



Mid Wales Matters



The Newsletter of Mid Wales Advanced Motorists

Web site: mwam.powys.org.uk

Volume 6, Issue 4

Registered Charity Number 1109484



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Chairman's Comment



“If you don't have a dream, how are you going to have a dream come true?” Remember this song from South Pacific? Well, my dream was to drive a Lamborghini Countach and quite a few years ago it came true. The experience was a birthday gift from work colleagues, and on the appointed day I went to Goodwood trackway to savour it. I had flown in an F4 Phantom jet in the early 1970s when I was on holiday in California, but this earthbound thrill was on a different planet.

To realise that there can be a vast difference in driving techniques from one car to another can come as a shock to those who believe that one car is much the same as another. Since becoming a member of IAM way back in June 1980, I have learned that my Jaguar XJ8, Rover 620si and Rover P5B need to be treated in completely different ways. Their driving qualities are so different. Concentration becomes more important; feel and familiarity almost become second nature to produce the top level driving skills expected from an IAM member.

Frank Torrens.

Publicity and Events

Our next event is to take place on January 9th 2010 at Morrison's in Aberystwyth. We would be extremely grateful to any volunteers who could offer an hour or so of their time between 10am and 4pm. It's really important that we make the most of every opportunity to publicise our activities and attract associates. Please contact Nigel Godman if you can help – ngodman0@googlemail.com

Do you know of any show or event during 2010 where we could use the MWAM display? Please pass on any information you have.

A Silly Question

Apart from horns, what do cars and cows have in common? I'm not quite clear what the newspeak phrase "think outside the box" means, but I suspect this is what you'll need to do to answer this one! Anyway, have a ponder. You'll find the truth later in the Newsletter.

A Classic Car



Britain's people's car, the "baby Austin", was launched at Claridges Hotel on July 21, 1921. Sales were slow at first, but the Seven eventually outsold its rivals. Built as a saloon, coupe, cabriolet, sports car, single-seat racer or commercial, with bodies made of wood, fabric, steel or aluminium, there are myriad types of Seven, not including the much maligned Ruby or the Seven's replacement, the Big Seven.

About 290,000 pre-war Sevens were built and about 7,000 have survived. It was also built under licence in Germany by BMW badged as the "Dixi". In the original form, the three-speed Seven is a handful, with little in the way of performance, brakes or directional stability.

Later or sympathetically modified cars will drive better, more quickly, with more safety. Sevens are not for the faint-hearted. You need to be good with spanners, determined and hardy. However, they represent driving at its most elemental and can be a source of great delight.

Beware of the Trains

Network Rail has launched a campaign to raise awareness of the danger of using level crossings. To judge by the excuses given by people jumping lights or weaving around barriers, it has its work cut out. "I thought the train would slow down to let me through," said one. "Lights? No, I don't look at them. I only stop when the barrier comes down so that I don't damage the car." And the prize for the best? "I thought that the train driver was giving way to me when he sounded his horn!" Good luck, Network Rail!

True or False?

Aristotle Onassis and Stavros Niarchos have lunch together in New York. Afterwards they go into a Rolls Royce showroom and buy one each. Niarchos goes forward to pay for his. "No, no Stavros," says Onassis, "Let me get these – you paid for lunch."

One of the first men to have a phone installed in his car was show-biz king, Jack Hylton. Soon afterwards, Lew Grade, anxious not to be left behind in the status race, installed an even better one. Naturally his first call was to his arch rival. The devastating reply from Hylton's chauffeur? "I'm sorry, Mr Hylton is on the other phone."

On the day following the announcement in the press that Lord Curzon had been made Master of the Rolls, he was amazed to receive a telephone call from a lady who asked if she could book an appointment to have her Corniche serviced.

True or false? - I couldn't possibly comment!

