

SWINDON & DISTRICT GROUP OF ADVANCED MOTORISTS
www.swindondrivers.com
07050 682842
Newsletter
February 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.

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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 first Newsletter of 2003.

Writing this mid January, Christmas seems long behind us and the days are slowly beginning to lengthen. However I fear the Winter has more to deliver, so a timely reminder for us all on basic road worthiness checks and the familiar acronym POWER (Roadcraft P.170)

Our November Group Night was themed around Hazard Perception, and utilised the "What if" video. Chris Gleed, our Chief Observer took ownership of the video control, while an audience of 25 watched and waited for him to hit the Pause button! A good evening that re-enforced the importance of continuous assessment of information throughout the phases of the System of Car Control (Roadcraft Chapter 2, PYADT P16/17)

Margaret Tester, Road Safety Manager of Swindon Borough Council gave a talk at the December Meeting on the topic of Road Safety initiatives in the Borough.

The Government met its 1987 target of reducing road fatalities from c. 5,000 to 3,500 per annum by 2000, and has set new targets for the current decade

- 40% reduction in Killed and Seriously Injured
- 50% reduction in Children Killed and Seriously Injured
- 10% reduction in Slightly Injured per 100m Kilometres

In Swindon this means a decrease of occurrence within these categories from 487 to 292 by 1st January 2010.

Margaret went on to describe SBC's initiatives, covering age groups "from cradle to grave", focused to achieve this: -

- The very young - In Car Safety - Child Car seat fitment
- Primary aged - Road Safety in the school curriculum

- Junior School - Good Citizen Scheme, classroom then practical experience
- All school Children - Reflector Initiative with Nationwide

Other initiatives included School Travel Plans, Secondary School pupils, young drivers and the older Driver.

An interesting statistic was one concerning people driving in the course of their business duties. More people are killed as a result of "at work" road accidents than any other occupational accident.

A thought to chill the spines of Company Directors and Fleet Managers is the charge of Corporate Manslaughter.

If a company is found negligent in training of drivers, or not ensuring that its vehicles are adequately maintained, it could in the case of an accident be prosecuted - there has been a test case!

Margaret continued on the subjects of decriminalised parking, the Safety Camera Partnership, which involves 18 fixed site and 1 ("highly visible") mobile van, finally concluding with a video.

We hope in the future to have one of Margaret's colleagues to talk to us about Safety Cameras.

All interesting stuff, you should come along.

With our former Treasurer, Bill Corry, in exotic climes, I have taken on this mantel on a temporary basis. I would like to hear from someone who would be prepared to take this role on, no previous experience is necessary, and guidance can be provided. Availability to attend Committee Meetings and Group Nights would be beneficial.

As mentioned in the previous Newsletter our Associate Rep, Kirsty Newland, after 5 years of service to the Committee in her current position, and previously as Secretary, will be standing down from September 2003. If you think you could contribute to this role of coordinating Associates with Observers then please contact Kirsty.

The role of Secretary is ably filled by Derek Sheldrake, who with his Observer activities must be the most active member of the Group. To lighten Derek's load we are seeking to recruit a Minutes Secretary to join the Committee - again if you think you could help, please let us know.

In the last Newsletter I highlighted some of the initiatives discussed at the September Committee Meeting.

I am pleased to let you know that we have established a sub committee to look at developing a Theory Package for Associates. This group, chaired by Chris Gleed, Chief Observer, will commence its work in February.

Increasing Group membership comes from improved Associate recruitment and existing membership retention. I am pleased to report that in the period August to December 2002, we had 15 new Associates plus 1 full Member join. This compares with 14 in same period of 2001 and 9 in 2000.

To cater for the influx we need Observers, and indeed 5 Members have passed their Observer's Test since August. Well Done! You know who you are, and appreciation to Bob McVay for your commitment to their training.

As you can see, as a Group we are progressing positively, and with support of you, our Members, will continue to do so.

I look forward to seeing you at our next Group Night.

A1

Promoting advanced motoring skills for the under 30's by encouraging involvement within local IAM groups

A1 AIMS

- To recruit and retain a young generation of advanced motorists
- To provide the opportunity for young people to meet like minded individuals on a social basis
- To encourage participation within local groups at observer and committee level

SURVEY REPORT

A big thank you to all groups who returned their completed surveys. We are very grateful for such a positive response to this initiative. We have received funds from 12 of the 24 groups in the South West region and will be organising the first social meeting in the New Year. We will also provide advertising material for participating groups.

Over to you - tell us where to go!

