



# 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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## From the Chairman

It is with sadness that I report the death of John Scott, who was such an enthusiastic and active member of our group. He joined us as an associate in 2007, gained his IAM membership and continued his involvement by becoming a Qualified then Senior Observer. Later he was appointed our Chief Observer, a role in which he established and organised observer training standards. For the last two years he was vice chairman. His personality and commitment will be greatly missed by all his friends at MWAM.

## Predictions for 2013

Not all of these are likely to come true, but as educated guesses they stand a good chance. Here goes.....  
Electric cars will become more popular. Price, mileage, range and the scarcity of charging facilities have been dampeners on sales, but improvements in all these areas are foreseen and should persuade more motorists to go green.  
The paper tax disc will disappear. It's been around since 1889 and compulsory to have on display since 1921, but since the arrival of number plate recognition, there's no real need to have it on show.  
The telematic (black) box will be used more widely. This gadget gathers and collates data on the way you drive. This can be viewed by both you and your insurance company which will assess how much risk you pose and adjust premiums as necessary.

CD players in cars will slowly be phased out. As it is already, car buyers want auxiliary ports, bluetooth and smartphone compatibility in their cd/radios. DAB radio is coming and many new car models have built in WI-FI hotspots, so the mobile silver disc has probably had its day.

The price of petrol will rise. No comment!

## Editor's Spot

My neighbour across the road is a very handy chap to have around. Not only is he multi-talented in the DIY field but also, as one born and bred in Llandrindod, he knows virtually everybody and their family. Recently the street lamp outside my house failed. When a Powys operative turned up to replace the bulb, Jim chatted to him and happened to mention that he knew the man's grandfather. Result - a brand new l.e.d. lamp fitted next day. By dint of similar contacts, the grit box over the road is always kept full, and the gritter and snow plough now come to the very end of our cul-de-sac, which was previously sadly neglected. Well done, Jim - and well done Powys for coping so well in the recent bad weather.

**Free to good home!** One of our members, Mike Hilton, has a set of axle stands and two car ramps which he no longer uses. He says that they are free to a good home if they are collected from Aberystwyth. Mike can be contacted on his home phone number 01970 822086 for more information.

**\*\*Don't forget AGM on Saturday 9<sup>th</sup> March 2013\*\***

## Annual General Meeting

You are cordially invited by the group committee to the 9<sup>th</sup> Annual General Meeting of Mid Wales Advanced Motorists which this year is being held at 2:00pm on **Saturday 9th March 2013** at the Bracken Trust, Cefnlllys Lane, Llandrindod Wells, LD1 5LJ. This is to enable the trustees of the group to present their annual report and accounts for the year ended 31 December 2012 for approval by the members and also to conduct an election.

This is your opportunity to find out how we have spent your money and to question the committee on its activities. We are nothing without our members and we need support and guidance on what we should be doing for the groups and your benefit. If you don't like what we are doing, come along and say so; if you do, please come and let us know. Your continued support is appreciated and we would encourage as many members as possible to become involved in the running of the group. This year we need to appoint a replacement for our Treasurer, Nigel who undertook this vital role for one year only to ensure that the group could continue. We would also welcome new committee members who are able to give their time and energies to the future success of the group. If you feel that you cannot play an active role, please continue your financial support by renewing your membership of MWAM. A formal notice for the AGM and nomination forms has been sent to members who do not have computer access and copies are available for download from our website for those who have this facility. If you have not received these or you would like a printed copy, please contact the secretary.

*Geoff Smith*

## Makes good wine as well.....

Mention dandelion and a shudder wriggles down most gardeners' spines. Scourge of lawns, borders, patios and allotments, they're a major reason why we spend a fortune on weed killer or hours bent double, extracting their thong-like roots. Now, a species of Russian dandelion is set to become one of the most important plants on the planet, propping up civilisation with rubber made from the glutinous, milky sap found in its roots.

In July this year, Indian-Dutch company Apollo Vredestein rolled out the first prototype tyres produced from European-grown rubber. If tests go well, they hope to start full production in 2015. The dandelion, *Taraxacum kok-saghyz* (TKS), is one of three plants currently being investigated by various international consortia, made up of government agencies, big business and scientific research establishments, locked in a multi-million pound scramble to find alternatives to natural rubber.

