



# Mid Wales Matters



## The Newsletter of Mid Wales Advanced Motorists

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### Chairman's Comment

I met the famous Carroll Hall Shelby when I visited California some years ago. He persuaded the Ford Motor Co. and AC Cars to combine a Ford engine and an AC chassis to produce what was to become the famous AC 427 Cobra. To hear this engine in full flow sets one's teeth on edge and encourages one's hand to reach for one's cheque book. From that day forward my interest in stylish cars blossomed.

I found them completely irresistible – from utter beauties like the 1936 Cadillac V16 designed by Hardley Earl, who named it the 'Madam X', to those designed by E.L.Cord and, of course, the Duesenbergs and Auburns. One of the most beautiful, in my mind, was the 1931 31/2 litre Bentley 2 seater Racer painted in gloss crimson red. Mind you I could mention the Ford Mustangs and the Pontiac GTOs - the list could be endless!

If I were a rich man.....!

Francis Torrens.

### Editor's Spot

Enough talk of stylish cars - Cadillac V16s and Bentley Crimson Racers! What about the good old Ford Popular, the first car I ever owned back in 1964? I bought it for £100 from Mr Bishop, a self employed mechanic who lived and worked next door to my parents. The registration number was 625 DMM. The "MM" signified that it originated from the Isle of Man, and I naively thought that if I was caught speeding the Police would find it virtually impossible to track me down in the backstreets of Pontypool. They didn't appear to have much of a problem, alas.

This particular Popular had a serious flaw – it wouldn't complete a long journey without taking regular rests. Every now and then the engine would begin to splutter and I had to get to the nearest lay-by before it packed up totally. After 10 minutes or so, it would regain its strength and the trip could be continued. Any young lady who happened to be with me on these occasions never quite believed that I hadn't somehow engineered the mechanical hiccups for my own evil purposes.

A few years later, my father gave me his Ford Consul complete with paint bubbles and rust patches. I had it sprayed two-tone cream and beige by a rather shady character called Gordon Troupe who worked strictly for cash on a derelict farm near Doncaster. I thought it looked tremendous.

Later came a Citroen DS, which lasted until a jack went through the floor during a routine service, and then, in fairly quick succession, a Ford Taunus, a Ford Corsair, a Vauxhall Viva and an Austin Maxi.

Generally the next car was the first I set eyes on after the demise of the one before – no market research ever took place.

But I did once own a potentially stylish car – a 1934 Rolls Royce in need of serious TLC. It was really in rather poor condition, and when the pre-purchase excitement had evaporated, I realised that I possessed neither the practical skills to do any of the necessary renovation myself nor the finances to pay others to do it for me. The engine, mechanics, upholstery, bodywork – it all wanted seeing to. I stored it in a ramshackle shed on Gordon Troupe's farm where it languished for a few months while its condition deteriorated even more. Finally somebody stole the klaxon, and all hope vanished. Even GT's offer of a quick paint job failed to restore my spirits, and in the end I sold it at a £50 loss to a dealer. I dare say someone transformed the old thing into a really splendid car which is worth a fortune regularly wins prizes at shows.

I know what you mean, Mr Chairman. If I'd been a rich man.....

## Time for a clean sweep?

A recent innovation has excited some in the car design business - a move that could see the end to windscreen wipers.

Apparently, using "nanotechnology", Italian car designers have come up with a self-clearing windscreen. It uses a special oxide to repel water and miniature nozzles which blast out water and air to get rid of dust and dirt. The windscreen uses super-thin layers of nanoparticles on top of the windscreen. Each layer is a couple of atoms thick, meaning they can work simultaneously on water and dust.

And it does appear an attractive idea - after all, even the best windscreen wipers don't reach the whole screen, which means that drivers have to put up with a permanent "film" that restricts vision at the extremes. Windscreen wipers also get frozen to the glass overnight in winter. Whether the new wiper-free technology could cope with UK road salt and grime has yet to be seen.

