



# Mid Wales Matters



## The Newsletter of Mid Wales Advanced Motorists

Web site: [mwam.powys.org.uk](http://mwam.powys.org.uk)

I AM a better road user ...

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## Chairman's Comment

A classic car isn't just a means of transport – it's a prized and much loved possession.

As most of you will know I have a passion for such vehicles and have already restored an ex-royal household Rover P5B saloon of which I'm very proud. After nearly 3 years of work my latest project, the bringing back to life of a 1972 Volvo P1800ES, is about to come to fruition. It should be on the road, in showroom condition, towards the end of August. With a bit of luck I shall be showing it at the Llandrindod Victorian Week classic car display. I believe it will be the only example of this particular model in the whole of Wales.

I bought the car for £5,500 and most of the restoration work is being done by a great friend of mine while I restrict myself to mundane unskilled tasks such as degreasing, cleaning, polishing and the painting of an occasional bracket. The other day, however, I actually managed paint the whole engine in signal red!

The pictures below represent not so much before and after as "just started" and "almost ready".

*Francis Torrens*



## Editor's Spot

Llandrindod is well and truly on the map, and not just as a spa town either. A couple of weeks ago it became Tescotown, and great is the jubilation among shopping folk! Apart from creating a retail palace, the arrival of the megastore has brought about changes to traffic flow – a new road, traffic lights, pedestrian crossings and a mini roundabout. Prior to these changes materialising, many misgivings were aired and there was much muttering about the inconvenience caused, however briefly, by the roadworks. Well, I think it was worth it. I've even been to Tesco and found it quite satisfactory!

## Publicity & Events

Can you spare an hour or so to help man our gazebo at the Victorian Week Vintage Car Show on Saturday 28<sup>th</sup> August 10? If so, please let Nigel know. Your time would really be appreciated.

## Mirror Mirror on the Car

**John D. Scott , FRCS**

The Highway Code and Roadcraft contain many references to the importance of the proper use of mirrors to ensure safe driving, However many drivers may not be aware that there is a significant difference in the size of the images seen in the interior and external mirror.

The interior mirror is usually flat, whereas the external ones have a slightly convex reflecting surface. The degree of convexity varies a little from one manufacturer to another but results in a significant reduction in the size of the reflected image. What difference then does this make?

The decision as to how far away an object closer than about 250 feet appears to be is achieved by how far that object stands out from its surroundings (stereopsis). Beyond this we use a process known as relative size. We learn the actual size of an object from experience; for example an average family car or a person positioned close to us. We then use that experience to decide how far away we would expect that object to be if it appears to be smaller than "full-size".

When driving, this relative-size system is critical for judging speed and distance. Not only does it give us an accurate assessment of how far away another vehicle appears to be, but also whether it is moving closer or further away. The human visual system is able to distinguish remarkably small differences in size, and to use this to make accurate judgments about another vehicle's approach or retreat speed.

This is highly relevant to the apparent size of an object seen in the car mirrors. In the flat mirror the image that we see reflects our actual experience of the relative size of the object. If there is any variation in the size of that object we will make a judgment as to how far away it appears to be, based on that experience. In the slightly convex external mirror the image that we see is smaller, and as a result, our experience of the size of the object would tell us that it appears to be further away. Depending upon the degree of convexity of this mirror and our experience, this difference may be considerable.

The differing image size reflected in the two types of mirror has very important implications for several aspects of driving. For example when pulling out of a lay-by into a major road it may be easier to use the external mirror to make a judgment as to how far away an approaching vehicle appears to be and how fast it is travelling before deciding whether it is safe to join the carriageway. However the reflected image in the external convex mirror will give a false impression of the approaching vehicle's distance away and may tempt the driver to pull out into the road when it may be unsafe to do so.

