

SWINDON & DISTRICT GROUP OF ADVANCED MOTORISTS
www.swindondrivers.com
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Newsletter
August 2003

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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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CHAIRMAN'S RAMBLINGS

Welcome to the August edition of our Newsletter.

What a scorcher of a summer it has been, with the weather smiling kindly on the Group's Car Rally and BBQ events - more about them later from our Events Team.

Within this Newsletter you will find formal notice of our AGM on 3rd September. This is your opportunity to join the Committee and influence the direction of the Group. The more enthusiastic members we can involve the more things we can do as a Group. I would particularly encourage the under 30's, we need new blood and fresh ideas, our ability to retain younger Associates once they have passed their test leaves something to be desired. If you haven't yet passed your test you can be an invited member until you do!

On more administrative matters the Group changed its Bank in July, having been with Portman Building Society for the previous 10 years. Unfortunately Portman gave us notice, that, for business reasons, they would be introducing a £5 per month administration charge, £60 pa is a lot for a small charity such as ours ! Luckily a number of Banks offer free Treasurers Accounts, and weighing up the pros and cons the Committee agreed in June that Lloyds TSB was the best option.

For those Full Members who do not currently pay your annual membership Subscriptions by Standing Order I would ask you to consider doing so, as it does make for simpler administration. Details are to be found later in the Newsletter.

The Group has had an interesting approach from a student of Cardiff University studying Occupational Psychology. Louise Onslow attended our June Group night and gave a brief explanation of her interest in Advanced Motorists!

The study of Situation Awareness originates from Aviation psychology and the study of fighter pilots. More recently this has involved the study of drivers.

Situation Awareness is a process that captures how people adapt to a constantly changing environment, and react accordingly in order to maintain their own safety (very similar the Hazard Perception Test which was introduced to the (standard) DVLA Driving Test in November last year {See November 2002 Newsletter}).

Louise's thesis will look at the effect of working memory distractors on Novice and Experienced (i.e.. Advanced) Driver's Situation Awareness.

Viewing a computer programme displaying scenes of bad driving behaviour participants are asked to click on the hazard at the same time as completing simple distracting tasks (tapping a finger, listening to music, responding to questions).

17 volunteers (who will be treated anonymously) stepped forward and the tests are scheduled for completion by the end of August. If you are interested there may still be the opportunity to participate.

We have been promised a copy of the outcome of the study in due course. Great PR for the advancement of safe driving, and the role that IAM and the local Groups have to play in it, I'm pleased that Swindon Group will have contributed

Also given the current debate on distractions within the car, ranging from the use of mobile phones (hands free of course, but you probably still have to touch some buttons, don't you?), conversations with fellow passengers, chastising the kids (look at the statistics for incidents on the "school run"), to listening to the radio.... it should make interesting reading !

Mark Simpson

Events Report

The Treasure Hunt took place on Wednesday 11 June. Seven teams participated, the winner although not in the shortest mileage was previous years organiser Dave Hewitt and his team with a close call for 2nd place Cynthia and her team. The evening ended at the Sun Inn, at Coate Water with a bar meal and a few drinks (soft of course for the drivers).

Ian, Dave and Debbie on behalf of the committee would like to thank all of you who took time out to making what turned out to be a great evening. As setting out the route and writing up the questions took a few weeks in the planning stage it was good to see you out there.

The American Supper held at Savernake Forest on 4th July took off slowly as with all barbecues, lighting those coals was hard work, and it was good to see all the new faces that turned up. There was plenty of food going around and we eventually managed to get the old camp fire alight, to take the chill of the evening, just as the park warden said he was locking the gates. Well done to everyone that attended.

We are working on a few more ideas for outside events for the remainder of the year. Should anyone have any suggestions or places of interest they are keen to go to as a group, please come forward and we will see if they are feasible.

Debbie Herbert

NOTICE OF ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING 2003

The Annual General Meeting of the Swindon Group of Advanced Motorists will take place on **Wednesday 3rd September 2003, at the Blunsdon House Hotel, Blunsdon, at 7-30 pm.**

Last years minutes, and this year's financial report will be available at the AGM.

The Officials of the committee must retire each year, and can offer themselves for re-election.

