

SWINDON & DISTRICT GROUP OF ADVANCED MOTORISTS

www.swindondrivers.com

07050 682842

Newsletter

August 2002

Editorial

This newsletter contains references to the forthcoming group AGM, to be held on September 4th at the Blunsdon House Hotel.

Full members should also have received a committee nomination form with this mailing - this will also be downloadable from our web site. Please also take the time to enjoy the great articles submitted by members of our group.

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Disclaimer

The views expressed in this newsletter are those of the individual contributor and are not those of the editor, the group, or of the Institute of Advanced Motorists.

Data Protection Act 1998

The Swindon & District Group of Advanced Motorists retains the names and addresses of all group members on computer for mailing and administrative purposes.

Who's Who in Your Group?

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PAST PRESIDENTS

Mr Peter Clifford, Mr Dennis Wood, Mr Kenneth Turner and Mrs Dorothy Wells

PAST VICE PRESIDENTS

Mr H. B. Bristow and Cynthia Howard

Chairman's Report

Welcome to another edition of our newsletter. Summer is here at last or is it? (we had a few sunny days last week but the rain is back again as I write this).

Those of you who have been, or are planning to go on holiday, now is a good time to think about your experiences of foreign travel or even in this country and get them down on paper. Write to Simon with any funny, disasters or eventful stories to go in the next newsletter. After all we all like to know what else you get up to besides being with us on a Wednesday night. If you would like to contact Simon, his email address is at the beginning of this newsletter or you can always write it down and give it to him or any member of the committee, at a group night.

Since the last newsletter the group has been busy with outside events.

- Firstly we had Try Drive, which was held at Wroughton over the weekend of 29/30 June. As well as the Swindon group manning the stand, we had support from the Bristol Group and thanks must go to Harold Wix for bring up Bristol's Mobile Display Unit (MDU). I would also like to thank Rygor Commercials and Vincent's Audi for their support in lending us their vehicles.

My thanks go to all those who helped in the planning of the Try Drive event, and also to all those who took the time to come along and help man the stand over the weekend. Without your support it would not have been so successful.

- Our second event was our annual Barbeque held on the 12 July at Savernake Forest. The weather stayed fine and the sun even came out. This was a big change from last year where it rained all night. We had loads of food and those who were able to come had time to chat and exercise Alan and Dave's dogs. Thanks for this event must go to Kath and Linda for organising the food and to Mark for lighting the fires.

With this newsletter you will receive the nomination form in preparation for the AGM, which will be held in September. Please take the time to think if you would like to nominate someone or if you are interested yourself in becoming a committee member. If, by any chance you have not received one please contact Simon Byford who will be able to get one to you.

Enjoy the rest of the summer and have a great holiday if you are going away.

Don't forget those stories.

Last but not least, I would like to congratulate Bob McVay on passing his Senior Observer Test. Well done Bob.

Safe driving to you all.

Ian Marshall
Group Chairman

Successes

The following associates have passed their tests. We extend our congratulations to the following members and their observers :-

Name	Observer
Rod Ashman	Bob McVay
Richard Hall	Derek Shel Drake
Graham Mearns	Richard Arman
Rachel Pengelly	Mark Simpson
Stephen Reay	Linda Simpson
Simon West	Dave Hewitt

Forthcoming Events

Date

4th September 2002	Group AGM, followed by a talk by Les Brown about his recent experience - Diving in the Red Sea
2nd October 2002	Inspector Ian Copus of Wiltshire Traffic Police (subject to confirmation)

Both of these events will take place at the Blunsdon House Hotel commencing at 7:30 PM.

Other events are also organised or participated in by the group and you can read first hand accounts of some recent ones elsewhere in this newsletter. Maybe you have some ideas of your own, and may even have had previous experience of organising events. As Derek says in his article, we would be very happy to hear your suggestions and even happier to have you on the committee as well!

