



Mid Wales Matters



The Newsletter of Mid Wales Advanced Motorists

Web site: mwam.powys.org.uk

I AM a better road user ...

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Chairman's Comment

Some time ago I told you that I displayed a mock numberplate on the rear window shelf of my car with the idea of advertising the IAM. It read as follows:

IAM IAM RU NO Y IAM

I'll pause here while you work out where to put the punctuation marks..... And that was the problem really – the plate must have distracted drivers behind me while they applied their grey matter to decoding the message. The plate could have caused an accident, so it had to go.

Now, as you can see from the photo, it's been downsized and placed modestly and, of course perfectly legally, beneath the car's registration number.



I'm proud to advertise the IAM, even in a very small way; it's a great organization. Here in mid Wales we're just coming up to the holiday season when our roads will have to carry a lot more traffic than usual, and we will need to be particularly vigilant as we go on our travels. We're used to these roads, but visitors can easily misjudge them or fail to see the dangers they hold for the unwary. We can't prevent other drivers from making mistakes, but what we can do is make sure that our own driving is of the highest standard and do our best to anticipate what other road users might do next.

Francis Torrens

Editor's Spot

Despite having an extra page at my disposal, I seem to have more or less squeezed myself out of this edition. This is because other people have done my job for me by sending in articles of interest. My thanks go to Harry Barbour, Nigel Godman and Humphrey Morgan, who are responsible for virtually all the non-routine material. By the time the next Newsletter goes to print we'll have had an election and, if all goes to plan, Llandrindod will be enjoying its very own Tesco store. Send in your copy!And finally, here's a quiz question:

What was the world's first hybrid petrol-electric motorcar?

- a) A late 19th century Porsche
- b) An Aston Martin which appeared in "From Russia with Love" (1963)
- c) A Skoda commissioned by Hermann Goring in 1942
- d) The Toyota Prius introduced to Japan in 1997

You'll find the answer in the "Bits & Pieces" section.

Why do they do it?

If you asked a sample of motorists what aspects of other drivers' behavior they found most annoying, I suspect that tailgating would come at or near to the top of the list. Why do so many drivers persist in this intimidating, dangerous and annoying habit?

The Highway Code gives sound advice on the safe distance to keep between you and the vehicle in front when travelling at different speeds, and I do my best to adhere to its wise words.

Here in mid Wales there's a 60mph limit on most roads, a limit which I consider too high for certain roads and conditions. Generally I tend to stick to a maximum of 50mph and, should a driver wish to overtake, I will signal and move over to the nearside so that he/she can pass me safely. All too often, however, this person slows down and decides to follow at a distance of a couple of metres from my bumper.

Once when I was coming home through the Radnor Forest in the dark, I pulled into a lay-by to let a tailgater pass. The car stopped behind me and, as I got out to see what the problem was, blue flashing lights suddenly filled the night sky. After a short chat the policeman went on his way without explaining his reason for stopping. Perhaps I should have asked why he'd been following me so closely.

This was in fact the third time I'd been tailgated by a police car. I was a traffic cop most of my working life and it's a long time since I took the four driving courses I needed in order to qualify. They were tough, and I can tell you that tailgating would have cost me dearly - especially with the feared but highly respected Officer Patterson as my instructor. He had a habit of covering the interior mirror and asking: "What's behind you?" If you got the answer wrong he would rap your knuckles with the thin edge of the ruler which was his principle teaching aid. You didn't make the same mistake twice. In these days of health and safety such methods would not be tolerated, and maybe that explains my being tailgated so often by the local constabulary!

Officer Patterson was an ace wheelman who taught me much about driving. Where is he now?

Harry Barbour

IAM at Mallory Park

You may be surprised to know that the IAM regularly hires a race track so that its members can speed round it with a view to learning how their cars behave in the dry, the wet and even in snow. Track days are well organised with participants receiving one-to-one instruction, and safety is paramount.

I've attended two track days at Mallory Park and really enjoyed both of them. The first was in November last year. The track was properly marshalled, and a coned chicane on the main straight ensured that maximum speed was limited to around 80mph. A pre-drive briefing session explained the use of flags and the rules we had to follow, the most important of which was to do what the instructor said unless you felt unsafe doing so. Each 10 minute session on the track was followed by a 20 minute break to give the other members in the group their turns. In fact the rest periods were both welcome (a peaceful moment after the intense concentration required on the drive) and also useful for reflection on what had been learned. It's fair to say that I'd never driven my 6.8 litre Jaguar so fast in the wet (a bit more than 80mph actually, but I can't say by how much!) and it was great fun using the manual side of the automatic box. The day had taught me to drive more smoothly and also to understand the meaning of "taking a line" on the track. I'd also learned how brilliant a car feels on a bend when brakes, gear, speed and acceleration are properly balanced.

