

e-NEWSLETTER



IAM
DRIVING ROAD SAFETY



DECADE OF ACTION FOR
ROAD SAFETY 2011-2020

**TAUNTON GROUP OF
ADVANCED MOTORISTS**
www.tgam.org.uk



Number 129

Winter 2013



TAUNTON GROUP OF ADVANCED MOTORISTS

e-NEWSLETTER

Published Quarterly

Editor: David Walton

IAM Group No. 1005

Registered Charity No. 1062207

www.tgam.org.uk

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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



Chairman's Message - Winter 2013

It seems odd writing for our winter newsletter in October when the sun is still shining and temperatures are still relatively mild. That said, we're about to have 80 mph gales over the next few days and perhaps that, together with clocks going back marks the transition to those dark winter evenings. I quite look forward to those though, sitting in front of a nice log fire, reading the Highway code, Roadcraft and How To Be A Better Driver (okay, well maybe watching a good film then).

It's the end of my first year as Chairman and I'm glad to say that I've been voted in for a second year. Now there could be one of two reasons for this; either I've done well and you all want to see me carry on OR I've done so unbelievably badly that you simply cannot believe just how badly so you want a re-run. Either way, I'm here for another year which I'm very pleased about.



By Andrew Griffiths
Chairman





The AGM held on October 16th went very smoothly as did the rest of the evening; our President, Brian Howe was joined by local IAM Examiner Andy Ware in presenting advanced driving test certificates to Lindsey Death (below) and Kate Barrington (bottom) who both did splendidly by gaining high marks. Lindsey achieved the accolade of becoming a member of the IAM F1RST club. Both Kate and Lindsey are now full members of IAM and TGAM.



The Chairman's Award; given to an individual serving on the Committee who, in my view, has made a positive and notable difference, was presented to Ella Waude.

Ella volunteered to fill the role of our Events Coordinator and she's hit the ground running. She slotted seamlessly onto the Committee and embraced her new role with enthusiasm. She quickly got to grips with organising our events for the coming 12 months.

Ella has a large appetite for work, limited only by the fact that she has a demanding day job.





She has the momentum and energy to take forward ideas some of which will drive our Group into the technological world thereby raising our profile and media connections. Ella has demonstrated interest in the IAM beyond that required by her role by attending the IAM annual conference on 5th October to find out more about what goes on. All of this summarises why I've chosen her for this award.

Following the AGM, we had a very good talk from Susie, a member of the Red Cross; she took first aid back to basics by demonstrating simple techniques on the basis that giving something to a casualty is better than giving nothing.

Do you remember at one of our social evenings we were given a talk by Phil Brind who, with his wife, owns and runs the Tiverton Canal Company? I found Phil's talk absolutely riveting and I was determined to pay a visit for a trip on the canal. So in

August, Katie and I drove to Tiverton and took a trip on the Tivertonian. We started in the Duck's Ditty floating café bar and had a beer (or two... well I wasn't driving the car that day!). The boat was pulled by a Welsh cob called Taffy who seemed as if he could walk through a thick concrete wall – he was that strong. The newly qualified skipper, David Poxon, was great fun and provided a warm welcome to all of his passengers. He kept us entertained and informed during the trip.



David Poxon (left, with bowler hat; traditional for a skipper)





One of the dogs joined us on the trip, for most of the time on horseback, directing Taffy by barking. She just loved sticks and was a friend for life if you threw a stick for her, which many of us did at the turnaround point when there was a chance to disembark for 20 minutes (while Taffy was fed, watered and brushed down).



The Tivertonian at the turn-around point

The scenery was great and the only noise was the sound of water against the hull (and some very excited children obviously enjoying the day out with parents and grandparents). That's what struck me during the trip; it was a family-orientated business operated by the Brind family themselves; David Poxon is Phil's future son-in-law.

The on-board bar offered more nice beer which I had to sample (well I wasn't driving... or have I already mentioned that?). What a way to spend a day; enjoying the tranquillity of the canal, beer in hand, sun shining, watching all the wildlife in their natural habitat. Would I visit again? Definitely! Why not pay a visit there too – I'm sure you'll enjoy it and will be made to feel very welcome.





More recently I visited the Morgan factory in Malvern with another Group Observer, John Gilbert. I remember Morgan featured in John Harvey Jones' trouble shooting programme many years ago; he visited Morgan with the aim of making it more efficient in its processes and manufacturing to increase its production. Bear in mind that Morgan produces two cars each week at present, all handmade and it was even fewer back then. The plan was to get production into double or even triple figures. It didn't happen and Morgan retained its uniqueness as a family business making unique motor cars in a unique way. The car is famed for its Ash frame and its aluminium body.

As we walked around each of the buildings, which have been there since the war, I was struck by the absence of production line equipment. Cars were in various stages of build with technicians working on different aspects such as filing the bonnet to fit the car, as shown in the shot above right. Quaint but indisputably hand crafted with pride!



An Ash frame being dipped in Cuprinol. Note the pram wheel at the top of the shot used to lower and raise!





The little gem below has a polished aluminium bonnet which adds an extra £5,000 to the cost of the car. It was like a mirror!

If any of you are now planning to buy yourself a Morgan for Christmas, you'll be disappointed as there is a 6 month waiting list - and you'll need a hefty sum of money!

Morgan is selling quite a lot of their 3-wheeler cars. These are powered by Harley Davidson motorbike engines mounted outside at the front of the vehicle. The shot above shows a few in various stages of completion, some awaiting their Ash frame.





This brings me on to winter driving. There's lots of advice out there about how to prepare your cars for the winter. IAM has recently launched a new website Advancedmotoring.org where you can find tips on driving in different conditions (click the "driving tips" button at the top of the home page).

And a reminder to all our full members that just by making a phone call to our Drive Coordinator, Tony Hucker, you can book a free refresher drive with one of our Observers. You can contact Tony on 01278 451565.

All TGAM Observers maintain their skills and expertise by attending Regional Observer Training Days. Our group organised and hosted one on Saturday 19th October. We attracted 20 Observers (numbers are limited to this) from all over the South West and the training was provided by our Staff Examiner, Andy Poulton, and Trainers from his Regional Training Team (RTT - of which I am one). It was an excellent day and the training provided was first class. The training started with a presentation from Ian Harris (IAM Examiner and RTT Trainer). It was followed by a series of 4 drives each covering a different aspect of advanced driving. Lunch was arranged by Ella Waude and Janet Loader and I was told by a



Andy Poulton (centre, rear) with trainers drawn from his Regional Training Team

number of people that it was the best food they'd had at such an event. The "housekeeping" and IT equipment was managed by David Walton (Editor!) in his usual effective and efficient manner. The event was declared a resounding success by our Staff Examiner. Great team effort TGAM!

It leaves me just enough space to wish you all a happy Christmas and prosperous New Year for 2014 (even though it's 2 months away). I'm looking forward to seeing some of you at the TGAM Christmas lunch on Saturday 7th December at Oake Manor Golf Club near Taunton.

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
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Events Coordinator	Ella Waude events@tgam.org.uk
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GROUP OBSERVERS



TGAM Observers

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

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.)

