

SWINDON & DISTRICT GROUP OF ADVANCED MOTORISTS

www.swindondrivers.com

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Newsletter

May 2004

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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

Unfortunately Mark wasn't available as this issue of the Newsletter went to press. This feature will return in our August edition - which will include full details of our Annual General Meeting to be held in September. Please take the time to read the article on the next page of this edition, though, as it contains an important "early" message concerning the AGM.

If you would like to provide an article or even a regular column for the newsletter please let us know - contact details are on the preceding page.

AN IMPORTANT MESSAGE TO ALL MEMBERS

I know that the AGM, in September, is a little way off, but it is not too early to start thinking of new committee members that will be required on the night.

Our Associates Representative, Angus Osborne-White, who is at present at the Defence Academy at Watchfield, finishes his course there this summer and then moves on to Sandhurst to continue with his Training.

His post within our Group will then need filling.

I have also announced that I will not be standing for re-election for domestic reasons. At the moment I undertake several roles for the Group, and it has therefore been agreed that we are going to break up the roles into more manageable sizes.

We are therefore looking for several people to take on these roles, and it has to be said that if we do not get replacements, that the Group will not be able to continue to function (Group Rules 2000, 2.3.1).

We are therefore looking for a Group Secretary, Membership Secretary, Minutes Secretary, and a Regalia Steward.

Help and support will be given where necessary to all helpers.

Please give it some consideration. The more the help, the less each one does.

For more information, please contact our Chairman, Mark Simpson, or myself.

Derek Sheldrake
Swindon Group Secretary

TEST PASSES

We congratulate the following members who have recently passed their Advanced Driving Test, and welcome them into the Group as Full Members :-

Name	Observer
Andy Mills	Albert Webb
Philip Pomeroy	Dave Hewitt
Steve Masters	Frank McKim & Derek Sheldrake
Diana Turnbull	Albert Webb
Christopher Clifford	Derek Sheldrake

Thanks also go to the Observers and Examiners without whom there would be no Associate Test Passes.

NEW ASSOCIATES JOINING THE GROUP

We welcome the following new Associates to the Swindon Group, and wish them well during their Observed runs, and with their Advanced Driving Test. An Observer will be allocated to them as soon as one becomes available.

Geoff Lawrence
Lesley Gilbert
Michael Barnes
Nicholas Hammond
Anthony Downing
Christopher Hidden
Luke Kemp
Deborah Telfer
Rebecca Twigg
Andrew Garrett
Paul Murphy
Jon Dear
Andy Rawlins
Serena Cooper

PLEASE NOTE

It is important that when an Associate is allocated to an Observer, that they keep in touch with them, and try and go out with them as often as possible. Recently we have had some Associates who have not kept in touch, and this is one of the reasons that has caused our waiting list to grow. If you have a problem, or are going to be away for holiday or business, please let your Observer, or our Secretary know, or we may be allocating them another Associate in your place.

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FROM YOUR CHIEF OBSERVER

Once again we are at that time of year when we are blessed with more daylight hours and how refreshing that is! Personally, It gives me more time to do those things that I want to do when I finish work. It also allows me to carry out more Observed Drives with Associates, Check Drives / Pre-Tests etc. It is time consuming, but I feel that we are a popular group and because of that popularity we do have a regular uptake of Associates, which at the moment means that we also have a 'Waiting List' for Associates to be allocated Observers. As a group we do not want those Associates to lose their enthusiasm by having to wait too long for their guidance runs to start. We have a Team of Observers giving their commitment to the Group and to Associates by giving up their free time on a voluntary basis. They are acting on behalf of the group and the IAM. I have said on many occasions that Advanced Driving is a commitment that should not be taken lightly. If you take it lightly, just to have that badge on the front of the car then you have a limited achievement! The real commitment comes after the Test, that is really when the learning starts!

Where can you go from there? What's the next step? Fortunately we have people who are readily taking that 'Next Step'. They have offered to 'put something back' into the group by offering to become Observers!

Step 1: We offer the help and preparation to them to assist them to become 'Trainee Observers'.

Step 2: After a qualifying period and a set criteria of 'Written' and 'Practical' assessments to achieve, they move to 'Qualified Observer' status, this is a recognised 'Qualification' in Observer Standard.

