

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

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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



April has come at last. You can tell by the gale force winds and the sunshine and showers can't you? It's been a gruelling few months with atrocious weather which has left clear evidence of damage to road surfaces in many areas of the county (and country).

Potholes are not our best friends and can cause serious damaged to our prized chariots unless we observe them sufficiently early and plan to manoeuvre safely around them. Driving over them can damage components in the suspension; tyres can be damaged; tracking can be thrown out of specification causing adverse wear on the front tyres; wheel rims can be damaged causing wheel balance to be affected and thus handling/steering becomes affected.

If they are full of water, you just can't see how deep they might be! Driving over them can also give an uncomfortable ride for any passengers you might have on board; don't forget that the driver has something to hang on to by firming up on the grip on the steering wheel while passengers can be caught unawares and get thrown about. So as advanced motorists, don't forget vehicle sympathy and passenger comfort.



By Andrew Griffiths
Chairman





But you won't see potholes in Dubai! My wife and I visited there last month to see our son and daughter-in-law (not to find potholes). The roads there are something to envy; new, smooth and free of road works and repairs. New roads seemed to be opened up almost daily, making satnav rather redundant. The main roads into the city went on for miles through desert and suburbs and were typically 8 lanes in each direction with overtaking happening in any lane; thankfully I chose not to hire a car so we were able to leave the driving to the local taxi drivers who were very skilled at negotiating the traffic! The city is being continually developed with lots of artistic housing developments and high-rise blocks in various stages of construction. It is a very rich city. And I found it to be a very expensive city too; a mediocre bottle of wine in a restaurant was around £85 and scanning down the menu I could see bottles at £5,000 (yes you read it right!). The skyscrapers around the marina were very impressive and very individual. The yachts in the marina were more like floating palaces. The private cars ranged from Maserati to Ferrari to Bentley to Rolls to Lamborghini. Of course, there were the common-or-garden Mercedes and Jaguar which went unnoticed. But despite all of its impressive wealth and splendour, I missed the



greenery and hills of the Quantocks and it was so nice to arrive home.

So once back home, I turned my attention to IAM business. TGAM is attracting more Associates through the Skills for Life programme and this is keeping a lot of our Observers busy. At the moment we have 6 Observers covering a wide area from Tiverton up to Bridgwater and I'm pleased that 3 members have stepped forward to train to become Observers. In addition to Skills for Life Associates, we also have 2 IAM members from neighbouring Groups who are training with me for the IAM Masters certificate; this is the highest civilian driving qualification in the UK and offers a true challenge to drivers who have already passed the IAM Advanced Driving





Test. If any of you would like more information on the Masters certificate, here is the link that will get you to the right part of the IAM website:

www.iam.org.uk/drivers/motorists-courses/masters

Some of us attended the Regional Training Day at Keynsham in March. This took place on a Saturday and was aimed at Observers wanting to refresh, maintain and/or enhance their skills and also for Trainees to gain valuable insight from IAM Examiners and from the Regional Training Team (RTT) headed up by our Staff Examiner, Andy Poulton. There are now just 2 of these events each year and my aim is to get all TGAM Observers and our Trainees on these valuable training days. The 200 or so IAM Groups cannot exist without Observers and it is crucial that their skills are kept razor sharp and up-to-date. The day started off with introductions from Andy Poulton who had worked hard with Richard (our Regional Coordinator) to arrange the content and structure of the day. Local IAM Examiner Ian Harris gave an excellent presentation about the role of the Observer and the Observed Drive. This covered the interpersonal skills, chemistry, tailoring the guidance to the different styles of learning for individual Associates, briefing and debriefing

Associates, keeping them stimulated and challenged and much more. We then split into teams of 2, one driving and one observing, with an RTT Trainer in the back seat providing guidance and feedback. The route was 11 miles around town, villages, rural and urban roads with a variety of speed limits.

The themes to be covered over 4 drives were:

- cornering and managing bends
- application of the IPSGA system
- overtaking
- entry and exit regarding dual carriageways

On completion of each drive, verbal and written feedback was given to the Observer and then roles were reversed and Observer on the first drive became the driver for the next (in their own car of course). It was fun and challenging once I had worked out that although my team was on the right road, we were travelling in completely the opposite direction due to “minor” misinterpretation of the map... well at least we spotted the error before we reached Liverpool! Somewhere in between the drives, we had time for a nice buffet lunch while refreshments were available all day.

The next training day is on 11th May in Bristol. Maybe I should study the OS map beforehand?



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
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Committee Members	Brian Howe (President), 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



TGAM Observer Structure

TGAM has moved away from the “East/West” structure and now has a simpler, single structure. This shows current and trainee Observers in our Group.

Chief Observer and Masters Mentor	Andrew Griffiths
Group Observer and Trainee National Observer	John Gilbert
Group Observer	Tony Hucker
Group Observer	Janet Loader
Group Observer	Allan Wellwood
Group Observer	Russ Williams
Group Training Officer	Alan Thomson
Trainee Observer	Isobel Jennings
Trainee Observer	Hugh Todd
Trainee Observer	David Walton

Group Observers must be fully paid up Taunton Group Members AND National IAM members at ALL times to carry out your vital Observer roles: There are NO exceptions. 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 the Associate Coordinator 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 Associate Coordinator Tony Hucker.

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

Nigel Steady 01278 722944

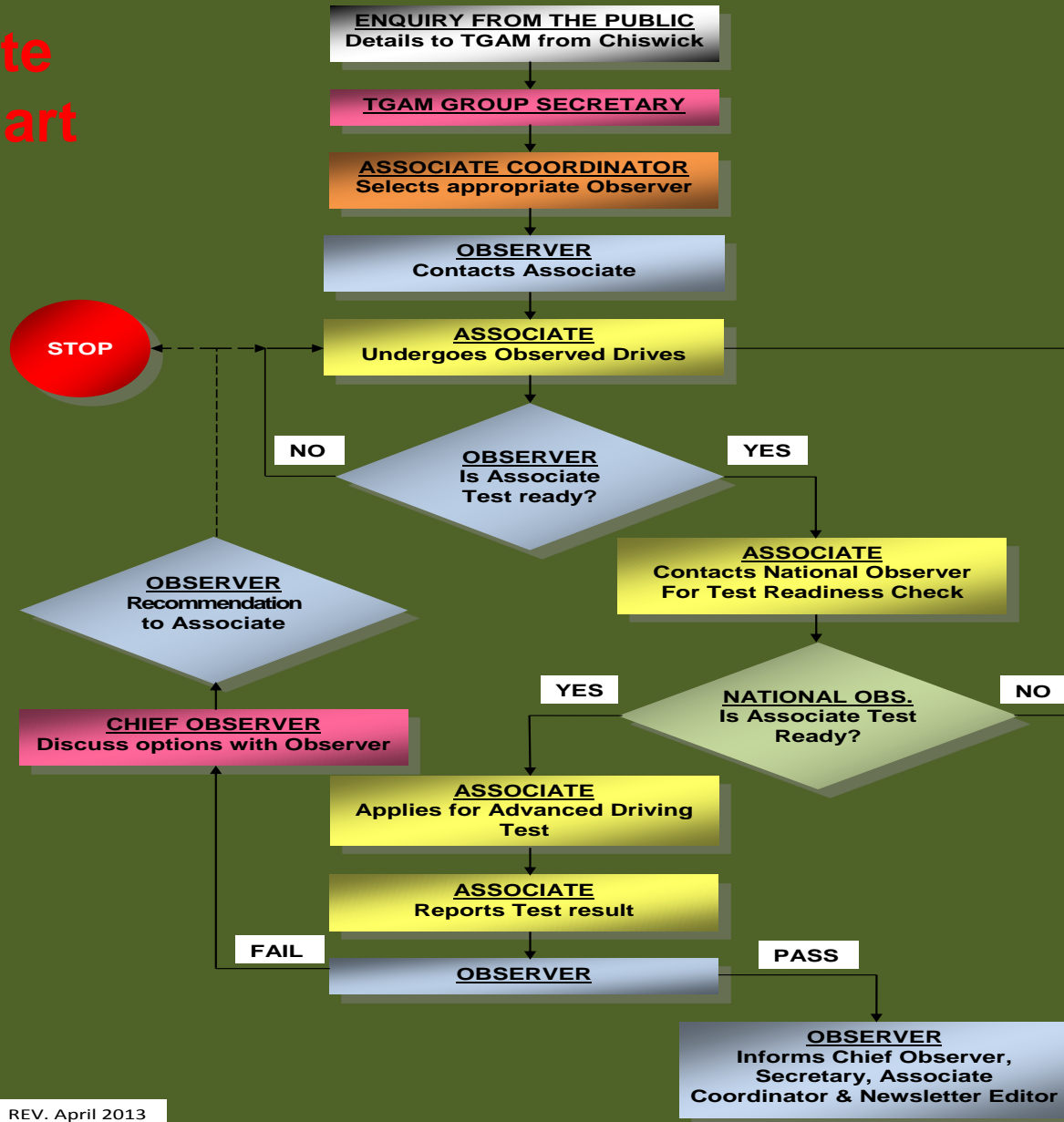
Nick Tapp 07900 900678

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.)