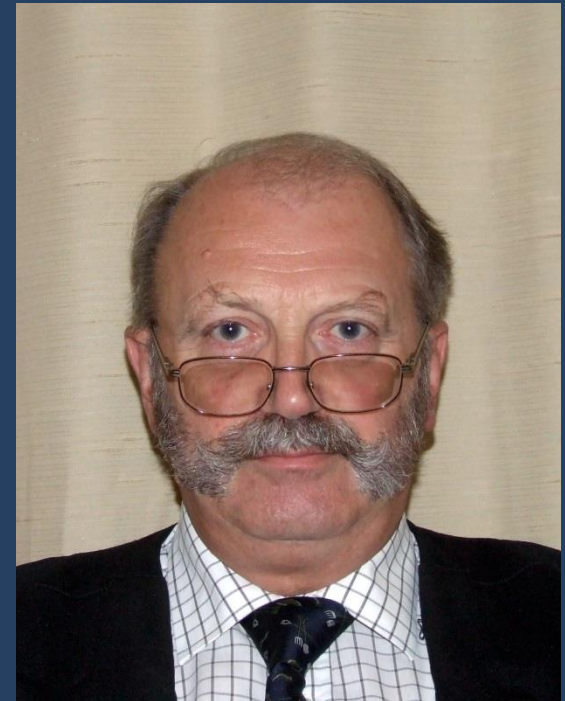


FROM THE PRESIDENT



Well that's another AGM over and done with. Don't get me wrong, they are neither bore nor chore, but they do take some planning to make sure that everything runs smoothly and that nothing is forgotten or left to chance. Thankfully our Group Committee Officers were all re-elected unanimously as were the Committee Members retiring by three yearly rotation and, with the addition of the highly efficient Ella Waude, our recently acquired Group Events Coordinator, we have a great team that works really well together to carry us into the future, whatever that may hold for TGAM and IAM. I would like to take this opportunity to thank the TGAM Committee and members present at the AGM for their support and for officially voting me in as TGAM Group President.

We have recently gained three new Group Observers to our Associate Training team, David Walton, Hugh Todd and Isobel Jennings, all trained by Allan Thomson and tested by Andrew Griffiths. This gives the Group a well-trained and well



By Brian Howe
Group President





equipped team to look after our future Associates. With the new equipment purchased by the Group for our Observers, we can now present a more professional face to our Associate training.

I won't give facts and figures here as you will be able to find them in the relevant annual reports from the AGM elsewhere in this issue. If you would like further information, please do not hesitate to contact the relevant Committee Member. Contact details can be found on the Committee page. Just suffice to say that TGAM is doing somewhat better than some other Groups in the country, but don't sit on your laurels, because we are not out of the woods yet. The Group offers FREE Drive Assessment Vouchers to non-members and members who have passed their ADT can ask for an assessment drive at any time. Please contact Tony Hucker, Group Associate Coordinator, for details and vouchers. Word of mouth is by far the best advertising. IAM now offers a wide range of products including some modular courses, so if you or any of your family or friends are interested, please ask.

TGAM is now part of the new Southern Region which includes Regions 1 and 2 but not South

Wales. Instead of an RCO, we have a full time Regional Manager, Mr Mark Trimmer. This reduces the number of contacts required for businesses, local authorities and other road safety partners and also improves efficiency and professionalism.

Please help to support your local Group, by attending the monthly club evenings at Hatch Beauchamp Village Hall. And yes, we can use the word "club". They are social events for IAM members and TGAM members and you are welcome to bring along family and friends. Always FREE parking, FREE tea/coffee, FREE biscuits (sometimes chocolate biscuits) and FREE friendship. We also have our Annual Christmas Lunch coming up, so please send your menu choice and your cheques made out to Taunton Group of Advanced Motorists to me by Monday 25th November 2013 so that I can then make all the final arrangements in plenty of time.

May I be the first to wish you all a very Merry Christmas and a Happy and prosperous New Year.

Brian L. Howe president@tgam.org.uk



MEMBERS' PAGES



**By Serena Lonton
Group/Membership Secretary**



Where has the last year gone? It does not seem very long since the last Christmas Lunch, or the last Winter Newsletter, but as they say, time flies when you are having fun!

I hope you all enjoyed the best summer we have had for several years, and are now busily preparing for the coming winter and all it may bring.

We have had a very good number of membership renewals this year, perhaps due to the fact that renewal forms were sent by

post along with the Christmas Lunch menu and AGM forms. Many thanks to those of you who have renewed your membership already, and to those who have not, please do so as soon as you can to save reminders.

So far, since 1st October, we have 94 fully paid up members with 23 who have not yet renewed their membership from last year. No new members have joined yet this year, but it is early days and we hope to repeat last year's success when 26 new people joined us and 14 passed their Advanced Driving Test.





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

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

Also, don't forget to book your place at our Christmas Lunch on Saturday 7th December at Oake Manor Golf Club. It's a must!

Many thanks for your continued support. Happy and safe motoring!

Advanced Driving Test Passes

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

	<u>OBSERVED BY</u>
Kate Barrington	Tony Hucker
Lindsey Death (F1rst)	Andrew Griffiths
Alan Madge	Allan Wellwood
Peter Marshall	Allan Wellwood
Doug Searle	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 seven 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>
Spencer Golding	Hemyock	Associate
Carole Jones	Taunton	Associate
Jane Langford	Taunton	Associate
Tom Langford	Taunton	Associate
Rebecca Mitchell	Taunton	Associate
Allen Pope	Bridgwater	Associate
Bernard Stacey	Taunton	Associate

CALENDAR

COMMITTEE MEETINGS

12th December

13th February

10th April



			NOVEMBER
20	W	7:30 pm	Members' Evening – Wood turning talk and demonstration by Andrew Griffiths
			DECEMBER
7	Sa	12:30 pm	TGAM Christmas Lunch at Oake Manor Golf Club
18	W	7:30 pm	Members' Evening – Christmas Quiz
			JANUARY
			No Members' Evening in January
			FEBRUARY
19	W	7:30 pm	Member's Evening – Testing Moments, a talk from Andy Poulton, staff examiner
			MARCH
19	W	7:30 pm	Member's Evening – 'A Century of Developments in Naval Aviation' by John Gilbert
			APRIL
16	W	7:30 pm	Member's Evening – An evening with Mark Trimmer, IAM Regional Manager





When our oldest son turned 17

By Nick Cowling

As you may remember in earlier version of this newsletter you will have seen a young chap having passed his advanced driving test. When our oldest son David turned 17, we faced the prospect which most parents must dread, to prepare their child for a life behind the wheel, the time when they feel truly independent and you feel the horror of them being in charge of a deadly weapon. Even more so, as over the years in my job as a Road Safety Engineer I have had to read the details of numerous fatal road accidents, a significant number involving younger drivers.

We knew that him learning to drive is one of those milestones you bring your children up for, to complete the process of them turning into independent adults, but it's still scary. We did the usual processes of insuring him on a family car and also organising a driving instructor. We had a few stop starts due to A level exams, but he passed his driving test in March 2012. Throughout my career in traffic and road safety engineering I came to the

conclusion that although we can achieve a great deal introducing suitable signs and lines and other engineering measures to guide drivers to appreciate possible hazards, overall road safety improvements are mostly down to driver behaviour. It was with this in mind that I made an effort to pass my advanced driving test nearly 20 years ago.