Step 3: After a further Qualifying period there is the opportunity to move to 'Senior Observer' status and we offer the guidance and preparation for that criteria. This does require a 'Practical' Test with an IAM Examiner.

To maintain the status for each qualification certain requirements are to be maintained throughout each year and it is through this type of

commitment that we see an improvement in all round standard and ability. This gives us all the chance to collate and share that information with others and therefore further our aims to Road Safety via the principles of Advanced Driving.

We now have some more volunteers for Observer Training - Nigel Allerton, Debbie Butland, Tony Hand, Alistair Johnson, Tony Leggett and Philip Pomeroy. Nigel Allerton, Debbie Butland and Tony Leggett have also volunteered their help in giving presentations for the Associate Training Course.

A training initiative is under way for these volunteers, we recognise their commitment and offer the most grateful thanks from the Group to them. Hopefully it will not be long before they are offering guidance to the Associates who have been waiting patiently for Observers.

I am positive that it is through becoming an Observer that I am able to maintain my awareness and ability.

It is no surprise sometimes that driving standards can drop over a period of time, especially if the Test was taken a long time ago. How's your Driving????

Why not think about the IAM Driving Assessment. This is not a Test, you cannot Pass or Fail, it is an 'Assessment' with certain recommendations and advice available at the end. You can only benefit from the experience!

If you are looking for the Ultimate Challenge then take the IAM 'Special' Assessment, a very stringent examination of your Driving/Riding skills.

We can offer a Group Assessment for you if required but if you go for one of the Assessments by an Examiner, what better guidance can you obtain! What is there to lose?

More than that! What is there to gain???

Most of all, 'Be Safe' and 'Stay Safe'! It's not easy, but we can help!
Chris Glead

DEATH IN 7/10TM OF A SECOND

For a number of years medical and engineering experts have test crashed hundreds of cars, studied thousands of accident reports, visited the scene and microscopically examined the wreckage of cars in which hundreds have died. Expert safety engineers of leading motor manufacturing companies have co-operated. Distinguished medical experts have written detailed post mortem reports on crash victims.

The primary reason for the research has been to reduce fatalities by making cars safer. Out of it have come recommendations for safety belts, a different type of steering wheel, safety door catches, dashboard padding and air bags.

What has also come out of it is the graphic detail of what happens to the human body in the last few seconds prior to death. This is a slow motion, split second reconstruction of what happens when a car, travelling at 55mph, crashes into a solid immovable object. In this example - a tree is used.

1/10th of a Second

The front bumper and the radiator grill collapse. Slivers of steel penetrate the tree to depths of one and a half inches and more.

2/10ths of a Second

The bonnet crumples as it rises, smashing into the windscreen. The wheels, still spinning, leave the ground. The radiator disintegrates. The wings come into contact with the tree forcing the rear parts to splay out over the doors.

At the same moment in time the heavy structural members of the car begin to act as a brake on the terrific forward momentum of the car. The drivers body however, continues to move forward at the vehicles original speed. This means that a force of 10 times gravity and therefore his body now weighs 3,200 pounds. His legs will snap at the knee joints.

3/10ths of a Second.

The drivers body is now off the seat, torso upright, with broken knees pressing into the dashboard. The plastic and steel frame of the steering wheel begins to bend in the drivers grip. His head is now* near the sun visor, his chest above the steering column.

4/10ths of a Second

The cars front 24 inches have been completely demolished, but the rear end is still travelling at an estimated speed of 35 mph. The drivers body is still travelling at 55 mph. The engine block impacts the tree. The rear of the car rises high enough to scrape the bark of low branches.

5/10ths of a Second

The drivers hands bends the steering column almost vertical and the force of gravity then impales him upon it. The column punctures his lung and intercostal arteries. Blood is now filling "he lungs.

6/10ths of a Second

So great is the force of the impact that the drivers feet are ripped from his tightly laced shoes. The brake pedal shears at the floorboards and the chassis bends in the middle. The drivers head smashes into the windscreen. The rear of the car begins to fall downwards and the wheels, still spinning, dig into the ground.

7/10ths of a Second

The entire form of the car is now out of shape. Hinges tear and doors spring open. The seat is forced forward pinning the driver further against the steering column. Blood will seep from the drivers mouth and shock has frozen his heart.

