak they probably need replacing. I tend to replace mine after the winter as the freezing temperatures can have an adverse effect on the rubber blades.

So what does TGAM have in store for 2013? Well, there are lots of things in the planning including a *new website* currently being finessed, which will have up-to-date information on driving-related topics, a diary of events so you can see what activities are coming your way, past newsletters, driving tips and advice. There will be a “members-only” section containing the latest newsletter, minutes of Committee meetings, AGM, accounts and more. The website will continue to evolve and I would be keen to hear what you would like to see on it so let me or Paul, our webmaster, have your ideas (however whacky they may seem to you) and we'll see what can be done; as the saying goes, “if you don't ask you don't get”.

A new and varied *events programme* is being put together by our committee - as we don't have an Events Coordinator at the moment. If you have any specific themes you feel would appeal to the wider audience, please contact me and I'll see if they can be included. These could be talks, visits, demonstrations for example and they don't have to be driving-related; if demand is high(!) I could give a demonstration of woodturning. Are there any TGAM members out there who could share their skills with us at a members evening? Please let me know!





This year, TGAM will be offering to its full members, *a free refresher drive* with an Observer. Please take advantage of it; you've nothing to lose and potentially a lot to gain! You can book this with Tony Hucker; just contact him with your name and IAM membership number and leave the rest to him; his contact details are 01278 451565 or email cmth@tgam.org.uk

It is in this year too, that IAM is making continued efforts to professionalise. Evidence of this can already be seen by the look of its new public website. For its Observers, IAM has teamed up with IMI (Institute of the Motor Industry) to provide an accredited competency-based Observer Qualification which will be recognised in the motoring industry. This will introduce consistency in the specialist mentoring and coaching provided to Associates by all Observers across all IAM Groups, something which has been long awaited in my view.

And on the subject of Observers, I wonder how many of you reading this newsletter have thought about training to become an Observer with TGAM? Ask any of our Observers and they will each have their own reasons why they became Observers but one in common

will be "to give something back to the Group". Some other reasons will include:

- Doing their bit for road safety
- Keeping their skills honed and up-to-date
- Passing these skills on, that others will benefit
- They feel a sense of achievement, personal pride
- They go out in some very nice cars!

Faye, one of our Group Observers, has listed her top 10 reasons for becoming an Observer and you can read these later in this newsletter.

A little-known fact is that all Observers are unpaid volunteers. They truly believe in what they do and without doubt they make a huge contribution to road safety. Committee members and Observers alike freely give up their time in support of TGAM. And I'd like to start off 2013 by thanking each and every one of them for all they do for our Group. I'd also like to thank all of our members too, for your continued support and I hope you will be tempted to come along to some of the members evenings being planned.

Andrew



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.

Chairman	Andrew Griffiths, Steppes House, Charlynch, Bridgwater TA5 2PG, 01278671659 chair@tgam.org.uk
Secretary	Serena Lonton, Mashala, Ilton, Ilminster TA19 9HL, 01460 52519 secretary@tgam.org.uk
Treasurer	Geoffrey Storate, Autumn Folly, Weacombe Road, West Quantoxhead, Taunton TA4 4EA 01984 632937 treasurer@tgam.org.uk
Training Officer	Alan Thomson, The Nook, Kingstone, Ilminster, TA19 0NS 01460 55919 cmat@tgam.org.uk
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Committee Members	Brian Howe, 29 Holford Road, Taunton TA2 7PD 01823274410 cmbh@tgam.org.uk Janet Loader, 5 Blundells Avenue, Tiverton, Devon EX16 4DL 01884 252116 cmjl@tgam.org.uk Faye Markham, 41 Calvados Road, Taunton TA1 2LA 01823 338171 cmfm@tgam.org.uk



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	Andrew Griffiths 01278 671659	John Gilbert 01278 651222
National Observers	Andrew Griffiths	
Trainee National Observers		John Gilbert
Observers	Tony Hucker Faye Markham Russ Williams	Ron Holdom Janet Loader Allan Wellwood

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

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.)





Ten Reasons to Become an Observer

by Faye Markham

1. It is a positive way to thank the patient soul who sorted YOU out. Now you can be in the driving seat - so to speak.
2. It keeps your brain from going rusty. You can't afford to forget the myriad of details involved in safe and efficient driving.
3. It is a cunning reason for frequent consultation of the Highway Code. How often would you open it if you didn't have an associate asking awkward questions? ("Er yes. We'll go over that next time"!)
4. It's a fun way of sharing experiences with fellow observers. We could get stuck into the same old routine if left to our own devices for too long.
5. Our senior observers and police colleagues add a special input to our on-going training. No names mentioned but when we do get 'pulled up' it is with good humour and witty banter. (Lots of chocky bickies help with one particular trainer to our group!)
6. You may have sighed with relief after passing your ADT and have since slid back a little. TUT TUT!
7. We have a brilliant and patient group trainer, calm and encouraging. You will enjoy this painless experience.
8. Ladies! At the risk of sounding sexist, please consider joining us. Janet and I are the only female observers in our group, and I believe we contribute a valuable and different approach, especially for the more nervous candidates. (I'll get some stick for this one!)
9. The feeling of elation and satisfaction when we get our associate through the test is great. And did you know the Taunton group has a pass rate of 93% at the last count, much higher than the national average? How good is that!!
10. And lastly you will LEARN a lot, as every associate is a different challenge. Come and join us. IT'S FUN!



MEMBERS' PAGES



**By Serena Lonton
Group/Membership Secretary**



There are still 21 of you who have not yet renewed your membership for the current year, so if you would like to renew, please complete the form and send it back to me with your cheque for £7.50 for full membership or £10.00 for associate/group friend membership by no later than 31st May 2013. This will prevent your membership from lapsing and guarantee that you continue to receive our brilliant Newsletter, which I am sure you will agree is always a very good read.

Please remember that if you are renewing as a full group member, you **MUST** be a fully paid up member of national IAM.

Our group records are now maintained via a new computer system linked to IAM, therefore it is vitally important that this is adhered to, so please check your national membership status carefully before signing the declaration on our renewal form.

Many thanks to you all for your continuing support.



MEMBERS' PAGES



Advanced Driving Test Passes

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

Owen Jones

OBSERVED BY
Tony Hucker

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.

The Membership Register

This quarter we have five 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>
Marcus Ransom	Taunton	Associate
Kate Barrington	Bridgwater	Associate
Theresa Strange	Bridgwater	Associate
Hazel Percy	Bridgwater	Associate
Hugh Todd	Bridgwater	Associate

CALENDAR

COMMITTEE MEETINGS

11th April

13th June

8th August



			FEBRUARY
20	W	7:30 pm	Members' Evening – Spring Quiz
			MARCH
20	W	7:30 pm	Members' Evening – Double Bill – IAM Cycling and Silverstone Track Day
27	W	am or pm	IAM track based skills day at Silverstone on the Stowe circuit
			APRIL
17	W	7:30 pm	Members' Evening – Talk by Tom Winsborough, a Director of Somerset Sight
23	Tu	am or pm	IAM Drivers track based Skills Day at Thruxton
			MAY
8	W	am or pm	IAM Drivers track based Skills Day at Croft Circuit
15	W	7:30 pm	Members' Evening – Recent Research in Somerset's History
18	Sa	All day	Regional Liaison Forum AGM at George Albert Hotel, Dorset





TGAM Christmas Luncheon – 8th December 2012

by Serena Lonton

This was held at our now regular venue, Oake Manor Golf Club, on a very rare sunny day. Twenty nine guests enjoyed a delicious traditional Christmas meal followed by coffee and mince pies.



The usual balloons and party poppers livened up the proceedings, along with the three youngest guests we have ever had in attendance. They were Janet Loader's three lovely grand-daughters, Isobel, Freya and Olivia, who were delighted when Santa's elves



crept in and left them some presents! We look forward to the time when we can prepare them for the ADT, not for some time yet though!

New chairman, Andrew Griffiths, thanked everyone for coming and said how much he and his wife Katie had enjoyed the day and had been made most welcome by all at TGAM.

Brian Howe as TGAM President also gave thanks to all present and to the Oake Manor staff for another superb event.



MEMBERS' EVENING



A “walk” along the Grand Western Canal 19th December - By Andrew Griffiths, Chairman



If you weren't there, you don't know what you've missed! In my view it was one of the most interesting talks I've heard in a long time.

For our final members evening of 2012 we were joined on 19th December by Philip Brind and his wife Jacquie. They own and run the Tiverton Canal Company, a unique canal tourist attraction based, of course, in Tiverton.

I have enjoyed a few canal narrow-boating holidays and have found every one of them relaxing; the sound of the boat moving through the water, the close-up view of the wildlife and, of course, the many canal-side

pubs beckoning to boaters. It is idyllic. The only noise to try to filter out is that produced by the diesel engine pushing the boat along.

Phil is one of the last horse drawn bargemen in the country and is a man who oozes passion about what he calls “the best job in the world”. What is written here is a very brief synopsis of his talk because readers who have access to the Internet can check out his website www.tivertoncanal.co.uk which is packed with information and a huge photo library – I simply cannot do it justice in the space of this article so I would urge you to click onto his website.





The Tiverton Canal Company has featured on BBC national television and featured in the BBC's 2012 Countryfile calendar for Children in Need – the winning picture no less! The BBC footage of the canal and the Countryfile video footage can be seen on the website above.

We were “introduced” to the crew and to Taffy,



Phil and Taffy

the Welsh Cob who effortlessly pulled the Tivertonian through the water. The communications between the horseman and the crew on board is essential especially when turning the barge around. During his talk, which was supplemented by many interesting

photographs taken by him and Jacquie, Phil took us on a “walk” along the towpath of the Grand Western canal for its 11¼ miles from Lowdells across to Tiverton.



As one would expect, Phil knows his stuff and has a wealth of information about the canal's origins, from when it was built in 1810 to current day when heavy rain in November 2012 caused a section of the canal embankment at Halberton to fail leading to local flooding. Phil was on the scene very quickly to help install measures to hold back water in the now, two separate sections of canal. He explained that the breach has to be repaired at considerable expense (a figure of £3 million was mentioned) because the location of the water source at the





Lowdwells end that feeds the canal means that the Tiverton basin will dry up.



The canal was built at a cost of £250,000 to carry lime from quarries to kilns. The only lock along the entire 11¼ miles is located at Lowdwells; the remainder of the canal is uninterrupted - there are no other locks! The canal is 6ft deep and lined with clay although some sections have had to be re-lined with a more modern resilient material as and when maintenance is carried out. Near Lowdwells is a quaint, tiny tunnel – Waytown tunnel. Phil explained that the craft used here were called Tubs and they were pulled through the tunnel by men pulling on the chain fixed to the tunnel roof.