Associate Flow Chart



FROM THE PRESIDENT



PRESIDENT'S PLEA

To The Group

Dear TGAM members,

Please note that my glasses have now found their way back to the top of my nose and the Victorian/Edwardian whiskers have been reduced back to the normal twirled moustache. One of these days I will supply Ed with an up to date photo. This one was taken for a Music Hall performance.

Before I subject you to my inane drivel, I would like to take this opportunity to formally announce the birth of my first Great Grandson, Caleb Thomas Howe. Caleb was born 11:13am, 18th March 2013, weighing in at 6lb 13½ oz. Mother and baby are both now doing well. In fact, I saw the little chap Saturday 20th April and he was then 8lb 8oz. I hope he doesn't grow up to be as big around as "Great Grandpa 2 Sticks". Now to business.



By Brian Howe
Group President





As a 'Group', the Taunton Group of Advanced Motorists is doing quite well. We are gaining Associates almost weekly. We have a Chairman, Andrew Griffiths, who in the short time he has been with us, has qualified as a NATIONAL Observer (formerly known as Senior Observer) and has 'aced' the new MASTERS course with a DISTINCTION pass. This is a great example of "Leading from the front". Well done Andrew. We are also training 3 new LOCAL Observers (formerly Group Qualified Observers) and another National Observer. We have also had several F1rst from recent ADT passes. BUT!! All of this will be to no avail if the rest of us do not support OUR Group.

We offer Social Evenings 10 months of the year and barring a few isolated visitors, we see the same old faces (metaphoric not literal) every month. Where is everyone else? Is it because we do not offer a varied programme of events? If you can help, or offer advice, please get in touch with myself or any Committee member. We need an Events Co-ordinator. This does not entail searching for and booking speakers etc, it is mainly an administrative post co-ordinating other people's ideas and offers and ensuring we don't have double bookings or worse still,

members waiting for a speaker who has not been booked.

Recently we have had some excellent speakers and presentations with more to come. In March we had John Gilbert's excellent presentation of his Silverstone Track Day experience and, after a FREE tea/coffee break, this was followed by some boring old fart banging on about his 4 wheeled pedal bike and, would you believe it, about the IAM getting involved with Advanced Cycling of all things. I mean, who is actually interested in that. Aren't cyclists just a bloody nuisance on our roads who should be banished to separate cycle ways and footpaths. Well, aren't they? (😄 As Advanced Motorists I hope you don't really believe that twaddle). N.B. I was nervous about giving that talk, but I think it went ok after the technical hitch.

In April, we had a truly excellent presentation about the exceptional work of Somerset Sight. This was given by their Training Officer, Anne Fowler. Next month on 15th May, we will have the pleasure of hearing Dr Robert Dunning talking about Somerset's history. I have known Robert for a number of years and have heard him speak on many occasions on various different subjects.





I was once lucky enough to be the coach driver on a tour of the West Country, following the Arthurian legends with a party of American ladies and Robert as their tour guide. I implore you all to come along on 15th May to listen and to be enthralled by Robert's eloquence.

There will be no meeting at Hatch Beauchamp Village Hall on 19th June as we will be visiting the Avon and Somerset Police Headquarters at Portishead. We are very grateful to Andy Mayes, our resident LGV expert, and Andy's daughter for arranging this trip. Spaces are strictly limited and on a first come, first served basis, so please book early. Let Serena know and she will liaise with Andy. One month later than previous years, on 17th July we are presenting our annual Casual Classic Car Evening. It is getting more difficult to encourage classic car owners to attend a short evening event, so this year we are adding a FREE barbecue. That way, it won't matter if there are just a few cars or even none at all. We can just enjoy the evening as a genuine social evening. Again, please let Serena Lonton know in plenty of time, if you intend to join us, so that we can arrange and prepare the right amount of food.

After all that excitement, we are letting you have August off, so that you can enjoy your holidays in the sun. Just relax on the beach, or

by the pool, with a G and T or whatever your favourite tippie is. Just don't drink and drive and come back and see us again in September, when we will do our best to continue our excellent programme of events etc, etc...

So this is the President's Personal Invitation to you, and your family and friends, to come and join us at any or all of our super, fun Social Evenings. Your family and friends don't even have to be members. Just come along and have a chat and get to know your committee and other Group members. I promise we won't sit you down in a classroom and bombard with you with motoring advice. After all, most of you are already qualified Advanced Drivers. We always offer FREE tea/coffee, FREE biscuits, and in July only, a FREE barbecue. By the way, if you do seek advice or guidance on a motoring matter, one of our committee or one of the Group Observers present will be happy to oblige. If you don't want to speak in person, send an email, they are all shown on the Committee Page and the Observer's Page.

Best wishes from your Group President, Brian L. Howe (Great Grandpa 2 sticks).

P.S. OH!! Don't forget to think about applying for the Events Co-ordinator post. Have fun and drive safely.



MEMBERS' PAGES



**By Serena Lonton
Group/Membership Secretary**

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

As at 16th April 2013, we have 106 fully paid up TGAM members, including 11 new members who have joined us since 1st October 2012.

Our membership is not much different from this time last year, so we are still in a healthy position and we fully appreciate and value your support.

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



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

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

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



MEMBERS' PAGES



Advanced Driving Test Passes

Congratulations to three members who have recently passed their Advanced Driving Test.

OBSERVED BY

David Cowling

Russ Williams

Marcus Ransom

Allan Wellwood

Hugh Todd (F1RST)

Andrew Griffiths

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>
Lindsey Death	Bridgwater	Associate
James Evers	Watchet	Associate
Zara New	Glastonbury	Associate
Doug Searle	Glastonbury	Associate
Ella Waude	Taunton	Associate

CALENDAR

COMMITTEE MEETINGS

13th June

8th August

10th October



			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
			JUNE
4	Sa	am or pm	IAM Drivers track based Skills Day at Goodwood Circuit
19	W	TBA	Members' Evening – Visit to the Avon & Somerset Police Headquarters in Portishead
			JULY
17	W	7:30 pm	Members' Evening – Classic Car Evening and Barbeque
			AUGUST
			No Members' Evening in August



MEMBERS' EVENING



Members' Evening 20th March 2013

- by Serena Lonton, Group/Membership Secretary



David Cowling receiving his ADT certificate from Chairman, Brian Howe



Before the main business of the evening, David Cowling was congratulated on passing his test and presented with his ADT certificate. There were the usual notices and chat then the first of two talks began.

Observer John Gilbert enjoyed a **Silverstone Track Day** in September 2012 on the Stowe Circuit and gave a superb presentation on this with photographs.





John started with a history of Silverstone, which prior to 1948 was RAF Silverstone during the 2nd world war. The new track is based on the “A” shape of the old airfield and the Stowe circuit is a smaller circuit inside the main track, incorporating some of the old runways.

There is a Premier Inn close to Silverstone, and the Green Man pub is very good for food, so anyone wishing to go in the future has everything conveniently available. It was a wet day, but good fun, and Bob Farish was John’s instructor. Bob is Chairman of Leeds Group and is highly regarded within IAM. It was amazing to see how John’s large car took the bends, and there was a definite sense of speed – he did say that it could be quite an



expensive adventure as apart from the cost of the day itself, tyres do tend to wear somewhat! John did around 60 laps incorporating straights and bends, and recommended others to have a go. Although there is no actual racing, there is a set procedure for faster cars to overtake in the right places, and the instructor guided John on where to brake and accelerate.

Well done John – you are not a boy-racer for nothing!

There followed a short break for refreshments, then.....