The driver is now dead and the time elapsed is **7/10ths** of a Second.

Article Supplied by **Wiltshire & Swindon Fire Authority.**

R.E.A.C.T.

A valuable mnemonic reminding us all of the actions to take in the event of an emergency on the road.

- **R**ing 999 Stating.....
- **E**xact Location of Incident
- **A**ll Vehicles Involved
- **C**asualty Numbers and if anyone is.....
- **T**rapped

Again, thanks to the **Wiltshire & Swindon Fire Authority**.

DON'T NEGLECT YOUR EYESIGHT!

Catherine Wallace and Jenny Sinclair of Haine & Smith Opticians kindly provided the following notes following their recent presentation to the Group. These points hopefully give us all something to think about. Remember that it is an offence to knowingly drive with uncorrected defective vision.

Over 90% of sensory information used in driving is visual in origin

- In 1992 in more than 310,000 road accidents there were over 4000 fatalities
- It was estimated that the medical ambulance costs alone amounted to £160 million

Problems with wearing spectacles for driving

- Glare and dazzle night driving
- Glare from sun
- Viewing instrumentation and the road in presbyopia

"There's nothing wrong with my eyes or general health, but lately I am having problems night driving!"

As we get older we;

- Need higher light levels to perceive details
- Are slower to recover from glare
- Have reduced dark adaptation
- Are more at risk of ocular disease

Failure to wear spectacles

In a survey of drivers it was found that 5% of 60-70 year olds and 11% of 70+ year old males fail to wear their spectacles for driving

THE TRL SIMULATOR RESEARCH DEVELOPMENT LAB @ BRACKNELL

I first heard about the now legendary full mission truck simulator at TRL whilst at a professional drivers association training day so when I heard that TRL where after 600 LGV drivers to trial it my email was off like a shot and to my surprise I got an appointment to attend.

For weeks I was like a kid waiting for Christmas I was off to Mecca, the research development lab to play with one of there newest toys and I couldn't wait.

Finally the day arrived and I arrived bright and early ready for the day's entertainment.

The day was laid out for us firstly a talk and video on the project then a series of tests comprising of hazard perception and theory tests, then a taster for the main course a part mission simulator, then the biggy.

Enough of my ramblings for a bit and a bit more on the technical side of the simulator.

TRL have received a grant from the governments road haulage modernisation fund to develop the full mission simulator to eventually be used to train new LGV drivers in a safe environment and for companies to train and develop there existing staff.

The simulator itself was developed by EAD Dornier for the German military and has now been reprogrammed for its current use and is based on the Mercedes Actros cab.

So here we go the drudge over and we enter the hanger housing the beast.

At first glance it looks like the lunar lander and I stand there like a kid in a sweet shop with my mouth wide open.

So in to the brain the control room, from here the controller sets the scenario for the drive and the arsenal at his disposal is awesome every type of trailer imaginable any configuration any load.

So finally I was in I settled myself in the cab the view in front is 3D you also get vision in the mirrors.

The cab itself was as I said earlier a Mercedes Actros 4 over 4 range change gear box.

A word from the control room and we were off and I found myself on the slip road to a motorway towing a tri-axle tanker.

A straight forward exercise just to get used to everything pootle up the motorway until stopped by a hazard.

There ended lesson one so armed with confidence I was set for scenario 2 a trip across mountains fully loaded in bad weather I was informed and not so cocky now.

Based on what looked like snake pass we set off nothing unusual at first up hill we dragged to a cross roads where a range rover pulled out in front off me no problem just like any other day on the road for a driver I thought.

Further up the road the same range rover was then blocking the road and the occupants were having a punch up in the road I was tempted to stop and watch but thought better of it.

On the downhill stretch came the bad weather very realistic spray mist the works finally after 20 odd minutes the scenario was over.

So what did I think overall of the simulator , well it does need work there are some glaring glitches mainly in the driving experience compared to a normal artic. Lack of feed back resistance and vibration through the steering wheel engine noise is very important and was lacking also a lot of drivers including myself complained of feeling sick a sort of motion sickness , TRL have 2 million to get it sorted and sort it they will have to . Overall a very useful training aid but that's all I think it will ever be I can't see the day when it will replace on road training. I would still like one in my garage though.