Today the canal is designated a country park and nature reserve. It is home to otters, kingfishers and many species of fish all of which must thrive in the fresh water supplied by the natural springs feeding the canal. We saw many photos of wildlife, insects etc, artistically taken by Jacquie; you can see them too in the gallery on the website.

If anyone hasn't been on a horse drawn barge yet, why not give the Tivertonian a try in 2013 – I definitely will be.

To round off the evening, hot sausage rolls, minced pies and other tasty things were provided by Fay and Janet – thank you very much to both of you!





TGAM Vacancies

TGAM has vacancies for Observers right now. If you have passed your Advanced Driving Test, you've got good interpersonal skills and would like to know more about training to become an Observer, please phone Andrew for an informal chat on 07941 527507.

TGAM needs an Events Coordinator. We are looking for someone to join our committee to take the lead for TGAM's events whether they are talks, visits, demonstrations for example. The Coordinator will not be expected to arrange events themselves but to capture, input and run with ideas and coordinate the workload. If you think you can help, please call David on 01823 490467 for more information.

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 quiz with a mixture of general knowledge and motoring related questions.

Come and have an entertaining evening and support your Group.

Wednesday, 20th February

7:30 pm

at Hatch Beauchamp Village Hall





MASTERS TEST

By Andy Poulton – IAM Region 1 Staff Examiner

Andrew Griffiths gets his MASTERS with DISTINCTION in driving

Yes, against all odds and with a massive handicap, Andrew took his IAM MASTERS test and received a pass with distinction.

(Well the odds were against him as Andy Poulton the Region 1 Staff Examiner was his Examiner. The handicap was; well Andy Poulton as his Examiner.)

SO a well deserved congratulations on an excellent drive and result.

The IAM MASTERS Test is based wholly on Roadcraft no less and anything more. It is the equivalent of a Police Advanced final test.

The Masters Test will definitely have benefits for all road users, not only our organisation.

Masters is an aspirational and inspirational test; anything that helps people to reach their full driving/riding potential has got to be a

positive. We aim to encourage and support drivers and riders to become better, safer and more confident, mainly through continual skill development.

It is important for us that we provide a test that stretches the candidate and reflects the hard work, dedication and commitment taken to maintain a high standard of driving. The IAM Masters test is based on Roadcraft therefore a candidate, from whatever background or driving experience, will be expected to use the driving techniques and principles it contains. This may require some drivers to adapt their style of driving for the test, however, this can be seen as a reflection of ability to match techniques, vehicle and conditions to circumstances. We are always seeking ways in which we can encourage drivers to achieve their full driving potential, the Masters test is proving to be a step in the right direction! We are the IAM, road safety and the promotion of road safety is at the heart of everything we do.





An introduction to the new IAM Masters programme (formerly Special Assessment)

Summary

The Masters programme has replaced the Special Assessment as the highest level of publicly available on-road test available from the IAM. It is nationally available for both cars and motorcycles.

Key enhancements

(versus Special Assessment)

- A pass mark of 70%
- A distinction pass above 80%
- Five yearly retest requirement
- Appointment of a dedicated Mentor throughout
- Open to both IAM members and non-members
- A test only option (but no exemptions)
- A personal logbook for each candidate
- A new black members badge

In addition the Masters is open to non IAM members 'who are recommended to have already completed another recognised form of driver or rider training'.

Test composition

- At least 90 minutes long
- Using unfamiliar roads for the candidate
- Extended commentary
- Roadcraft/advanced techniques/Highway Code knowledge and understanding check
- Full verbal and written debrief

Product variables

There are eight different versions of the product (4 car, 4 bike) depending on membership status and whether mentoring is required.

The prices, coding and welcome pack materials are detailed below.



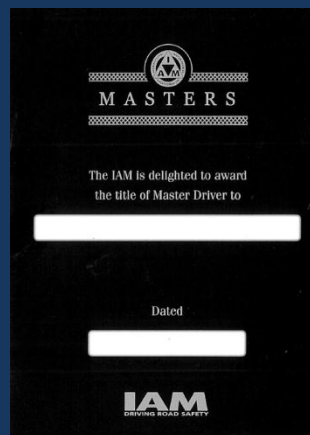


CAR	Member with Mentoring	Non Member Mentoring	Test Only Member	Test Only Non Member
Code	MMMC	MMNMC	MTOMC	MTONMC
Selling Price	£249	£279	£129	£159
Masters envelope	Y	Y	N	Y
Membership card	N	Y	N	Y
Letter	1	2	email	4
Log book	Y	Y	N	N
Roadcraft book	Y	Y	N	N
RAC voucher	Y	Y	Y	Y
Selling Price	£249	£279	£129	£159

Membership information

Success in the Masters test does not lead to a different category of IAM membership, however candidates will have the logo on their certificates and membership cards. There are no plans to introduce a 'Masters Register' but this could be created if there is demand.

Only Master members can act as mentors for Masters candidates.





MARCH MEMBERS' EVENING

Postponed in November due to bad weather

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 will have read John Gilbert's article
about the skills day in the last newsletter.
Come and hear lots more about John's
exciting and rewarding day.

Wednesday 20th March
7:30pm
at Hatch Beauchamp Village Hall

CONGRATULATIONS

I would like to add my heartiest congratulations to our Chairman, Andrew Griffiths, on his recent achievement with the IAM Masters Test. With Andy Poulton as his examiner, Andrew passed his Masters Test with **DISTINCTION**, attaining the stratospheric score of 90%.

Andrew is also currently studying and training hard for his forthcoming National Observer qualification. What better example can the TGAM have than a Chairman who is prepared to put his money where his mouth is and take up the challenge.

Andrew's achievements should be an inspiration to us all. If I had a driving licence I would be encouraged by Andrew to improve my standards to the highest possible, but in the absence of that item, I will be pushing Head Office (Chiswick), as hard as I can for a chance to qualify as an IAM Cycling Instructor, even though my cycle has four wheels instead of two.

Again, I say, **WELL DONE** Andrew.

Brian L Howe
Group President





The History of the Motor Coach (Part One)

From the President, Brian Howe

PREFACE Due to the recent “divorce” involving me and my driving licence on medical grounds, with minimal if any, chance of reconciliation; I thought it might be an idea to attempt to chart the history of the motor-coach. I was a coach driver for most of the last 24 years. That includes an “apprenticeship” of two years driving eight seat, Ford Transit minibuses for Brendon Motors of Bishops Lydeard, on Somerset County Council funded school contracts. I started in early 1989 and went on to take the PSV 4 (9-16 seat minibus) test in 1991. I followed this with the PSV 1 test (16 seats upwards, including double decker buses but not articulated, bendy, buses) in 1995. Having passed my IAM ADT in January 1997, I followed it with the IAM Commercial ADT in a 33 seat Mercedes 814 Vario coach in February 2004. I completed all elements for the Drivers Qualification Card (CPC or Certificate of Professional Competence) on 31st July 2012, just 6 weeks before my enforced medical retirement from not only professional driving but also private motoring.

Believe me, the irony was not lost on me. However, onwards and upwards my friends. Don't look back unless learning from past mistakes.



A *coach* (also *motor coach*) is a large motor vehicle, a type of bus, used for conveying passengers on excursions and on longer distance express coach scheduled transport between cities - or even between countries. Unlike buses designed for shorter journeys, coaches often have a luggage hold separate





from the passenger cabin and are normally equipped with facilities required for longer trips including comfortable seats and sometimes a toilet. The term 'coach' was previously used for a horse-drawn carriage designed for the conveyance of more than one passenger, the passengers' luggage and mail that is covered for protection from the elements. The term was applied to railway carriages in the 19th century and later to motor coaches (buses). *Wikipedia*.

Land transport in its widest, most general sense was carried out entirely on the turnpike roads and the first attempts to mechanise it were expressed not in steam trains, but in steam coaches. Before and during the eighteen-thirties, when railways were becoming established and their possibilities were fully realized, enterprising engineers designed and built some successful steam carriages, which deserved to be called the first motor coaches.

Drawings of Cugnot's Steam Tractor (1769-1770) reached England and were seen by William Murdoch, assistant to James Watt, then the biggest name in steam power development. In 1784, Murdoch set out to make his own steam vehicle, but modestly essayed only a scaled-down model.



He used a spirit fire to create steam, and learning from Cugnot's mistakes, he mounted the engine over the rear wheels. N.B. Cugnot's tractor had the boiler/cauldron suspended over the front wheel causing it to tip over easily when turning, due to the shift in its centre of gravity. According to Cornish legend, Murdoch road-tested his model one evening on a lane leading to the church in Redruth, where he lived. The vicar, meeting the hissing toy in the gloom, took to his heels. Later Murdoch allowed himself to be taken off the project by Watt. Possibly Watt was motivated by jealousy; certainly Murdoch never took the next step to develop a full size vehicle.

That was done by Richard Trevithick, a mining engineer from Camborne, four miles away. With a tall chimney stack and a footplate for the fireman, his vehicle looked more like a railway locomotive than a car, but at that time even railway locomotives were in the future. On Christmas Eve, 1801, Trevithick took a party of his workmates for a ride. Eight people jumped aboard, eager to be the first travellers on the new machine. (Making it, probably the first self-propelled multi-passenger vehicle, bus, certainly in England, if not the world). One of Trevithick's friends wrote this about the journey, "When we see'd that Captain Dick was agoing to turn on steam, we jumped up, as many as could, maybe

