

Mid Wales Matters



The Newsletter of Mid Wales Advanced Motorists

Web site: mwam.powys.org.uk

Volume 2, Issue 1

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Chairman's Comment

I would like to wish you all a happy and prosperous New Year. When we hold our first Annual General Meeting in March it will be 18 months since Mid Wales Advanced Motorists was inaugurated and 12 months since our official launch meeting. At the inaugural meeting I volunteered to take the Chairmanship since it seemed to me at the time there was a reluctance to fill this position. My view was that if there was no Chairman there would be no MWAM and I agreed to take on this role for the formation year of the group. Since the last Mid Wales Matters I have had a change of heart and decided that I would now like to offer myself for re-election as your Chairman. There will of necessity be some changes and, as a result of Steve Woolley's resignation, we need a new Chief Observer. I feel an ideal candidate would be our current Secretary, Geoff Smith, who has recently qualified as an IAM Senior Observer. However, we would then need a new Secretary to replace Geoff; a new Secretary who would have the advantage of working on a committee with Geoff who knows the secretarial ropes inside out. So we are very keen for a volunteer for the post of Secretary to come forward. I would urge the membership to get your nominations in to our secretary, not only for the officers but also for other committee positions. As you will see we have several opportunities for you to use your talents and enthusiasm to build on the successes already achieved. I can assure anyone interested that you will be working with some very hardworking, dedicated people aiming to make our group the best in Wales.

Norman Wood

Annual General Meeting

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN by order of the Group Committee that the 1st Annual General Meeting of **Mid Wales Advanced Motorists** will be held at 1:30pm on Saturday 12 March 2005 at Powys County Hall, Llandrindod Wells to enable the Trustees of the Group to present their Annual Report and Accounts for the year ended 31 December 2004 for approval by the Group Members and to conduct an election. This is your opportunity to find out how we have spent your money and to question the committee on their activities. We are nothing without our members and we need your support and guidance on what we should be doing for the groups' and your benefit. If you don't like what we are doing come along and say so, if you do, also please come and let us know. Your continued support is appreciated and we would encourage as many members as possible to become involved in the running of the group. We would welcome new committee members who are able to donate their time and energies to the future success of the group. We also need additional Observers who will be trained to assist new Associates. If you feel that you cannot play an active role please continue your financial support by renewing your membership of MWAM. I would urge those members who can to sign the Gift Aid Declaration and to complete the Bank Standing Order for the continued payment of their annual subscription.

A Formal Notice for the AGM and Nomination forms are included with this newsletter

Geoff Smith

This Newsletter is a forum for tips, anecdotes and comment from our membership. It is your voice to each other as much as it is to inform you of what the group is doing.

The Editor welcomes articles and letters for publication in this newsletter. Please note that all such contributions must have the full identity of the writer (not necessarily for publication) and a contact telephone number. Articles are accepted on the condition that they may be edited.

Chief Observer's Observations

Hello again, I hope you had a great Christmas, and may I wish you the very best for a safe and happy motoring New Year.

First let me welcome David Leppard our new Membership Secretary who has also decided to become a trainee observer. David, when he has completed training will cover the area in and around Machynlleth. We are also please to welcome Keith Blanchard and Paul Wilson as new observers. Both are Approved Driving Instructors and run their own Driving Schools. Keith will be working in and around the Montgomery Area and Paul in the East Radnor Area. As you can see we are growing apace and spreading our influence throughout the MWAM area.

Did you see the article in the County Times? Good wasn't it? The reporter Dominic Robinson gave us a good write up and I can say this now that the article has been written; he was quite a good driver. We tried to sign him up, but as he says, he has got quite a bit going on in his life at the moment, there just aren't enough hours in his day, a pity. I know I go on about this but we really could do with more young people in the group. Any young people out there, or ladies, please get in touch with us.

We are still desperate for a newsletter editor and events secretary. We have recruited our membership secretary so that's one position filled. If you feel a bit of a reporter or newspaper editor this is your chance! Get your nominations in for a committee place.

As you can see from the Members Corner article by our Publicity Officer, Ron Collins, he is getting a visit to a skidpan sorted out. I've told him he can certainly put me down for a crack at it! It's got to be worth every penny. As far as I know there isn't a facility like this anywhere near us, it's going to be a bit of a drive but, as I said well worth it.