Brian Howe on IAM Cycling

As most of us are aware, TGAM President Brian had to give up driving due to health issues, and is now the proud owner of “Bob the Bike”. Bob is a four-wheeled cycle, or quadcycle, which Brian obtained from Mission Cycles, and there are only 1 or 2 such cycles in the South West. Brian explained the need for four wheels and went through the equipment he had brought with him and put on display. This is needed to deal with emergencies, as well as everyday riding. Spare inner tube, pump, repair kit, helmet, hi-viz gear, locks, rear and front lights (flashing and static), waterproof clothing to name but a few.

We were then treated to a tour round Bob. There are 21 gears, front and rear disc brakes, flashing lights to draw attention, static ones for general night riding, front and rear reflectors, height-adjustable seat (Brian is a tall chap), a back rest to aid balance, and a very smart luggage basket at the rear, which has the IAM light blue Cycling badge mounted proudly in the centre. The only thing missing was a spare wheel!

Brian is actively promoting IAM Cycling and wants to become an instructor, so we wish him (and Bob) the best of luck. There are so many cyclists out there who could do with a bit of



instruction, and new cyclists would benefit greatly by starting off in the right way.

Incidentally, Brian will be riding the 11 mile course of the Rotary Club of Taunton, 50/50 charity cycle run to be held 19th June from the Genesis Centre, at SCAT. 50% of the monies raised will go to the Rotary Club of Taunton for their charities and 50% Brian will be donating to Cancer Research UK. If you want to sponsor Brian, please contact him at brianhowe178@yahoo.com

As usual, both the above presentations were entertaining and informative and our thanks go to John and Brian for their time and effort. Thanks too go to Faye Markham for organising the refreshments.





The IAM F1RST Register

By Paul Woozley, Membership Manager IAM

I am delighted to say that the IAM F1RST Register has recently recorded the 1,000th F1RST member. The total now stands at 1,061 F1RST members.

The qualifying members come from car, motorcycle and commercial vehicle advanced test passes, member's assessments and some exemptions.

This is a great achievement for us and provides the motivation to develop and introduce more aspirational membership tiers and goals for our members.

By the way the number of Masters programmes purchased has already exceeded 50 and continues to appeal to the UK's most dedicated and keen drivers and riders.

We'll recognise the achievement in the next magazine, group and member emails and on our website.

Thank you to all the local groups, Observers, Examiners and Ops team for delivering such a successful product.

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





Canadian Speed Control!

By Andrew Griffiths

Speed control being used in Canada.

How's this for effective speed control?



I don't know about you, but this would certainly slow me down!
People slow down and actually try to "straddle" the hole.





This is an actual speed control device that is currently in use. It is MUCH cheaper than speed cameras, radar guns, police officers, etc.



Pretty clever – especially when they move them around every day.

Isn't Art Wonderful?

JUNE MEMBERS' EVENING

Visit to the Avon & Somerset Police Headquarters in Portishead

Andy Mayes has arranged a visit to the Avon & Somerset Police Headquarters in Portishead. Andy's daughter Kirsty is employed there and will be showing us around the Control Centre where 999 calls come in, then on to the Despatch Centre where the relevant assistance is sent to the incident. Maximum 25 places, bookings on a strictly first come, first served basis. Vehicle registration numbers have to be sent in advance for security reasons, therefore it is intended to car-share wherever possible with a maximum of 5 vehicles going.

Wednesday, 19th June





LEFT IS RIGHT? – CORRECT

By John Dowell

Normally in answering pupil's questions it is quite easy, with our knowledge, to give an immediate answer. However to the question 'Why do we drive on the left and other countries on the right?' it leaves one a little tongue-tied to give a full answer.

But, as Hercule Poirot is famous for saying – it makes the little grey cells begin to work. So why do we drive on the left? Research can be fun and researching this certainly got the little grey cells working.

Being on the left probably goes a long way back to when travellers or ordinary citizens, fearing a mugging, passed strangers sword arm to sword arm. However a slight difference to this was in jousting where the riders were on the right of each other to hold the lance in their right hand and aiming to the left as they charged. Left – handed knights must have had a short life!

Early coaches and stage-coaches had the driver on the right because the 'brake' (I use the word loosely) was a large piece of wood

which rubbed on the front wheel and was operated by the driver using his right hand or right foot, dependent upon the brake, whilst pulling up the horses. The postilion rider sat on the left and when the coach or carriage stopped would dis-mount and assist the passengers out on the left. This was pretty much universal.

The first cars, of course, being horse-less carriages, had the steering wheel on the right because the brake was on the right. Henry Ford couldn't understand why cars should have the steering wheel on the right and be driven on the right so in 1909 he put the steering wheel on the left; car makers all over followed suit.

So, the custom of driving on the right dates back to the French Revolution. Up to the end of the 18th century, the *sans-culottes* (radical militants of the lower classes) thought it safer to walk on the right and face the nobility in their oncoming carriages. Later the aristos decided it was safer to join the anonymity of the *citoyens* on the right.





Ancient Rome had a rule of keeping to the left due to congestion in that city. Wagons and chariots were banned during the day and wheeled traffic was banned during the night in parts of the Empire to allow their citizens to sleep – a forerunner of the present night-time ban on heavy lorries in London.

It took the unlikely alliance of Maximillien Robespierre, Napoleon Bonaparte and Adolf Hitler to move most of the world over to the right.

When Pope Boniface VIII suggested that pilgrims should keep to the left in 1300, the rule was already widely used. In England, however, the rule remained a matter of custom rather than regulation. At the end of the 18th century horse traffic was very much on the increase and Parliament put 'keep-left' on the statute books.

Due to traffic problems the numbers of hackney coaches were limited on the road; especially in London. There was an increase in other horse-drawn traffic which was not governed by law and in 1756 traffic was forced to keep to the left on London Bridge. The General Highways Act of 1773 did not apply the keep-left rule in England although the custom was already established.

Stage coaches left London using flexible routes, the drivers choosing the firmest ground: it was not uncommon for roads to be 100 yards wide. As landowners enclosed more and more of their ground, roads became narrower and it became important to know which side of the road to drive to avoid an accident.

With four successive sessions of parliament implementing the Highways Bill of 1835, the keep-left rule became law; albeit some local regulations already existed.

Where France was concerned there was an obvious class distinction. The aristocrats drove their coaches on the left forcing the *citoyens* to face them on the right. (The advice today is for pedestrians to face oncoming traffic.) Due to the revolution of 1789 and the 'rights of man' in 1791 the aristocrats, not wanting to appear what they were, crossed the road.

Robespierre codified the change and ordered that traffic in Paris should keep to the right. Napoleon established the change more firmly by ordering his troops to take the right side of the road.





The Napoleonic wars spread the keep to the right through the Low Countries, Switzerland, Germany, Italy, Poland and Spain. The countries which had resisted Napoleon kept to the left – Britain, Austro Hungary, Russia and Portugal. Of these independent States, Denmark converted to the right in 1793. The European division remained for over 100 years until after the First World War.

So, what of America? Well, here we have a link with the French Revolution to the War of Independence. General Lafayette, the French liberal reformer, visited the US on several occasions and gave military help during the War of Independence. The first keep-right law was passed in 1792 and applied to the Pennsylvania turnpike between Lancaster and Philadelphia. In 1804 New York enacted a keep-right law followed by New Jersey in 1813. Canada, which was still ruled by Britain, remained on the left until 1920.

The imperial expansion of Great Britain meant that the sun never set on the left-hand side of the road in any continent. Apart from Egypt, which had been conquered by Napoleon before becoming a British dependency, all of the African colonies adopted the keep-left rule: as did the Indian Empire and Australasia.

In 1850 British gunboat diplomacy forced the Japanese to open its ports for trade and, as a consequence, we 'persuaded' them to impose a keep-left rule. British influence in Shanghai during the Chinese opium wars helped to form their decision to drive on the left. Most European countries followed the practice of their colonising powers with a few exceptions.

Russia switched to the right in the latter days of the Tsars and most countries, even after the First World War, kept to their own traditional sides. The break up of the Austro-Hungarian Empire created no change; Czechoslovakia, Yugoslavia and Hungary continued to drive on the left. Portugal changed to the right in 1920.