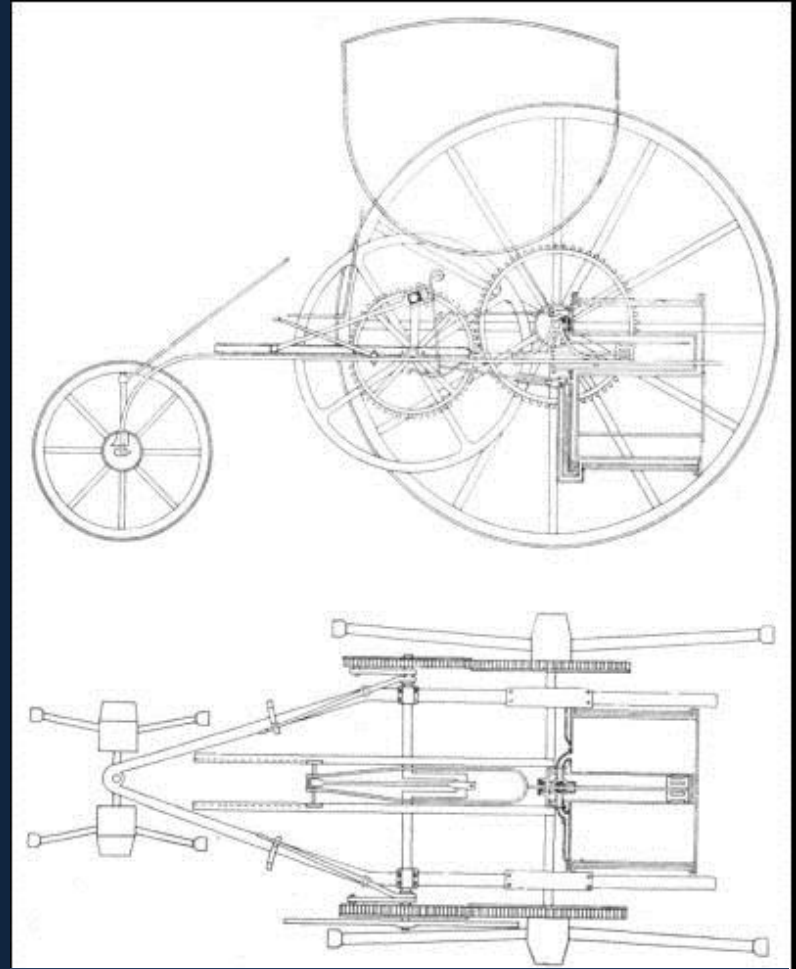




seven or eight of us. Twas a stiffish hill, but she went off like a bird..." Trevithick drove his steam-coach half a mile up that hill 'faster than a man can walk'. This journey and several later ones, gave Trevithick the distinction of being Britain's first motorist. Unfortunately the vehicle wasn't destined for a long career. Trevithick left it overnight in a hotel stables during one of his demonstration runs. He forgot to extinguish the fire and the water boiled away, burning his vehicle to a shell. After driving an improved model along London's Oxford Street, Trevithick failed to interest any sponsors. He sold the engine and switched his interest to railways and designed stationary engines for winching trucks along rails. He died in poverty.

After the Napoleonic Wars, Britain's commerce developed rapidly at home and abroad. Many highways were not much more than country lanes or tracks, and two men, Telford and Macadam, contributed greatly to their improvement. During the 1820's their road building work enabled coach companies to set up a large and complex network of routes throughout the country.

At this time several far-sighted engineers developed the self-propelled steam coach and by the 1830's several steam coach companies operated regular passenger carrying routes. One of the more notable coach operators was Sir



DRAWINGS OF TREVITHICK'S STEAM COACH furnished with his patent specification in 1802. The drawings represent a coach built in the previous year. Trevithick and his partner, Andrew Vivian, drove the coach from Camborne, Cornwall, to Plymouth.

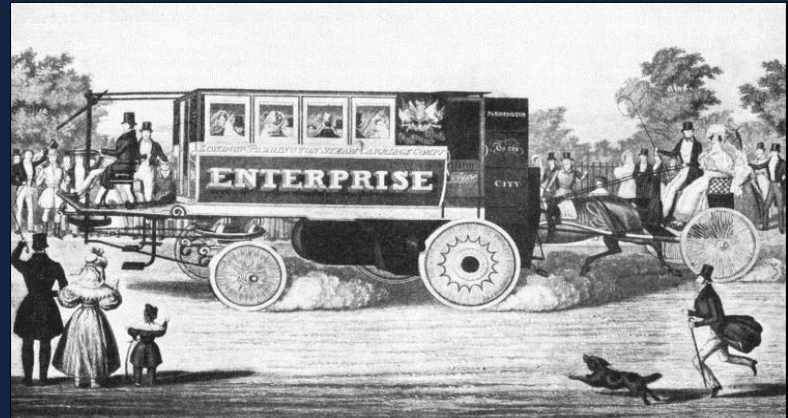




Goldsworthy Gurney, whose 'steam diligences' could carry up to 21 passengers and travel at 14 miles an hour at a cost of 3d a mile in coal. In London several routes were opened, East End to the City and Moorgate to Paddington, while other routes started from London to Bath and Cheltenham to Gloucester. The timetables were probably as reliable as those of today.



THE FIRST STEAM COACH, resembling a steam-driven stage coach, was invented by Gurney in 1827 and ran between London and Bath. The ingenious water tube boiler, fired by coke, was placed in the hind boot of the carriage, from which projected the flues. Steam was delivered to the two driving cylinders placed under the body. Accommodation was provided for six passengers inside and twelve outside.



BUILT IN 1833 for the steam-driven bus service between Paddington and the Bank, in London, the Enterprise was one of ten successful steam coaches built by Walter Hancock. This was the first regular motor omnibus service to be operated in any city. The coachwork of the Enterprise, which had its engine at the back, was based on the design of horse-drawn omnibuses.

Walter Hancock, a contemporary of Gurney, was also much interested in steam coach design. He began his first experiments in 1824, but did not succeed in conveying fare-paying passengers before the energetic Sir Goldsworthy. The height of Hancock's fame came at the beginning of the eighteen-thirties, just when Gurney was giving up. Before 1810, Hancock had built ten steam cars of various types, the later examples being most successful. He tended to favour the





steam omnibus rather than the steam coach and his best known vehicle, the Enterprise, resembled a motor bus of the early nineteenth-hundreds, save that the engine was mounted behind the body instead of in front. Hancock's machinery was extraordinarily advanced. In various early steam coaches we find features which are to-day considered essential points of modern practice.

Hancock's steam generator consisted of a light cellular boiler. For materials he used copper and gunmetal. The boiler was a marvel of compactness combined with good steaming qualities, so much so that modern motor engineers can claim merely to have revived lightweight propulsion, not to have introduced it. Some of the Hancock coaches were most efficient. His curiously named Infant first ran from London to Brighton on 1st November, 1832. Unfortunately, it ran short of coke on the way and took a long time to reach its destination. On the return the average speed, including stops for coke and water, was as much as six miles an hour. In 1832 Hancock inaugurated the first regular urban motor bus service. His steam omnibus Enterprise was built for this service in 1833. It ran in London between Paddington (which had no railway station in those days) and the Bank. Between

1833 and 1836, when railways first reached London, Hancock carried more than 12,000 passengers on his Paddington-Bank service. In 1833 Hancock put another steam coach on the road. This coach, which had the rather gruesome name of Autopsy, ran between London and Brighton, making the journey in five and a half hours and attaining a maximum speed of thirteen miles an hour. That was faster than the maximum speed allowed for motor buses within comparatively recent years. Hancock's calculations showed that the owner of steam coaches could make a profit of 25 per cent over all running expenses. This showing, which should have stimulated wealthy coach proprietors, unfortunately alarmed other influential persons, who would stop at nothing to prevent the spread of mechanical transport.

But in spite of threatening movements, engineers were busy on steam coaches at the beginning of the eighteen-thirties. Colonel Maceroni built several, in which he incorporated a wonderfully advanced lightweight water tube boiler, the tubes of which communicated with a steam drum at the top, delivering steam to the cylinders at a pressure of 150 lb. per sq. in. Dr. William Church was another pioneer with bold ideas,





who set out to establish a regular steam-coach service between London and Birmingham. His second and most important design took the form of a three-wheeler, with the single steering wheel in front and the engine in the middle, the engine weight resting on the two big driving wheels. Church used a rather heavy and cumbersome engine and to prevent the weight of the engine from damaging the road surface he designed his wheels with exceptionally broad treads. Steam coach wheels were normally of wood, with iron tyres, and resembled those of the ordinary stage coaches, except that they were rather stouter. There is no evidence that they damaged the roads in normal conditions and probably, as the Select Committee had claimed, the pounding of horses' hoofs on the macadam surface was far rougher. Encouraged by initial success, Church designed a coach larger than any hitherto proposed, on the same lines as his existing three-wheeler, but big enough to carry fifty passengers inside and out. The coach was never put in commission, for the opening of the London and Birmingham Railway in 1837 convinced Church that his plans for mechanizing travel on the Birmingham road had come too late.

The trouble, with early steam coach proprietors

was that they saw in their vehicles a substitute for horse transport; and for railway transport. Had they tried to introduce steam road coaches as feeders to the new railways in districts where branch lines would have been unremunerative, there is little doubt but that the rich and influential railway companies would have given them all the backing they deserved and enabled steam coaching to prevail against its more reactionary enemies. Only to-day are we realizing the meaning of transport co-ordination which, from a scientific point of view and from the travelling public's point of view, should be in every way superior to cut-throat competition.

Scotland saw one of the most remarkable developments of all in the work of John Scott Russell. Nasmyth's steam car had been a simple experiment; Russell set out to produce an efficient means of urban or interurban road transport and in this, for the time, he succeeded. Russell took the stage coach as his model, reinforcing its undercarriage and springing to support the heavier weight of the machinery. The springing alone showed that Russell had remarkable knowledge of the dynamics of a more or less heavy vehicle passing over an uneven road surface. As Gurney had done, Russell placed his machinery





behind the coach body, in the place of what would be the after boot of an ordinary coach. For a motor he installed a two-cylinder vertical engine, with gunmetal cylinders of 12 in. diameter and 12 in. stroke. The piston rods came through the tops of the cylinders, the crossheads moving up and down above them. From the two cross-heads connecting rods came down to the crankshaft, on which were mounted the eccentrics working the valves. The crankshaft was geared down to the driving axle at a ratio of 2 to 1. Perhaps the most remarkable thing about Russell's design was the gearing of the driving axle. To allow for the variation in revolution speed of the two driving wheels when rounding corners, Russell fitted two clutches whereby either wheel could be thrown out of gear. His carriage was thus able to turn sharply without skidding or damaging the road surface. In this he anticipated by many years the differential of modern motoring practice. Russell fitted a steam generator which was a miracle of compactness and which attained a remarkably high degree of thermal efficiency. His boiler was rectangular in shape and built up of copper plates. The firebox and smoke-box were placed at the same end. At the opposite end he fitted a square combustion chamber, the flues passing

from firebox to combustion chamber and from combustion chamber to smoke-box. From these the fumes escaped to the outer air through a tall chimney, draught being induced by the exhaust from the engine. The steam pipe opening was in a raised steam space, corresponding to the dome of a modern locomotive boiler, through which the chimney passed, giving the steam a slight degree of superheat. With this boiler, it was possible to raise steam to working pressure within the surprisingly short time of twenty minutes.

