



Mid Wales Matters



The Newsletter of Mid Wales Advanced Motorists

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Chairman's Comment

This cartoon reminded me of a couple of elderly ladies – one who made the newspapers and another who didn't.



The first was prevented from hiring a car on the island of Majorca because she was over 80 and judged to be a bad risk by the rental firm. She was naturally displeased and decided to prove that she was anybody's equal. When she returned to England she signed up for "Skill for Life" and in due course passed the Advanced Drivers' Test, becoming one of the IAM's oldest members. What she did on her next visit to the Balearics is not recorded.

I came across the second on the road between Welshpool and Newtown. To be precise, due to the winding road and heavy oncoming traffic, I was forced to follow her in a longish queue for the whole 14 miles at a speed of exactly 28 mph. I finally passed her on the outskirts of Newtown and was not surprised to see that she looked very like the dear old soul in the cartoon – tiny with Guinness-bottle glasses, barely able to see over the steering wheel.

Older drivers often come in for criticism but they, like younger ones, vary a lot in quality!

IAM Report

This year, at the IAM Region 3 meeting, car and motorcycle sections were split up to enable the relevant sections to concentrate on particular matters affecting them.

High cost of membership

The main thrust of the first part of the meeting was the price of membership and what was gained from both main and group membership. It was also discussed how the cost of the training and testing split up between the Area and HQ.

How are we to encourage new members?

This brought much debate and some rather cynical remarks came forward. I explained the efforts we were making regarding the gazebo and the banners together with the DVD unit.

Stopping distances

We were given a very enlightening talk by Brian (Chairman) on reaction times and two of us were invited to a personal demonstration on OUR reaction ability. A balloon and a pointed wooden prong were given to us, and when a certain word was uttered, we were to burst the balloon. Happy and delighted to report, your Chairman achieved less than a second reaction time.

IAM Report con't

Morrisons Newtown Drive-check day

On Sunday July 17th we tested our ability to erect the Gazebo and associated fittings in Morrisons car park, with the able assistance of two other IAM helpers, without whom we may be still at it. The rain didn't help but we made 2 drive assessments and handed out numerous leaflets. Pictured right to left are Vic Orehawa, Nigel Godman, Francis Torrens (Chairman), Mike Lloyd and Chris England (M/Cycle).



Please can you help?

My name is Nigel Godman, second from the left in the above photo of the Gazebo Five, and I have recently become our group's Events and Publicity Secretary. Following the successful first outing for our new gazebo, we now need your help to get it up and working again! We are planning our venues for 2010. Please contact me directly by email or tel. 01686 670176 with any ideas as to where the MWAM car and motorcycle sections may be able to display one or both gazebos. The space required for each gazebo is 3 car spaces. They can be used on grass or tarmac, level or uneven ground. What is important is attracting associates - so somewhere or some event with loads of people milling about is essential. Given the huge geographical area our group covers I just need the following at this stage:

1. Where and what organization I need to contact for permission to arrange a venue.
2. If anyone is prepared to come along and help to man events.

Dates for events will be arranged for Saturday/Sunday to coincide with start dates for associate courses running between January and September. Please let me know how far away from home (in miles) you are prepared to travel, so I can grasp what is feasible. Clearly this process is in its infancy and until specific dates and places are identified no-one is able to commit 100%.

MWAM has been successful in discussions with Morrisons and has permission to display across Mid Wales. I will be arranging events at Newtown, Aberystwyth and Brecon during 2010.

Our next display will be at the end of the Victorian Festival in Llandrindod Wells on the 29th August 2009.

We will be at Morrisons in Newtown on Saturday, 12th September 2009 from 10am to about 3pm. All available assistance will be greatly appreciated.

Editor's Spot

Recruitment of new associates is vital if MWAM is to continue to flourish. Our purpose is to train local people to become better and, hopefully, expert motorists and motorcyclists. One way to reach our potential recruits is by word of mouth, the other is by putting ourselves in front of as many as we can in town centres and at shows and other events. You will have read in the articles above that we have the equipment – what we now need is your support. Please help when you can, particularly if the gazebo is to appear at a place near you.

It's hard to imagine now that the first motorways created great excitement. When the 8 mile long Preston by-pass was opened in 1958, one newspaper announced a "day of national rejoicing". People brought out deck chairs and picnics to watch the M1 being built, and when it opened – all 55 miles of tarmac with no speed limit – motorists descended onto it from all over the country. Over the first weekend, the AA was called out every six minutes to attend to blow-outs and wrecked big ends. Barbara Castle, opening the M5/M6 interchange in 1966, described such junctions as "the cathedrals of the modern world". But disillusion soon set in. Ecstatic day trippers gave way to traffic jams, road rage and environmental protestors.