We weren't initially going to buy David a car as he didn't really need one living in Taunton, but then an elderly aunt, living in the north-east decided to give up driving and donated her R reg 50,000 mile Fiat Cinquecento to us. A typical one lady owner ideal first car, though very little protection in a crash! Insurance still cost £1,500, more than 3 times the value of the car. So after some discussion part of the deal for helping him run the car was that he would take an advanced driving test. As a Christmas present we acquired a Skill for Life package for him. After a few months of assessments he put in for the test and passed, we were very proud. I felt he was a good driver before, but





it was good to know that his driving has been assessed as being to a high level. It is fortunate that I know he is safe as possible on the roads and that as parents we have done as much as we can to launch a safe motorist on the wider world. We now hope he can soon benefit from cheaper insurance from IAM Surety.



David, his generous aunt and R reg Fiat

November Members' Evening

WOOD TURNING



Andrew Griffiths, our Chairman, will be bringing his lathe and giving a talk and demonstration on wood turning. There will also be a chance to buy some Christmas presents from him!

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





Careless drivers face on-the-spot fines

Information from "Lifestyle", the magazine for Motability customers and supporters. Brian L. Howe

Drivers who hog the middle lane on motorways, tailgate and cut up other drivers, will face on-the-spot fines of up to £100 and three points on their licence as part of a government initiative to clamp down on careless driving. The more serious examples of these offences will continue to go through the courts, where higher penalties may be imposed.

The level of fine for some existing offences has also been increased. For non-endorsable offences (where you do not receive points on your licence) fines will rise from £30 to £50. Examples include not displaying your car tax in a place that is easy to see and not complying

with a road traffic sign. Fines for endorsable offences (where you do receive points on your licence) and some non-endorsable offences will rise from £60 to £100 and, where appropriate, you will receive endorsement points. Common examples include using a mobile phone while driving, failing to wear a seat belt and some speeding offences.

The changes, which were announced this summer, have been introduced following public consultation with police forces and road safety groups. Educational training will be offered as an alternative to endorsement where appropriate and drivers will be able to appeal against any decision in court.



Ella Waude

EVENTS COORDINATOR

I'm Ella, your events coordinator. I joined IAM and passed the advanced driving test in May 2013. I've been elected onto the committee having offered to look after the events for our group. I am really happy

to be part of your committee and I've been busy arranging interesting speakers and events for the next twelve months. I have also set up a TGAM Facebook page, so please 'like' us and keep track of what is happening. If you have any requests for topics and guest speakers I would really like to hear from you. You can contact me at events@tgam.org.uk, call me on 07792 091903 or send a message through the [TGAM Facebook page](#).



TAUNTON GROUP of ADVANCED MOTORISTS CHRISTMAS LUNCHEON

to be held at

OAKE MANOR GOLF CLUB

Oake, Nr. Taunton, TA4 1BA



on Saturday 7th December 2013

12 noon for 12:30pm

ONLY £13.95 per person





THE IAM MASTERS Programme

My experience - by Colin Fraser Mackenzie

The IAM Masters programme provides an opportunity for those who have already passed the Institute of Advance Motorists Driving Test or other similar qualification to attain the highest level of civilian driving standard in the country.

The course, which costs around £250 is based on the Police response driver training program and participants are required to be fully conversant with the Highway Code; to have studied the IAM book – “How to be a better driver”, as well as having a working knowledge of “Roadcraft” – The Police driver’s Handbook. Additionally, I would recommend that The ROADCRAFT DVD which covers a group of Police Drivers as they go through their course is studied.

The first step is the appointment of a mentor

for the entire course. The mentor arranges drive sessions at roughly weekly intervals to suit mutual availability. After each session, normally about two hours, a log book is completed and a full discussion of the day’s performance is carried out – in my case, in a relaxed environment over a nice cup of coffee! Your £250 allows you to have as many sessions as is required to bring you up to the required standard. Those participating are required to drive safely and at all times within the law; but are additionally expected to maximise progress wherever possible. In this context it is useful to have a vehicle with good acceleration and road holding.

I decided to have a go at the course in the hope that the training might go some way to





compensating for the effects of increasing age (76) and prolong the ability to drive safely on today's increasingly crowded roads.

Andy Poulton the IAM Staff Examiner for this region appointed Andrew Griffiths the Chairman and Chief Observer of the Taunton IAM Group as my mentor and since last November we have had twelve full sessions in addition to an initial "benchmarking" drive and a pre-test session with both Andy Ware and Andrew Griffiths prior to the actual test; which is based on the Keynsham area and lasts for almost two hours. In addition to completing my log book, Andrew provided a more detailed report shortly after each drive session – this also included some homework by way of background reading and some testing questions on Roadcraft and the Highway Code, which was invaluable.

During training and throughout the actual test the participant is required to give an in

depth commentary and in the early days it was difficult to overcome the tendency to slow down whilst commentating. Another problem area for me was maintaining rapid progress whilst keeping track of the ever changing speed limits. The key to success is developing observational and anticipatory skills so that the system of car control can be applied instinctively under all circumstances.

I am very grateful to Andrew Griffiths for his patience and encouragement throughout the course and for the many occasions when he went the extra mile to ensure that errors were fully understood and corrected and also for the support from the IAM Camelot Group.

The Masters course is demanding, challenging and very enjoyable. It becomes exhilarating as confidence is developed and progress begins to be made. I would have no hesitation in recommending it to anyone seriously interested in developing and improving their driving skills.

Test passed 24th July 2013.





IAM BICYCLING - Dumped in the Skip – for the time being

By Paul Hunt from IAM Bristol Group

In response to an enquiry to IAM Chiswick, Laura Martin, the IAM's Market Development Manager, wrote:

“Regarding your general comments around bicycle training we are reviewing how this is currently delivered and until we establish a suitable alternative for training we will be providing guidance to all who enquire on finding a trainer. The communication regarding the membership itself is due to go out shortly, this will be delivered by the same body as the training as this seems to make more sense. We will have some more firm plans in place in the very near future. The book [*How to be a Better Cyclist*] will remain in the shop but the membership and training for the time being has been removed.”

The IAM website has been altered. The ‘I am a Cyclist’ option remains, but ‘Cycling Courses’ now refers to the national Bikeability 1/2/3 Scheme and says that this can be obtained through Local Authorities.

The existence of IAM Bicycling has divided opinion since it was introduced. The reason for it is that many Bicyclists are also Drivers

and the IAM hoped it would be an avenue for more Skill for Life sales, as well as showing the IAM's interest in Road Safety – for example, 2012 DfT statistics show that although overall ‘killed and seriously injured’ figures decreased, the number of bicyclists killed rose 10% from 107 to 118.

Three New TGAM Observers

I would like to add my congratulations to Isobel Jennings, Hugh Todd and David Walton for the time and effort that you have put in to your training. Welcome to the TGAM register of Group Observers. (Does this mean that Ella Waude is now a professional “Trainee Observers’ Associate”?)

Well done to Alan Thomson for what must be an excellent Observer Training Programme to achieve the results you are able to, and for the time that you give your ‘students’.