Against shocks from inequalities in the road surface, Russell mounted his machinery on a set of S-form laminated springs (springs made of thin metal plates), the coach body itself resting on the more usual C-shaped coach springs. The fuel was carried on a two-wheeled tender behind the main coach. Seats were mounted on this tender for additional passengers, the arrangement recalling that of a dog-cart. Both coach and tender were finely decorated and the internal fittings and upholstery were on a noteworthy and lavish scale. Russell had six steam coaches built to this design by the Grove House Engine Works in Edinburgh. They were completed in the spring of 1834 and in April of that year the designer inaugurated with them a regular





hourly service between Glasgow and Paisley. The distance is seven miles and the coaches were easily capable of covering it in thirty minutes at an average speed of fourteen miles an hour. The coaches immediately gained a great measure of popularity with the travelling public and were generally crowded with passengers, who hung on to the sides of coach and trailer in addition to occupying all the seats, inside and out.

The local authorities, however, watched Russell's success with an unfriendly eye. Their workmen were instructed to spread a thick layer of loose stones over the surfaces of the roads along which the coaches passed. All that happened was that the existing horse-drawn traffic was held up and had to be taken round the obstruction. The steam coaches went crunching through the loose stones without delay or mishap. How far the ingenious Russell might have gone we shall never know, for a sad accident overtook his enterprise. Probably the overcrowding of the coaches was responsible for the accident. Whatever it was, one of the coaches was upset through the breakage of a wheel. The vehicle heeled over and the bottom plates of the boiler came into violent contact with the ground. The boiler immediately exploded, blowing much of

the coach to fragments and causing heavy casualties among the passengers.

The authorities promptly ordered Russell's remaining five coaches off their roads at once and a splendid beginning was brought to an abrupt and untimely end. Two of the displaced coaches were brought to London, where such vehicles were still tolerated. They made occasional trips to Kew, Windsor and Greenwich. For a while, too, one of them plied between Hyde Park Corner and Hammersmith.

There were various reasons why these earliest motor services - for motor services they were - came to an end. Perhaps it was the Turnpike Trust that gave the infant industry its fatal blow.

The Turnpike Trust consisted of men intolerant of change. Many of them still did not believe in the ultimate success of railways and they were determined not to allow steam engines on the public highroads. They could not forbid entirely the use of these steam engines, but they adopted the old plan of taxing them out of existence. Though it had been proved that a steam coach did no more, probably less, damage to the road than a coach and four, the Turnpike Trust had the price of a steam coach





licence made twelve times that of a coach and four horses. The industry had been dead many years when the repressive Act of 1865 was passed. Under this Act every road locomotive had to be preceded at a distance of one hundred yards by a man on foot carrying a red flag to warn passengers of the locomotive's approach. The speed limit was fixed at four miles an hour.

The development of heavy traction engines, it is true, was not unduly impeded by this Act. The large steam tractor gained rapidly in popularity from the eighteen-sixties onwards, but most of its activities were of an agricultural nature - hauling steam ploughs by means of revolving drums and steel cables, working threshing machines and so on. Steam tractors used the roads, as a rule, when they were making their way from one farm to the next, or transporting newly-felled timber. In neither instance was speed necessary or desirable.

A number of Mid-Victorian inventors designed steam passenger coaches, in the interests of experiment, and some of these were cruder than the coaches of earlier days. There were a "steam dog-cart" and a "steam brougham", in which the passengers sat on a narrow leather

seat with a huge coal-fired boiler almost on top of them. It was not until the early years of the present century that road motor vehicles reappeared in any numbers on the roads of Great Britain. Had their predecessors been given a reasonable chance, there is little doubt that mechanical road transport and railways would have grown up side by side and many economic transport problems of today would never have occurred.



HEAVY ORNAMENTATION was one of the outstanding features of the steam carriages designed by William Church. In 1832 he inaugurated a service between London and Birmingham, but this was suspended when the railway was opened a few years later. Two types of vertical boiler were invented by Church to provide steam for his carriages, which were three-wheelers.





APRIL MEMBERS' EVENING

Somerset Sight

Somerset Sight helps people of all ages with sight loss to find ways of continuing to live a full and independent life.

Tom Woolsborough, a director of Somerset Sight, will tell us about funding and providing services and activities for visually impaired people within their local communities throughout Somerset.

**Wednesday 17th April
7:30pm
at Hatch Beauchamp Village Hall**

MAY MEMBERS' EVENING

Recent Research in Somerset's History

By Dr. Robert Dunning

Dr. Dunning is a very well-known historian, author and raconteur who between 1974 and 2006 produced seven out of the ten volumes of Somerset Victoria County History. In his spare time he has produced other books such as Some Somerset Country Houses, Christianity in Somerset and Arthur - The King in the West.

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





Best Procurable

By Janet Loader

It was a cold night, no, it was a very cold night, 20 degrees below zero. The family of father, mother, her mother-in-law and two children aged 3 years and 8 months were returning from Winnipeg and were on the last leg of a seventy mile winter logging road created by compacted snow and ice. On either side were deep ditches so they travelled very carefully as very little traffic, if any, used the road at night.

The trip to Winnipeg was to purchase a new car so they didn't have the usual emergency gear like extra blankets, snow shovels, food and drink. They were about 30 miles from home when the car started to shudder, wouldn't respond and finally came to a halt.

As they sat there the cold began to penetrate and the biggest concern was for the children. Mother-in-law took the 8 month old undid her coat and wrapped it round them both; the mother took the 3 year old and did the same.

This new car had a fuel injection system and the father had the idea that maybe ice was

blocking the filter so preventing the petrol from flowing into the engine.

While in Winnipeg he had bought his favourite tippie, Hudson's Bay Best Procurable Whisky, produced for the Hudson's Bay Company for which he worked.

As the cold became more intense and the family were becoming more at risk of hypothermia, the father took his whiskey and poured it into the petrol tank, with tears running down his face - a sight never to be forgotten. So much for enjoying a quiet drink in the comfort of his home!

They all sat in the car just hoping the alcohol in the whisky would act as a de-icer and they would be able to continue their journey.

The miracle worked. The car behaved itself and they all arrived home safely.

The Moral of this story? Always have emergency gear and of course The Hudson's Bay Best Procurable Whisky.





ROLLS-ROYCE CHAUFFEUR COURSE

By John Dowell

I joined IAM Fleet Training in May of 1986, one month after its creation.

The trainers were all ex-class one police drivers who were Approved Driving Instructors (ADI's). We went into companies as a team, gave a presentation on Roadcraft, did an assessment run with employees, gave a demonstration drive and finally instructed to an advanced standard. In the early days this was a bit of a mish-mash as there was no particular curriculum for giving the lecture and it was up to the individual trainers on how the presentation was set. However, let me jump ahead.

I had always wanted to do a Rolls-Royce Chauffeur Course, but cost was something to consider. I applied in December 1993 and was offered a course at Crewe for April of 1994; cost was just over £1000. My intention was to be able to train chauffeurs through Fleet Training albeit I paid for the course myself.

The course was for five days and consisted of the following:

Day 1. Introduction with film and talk on the history of Rolls-Royce; technical topics with controls and their function. There were six people on the course with three instructors and it was made clear that we were there to learn; anyone playing about would be sent home! We were informed that there would be six exams and anyone falling below 62% would be off the course.

Day 2. Car care including rectification of minor abrasive damage, care of the interior, minor mechanics and conduct with the car's passengers.

Day 3. The morning was spent on a skid pan with a 6.75 litre Corniche with bald overinflated tyres. After practice we did three individual laps against the clock – this was our first test and I scored 90%. The afternoon was spent with manoeuvring. The first test was to go forwards through a chicane marked by poles, then reverse back through the chicane using just the exterior mirrors. Marks were deducted for turning the wheels whilst stationary, or





touching a pole with the car. Next we reversed into a 'garage' made with poles six inches from the exterior mirrors and we had to stop within six inches of a pole at the rear. Marks were lost for touching the poles or being over the six inches. From that we went forwards into a 'garage' with the same criteria. Finally we parallel parked with poles resembling other cars. The latter three I didn't lose any points on, but I lost 10 whilst reversing the chicane as I confused the poles in the wing mirrors!

Day 4. Road driving to an advanced standard with a Rolls-Royce Silver Sprit. This not only included consideration for terrorist action, but also the comfort of passengers. In the first part the instructor was advising us on commentary driving. I found this off-putting because my police training for commentary was superior to the instructor as I was thinking well ahead of what he was trying to teach me! Later in the day the driving test was conducted in a Bentley Turbo R. I achieved 95% for my drive as, like the Driving Standards Agency Cardington Special Test, no one comes out with a clean sheet!

Day 5. We knew that we were having three written tests today which would be multiple choice covering Advanced Driving, The Highway

Code and a Technical Paper. At that particular time I was tutoring at night school for Part One of the ADI Exam which was multiple choice. I spent the evening coaching the other candidates on how to read a multiple choice question as they all considered it to be their weak point (less than 62%, no certificate!). They all got through. My average for the three papers was 93.5.

To achieve a 'Distinction' an overall score of 92% was required. I just missed this by one point, but achieved a 'Credit'.

To go back to our first day: We were informed that the factory stopped work at one-o'clock when the workers went to the restaurant - Rolls-Royce doesn't have a canteen! We were permitted out at five to one and waited for the doors to open. The restaurant had four food counters served by chefs. We wandered in somewhat filled with wonderment – where to start. We didn't get chance. Several hundred workers burst through the doors and ran to the serving areas virtually knocking us out of the way. At this stage none of us knew what was for lunch because we couldn't see the counters. The restaurant became chaos with people running with their food and grabbing chairs at tables and woofing down food.





We were later to learn that, with the agreement of their unions, the lunch time was forty minutes (that was from the time of the siren and back to the work area) and for this short stop the workers finished at one-o'clock on Friday. At five to one all gates into the factory were closed and no movement of traffic was allowed within the factory area. With all these workers running from every door inside it was understandable that 'elf and safety' was paramount.

Having achieved this certificate I approached the IAM Fleet Training Manager to discuss chauffeur courses. Courses were set at one, three and five days. Three and five day courses were completed with an Advanced Test on the final day.

As a result of this I trained some 300 chauffeurs from 1994 to 2007 this being either individuals, or in some cases one or two weeks with chauffeur companies.

This included 19 chauffeurs of Sheikh Mohammed Bin Rashid Al Maktoum of Dubai, 20 chauffeurs for a chauffeur company at Heathrow and 15 chauffeurs for a company out at Gatwick.

