



Mid Wales Matters



Registered Charity Number 1109484

The Newsletter of Mid Wales Advanced Motorists

Web site: mwam.powys.org.uk

Volume 2, Issue 3

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Chairman's Comment

Welcome everybody. Our new committee members have now taken up their responsibilities – Berwyn Woolnough (Newsletter editor), Sean Miles (Motorcycle Contact) and Didi Lush, who has joined Pat Allen to arrange events and publicity.

To date the group has attracted 45 associates of which 23 have passed the IAM test. One has failed, 6 have withdrawn or deferred and the remainder are either undergoing or awaiting training. This is a pass rate of over 95% in the IAM Advanced Driving Test, which is a credit to our observers in the preparation of associates. The observer group consists of one Senior, three Qualified and four Group Observers.

I am pleased to report that three of our observers have recently taken and passed the IAM Qualified Observer Test. They are Humphrey Morgan, Keith Blanchard and Paul Wilson and I offer my congratulations to each of them. Unfortunately, Clive Payne our Treasurer has decided that he will not be seeking re-election at the end of this year. Clive's has served in this role for two years and has given us good notice of his decision. The Group are seeking a volunteer to fill this essential position from within its membership. Please make yourself known to Clive if you can help and he will be able to explain the commitment involved.

Norman Wood

Associate Recruitment

MWAM is always seeking to raise its profile and in order to recruit new associates who wish to improve their driving by enrolling on the IAM Skill for Life scheme. All existing group members are encouraged to talk to their family, friends and colleagues to remind them how IAM membership can help them and how rewarding it can be to take advanced driver training. The IAM Guide to Associate Recruitment was sent to all members earlier this year to give advice on how to persuade potential recruits. If you cannot locate your copy, or would like further copies, these are available on request from the Secretary.

Observer Recruitment

The Group needs to recruit and train new observers if it is to meet the IAM's anticipated future demand for Skill for Life training. If you are interested in this fulfilling challenge, which will undoubtedly improve your own driving skills, why not come along to one of our monthly observer training sessions to find out a bit more about what is involved? See Page 4 for details.

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On production of your current Membership Card for all Members of Mid Wales Advanced Motorists

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.

Future Newsletter Distribution

As you will appreciate this Newsletter is the main means of communication with the majority of our members, especially those who do not to play an active part in the group. We recognise the valuable contribution such loyal members make to the success of MWAM by their voluntary annual subscription and welcome this continued support. We aim to issue four newsletters each year and the costs associated with this in terms of paper, printing, envelopes and postage are a significant part of the group's expenditure. Whilst we do not wish to deprive any of our members of their printed copies we are seeking to minimise these distribution costs. Members with access to the internet and with e-mail addresses are asked to consider receiving future copies of the newsletter directly to their mailbox.

If you are willing to participate in this scheme, please send an email to our Membership Secretary, David Leppard (david.leppard@homecall.co.uk) stating this preference. We would encourage members who have the facility to try this and, if it is unsuitable, you can revert to a printed copy at any time by e-mailing David. If you do nothing you will continue to receive future copies through the post as usual.

Speed cameras - what's your view?

In November 2003, a poll of polls showed that 74% of drivers were in favour of speed cameras. However, a more recent survey carried out for the IAM reveals overwhelming support for a range of changes in the rules governing cameras.

Nearly nine out of ten drivers (88%) say every roadside speed camera should carry a sign, advising motorists of the speed limit. And more than eight out of ten (82%) also want vehicle-activated signs placed ahead of cameras to provide an early reminder of the speed limit.

More than seven out of ten drivers (76%) want all roadside cameras painted yellow, including traffic light and yellow box cameras. And more than six out of ten (62%) would like to see the money left over after covering the cost of speed camera enforcement used to pay for hundreds more traffic police.

John Maxwell, IAM Chairman, said:

"Speed cameras should be about compliance, not capture. Posting speed limits on cameras and putting up early warning signs would leave drivers in no doubt about what maximum speed they should be doing. If the government wants to make speeding as socially unacceptable as drinking and driving, it has to raise public support for cameras. It should make all cameras conspicuous, not just some. And it should consider using the money from fines on what most people are calling for, more traffic police, instead of giving it to Gordon Brown. More than £20 million a year from fixed penalties is going to the Treasury. That money could buy more than 600 extra traffic constables, who can exercise more of the discretion that motorists want."

Never too old to drive?