Observers News

Observer's Insurance Cover

Due to a change in IAM group insurers, some minor changes have been made to our insurance policy. For your information, our new insurers are Royal & Sun Alliance. All observers should be aware of our current arrangements, which are as follows:

1. We are covered for 20 active observers - we currently have 17 and 3 under training.
2. All observers must be fully paid up members of the Swindon & District Group *and* fully paid up (via Chiswick Head Office) IAM members, and will have been trained and approved by the Group.
3. Associates being observed must *also* be fully paid up Swindon & District Group members. No associates will be allocated to an observer until we have confirmation of membership payment from HQ.
4. Associate's driving licence, and relevant vehicle insurance and MOT Test certificate (if applicable) should be checked for validity prior to commencement of the first observed run.
5. Personal Accident cover for Observers aged from 17 to 75 years is set at max £10,000 capital sum (for : Death, Loss of sight in eye/eyes, Loss of limb/limbs, or Permanent total disablement. Temporary total disablement is covered at £100 per week/maximum 104 weeks.
6. Observers between the age of 75 and 80 years can remain as Observers for the Group, but Personal Accident cover is limited to the payment of Capital benefits *only*. (IAM handbook 2.2.2 dated 02/02)
7. The Group is required by its insurers to confirm the number of Observers aged over 70 years, but is not required to supply names or personal information.
8. Public liability cover has been arranged to max £5,000,000 under the policy.

9. Car Observers must not instruct or train Associates. However, general advice and guidance can be given to Associates during an observed run, but care must be taken to ensure that this does not distract the Associate from the driving task. In particular, no communication from the Observer should allow the Associate to believe that they are being instructed in the conduct of their vehicle (for which they remain 100% responsible).

If any Observer has any queries with the above or wishes to view a copy of the insurance schedule, please contact Linda Simpson (Treasurer) or Derek Sheldrake (Secretary)

Please note: The above is published as a guide to Observers, and is believed to be an accurate summary of group Insurance cover. Neither the Group Officers nor the editor can be held responsible for any inaccuracies in the above.

2. Thank You. The committee would like to thank all of our existing observers for their continued support and feel sure our associates and full members will join us in doing so.

3. Would you like to become an Observer?

If you are considering joining our team of Observers, you would be very welcome to come to our next Observer's meeting to find out more. The meeting is to be held on Wednesday 9th October at 7:30 PM at WH Smiths offices in Greenbridge. Please contact Derek Sheldrake to express your interest.

Les Brown

Les will be standing down as Chief Observer shortly but will remain a Senior Observer with the group. Many thanks to Les for all his hard work.

Summer Barbecue

Derek Sheldrake was there and has sent the following report :-

This years BBQ, held at Savernake Forest on Friday 12th July, was a great success. The weather had not been too good for most of the week prior to the event, and even rained at Watchfield an hour before the start, but it improved as we drove to Marlborough, and finished up a nice fine evening.

A big thank you to Linda and Mark Simpson for organising the food, along with Kath Penny and Linda's friend, and to Ian and Suzie Marshall for their excellent cooking and serving, in fact most people present played their part in helping in some way or another, particularly the tidying up at the finish.

Dave Hewitt organised a good bonfire for later in the evening, and the dogs had a good runaround.

There were two gazebo's in case of inclement weather, but fortunately were not needed for the expected rain, but came in handy to keep the sun at bay.

It was also nice to see some other members of the Group there besides the committee, although it has to be said that there were some of our usual supporters not able to make it. We missed you.

The committee works hard over the year to try and provide a variety of entertainments, and it can be disappointing when they are not always supported in good numbers.

If you have any ideas for events, inside or outside, then let someone on the committee know, or better still, help us to provide it by joining the committee.

Try Drive 2002

Ian Marshall describes an event which reappeared on the local motoring scene this year following its enforced break in 2001.

Saturday started as a sunny, cloudy morning and once I found our plot a few people were already they're setting up the MDU.

We started the day setting up the course for the sprinter van and the figure of eight course for the Audi car. We had to get some extra railings for the front part of the display to keep people off the course.

Mark and Linda had put a lot of time into making the safety notices and they were put up in the appropriate places for the safety of the public. We were prepared for the gates to open at 10 am but it was a slow start and there were a lot of exhibitors who had let the Try Drive organisers down and did not turn up.

We had a good interest in our display and we gave out a lot of leaflets, which informed people of the IAM and of our group in Swindon. It told them what we do and the activities we are involved in. We all had a lot of time to talk to people that showed any interest in the group.

Bob McVay and Derek Sheldrake did a wonderful job assisting and looking after anyone who wanted to drive the van or the car. This gave the rest of the team time to organise the timings for the drives, talk to the public and hand out leaflets.

It was interesting talking to people who had an interest in becoming better drivers and meeting people who are already members of the IAM and members of other IAM groups.

Sunday was a new and busier day. Not as sunny as Saturday but there was more going on and therefore it brought in more crowds.

Les had taken over from Bob on looking after the Sprinter van with a slightly different course. The public wanted to drive the van and it seemed to be more popular than the car, probably because it is different to what they would normally drive, which is the whole point of Try Drive.