Last but by no means least, well done to Andrew Griffiths for all the time that you put into the TGAM, selflessly performing your many different roles. A tremendous role model for the rest of us mere mortals. Brian L. Howe



A Summer Holiday by the Navigator

Brian L. Howe

Despite nearly 25 years of coach/minibus driving, since I have lived in Somerset and the previous 20 odd years of driving around the country for other employments, I had never yet ventured to North Wales, let alone Llandudno. Alice and I rejected a coach holiday to the area because they either went where we wanted to go, but not when, or they went when we wanted to go, but not where. We had recently taken delivery of a shiny new Vauxhall Meriva SE 1.4T on the Motability scheme, (where you give up the mobility part of your Disabled Living Allowance to lease a new car for three years), so we decided to book a hotel in Llandudno, put some 'running-in' miles on the clock and motor round North Wales at our leisure. Loading the Meriva was simplicity itself due to the FlexSpace® 40/20/40 split rear seats which are so easy to drop level into the floor and the FlexDoors® where the rear doors are rear-hinged. The first item loaded was my Shoprider Paris mobility scooter which was made easier by using our newly purchased 5ft folding aluminium ramp.





Next in was the ramp so the luggage could sit on top and hopefully prevent rattles, all wedged in with the upturned, folded scooter seat.

My grandchildren bought me a Garmin Nuvi sat-nav for my birthday last year (ironically, just a few weeks before I had to give up driving), so I thought we could test it out on a 'proper' journey. I set that for the address and Post Code of the hotel in Llandudno and fixed it on the windscreen so that it didn't disturb or distract Alice from her driving and I had my trusted 2012 AA Road Atlas open on my lap. I knew the general direction of travel so we headed north on M5 from junction 25. The first

thing I noticed was that the Garmin was reading 65mph while the car was travelling at 69mph. I wondered which would get there first. It also made me wonder if modern car speedo's are deliberately set to read higher than the actual speed of travel, but I'm not generally a 'conspiracy theorist' so I won't pursue the matter further. The M5 was busy but moving reasonably well at about 65mph (Garmin speed), with Alice driving in lane two whilst passing a convoy of towed caravans, motor caravans and lorries. When, surprise,



surprise, we were overtaken by a car towing a camping trailer which was merrily hopping





along behind. The Garmin was reading the time as 14:16hrs, but that was our estimated arrival time in Llandudno. Two possible offences here Officer; 1). Exceeding 60mph on a motorway whilst towing a trailer. 2). Driving in the outside lane (3) of a motorway whilst towing a trailer. That I believe can now earn you up to 6 points on your driving licence and cost you a fine up to £200. He wasn't the only impatient driver out that day, but he was the only one towing in lane 3, and we never saw him again.

Everything else went well until J6, Worcester North, where the traffic ahead was at a standstill. I almost wished that the impatient trailer man was stuck in the thick of it. I asked Alice to leave the motorway and take A449 north towards Kidderminster. This is where the Garmin started to get stroppy. "Make a U-turn as soon as possible". "Take the fourth exit at the next roundabout". I ignored it and followed the trusted AA Road Atlas. At Kidderminster the Garmin wanted to take A456 East, back to jct3 of the M5. At this point I realised that it, (the Garmin), was obsessed with the so-called 'quickest route'. I ignored it again, and we continued north, over A456 along A442 towards Bridgnorth, where the Garmin wanted to take us north to Telford, east on M54 to join M6 north. At this point I named the Garmin

"MARVIN-GARMIN", after Marvin the Paranoid Android from "The Hitchhikers Guide to the Galaxy", and laughed every time it got confused and had to recalculate its idea of our route. However, we continued our journey north west on A458 to stop for lunch at a delightful restaurant called 'The Riverside Inn', Cound, Shrewsbury, Shrops, SY5 6AF www.theriversideinn.net, which was just south of Shrewsbury itself. The sun was shining on Cound and the restaurant overlooked the River Severn and the green rolling countryside beyond. They served an excellent ploughman's lunch at a reasonable price, a passable glass of house red wine and a lovely selection of desserts, all in very pleasant surroundings. Yes I was allowed a dessert as we were going on holiday. We stayed more than an hour so that Alice was fully rested and relaxed to continue. (It was one of the few times that I wished I could take over the driving for a while).

Onwards! As they say. We turned west on A5 past Oswestry and Chirk, and would you believe it, Marvin-Garmin wanted to take us north on A483 via Wrexham, onto A55 just south of Chester? I mean, why on earth would you want to go that far north before turning west? But we obstinately ploughed on westwards along A458, past Llangollen to





Betws-y-Coed, where we turned north on A470 through the stunning scenery of the Vale of Conwy. To the west of the River Conwy was Snowdonia National Park, with all its peaks and valleys creating shades of light and dark. Some places in sunshine, others under heavy cloud and rain. We crossed A55 at Llandudno Junction, and at last, Marvin-Garmin agreed with me and my AA Road Atlas. He did however prove very useful in Llandudno town centre by guiding us into the correct lane to reach our hotel safely, 2½ hours later than his first arrival prediction. Journey complete, park the car and look for a cup of tea. NICE!



Tuesday morning I set Marvin-Garmin for Portmeirion, and we easily negotiated our way south out of Llandudno. We did upset Marvin-Garmin though when Alice turned right 50yds too soon and we found ourselves in the centre of Betws-y-Coed. Déjà vu! That's where we went on the No.19 Arriva bus yesterday. But with Marvin-Garmin's 'brain' and my trusty AA Road Atlas, we were soon back on the right road again. There is some fantastic scenery in Snowdonia National Park, even with some of the peaks shrouded in low black cloud, and we still made it to Portmeirion inside an hour despite our little diversion. Well, what can I





say about Portmeirion? Beautiful! Marvellous! Fantastic! These superlatives do not come close to doing it justice. It is quite simply, a beautiful Italianate village with marvellous buildings and fantastic gardens. Then there was Li'l Blue my faithful little travel scooter, fully charged and raring to go. I was warned by the very nice Meet'n'Greet gentleman that I probably wouldn't be able to get all the way down the steep lane to the beach. So he gave me free entry. Having been 'issued with a challenge' we set off exploring. I was reminded of No.6, The Prisoner, riding around 'The



Do you think he will mind if I sit in it?

Village' on a parasol covered golf cart, as Portmeirion is proud of its claim to fame from that iconic TV series. We tagged on to the back of a guided tour party round those parts of the village that Li'l Blue could access and we ignored the areas only accessible by steps.

We made it to the beach gate but the tide was in and we even managed the rather bumpy path towards the lighthouse until we had to stop and turn round because the path became too narrow and people couldn't pass me on the scooter.





The tide was in, so no sandy beach with giant balloon

Then Li'l Blue, carrying all my excess weight, carried me safely back up the hill (and you can see how steep it was by the photo), although we did give him a rest half way up while Alice and I stopped for lunch. Well! Li'l Blue's little electric motor needed to cool down as well.

After returning to the car I set Marvin-Garmin the task of finding Porthmadog railway station so we could ride the Ffestiniog & Welsh Highland narrow gauge steam railway. I just love steam trains, although I am not an 'anorak', I don't know engine types and sizes, but I am old enough to have travelled fairly



Ruddy sat-navs!! Which way now?

regularly on the original steam trains before they became Heritage. Some say I am just trying to regain my youth. I say if you are able to, get out there and enjoy. This narrow gauge line runs between Blaenau Ffestiniog and Porthmadog, where it joins the standard gauge Welsh Highland line running up to the west coast at Caernarfon.

Boarding at Porthmadog we travelled through Minffordd and Penrhyndeudraeth to Tany-y-Bwlch and its gardens which apparently are very pretty. Here the guard walked the length of the train and back shouting, "Tanneeboolchchchchch!"