One of my most memorable chauffeurs was

the chauffeur for the chairman of Loreal Shampoos. He had a five day course and I had to work on observation, planning, steering and smoothness. On the final day he came to pick me up at home and the morning session was just a matter of revision. Part way through the morning he stated that having left home his concentration level was high but relaxed. His steering was perfection, especially when turning into side roads and he was aware that the car was balanced and smooth. He said he thought to himself, 'That so and so has got me doing what he wanted me to do!' Praise indeed.

He, too, took his test and became a member of the IAM.

Prior to retiring from Fleet Training I re-wrote the three Chauffeur Courses and instructed four of my fellow trainers how to conduct the courses.

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



SNOW



Budget cuts are really affecting services!



Snow Difference



The Snow Squirrel was sculpted by our president's grandson Joe Blasby





Tyres

By David Walton

The earliest tyres were bands of iron, placed on wooden wheels, used on carts and wagons. A wheelwright would heat the tyre in a forge and place it over the wheel and then water quench it, causing the metal to contract and fit tightly on the wheel. This outer ring "tied" the wheel segments together and provided a wear-resistant surface to the wheel.

The first simple solid rubber tyres were produced in the mid-1800s. The pneumatic tyre was invented and patented by R W Thompson in 1845, though the first practical use was in 1887 by John Boyd Dunlop on his son's bicycle. The first pneumatic tyres were used on automobiles in 1895 by Andre and Edouard Michelin.

Layers of relatively inextensible cords were embedded in the rubber to hold its shape by preventing the rubber from stretching due to the internal pressure. Initially these cords were angled at about 60 degrees to the direction of travel so they criss-crossed over each other

(hence the name 'cross-ply'). Radial tyres, on the other hand, have their cord plies at 90 degrees to the direction of travel. This design avoids the plies rubbing against each other as the tyre deforms, reducing rolling resistance. In 1948 Michelin introduced steel-belted radial tyres, giving longer life and lower rolling resistance, but requiring changes to the vehicle's suspension system. These new tyres were widely used throughout Europe and Japan but, due to the high cost of suspension changes, they were not introduced in the US until the fuel crisis of the 70's.

Pneumatic tyres are manufactured in about 450 factories around the world, which produce over one billion tyres annually, making the tyre industry a major consumer of natural rubber.

A recent study by the European division of tyre maker Bridgestone found that 93.5% of cars in Europe have under-inflated tyres, wasting some 2.14 billion gallons of high-priced, polluting fuel every year.

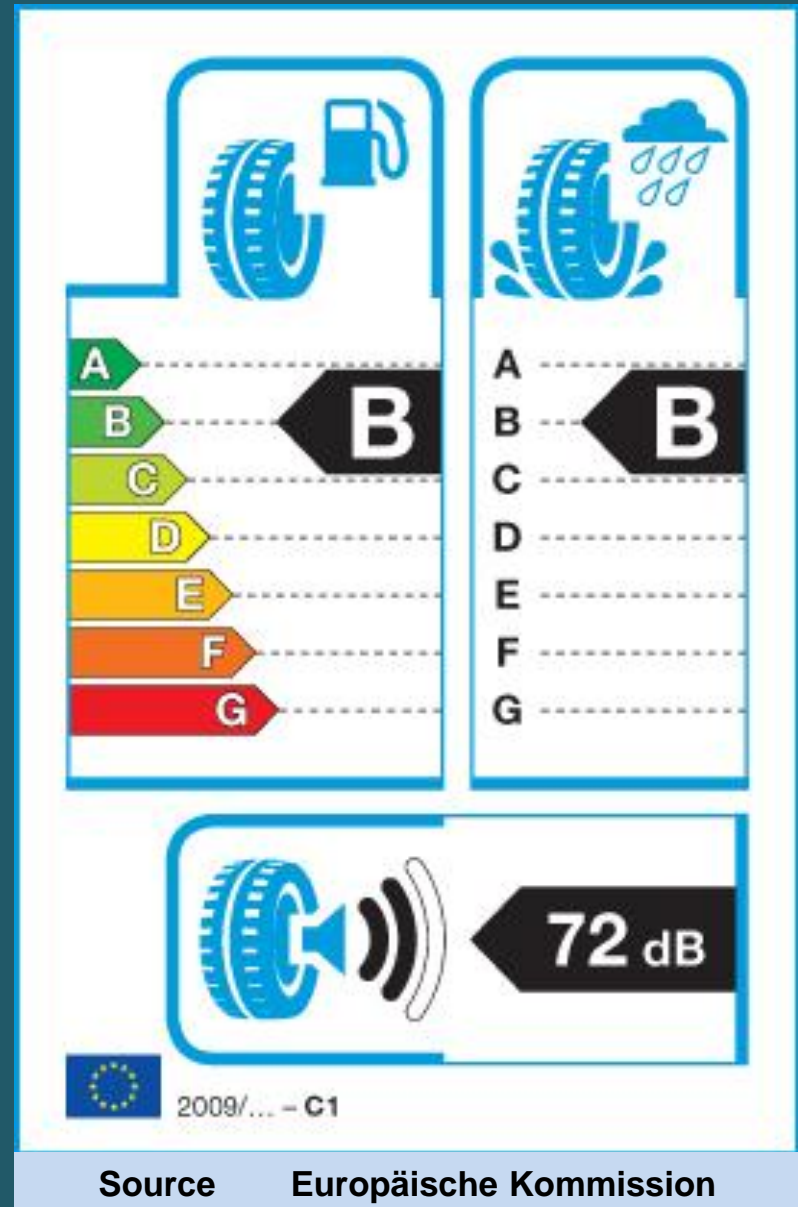


Tyre Labelling

From 1st November 2012, tyre manufacturers must specify fuel consumption, wet grip and noise classification. This is as a result of a regulation created by the EU Commission in 2009 as part of the Energy Efficiency Action Plan and similar to the system of marking on white goods such as refrigerators, washing machines and televisions to show the level of energy consumption. All tyres displayed for sale must carry a sticker or have a label close by.

Fuel Consumption

The energy lost when a tyre is moving, known as the rolling resistance, has a major effect on fuel consumption. The lower the rolling resistance, the less energy is lost, reducing fuel consumption and CO₂ emissions. In the new regulations, the rolling resistance is graded A to G, green to red, best to worst (though D is not used for cars and light goods). The difference between A and G represents a 7.5% difference in fuel consumption. If you do 10,000 miles a year at 30mpg, that's £150 difference!



Source

Europäische Kommission





Wet Grip

The wet grip classification is an indication of the difference in stopping distance from 50mph.

This is also expressed as a grade between A and G (this time D and G are not used for cars and light goods). There is 3 meters difference between grades, meaning that the difference in stopping distance at 50mph between a tyre of grade A and one of grade F is 5 car lengths: Could be life or death!



Noise Emission

The 'drive by' noise level is indicated in decibels along with a one, two or three sound wave symbol where one black wave

indicates the best noise level performance. The legal limit is being reduced at some point before 2016. Tyres outside the limit pay extra tax.

3 black waves = Noisier tyre. Level greater than the future limit but complies with today's noise regulation

2 black waves = Average tyre. Noise level equal to or below future limit by up to 3 dB (A)

1 black wave = Low noise tyre. Noise level 3 dB (A) or more below future noise limit

3dB doesn't sound much but it is actually double the noise level!

Tyre Code

Car tyres are described by an alphanumeric tyre code, which is generally moulded into the sidewall of the tyre. This code specifies the dimensions of the tyre and some of its key limitations, such as load-bearing ability and maximum speed. Sometimes the inner sidewall contains information not included on the outer sidewall and vice versa.

There is a mix of metric and imperial units and various extensions to lettering and numbering schemes, which have evolved over the years. In addition new tyres now have ratings for traction, tread wear and temperature resistance (collectively known as The Uniform Tyre Quality Grade (UTQG) ratings).

Most tyres sizes are given using the ISO Metric sizing system, which consists of a string of letters and numbers, as follows:

An optional letter (or letters) indicating the intended use or vehicle class for the tyre:-

P: Passenger Car

LT: Light Truck

ST: Special Trailer

T: Temporary (restricted usage for "Space-Saver" spare wheels)





3 digit number: The “nominal section width” of the tyre in millimetres at the widest point excluding any lettering or decoration on the sidewall.

/: Slash character for character separation.

2 or 3 digit number: The “aspect ratio” of the sidewall height to the total width of the tyre, as a percentage. If the information is omitted, it is assumed to be 82%. If the number is larger than 200, then this is the diameter of the entire tyre in millimetres.

An optional letter indicating construction of the fabric carcass of the tyre:

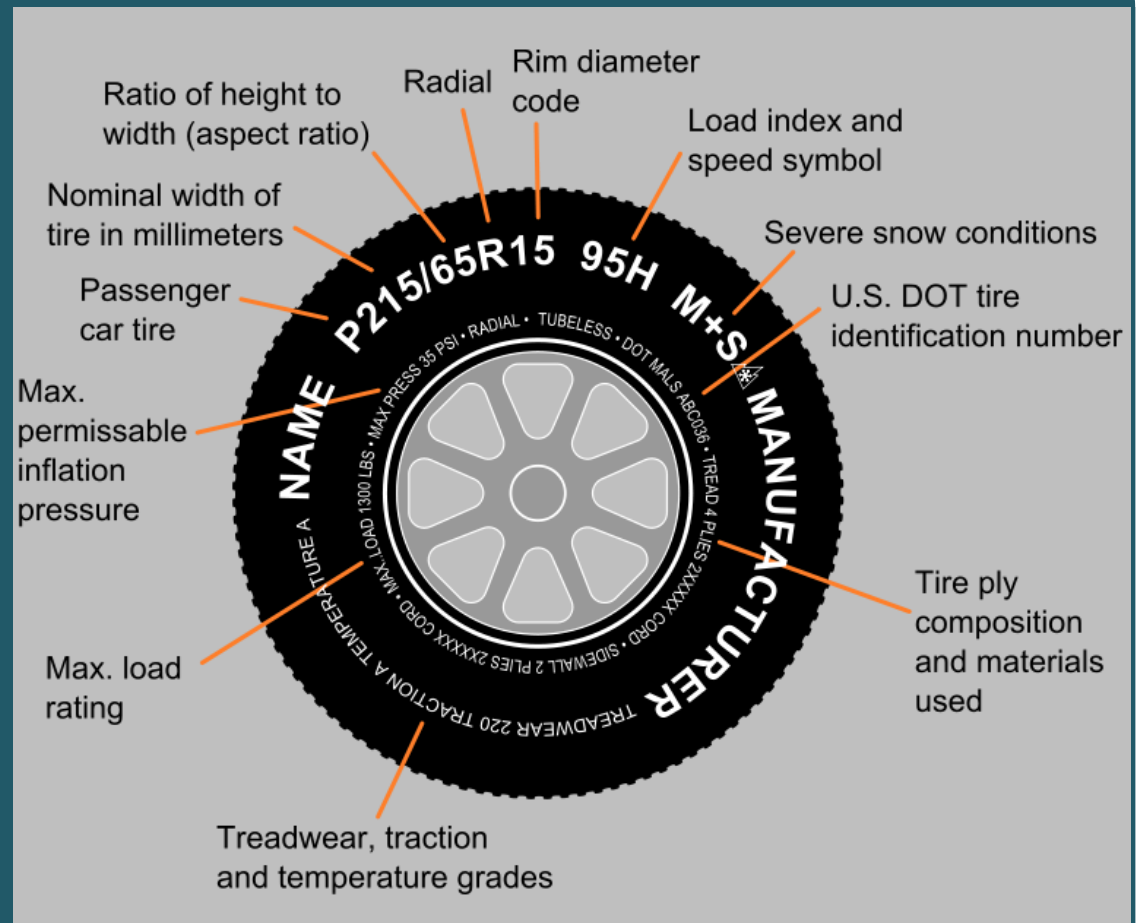
B: bias belt (where the sidewalls are the same material as the tread, leading to a rigid ride)

D: diagonal

R: radial

if omitted, then it is a cross ply tyre

2 digit number: Diameter in inches of the wheel that the tyres are designed to fit.