On 12th March 1938 Hitler invaded Austria and the following day proclaimed Anschluss, the absorption of Austria into Germany. Traffic was ordered to change from left to right overnight. This created public turmoil because the road signs could not be seen and in Vienna chaos was caused because the trams could not be turned round. As a result trams and cars were facing each other for several weeks. Czechoslovakia and Hungary changed after invasion in 1939.

The increase in traffic after the war provided a motive for switching to the right as most





vehicles were built for that purpose. The problem was minimised for Britain, Ireland and Japan to continue on the left as they are all islands.

China changed to the right in 1946 and Sweden in 1967 after a two year preparation period. In the 1960's Britain considered changing to the right but then dropped the idea. Today the cost would be astronomical.

Railways, overall, follow the custom established on the roads. Canals follow the custom established at sea, boats pass on the right.

There is one street in London, however, which goes against the rule of the road and that is outside the Savoy Hotel. It dated from the time when horse-drawn cabbies, seated on the right of the cab, wanted to open the door for their passengers without forcing them to cross the road. So in Savoy Street, a turning off The Strand, traffic drives on the right.

Alright! (or left, as the case may be.)

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

JULY MEMBERS' EVENING

Classic Car Evening & Barbeque



**If you've got one – bring it.
If not come and envy those who
have!**

**Either way come along and enjoy
the cars and bikes and have a FREE
barbeque and a chat.**

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





The History of the Motor Coach (Part Two)

From the President, Brian Howe

Having left Part 1 in the steam era of the 1830's, I now find it extremely difficult to know where, or how to continue, as this is such a potentially huge subject. I deliberately didn't spend time or effort on "Horse-Drawn" coaches, as realistically they have been about since horses were first harnessed to vehicles mounted on wheeled axles. And even before those, oxen were pulling goods and people on sleds with heavy oak runners. I'm sure you don't want me to go back that far. Even if you do, I'm not going to, but I will start with a brief history of one of the most iconic coach operators, certainly in the south and south west of England. I am of course talking about Royal Blue Coaches, who took my mum and her 5 children from Victoria coach station to Exeter coach station, many times between about 1957 and 1965 when going to stay with my aunt's family in Lapford, Devon. In 1957, the youngest was 4 and the eldest was 9. N.B. I was just about 8. I have also included a section on Bristol Commercial Vehicles. Firstly, because they were a relatively local company, and secondly, because Royal Blue used so many of their bus/coach chassis.

Elliott Brothers (Bournemouth) Ltd. 1880-1935

Thomas Elliott was a jobmaster with stables in Royal Blue Mews in Avenue Lane, Bournemouth and was reputed to have established a horse-drawn coach service between Bournemouth and the town's railway station at Holmsley in 1880. In actual fact, the original horse-drawn service between Holmsley station ('Christchurch Road' in those days) and the Bath Hotel in Bournemouth was started by William Humby, of the King's Arms Hotel, Christchurch, in 1851.

Thomas Elliott got his first licence to drive his uncle's cabs in 1880 and did not possess his own vehicle (a four-seat Landau) until October 1885. His first four-in-hand vehicle was licensed in 1888, and the first of his four replica stage coaches he acquired in April 1894. By 1888, however, the railway had opened a more direct route to Bournemouth and there was no longer a need for the service, but during this period, Elliott had also commenced horse-drawn char-a-banc excursions from the resort, many of which were routed via the New Forest.





Thomas Elliott died in 1911 and his two sons, John and William, took over the business. The brothers purchased their first motor charabancs – a pair of Dennises with 20-seat Metcalfe bodywork in March 1913. The chassis of both these and some Daimlers that followed were requisitioned in World War 1. After the end of the First World War, more vehicles were obtained, many of which were on chassis that had been built for military use, and the range of excursions increased – notably to include a trip to the Isle of Wight via Lymington, added in 1919 at a cost of 2 guineas (£2.10). That year also saw a strike on the railway. The Elliotts again seized the opportunity and started a service from Bournemouth to London at weekends. This was more like an excursion than an express, as passengers were only carried from one terminal to the other, not intermediately, and only for passengers originating in Bournemouth. This was so successful that the following year it was stepped up to twice weekly and passengers could book from either London or Bournemouth.

The company was re-organised in 1921 as Elliott Brothers (Bournemouth) Ltd.

In 1924 Elliott Brothers proposed the implementation of stage carriage services between Bournemouth and Lymington, Ringwood and Wimborne in competition with Hants & Dorset Motor Services. However, before



A Royal Blue Charabanc and passengers, outside the offices of Hankinson's, in the square, Bournemouth, c.1920. The solid tyres and wooden benches probably didn't make for a comfortable ride.

The word 'charabanc' literally translates as carriage with benches.

the services commenced, an agreement was reached between the two companies, whereby Elliott Brothers undertook not to operate the services in return for an assurance from Hants & Dorset that they would not operate any tours, excursions or long distance services from Bournemouth. As a result, a number of vehicles purchased by Elliott Brothers for the proposed services were transferred to Hants & Dorset.





11th February 1925. It is generally accepted that the first regular daily express service operated by road motor vehicles started. Greyhound Motors Ltd of Bristol provided specially equipped Dennis coaches which ran between Bristol and London via Bath.

In 1928, the London service became 3 times daily all year round and picked up in various towns along the route (Elliott Brothers being one of the pioneers of this form of travel). The journey took 5 hours, and cost 12/6 (65p) single or 20/- (£1) return from London to Bournemouth. The express services were quickly expanded to include destinations such as Torquay, Plymouth, Ilfracombe, Bristol, Birmingham and Margate.

On Sunday 8th March 1931, Elliott Brothers opened a new bus station in Bournemouth, jointly with Hants & Dorset. It was a two-tier building with entrance onto Exeter Road, with Royal Blue coaches using the lower tier and Hants & Dorset buses, the upper tier. In 1934, Elliott Brothers became a founder member of the Associated Motorways pool, their services to the Midlands becoming Associated Motorways services, although still operated by Royal Blue.

Following an approach by the Tilling Organisation, Elliott Brothers sold out in early 1935. The tours and excursions part of the business was taken over by Hants and Dorset

and the express services passed to the Southern National and Western National companies. Their express services were incorporated into the Royal Blue network, which continued to be run from Bournemouth as a subsidiary of these companies. The Royal Blue routes now ran from London - Bristol, London - Bournemouth and the area between, as far west as Penzance, as well as the joint South Coast Express from Bournemouth to Margate. Whilst on Associated Motorways duty they ran north from Bournemouth to Cheltenham, Birmingham, Northampton and Liverpool.



Bristol L5G (5 cylinder Gardner engine)





The Royal Blue services were incorporated into National Express in 1973 - the coaches becoming all-over white, with the Royal Blue name in red! The organisation celebrated the centenary of Royal Blue, as its oldest constituent part, in 1980. The use of the Royal Blue name was finally discontinued in 1986.



Early Royal Blue Poster



1949 Bedford OB Duple Vista



Note luggage rack on roof





Note Royal Blue feature of windows on roofline



1969 Bristol ECW (Eastern Coach Works body)

Sources: A Brief History of Royal Blue; P. M. Delaney 1999; Fleet Histories PK781/782; PSV Circle 1999; Hants & Dorset - A History (Colin Morris, DTS, 1996)

Bristol bus chassis.

In the early days of motor buses, the Bristol Tramways & Carriage Company found its fleet inadequate for local conditions, especially the hilly routes from Bristol proper up to Clifton. It therefore decided to build its own vehicles.

It developed into one of the country's biggest bus builders and was also in the unique position of being both an operator and manufacturer of buses. The Birmingham & Midland Motor Omnibus Co. (Midland Red) was also a builder, but made vehicles solely for its own use.



In the 1950s the operating and building concerns were separated; the former becoming known as the Bristol Omnibus Co. and the latter Bristol Commercial Vehicles. BCV continued to flourish until the 1970s, when it was merged with British Leyland, both being parts of nationalised industries. BL began to run down its new acquisition to leave the market clear for its own products. Bristol's highly successful RE (Rear Engine) model was discontinued to make way for the Leyland National (laughter) a greatly inferior product.

Bus chassis on test drives or delivery runs to body builders were commonly seen along Bath Road, Bristol, where BCV had a factory on two different sites. Weatherproofing of the cab consisted of two sheets of plywood. (See picture above). By the date of this photo, Monday 17th April 1978, the RE was no longer being made for the home market and this one is probably destined for Ulsterbus in Northern Ireland. Bristol Commercial Vehicles lingered on for a few more years until Leyland administered the *coup de grace*.





