



Mid Wales Matters



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In this issue:

Chairman's Comment	1
Editor's Spot	1
MWAM in Presteigne	2
Press Cuttings	2
Family Success	3
Vacancies	3
New members	3
Associate Course Dates	3
Observer Training Dates	4
Your Committee	4

Chairman's Comment



I have been rather busy for the last couple of months, though not entirely due to MWAM business, I have to admit. Perhaps I get too involved in things, perhaps I'm addicted to meetings – whatever the reason, my time seems to get swallowed up, and I wouldn't want it any other way. I am the typical pensioner who wonders how he ever managed to find time to go to work.

So, what have I done wearing my MWAM chairman's hat? First, I attended an event in Presteigne, covered later on in the Newsletter, and then I went to the Region 3 liaison meeting in Worcester. Apart from routine matters, there were two talks, one about the new Health and Safety regulations now in place regarding company drivers, and another – much more entertaining – given by the Midlands motorcycle chairman about his group's motor and pedal cycle tour of the Isle of Man. He also gave an illustrated talk on motorcycle training, which I found most illuminating.

However, the most valuable aspect of regional meetings is the chance to meet and exchange ideas with the representatives of other groups. Despite the two diversions that nearly brought about a late arrival, I had a most enjoyable day!

As this is the last newsletter of 2006, I wish you all a Happy Christmas and a prosperous New Year.

Frank Torrens

Editor's Spot

For those of you who haven't already heard, MWAM has won the IAM's Group Achievement Award for 2006. This is a most prestigious award, and we are extremely proud to have received it, especially as the group has only been in existence for some 3 years. The IAM's President Nigel Mansell presented this at the annual conference held at Alton Tower's Conference Centre. Our Secretary Geoff Smith accepted the award of £1000 on behalf of the Group. This award is made each year to the group judged to have done the most to further the aims of the IAM, and it is in recognition of the very hard work that has been made by the volunteers who have taken the group to this high standard.

We also congratulate Sean Miles, our Motorcycle Co-ordinator and Observer, whose first three motorcycle associates have all passed the IAM test.

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.

MWAM in Presteigne



At the end of October MWAM had a stand at the "Keep Well and Safe Information Day for the Over Fifties". It went off very well, and lots of people showed an interest in the display and information board and took away leaflets. It was good that so many younger folk wanted to know more about the IAM and what it stands for.

The number plate exhibits, and in particular the "I am IAM RU No Y I am" plate, were well received, although the latter did on occasion require elucidation! All in all, it was a worthwhile and most enjoyable event.

(Please note that there isn't really a balloon attached to my hat – it's just a quirky camera angle that gives this impression!)

Frank Torrens.

Press cuttings

Nissan has developed a self-healing paint. If you scratch your car in a narrow parking place or it is attacked by a 10p piece, the paint will reform itself over the damage and, in a few hours, the bodywork will look like new. Initially it is available as an option on the X-trail SUV, and if successful the Company will introduce it on other models.

No problem with scratched paintwork with Citroen's self-parking system. The driver operates the brake and accelerator, but the car eases itself into the space using sensors.

Volvo's new system monitors the driver's behaviour with sensors in the front and back of the car. If concentration levels drop, an alarm sounds.

The Mercedes crawl system senses when the car in front inches forward and follows suit.

To read the above you would guess that the brave new world of motoring was upon us, and this may well be the case. The problem is, it seems, that careless drivers are yet not self-healing. Each year more than 25,000 motorists are sent on "driver improvement courses" after committing careless offences such as shunting the car in front or turning right into the path of an oncoming vehicle. Police can offer this option instead of issuing a careless driving charge that carries a maximum fine of £2,500 and nine penalty points. Education rather than punishment. But does it work? Alas, a study has "failed to reveal significantly safer driving" among those who had been on the course. They appeared to be more aware of risks and claimed that their attitude to driving had changed, but their actual behaviour had not.

Back to the drawing board!