The Steering Committee now needs to move forward with your ideas for a fantastic launch experience. To kick us off, there is **£50 CASH** up for grabs for the person with the best ideas on the launch, socials and events.

We are looking for ideas that will appeal to all young motorists, so, if you can come up with something amazing, then please send your ideas to Ceri Jones (csjones77@hotmail.com) marked 'A1 competition' by 07 March 2003.

(Please note that only under 30's can enter and must be prepared to assist us with putting their idea into practice.)

Even if you don't have any ideas this time, please register your interest in this initiative to let us know that you're out there. This will only work with your support, so please contact us!

Coming Up...

Watch your newsletters for further updates on A1, including the upcoming 'Weston Wheels' legal car cruise at Weston Air Field. We will need your support!

A1 Contact Details

Darren Cox - Chairman
01934 514792 or dcox9@orange.net

Ruth Hamlin - Secretary
01934 813516 or fazerfast@talk21.com

Ceri Jones - Publicity
01242 530643 or csjones77@hotmail.com

STOP PRESS

Anyone who feels they would like to be more involved with the A1 project (you don't have to be on the committee) then come along to the next regional forum at BAWA at Bristol on 15th March 2003. We'll be there in a separate room to listen to your ideas and you can have some of the buffet too! Just speak to your committee or phone one of the numbers above. You'll be made very welcome. A1 is aimed at both Car and Motorcycle members although the later is very under represented at present.

RECENT PASSES

Congratulations to :-

ASSOCIATE

Derek Tedder

John Gwynne

Monica Graham

Neil Hodgson

Fenella Headlong

Philip Ashby

Howard Blunden

OBSERVER

Chris Gleed assisted by Geoff Hicks

Derek Sheldrake

Derek Sheldrake

Frank McKim

Mark Rawlings-Smith

Bob McVay

Albert Webb

We are pleased to see Albert Webb back again after his recent illness.

We welcome the following full members to our Group :-

Mr Michael Thompson, Mr Malcolm Cox, & Mr Richard Marks

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A BUSY YEAR

One of our newer Members, Simon West, has had a busy year. He joined us about a year ago as an Associate and had the usual wait for an Observer. Dave Hewitt was waiting for a new Associate when Simons name reached the top of our waiting list. Simon completed his Observed runs and his Pre-Test, and went on to take his IAM Car Test in June.

Having passed that Test, he offered his services as an Observer. This was taken up by the Group, and he then went on for further Training with Bob McVay, our Observer Trainer, and was declared ready in November to take out other Associates and bring them up to the Standard required for the IAM Test. At the same time, through his work, and with the cooperation of his employer Aldi Supermarkets, he took the IAM Commercial Advanced Test, driving a Scania 114/360 articulated unit, coupled to a Tri-axled Refrigerated Box Trailer.

Because we do not specialise in the other sections offered by the IAM, Commercial & Motorcycle, we do not have the Observers registered to take out Associates in these Groups, so Simon had to use his 15 years HGV experience, coupled with his IAM Car Test experience to get him through the Test, which he managed to achieve.

The Swindon Group Committee would like to congratulate Simon for his effort and achievements, and welcome him to our team of Observers.

If anyone is interested in taking the Commercial Test, then I am sure that Simon would let you know what is involved, though, clearly training, at this juncture, would need to be pursued via Head office. If you need to contact Simon, just contact Derek Sheldrake who can put you in touch. The same for anyone interested in taking the IAM Caravan Towing Test, which Derek took three years ago.

For anyone interested in the IAM Motorcycle Test, we can put you in touch with a local IAM Group, who have Observers living in the Swindon area, and would be only too willing to bring you up to the test standard.

As one large organisation say`s, - Just AAsk!!

TALKING POINT

Microchipped number plates join fight against Vehicle Crime.

Electronic number plates, which will be "read" 24 hours a day by roadside microwave beacons and cameras, are to be introduced in 2004. By the end of 2007, the Government aims to have them on every road vehicle in Britain, writes Michael Kemp of the Daily Telegraph.

Each plate will have a microchip containing details of the vehicle's make, type, colour, engine, transmission, date and place of manufacture; its registered keeper; MOT status and insurance validity. False plates will automatically raise an alert through the police national computer in Hendon and the Driver and Vehicle Licensing Agency in Swansea.

Computers will be programmable to find any wanted vehicle. It will mean new number plates being fitted to more than 29.2 million vehicles. The chips will cost about £1 each and a set of electronic number plates up to £35 or more if a one-off tax is applied to make motorists pay for the roadside "reading" infrastructure.