## Original thinking!

Councillors in rural Ireland have come up with a novel way of tackling the problem of drink-driving – by making it legal. The plans backed by Kerry county council, in south-west Ireland, would allow police to issue permits that exempt some people from drink-driving limits.

Councillor Danny Healy-Rae, who proposed the motion, said the new rules should apply to "older people" who live in isolated areas. He argued that current laws regulating drink-driving were forcing an older generation to stay home. "All the wisdom and all the wit and all the culture that they had, the music and the singing, that's all being lost to the younger generation because these older people might as well be living in Japan and Jerusalem. I see the merit in having a stricter rule of law for when there's a massive volume of traffic. But on the roads I'm talking about, you couldn't do any more than 20 or 30 miles per hour and it's not a big deal."

The motion was passed at the end of a long meeting when 12 councillors were absent. The council will now call on the Irish justice department to implement the change. But it is unlikely that the council will be able to force a change in the law. The idea was branded "unthinkable" by road safety campaigners, and the Mayor of Kerry, Terry O'Brien, called it "incredibly dangerous." A number of councillors who approved the measure, including Mr Healy-Rae, are pub owners, and as such could benefit from the rule-change. Mr Healy-Rae denied that this had influenced the vote. Clearly they're just lovers of ageing wiseacres and balladeers!

## Membership Renewal 2013

We thank the 80% of members who have already renewed their membership for 2013 and for their continued support. Annual subscription for group membership is due on 1<sup>st</sup> January each year and renewal notices were sent out at the end of last year requesting payment of the £10 fee. Over 70% of our membership now pay their subscription by banker's standing order and this is the preferred method to ensure that membership does not lapse. If you have not received your membership renewal notice and MWAM membership card for 2013 please let the membership secretary know and these will be sent to you again. Members are also asked to return the 'Renewal of MWAM Membership' form in the addressed envelope provided. This contains the details held on each member and affords the opportunity to amend any of these. This form should be returned to the membership secretary even if all details are correct as its primary purpose is for each member to declare that they are current members of the IAM. They are asked to enter the expiry date of their **IAM membership** from their IAM membership card (not MWAM) on this form. Unfortunately unless you hold a current IAM membership you are not eligible to be a member of local group. However, you can transfer your membership to that of Group Friend at the same annual rate of £10. This classification is intended for those who may wish to support a local group whilst not willing to commit to either IAM membership or advanced driver or rider training. If you wish to transfer to the Group Friend class of membership please indicate this when you return your form. Any member who has let their IAM membership lapse and has paid their MWAM subscription will be transferred to a Group Friend unless they advise otherwise.

If you have not yet returned your renewal form and/or payment please do so as soon as possible. Equally if for some reason you have decided not to renew please return your membership card with your resignation confirmation.

*Geoff Smith - Membership Secretary*

## War on speeding motorists

Drivers will be confronted with a further speed camera onslaught as part of a raft of measures to slow them down, a report revealed.

Lower limits and more road humps, chicanes and other 'traffic calming' measures are also contained in the guidance given to councils.

Ministers are calling for many more 20mph limits in residential and urban areas, and for the riskiest rural roads to be slashed from 60mph to 40mph.

They also signalled a significant role for a new generation of 'average' or 'time over distance' cameras, particularly on rural roads.



Unlike traditional speed cameras, which capture a driver at a specific spot, these devices take a photo of a car and its number plate in one location and then, up to a mile or so down the road, take a second picture and work out the average speed between the two points. If this is higher than the limit, a speeding ticket is automatically issued to drop through the driver's letterbox.


Such cameras are often used to police motorway roadworks or on so-called managed motorways with variable speed limits.

The Department for Transport report calls for the cameras to have much wider role in 'calming' traffic following evidence they slash fatalities and seriously injuries on the road by more than two thirds, or 69 per cent.

## 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
Andrew Francis 	Newtown	Tina Whitmore	Dec 12

## Associate Course Dates

 Denotes Car Course  Denotes Motorcycle Course

Course	Start Date	Day	Times		Location
 13/1 	20/03/2013	Wednesday	7:00 PM	9:30 PM	Bracken Trust, Llandrindod Wells
 13/2 	22/05/2013	Wednesday	7:00 PM	9:30 PM	Bracken Trust, Llandrindod Wells
 13/3 	24/07/2013	Wednesday	7:00 PM	9:30 PM	Bracken Trust, Llandrindod Wells
 13/4	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.