



# 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 Spot



No, not Billy Butlin's great grandson out for a spin in Skegness – it's a Californian gentleman by the name of Tom Wright who feels it's a terrible shame for pensioned off bumper cars to go straight from the amusement park to the scrapheap. This is the seventh of the fun vehicles he has created.

His prototypes were powered by 2 cylinder Harley Davidson engines, but they caused so much vibration that he decided to go for the 4 cylinder Honda 750.

This means that they move frighteningly fast – they've been clocked at 160mph plus! Amazing, but even more so is the fact that these little beasts are have been deemed street legal by the state authorities.



When I came across an article about Mr. Wright, it crossed my mind that when my old Rover became too expensive to maintain in pristine condition, I could weld its remains to a big-wheeled chassis, fit a monster engine and zoom around the roads of Powys in/on it. Just a dream of course because it would be unlikely that I could persuade the DVLA to grant a licence for such a contraption. The Californian equivalent seems a little more cavalier in its approach, perhaps swayed by Mr Wright's assertion that his creations are virtually indestructible in a crash. Human beings, alas, are not so robust.

## Look after your keys!

Vehicle thefts where the perpetrators steal the keys in order to break into the car now account for two-thirds of the 150,000 cars that are stolen each year, according to a survey by LV, the financial mutual.

In four in ten car thefts, the keys are stolen from the owners' home during a burglary.

Conversely so-called "forced ignition thefts", where the thief smashes into the car and hotwires the ignition, now account for just one in 50 thefts, according to LV. As recently as five years ago, forced ignition thefts accounted for 16 per cent of all thefts. The average time it takes to steal a car has reduced from more than a minute to just 10 seconds. LV said that modern car security functions – such as alarms and better locks – have resulted in car thieves using more inventive ways of stealing vehicles.

Cases of 'lifting', where a car is lifted onto the back of a truck, have risen steadily in recent years. According to LV, an estimated 12 per cent of car thefts were 'lifted' in 2011 and 14 per cent of thefts so far this year have been done using this method. Black Audis, silver BMWs and black BMWs are the top of thieves' shopping lists, with yellow smart cars being the least desirable, LV found. The highest number of thefts occurred on London, followed by the West Midlands, Greater Manchester and West Yorkshire. The most common features that thieves look for are air conditioning, alloy wheels, a CD player and metallic paint, a survey of 200 victims of car theft found.

## New Committee Members needed

Unfortunately, due to illnesses and other commitments, our committee membership has dwindled over the last few years. A glance at the table on the last page of this newsletter will tell you that we are down to seven committee members which is five short of our full complement of twelve. The primary reason for this decline is the reluctance of our membership to volunteer to join our committee despite the appeals at the last two Annual General Meetings. The result of this is that the remaining committee members have to shoulder additional work in order to keep the group functioning. The committee now feels that we have reached a critical level which could jeopardize the future of the group unless new committee members are forthcoming. To paraphrase the famous JFK quote "*My fellow members, ask not what your group can do for you, ask what you can do for your group*". Please don't leave it to others as they are leaving it to you! New committee members will bring fresh ideas and help shape the future of the group. They may also be able to offer to share the tasks that need to be completed to keep the group functioning. Presently our committee meets every two months at evening meetings and we would welcome your support and contributions. If you are able to assist or would like to discuss the commitment and involvement please contact the Group Secretary Geoff Smith.

## Advanced driving course

Drivers coached beyond the L-test to advanced driving standard are more aware of other road users, road conditions and hazards on the road, according to a study by Jean Hopkin Research Associates, published June 12<sup>1</sup>.

Ninety per cent of advanced drivers are more aware of other road users, and potential hazards. Sixty-six per cent believe that advanced driver training helped them to avoid an incident or collision, and 78 per cent have better car-handling skills.

The independent survey of 2,500 IAM members also shows that advanced driving saves fuel and money. Sixty per cent say their driving is more fuel efficient as a result of taking a course.

The top ten reasons for taking the advanced driving course are:

- greater awareness of potential hazards and difficult driving conditions
- greater awareness of other road users
- improved general driving outlook/ philosophy
- improved planning and anticipation
- smoother driving/ better progress
- improved use of road space
- more alert driving – less 'driving on auto-pilot'
- better car handling skills
- improved confidence in my driving; and more tolerant and aware of the behaviour of other road users

Men are more likely than women to say their driving has become more responsible, considerate, and tolerant, and that they drive less fast as a result of the course.

Women are more likely than men to say their driving had become more decisive and confident. Eighty nine per cent agree that taking the IAM test had a permanent positive effect on their day-to-day driving. Women were more likely to report lasting effects on their driving style than men.

Among 17 to 29 year-olds, 49 per cent took the advanced test to get cheaper insurance and 60 per cent to reduce their risk of being involved in an accident.

<sup>1</sup> *Jean Hopkin and Wendy Sykes 'Evaluation of preparation for the IAM Advanced Driving Test' published June 2012.*

## IAM Gift Vouchers

The IAM has announced the availability of gift vouchers as a Christmas present idea. Prices start from £15 for the cycling membership voucher and go up to £249 for a place on the Skill for Life Fast Track course. As an added incentive, Skill for Life courses, both car and bike, are available at a 10% discount in the run up to Christmas, bringing the cost down to £125. The Skill for Life gift pack contains all that is needed to reach advanced status including the IAM manual. The cost also includes a valuable 12 months free RAC roadside and recovery assistance on becoming an advanced driver or rider.

