



Mid Wales Matters



The Newsletter of Mid Wales Advanced Motorists

Web site: mwam.powys.org.uk

I AM a better road user ...

Volume 8, Issue 2

Registered Charity Number 1109484

Chairman's Comment

IAM
DRIVING ROAD SAFETY

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Of course, by the time you read this, the big wedding will have taken place, but I thought you might like to see one of the quainter means of transport William and Kate could have chosen, had they been less bound by tradition. As you may know, I dabble in the wedding car business, and I found this rather fine carriage while surfing the net to see what the competition was up to. The company offering this vehicle will also let you rent a London bus!

A short while ago the Volkswagen Type 2, the Transporter as it was officially known, celebrated 60 years of production. It is now available as a passenger van, a cargo van and a pickup truck. Like its predecessor, the Type 1 Beetle, the van has had several nicknames such as "microbus", "combi", "hippie van". It's one of the motor industry's success stories.

On reflection, however, I won't be adding a Camper-limo to my fleet. I suspect that the market for quirky wedding transport is a small one, and that my investment wouldn't be recouped in my lifetime. I think I'll just stick with my ex-royal Rover P5B and XJ8 LWB Jaguar.

Francis Torrens.

Editor's Spot

It would be interesting to hear what members think about the possible scrapping of the MOT test in favour of a more relaxed European version which at present requires a car to be examined at 4 years old and thereafter every other year. The motor trade says such a move would cost many more deaths and bring about the loss of thousands of jobs. The Dept. of Transport has made no decision, but believes that cars these days are inherently safer and more roadworthy than they used to be. It is also considering a scheme based on mileage rather than age.

Your views, please!

Annual General Meeting 2011

The 7th Annual General Meeting of Mid Wales Advanced Motorists was held on Saturday 5th March 2011 at The Bracken Trust, Llandrindod Wells. This was attended by Group and Committee Members and Phil Collins, IAM Regional Coordinator.

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 2010 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 2011 are:

Chairman: Francis Torrens

Vice Chairman: John Scott

Secretary: Geoff Smith

Treasurer: Mandy Giordano

Two Committee Members had resigned during 2010 Chris England, Motorcycle Coordinator and Paul Wilson our Chief Observer. John Scott, our Vice Chairman and Senior Car Observer, has agreed to take on the responsibility of becoming our Chief Observer and takes over from Paul. In accordance with group rules one third of our committee stands down each year. This year Pat Allen, Nigel Godman and Sean Miles had served their term and all were unanimously elected to serve on the group committee for a further three years. Two new committee members had been nominated prior to the meeting, David Tompsett and Howard Roberts-Jones and both were elected to serve for three years. This means that we now have a vacancy for two additional members to join our committee of 4 officers and 8 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.

Pictured are new members of The Institute of Advanced Motorists who were presented with their certificates by our Chairman Councillor Francis Torrens (centre). David Tompsett was also presented with his Qualified Motorcycle Observer Certificate.



Pictured, from left to right, David Tompsett (Qualified Observer), Tina Whitmore, Nigel Morries, Francis Torrens (Group Chairman), Geoff Smith (Group Secretary), Howard Roberts-Jones and Patricia Shaw.

Members assessment

We are very conscious that the Group does not offer much in the way of ongoing driving support to our membership at the moment. Our group offers a free driving or riding assessment each year to any members who request this. We would urge our members to consider taking up this offer as inevitably standards can slip without us realising it. Therefore it could be useful to have a session with an Observer, who can undertake an assessment and identify any potential faults and suggested remedial action that may be needed.

However, as an alternative for car members, instead of going out on a one to one basis, two or three members would team up with an Observer. Each person would drive their own car with the others as passengers for about thirty minutes. Hopefully all would benefit from the Observers comments and also the experience of seeing other advanced drivers performance. It will be a good learning experience as well as a chance to meet other members of our Group. This proposal supports the IAM policy of improving driving standards and, we hope it will be an enjoyable experience too. Members will meet at mutually convenient times and places, evenings during the summer, or weekends during the autumn and winter months.

Please contact our Chief Observer, John Scott or Secretary Geoff Smith if you would like to participate in an assessment and mutually convenient arrangements will be made.