The DVLA, which drew up the plans, is proposing that "the whole system is financed by taxation". The electronic readers, planned to be on every road, will cost "an estimated average £1,000 each when purchased in quantity and placed on existing poles and gantries".

From the start of 2003, all number plate producers will be registered by law, under the Crime Prevention Act, and plates supplied only on production of a vehicle registration document and proof of entitlement by the vehicle's keeper. By December 2007, the DVLA aims to introduce drive-in, paperless automated relicensing, which will spell the end for windscreen-mounted tax discs.

The electronic plates have been developed by Birmingham-based Hills Number Plates, which makes 50 per cent of Britain's registration tags. A spokesman said: "Relicensing will be like buying a drive-in hamburger. You will not need to leave the wheel. Just hand over a credit card and the whole process will be done electronically." Cash is expected to be accepted. "Front and rear microchip number plates are now fully developed at an extra cost of no more than £1 each to the motor trade.

Normally a microchip costs about £5, but by ordering tens of millions we have negotiated a considerably lower price. "Hills is working closely with the DVLA and expects the go-ahead for electronic number plates in 2004. Microchip readers will be on the Trafficmaster (driver traffic information) radio masts that cover the main road network, and certain camera sites."

By 2004, the DVLA aims to have merged driver, vehicle and insurance records into a "single or virtually single" database from which the number-plate microchips will be programmed. New regulations will compel motorists and dealers to inform the DVLA within one working week of vehicle ownership changes.

"TAKE CARE" MESSAGE AS NEW LONDON RIDERS PREPARE TO "DODGE THE CHARGE"

Commuters taking to two wheels for the first time in a bid to avoid the new £5 congestion charge in London next February will need more than compulsory basic training (CBT) if they are to cope with the capital's rush hour.

That was the warning this week from the Institute of Advanced Motorists as the Motorcycle and Scooter Show opened (NEC 14 - 24 November).

"We can see why scooters and other powered two wheelers will suddenly be even more appealing - they are cheap to buy and run as well as stylish. They are also of course exempt from the new congestion charge, which is good. But new riders should be particularly careful: they may not have the full control and hazard awareness that experienced motorcyclists have," said IAM Chief Examiner Bryan Lunn.

"I would hate to think of them ending up in hospital for the sake of saving £5 a day because they haven't prepared themselves properly for riding in the rush hour," he said.

"Two wheeled powered motor vehicle users feature disproportionately in the 'killed and seriously injured' statistics. We are already seeing bits of broken scooters around London's roads. Without being gruesome, these new scooter riders should bear in mind that avoiding crashes must be a priority - and be prepared to spend some time beyond basic training to avoid coming to grief," said Mr Lunn.

The IAM has produced a special booklet "Safer scootering - how to keep out of trouble on your scooter" which is free of charge.

"Our booklet is packed with sensible advice to keep you safe. For example, overtaking other vehicles in congested traffic is one of the great advantages of riding a scooter - but its potentially very hazardous.

"Extra preparation for urban riding will pay off. Save cash - but don't risk an injury as you do so," said Mr Lunn.

DRINK DRIVE CAMPAIGN

Recent figures show that young men under the age of thirty have the most drink-related accidents. Nationally nearly two thousand male car drivers between the ages of 17 and 25 involved in traffic accidents last year failed a breath test.

The latest campaign is moving away from the 'Don't Drink and Drive' message to asking 'What will it take to stop you drink-driving' - seeking to make offending drivers question why they persist in breaking the law.

There are approximately 10 drink-drive related deaths and 345 injuries every week, so it is vital that we keep reminding drivers. Not only are these drivers breaking the law and facing a £5000 fine, they are also risking their own lives, but more important, the lives of other road users.

We would like to thank Margaret Tester, the Road Safety Manager for Swindon Borough Council, for the above information. If you would like further information on this campaign, you can contact Margaret on 01793 466399, or visit the DfT Website <http://www.dft.gov.uk>.

While we are talking of Margaret, we would like to thank her for a very interesting presentation that she gave to our Group at the December Meeting at Blunsdon House Hotel.

DRIVING IN SNOW

The Institute of Advanced Motorists (IAM) has issued the following advice to drivers who may be unfamiliar with adverse road conditions.

Keep your speed down and increase your safety gaps when the road is wet or icy.

There is an increased risk of skidding. But a skid does not just happen - it is almost always caused by the driver's actions.

Braking, steering, acceleration, decelerating and gear changing must be done gently and gradually. If a skid occurs, do not brake, no matter how strong the temptation.

Lose speed by gently easing the pressure on the accelerator pedal and, if appropriate, de-clutch until you regain control of the vehicle.