Simon West

MOTORISTS: LESS MOTORHEAD, MORE MANTOVANI!

The Times reports that drivers who throw their head back and belt out the latest hits could be putting themselves and others at risk, according to the latest research.

Scientists have found that motorists who listen to loud music on their car stereos, particularly tracks above 60 beats per minute, run a higher risk of accidents.

The study by Canadian researchers showed that loud music cut a driver's reaction time by up to 20%, a fatal delay even when driving in good weather, at moderate speed.

Following the research by a team at the Memorial University of Newfoundland, the RAC yesterday named the top five most dangerous tunes to play behind the wheel.

Worst was Wagner's Ride of the Valkyries, followed closely by Prodigy's Firestarter.

Conrad King, a consultant psychologist, said the findings confirmed what he had long believed - drivers should choose their music with care.

"Up tempo music has been shown to cause drivers to have double the amount of accidents as those listening to slower music," said Mr King.

The RAC said a selection of easy-listening favourites was recommended, with the recent cover of Mad World as No 1.

Edmund King, RAC Foundation executive director, said the study proved not only that loud music was a nuisance to others, it could be the cause of accidents on the road.

MAYORAL CANDIDATE'S "STEP IN THE ROAD" PLAN

Millionaire Ivan Massow has launched his bid to become London's Mayor with a plan to let pedestrians walk into the road whenever they feel like it.

Cars would have to give way whenever someone wanted to cross on foot. Only London's busiest main roads would be exempt.

He said it would reclaim the streets for pedestrians, but one motoring group called it "a recipe for disaster". Mr Massow, 36, is running as an independent against Ken Livingstone and a crowded field of challengers.

Under his proposal, pedestrians would be allowed to step out at any point along most London roads, as long as they did not force a car to brake sharply. Mr Massow said the move would be of particular benefit in areas like Islington, Soho and Brick Lane.

The driving speed limit would remain at 30mph, instead of the 20mph in residential areas Mr Livingstone is set to propose.

The RAC said: "This is ill conceived. It is better to teach pedestrians the dangers of the road than offer a free-for-all."

DECLINE IN BUS USAGE

The number of people using the buses in most of the UK is falling - with the exception of London.

A Confederation of Passenger Transport report shows a stark contrast between the metropolis - where numbers are soaring - and the rest of the country.

Critics of current transport policies say they want to regain the power to regulate buses, so as to have the same control over local transport strategies as Mayor Ken Livingstone has in London.

Bus services outside London were deregulated in the 1980s by the then Transport Secretary Nicholas Ridley.

IAM FLEET DEAL FOR DRIVER TRAINING

BT has awarded IAM Fleet - the commercial training division of the Institute of Advanced Motorists (IAM) - a three-year contract to provide occupational road risk training for BT drivers.

It is expected that up to 1,500 drivers a year will participate in the bespoke programme - which features both interactive workshops and on road assessment and tuition.

The half-day workshops have been designed to focus on risk and raise driver awareness of the dangers they face in today's driving conditions.

BT Group Safety Adviser Dave Wallington said: "BT regards the effective management of occupational road risk as one of its most important safety objectives.

"We see this contract for delivery of driver training as a key component in an overall strategy to protect our people, minimise the adverse effects of our business on the wider community and to provide a commercial return in reduced accident costs."

More than 50 candidates participated in the first session - which took place during January in Dartford. Within three weeks of taking part in the interactive workshop, candidates are then required to participate in a half-day, on road, training session.

A DRIVE FOR SAFER MOTORING

Controversy over speed cameras and whether they are aimed at saving lives or raising money has prompted a review in London which could see them replaced with signs telling drivers how fast they are travelling. And their removal in the capital could trigger a similar response in other parts of the country.

Do you believe speed cameras help make our roads safer, or do you take the cynical view and think they are just another way of swelling government coffers at the motorists' expense? And when it comes to keeping down the accident rate, what useful tips do you have for your fellow drivers?

BT has one of the largest vehicle fleets in Europe, which is accompanied by a multi-million pound annual bill for repair work. So it is in the company's best interests to promote safe driving standards among BT people.