From Wikimedia Commons – author F l a n k e r





2 or 3 digit number: Load index – this is a numerical code which gives the maximum load that the tyre can carry whilst it is travelling at up to the maximum speed set by the speed rating of the tyre.

Load Index	Load (Kg)	Load Index	Load (Kg)	Load Index	Load (Kg)
65	290	85	515	105	925
66	300	86	530	106	950
67	307	87	545	107	975
68	315	88	560	108	1000
69	325	89	580	109	1030
70	335	90	600	110	1060
71	345	91	615	111	1090
72	355	92	630	112	1120
73	365	93	650	113	1150
74	375	94	670	114	1180
75	387	95	690	115	1215
76	400	96	710	116	1250
77	412	97	730	117	1285
78	425	98	750	118	1320
79	437	99	775	119	1360
80	450	100	800	120	1400
81	462	101	825	121	1450
82	475	102	850	122	1500
83	487	103	875	123	1550
84	500	104	900	124	1600

1 or 2 digit/letter combo: Speed rating – This indicates the maximum permitted speed that the tyre can endure for a period of ten minutes without being in danger of sustaining damage. The speed rating of the tyre must match or exceed the maximum speed of your car. See the table below for the maximum permitted speeds for each speed rating.

Speed Symbol	Speed (km/h)	Speed (mph)
L	120	75
M	130	81
N	140	87
P	150	93
Q	160	99
R	170	106
S	180	112
T	190	118
U	200	124
H	210	130
V	240	149
W	270	168
Y	300	186
(Y)	over 300	over 186



M5 Pile-Up: Manslaughter Charges Dropped

Manslaughter charges have been dropped against the organiser of a fireworks display held on the night of a crash on the M5 in which seven people died.

Geoffrey Counsell, 50 and from Somerset, was arrested after the crash, which involved 34 vehicles and left 51 people injured, in November 2011. Mr Counsell will now face one charge, under health and safety laws, of failing to ensure the safety of others. That case will be heard at a later date, Bristol Crown Court heard.

The Crown Prosecution Service authorised Avon and Somerset Police to charge Geoffrey Counsell with manslaughter in October 2012. Chief crown prosecutor, Barry Hughes said all CPS cases are kept under "constant review". He said: "During this review process, in December we sought further advice from a leading expert on the law of negligence and additional information was also provided by expert witnesses and police investigators.



Seven people died and 51 were injured in the pile-up involving 34 vehicles

"Based on this additional information and advice, it has been decided that there is insufficient evidence to continue with a prosecution for manslaughter." The fireworks display organised by Mr Counsell was taking place at Taunton Rugby Club, which is next to the motorway, when the crash happened. Mr Counsell was originally charged with the seven counts of manslaughter, on 19th October last year.





I Wonder Who's to Blame?

By Kevin Grose

I'm driving on the M5 approaching Junction 25 (Taunton) travelling southbound from the Bridgwater direction. The central reservation signs are indicating a 40 mph speed limit and the overhead sign indicates "QUEUE AHEAD". It's raining heavily and the time is about 8:45 am – rush hour scenario!

I notice the inside lane is slowing down; it is slowing down quite quickly – in fact, it is now stationary and it has STOPPED! I react; I slow down and I leave a fair sized gap running up onto the end of this queue. All this time I am looking in my rear view mirrors to assess the traffic movements behind me.

About a dozen vehicles slow down and roll up to join the queue behind me. The other two overtaking lanes are both reasonably clear and devoid of any major traffic. Whilst looking again in my three rear view mirrors, I notice a fast approaching, blue coloured lorry. It appears to not slow down. In fact, it is NOT slowing down at all. I gradually move forward slightly using up some of my gap I have left just in case this lorry does not stop at all.

Suddenly, I see this lorry is slightly sideways across lane 1 and 2 and then catapults towards the hard shoulder. It is initially hammering down the hard shoulder, then starts to slow and then finally stops almost beside me already waiting in the queue. It's a builders merchant's 3 axle rigid lorry loaded with timber roof trusses, roofing sections, timber joists, bundles of plastic wrapped timber, some cardboard boxed items (about the size of an average kitchen table) and many other items of some size filling the gaps – a somewhat FULL load indeed.

The lorry driver looks across to me. He appears ashen faced – white as a sheet! He then indicates to re-join the inside lane (lane 1) which I allow him to do by him taking up the remainder of my previously allowed safety space on the back of the initial queue. I allow this to enable him to make clear the hard shoulder in case it's needed for an (another) emergency! He then quickly re-indicates to join the second lane (lane 2) and proceeds on his way in the associated rain, mist and motorway spray atmosphere.





So what, you may say? He's just not a very good driver, maybe? He didn't know where he was going, maybe? Well, whatever reason for this bit of atrocious driving, there's absolutely no excuse. This could have been a very major incident causing untold carnage and damage and it would have occurred exactly opposite the tragic M5 inferno that happened last year (Nov 2011) which caused so many lives to be lost.

So, what caused this moment - lack of concentration; excessive surface water; the queue; the fact that vehicles had actually stopped on the motorway; speed; he was in such a hurry he didn't want to slow down; he was asleep? No, none of these facts – just one simple thing, he was on his mobile phone and it was still clasped in his white, sweaty right hand when he finally managed to stop on the hard shoulder. Being exactly next to him, waiting in the queue, there it was in full view, tightly gripped in his right hand and fully visible through the driver's door window. Once stopped, he appeared to throw the phone onto the passenger's seat; composed himself; looked all around and obviously thought, "I'd better get out of here very quickly", which he did!

Maybe he learnt a lesson for life this time... or maybe not as this scenario will occur again in his driving life, but will he be so lucky next time? Please KILL the mobile phone whilst driving, otherwise the mobile phone may just KILL you... and a great many others at the same time.

Watch This!

Kindly sent in by Rachel Palmer

You watch the guy who drives ahead

And the guy who drives behind,

You watch to the left and watch to the right

And drive with a calm clear mind.

But the guy you really have to watch,

On the highway you will find,

Is the guy behind the guy ahead

And ahead of the guy behind!

Many thanks to Rachel for a bit of fun,

Serena Lonton





This man owned and drove the same car for 82 years

They certainly don't make them like that anymore. Can you imagine even having the same car for 82 years! "What is the longest

you have owned a car?"

Mr. Allen Swift (Springfield, MA.) received this 1928 Rolls-Royce Piccadilly-P1 Roadster from

his father, brand new, as a graduation gift in 1928. He drove it up until his death last year... at the age of 102!

He was the oldest living owner of a car that was purchased new.

It was donated to a Springfield museum after his death.

It has 1,070,000 miles on it, still runs like a Swiss watch, dead silent at any speed and is in perfect cosmetic condition. That's approximately 13,048 miles per year.





Minutes of a Regional Liaison Forum Meeting

Held on Saturday 20 October 2012

The advantage of an e-newsletter is that it's free irrespective of length, so I can include things that will not be of interest to everybody. Serena reported on this RLF meeting in the last newsletter so only read this if you want all the gory details, as you may find it hard going.

If you have an issue with, or want clarification on any of the points discussed at RLF, please contact Serena or Andrew rather than going direct to reps at Regional level. Ed.

Present: Officers: Roger Jewell Chairman (Chairman, Plymouth and District); Norman Dadd Vice Chairman; Carol Shergold Treasurer (Gwent); Jane Percy Secretary (Secretary, Dorset (Dorchester))

Guests: Andy Poulton Staff Examiner; Mike Lovelock Staff Examiner; Tim Soper Regional Group Co-ordinator (Motorcycles); Robbie Downing Motorcycle Examiner; Tim Ivory Chairman of Region 2; Andrea Tallis Region 2; Jane Climpson Guest Speaker; Paul Hutchison Guest Speaker

Groups: Bath and District: Andy Stewart, Glen Johnson; Bristol: Paul Hunt, Gary Nunn;

Cheltenham and Cotswolds MC: Andy Downs, Karen Rickard; Cirencester: Gordon Burley, Alan Watt; Exeter and Torbay: Val Hoar; Gloucestershire (Cheltenham): Peter Davies, Tony Higgs; Gwent (Newport): Carol Shergold (RLF Treasurer); Melksham: David Major, Angela Summers; Plymouth and District: Roger Riddle, Mike Adams; Salisbury: Sheila Agard-Edbrook, Richard Burley; Somerset Motorcyclists: Graham Tulloch; Swindon: Graham Mearns, Joyce Gase, David Douch; South Wales Motorcyclists: David Meadows, David Hutton; Taunton: Brian Howe, Serena Lonton, Andrew Griffiths; Weston and Mendip: David Gough; Wilts and Bath Motorcyclists: Mike Doggart

Apologies: Guests: Richard Furneaux, Regional Group Co-ordinator

Delegates: Dylan Jones of Carmarthen Motorcyclists and Cars; Gary James of Weston and Mendip; Chris Dale of Bournemouth

Groups: Barnstaple and North Devon, Camelot, Cardiff, Devon Motorcyclists, Dorset (Dorchester), Dorchester and West Dorset Motorcyclists, Plymouth Motorcyclists





1. The Chairman opened the meeting by welcoming those present, offering the apologies of those absent and reiterating the Health and Safety information and action necessary in case of fire. The meeting point was in the Car Park and as the fire siren was not working, the alarm would be raised by voice. The Chairman continued with a little bit of history relating to the Blunsdon House Hotel. The Hotel is set in 30 acres of beautiful Wiltshire countryside, overlooking the Vale of Cricklade with views of the Cotswolds. It has been owned and run by the Clifford family for 50 years and celebrated its Golden Jubilee in 2010. Our thanks to Joyce Gase and the Swindon Group for organising this venue.
2. Minutes of the Last Forum Meeting: The acceptance of the Minutes of the Last Forum Meeting which took place on 04 February 2012 at Exeter Court Hotel, Kennford was proposed by David Douch of Swindon and seconded by Sheila Agard-Edbrook of Salisbury.
3. Matters Arising: Mike Doggart of Wilts and Bath Motorcyclists referred to 31 May regarding the DTE and Roger Jewell said that he would enquire.