The second outing was in February, this time in my Ferrari Testarossa. I arrived at 7am with 2 inches of snow on the ground. I wasn't alone in thinking that we should have stayed in bed! But after the tractors had cleared away the snow it was amazing. I was astonished at the grip my car maintained in freezing conditions and also impressed by my improved driving skills which enabled me to correct oversteer just by instinct.

After these IAM track days I know my cars much better than I ever thought I could. I've learnt how to assess road positions and appreciate speed; I can also make sounder judgements about risk-taking manoeuvres. I'm now more confident, decisive and overall a better driver. I can really recommend IAM track days – have a look at the IAM website and book one for yourself!

Nigel Godman

Annual General Meeting 2010

The 6th Annual General Meeting of Mid Wales Advanced Motorists was held on Saturday 6th March 2009 at The New Inn, Llanbadarn Fynydd. This was attended by Group and Committee Members and Mike Lovelock, IAM Staff Examiner.

Our Chairman Francis Torrens addressed the meeting and outlined the achievements and disappointments 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 2009 prepared by Mandy Giordano and audited by Helen Carter, were approved and elections were held for our Officers, Chairman, Vice Chairman, Secretary and Treasurer together with those for new committee members.

Those Officers appointed to serve for 2010 are:

Chairman: Francis Torrens

Vice Chairman: Vacant

Secretary: Geoff Smith

Treasurer: Mandy Giordano

Three Committee Members had resigned during 2009 Mike Smith, David Leppard and Berwyn Woolnough. In accordance with group rules one third of our committee stands down each year. As we have had three resignations this fulfils this obligation as all other serving committee members have served less than three years

Following the AGM John Scott, a committee member has now been asked by committee to take on the position of our Vice Chairman for 2010 and we are pleased that John has accepted this role.

This means that we now have a vacancy for three additional members to join our committee of 4 officers and 9 committee members. No appointments were made at the AGM and if any member wishes to offer their services to fill any of these positions they should make contact with the secretary to discuss the commitment required.

Geoff Smith

Publicity and Events

This is our display on Saturday 27th February 10 at Morrison's supermarket car park in Aberystwyth. This event attracted considerable interest and Nigel's Ferrari no doubt contributed to this! Please let Nigel Godman know if you can spare an hour or so to assist us at our future events. His contact details can be found at the end of the Newsletter.



Future Events

- Saturday 8th May Morrisons Store at Brecon 9-4pm
- Saturday 15th May Welshpool Car Park 9-3pm
- Sunday 13th June Presteigne and Norton Car Show 10-4.30pm
- Saturday 11th July Aberystwyth Seafront 9-4pm
- Saturday 24th July Morrisons Store at Aberystwyth 9-4pm

Bits & Pieces

A businessman in Ayr has been fined £60 and had his licence endorsed for blowing his nose while stuck in a traffic jam. Michael Mancini said that he only leaned over to reach a paper handkerchief and stated that his van was in neutral with the handbrake on. He was flabbergasted when an approaching policeman signalled him into a nearby parking bay. When he wound down his window he was promptly charged by the stern faced PC Stuart Gray, a man known locally in Prestwick as "Shiny Buttons" in recognition of his minute attention to detail. "I honestly thought it was a joke," said Mancini, who was booked for failing to be in control of his vehicle. PC Gray had previously earned notoriety for doling out a £50 fine to another Ayr man, who dropped a ten pound note from his pocket, and charging him with littering. Mr Mancini is determined to defend himself in court, despite the fact that the district court has no power to award costs. Even if the case is dismissed, he may still face considerable expense.

A clergyman who was caught speeding told the officer who had filmed the offence "a waste of space", Luton Crown Court was told. The Reverend Philip Gibson claimed later by letter that his wife had been driving, however video footage showed Mr Gibson driving, with a lady who was not his wife. The case continues both in court and, I suspect, at home.

The quiz answer is a). The world's first hybrid car was built by Dr Ferdinand Porsche, aged 26, and unveiled at the Paris World Exhibition in 1900. Porsche was an engineer at Jacob Lohner & Co. The Porsche-Lohner petrol-electric mixte vehicle catapulted Porsche to fame, and 300 were produced. The patent was later sold to Emil Jellinek, after whose daughter, Mercedes, the well known car is named.

Member Presentations

Terry Manser from Howey and Roger Mantle from Newtown are pictured below receiving their certificates and being congratulated by Geoff Smith Group Secretary, at the new associates' introduction meeting held at the Bracken Trust on 24th March 2010

Terry Manser



Roger Mantle



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
Terry Manser 🚗	Howey	Humphrey Morgan	Feb 10

Associate Course Dates



Denotes Car Course



Denotes Motorcycle Course

Course	Start Date	Day	Times		Location
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
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

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