



Mid Wales Matters



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The Newsletter of Mid Wales Advanced Motorists

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In this issue:

Chairman's Comment	1
Editor's Spot	1
Members' Corner	2
Eco-driving tips	2
AGM	3
Vacancies	3
New members	3
Off Road Driving	3
Associate Course Dates	3
Your Committee	4



Chairman's Comment

I'm an ex-motorcyclist. I've owned a Honda CX500 and before that, in my much younger days, a 250cc Super Dream on which I undertook the "European Grand Tour". Motorcyclists are among the most vulnerable of road users – 13 were killed in Powys alone last year.

About 4 years ago a young man was clocked doing 125mph up in North Wales; 6 hours later he was killed on the A55. It transpired that he had neither a licence nor insurance and the bike had false number plates.

This, of course, was an extreme case but it highlights a very serious problem, so it's very encouraging to know that the fastest growing area of IAM is the motorcycle section. MWAM is playing its part too – the success of our new initiative under the leadership of Sean Miles has already been reported. Already he has 5 new associates and all the training places have been taken up for 2007. All three of Sean's first associates are training to be observers.

A remarkable beginning with lots of promise for the future!

Francis Torrens

Editor's Spot

A couple of weeks ago Llandrindod Probus Club was treated to a talk by two Powys road safety officers. It was a wide ranging presentation which began with some historical motoring statistics which I thought might be of interest to you. Here are a few of them.....

- 1894 - A 2HP Benz was the first motorcar on Britain's roads.
- 1895 - Dunlop introduced pneumatic tyres.
- 1896 - The first speeding ticket was issued – a Mr Arnold fined one shilling for travelling at 8 mph. The first road fatality occurred this year, too.
- 1903 - Vehicle registration made compulsory. The first number was A1. Driving licences were brought in, and a speed limit of 20 mph imposed.
- 1907 - First AA patrols.
- 1908 - Road tax introduced.
- 1912 - Telephone boxes appear at roadsides.
- 1914 - First petrol pumps.
- 1919 - First 3 colour traffic lights.
- 1923 - Roundabouts are built.
- 1927 - White lines introduced.
- 1930 - Road Traffic Act passed. 3rd party insurance compulsory.
- 1931 - The driving test became compulsory and cats' eyes appeared.

How many of these facts did you know? Whatever your answer, you're now far better equipped to do well at Trivial Pursuit and be a star in any pub quiz!

Members' Corner

The painful thought of our editor sitting at his desk, thumbs a-twiddling, anxiously awaiting the arrival of unsolicited copy for the next Newsletter, has moved me to come to his aid with a few words of wisdom and a bit of reminiscing.

Some time ago there was an article in the IAM magazine, written by a serving police officer who said that the standard of the IAM test could not be compared with that of police driver training at advanced level. This is, of course, true but I feel that it was an unfair comparison. My own police driving tuition lasted four weeks and involved daylight/night chases, a lot of skidpan work and classroom instruction. The IAM has neither the staff nor the financial resources to carry out such a programme and, in any case, the average driver doesn't need such specialised skills. The IAM, together with other like-minded organisations, is fully committed to the promotion of road safety, and I fully endorse the work it does. That was the wisdom - now for the stroll down memory lane!

The other day I spotted an old Alvis two-seater in the car park of the Metropole Hotel in Llandrindod. It was in such a car that I took my advanced final drive and gained a police advanced driving qualification. I was quickly moved from divisional duties to the Traffic Department where I spent four years driving vehicles of many types, including HGVs, coaches, buses and motorcycles.

I took a total of four police driving courses. The first was the lightweight motorcycle course using LE Velocette machines; the second was the standard car course driving the Austin Cambridge. Then came the heavyweight motorcycle course on Triumph 500cc machines and finally the advanced motorcar course using Rover 90, Wolesley 6/110 and Morris Isis saloons. For younger readers these names will have little or no meaning, but for us older fellows who can see some distance into the mists of time they conjure up what may well have been a golden age of motoring.

I no longer consider driving a pleasure. Congested roads, the cost of fuel, the amount of legislation aimed at the motorist and the often aggressive antics of other road users have all contributed to this view. All we can do is drive in such a way that we have the best possible chance of reaching our destination safely.

Harold Barbour.

Eco driving

Regardless of the vehicle you are driving, there are techniques you can use to save fuel and to minimise your impact on the environment.

Ask yourself: "Do I really need to drive?" It's the shortest journeys - less than two miles - which cause the most pollution and are inefficient in terms of fuel consumption. Yet it's these shorter journeys that are ideal for walking or cycling.

Plan your route. A bit of forethought can save much wear and tear - for the car, and the driver. Try to take the most direct route and go off peak if possible.

Have your vehicle serviced regularly.

Inefficient, under-serviced engines can reduce fuel economy by ten per cent or more. Catalytic converters are environmentally friendly - but only if they are properly maintained.

Check your tyres. Correct tyre pressures will keep wear down and fuel economy up. Make a point of checking them at least once a week.

Obey the speed limits. Try to "feather" the throttle as you reach your cruising speed. Doing 56mph uses 25 per cent less fuel than 70mph and a smoother driving style can bring significant fuel saving.

Reduce the drag factor by removing roof racks and carriers when not in use. Driving with the window open also increases drag. Remove unnecessary boot luggage. Use air conditioning sparingly.

Buy green fuel - and use less of it. If you know you are going to be stationary for a while, for example at a level crossing, switch off the engine. Find out if you can buy low sulphur diesel (City diesel).

Annual General Meeting 2007

The 3rd Annual General Meeting of Mid Wales Advanced Motorists was held on Saturday 10th March 2007 at Powys County Hall, Llandrindod Wells. This was attended by both Group Members and Associates. We were also please to welcome Mike Page the IAM Divisional Council Member for our region.

Our Chairman Francis Torrens addressed the meeting and outlined the achievements of the last year and the challenges for the future. The Secretary Geoff Smith reported on the success of our Associates and Observers. He also commended the Group Newsletter, Mid Wales Matters and the Web Site to members. The audited Group Accounts for 2006 prepared by Mandy Giordano were approved and elections were held for our Officers, Chairman, Secretary and Treasurer together with those for new committee members.

Those Officers appointed to serve for 2007 are:


Chairman:	Francis Torrens
Secretary:	Geoff Smith
Treasurer:	Mandy Giordano
Committee Member re-elected for a 3 year term:	Martin Backhouse
Committee Member appointed for a 3 year term:	David Leppard
Committee Member retiring after a 3 year term:	Meg Lewis

Geoff Smith

Situations Vacant

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

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
Nigel Godman	Newtown	Keith Blanchard	May 07
Peter Gilbert	Llandrindod Wells	Ron Collins	Apr 07
Adam Cusack	Newtown	Keith Blanchard	Apr 07
Wesley Hardiman	Newtown	Keith Blanchard	Mar 07
Peter Gilbert	Llandrindod Wells	Ron Collins	Apr 07
Martin Baker	Aberystwyth	Rees Thomas	May 07
Adam Cusack	Montgomery	Keith Blanchard	May 07
Philip Jennings	Llanbister Road	Ron Collins	May 07



Off Road Driving Experience

MWAM is considering organising an Off Road Driving Experience in conjunction with J V Like Land Rover of Three Cocks, Brecon. This will take the form of driving a 4x4 vehicle on their off road course under supervision. If you are interested in this please let David Leppard, our Events Organizer know.

Associate Course Dates



Denotes includes Motorcycle Course

Course	Start Date	Day	Times	Location
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

Observer Training Dates

Date	Day	Times	Location
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.

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.