Early First Class Carriage.



Very unusual double ended locomotive.



Looking down on the lower section of the Ddualt Spiral and taking the tight curve to come back underneath.





Tanneeboolchchchchch!”. (Sorry that was my phonetic interpretation of the Guard’s Welsh pronunciation). The train continued through the Garnedd Tunnel and round the Ddualt Spiral, the only rail spiral in the UK, (designed to gain height in the shortest possible distance, and has created the tightest curve on any UK railway), then through the Moelwyn Tunnel and past the Tan-y-Grisiau Reservoir, the Hydro Electric Power Station and on past the slag heaps of a disused slate quarry in to Blaenau Ffestiniog, where it joins the Conwy line to Llandudno Junction.



Slate quarrymen's boots used as flower pots.



A South African Railways locomotive at Porthmadog.



Entrance to Penmaenmawr Tunnel.





We left Porthmadog on A487 past Caernarfon, alongside the Menai Strait and joined A55 which took us through the Penmaenmawr tunnel, another tunnel and the River Conwy tunnel.

Thursday we set out for Anglesey but changed our minds and let Marvin-Garmin guide us to Llanberis for the Snowdon Mountain Railway. It's a good job Alice doesn't mind trains, although she did want to do Snowdon anyway. I kept a wary eye on Marvin-Garmin's route instructions just in case, but this time he took the same route I would have

chosen from my trusty AA Road Atlas. Either he's as good as me or I'm as good as him. I'm just not sure which is best. A55 west to jct11, A4244 south through Glasinfryn, Rhyd-y-Groes, Pentir and Brynnefail, then A4086 east to Llanberis. The Snowdon Mountain Railway was opened at Easter 1896 and runs for 4.7 miles, rising to 1,085 metres (3,560ft for those of who still measure in English). The railway has been running for 117 years and remains a popular tourist attraction. It is the only public rack and pinion railway in the UK.



New 2013 carriage





Diesel power to spare



The platform is 20ft in front of the screen



Previous picture from the other direction



New 2013 carriage



It was lucky that we arrived at Llanberis before 10:30am as we were able to book the last two seats available on the 12:00 noon train. After that, all trains were fully booked until 15:00hrs. All steam hauled trains were fully booked until the end of August. The views of the valleys and peaks are truly amazing, even if they were at times almost invisible. I was surprised to see so many people walking up Mount Snowdon in tee shirts, shorts and trainers. No wonder the Mountain Rescue are called out so often. At the summit Triangulation Point the winds were high enough to knock young healthy people off their feet and the view was



A station on the Holyhead line on Anglesey.

non-existent. After a cup of hot chocolate each, we caught the next train back to 'base-camp' where a large Welsh Oggy (Welsh miner's pasty containing Welsh beef steak, potatoes, onions and of course leeks) was awaiting my return in the station cafe. Much needed after the close inspection of the inside of a heavy rain cloud.

Friday found us looking around Anglesey as I wanted to see the railway station with the longest name in the UK containing 57 characters. In maps and locally, it is known as Llanfair PG.



Gift shop and cafe showing translation.





The station building was closed.

Llanfairpwllgwyngyllgogerychwyrndrobwlllantysiliogogogoch. Translating to “The church of Mary in the hollow of the white hazel near the fierce whirlpool and the church of Tysilio by the red cave”. That is 96 characters without the spacings.

The station of Llanfair PG was the first on Anglesey and opened in 1848. After a 20 year closure from 1973 to 1993 it was reopened in 1994, having been restored by James Pringle-Weavers adding a shop and visitor centre which was later extended to include the “Sidings Restaurant”.



A rare opportunity taken by a kind cyclist from Liverpool

Then off to see Holyhead. It was deserted, an almost silent ghost town. I bought a cheap print of a nice steam engine and then we found an equally deserted Internet Cafe for a cup of tea and left again. On the way back I spotted a brown tourist sign advertising a Motor Museum, with nothing to lose we followed the signs for nearly four miles on narrow country lanes. We eventually arrived at TACLA TAID, Anglesey Transport and Agriculture Museum at Tyddyn Pwrpas, just outside Newborough, LL61 6TN, on B4421. I am very glad we did. It wasn't the largest motor museum I've ever been to, but what it



lacked in size it made up for in spades in character and quality. It has a collection of over 60 classic cars from the 1920's onwards, all set out in a replica of a 1940's cobbled village street. There is a large assortment of vehicles including motorbikes, cars, vans, military and agricultural vehicles. They have a cafe on site, Caffi Nain, and a Caravan Club registered site with showers and electric hook ups and excellent views across Snowdonia. It was a real "I had one of those once" moment. I even found a Guy Wolf coach in amazing condition.

Saturday we departed Llandudno and set off for home using more or less the same route taken the previous week. We even stopped at



Quite a collection in a small space.



Not sure about the colour of this though.



Nice Rover. Is it a 75?





Ford van taxed and ready to work.



Wouldn't mind driving this, it's well up to scratch.



Mine was a grey Velox DeLuxe DLU 55C.

the same restaurant for lunch. We did have a diversion from Ruabon in an easterly loop down to Worcester, which really upset Marvin-Garmin because he kept trying to send us down lanes so narrow, you would not be able to pass a pedestrian without putting him in a hedge. We stopped the second time at Michaelwood Service area, but I wasn't impressed with the cleanliness or the pricing. I even had to remove the teabag from my mug with a wooden stick and there was no saucer to deposit the bag.

All photos taken by me using a Nikon Finepix and my Blackberry Torch.

Don't forget the Xmas Lunch at Oake Manor, 7/12/13, 12:00 for 12:30pm president@tgam.org.uk





Toyota Recall

Toyota is recalling 870,000 vehicles because a problem with an air conditioner part could cause airbags to deploy unnecessarily.

In some cases, the problem was caused by spiders.

Sometimes, their webs can create a blockage in a drainage tube coming from the air conditioning condenser. That can cause water to drip down onto an airbag control module, causing a short circuit. That, in turn, could cause the airbag warning light to light up on the dashboard and it could even cause the driver's side airbag to deploy, something that happens with explosive force.

In some cases, there could also be a loss of power-steering force, Toyota said.

The vehicles involved are model year 2012 and 2013 Camrys, Venzas and Avalons, including hybrid versions of those cars.

So far, Toyota is aware of three airbag deployments as a result of this and 35 cases of warning lights coming on, Toyota spokeswoman Cindy Knight said. In the cases Toyota has investigated, the only consistent cause of the blockages has been spider webs. Knight could not say if spider webs caused every incident, however.

Spiders sometimes build webs inside tubes in cars. In 2011, Mazda recalled 52,000 Mazda6 sedans for a problems caused by spiders building webs inside a vent line for the petrol tank.

To fix the problem, Toyota dealers will make fixes to block water from dripping onto the airbag module. Owners will be notified by mail to take their vehicle to a Toyota dealer where the necessary work will be performed at no charge.





Driving habits that can save you fuel

Adapted by Brian L. Howe, from an article in “Lifestyle”, the magazine for Motability customers and supporters.