Bristol Commercial Vehicles

BCV was a vehicle manufacturer in Bristol, England. Most production was of buses but trucks and railbus chassis were also built. The Bristol Tramways and Carriage Company started to build buses for its own use in 1908 and soon started building vehicles for other companies. In 1955 this part of the business was separated out as Bristol Commercial Vehicles Limited. It closed in 1983 when production was moved to its then parent company Leyland.

History

The first trams of the Bristol Tramways Company ran in 1875 and in 1906 the company started to operate motor buses to bring extra passengers to their trams. In 1908 the company decided to build bus chassis for its own use, the first one entering service on 12 May. The Motor Department was initially based at the tram depot in Brislington, on the road that led east from Bristol to Bath. The Car Building Works there had been responsible for erecting electric trams and had gone on to build horse-drawn vehicles for the company. The first motor bodies built there had been three charabanc bodies constructed in 1907 for the Thornycroft buses delivered the previous

year. During 1907 the bus fleet was transferred to the tram depot at Filton to the north west of the city. In 1908 the company built its first six buses. The chassis were erected by the Motor Department and three bodies each at Brislington and the company's carriage works in Leek Lane, north Bristol.

In 1910 the company decided to build aeroplanes. The best place for this work was the sheds occupied by the Motor Department at Filton, so motor repairs and construction returned to Brislington. The tram depot proved too small for the volume of work and so a new 4 acres (1.6 ha) site, to be known as the Motor Constructional Works, was purchased nearby in Kensington Hill, Brislington. In May 1914 it supplied its first bus to another operator, a C50 fitted out as a charabanc for Imperial Tramways at Middlesbrough. The two companies shared a chairman, Sir George White, who in January had taken some buses out of service in Bristol to send to Middlesbrough when a rival company had tried to start a competitive service. The Middlesbrough order was followed by a number of trucks for the Royal Navy Air Service. The Great Western Railway bought a controlling interest in the tramway company in 1929 but the bus interests of the railway were transferred to Western National in 1931. This





brought Bristol Tramways and its manufacturing activities into the Tilling Group. Other companies in the group increasingly turned to Bristol to provide their chassis. Many Bristol chassis were taken to Eastern Coach Works (ECW) at Lowestoft, another member of the Tilling Group, where bodies were added. Note: When Tilling bought Royal Blue it made sense to them to supply vehicles built by their own group. Hence the number of Bristol ECW's on the Royal Blue fleet. The unbodied chassis were moved between the two towns by delivery drivers wearing substantial weatherproof suits.

Bristol Commercial Vehicles (BCV) was created in 1943 as a subsidiary of Bristol Tramways. The Transport Act saw the nationalisation of the Tilling Group into the British Transport Commission (BTC) in 1948. BCV and ECW soon found themselves restricted to selling products to other BTC operators. Nationalisation also brought the task of supervision of the Ministry of Supply's motor repair works at Kingswood. In 1955 BCV became an independent company owned by the BTC. Rationalisation of activities saw new body construction cease at Bristol in 1956.

Changes in government policy in 1965 allowed the Leyland Motor Corporation to buy some shares in BCV and ECW so that their products

could once again be sold to independent operators. The last new chassis to carry a Bristol badge was a VRT/SL double-deck bus built in 1981. For a while the factory continued to build buses with Leyland badges, notably the Olympian which had been designed by the staff at Brislington. All work ended in October 1983 when the final Bristol-built Olympian chassis was sent to ECW to receive its body for Devon General (where it was registered A685 KDV). Work was then transferred to other Leyland factories.

Chassis

Early chassis types were given a C-series number. When a new lower frame was introduced in 1920 they were known simply by the capacity of the body that was designed to be fitted. From 1925 a sequential letter system was given that ran from A to M, although the M type only, never went into full production. This was replaced by a new series that used initials to describe the vehicle, such as 'RE' for 'rear engine'. Different chassis letter codes were used to identify different sizes of petrol engines, but with the introduction of diesel engines from 1933 the size and manufacturer was shown by a suffix to the main code. In this way LD5G denoted an LD with a five-cylinder Gardner engine and FS6B an FS with a six-cylinder Bristol engine, and so on.





All early chassis were used for either single deck buses or goods vehicles. In 1931 a longer J type single deck chassis was offered to exploit the increased length now permissible but this was replaced by the L in 1937. In 1952 a new Light Saloon was introduced which was built on integral principles. It had no true chassis but lightweight running units were fitted to a special ECW body that gave the bus its strength and rigidity. A more conventional Medium Weight chassis was offered from 1957. A larger single deck, the rear-engined RE, was produced in 1962 and shorter versions to replace the MW appeared in 1968 along with a Lightweight Horizontal engined chassis, to replace the SU midi-bus and sell to the private sector as a lightweight coach, the LH.

The G was introduced in 1931 as a dedicated double deck chassis, but this was replaced by the K in 1937. Larger versions were offered as laws changed to allow an increase in both width and length, but in 1949 a radically different double deck prototype was tested. This had a specially designed chassis that allowed a conventional body to be fitted within the height of a 'low-bridge' profile which, with a conventional chassis was only possible with gangways below floor level and very restricted

headroom inside. This prototype became the Lodekka which remained in production in various forms until 1968. By this time a rear-engine double deck, the VR was available.

The last VRs and LHs were built in 1981 and the last REs in 1982, but production switched to Leyland-badged chassis. These included the B21 and B52 single deck urban bus chassis and the Olympian double deck.

Engines

Bristol made their own petrol engines to power their chassis. Until 1929 these were all four-cylinder, but in that year a six-cylinder model was added to the range to power the new C and D models. The C failed to get past the prototype stage, but the D was joined in 1931 by the G and J which also used Bristol's six-cylinder JW engine.

Bristol first offered a diesel-engined chassis in 1933. This was a JO single deck fitted with a Gardner five-cylinder engine. The GO double deck soon followed, but the petrol-engined J and G versions remained in the product range until 1936. Bristol continued to source its diesel engines from Gardner and other suppliers. In 1938 they began to develop their own but a production model was not ready until after World War II. The 8.14 litre AVW





engine was available in 1946 and an LSW horizontal version was produced for the LS integral single deck in 1950. Larger 8.9 litre BVW engines appeared in 1957. More than 4,000 diesel engines were eventually produced.

Bodies

Bristol Tramways initially built bus and truck bodies at their Brislington Body Works which was on the same site as the Brislington tram depot. Low demand for new aircraft following World War I saw some bus and lorry bodies built in the aircraft factory at Filton, where the first bus chassis had been built.

Most early Bristol chassis (and some of the few chassis that the company bought from others) had their bodies built by Bristol Tramways, but by the late 1930s most other operators were having bodies for their Bristol chassis built elsewhere. One such outside coach factory was ECW in Lowestoft where they had been building bodies on Bristol chassis for United Automobile Services and other operators since 1929. Bristol Tramways even had a batch of K5Gs bodied by ECW in 1938.

After World War II Bristol's old angular body

designs became more like the contemporary, more rounded ECW designs. After nationalization ECW built bodies for most of Bristol's output. In 1955 it was decided that body production at Brislington would cease. The designs for the HA lorry cab were handed over to Longwell Green Coachworks, a company based near Bristol. All work had been transferred there by 28 May 1956.

Source: Wikipedia.

Here are a few examples that show the development of body styles over the years. In the first picture from the left are 2 open-top Bristol Lodekkas from Southern Vectis, (Isle of Wight), a Routemaster open-top, Leyland PD5, Ribble Valley Leyland PD3, Bristol L5G, North Kent Leyland Tiger, Crosville Leyland PS1, Burton's Coaches AEC Regal, and a Crosville Bristol L5G. I drove all 10 at one time or another, even if it was only into town for refuelling. Others I drove for Weddings and private hires. This group photo was taken outside the depot of Quantock Motor Services, Taunton Trading Estate, Norton Fitzwarren. The estate is now in the process of being redeveloped.

All following photos by Brian L. Howe.





Leyland PD3 "White Lady" Express D/D Coach fully restored and the only one left of over 50 built.