Post Meeting Note: This and many of the other questions were answered during the meeting and rectified later and the DTE is receiving updates regularly.

4. Regional Co-ordinator's Report: As Richard Furneaux was absent from the Meeting there was nothing to report.
5. Regional Motorcycle Advisor's Report: Tim Soper spoke regarding the Membership. He said it was down and that the trend was 6 in but 8 out. Regarding meetings at Chiswick with regard to the DTE. They are struggling with this. It was commented that this was the 3rd or 4th computer system. Roger Riddle of Plymouth said Jags had said that it was "Live". Peter Davies of Gloucestershire (Cheltenham) has problems with different PCs. Carol Shergold of Gwent has difficulty with her work computer. It was stated that it could be to do with the browser. Roger Riddle of Plymouth said that the best person to talk to was Jags as she knows of the Log In problems.

Tim asked how many receive Insight. He thought only Secretaries, but this is untrue. However, the emails need correcting.

How many know about 6 part payment (6 x £25) and that this ends up at costing £150?





Much discussion took place about this and it transpired that very few delegates knew about it. Roger Riddle of the Plymouth Group informed those present that it was on the IAM Website and also highlighted the fact that Groups would get half the Group payment at the start of the SfL and the remainder after the Associate paid the final instalment. If they did not complete the SfL or they stopped paying, the Group would only receive half the £31 Group payment. Also, what information from IAM would be passed to the Group if the Associate did stop paying? Mike Adams of Plymouth and District objected to the £11 overpayment from the £139 for the “straight” Skill for Life payment.

Tim then asked if we all knew about Modular Training. Graham Mearns of Swindon thought this a great idea.

Tim went on to report on the outcome of the presentations at the National Conference. The Saffron Insurance top prize of £1000 went to the Dorset Group, with Cheltenham taking 2nd prize of £600 and Bristol 3rd prize of £400. Devon Advanced Motorcyclists received the Lord Strathcarron Award.

With regard to the Regional Training Teams – there are 9 out of 32 with 8 still to be processed. At present there is a 50% pass rate. The Training Team’s first job is a Meeting on 17 November at Trowbridge in Wiltshire. Training weekends for next year are expected to be May and July.

6. Chairman’s Report: Roger opened his report by stating he felt it had been a good Conference. As the Fred Welsh Rosebowl had gone to a biker it was a shame that we could not be told on the day. However, we will find out when it is published in the Advanced Driving Magazine. Roger noted that the attendance today had been the lowest since he had become the Chairman. He introduced our Guests, Jane Climpson who will talk to us about sharing the road with horses. Jane is accompanied by Paul Hutchison. He finished by congratulating Val Hoar of Exeter and Torbay who is now the Chairman of the Group.
7. Secretary’s Report: Andy Stewart asked about the criteria required for the Saffron Insurance Group Achievement Award. Tim Soper said that this used to be voted on but now is run by Peter Clark at Chiswick. All aspects of the Group activities are taken





into consideration. Roger Riddle of the Plymouth Group stated that it was all on the Website under Group Awards.

Jane Percy said that she had brought it to the attention of the Conference Delegates that Chiswick was again advertising the £25 DriveCheck with £20 going to Chiswick and the Group receiving only £5. As the work was done by the Group Observer, she deemed this to be unfair. This particular DriveCheck was discontinued a few years ago and Groups were given the choice to use this particular DriveCheck as an incentive with all the money going into Group funds. Simon Best said that he would look into this.

Treasurer's Report: The Treasurer reported that the funds stood at £1,649.66. No monies are held in respect of car and motorcycle events and will not be in future. This amount does not include monies paid today. She added that independently examined Accounts for 2010 and 2011 are available at the back of the room. Roger Riddle of the Plymouth Group asked why there were Groups that did not pay the Group subscription in 2010 and 2011 as shown on the Accounts. The Treasurer said

that she had asked the Groups for the monies but they still had not paid. With the agreement of all it was deemed that the Treasurer should invoice them. Roger Riddle of the Plymouth Group also asked why the RLF had to subsidise Car Observer Training events but the Motorcyclists were completely paid for by IAM. Andy Poulton said that he would talk to the Treasurer about this later. It was noted at this point that Chiswick only pay for the venue.

Acceptance of the Accounts was as follows:

2010: Proposed by Gordon Burley of Cirencester and Seconded by Mike Doggart of Wilts and Bath Motorcyclists.

2011: Proposed by Val Hoar of Exeter and Torbay and Seconded by Dave Major of Melksham.

9. Any Other Business: There was no other business.
10. Date and Venue of Next Meeting: Sheila Agard-Edbrook of the Salisbury Group and the date of 26 January 2013 was agreed. The AGM had been booked last year at the George Albert Hotel on the A37 between Yeovil and Dorchester. The date was 18 May 2013.





Gordon Burley of Cirencester asked if the low turnout today was because we are away to the East of the Region. Carol Shergold said, as Treasurer, she thinks most Groups attend most Meetings. Peter Davies of Gloucestershire (Cheltenham) enquired if the date in January was already fixed as this would clash with a driving course. He observed that dates should be fixed well in advance. It was agreed that 26 January 2013 would be the best date.

11. National Representatives Group (NRG) - Norman Dadd's résumé of the NRG is as follows: NRG meeting at Warwick on 8th September, 10th and best to date. Maximum 2 delegates per Region, RJ & ND for R1. (somewhat overtaken by information released to all groups at October Conferences)

Best meeting to date because:

- a. Chaired by Operations Director, Pat Doughty, in absence of CEO, with authority and humility, accepting HO does not know all the answers. Wanted both to tell and listen. A recognised expert in customer service, understands group dynamics / volunteer interface.
- b. Professional. There was a folder for each delegate with a copy of all

presentations and a full set of "Observer Qualification and Assessment" papers.

- c. Possible increase in HO confidence from projects now underway:-
 - DTE (then) soon to be rolled out (now started)
 - IMI Observer Qualification being successfully piloted in R2 & R6
 - Operations Manager in post in R2 for 5 months and making strong progress, including creation of R2 Forum. (Mark Trimmer).
- d. R2 Forum sent 2 delegates who made a strong contribution to proceedings. They were a real breath of fresh air, asking old questions anew and getting up to date answers.
- e. All in spite of gloomy background figures on Membership and SfL sales.

Motorcycle Forum (& Car)

- f. The uncertainty caused by poor communication at the previous meeting was lifted. Dave Shenton gave a full explanation as to the origin and purpose. Included non NRG Members (source unclear) but would report via NRG.





- g. Web sites for better riding and better driving had been developed. Both still subject to criticism for being too strongly linked to the IAM.
- h. The Round Britain Ride (Tim Soper took part and elaborated) was a success and will be repeated and developed as a recruitment tool in 2013.
- j. R2 delegate volunteered to Chair a Car Forum, to be established on similar lines, and will seek specialist input (marketing, computing etc) from non NRG members
Membership
- k. Much activity still aimed at younger drivers and riders.
- m. Maybe growing realisation that with increased longevity membership numbers would be boosted by targeting middle aged drivers and riders.
Friends
- n. Definitive statement from Company Secretary. In essence The Friends category "was only ever intended for anyone without any history as a former IAM member. The only exception should be for those who have given up driving, and have not renewed their IAM Membership but wish to continue with

the Group ...and each individual needs to be approved by the Committee. (ps Bristol Car Group - Friends includes donors / donators)

- 12. The Chairman read out the Workshop Meeting at Conference. They were as follows: IAM in three years; IMI Observer Qualifications; Forums; Modules to membership; Test Requirements; Regional Manager; Policy and Research; Social networks/websites
- 13. Comfort Break
- 14. Roger Jewell, the Chairman, reintroduced Jane Climpson who will talk to us about sharing the road with horses. It was noted that the majority of the motorcyclists split at this juncture. Jane is actually a nuclear scientist, but as a horse rider herself she has become more and more interested in horse psychology
Jane gave us a great presentation and included the following aspects:
 - a. Rider/Driver Similarities
 - b. Legal position
 - c. The Horse
 - d. What can happen
 - e. Practical applications
 - f. Horseboxes
 - g. Summary





She outlined the feeling of freedom that horse riding gives but asked us to remember that horses are thinking – cars and bikes are not! She explained the natural instincts and explained that horses are prey animals and that their eyes are on the side of their head. Because of this they have to be trained from both sides as they do not have cross processing. A horse is as good as blind if you approach squarely in front or behind. It sees things as predator motion and decides fight or flight – usually flight! Jane outlined instances that can frighten or spook a horse. With regard to their hearing, sudden noise, even the wind can have an effect. Flags and snapping noises, passing parked cars, electric windows going up or down. As they see out of only one eye when passing a parked car, it is best to sit still until the horse passes. Can see better in dark, but can cope with headlights – dappled light can cause problems. Regarding focus – act like bifocals and need longer to cope with fluttering things. Not too wound up by noise except sudden noise – air brakes not good. Windy days are disorientating and have to rely more on eyesight. We were treated to some very interesting DVD

footage of a horse in training. In her Summary Jane stated that it was the horse and not the rider who decides. Please respect horses' space, look for any signs of worry from the horse or rider – if in any doubt wait. Obey signs from rider, pass slowly and quietly giving horse wide berth but not silently.

This was a very interesting and informative presentation and a pleasure to listen to. Jane agreed to send a copy of her presentation to the Chairman. As this point it was decided to break for Lunch. Jane agreed to return after Lunch.

LUNCH

15. Jane continued with her presentation after Lunch as everyone present was very interested and had lots of questions.

Everyone agreed that this was a very worthwhile insight into how a horse “works” and agreed that we could have listened well into the afternoon.