In fact one of BT's 60,000 drivers in the UK reports an accident on average once every 20 minutes, according to BT group safety adviser Dave Wallington. "That's an average the company is trying hard to reduce," he said.

BT's focus is to identify drivers who are at high risk and use counter measures such as defensive driver training to help them improve road skills and risk management.

This assessment has, in the past, been based on accident history, but BT is increasingly using the "starting point" online programme. Said Dave: "This seeks to identify drivers who may be at increased risk of an accident in the future."

Peter Brewer, a senior fleet trainer with the Institute of Advanced Motorists, played a major role in creating a refresher training package for BT drivers in the form of a half-day seminar - for groups of from eight to 12 people - followed by a couple of hours' on-road training in an individual's own vehicle.

“My job is not to teach people how to drive,” he said. “Most of my work is with experienced drivers who put in a lot of mileage and, rightly, they would resent someone who comes along and lays down the law.”

Peter says the ultimate aim of the course is that the driver gains an increased awareness of what constitutes a hazard and how to nip possible problems in the bud.

“My main concern is to make people change the way they think about driving from a safety perspective and not to take anything for granted.”

Here are some of Peter’s top tips for safe driving:

- keep as much space around your vehicle as possible
- aim to keep free at least two of your escape routes of sides, back and front
- slow down well in advance behind another vehicle, and ensure you stay at a sufficient distance to see tyres and tarmac beneath it
- overtake lorries individually on motorways, avoiding doing so when there are flanking lorries on both the inside and middle lanes, and always leaving yourself a space to escape into
- keep well back from the vehicle in front at roundabouts and don’t be in a hurry
- reverse into your parking spot in car parks for greater safety and security, and also, if necessary, for a rapid getaway when you return to your car.

SAFER DRIVING: THE VIEWS OF BT PEOPLE

Following news that London's speed cameras could be replaced with signs telling drivers how fast they are travelling, BT people were asked whether they thought speed cameras make our roads safer or if they believed they are just another way of raising money for the government at motorists' expense.

They were also asked for tips on how to keep down the accident rate in BT which has one of the largest vehicle fleets in Europe and where one of the company's 60,000 drivers reports an accident on average once every 20 minutes.

Here is a selection of the comments received :

Bob T of BT Wholesale: "Cameras do have their place at accident blackspots, but I think speed displays are an excellent idea."

"Many motorists just do not realise the speed that they are travelling in towns. Having a display flash the speed to them makes them think and slow down straight away, whereas a camera take a picture and two weeks later you are told your speed and given a fine."

"My tip for safer motorway driving is to use cruise control, if your have it, to avoid the keeping up with the traffic scenario where your speed increases above the speed limit without you being conscious of it."

Cliff E of BT Retail: "I ride a motorcycle and have learnt several things which are also relevant when driving a car. Always keep a two second gap from the car in front. This not only reduces the chance of running into the car, but it means you don't have to work so hard, therefore reducing the chance of being hit from behind."

"If you are being tail-gated, let the car pass or again increase the distance from the car in front so it reduces the chance of you having to brake hard."

“Constantly look ahead for left and right hand junctions and suspect that someone might pull out without looking. The fact that you have recognised a potential hazard will reduce your reaction time considerably.”

“Plan ahead as far as possible. This way nothing should take you by surprise. Remember, the excuse that ‘he appeared from nowhere’ really means that you weren’t paying attention and did not foresee the potential hazard.”

“Always make sure that the speed you are going enables you to stop in the distance you can see.”

“And finally, think ‘bike’. I agree there are a few nutters out there, but the majority of us take our riding very seriously and simply want to survive.”

George C of BT Global Services: “I have no issue with speed cameras in principle. The problems arise due to inconsistent implementation”.

“They do not seem to have any impact on lorry or motorcycle speeds, which represent the biggest speeds dangers on our roads, so it is difficult to believe the safety argument is the real reason behind their deployment.”

“I understand that half the road deaths in North Wales last year, an area in the vanguard of speed camera deployment, were motorcyclists. I’m sure this ratio is not reflected in the number of motorcycles on the road in this area.”

Ian C of BT Wholesale: “In an effort to reduce stress under congested traffic conditions I try to adopt the policy that where traffic is moving slowly, at most junctions I will allow one car to join or leave as appropriate. I believe that if each of us does the same then all the traffic will flow more smoothly, if perhaps a little slower, but overall with less stress as we will all spend less time waiting to be let out at a junction.”