If you have any comments or even 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

Family Success


It is good to be able to report a father and daughter success at the Advanced Driving Test. As you will see from the New Members table below, Roger Cumberland and his daughter, Joanne both became members when they passed the test in November. Unfortunately, they did not take the test on the same day but they were both assessed by Sean Westlake, one of our region's two appointed IAM examiners. Roger was a lapsed IAM Member who had trained and taken the IAM test some years ago. He wanted to encourage Joanne to improve her driving and decided the best way to do this was to lead by example and enrol them both into last August's Skill for Life Course. Roger's observer was Roger Wingfield, and Humphrey Morgan, assisted by Margaret Reid a Trainee, observed Joanne. Roger took his test after Joanne and confided afterwards that he was a little worried as, with his past experience, he did not want the 'disgrace' of failing to come up to the standard required! As it turned out, he need not have worried because they are both very competent drivers. Joanne said: "*The course was fun, educational and most of all it built my self confidence and made me a better driver*". Roger has regained his IAM status and achieved his objective to improve his daughter's driving so it is a double success. We trust that they will both prove good ambassadors for the IAM and MWAM.

Roger and Joanne enjoyed the experience, so why not consider enrolling your partner and/or children so that they can improve their driving together?

Situations Vacant

Chief Observer	To organise the training and accreditation of observers
Associate Co-ordinator	To organise the allocation of associates to observers.
Membership Secretary	To organise the group's membership records

New Members

Congratulations and a warm welcome to the following associates who were successful in their IAM Advanced Driving or Riding Test 

Name	Location	Observer	Date
Martin Wiltshire	Llandrindod Wells	Geoff Smith	Sep 06
David Gordon 	Aberystwyth	Sean Miles	Oct 06
Chris Collins	Rhayader	Humphrey Morgan	Oct 06
Mike Smith 	Aberystwyth	Sean Miles	Nov 06
Chris England 	Aberystwyth	Sean Miles	Nov 06
Joanne Cumberland	Builth Wells	Humphrey Morgan Margaret Reid	Nov 06
Roger Cumberland	Builth Wells	Roger Wingfield	Nov 06

Associate Course Dates



Denotes includes Motorcycle Course

Course	Start Date	Day	Times	Location
07/1	24/01/2007	Wednesday	7:00 PM 9:30 PM	The Bracken Trust, Llandrindod Wells
07/2 	28/03/2007	Wednesday	7:00 PM 9:30 PM	The Bracken Trust, Llandrindod Wells
07/3 	30/05/2007	Wednesday	7:00 PM 9:30 PM	The Bracken Trust, Llandrindod Wells
07/4 	01/08/2007	Wednesday	7:00 PM 9:30 PM	The Bracken Trust, Llandrindod Wells
07/5	03/10/2007	Wednesday	7:00 PM 9:30 PM	The Bracken Trust, Llandrindod Wells
07/6	05/12/2007	Wednesday	7:00 PM 9:30 PM	The Bracken Trust, Llandrindod Wells

Observer Training Dates

Date	Day	Times	Location
14/01/2007	Sunday	2:00 PM 4:00 PM	Builth Wells, Co-operative Car Park
18/02/2007	Sunday	10:00 AM 12:00PM	Crossgates, Knill's Car Park
17/03/2007	Saturday	10:00 AM 12:00PM	Bracken Trust, Llandrindod Wells
22/04/2007	Sunday	2:00 PM 4:00 PM	Newtown, Morrisons Car Park
14/05/2007	Monday	7:00 PM 9:00 PM	Builth Wells, Co-operative Car Park
12/06/2007	Tuesday	7:00 PM 9:00 PM	Crossgates, Knill's Car Park
11/07/2007	Wednesday	7:00 PM 9:00 PM	Bracken Trust, Llandrindod Wells
09/08/2007	Thursday	7:00 PM 9:00 PM	Newtown, Morrisons Car Park
09/09/2007	Sunday	10:00 AM 12:00PM	Builth Wells, Co-operative Car Park
06/10/2007	Saturday	10:00 AM 12:00PM	Crossgates, Knill's Car Park
04/11/2007	Sunday	10:00 AM 12:00PM	Bracken Trust, Llandrindod Wells
08/12/2007	Saturday	2:00 PM 4:00 PM	Newtown, Morrisons Car Park

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 Humphrey Morgan (01597 822082) who will be co-ordinating observer training if you require any further details.

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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.