It's certainly been a while since windscreen wipers were on the drawing board: in 1969, the first intermittent wipers were introduced. A year later, Swedish car manufacturer Saab introduced headlight wipers.

Practical use of the new technology will take a while to appear on production cars and in the mean time the IAM recommends regular wiper checks. Quite often, polish from the car body finds its way onto the windscreen blades, producing a smear or a less than clean sweep, or pimples of tree resin that leave a line. It's tempting to replace the whole wiper when this happens - but actually, a thorough wipe-over with a bit of kitchen roll can extend the life of the blades considerably, take away those lines, and stop the smearing effect that destroys vision so effectively.

When the rubber blades finally do give up the ghost, consider just replacing the rubbers themselves - there may not be a need to replace the entire wiper blade, depending on your car.

## Weary at the Wheel

A recent survey by the Department for Transport said that motorists who ignore that innocent yawn are putting themselves and other road users at risk if they press on regardless. As many as one in five of all crashes on major roads are caused by tired drivers. And it may be even more - because those drivers that survive a crash (or a near miss) are unlikely to admit that they were too tired to drive when it happened.

The IAM's guidelines for dealing with possible tiredness at the wheel are as follows:

- Don't start a long trip if you're already tired.
- Plan your journey to include at least a 15 minute break every two hours, even if you feel you don't need it.
- If you feel drowsy, don't press on regardless. Find a safe place to stop.
- As an emergency measure drink two cups of coffee or a high-caffeine drink and have a rest for 10-15 minutes to allow time for the caffeine to kick in.
- Lastly, don't rely on what some drivers admitted to as their solution - slapping themselves in the face!
- Other non-solutions reported to the IAM include turning up the radio, singing, shaking the head vigorously and opening all the windows!

## Recruitment - Mobile Display Unit

The group will be using the IAM Mobile Display Unit to raise the profile of the group and to recruit new associates. We will be attending the **Llandrindod Wells Victorian Festival Historic Vehicle Display** on Saturday 23<sup>rd</sup> August 08 held on the Common near the Lake. We now have sufficient volunteers to staff the MDU but please come along to visit the MDU and support the group. Also please let your friends and colleagues who may be interested in joining the IAM know about the event and invite them to drop by to discuss IAM Membership.

## New Members' Presentations

Ken Lampitt from Lyonshall and Mike Lloyd from Newtown are pictured below receiving their certificates and being congratulated by Francis Torrens, Group Chairman, at the new associates introduction meeting held at the Bracken Trust on 28<sup>th</sup> May 08.



Ken Lampitt



Mike Lloyd

Angela Davies-Jones from Newtown and Sarah Godman from Kerry are pictured below receiving their certificates and being congratulated by Francis Torrens, Group Chairman, at the new associates introduction meeting held at the Bracken Trust on 30<sup>th</sup> July 08.



Angela Davies-Jones



Sarah Godman

## 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
Angela Davies-Jones 🚗	Newtown	Keith Blanchard	May 08
Sarah Godman 🚗	Kerry	Keith Blanchard/ Ron Collins	June 08

**Associate Course Dates**

Denotes Car Course

Course	Start Date	Day	Times		Location
08/5	01/10/2008	Wednesday	7:00 PM	9:30 PM	The Bracken Trust, Llandrindod Wells

**Observer Training Dates**

Date	Day	Times		Location
07/08/2008	Thursday	7:00 PM	9:00 PM	Newtown, Morrisons Car Park
07/09/2008	Sunday	10:00 AM	12:00 PM	Builth Wells, Co-operative Car Park
04/10/2008	Saturday	10:00 AM	12:00 PM	Crossgates, Knill's Car Park
02/11/2008	Sunday	10:00 AM	12:00 PM	Bracken Trust, Llandrindod Wells
06/12/2008	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](http://mwam.powys.org.uk) or contact the group secretary.

**Please contact our Chief Observer Ron Collins (01597 823417) 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.