We did get some people join us following Try Drive, which make the whole event worthwhile.

And finally I would like to thank everyone who supported the event on both days. Without you all it would not have been the success I think you will all agree it was.

I

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*Our former Chairman **Chris Glead** has sent us the following articles :-*

All about Bends

A Bend is a Bend is a Bend!! Well not exactly!! There are differences!!

Bends are either Left or Right--- After a Left there is usually a Right and vice versa.

The classification of Bends are as follows :-

Gradual Less than 90 degrees

Acute More than 90 degrees

Blind When you cannot see all of the road surface

Open When you can see all of the road surface

So the majority of bends are Gradual or Blind!

Tips:

If it's a nice sunny day and you are approaching a Bend to the Left and the Sun is on your Left you have a chance of seeing the shadow of anything oncoming before you actually see the vehicle / cyclist etc, it's just a fraction of a second but it is useful.

If the hedgerow is a little sparse in greenery then you can possibly look through the hedge to obtain an early view of Possible oncoming vehicle etc, and adopt your position accordingly.

If it's within side streets look for reflections in windows, again it's possible to glimpse a reflection just marginally prior to the vehicle emerging

If you want an easy way to remember them, use the Mnemonic G.A.B.O. to assist you in the description of them but remember the principle.

Position, Speed and Gear on approach and you must be able to stop in the distance you can see to be clear, on your own side of the road.

Shutdown Drill

We generally hear quite a few mentions of 'Cockpit Drill' but not so much about the 'Shutdown Drill', which is as equally important!

Here is a general example of a 'Shutdown Drill'.

- 1: Bring the vehicle to a smooth, gliding stop and ensure that the front wheels are straight and that the steering wheel is level.

- 2: Once the vehicle stops, allow approximately Two Seconds before the hand leaves the steering wheel to firmly apply the Hand Brake.
Make sure that the 'Pawl' button is depressed as the Hand Brake is applied.
Keep both Brake and Clutch pedals depressed.
Select 'Neutral,' or 'Park' if the vehicle is an Automatic.

- 3: Switch off all controls and auxiliaries used during the drive...Wipers, Lights, Fan etc. Don't forget to re-adjust the 'Headlight Levelling Switch' if you have one and have been out with a full compliment of passengers. Especially if, next time you are going out at night you are going out alone.

- 4: Now switch off the ignition and **'Remove the key'!!**
- 5: Remove feet slowly from the pedals to assist in eliminating any movement.
- 6: Remove hands from the steering wheel.
- 7: Release the seat belt and stow it correctly. It is not the mark of an Advanced Driver to allow the belt to fly back. This could cause damage to the window or the paintwork.

If the vehicle is a 'Turbo', this 'Shutdown Drill' ensures that you have given the 'Turbo' some time to idle. They do revolve at a very high speed and switching off at high speed can cause damage.

Finally! If you have a 'Special' lady on board, go round and open the passenger door to assist her from the vehicle.

Presuming of course that she hasn't already alighted to go and 'Put the kettle on!!!

An example of how dedication to Advanced Driving can affect you!

I had an experience back in April that I thought I should share with you.

A friend of mine, (Also an Advanced Driver,) called to see me one day and said, "Chris, Sgt ??????(No names no Pack Drill)!, at Westlea Police Station would like to see you urgently!"

"What about?" I enquired.

"Advanced Driving!" was my friend's reply.

We duly made our way to the station where, upon arrival, my friend made some enquiries about the reason for the need to see me.

He returned to the 'Waiting Room' and said, "It seems that they are considering 'Throwing the Book' at you Chris".
Now I was worried!!!

I was duly interviewed, I remember it thus!

Officer: "I need to ask you some questions about Advanced Driving".

Myself: "Go ahead"

Officer: "What is the System of Car Control ?"

Myself: "The 'System of Car Control' is a way of approaching and negotiating Hazards that is, Methodical, Safe and leaves nothing to chance, it gives you time to select the best position, speed and gear to negotiate the hazards safely and efficiently,...it also gives you that essential aspect of Safe Driving...'Time to React'!"

Officer: "Smart Ass!"

Myself: "You already know the answer and it's people like yourself that have passed the information on to people like me".

Officer: "What are the Phases of 'The System'?"

Myself: "Information..Position..Speed..Gear..Acceleration.
"The Information Phase overlapping all the other Phases which are considered, in sequence on approach to any Hazard".