From The Times, Feb. 05

- A driver aged 80 died after hitting two cars when he drove the wrong way down a dual carriageway near Dunbar.
- A woman aged 75 was stopped by police when she was spotted driving at 5mph along a busy trunk road. She said she was having trouble seeing because of her new glasses.
- An elderly driver reversed his car up the bonnet of a Ford Galaxy in Dartford. He kept going until his wheels were stuck in the windscreen. He said he had not seen the car behind.
- A widow aged 100 was allowed to keep her licence despite admitting to careless driving after failing to spot a pensioner with a shopping trolley on a crossing.

Editor's Spot

If you have any comments on the above features or an article of your own, which you would like to submit for Member's Corner in the next newsletter, do, please let me have them. Apart from your thoughts on matters of national importance, I would welcome views or items of news that are of relevance to the MWAM area in particular

Members Corner

On the skids

When I realized that there was going to be an opportunity to have a go on a skidpan I signed up. It's something I had wanted to have a go at since seeing the police training video (although the truth is I thought I might learn how to park by sliding into a space rather than having to reverse park!)

So on May 7th members of MWAM and others travelled to Hixon near Stafford to have a go on the skidpan. Upon arrival Mike, the instructor, introduced himself and we were able to watch another group of people already out on the skidpan manoeuvring around quite steadily.

Then it was our turn! Mike explained that we would be using three cars, two of them adapted with slick tyres so that the skidding was over emphasized; the third car was front wheel drive that could be used both with and without the Anti-Lock Breaking System (ABS).

So off we went, first in the rear wheel drive car with slick back tyres. Mike demonstrated what to do if we ever find ourselves in a skid in a rear wheel drive car; he made it look simple... and then each of us took a turn at practising what he'd shown us! Next, we got into the front wheel drive car with slick front tyres and again we were shown what to do in this type of skid... this was a more subtle skid and again we each had a go. Lastly, we went out in the ordinary car, we were shown and had the opportunity to practice cadence breaking under instruction, and finally we got to experience what it feels like when ABS cuts in.

All too soon the session was over. We'd each had about half an hours driving practice - but because we were all together we got to experience the drive as a passenger and were able to learn from each other. We all agreed that the most dramatic skid was in the rear wheel drive car and we all felt that it was really helpful to experience what ABS feels like in a safe, controlled situation.

All in all it was a fun day out and a very useful experience. I'd encourage everyone to have a go. The group has arranged for another session on Saturday 22nd October 05, so let me know if you want to go. The cost will be £37.50 per person as before, but be quick because I'm looking forward to having another go!

Pat Allen

Visit to National Traffic Control Centre

MWAM is planning a visit to the National Traffic Control Centre (NTCC). The NTCC is located in Quinton to the West of Birmingham near to junction 3 of the M5 motorway. NTCC is responsible for the core of the Strategic Road Network in England covering most motorways and major A roads (4818 miles) which link the major cities/towns and carry one third of all traffic and two thirds of all freight.

NTCC monitors the traffic flows on this network and provides the authorities and the public with information and, when necessary, advisory diversions to reduce journey times caused by congestion due to roadwork or other major incidents.

It uses 1750 variable messaging signs, 4300 traffic reporting points, 1010 automatic no. plate recognition cameras, 700 CCTV cameras, 1900 loop detectors and continuous weather updates.

This opportunity, which is not available to the general public, will be a fascinating background insight into the technology and strategies used in an attempt to keep the ever increasing volumes of traffic flowing on our major routes.

This visit will take place this autumn on a weekday during normal office hours and will initially be open to members only as we expect that demand will be high for the 16 available places. Participants will be expected to make their own way to the NTCC and full directions will be provided. Places will be reserved on a first come first served basis and you should contact Pat to register your interest. The date of the visit will be finalised as soon as possible.

Geoff Smith

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
Jane Wilkinson	Presteigne	Paul Wilson	April 05
Jackie Cole	Llandrindod Wells	Geoff Smith	June 05
John Ainsworth	Newtown	Keith Blanchard	June 05
Dave Thomlinson	Clun	Keith Blanchard	June 05
Darren Stowers	Aberystwyth	Rees Thomas	June 05
Sue Cox	Newtown	Martin Backhouse	July 05
Chris Mapp	Llanyre	Humphrey Morgan	Aug 05

Situations Vacant

Chief Observer	To organise the training and accreditation of Observers
Associate Co-ordinator	To organise the allocation of Associates to Observers.

Associate Course Dates

Course	Start Date	Day	Time	Location
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
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.

Please contact Norman Wood (01982 553181) who will be co-ordinating observer training if you require any further details.

Your Committee

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ASSOCIATE 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.