We've heard from our ex newsletter editor too,

Ralph Pettit. See, once involved they just can't let us go! I think he makes some good sense. What do you think? Get in touch with your views. If you've got any ideas let's have them. Ideas for future events, comments, the more controversial the better, or do you just want to get something off your chest. As long as you supply us with your name and address, I'm sure we can persuade Geoff, our secretary and acting editor to print your letter anonymously. As soon as we can get someone to take on the job of events secretary, the job that Ron's doing at moment, we can get together for some group events. What do you think about member's refresher drives? A short drive out for about an hour or hour and a half with an observer to try an iron out any bad habits and thereby keep standards up. What do you think? Let us at the newsletter know and we'll try and sort something out.

One bit of negative news I'm sorry to say. The committee has taken the decision that the start of the motorcycle section will have to be postponed. We were planning to start operations in March but due to other commitments, our Motorcycle Co-ordinator, Neil Owen cannot continue in this role with the group. If we can recruit a replacement it shouldn't take too much to resurrect the section and as soon as we can resume we will let you know.

Steve Woolley

Editors comment

Regrettably Steve has found that he cannot devote enough of his time to the group so he has decided to resign from our committee and consequently the post of Chief Observer. We respect Steve's decision and thank him for the invaluable contribution he has made in establishing MWAM over its inaugural year. Steve is intending to continue in as an Observer so we will still benefit from his long experience.

Situations Vacant

Newsletter Editor	To edit, print and distribute our newsletter Mid Wales Matters
Events Co-ordinator	To organise events, with the help of other group members
Chief Observer	To organise the training and accreditation of Observers
Motorcycle Co-ordinator	To organise the formation of the Motorcycle Section

New Members

Congratulations and a warm welcome as Members to the following Associates who were successful in their IAM Advanced Driving Test.

Name	Location	Observer	Date
Dean Williams	Builth Wells	Geoff Smith	Nov 04
Helen Lewis	Crossgates	Ron Collins	Nov 04
Charles Scarrott	Aberystwyth	Rees Thomas	Nov 04
James Mansfield	Llandefalle	Roger Wingfield	Dec 04
Berwyn Woolnough	Llandrindod Wells	Geoff Smith	Jan 05

Members Corner

The group is arranging a visit to Hixon skid-pan, a police training establishment. Hixon is about 8 miles east of Stafford. All MWAM members and non-members will be welcome and are invited to apply. There are 12 places per day on a first-come-first-serve basis. The non-returnable fee will be £30.00 per head, paid in advance, preferably by a cheque, payable to "Mid Wales Advanced Motorists" and sent to Ron Collins Events Officer, 01597 822004 daytime. An instructor and adapted car will be allocated, with three persons per car, allowing approximately 20mins 'skidding practice' per person. I am assured that this will be more than enough!

Applicants will be asked to make their own travel arrangements to Hixon. A map will be available at a later date if required, although my contact says the site is well signed.

Times on the skid-pan are staggered; MWAM will notify applicants when they should arrive to use the skid-pan. The session times are provisionally 09:00 to 10:30; 10:30 to 12:00; 12:00 to 13:30 and 13:30 to 15:00. We will endeavor to secure later slots to allow for travel time.

It should be noted that unfortunately, other than a tea/coffee dispensing machine, there are no refreshment facilities available on the site.

The date will be Spring or early Summer and this will be advertised in a later issue of the 'Newsletter'. Please make your reservation now and we will ensure you are allocated a place.

Ron Collins

IAM President - HRH the Duke of Gloucester

You may have read in the press that our President, HRH the Duke of Gloucester, appeared in court for a speeding offence and received a six month driving ban. This was due to "totting-up" procedures. The IAM rules on membership are quite clear and are applied without exception. As a result the Duke has lost his current IAM membership. However, unlike membership of the IAM Council of Trustees, the President role is an honorary position which does not necessarily require current IAM membership. It is this second (constitutional) matter which the IAM Council has to consider in responding to the Duke of Gloucester's offered resignation. This will be considered at their next planned Council Meeting on March 8th.

Members Letters

Nice newsletter, keep it up!!

Is there such a thing as a careful young driver?