Officer: "What about 'Left Hand Bends'?"

Myself: "Position, Speed and Gear on approach and being able to stop on your own side of the road in the distance you can see to be clear, Position towards the Crown of the road on approach for Stability, View and Safety and maintain a constant speed throughout the bend., I would add, that if the road is quite narrow it may be safer to maintain your position towards centre carriageway!"

Myself: "On the 'DIA' Diamond Advanced Test, the Examiner would expect you to maintain centre carriageway on approach and through a Left Hand Bend, that is one of the differences in the Advanced Tests".

Officer: "What is a Hazard?"

*Myself: "Anything that is potentially dangerous, but there are three main types,
Physical features such as Junctions, Roundabouts, Bends etc,
Risks arising from the movement and actions of other road users,
Problems from varying road surfaces, weather conditions and visibility".*

Officer: "What would you consider before attempting a manoeuvre?"

Myself: "First of all...is it safe!"

"Is it legal!"

"Can I actually do it at this location!"

"Is it convenient!"

Officer: *"Where would you carry out an 'Essential Mirror Check'?"*

Myself: "Rule 137 of the highway Code"
"Frequently! In good time, before any Manoeuvre, Signal, Change in Position or Speed!"

Some other questions remain a blur, after all, it was very stressful but the Officer finished up by saying...
"This is all very well...but I am still going to charge you!"

I replied, "What!, charge me for having an attitude to Safe Driving and trying to help others as well while there are thousands of other people out there who need educating! I require my Solicitor present!"

The Officer replied: *"You don't require a Solicitor present To face a charge of...
..., "**April Fool'!!!**"*

I then woke up!!! Yes...I had been dreaming!!!

And that is the absolute truth!!!

That's when you realise that 'Advanced Driving' is becoming An obsession.

But why shouldn't it!!!

Stay Safe, and 'Sweet Dreams'!!!!!!

Rallying - by Rob Smith of Zelena Motorsport

Your 300bhp turbo engine howls back through the cockpit as you hurtle towards the first corner flat out in top. You know that you have masses of brake torque and tyres that really bite. But this is the first time you have approached this corner at speed. You are not even sure how tight it is. There is mist, rain and even the odd patch of ice. There is no run off area and no Armco. If you misjudge your braking point you will almost certainly collect a tree - but if you hesitate you'll lose the race with time. This is rallying.

There will be corner after corner like this before you finish this daunting race and this is only the first of many races that will punish you today.

Rally cars start at 1 minute intervals one by one and race over a special stage, a closed road or private track on tarmac or loose forest. They have a crew of two and don't go round in circles. They run on one unfamiliar stage after another over one or more hectic car breaking days. But at the top level rallying is no reliability trial, each stage is precision timed and has to be driven flat out. The aggregate of stage times decides the winner of an event and the competition is fierce.

Rally events are held all round the world over very different types of terrain. At one extreme is the sheet ice and snow of Sweden where temperatures can fall to as low as 30 degrees below and at the other extreme is the sand and baking heat of the Middle East. Most surfaces are loose such as the ball bearing like lava gravel of Australia. If the track becomes damp those ball bearings squash down into the ground, providing a faster surface, but if it is wet they disappear altogether, leaving treacherously slushy mud. Clearly the rally car has to be a car for all seasons, and for all forms of terrain.

A rally car has to be derived from a road car and with this in mind a manufacturer has to “homologate” a model of car with a minimum production run of 2500 for Group A (modified cars) and 25000 for Group N (showroom cars). With a set of rules defining what further modifications can be made, in essence the engine can be tuned, the chassis can be re engineered and the transmission can be redesigned. In fact the scope for alteration of all aspects of the car is such that the rally car is effectively designed from scratch, though it doesn't lose the character of the parent road car. It has to be designed to cope with ice, snow, gravel and tarmac surfaces with the car smashing bumps and jumps everywhere.

Rallying is more about driver confidence than anything else. You are totally dependent upon the driver's confidence in his ability to judge the speed of every corner and the capacity of his car. If the driver is to get the most out of his car it must give him confidence in its ability. Making the cars more predictable is more important than maximising its speed.

Tim & myself are building a new rally car from a road car we bought at Christmas. When most of you were out shopping on the 23rd of December we went down to Southampton to look at a Subaru Impreza WRX RA (to give it its full title), an import from Japan and used on our public roads for two years. On first inspection you would have walked away from it, the car was very basic and not your typical Impreza you see on the roads. But being a WRX RA it is one of the “homologation” specials built by Subaru to get themselves into rallying - the “RA” designates lightweight, aluminium bonnet, boot and suspension arms, wind up windows etc.