Rising fuel prices are in the news almost every week, but did you know that by changing your driving habits, you could save a significant amount of money at the pumps? Below are some tips to help your pounds go further:

- Drive smoothly, accelerate gently and read the road ahead to avoid unnecessary braking.
- Avoid driving at excessive speeds and always keep to the speed limit – driving at 70mph could use up to 15% more fuel than driving at 50mph.
- Check your tyre pressures regularly, particularly before a long journey. The recommended pressures for your car's tyres will be outlined in your manufacturer's handbook. Remember that under inflated tyres mean your engine has to work harder.
- Switch off your engine if you think you

will be stationary for a few minutes or more.

- Change up to the next gear as soon as possible without having the engine labouring. For diesels, change up a gear when the rev counter reaches 2000rpm. For petrol cars, change up at 2500rpm. (But remember these are guidelines, not hard and fast rules).
- The lighter your car, the less fuel you'll use, so it is a good idea to remove heavy items such as roof racks or roof bars if you're not using them.

When you buy your next car you may want to consider a more fuel-efficient engine to keep your running costs down. Each car has a 'miles per gallon' (mpg) figure, the higher the mpg is, the less the car should cost to run. Don't forget that manufacturer's figures are only a guide to help you compare cars and are based on ideal test conditions.





MINUTES OF THE 32nd ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING OF THE TAUNTON GROUP OF ADVANCED MOTORISTS

WELCOME: Andrew Griffiths, Chairman, welcomed Andy Ware, (IAM Examiner), Gary James & guests, Weston & Mendip, Godfrey Davey & Rachel Bettiss, Camelot. Also welcome are all those whose names are not shown.

APOLOGIES: Mark Trimmer (ROM), Bristol Group, Exeter & Torbay, Barnstaple & N. Devon, Andy Poulton (Staff Examiner), & TGAM members Hugh Todd, Dr. Roy Scotter, Roger Critchard, Paul Willitt, Janet Franklin, David Crowhurst, Peter Marshall.

MINUTES: 31st AGM minutes, 17/10/12 - approved and signed by AG – prop. T. Hucker, sec. A. Mayes.

MATTERS ARISING: None. **AMENDMENTS OR ADJUSTMENTS TO AGENDA:** None.

CHAIRMAN'S REPORT: Read out by AG who thanked the committee, Alan Thomson and the new observers for their commitment, also Ella Waude who was co-opted to the role of Events Co-ordinator. *(Full text of Chairman's report follows)*

TREASURER'S REPORT: Geoffrey Stoate presented the accounts 1st October 2012 to 30th September 2013. Not much change from the previous year, but possibly more funds needed for training, possibly by raising the group subscription. Accounts proposed for adoption by GS and seconded by David Walton.

ELECTION OF OFFICERS: All officers retired, standing for re-election, Group President, Brian Howe read the nominations received: Chairman: Andrew Griffiths, nominated by Kevin Gould Grose, seconded by June Fenn.

Secretary: Serena Lonton, nominated by Kevin Gould Grose, seconded by June Fenn.

Treasurer: Geoffrey Stoate nominated by Kevin Gould Grose, seconded by June Fenn. All duly elected.

ELECTION OF COMMITTEE: AG took the chair. Retiring by rotation and standing for re-election: -

Tony Hucker, Janet Loader, Paul Willitt. All agreed all committee re-elected en bloc as proposed by June Fenn, seconded by Kevin Gould Grose. Ella Waude was formally voted on to the committee, proposer Brian Howe, seconder Janet Loader.

ADDRESS BY NEW CHAIRMAN: AG asked for ratification of Brian Howe as President – proposer Alan Thomson, seconder Isobel Jennings. Chairman's Award presented to Ella Waude for "hitting the ground running". BH affirmed AG's thanks to committee, TGAM doing very well & noticed by Chiswick. Thanked all for their support and presented Faye Markham with a gift for sorting out refreshments for this evening & members' evenings etc.

ANY OTHER BUSINESS: SfL pass certificates presented to Kate Barrington & Lindsey Death, Lindsey having attained a F1RST.

Andy Ware – 14 passes for TGAM over the year, has also conducted over-55 Drive Checks. Thanked the observers for their efforts and said SfL is well worth the expense.

The meeting closed at 8:30pm.





Chairman's Report

Good evening ladies and gentlemen and welcome to the Taunton Group of Advanced Motorists annual general meeting 2013.

It's been a year since I took on the role of Chairman and the time has flown by. I'd like to take this opportunity to reflect on some of the achievements of the last 12 months and perhaps share some thoughts with you on how I see our Group developing over the next 12 months.

Our Group has fared well during what has been a difficult year when the economy has played its part in everyone watching the pennies and having to make hard decisions. Despite this, our Group has seen a steady flow of new Associates signing up to the IAM Skill for Life programme. Other Groups have not been so fortunate. It is not by chance that we are keeping our heads above water; we have been working hard to attract more Associates for the IAM. Without Associates, TGAM would not exist as one of over 200 local IAM Groups; it's as simple as that. Taking Associates from base level up to the high standard of the IAM Advanced Driving Test is what we do.

So what have we been doing to promote safer driving and the IAM Skill for Life? We've been raising our profile at local events; we've been working the U3A, we've been giving free assessment drives – taster drives – through a voucher scheme and offering a free refresher drive to any full member of our Group. Passing the word through to family and friends has produced results too. But you can do your bit to help; full members and Associates can help promote the IAM, our Group and the training we provide. Please take some vouchers with you and pass them to family, friends and work colleagues and spread the word.

Our Group has had a number of successes in the last 12 months with 14 Associates passing the advanced driving test, two of them achieving the accolade of the IAM F1RST club; successes are not handed out on a plate and this is a direct reflection of the quality, professionalism, dedication and enthusiasm of all of our Observers in the mentoring and training they provide to Associates. They all give freely of their time and I'd like to thank them all.

We have raised our Observer cadre from 7 to 10 just recently; Hugh Todd, Isobel Jennings





and David Walton were signed on by me as Group Observers having undergone weeks of training under the direction of our Training Officer, Alan Thompson. I like to congratulate them on their achievement and welcome them on board as Observers – they have already put their newly acquired skills into play by each having a new Associate assigned to them.

Since the last AGM, the Committee has worked hard to ensure TGAM is moving forward at pace, setting objectives and delivering against them. Every member of the Committee is a pleasure to work with and they make my job an easy one – one of the most difficult challenges for me though is keeping Committee meetings to less than 2 hours duration and seldom am I successful. One of their most difficult challenges is keeping me on the straight and narrow – they have more success! They too, give freely of their time and live up to the responsibilities that go with their respective roles.

Since the last AGM we co-opted a very willing volunteer (yes, a rare breed these days!) who stepped forward to fill the position of Events Coordinator; Ella Waude has hit the ground running, with impressive enthusiasm. She has

wasted no time at all in proposing and taking forward new ideas and has even persuaded some of her technophobic colleagues that TGAM can benefit from more of a presence on the internet and so has launched us on Facebook (whatever that might be). Why don't you be our Facebook friends? And here's a reminder about our evening events; we do try to put together a balanced and interesting programme and you can help shape that programme by telling Ella what sorts of themes you'd like us to include and we'll do our best to accommodate.

So that leads me to the point where I'd like to thank every member of the Committee for their hard work and dedication. I am reminded of the swan majestically moving across a lake – that is what we can all see, but what is not seen is the driving force underneath the surface. So, Serena, Geoffrey, Janet, Ella, Faye, David, Paul and Tony, my thanks you all.