The mention of "big ends" brought back memories. If you're about my age, whatever that may be, you'll remember that, in the old days, your car's big end going could involve huge repair bills. It was every driver's dread.

When I was a lad we used to travel a few times a year from Surrey to my grandparents in North Wales. At the time the family car was a not very new Hillman - "It cruises nicely at 40mph," my father was wont to say.



On one of these trips, somewhere in the Cotswolds, we heard an awful grinding noise from the back of the car and came to a halt. The AA man soon gave his diagnosis. He doffed his cap, bowed his head and quietly said: "I'm afraid your big end's going, sir. I'd advise you to drive slowly to the nearest garage."



This turned out to be in a picturesque village whose name I've forgotten, and its owner, a quaint old chap covered in oil and smoking a clay pipe, agreed to examine the car while we went to the tearooms.

It turned out to be a happy ending – no big end disaster, just a loose wire at the distributor! Great was the travellers' relief!

What happened to distributors, by the way? I was a wizard at adjusting points!

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
Edgar Jones 	Brecon	John Scott	Jun 09
John Jones 	Llanilar, Aberystwyth	Mike Smith/Sean Miles	May 09

Member Presentations

Edgar Jones from Brecon and John Jones from Llanilar, Aberystwyth 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 29th July 2009.

Edgar Jones



John Jones



Associate Course Dates



Denotes Car Course



Denotes Motorcycle Course

Course	Start Date	Day	Times	Location
09/5	30/09/2009	Wednesday	7:00 PM 9:30 PM	To be advised

Static Observer Training Dates

Date	Day	Times	Location
01/11/2009	Sunday	2:00PM 4:00PM	To be advised

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 our Acting Chief Observer Geoff Smith if you require any further details.

Your Committee

GROUP CHAIRMAN Francis Torrens	Ael-y-Bryn, Plas Heulog, Milford Road Newtown, Powys SY16 2EQ	01686 622019 frank.torrens1@btinternet.com
VICE CHAIRMAN Peter Gilbert	19 Gorse Farm Estate Llandrindod Wells, Powys LD1 5SH	01597 823996 ringaloan@yahoo.co.uk
SECRETARY & GROUP CONTACT Geoff Smith	Heddfan, Cortay Park, Llanyre Llandrindod Wells, Powys LD1 6DT	01597 823442 geoff.smith@gcs104.plus.com
TREASURER Mandy Giordano	Maesmelan, New Radnor Presteigne, Powys LD8 2TN	01544 350297 giordano.amanda@gmail.com
OBSERVER CO-ORDINATOR - NORTH Nigel Godman	21 Park Avenue, Kerry Newtown, Powys SY16 4DA	01686 670176 nigelgodman@yahoo.co.uk
EVENTS & PUBLICITY SECRETARY Nigel Godman		
OBSERVER CO-ORDINATOR - SOUTH Humphrey Morgan	Kielder, Ithon Road Llandrindod Wells, Powys LD1 6AS	01597 822082 humph@btinternet.com
MEMBERSHIP SECRETARY Geoff Smith	Heddfan, Cortay Park, Llanyre Llandrindod Wells, Powys LD1 6DT	01597 823442 geoff.smith@gcs104.plus.com
MOTORCYCLE CO-ORDINATOR Chris England	Dolgelynen, Llanbadarn Fawr Aberystwyth, Ceredigion SY23 3HJ	01970 636535 chris@epsaber.co.uk
MOTORCYCLE CO-ORDINATOR Sean Miles	12 The Terrace, Commins Coch Machynlleth, Powys SY20 8LH	07721 012007 sean.miles@texplan.co.uk
NEWSLETTER EDITOR Berwyn Woolnough	50 Lakeside Avenue, Llandrindod Wells, Powys LD1 5NT	01597 823217 ridge50@btinternet.com
CHIEF OBSERVER Paul Wilson	Westfield Barn, Rectory Lane New Radnor, Powys LD8 2SR	01544 350263 paulatthelane@btinternet.com
Pat Allen	9 Tan y Fron, Crossgates Llandrindod Wells, Powys LD1 6RP	01597 851668 patriciaj.allen@btinternet.com
John Scott	Apple Tree Cottage, The Dardy, Crickhowell, Powys NP8 1PU,	01873 811994 john-scott@retina-service.fsnet.co.uk

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.