Chairman:- Mark Simpson - is offering himself for re-election.
Vice Chairman:- Ian Marshall - is offering himself for re-election.
Secretary:- Derek Sheldrake - is offering himself for re-election.
Treasurer:- Mark Simpson - will be retiring and not be seeking re-election as Treasurer, but would like to remain on the committee. (During the year, **Bill Corry**, who was elected as Treasurer last year, took on a post overseas and had to resign. Mark Simpson, who had been elected as Assistant Treasurer, took on the roll of Treasurer. Since then, we have been pleased to co-opted **Margaret Brewer** onto the committee to prepare for the roll of Treasurer, and she offers herself for election as Treasurer).

The following offer themselves for re-election on the committee:-
Simon Byford, Dave Abbott, Debbie Herbert, Chris Gleed, Mike Newman.

The following were co-opted onto the committee during the year, and offer themselves for election:-
Bob McVay, Alistair Johnson.

The following are retiring from the committee and not seeking re-election:-
Kirsty Newland.

If you are an Associate, and would like to get involved on the committee, please inform the Chairman or Secretary, as there may be sub-committee positions available, and then you can be co-opted on when you have past your Advanced Driving Test

Volunteer Needed for Database Administration

The Group Secretary uses a series of Visual Basic (VB) programs to update a database produced using Microsoft Access that is used to store our members details. This data is used for producing the membership register, newsletter and other mailing labels and other important administrative data.

Our existing system was created by an individual who has now left the area and whilst they still help us out with occasional changes we are now looking for someone who is locally based to do this, ideally within the group.

Unless we were to increase the functionality of the database we hold we would not expect this to be an onerous task for someone with the right skills. It may, however, be advisable for you to become familiar with the code initially and perhaps suggest and implement enhancements to the system.

If you have VB knowledge and would like to assist the group, please contact Kirsty Newland (contact details on Page 2 of this newsletter).

NEWS

Radio Amateurs to be Exempt from Ban on Driving While Using Mobile Phone

The Department of Transport has issued a paper on the results of its consultation on a proposal for the introduction of an offence of using a hand-held mobile phone while driving. The consultation document suggested that "two-way radio microphones" should be included within the proposed ban, which would effectively have banned mobile amateur radio in the UK. In its submission to the consultation document, the Radio Society of Great Britain pointed out that amateur radio had been operated from motor vehicles since 1955 without any accidents being recorded.

The Department of Transport report on the results of the consultation states that, "Amateur radio operators, some commercial drivers such as taxi drivers and hauliers, and some of the emergency services use two-way radio to communicate with a base station. We accept that such 'press to talk' devices keep conversations short and are likely to have a lower risk. . . While the details of the extent of the exemption remain to be determined, the new offence will exempt the use of such devices."

*Source : Radio Society of Great Britain
(www.rsgb.org.uk)*

NEWS

Regalia

As so few requests for Regalia have been received recently, Group stocks have been allowed to run down.

If anyone is interested in purchasing any items, or borrowing training videos, please see our Secretary, Derek Sheldrake, on Group nights.

The full selection of items that are available can be seen in the IAM magazine "*Advanced Driving*", on the page "The IAM Collection". Items can be ordered direct from the Institute, or through the Group Secretary.

Book Bargain

Amazon.co.uk are currently offering '*Holes in the Road: Roads and Utilities in the 1990s*' at the special price of £8 plus postage and packing.

Mobile Road Safety Cameras

Mobile safety cameras are now operating on the roads in the London Boroughs. Clearly marked bright yellow and blue vans are kitted out with camera equipment able to detect a speeding motorist up to one kilometre away, in all weather conditions.

The cameras are designed to change the behaviour of drivers and reduce the number of accidents on London's roads. Statistics from Transport for London's Road Safety Unit show 280 people died in road collisions in London last year. A further 5,370 people were seriously injured

Source : LBC 97.3
(www.lbc.co.uk)

ASSOCIATES NEWS

New Starters

The Swindon Group welcomes the following new Associates to the Group, and wishes them well during their observed runs :-

Mark Stafford, Peter Clothier, Paula Emmerson, Andrew McKelvey, Anthony Lawrence, Samantha Gingell, Andy Waite, Michael Fitzgerald, Ian Dewar, Janet Mason.

Background Reading

When an Associate joins the Group, they receive a book called "*Pass Your Advanced Driving Test*". As a new associate we would like you to spend some time browsing through this book, paying particular attention to the sections listed below, to get some idea of what is required in total to become an Advanced Driver - but not to try and remember it all before their first run with their Observer.

The important pages to really get to know before their first run start on page 16, The Planned System of Driving.

Here you will find details of the Five-Point System (also known as "the system of car control" that the examiner will ask you about, and expect you to follow during your test. These are :-

1. Information.
2. Position.
3. Speed.
4. Gear.
5. Acceleration.

Your Observer will answer any questions that you may have on this item, and any other items, when you meet for your Observed runs.