Rather than do all the work ourselves, job commitments dictated that we found a firm in the Lake District that would do most of the conversion for us at a price that wouldn't break the bank.

NEXT TIME - BUILDING A WINNER!

Head Office Subscription and Swindon Group Subscription - Why Two Fees?

- Your annual subscription to the IAM pays for Head Office items such as administration, staff wages and your copy of 'Advanced Driving' magazine.
- Your annual subscription to the Swindon Group is used to pay for Group administration costs i.e. committee expenses such as attendance at regional meetings, newsletter production costs and promoting the Group.
- We also use your fee to assist with observer training, as without the observers there would be no-one to coach the Associates to test standard. We are always looking for new observers - please don't be shy.
- We receive a proportion of the Skill for Life Fee to assist with associate training.
- We DO NOT receive any element of your full IAM membership fee and therefore would like members to continue their Swindon Group subscription.
- We have to hold some money in reserve just in case of an emergency. We are fortunate that we do not have to pay for our monthly accommodation for Group or committee meetings; this may not always be the case.
- We recognise the need to promote the Group more effectively - we have been lucky to receive assistance from larger groups - e.g. Bristol Group with display equipment at the local Try-Drive event. We need such activities to grow the Group membership and need funds to allow us to do so in a professional manner.

- Full members of the Swindon Group are eligible for a position on the committee; we always need your support. There is a minimum requirement of 3 officers and 3 additional committee members to constitute a committee. Without this the Group cannot survive.
- We need your ideas on how to continually improve the Group and make it one you want to support. Your input will help ensure that you get value for money from your subscriptions.
- Your Swindon Group membership gives you benefits - it entitles you to some useful local discounts, your regular newsletter, keeps you in touch with other local advanced Motorists, provides opportunities to attend events, creates a forum to discuss motoring issues with like minded individuals.
- Remember - we are here to play our part in promoting better driving, without local Groups the IAM would cease to exist.
- Your local support is highly valued; please consider whether you are able to offer any additional resources either on the committee or as an observer.

HQ News

IAM Headquarters has finally moved to its brand new premises at :-

IAM House
510 Chiswick High Road
LONDON
W4 5RG Tel : 020 8996 9600 Fax : 020 8996 9601

The new building is pictured on the front cover of the current issue of "Advanced Driving" magazine.

Members Discounts

A range of discounts exclusive to all members of the group are available. Discounts currently available are:-

Central Tyre Ltd, Newport Street, Old Town - 10% discount on tyres, batteries, brakes, oil and filter changes and shock absorbers, 15% discount on exhausts.

Tel: 01793 528493

MotorWay Tyre and Autocentres Ltd, Hawkesworth Trading Estate, North Star - 10% discount on tyres, batteries and related services.

Tel: 01793 525525

Quick-Lee Cleaners Ltd, 15 Borough Fields Shopping Centre, Wootton Bassett - 10% discount on dry cleaning services.

Tel: 01793 848859

Car & Truck Services (Swindon) Ltd, Transfer Bridge Ind Estate - 10-40% Discount dependent on the product purchased.

Tel : 01793 616151

To obtain your discount you will need to produce your current, valid group membership card when obtaining a quote or before any work is started.

In addition to the above FULL members of the IAM are eligible for a range of additional benefits, details of which can usually be found in the current edition of "Advanced Driving" magazine.

Talking Point

A European law is being planned which will force motorists to pay compensation to cyclists regardless of who is at fault.

Opponents say it could raise the cost of car insurance by up to £50. It will be debated by the European Parliament in the autumn.

Although Britain is expected to oppose the plan it will be imposed here if the majority of other states support it.

The move is designed to harmonise car insurance laws across the continent and favour cyclists.

Kevin Delaney of the RAC told The Observer: "Drivers are going to have to pay higher premiums to compensate cyclists for their own mistakes."

But Kevin Mayne, director of the national cycling body CTC, said: "Its not the person sitting in their steel box who gets killed by the cyclist."

Britain is expected to argue that it should be allowed to opt out of the legislation.

What do you think?

Email your views to simon@byford.plus.com and I will publish them in our November newsletter. Please let me know if you wish to remain anonymous. Your comments on any similar issues are also invited.

That's it for this time. Don't forget to send me your news items and articles.