Just after the last AGM, the Committee, under the powers of our constitution, elected Brian Howe as our President. Brian has done such a lot for our Group and it was unanimous that this was a befitting punishment – oops, recognition. Brian is a true envoy for our Group and long may he be our President.





So I said I'd give you some thoughts on the next 12 months. We've done a lot but there is more to be done. IAM is rolling out a new Observer Qualification which is accredited by the Institute for the Motor Industry. This will give all IAM Observers a very credible, recognisable and professional qualification which has demanding standards consistent across the UK. For us in TGAM, we've already started the process – I qualified as an IAM National Observer earlier this year – despite being assessed by our Regional Staff Examiner Andy Poulton who regrettably cannot be here tonight to defend himself; during the early part of 2014 we shall see our Observers being developed and assessed to achieve the status of Local Observer and with it comes those demanding standards and consistency.

As a Group we are here to promote road safety and to offer where possible, coaching, help, advice, guidance, instruction, tuition. Presently we do this through the Skill for Life programme, free assessment drives and refresher drives. I am keen that TGAM plays a key part in delivering new products which IAM

are now starting to offer, namely the “Confident Driver Modules” – Motorways, Lone Driver, Technology in the Car and Parking and Manoeuvring.

IAM has been around for 60 years; to be around for another 60 years it must change and this was mooted at the annual conference held on 5th October. In preparation IAM is looking at strategic changes with a view to reshaping by 2020. Although nothing is yet decided, we might expect to see fewer, but larger local Groups, better communications between those Groups, Chiswick and local authorities; the recent introduction of Regional Operations Managers is aimed to provide the base on which to build all of this. Mark Trimmer, the ROM for the Southern Region, will be coming to talk to us at a members evening in 2014 so be sure to come along to find out what's happening.

So all this means change and change can be daunting – or it can be embraced. There will inevitably be exciting times ahead and I for one would like to be part of the change.

Thank you for listening.





WSRA Steam Fayre and Vintage Vehicle Rally 3 & 4/08/2013

By Brian Howe, Group President

It was a late decision by the Group to attend the West Somerset Railway Association Steam Fayre and Vintage Vehicle Rally after a break of several years. An event which I have followed personally for 25 years, having shown a number of classic cars in more recent years and previously providing a retail grocery shop on site for exhibitors, when Alice and I were running the Corner Store at Bishops Lydeard. Contact was made with the relevant Rally Marshal and we were allocated a spare plot of 20ft x 20ft in the lower corner of the Classic Car Field as the site was nearly fully booked.

So, FULL STEAM ahead to get everything ready, organised and tested. This was a true team effort. Group Chairman Andrew Griffiths ensured the bright red Eze-up gazebo was fully functional, as well as manufacturing a mk2 flag pole to attach to one support leg of the gazebo.

Group Secretary Serena Lonton devised a quiz for adults to identify 16 car badges. Events



Coordinator Ella Waude arranged a vehicle colouring competition for children, organised small boxes of Smarties and California Raisins for participants and even rustled up a couple of prizes for the winners. The competition and quiz were to be judged at the end of the event and the prizes posted out to the winners. I made nearly 17 metres of bunting using cut up old IAM leaflets which were laminated then





strung together. Friday 2nd August Chairman Andrew, Newsletter Editor David Walton, Secretary Serena, Serena's husband Peter and myself, all met at the Classic Car field on the Rally site to erect the gazebo and set up the display tables, leaflets and competitions.

The flag pole was successfully attached and the bunting strung up inside and out. It was some time since the gazebo had been used complete with walls, so we were pleasantly surprised to discover it had all four walls present and undamaged. This meant we could zip it up and know that everything was safe and dry inside. I rode my Shoprider Sovereign mobility scooter to the field which was an experience I'm not ready to repeat in a hurry. The scooter was fully loaded with everything that I had to take, so it used a lot more battery power than I bargained for, but thankfully there was enough left to carry me home albeit very slowly to conserve power. The pathway between Corkscrew Lane, Staplegrove and the Taunton Vale Sports Centre, Gypsy Lane, (off Greenway Road), was completely overgrown with nettles and brambles. It was also a bit scary travelling through the other end of Norton Fitzwarren where there is no footway. I did take the precaution of draping a hi-viz vest across the back of the seat to make myself a bit more visible.



The weekend unfortunately turned out to be overcast, bleak and occasionally very wet, which did affect the number of people venturing as far as the Classic Car field where there was no shelter. We did however cultivate a few strong leads and handed out a number of Assessment Drive Vouchers. I think it helped by having Bob the Bike there on Saturday as it did encourage people to stop and talk to us. Our stand was staffed by myself, David Walton, Ella Waude and former Newsletter Editor and Group Observer, John Gilbert, on the Saturday and Tony Hucker





(Associate Coordinator), Faye Markham (Observer and Committee Member), Serena Lonton and myself on the Sunday. **You may have noticed that all these people are either serving or former Committee Members. We do accept help from Group Members as well. If you have the time to spare please help us so that it doesn't all fall on the shoulders of a few.**

However, continuing, the light flow of visitors meant that we could all take it in turns to have a look around at the other exhibits and food

stalls of course. This particular rally always has something of interest to everyone and everything to interest someone. Bicycles, mopeds, motorbikes, tractors, cars, commercials, military and emergency vehicles, steam rollers, traction engines showman's engines and of course, steam trains and locomotives. The military section included a full size tank and a WW2 Spitfire aircraft which, for a fee, you could clamber aboard and start those iconic Merlin engines. I have included just a few photographs.







This event was not a flying success for TGAM, but then it wasn't a complete disaster either. We have learnt from it and we will carry the experiences on to the next events, of which we hope there will be more, possibly in conjunction with neighbouring Groups. We will certainly go back to the WSRA Steam Fayre and Vintage Vehicle Rally next year 2nd and 3rd August 2014, so please put that date



in your new 2014 diary and come along to support us, even if you can only manage a few hours.

P.S. A note from the Group President: Talking of events, have you considered joining us for our annual Christmas Lunch at Oake Manor, 7th December 2013, 12:00 noon for 12:30pm. Details from Brian Howe at 01823 274410 or president@tgam.org.uk .



Winter Windscreen Advice

Adapted by Brian L. Howe, from an article in “Lifestyle”, the magazine for Motability customers and supporters.

As the winter months approach it's important that your windscreen is kept in good condition. Windscreen replacement can be expensive, even if you are only paying the insurance excess, it can also be very inconvenient and time consuming. Here are a few tips for looking after your windscreen.

- Do not use hot water or sharp objects to de-ice your car, as this can cause glass to crack. Instead use de-icer or a scraper designed for the job.
- Fully defrost your windscreen and windows to ensure that you have clear all-round visibility when driving.
- Avoid using the wipers until the windscreen is fully defrosted as snow and ice can cause damage and stop them from working.
- If frost is expected overnight, you may wish to protect your vehicle's windscreen with a cover to save you time defrosting it.

- If you notice any signs of wear and tear in your wipers, speak to your dealer or a tyre/exhaust provider to get them replaced (Note: Halfords provide a reasonably priced fitting service as well).