Highway Code is 80 Years old

It was 80 years ago, on April 14, 1931 that The Highway Code was first published - and it remains one of Britain's best-selling books.

It was introduced in response to the high number of deaths on Britain's roads, which totalled more than 7,000 a year, despite there only being 2.3million vehicles - a figure not helped by there being no compulsory driving test.

Fast forward to today and those figures are closer to a death toll of 2,000, with more than 30million vehicles on the road.

Road Safety Minister Mike Penning said: "The Highway Code is the official guide to using the roads safely and responsibly. The Code has helped to save thousands of lives over the last 80 years, which is cause for celebration.

Millions of copies of the book have been sold, although whether many people refer to it once they've passed their driving test is doubtful, a point of frustration for many road safety campaigners.

The Highway Code is not just for new drivers, it holds crucial information for everyone from experienced motorists and motorcyclists to horse riders and pedestrians," said Mr Penning. He added: "The publication offers the latest information on the rules of the roads and road safety advice, as well as promoting greater courtesy and understanding among all road users. Its long-standing success is one of the reasons why Britain's roads are among the safest in the world."

Just as with the current version of The Highway Code, the first edition urged road users to be careful and considerate towards others and to put safety first.

For the second edition road signs were added, along with information about the dangers of driving under the influence of alcohol, while the third edition included a section on stopping distances.

By the 1950s the arrival of motorways prompted another new edition of The Highway Code, which explained how to use exit slip roads and advised drivers to avoid becoming tired by stretching their legs at service and parking areas.

The Green Cross Code made an appearance in the 1978 edition, as well as advice on vehicle security as a response to rising crime rates.

Today The Highway Code is available not only as a book (priced £2.50), but also online via the Directgov website at <http://www.direct.gov.uk/en/TravelAndTransport/Highwaycode/index.htm>

Good News for British Bikes

It must be the rhythmic pop-pop-pop – the unmistakeable exhaust note of the Royal Enfield Bullet – that has made a motorcycle invented in a factory in Redditch 80 years ago the must-have lifestyle accessory for the booming middle classes of one of the fastest growing economies on Earth.

The Bullet has become the Indian equivalent of the Harley-Davidson. Royal Enfield is spending £50m building a second factory at its base in Chennai, with plans to produce a staggering 100,000 a year by 2014. As India grows wealthier, the company is struggling to meet demand and there is currently a waiting list of six months for new bikes, despite 50,000 being produced last year.

At the same time, another great British motorcycle marque is enjoying a similarly-remarkable renaissance.

Triumph, which seemed dead and buried in 1983 with the closure of its famous factory in Meriden, Warwickshire, has returned to the top of the podium as Britain's best-selling maker of motorcycles over 500cc. With the bike market gripped by recession, the tradition of a brand that dates back more than a century has a special appeal.


Total motorcycle sales tumbled by 18 per cent last year, but Triumph sold 7,562 bikes in the UK (and 50,000 worldwide), an increase of 1.5 per cent, driving profits before tax from £2.5m to £15.1m.

"One of the things that's really cool about motorcycling is its history – it's a link with the past and a form of nostalgic escapism," explains Hugo Wilson, editor of Classic Bike magazine. "People don't care that they are not as cutting-edge as some of the other machines. That's not important. What's important is it makes you feel good when you ride it. If it makes you smile, it's a good bike."

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
Howard-Roberts-Jones 	Newtown	Nigel Godman	Jan 11

Associate Course Dates

 Denotes Car Course  Denotes Motorcycle Course

Course	Start Date	Day	Times	Location
 11/3 	25/05/2011	Wednesday	7:00 PM 9:30 PM	The Bracken Trust, Llandrindod Wells
 11/4 	20/07/2011	Wednesday	7:00 PM 9:30 PM	The Bracken Trust, Llandrindod Wells
 11/5	28/09/2011	Wednesday	7:00 PM 9:30 PM	The Bracken Trust, Llandrindod Wells

Static Observer Training Dates

Date	Day	Times	Location
06/07/2011	Wednesday	7:00 PM 9:00 PM	The Bracken Trust, Llandrindod Wells
29/11/2011	Saturday	2:00PM 4:00PM	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 John Scott if you require any further details.**

Your Committee

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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.