Guy GS (Went to primary school on these)



1966 Routemaster on wedding duty in Bath



1949 AEC Regal + Bristol L5G Bus/Coach



Amsterdam bendy bus (Not a tram)



RAY YOUNG GROSSGLOCKNER HOCHALPENSTRASSE 23 AUGUST 2004 PHOTO B. HOWE

Bova touring coach c/w Reclining seats, WC, and Kitchenette
(Best coach holiday ever)

Summing up

The first motor buses

There were experiments with steam buses in the 1830s, but harsh legislation in 1861 virtually eliminated mechanically propelled road transport from Britain until the law was changed in 1896. From 1897 various experimental motor bus services were operated with petrol-driven vehicles, including a service in Edinburgh which ran from 1898 to 1901. In 1903 motor bus services were started in Eastbourne, and in the same year a motor bus service was started between Helston and The Lizard by the Great Western Railway.





Motor bus services grew quickly and soon eclipsed the horse buses. Early operators were the tramway companies, e.g. the British Electric Traction Company and the railway companies. In London, the horse bus companies, the London General Omnibus Company and Thomas Tilling, introduced motor buses in 1902 and 1904 and the National Steam Car Company started steam bus services in 1909. By the time of the First World War, BET had begun to emerge as a national force.

Between the wars

By the time of the First World War, the LGOC had achieved dominance in London and its two major competitors, Tilling and National (in 1919 renamed National Omnibus and Transport Company) looked elsewhere for expansion. Tilling had shares in BET as well as competing with BET and in 1928 the two companies formed Tilling & British Automobile Traction Co., which continued its acquisitions. At the end of the 1920s the railways mostly ceased direct bus operation, but acquired interests in many bus companies. The National transferred its operations to three companies jointly owned with the railways, Eastern National, Southern National and Western National.

The 1920s were an era of intense competition, but BET, Tilling and National gradually acquired more companies. The Road Traffic Act 1930 ended the period of competition and introduced a new system of regulation of bus services. One effect was to eliminate many of the smaller operators. In 1931, Tilling acquired control of the National. In England outside London and towns where municipalities ran their own buses, the industry was dominated by Tilling, BET and their joint company TBAT. In Scotland, Scottish Motor Traction came to be the dominant force.

In London, including the surrounding area up to 30 miles from London, bus services were effectively nationalised in 1933, when operations were compulsorily transferred to the new London Passenger Transport Board. In 1942, TBAT was wound up and its companies transferred to Tilling.

Nationalisation

The post-war Labour government embarked on a programme of nationalisation of transport. Under the Transport Act 1947, the British Transport Commission acquired the bus services of Thomas Tilling, Scottish Motor Traction and the large independent Red & White. By the nationalisation of the railways,





the BTC also acquired interests in many of BET's bus companies, but BET was not forced to sell its companies and they were not nationalised.

In 1962 the BTC's bus companies were transferred to the Transport Holding Company. Then in 1968 BET sold its UK bus companies to the Transport Holding Company. Almost all of the UK bus industry was by then owned by the government or by municipalities.

Bus passenger numbers declined in the 1960s. The Transport Act 1968 was an attempt to rationalise publicly owned bus services and provide a framework for the subsidy of uneconomic but socially necessary services. The Act transferred the English and Welsh bus companies of the Transport Holding Company to the new National Bus Company, transferred the country services of London Transport to the NBC, transferred the Scottish bus companies of the THC to the Scottish Transport Group and transferred municipal bus operations in the 5 large metropolitan areas outside London to new Passenger Transport Executives, together with some operations of THC companies in those areas.

Privatisation

In 1980 the new Thatcher government embarked on a programme of deregulation and privatisation of bus services. The National Bus Company and Scottish Transport Group divided some of their larger subsidiaries into more saleable units. In 1986, under the Transport Act 1985, all bus services apart from those in London and Northern Ireland were deregulated. The NBC's and STG's subsidiaries were then sold, in most cases to their management and employees.

Bus services in London were transferred to a new company, London Buses in 1984, split into smaller companies in 1989 and then privatised. The PTEs were also required to sell their bus operations. Local authorities had to transfer their buses to arms length companies, some of which (but not all) were sold off.

Post deregulation, the intended model had been for competition between private companies to increase services. Regulations prevented neighbouring state owned companies being sold to the same concern, to create a 'patch-work' distribution of the operating areas. Competition law prevented private companies acquiring more than a certain percentage of geographical market share.





Competition did occur in many areas, in some cases causing bus wars. However, many of the smaller start up operators were bought up by their larger neighbours after a few years. After some initial mergers, five large bus groups emerged - two (First Group and Go-Ahead Group) were formed from NBC bus companies sold to their managements, two (Stagecoach and Arriva) were independent companies which pursued aggressive acquisition policies, and National Express was the privatised coach operator which diversified into bus operation.

In the early 1990s it seemed all services would fall into the hands of the few major groups, but recent trends have seen the disposal of relatively large companies where revenues do not meet shareholder expectations. The Stagecoach Group went so far as to dispose of its two large London operations, citing the inability to grow the business within the London regulated structure. Some large overseas groups have also entered the UK bus market.

Source: Wikipedia



A Police STOP at 2 AM

An elderly man is stopped by the police around 2 a.m. and is asked where he is going at this time of night.

The man replies, "I am on my way to a lecture about alcohol abuse and the effects it has on the human body, as well as smoking and staying out late."

The officer then asks, "Really? Who is giving that lecture at this time of night?"

The man replies, "That would be my wife."



Two Seconds – Too Late To Stop!

By John Dowell

I come to praise Two Seconds – not to bury it! (With apologies to William Shakespeare)

The first Highway Code to contain overall stopping distances was published in 1946.

To the best of my knowledge the tests were carried out at the Transport Road Research Laboratories and were tested on a track. Different drivers drove various cars at given speeds and when they arrived at a set point they braked firmly, but not to skid.

At the point at which they responded, lifting the foot off the accelerator triggered a chalk-gun to fire on to the road. As they applied the brake another chalk-gun fired on to the road surface. After stopping they could measure the reflex action of both releasing the accelerator and pressing the brake and relate the whole to the stopping distance.

(This is now done with lasers and computers.)

In the 1946 Highway Code this was given from 20mph to 50mph.

Thinking time was given in feet equivalent to mph: 20 mph = 20 feet for thinking time. 30 mph = 30 feet. (Rounding to the current Highway Code that is 6 metres and 9 metres respectively)

It is considered by most people that I have spoken to within the driving world that the average driver takes $\frac{1}{2}$ a second to respond to a hazard. Exceptions to this are the younger element believing that their responses are quicker than the more experienced drivers.

‘Reaction time is the whole time interval between stimulus and response. It is questionable whether anyone has succeeded in sorting out how much of the time lag is due to the brain, how much to the nervous system and how much to the muscles. Reaction times vary with the nature of the stimulus and the nature of the response, as well as with the subject’. – *National Institute of Industrial Psychology* Autocar 19th December 1947.





In the Autocar article, as dated above, it also quotes from a 1937 test carried out in the States by the *U.S.A Bureau of Standards, Washington* and quoted by Tapley Meters Ltd in their book 'Concerning Brakes':

Conditions	Average time elapsing before brake application
Driver not expecting test, foot on throttle	1.02 secs.
Driver alert, expecting test: not warned. Foot on throttle.	0.53 secs.
Driver expecting test: foot over brake.	Practically instantaneous

In 1947 an apparatus, devised by the Metropolitan Police to record reaction braking time, was secured by the Road Safety Officer for Hampshire, Capt. E Jervis O.B.E, M.C., and taken round the country accompanied by staff from Autocar Magazine. I don't intend to go into details as to how it worked, save to say their figures and the TRRL figures equate.

At 30 mph a reaction time of 0.5 sec. shown on the table for the above test gave a travelling distance of 22feet (5.5metres approx).

0.6 sec = 26.5 feet (6.7metres approx.)

0.7sec = 31feet (7.8metres approx.)

0.8sec = 35.43 feet (8.99 metres approx)

The current Highway Code shows a distance of 9 metres for thinking distance which equates to .8 of a second in the above table.

(In relation to the American table stating *Practically instantaneous* the Autocar article said that in their own experiments no such performance was recorded. On successive tests an average identical reading was given as 0.3 secs., which would still give a distance of 13feet (4.5metres approx.) travelled at 30mph)

One can play with figures for ever and points of a second or fractions of a foot (metres) could be argued *ad infinitum*.

However, both the TRRL figures and the Autocar figures are, to some degree, flawed in the way they were conducted and therefore give an *approximation* of reflex action. The candidates in all of these tests KNEW they were going to have to brake.