The Chairman thanked Jane and Paul for travelling to see us.

There were comments made that the motorcyclists missed a superb presentation that would have been of benefit to them as well as the car delegates.

The Examiners, Andy and Mike took over the floor.





Andy explained the Institute of Motor Industry qualification and said that this was unique and has replaced the NVQ. Those eligible are Group Observers at local level and Senior Observers at national level. Eighty (80) in Region 2 and 90 in Region 6. Examiner has 40 pages and tick off sheets. Participant gets both bits. Piloted at moment – 22 July is current, but because piloted it can change. Mike Lovelock added that the IMI Qualification has to have a paper trail. Roger Riddle of Plymouth asked that if you get a non-competent test and you reapply do you do the whole thing again. Andy and Mike said just the bit that was wrong but there is a time limit. Andy Stewart of Bath and District asked how long between tests. The boys replied 3 for Observers, 5 for Local Observers and 6 for National. Graham Mearns said Group to National can go straight up.

Masters has replaced Special Assessment with a retest every 5 years. Travel to meet mentor.

Regional Training Teams: Thirteen (13) Groups – room for 3 more. Dorset, Bournemouth etc were mentioned.

The Meeting closed at 15:30 and the Chairman wished everyone a safe journey home.



Views of the venue, Blunsdon House Hotel, Swindon





Towing me, towing you Peter Rodger advises on towing techniques

IAM Press Office

Rodger said: “Whether you’re towing a speedboat, a horsebox, a caravan or another car, there are certain rules which must be applied. It is important to recognise the challenges which come with having to control not just one vehicle, but two.”

Rodger offers tips for successfully towing another vehicle:

- Watch the weight of the towed vehicle – this should not exceed 85 per cent of the car’s kerb weight. Excess weight will cause instability.
- Check the unit you are towing is secure before pulling away, and check again after a short distance. Look for anything loose, disconnected, missing or broken.
- Check that your extra rear lights are all connected and fully functional. Get somebody to help while you test the brakes and indicators. As well as additional lights, you will also need an illuminated number plate at the rear of the unit.
- Check the pressure of all tyres before you set off, bearing in mind those of the towed unit as well as your own vehicle.
- Stopping distances and the space between you

and other vehicles should be increased appropriately, allowing for the extra weight you are carrying. You should also allocate more time to overtaking, positioning yourself for turns, parking, pulling into traffic streams, changing lanes and joining and leaving motorways.

- Use your mirrors frequently - the fact you have lost the use of your rear view mirror makes extended door mirrors very useful. Extended towing mirrors are not a legal requirement, but you will have a better feel for overtaking and reversing.
- Be aware that reduced speed limits usually apply when towing vehicles and remember to extend courtesy to vehicles following you by allowing them to pass.

If you would like any further help and advice on towing, you may want to consider signing up for a manoeuvring course with the Camping and Caravanning Club, which now has a tie up with the IAM’s own towing test.

To help drivers stay safe this winter, the IAM has launched its winter driving campaign which includes a dedicated website, drivingadvice.org.uk, with traffic updates, weather forecasts and tips on how to drive safely in winter. Check it out before you travel.





There may be tunnels ahead

Peter Rodger advises on driving through tunnels - IAM Press Office

Tunnels can present serious problems for drivers. For example, vehicle fires in Europe's Mont Blanc and Gotthard tunnels have claimed 50 lives between them. Many died because they wrongly believed they should wait in their vehicles for help, rather than getting out of the tunnel as soon as possible.

Regardless of the length of the tunnel, an accident in one will present unique problems and knowing what to do is essential.

Before entering a tunnel:

- Check your fuel gauge in plenty of time, don't risk running out in a tunnel.
- Turn on the traffic information station. Some larger European road tunnels have their own radio as well as electronic signs.
- Take off your sunglasses as they will hinder your eyesight in the dim light of a tunnel.

In the tunnel:

- Turn on dipped headlights. Do not use full beam as this will dazzle other motorists.
- Don't exceed the speed limit.
- Leave plenty of room between yourself and the car in front and watch out for brake lights.
- Keep an eye out for the location of emergency pedestrian exits just in case you may need one.

- In two-way tunnels, keep well to the nearside kerb.
- Do not change lanes unless instructed to.

If you break down:

- Switch on your hazard lights immediately.
- Try to coast to a breakdown lay-by. If none are available, stop as close to the nearside kerb as possible.
- Turn off the engine but leave the key in the ignition so the vehicle can be moved.
- Evacuate the vehicle, making sure everyone is in a safe place – well away from the car and on the pedestrian walkway if there is one.
- Put on a reflective jacket if you have one, and walk carefully to the nearest emergency phone to inform the operator.

In the event of a fire:

- Only try and extinguish the fire if someone is in danger.
- In all other cases leave as quickly as you can – do not wait to be told what to do.

Rodger said: "Though you may see a tunnel as just another stretch of road, there are specific precautions that you must be aware of and implement when using one. Remember, if there is a fire or an accident, don't wait to act -- fire and smoke can be fatal. Leave the vehicle and walk to a safe place. Save your life and not your car."





Looks like it's going to rain-dear

Advice on driving in heavy rain by Peter Roger

IAM Press Office *(released just before Christmas – hence the title. Ed)*

- Before you set off, set your heater controls – rain makes the windows mist up in seconds. You don't want to be fiddling with controls when you should be concentrating on the road.
- Watch your speed – In the rain your stopping distance should be at least doubled. Giving yourself more space will help to avoid spray; especially important when following a large vehicle.
- Keep your eyes on the road ahead and plan your driving so that you can brake, accelerate and steer smoothly. Be aware that harsh manoeuvres can unbalance the car.
- If you have cruise control, avoid using it on wet roads – it may create problems if you start to aquaplane.
- See and be seen. Put your lights on – as a rule of thumb, whenever you need to use your wipers you should also turn your headlights on, and before overtaking put your wipers on their fastest setting to allow for spray.
- Making sure your car is properly maintained will make a difference too. Check your windscreen wipers, tyre pressure and tread depth, and that all of your lights work and are clean. Make sure that as well as keeping your washer fluid topped up, you also clean the inside of your windscreen as not to hinder your view.

Rodger said: "There's nothing quite like getting to your car in the rain. It's a haven from the elements. But be cautious, especially after prolonged dry spells – rain on a dry road is dangerously slippery.

"The prospect of waiting for a bus in the pouring rain after your work Christmas party is a daunting one, but don't fall into the temptation of driving home after drinking – a drink-driving conviction is not worth the avoidance of soggy trousers."





Duties in the eyes of the beholder

Peter Rodger advises on keeping your eyesight in check when behind the wheel

IAM Press Office

IAM chief examiner Peter Rodger said: “Your eyesight will inevitably change as you get older, and usually not for the better. Since the majority of information gathered in order to make decisions while driving is through your eyes, good vision is a necessity.”

Rodger offers tips on eyesight and driving:

- Get your eyes checked regularly by an optician or GP. You are entitled to a free NHS eyesight test every two years, and more frequently if you are above 70 years old.
- The law requires motorists to be able to read a car number plate from a distance of 20 metres – If glasses or contact lenses are needed to achieve this, they must be worn at all times when operating your vehicle.
- If you are diagnosed with a condition which causes vision impairment, you are obligated by law to inform the DVLA. Failure to do so could result in a fine.
- If you have trouble with night vision or headlight glare, avoid driving outside

daylight hours. Older eyes take longer to react to changes in light, lengthening the recovery period after facing dazzling headlights.

- Peripheral vision is diminished as eyes age - turn your head rather than glancing sideways to compensate for this.
- Maximise your view by keeping headlights, mirrors, and windscreens (inside and out) clean.
- Increase your range of visibility by upgrading to a larger rear view mirror, as well as a wing blind spot mirror.

Rodger said: “The deterioration of our eyesight can go unnoticed, a fact which is especially problematic after the age of 40 when the rate of decline increases. Poorer vision can pose an even greater risk during the winter months, with fewer hours of daylight and more challenging weather conditions. Now is the time to book yourself in for an eye test to ensure you’re as safe as you can be when driving your car.”





Government cuts £15 million from road safety campaigns

IAM Press Office

The government has cut spending on road safety campaigns from £19 million in 2008/09 to just £4 million in 2011/12 – a cut of nearly 80 per cent. The figure was revealed after a freedom of information enquiry by road safety charity the Institute of Advanced Motorists.

The DfT is planning on spending £3.7 million on road safety in the 2012/13 financial year which will see:

- £53,000 spent on cyclist safety
- £78,000 on child and teenager road safety
- £50,000 on research into young drivers
- £1.275 million on motorcycle campaigns; and
- £1.685 million on drink-drive campaigns.

Every fatal road accident costs the UK £1.7 million. In 2011 the total cost of fatal road accidents was £3.2 billion, with

immeasurable emotional and social costs.

IAM director of policy Neil Greig said: “Right across the public sector road safety is being cut too hard and too quickly, despite the huge returns on investment. One life saved, saves the economy £1.7 million. £53,000 is a derisory amount to spend on national cycle safety campaigns. Until we have the right roads infrastructure in place, publicity and education campaigns are one of the few tools we have to help us save cyclists lives. £78,000 for children’s safety campaigns is virtually insignificant. If the government is serious about safety for these groups, these amounts must be increased. “

“The successful drink driving and biker campaigns have raised awareness of these issues and they both appear to be working. The government needs to match that kind of expenditure and take the safety of children and cyclists seriously,”





One, two, miss a few...

Peter Rodger recommends “block-changing”

IAM Press Office

- Block-changing contributes to a calm and planned driving style.
- It requires less driver input and so allows more time for other things like looking for problems or reading road signs.
- A good driver will use the brakes or their acceleration sense to slow down, not the gears. Brake pads are cheaper to replace than clutches, so use the brakes if you need to.
- When increasing speed, you can save on fuel consumption by skipping out gears, for example perhaps going straight from third to fifth.
- When slowing on approach to a roundabout or junction, use acceleration sense and/or brakes to decrease speed, and then select the right gear for the speed you are driving at. This may mean skipping out several gears at once.

- Gear changes should be made after braking but before turning the steering wheel.

Rodger said: “Block-changing means choosing and changing gear once, instead of working through all the gears. Missing unnecessary gears saves on fuel, as well as wear and tear and saves driver effort. Use your gears to go and your brakes to slow.”





**Closing date for the Spring Edition of
the TGAM e-Newsletter is
Saturday, 20th April.**

**All contributions would be very
welcome.**

**All items should be sent to
“The Editor” at ed@tgam.org.uk or
by mail to David Walton at
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