There are seven different gift vouchers which can be bought either online by visiting [www.iam.org.uk/xmas](http://www.iam.org.uk/xmas) or calling membership services on 02089969600 or 0845 126 8600. They are guaranteed to arrive for Christmas if ordered before 16<sup>th</sup> December 2012 and are valid for 12 months from the date of purchase.

## If they can do it.....

Fancy driving from Reading to Birmingham using less than one gallon of fuel? Well you could if you emulated the winning drivers of this year's MPG Marathon, whose Ford Fiesta Econetic 1.6 TDCi recorded 108.78mpg. Former rally drivers Andrew Marriott and Andy Dawson beat their nearest rival by more than six miles per gallon in the annual celebration of frugal driving. The ALD Automotive/Shell FuelSave MPG Marathon is a test of fuel consumption for showroom vehicles, which also demonstrates the financial benefits of simple, smarter driving techniques. This year's 370-mile route took in the hills of South Wales and the Cotswolds, with some challenging weather conditions thrown in. Despite many complaints that cars never match EU fuel consumption figures, the two Andy's managed to improve on the Fiesta's official EU Combined economy of 85.6mpg by 27 per cent. Many other cars recorded significant improvements on their official EU Combined figures, proving that care with acceleration and braking combined with great anticipation can have a significant effect on reducing fuel consumption. Event organiser Ross Durkin said: "The average improvement over combined cycle figures achieved by the 27 vehicles in this year's event was a whisker under 16 per cent – impressive by anyone's standards. Manufacturers have done a tremendous job in improving the fuel efficiency of all new cars and vans, but motorists should see their published fuel consumption figures as a target to beat, not the maximum achievable."

## Baby on Board!

Designed to alert the emergency services that a baby or small child is in the car in the event of an accident and encourage other drivers to be more careful around them, these stickers are being criticised as a distraction which causes a significant number of accidents. In part the problem is because they can obscure a driver's vision through the car's rear window. A survey by Confused.com, led to calls for drivers to use the signs with discretion. "Motorists need to ensure that their view is not obscured and that they have a clear view of the road around them at all times," said a Department for Transport spokesman. There was also an appeal for drivers to generally cut the clutter in their cars for safety reasons.

## Gold standard needed for silver drivers

The number of drivers over 90 years old is set to increase by 18 per cent (12,400) over the next five years. By 2017, there will be 82,400 ninety-year-olds driving on the roads. At present, there are 70,000 drivers over 90. The number of eighty-year-old drivers is currently 1,049,058, this is set to rise by 22 per cent to around 1,283,000 in the next ten years.

Drivers over the age of sixty-five now make up 25 per cent of licence holders – a figure that is set to rise as more and more baby boomers reach retirement age.

Currently there are 154 drivers over 100 including one 106 year-old and two 105-year-olds.

Drivers over 70 are no more likely to cause crashes than any other driver, and are considerably safer than younger drivers, according to research by the IAM. Eight per cent of drivers are over 70 yet they only account for four per cent of all injury crashes.



Currently, motorists are required to renew their licence at 70 and then every three years after that.







IAM chief executive Simon Best said: "Today, over 10 million people can expect to reach 100 so the chances are they'll be driven around by their 70 year-old children. While their frailty puts them at risk if they are in a crash, that doesn't necessarily mean that they are a risk to other drivers."

"Despite the increase in numbers, we should resist calls for compulsory retests for elderly drivers. The government needs a strategy now on how it is going to manage more elderly drivers and make them more aware of the risks they face. The top priority must be non-compulsory driving assessments available nationwide to help them deal with modern high speed traffic and eliminate any bad habits."

## New Members


Congratulations and a warm welcome to the following associates who were successful in the IAM Advanced

Driving  or Riding Test 

Name	Location	Observer	Date
Mair Rees 	Llanarth	Rees Thomas	Aug 12
Mary Burgess  <b>FIRST</b>	Sennybridge	John Scott	Aug 12
Ian McCall  <b>FIRST</b>	Tylwch	David Gordon	Aug 12
Michael Richards  <b>FIRST</b>	Newtown	Tina Whitmore	Oct 12
Jason Cooke  <b>FIRST</b>	Machynlleth	Mike Hilton	Oct 12
Lyndon Milne 	Llanfair Caereinion	Angela Davies-Jones	Oct 12

## Associate Course Dates

 Denotes Car Course  Denotes Motorcycle Course

Course	Start Date	Day	Times		Location
 12/4 	20/03/2013	Wednesday	7:00 PM	9:30 PM	Bracken Trust, Llandrindod Wells
 12/4 	22/05/2013	Wednesday	7:00 PM	9:30 PM	Bracken Trust, Llandrindod Wells
 12/4 	24/07/2013	Wednesday	7:00 PM	9:30 PM	Bracken Trust, Llandrindod Wells
 12/4	25/09/2013	Wednesday	7:00 PM	9:30 PM	Bracken Trust, Llandrindod Wells

## Static Observer Training Dates

Date	Day	Times		Location
23/03/2013	Saturday	10:00AM	12:00PM	Bracken Trust, Llandrindod Wells
03/07/2013	Wednesday	7:00PM	9:00PM	Bracken Trust, Llandrindod Wells
26/10/2013	Saturday	2:00PM	4:00PM	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 Secretary Geoff Smith 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.