Karen B of BT Retail: "I think speed cameras serve their purpose when they are clearly visible in the distance. Where they fail and potentially can cause an accident, are occasions when they are hidden or partly concealed. When a camera is not clearly visible drivers will slam on their brakes the minute one comes into view which can cause an accident."

"As a motorist I much prefer the signs that tell you what your speed is. I have come across these in Scotland and from what I have seen think they are more productive."

Martin B of BT Wholesale: "I see examples of bad driving by BT people in liveried vehicles from time to time. People are still using hand held mobiles. But I have no way of feeding it back to the driver or Manager."

"We need a way of identifying the driver /owning unit either with a registration number or fleet number search facility on the internet. If this exists already it needs advertising."

Ian M of BT Retail: "It amazes my how many people drive on sidelights instead of dipped headlights. These vehicles are harder to see than those using headlights. If the majority of other drivers are using dipped headlights then so should you. If the majority are not using lights at all but you think conditions warrant the use of lights then use dipped headlights."

"One last point, turn off your fog lights when there is a vehicle close behind as rear fog lights dazzle."

Keith C of BT Exact: "I've never understood the complaints about speed cameras being money makers. They can only make money from those that break the speed limit and the law."

"I don't think speeding, i.e. going faster than the speed limit, is in itself dangerous. It's going faster than it is safe to do so regardless of the imposed speed limit. Doing 30mph in a 30mph zone when passing a school at the end of the school day, with children running everywhere and cars parking and pulling out, is clearly not safe."

"I never break the speed limit in residential areas and I try to drive at an appropriate speed at all times."

Paula T of BT Global Services: "If you have to stop on the hard shoulder for any reason, ensure you accelerate up the hard shoulder before rejoining the carriageway."

"It is frightening how many inexperienced drivers pull straight onto the carriageway inside lane."

John H of BT Retail: "I believe that more could be done to enhance overall safety of BT's Fleet and in turn avoid costly repairs to vehicles."

"I took delivery of a Vectra last year, and made enquiries to have proximity locators fitted to the rear of the vehicle to provide a greater awareness when parking or manoeuvring in tight areas. I was told that this was not possible, even after offering to pay for these myself, the answer was no."

"This could also be of great help to the many van drivers, who often have to seek parking spaces in busy town centres where space is limited."

"Safety items should not be an added extra but standard for all."

Jim G of BT Wholesale: "I have been driving for thirty nine years without an accident. I don't know if these tips have helped me remain accident free or not, but I am more than happy to share them with others."

"If I need to make a decision, e.g.. to overtake, but am not certain that it is safe I say to myself: 'If in doubt, DON'T!'."

If I think that I have made a silly decision I chastise myself in my head: 'That was a stupid thing to do don't do it again'."

FORTHCOMING EVENTS

Next Meeting : Wednesday 2nd June

Venue : Blunsdon House Hotel

Time : 19:00 for 19:30 start

RAC Patrol complete with breakdown unit talking on his/her duties as a patrol officer.

Don't forget our Annual Car Rally and Barbecue later in the summer.

REMEMBER - FOR ALL THE LATEST NEWS ABOUT YOUR GROUP

**Swindon & District
Group of Advanced Motorists**

Group No. 2288

Welcome to Our Website

The Swindon & District Group of Advanced Motorists offers guidance to those who want to improve their driving skills. We cater for everyone on four wheels. Most members take and pass the Advanced Driving Test and become full members of the Institute of Advanced Motorists. We also have a wide ranging social programme open to full members and associates, including a regular monthly meeting at the Blunsdon House Hotel - [click here](#) for details and directions.

Use the Navigation Buttons to find out more.

We hope that you find our site useful and invite you to contact us - [click here](#) for details.

NEWS AND UPCOMING EVENTS

*Our next meeting is on Wednesday 12th November (not the 5th).
[Click here for details.](#)*

*The next edition of the Newsletter will be available at the meeting.
Articles for publication welcome - [click here](#) to email.*

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Swindon & District Group of Advanced Motorists
Registered Charity No 1050397

Don't forget to visit our website
<http://www.swindondrivers.com>