This is also true when moving in front of a vehicle we have just overtaken. If we use the left hand external mirror to decide when it is safe to carry out this manoeuvre, and then, as we pass, check the internal mirror, we will find that the vehicle appears to be significantly closer than it did in the external mirror. It is therefore important to check the internal mirror before deciding to complete this manoeuvre. Relative size is equally important in judging distance and speed of another vehicle ahead. We know that before considering when it is safe to overtake a vehicle in the presence of an oncoming vehicle we need to take a moment or two to judge the latter's speed and distance. We achieve this by noting the apparent size and the rate of change in size of the oncoming vehicle.

In summary then, it is important that we realise and understand the differing information that is obtained from the internal and external vehicle mirrors and use both in any decision regarding a judgment of the speed and distance of another vehicle.

*John Scott is a retired Consultant Ophthalmic Surgeon and a Senior Observer with Mid-Wales Advanced Motorists.*

## L-test 75<sup>th</sup> Anniversary

On June 1<sup>st</sup>, 1935 Mr J. Beene made history as the first person to pass the driving test. He could scarcely have imagined that, 94 million tests and 75 years later, the driving test, honed and polished as it may be, would remain pretty much the same as it was from the outset. It was introduced by Mr Hore-Belisha, first as a voluntary scheme, but 3 months later as a legal requirement for any new driver. "Driving is an art in which those who are engaged should, in the interests of their own and the public's safety, take the greatest pains to be proficient," he said.

## Bits & Pieces

The number of people killed in traffic accidents fell by 12% last year to 2,222, the lowest since records began in 1926. A reduction in traffic, and people driving more slowly to economise were factors, as were safer vehicles, better road design and speed cameras. Campaign groups have warned against cutting public spending on road safety.

Police using a lorry to check on commercial vehicles have caught drivers watching DVDs, playing video games and even cooking. The Scania tractor unit, which normally pulls a 44 tonne trailer, allows patrols to see into lorry cabs for the first time. "What we have found has been frightening," Central Motorway Group said.

Technology that recognises speed limits and warns drivers when they exceed them, or even intervenes to prevent a vehicle breaking the limit, could save thousands of lives on Britain's roads over the next decade. Thanks to the popularity of satellite navigation, such equipment could now be introduced rapidly and cheaply. Such systems, known as intelligent speed adaptation (ISA), are being tested by 550 drivers in Lancashire as part of research by the Institute for Transport Research at the University of Leeds.

## Speed Cameras Again

It was recently announced in the papers that Swindon council is scrapping its speed cameras because they are too expensive to maintain and have had no positive effect on road accident numbers. A couple of days ago we learnt that Oxfordshire county council too may switch off its cameras following government cuts. The council, which has to save £11 million, is set to withdraw its £600,000 contribution to the Thames Valley Safer Roads Partnership.

On the other side of the coin, Dorset county council seems unlikely to follow the example of the above authorities – it has a camera that rakes in £1.3 million a year! It enforces a 30mph limit on a dual carriageway on the A350 in Poole, collecting a £60 fixed penalty from 2000 motorists a month. Dorset Speed, a pressure group, said the limit was totally inappropriate for a dual carriageway, but the police insisted that it would be enforced until drivers slowed down.

Perhaps Swindon and Oxfordshire councils should seek out choice money-spinning spots of their own – possibly 30mph limits on stretches of the M4/M40!

## Member Presentations

Andrew Brick from Knighton pictured receiving his certificate and being congratulated by Geoff Smith Group Secretary, at the new associates' introduction meeting held at the Bracken Trust on 28<sup>th</sup> July 2010.

Andrew is continuing his support of the group by commencing his training to become a qualified car observer.



## 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
Mike Hughes 🚗	Newtown	Vic Orehawa	May 10
Carl Death 🚗	Aberystwyth	Rees Thomas	June 10
Andrew Brick 🚗	Knighton	Paul Wilson	July 10

## Associate Course Dates



Denotes Car Course



Denotes Motorcycle Course

Course	Start Date	Day	Times	Location
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
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](http://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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