I believe there is. Lack of ability is their biggest problem. To say they learn to drive during the summer and are then caught out by winter conditions is not to say that they weren't careful. They may well have had their mind on the job in hand but skills are a hard learnt thing, whether it be driving or carpentry. I don't believe that young drivers are necessarily careless or even not careful. I suspect that their problem is inexperience. I don't think that there are many youngsters who drive alone involved in major shunts. Horrific tales of multi-fatal teenage crashes are common place. Is that because of an element of showing off to one's passengers? If alone I suspect that they practice what they learnt, but if accompanied by their peers there is a different culture.

Bring back traffic police.

No debate, YES. They are the best deterrent to bad driving known. Their crime? A £60K enforcement vehicle and about £25K per annum per crew member is expensive. Finance managers get apoplexy at the thought.

I think speed limits are too low

Some doubtless are. 70 mph at 3 am on a deserted motorway is a recipe for boredom, even when you are getting £25K per man for doing it. I detest the M25 but I love the flexibility of the speed limit. Something giving a max of say 85 on motorways but with the ability built in for the police to enforce lower marked limits when marked up is a way forward. I'll bet we don't get it though. Most others are probably about right, but I despair at 30 through some villages with a handful of houses scattered along A roads. As for 20 mph outside all schools 24/365 is about as bonkers as you can get. 20 mph outside schools 8am to 5pm Monday to Friday during term time would get my vote, provided it was rigidly enforced. If you can't enforce it give it a miss.

I'll not comment on women drivers, other than to say I'm married to one who is well capable of passing the IAM test. But you'd expect that because we went through the same driving school.

Ralph Pettitt

Associate Course Dates

Course	Start Date	Day	Time	Location
05/1	26 Jan 05	Wednesday	7:00pm to 9:30pm	The Bracken Trust, Llandrindod
05/2	30 Mar 05	Wednesday	7:00pm to 9:30pm	The Bracken Trust, Llandrindod
05/3	1 Jun 05	Wednesday	7:00pm to 9:30pm	The Bracken Trust, Llandrindod
05/4	3 Aug 05	Wednesday	7:00pm to 9:30pm	The Bracken Trust, Llandrindod
05/5	5 Oct 05	Wednesday	7:00pm to 9:30pm	The Bracken Trust, Llandrindod
05/6	7 Dec 05	Wednesday	7:00pm to 9:30pm	The Bracken Trust, Llandrindod

Observer Training Dates

Date	Day	Location	Times
19/02/2005	Saturday	Crossgates, Knill's Car Park	10:00am to 12:00Md
19/03/2005	Saturday	The Bracken Trust, Llandrindod Wells	10:00am to 12:00Md
16/04/2005	Saturday	Newtown, Safeway Car Park	10:00am to 12:00Md
21/05/2005	Saturday	Builth Wells, Co-operative Car Park	10:00am to 12:00Md
18/06/2005	Saturday	Crossgates, Knill's Car Park	10:00am to 12:00Md
16/07/2005	Saturday	The Bracken Trust, Llandrindod Wells	10:00am to 12:00Md
20/08/2005	Saturday	Newtown, Safeway Car Park	10:00am to 12:00Md
17/09/2005	Saturday	Builth Wells, Co-operative Car Park	10:00am to 12:00Md
22/10/2005	Saturday	Crossgates, Knill's Car Park	10:00am to 12:00Md
19/11/2005	Saturday	The Bracken Trust, Llandrindod Wells)	10:00am to 12:00Md
17/12/2005	Saturday	Newtown, Safeway Car Park	10:00am to 12:00Md

Please note that all the above published dates and venues may be subject to change due to circumstances beyond the committee's control. For the latest information visit our web site: mwam.powys.org.uk or contact the group secretary.

Your Committee

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MOTORCYCLE CO-ORDINATOR	Vacant	
NEWSLETTER EDITOR	Vacant	
EVENTS CO-ORDINATOR	Vacant	
ASSOCIATES CO-ORDINATOR	Vacant	

Mid Wales Advanced Motorists (MWAM) publish this Newsletter to provide a means of communication within the group to Members and Associates. The opinions are those of the Editor and individual contributors and do not necessarily represent the view of MWAM or the Institute of Advanced Motorists to which it is affiliated.