In the next part, although figures are to the nearest inch or foot, the reality is that they are absolutes whereas the above figures are all approximates depending upon the individual driver.

Up until the 1976 edition of the Highway Code the advice was to keep one yard (three feet or approx. one metre.) for each mph of your





speed. *In reality it is very difficult for the brain to assess this type of varying distance with any accuracy.*

Some years ago I spoke to someone at the Department of Transport and asked why they didn't advise a minimum of three seconds gap on a motorway. Their response, I suppose, was predictable: *Nothing stops dead and anyway at three seconds there would be longer lines of traffic!*

A few years ago chevrons were painted on some motorways at a distance of 40 meters apart and drivers were advised to keep two chevrons from the vehicle in front. This equated to a two second gap.

My own view as to the danger of these chevrons was that, first they were too close, and secondly it was encouraging the drivers to look at the road surface, not along the motorway.

An item which appears along all motorways, and can be used very effectively to time one's distance from the vehicle in front, is the red white and blue marker posts which give direction to the nearest emergency phone and are along the hard-shoulder. These posts are 100 metres apart, which in effect is the stopping

distance at 70 mph. Keeping one of these posts between yourself and the driver in front could easily be included in the Highway Code.

As a retired police driver and trainer for some 22 years with IAM Fleet Training, I have questioned many hundreds of experienced drivers if they knew what the posts were for along the motorway. The average response: about one driver per year has known what they are for; 5 per year knew they were there but not their purpose; the remainder have never seen them! Doesn't say much for drivers' knowledge or our motoring education does it.

Roughly ten years ago a university in the States carried out a two year experiment in relation to *hazard perception*. The purpose was to time how long it took the average driver to recognise a hazard. This was carried out on the road *under normal driving conditions* and the driver gave a response when he/she recognised a hazard. This was not for an emergency stop, but pure recognition – traffic light changing; car emerging; child on a bicycle etc.

This stated that the average time for the average driver to *recognise* a hazard BEFORE reacting to it was 1 second. (Frightening, isn't it!)





In reality this one second has to be added to the 0.8 of a second as shown in the earlier table of reaction time. (Perception time plus reaction time.)

So almost two seconds could elapse before the brake is actually applied.

This equates to travelling:

almost 90 feet (30 meters) at 30 mph

almost 120 feet (40 meters) at 40 mph

almost 210 feet (70 meters) at 70 mph

Thus, I am informed, in America a three second gap is advised.

I am not, however, saying that they adhere to this anymore than we do to a two second rule.

In the Top Gear television programme some years ago, Jeremy Clarkson was sitting in a nice new Ferrari and was displaying the stopping distances in the Highway Code to the camera. His comment was that they were out of date (he used the Triumph Herald as an example as to when the stopping distances were introduced – erroneously!) and that cars today stopped quicker! He then threw the Highway Code out of the window.

I acknowledge that brakes today are superior than in 1946, tyres give better grip and road

surfaces assist with braking and some are anti-skid. However Jeremy did not mention the *alert driver!* No car will stop until the driver reacts – and with the amount of road markings, road signs and other forms of information the brain has to process, perhaps two seconds is too close to stop!

Finally: the loading of a vehicle will have an effect on the overall stopping distance. Cram six or seven people into a vehicle which is designed for 5 people and the stopping distance will increase. As would carrying several sacks of cement in the boot. Think about it!

Safe driving.

TGAM Vacancy

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 or stalls at events. 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.





CHINA'S NEW "LITTLE CAR"

By Serena Lonton

This is not a joke and they do sell for \$600. They won't be able to make them fast enough.

Here's a car that will get you back and forth to work on the cheap; only a one seater however. Talk about cheap transportation; Volkswagen's \$600 car gets 258 mpg. It looks like Ford, Chrysler and GM missed the boat again! This \$600 car is no toy and is ready to be released in China next year. The single seater aero car totes VW (Volkswagen) branding.



Spartan interior doesn't sacrifice safety.

Volkswagen did a lot of very highly protected testing of this car in Germany, but it was not announced until now where the car would make its first appearance. The car was introduced at the VW stockholders meeting as the most economical car in the world.

The initial objective of the prototype was to prove that 1 litre of fuel could deliver 100 km of travel.





The body is 3.47 metres long and just 1.25 metres wide and a little over a metre high. The prototype was made completely of carbon fibre and is not painted to save weight.

The power plant is a one cylinder diesel, positioned ahead of the rear axle and combined with an automatic gearbox controlled by a knob in the interior.



It will be selling for 4000 Yuan, equivalent to US \$600.

Fuel tank capacity = 1.7 gallons

Speed = 62 – 74.6 miles/hour

Fuel efficiency = 258 miles/gallon

Travel distance with a full tank = 404 miles



Due to the latest budget cuts, this is the state of the art Police cars we will be seeing on our streets very soon



Recent Releases from the IAM Press Office

Councillors agree road safety is neglected

The top road safety priority for local councillors is improving road surfaces and reducing potholes, according to a survey conducted by road safety charity, the Institute of Advanced Motorists (IAM).

74 per cent of councillors placed potholes in their top five road-safety priorities while 61 per cent think that the budgets for repairing them will decrease or stay the same.

Almost half of councillors surveyed think that road safety targets should have been kept. Fifty-eight per cent of local councillors agree that budget cuts are having a negative impact on roads and road safety, with one in four councillors strongly agreeing.

Although councillors agreed that transport was a priority half of them thought that their transport budget would reduce in the next year.

Other key findings include:

- Fifty-nine per cent of councillors support 20mph speed limits, with 15 per cent supporting 20mph for most urban roads.
- Twenty-nine per cent of councillors think that the government's policies have been

bad for road safety.

- Councillors in the north of England are more likely to say they anticipate spending reductions while councillors in the south and east of England are less likely to report reductions in their transport budgets.

IAM chief executive Simon Best said: "It's good to see that potholes are councillors' top priority as this is a big concern for motorists. More must be done to fix our roads before the backlog of repairs becomes unmanageable.

"The results show that different political parties offer the electorate real choice on their transport priorities. Conservative councillors are more likely to focus on road building, road surfaces and car parking, while Labour councillors appear to be more likely to prioritise road safety and the use of public transport. Liberal Democrats are more likely to focus on cycling and walking."

"Councillors say that road safety is a priority so they must put up a stronger fight to protect road safety budgets. It's also clear that there is a need to set up smart new targets that will help everyone in road safety focus on the highest risk groups in society."





Don't hold your breath for French drink-driving fines

The French Minister of Interior has announced an indefinite delay on the fines for motorists, including motorcyclists, who do not carry a breathalyser kit with them in their vehicle. Previously, it was decided that fines would be issued from 1st March 2013.

Currently, all drivers in France, including motorcyclists, are required to carry a breathalyser kit and the €11 fine for not carrying a breathalyser would have been applicable to all road users, except for those on mopeds.

Anyone driving in France is already required to carry a warning triangle and a fluorescent safety vest to use in an emergency. Additionally UK motorists and motorcyclists must display a GB plate.

IAM director of policy and research Neil Greig said: "The law for carrying breathalysers will no longer be enforced through fines, but in order to comply with the law we still recommend that you keep a breathalyser kit in the car whenever you're travelling to or through France."

Don't drive so close to me

- The things that other drivers do that annoy you are usually mistakes, not deliberate. Give them the space you would like yourself to sort an error out.
- The horn is there simply to get others' attention and let them know that you are there. If someone else uses it to express annoyance, don't join in, just let it pass.
- If you spot an oncoming vehicle approaching which still has its full beam on, consider that this is probably a case of forgetfulness on the part of the driver – retaliating by switching your full beam on would only increase risk.
- Set an example by giving way at busy junctions or allowing traffic to merge into your lane when necessary – for example, at a motorway junction.
- If another road user is driving threateningly, try to maintain extra distance between your car and theirs. Try not to react by accelerating, braking or swerving suddenly, as this will reduce your car control, and probably wind up the other driver.
- Planning as far ahead as possible puts you in the best stead to predict other people's actions and mistakes on the road, allowing you to cope with them more easily.

Rodger said: "Even the best drivers make mistakes, so try and cut people some slack when they do so. Road rage doesn't improve the situation, and puts you, your passengers, and other road users around you at risk. The best thing is to stay calm and continue to drive sensibly as not to worsen the situation."