Winter Tips

Now that British Summer Time has ended, drivers should bear safety in mind more than ever. IAM Chief Examiner, Peter Rodger said, "Optimum driving conditions are now ending after an autumn with reasonably good weather, so drivers may need to reduce speed to reflect bad light and weather conditions. The clocks going back means more hours of darkness and slower speeds may be required, especially in the early evenings when children are on their way home. This is the time when most accidents happen." Here are some seasonal driver safety suggestions from the IAM:

- Don't wait until it's fully dark before putting lights on.
- Take particular care where children may be playing, especially between 4pm and 6pm.
- Look out for pedestrians and cyclists wearing dark clothing.
- Check your windscreen wiper blades are in good condition and washer reservoir topped up.
- Keep the windscreen clean and clear, both inside and out.
- Carry a spare pair of shoes in the car as dry soles make it easier to drive.
- Check your lights and tyres, including the spare, and carry a spare set of light bulbs.
- Wipe your head and tail lights to keep them bright.

Editor's Spot

Well, did you think outside the box? If so, you must have reached the correct answer - both the cow and the car emit greenhouse gases. But that's where the similarities end, because whereas the average car releases 2.7 tonnes of carbon dioxide into the atmosphere each year, the apparently harmless cow pumps out 4 tonnes of methane through burps and other flatulence. This fact has led to the Irish government suggesting a cow tax of 13 euros per animal and the Danes discussing the possibility of 80 euros. The taxes would offset the penalties which would be imposed as the result of failure to meet EU global warming legislation.

A recently published book takes the animal/car comparison even further. It claims that the carbon footprint left by household pets is totally out of proportion with the size of their paws. The medium sized dog has the same impact on the environment as a Toyota Landcruiser driven 6000 miles a year. A cat equals a VW Golf. Not so distant generations may well be faced with the decision whether to sacrifice the second car or the furry friend.

Safe driving to become part of Welsh Bacc'

A unique road safety driving programme has been developed for students studying the Welsh Baccalaureate at a Haverfordwest school.

Eighty six Year 12 (lower sixth) pupils at Tasker Milward School will be taught safe driving as part of their studies.

Along with a short off-road driving lesson, students will be taught how to apply for a driving licence and prepare for a driving test, study for the theory test and how to avoid road traffic collisions.

The programme is the only road safety driving initiative developed for the Welsh Baccalaureate in Wales.

The course is being held at the school and lessons will be taken by driving Instructors from 'Go For It Driving School', Road Traffic Police Officers from Dyfed Powys Police and staff from Pembrokeshire County Council's Road Safety Unit.

Associate Course Dates



Denotes Car Course



Denotes Motorcycle Course

Course	Start Date	Day	Times		Location
10/1	20/10/2010	Wednesday	7:00 PM	9:30 PM	The Bracken Trust, Llandrindod Wells
10/2	24/03/2010	Wednesday	7:00 PM	9:30 PM	The Bracken Trust, Llandrindod Wells
10/3	26/05/2010	Wednesday	7:00 PM	9:30 PM	The Bracken Trust, Llandrindod Wells
10/4	28/07/2010	Wednesday	7:00 PM	9:30 PM	The Bracken Trust, Llandrindod Wells
10/5	29/09/2010	Wednesday	7:00 PM	9:30 PM	The Bracken Trust, Llandrindod Wells

Static Observer Training Dates

Date	Day	Times		Location
20/03/2010	Saturday	10:00 AM	12:00 PM	The Bracken Trust, Llandrindod Wells
07/07/2010	Wednesday	7:00 PM	9:00 PM	The Bracken Trust, Llandrindod Wells
31/10/2010	Sunday	2:00 PM	4:00 PM	The Bracken Trust, Llandrindod Wells

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 Chief Observer Paul Wilson if you require any further details.

Note that all driving observer training sessions are now organised by Area Observer Co-ordinators who should be contacted for the dates and venues of each area session.

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 mgiordano@agrin.co.uk
OBSERVER CO-ORDINATOR - NORTH Nigel Godman	21 Park Avenue, Kerry Newtown, Powys SY16 4DA	01686 670176 ngodman0@googlemail.com
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