If you find any damage to your windscreen or windows, contact your insurance company before calling a mobile repair service as many insurances cover for free windscreen repairs with no excess to pay. The sooner you call the quicker and easier it will be to repair the damage. When you call, give the advisor your car details and don't forget to mention extra features, for example, tinted screen or heated screen. Have your insurance certificate handy at the appointment. In some cases, once a repair on a chip has been carried out, it may still be visible. However, it will prevent the chip turning into a crack. Repairs take around a quarter of the time it takes to perform a replacement and they're also more environmentally friendly, so it's worth looking after your windscreen this winter.





Recent Releases from the IAM Press Office

Don't get caught up in a crash for cash scam

Crash for cash scams are staged collisions. The one to watch for is when someone deliberately flashes you to dupe you into thinking they are giving way and then driving into the side of your vehicle. This makes it very difficult for you to prove that they were giving way to you allowing you to turn into the road and allows them to make an exaggerated insurance claim.

How to avoid them:

- Always look ahead and anticipate hazards, so you aren't "cornered" into a crash you can't avoid.
- If someone flashes you to invite you out of a junction, thank them but don't go - wait until the road is clear for you to progress.

If you are involved in one, remember:

- If you're suspicious, don't ask them directly about it at the scene but keep careful notes.

- Try to take photos of the damage to all vehicles, discreetly if possible.
- Get a description of the driver and count the number of people in the other vehicle. Take photos, discreetly if possible, of all the people in the vehicle.
- If you need the emergency services, call 999, and if you are suspicious about the incident, tell the police when you ring.
- Stay calm. You'll need to swap details with other drivers whatever happens.

IAM chief examiner Peter Rodger said: "Flash for cash scams are costing millions of pounds through our insurance premiums and some are so reckless that they risk lives. Collisions are stressful and emotionally draining, but it's important to be prepared in case you are involved in one."

"Make sure you drive carefully to minimise your chances of having to deal with a collision."





Biggest change in traffic policing for decades

Fixed penalty notices for careless driving offences such as middle lane hogging came into effect on Friday 16th August.

Following a government consultation announced in June, the £100 fine was introduced for a wide range of careless driving offences including tailgating and middle lane hogging.

The IAM advise that in-car distractions that cause you to swerve or drive badly could lead to prosecution; you don't have to inconvenience other road users to be issued with a ticket. Some typical examples of careless driving are:

- Overtaking on the inside;
- Driving inappropriately close to another vehicle;
- Inadvertently driving through a red light;

- Emerging from a side road into the path of another vehicle;
- Tuning a car radio, when the driver was avoidably distracted by this action;
- Selecting and lighting a cigarette or similar when the driver was avoidably distracted by that action.

IAM chief executive Simon Best said: "If the police target the worst and most persistent offenders this could be good news for road safety. If, however, it just becomes another numbers game with thousands of careless driving tickets issued then the impact will be limited. The IAM believes that driver retraining courses have a much bigger potential to actually improve poor driving than simply issuing a standard fine and should always be offered as the first stage of prosecution."





42 points and still allowed to drive

A woman from Isleworth, West London, accumulated 42 licence penalty points last year, according to the latest figures from the DVLA. The points were all for failing to disclose the identity of the driver between 26 May and 21 December 2012.

The second-highest points total, 36, went to a man from Warrington, Cheshire, who was caught driving without insurance six times in less than two weeks, between 20 February and 2 March 2012.

Other notable offenders include:

- A man from Southend-on-Sea with 30 points, who was caught speeding ten times between 14 March 2011 and 3 August 2012.
- A man from Blackburn with 29 points, who was caught speeding eight times in two months, between 29 September 2011 and 29 November 2011.
- A man from Pevensey, East Sussex, with 24 points who was caught speeding six times in just two weeks, between 30 September and 13 October 2012.

Failing to give the identity of the owner, speeding, and driving uninsured are the most common reasons for points.

Of the top twenty licence-points holders, only two are women.

IAM chief executive Simon Best said: "It's really disappointing to see that this issue has not yet been resolved. DVLA and the Courts Service are upgrading their computer systems to ensure that offence information is shared more efficiently, but this is not due to be in place until October. When drivers with ten speeding offences are getting away with holding a licence, these improvements cannot come quickly enough.

The IAM has no sympathy for owners who refuse to reveal the identity of the driver and we would welcome an urgent consultation on new ways to deal with this problem. Drivers must expect that 12 points means a ban or the whole system falls into disrepute."





Drivers wary of safety benefits of EU vehicle control

Three quarters of drivers are concerned that the use of Intelligent Speed Adaptations (ISAs) will compromise safety, according to research by the Institute of Advanced Motorists (IAM).

Last month, the EU announced that they were considering rules for new cars to be installed with Intelligent Speed Adaptation (ISA) technology. This would be capable of detecting limits through cameras or satellites and automatically applying the brakes. Existing vehicles could be forced to be retrofitted with the devices.

Seventy-eight per cent of drivers don't want to see the retro fitting of ISA technology onto older vehicles.

Fifty-seven per cent of drivers feel that ISAs won't have a positive impact on road safety – avoiding crashes, deaths and injuries.

There is overwhelming support for ISAs when vehicle control remains with the driver. Sixty-seven per cent of respondents would prefer

ISAs to operate with warning messages with no control of the vehicle.

Respondents do feel that there are some benefits to ISAs. Fifty-two per cent see a reduced likelihood of speeding convictions and less money spent on traffic calming measures such as road humps.

Thirty-one per cent of respondents feel that, if enforced, ISAs should be restricted to younger drivers, newly qualified drivers and drivers with previous road-related convictions.

IAM chief executive Simon Best said: "ISAs could help to save lives but it's clear that drivers remain dubious about the benefits of the technology. More research into the benefits would help to reassure the public that this will improve road safety.

"Unfortunately, over a third of respondents see this as a way of controlling drivers, I believe if drivers are trained properly and have access to on-going learning, the government would not need to enforce ISAs."





Quarter two provisional road casualty statistics

The latest Department for Transport road casualty statistics released recently show a welcome decrease in the overall number of deaths and serious injuries in the first half of 2013 compared to last year. However, the IAM are concerned that two-wheeled road users are still a growing risk and must be given even greater priority for investment and education.

- For reported road accidents in the year ending June 2013: 1,730 people were killed, a 3% drop from 1,785 in the year ending June 2012. The number of people killed or seriously injured fell to 23,530, a 5% decrease compared with the year to June 2012.
- Overall for year ending June 2013, there were 185,540 reported road casualties, 7% fewer than the 199,091 for the year ending June 2012.
- There were decreases in the number of casualties for car users and pedestrians of

12% and 3% respectively, with similar falls in the numbers of KSI casualties – 9% for car users and 7% for pedestrians. However, there were increases in the number of casualties for motorcyclists (4%) and pedal cyclists (12%), with an 8% increase in the number of motorcyclist KSI casualties and a 4% increase in pedal cyclist KSI casualties.

IAM director of policy and research Neil Greig said: “Once again the latest casualty figures show the increasing risks for vulnerable cyclists and motorcyclists. Spring and summer will always be the most dangerous months for those on two wheels but that must not be allowed to obscure the need to focus on their safety. Investment in segregated cycling facilities must keep pace with the rising demand for cycling. Road designs that help car drivers can often be fatal for motorcyclists so engineers must learn to ‘think bike’ when they build barriers, signposts and new surfaces.”





Closing date for the Winter Edition of the TGAM e-Newsletter is 20th January 2014. All contributions would be very welcome.

**All items should be sent to
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