Boris wants to 'de-Lycrafy cycling'

A £913 million plan to revolutionise cycling in London was announced today by the capital's mayor Boris Johnson.

Saying he wanted to "de-Lycrafy cycling", Mr Johnson outlined plans for a 15-mile cycle route from the western suburbs to Canary Wharf in Docklands and Barking in east London.

The route will include Dutch-style fully segregated cycle tracks along, among other places, the Victoria embankment and the Westway flyover.

Under the plan, a range of new cycle routes will open over the next four years parallel to and named after Tube lines and bus routes.

The plans will include:

- ❖ A new network of "Quietways" - direct, continuous, fully signposted routes on peaceful side streets, running far into the suburbs, and aimed at people put off by cycling in traffic;
- ❖ Better segregation between bikes and other vehicles;
- ❖ Improvements to existing "superhighway" bus routes;
- ❖ Improvements to junctions deemed the least safe for cyclists, including

Blackfriars, Vauxhall and Elephant & Castle;

- ❖ Encouraging more out-of-hours deliveries by lorries to improve cyclist safety;
- ❖ 20mph speed limits for all traffic on some cycle routes;
- ❖ An electric bike hire scheme, similar to the existing Barclays Cycle Hire, will be trialled;

Mr Johnson - a keen cyclist himself - said: "I want to de-Lycrafy cycling. I want to make it normal, something for everyone, something you feel comfortable doing in your ordinary clothes. Our new routes will give people the confidence to get in the saddle.

"I do not promise perfection, or that London will become Amsterdam any time soon. But what I do say is that this plan marks a profound shift in my ambitions and intentions for the bicycle."

He went on: "The reason I am spending almost £1 billion on this is my belief that helping cycling will not just help cyclists. It will create better places for everyone. It means less traffic, more trees, more places to sit and eat a sandwich.

"It means more seats on the Tube, less competition for a parking place and fewer cars in front of yours at the lights. Above all, it will fulfil my aim of making London's air cleaner."





Think!'s new motorcycle safety campaign

IAM director of policy and research Neil Greig said: "There are far too many SMIDSY (sorry mate, I didn't see you) accidents on our roads today so we welcome the new Think! awareness campaign for motorcyclists. 'Failed to look' is the top reason for serious crashes and research shows that drivers often miss smaller vehicles when they scan the road before a turn. A few extra moments spent checking for motorcyclists means everyone gets home safely."

Car drivers are being urged to see the person behind the helmet and take longer to look for motorcyclists in the latest THINK! motorcycle safety campaign, launched today by Road Safety Minister Stephen Hammond.

The £1.3m campaign, timed to coincide with the anticipated Spring increase in motorcyclists' return to the roads, encourages drivers to take longer to look for motorcyclists and think about the biker, not just the bike.

Stephen Hammond said:

"Motorcyclists account for just 1% of traffic but 19% of deaths on Britain's roads and 30 bikers are killed or injured in accidents at junctions every day. I am determined to reduce this terrible toll.

"That is why we are funding this THINK! campaign to remind drivers to look out for motorcyclists - particularly at junctions - and to see the person behind the helmet not just a motorbike."

The campaign was informed by accident statistics, which show that motorists pulling out in front of motorcyclists is a major cause of deaths and injuries; and wider research showing that drivers are more likely to notice motorcyclists on the roads if they know a biker themselves.





Motorists favour driving and smoking ban

Fifty-six per cent of motorists think that smoking while driving should be banned, according to a survey by the Institute of Advanced Motorists (IAM). However, almost half of respondents (forty-five per cent) think that such a ban would be unenforceable.

Respondents clearly have concern over the effects of smoking while driving. Seventy-five per cent of motorists think that lighting a cigarette while driving is a serious distraction.

Fifty-two per cent of those surveyed think the act of lighting a cigarette is the greatest potential danger of smoking and driving. While just two per cent believe that there are no dangerous elements to smoking while driving.

Other survey results reinforce the negative perception of smoking and driving. Respondents felt it was:

- Irresponsible 48%
- As dangerous as using a mobile phone 46%
- Dangerous 43%

IAM chief executive Simon Best said: “Smoking is clearly seen as a serious issue by motorists and highlights the impact of distractions in the car.

“The health benefits may be clear but more research needs to be done to determine whether there are actual road safety grounds to act on these concerns by banning smoking and driving altogether.”

Young drivers need continuous support

Young drivers need more guidance and support in the first six months of obtaining their license, according to road safety charity IAM (Institute of Advanced Motorists).

Last month, the DfT announced a green paper would be published this summer looking at ways to improve the safety of young drivers. The announcement includes the possibility of introducing graduated licensing, with curfews and controls which will prevent young people from gaining experience on the road.

The IAM will be recommending to the government the following changes to help improve young driver safety:

- A tougher test to include rural roads – where young people are most vulnerable
- A new focus on treating driving as a skill for life – through continuous learning with post test checkups in the first six months of solo driving
- A minimum driving period during learner stages to increase exposure to as wide range of traffic conditions as possible
- A relaxation of the rules allowing learner drivers on motorways

IAM director of policy and research Neil Greig said: “Continuous learning will do more to keep young people safe on the roads than restrictions. During and after supervised learning, new drivers need to gain as much experience as possible to prepare them for driving independently – something which curfews simply cannot deliver.”





Drink-drivers face tougher rules

Drink-drive rules involving the most serious offenders are to be tightened up. Under new regulations the most dangerous offenders will have to prove they are no longer dependent on alcohol before they are allowed to get back behind the wheel.

The new measures will also see those drink-drivers who obstruct the police by refusing to allow their blood samples to be analysed being treated the same as other high risk offenders.

Currently, all high risk offenders must pass a medical examination before they can be issued with a driving licence following their disqualification. However, drivers can start driving as soon as they have applied for their licence and before they have taken and passed the necessary medical.

But from 1st June, the most dangerous drink-drivers will have to pass a medical confirming they are no longer alcohol dependent at the end of their disqualification and **BEFORE** they start driving.

Also, those offenders who refuse to allow their

blood samples to be analysed will also, from 1st June, only get their licence back following disqualification if they pass the required medical.

Under the High Risk Offender (HRO) scheme, drivers convicted of certain serious drink/driving offences must have a medical investigation to confirm that there are no on-going problems with the misuse of alcohol before they can be issued with a licence.

The Driver and Vehicle Licensing Agency (DVLA) is notified of such offenders by the courts. Last year the DVLA was notified by the courts of just over 50,000 drink-driving convictions.

Nearly 22,000 of those were classed as high risk offenders. Of those, around 5,000 drivers either failed, or failed to attend, their medical.

Road Safety Minister Stephen Hammond said: "Drink-drivers are a menace and it is right that we do everything we can to keep the most high risk offenders off the road."





Male drivers fail to see the point

Over 8000 UK drivers are still driving despite having 12 or more points on their licence. The top fourteen licence point holders with 25 points or more are all men.

The official upper limit for license points according to DVLA is 12, or six for those who have held a licence for three years or less. However, a freedom of information request to the DVLA showed many male drivers with 25-36 points were still driving.

A male driver from Warrington has the highest number of points, 36.

Currently, there are 20,439,578 male and 16,804,524 female licence holders in the UK, but it's men who fall foul of the law more often:

- Of the top thirty-four licence point holders, only two are women.
- Of the top 99 licence point holders, just fourteen are women.
- 2256 men are still driving with more than 12 points on their licence.
- 351 women are still driving with more than 12 points their licence.

IAM chief executive Simon Best said: “Law abiding drivers will be shocked that so many drivers are on the road who have more than 12 points. The ‘totting up’ principle is supposed to give a simple four strikes and you are out message. Anything more than this should be a disqualification, unless there are the most exceptional circumstances.

“There must be tighter practice in courts and at the DVLA to take these motorists off the road or ensure they take a driver retraining course to help them break their points habit.”

Steph Savill, managing director of FOXY Lady Drivers Club said: “For most motorists, collecting points is expensive, embarrassing and potentially highly stressful. But they make us more vigilant drivers. The relative few who collect 12 points in a fairly short period of time must be either ignorant or contemptuous of the rules of the road. They are getting away with it because the courts seem unwilling to play the disqualification cards they hold. There may even be a case for making serial point scorers re-sit the theory and practical driving test before their licence is reinstated.”





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

**All contributions would be very
welcome.**

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