For legal reasons, the Institute, and our Insurers, do not permit us to "Instruct" or "Teach" you. We are only permitted to "Guide" and "Observe".

When you are "Test-Ready"

When your Observer considers that you are "Test-Ready", you will be asked to go out for a run with our Chief Observer. When he considers that you are ready, apply for the Test on the form that was sent to you at the time that you joined. If you have lost it, ask our Chief Observer, or Group Secretary, for a copy.

Having sent the form to IAM House, in London, they will send you back a letter telling you that your Examiner will contact you within three weeks. **PLEASE** do not let it go longer than three weeks before you phone the number given on the letter. If, for any reason, you are unable to contact them during the day, then let our Secretary know (phone numbers at the beginning of this Newsletter). The longer you wait, the longer it is before the next Associate has an Observer, and the longer our waiting list gets. We can only help you if you inform us.

Chris Gleed (Chief Observer)

TEST PASSES

We congratulate the following who have recently passed their Advanced Driving Test :-

Paul Ashby

Observed by

Nigel Cox

Ralph Morgan

Observed by

Jim Wilde

Louise Cooper

Observed by

Chris Gleed

Welcome to **Nicholas Ruck**, who joins us from another Group as a Full Member.

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ROAD CONES - WHERE DO THEY ALL COME FROM?

Research has shown that many of the cones to be seen on Britain's roads are manufactured semi locally in Chipping Norton by **Oxford Plastics Systems Limited**.

The **Highwayman Series** of heavy duty road cones are often used in heavy traffic areas such as motorway contraflow systems and for lane delineation.

Available in 500mm, 750mm and 1000m sizes, Highwayman cones are of a two-part design with a tough composite base complete with hand grips for ease of handling.

E Cones are heavy duty, 100% recycled cones which are virtually indestructible and designed for maximum stability, ease of handling and storage.

They are ideal for use in any traffic control situation on roads, motorways, and emergency works.

They can be supplied with coloured bases for corporate identity, and embossed with a company name or logo.

LLPE Cones are made from low linear polythene and are also called **British Standard Traffic Cones**.

They consist of a range of rotationally moulded one piece traffic cones, designed to meet the latest standards.

They are available in 305mm, 450mm, 530mm, 600mm, and 750mm sizes.

These cones can be ballasted with either sand or rubber weights.

“No Waiting” warning cones are available in various designs and sizes to meet the needs of police, local authorities and others. Three-sided or conical, these cones are durable and highly visible, and can be embossed for local identification. They use tough polymers for high impact strength. A modern pigment system is used to enhance their colour and thus visibility.

Sports Cones

A range of plastic cones is available which have a variety of uses in schools, for gymkhanas and horse events, motor cross and other sports events. They are available in green, blue, red and yellow in 300mm, 450mm, 530mm and 750mm sizes, with weighted bases.

Corporate Cones

The company also produces a special range of cones for use at exhibitions, shows, sports events and corporate conventions. They often bear the corporate logo of a company or club and have a dual function as a means of promotion. They can also create temporary parking bays at an event or convention.

Interesting Facts and Web Links for Cone Fans

David Morgan, from Burford, owns the world's largest traffic cone collection.

He has 137 different types of the objects which constitutes two thirds of those ever manufactured.

The **Traffic Cone Preservation Society** has a website at <http://animation.filmtv.ucla.edu/students/awinfrey/coneindex.htm>. This is an American website, but fortunately contains no nasty surprises for the UK reader as all the items depicted are reassuringly familiar in appearance - they are all cone shaped.

MEMBERS DISCOUNTS

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

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.

FORTHCOMING MEETINGS & EVENTS

The events team have been working hard to provide you with a full programme of events for the rest of the year. Our current plans for Group Nights are as follows :-

3rd September 2003

Swindon Group Annual General Meeting

Our Annual General Meeting followed by a talk by ITV1 newsreader **Derek Tedder**.

1st October 2003

Adrian Dean from **Swindon Borough Council Traffic Management**

A talk on general traffic management issues - probably including the notorious Covingham speed humps!

12th November 2003

Graham Feest from the **Association of Road Safety Officers**

Please note that our November meeting has been put back a week to avoid clashing with bonfire night.

3rd December 2003

Wiltshire Constabulary Publicist Saira Kharn

Come and hear all about the deployment of GATSO safety cameras in the area.