The IAM recommends you ask the following questions before you venture out.

* Is your journey really necessary? If it is, plan it and give Yourself plenty of time. Tell someone your intended route and how long you think it's going to take. Listen to the radio for details about road and weather conditions.

* Have you cleaned the windscreen and windows thoroughly, using a demisting preparation? Check that screen washers are not blocked and that > the screen washer bottle is topped up and has a winter additive to stop it freezing. Check that the windscreen wipers are in good condition and work effectively.

- * Are you sure your lights, brake lights, indicators are working properly and the lenses are clean?
- * Are the tyres in good condition and properly inflated?

Consider putting the following in your vehicle:-

*Warning triangle.

*Warm coat.

*First aid kit.

*Good torch.

*Seat belt cutter.

*Fire extinguisher.

*Travel rug.

*Tow rope.

*Bottled drinking water.

*Recovery service contact number.

*Good Map.

*Pen and paper.

*A mobile phone can be useful for emergencies - but before you use it, find somewhere safe, convenient and legal to stop.

ONE LINERS by Les Brown

I have been thinking lately on the subject of how many "one liners" we observers use and thought it was time to put a few down on paper. I am sure there are many more out there but I thought it might start the ball rolling with these (which I have stolen from a variety of people /places).

Plan to stop but look for the gap to go. (For roundabouts).

Only a fool breaks the 2 second rule.

A development of "only a fool..." which I've found useful:
A bl**dy fool breaks the two second rule; The wise leave more like three or four"

2 second stopping distance and 4 second going distance.

Look to be safe, then select gear, and go (emerging from junctions etc).

Early vision - early decision. (For roundabouts and junctions).

Drive according to the Highway Code and you will drive safely and well.

Concentration assists anticipation.

Think and avoid accidents.

Whenever in doubt hang back.

Deliberation eliminates uncertainty.

Any fool can drive fast enough to be dangerous.

Good car sense increases the life of your car.

Give good signals and earn the praise of fellow road users.

Car and driver must blend harmoniously to ensure good driving.

Courtesy is a great factor in road safety.

Don't put your car where your eyes and mind haven't been before.

When accelerating away from a hazard, e.g.. roundabout - "Leave the car behind, behind"

When explaining why not to slap a right indicator on at the start of a long motorway acceleration lane - "Giving a signal deprives you of the ability to give a signal".

When weak positioning may allow another to squeeze partially into your lane to your immediate detriment - "lane sharing is like needle sharing".

Deliberation eliminates uncertainty

This is one I use most from the old Roadcraft: - (which added "when safe, go"). Drive as if you were going to meet yourself coming the other way!

Whatever your manoeuvre, make sure that you leave the other road users thinking: "I wish I was doing that"

Both of these are for use in the very early stages with an associate :-

Brakes are for slowing, gears are for going. (When working on the absolute basics of bends and corners :-)

First the brakes, *then* the gear.

For use on a demo drive:

Nothing happens in a hurry in this car.

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.

WEB LINKS

There are many websites out there that will provide a lot of interest and pleasure for anyone at all interested in motoring.

One that has caught the eye this month is "UK Roads". This site includes lists of lost motorways, duplicated road numbers, some railway-to-road conversions, and also has a reference to our very own "magic roundabout".

The site can be found at

<http://www.pberry.plus.com/ukroads/index.html>

Outing Suggestion

It may still be cold outside but If you are looking for a day out close to home with a motoring theme where the weather won't matter then take a look at

<http://www.milestones-museum.com/index.html>

This is the homepage of Milestones Museum in Basingstoke. It is an award winning "indoor open air museum" housing several motoring collections including a display of historic Thornycroft vehicles as well as the AA collection. These are all set in a "period display" of historic roads and buildings.

We would be interested in publishing a trip report from anyone who visits the museum. It is a relatively new venue having only been open for a year or so.

FORTHCOMING MEETINGS

At our next Group Night to be held on Wednesday 5th March, IAM Council Member Bryan Davis will speak on VIP Escort Duties. Bryan has extensive experience in this area from his time in the police force.

On Wednesday 2nd April we welcome Brian Cavill of the Wyvern Historical & Detector Society. The theme of this meeting will be the exploration of archaeological sites using metal detectors.

Our Programme for later on in the Spring and Summer is under development. Details will appear in the newsletter and be posted to our Website at www.swindondrivers.com as they become available.

EDITOR'S FINALE

Thanks to everyone who has contributed to this edition of the Newsletter. Articles are always welcome - the next edition will be published in May and the copy date by which contributions should be received is 18th April 2003.

We look forward to seeing you at our next group night.