



Mid Wales Matters



The Newsletter of Mid Wales Advanced Motorists

Web site: mwam.powys.org.uk

I AM a better road user ...

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Chairman's Comment

Getting out of a Hole.

"We're in a pretty pickle this time, darling. What do you suggest we do?"

"I'm thinking, Gordon. We could hit motorists again, I suppose. Do you think they'll object?"

"They didn't like the road mileage tax scheme, so we'll have to think up another devious scheme. How about.....a justice tax. We'll call it a "victims' surcharge. Nobody'll twig it until after the elections over, and then it'll be too late"

"Darling, you're a genius."

Well, this is on the way to becoming law if this government has its way. A £15 surcharge will be added to the following fixed penalty offences: ignoring parking regulations, ignoring a "stop" sign, speeding, having dirt-obstructed number-plates, having dirty windows or insufficient tyre tread, crossing double white lines.

Of course, this is just another stealth tax – a polite term for highway robbery. At least Dick Turpin had the decency to wear a mask!

Francis Torrens

Editor's Spot

****Don't forget AGM on Saturday 6th March 10****

It seems that thousands of workers at Southern Energy have been told that they must reverse into parking spaces at their offices. Failure to do so will apparently result in disciplinary action. The company has taken this step because "reversing into a static parking bay is safer than reversing out into a road which may have heavy traffic or a car park which may have pedestrian movement which you cannot easily see."

Not unexpectedly this measure has angered some employees. They point out that the Health and Safety Executive has set no guidelines for parking, and that the view of the Royal Society for the Prevention of Accidents is as follows: "In general it is preferable to allow the driver a choice, depending on the car park layout or circumstance."

Employees have also been told that they must hold on to the handrail when using stairs. It would seem that Southern Energy is trying to outdo the Government with its policy of extreme nannification.

The AA has said that a family with two cars is now paying an average of about £12.50 more for petrol than a year ago. Average petrol prices are now 111.83p a litre compared with 86.63p this time last year. Diesel has gone up by about 16p. The return to the 17.5% vat rate plus an increase in oil prices have inevitably led to an increase in the cost of food.

Asda is offering the cheapest petrol (107.83p) with Yorkshire and Humberside slightly ahead at 110.7p. The dearest is allegedly in East Anglia and London, 112.6p

Clearly the AA's researchers didn't get as far as Llandrindod Wells!

Annual General Meeting

You are cordially invited by the group committee to the 6th Annual General Meeting of Mid Wales Advanced Motorists which this year is being held at 2:00pm on Saturday 6th March 2010 at the New Inn, Llanbadarn Fynydd, LD1 6YA. The New Inn is located at Llanbadarn Fynydd on the A483 and is almost equidistant from Llandrindod Wells and Newtown. This is to enable the trustees of the group to present their annual report and accounts for the year ended 31 December 2009 for approval by the members and also to conduct an election.

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

Geoff Smith

Membership Renewal 2010

We thank the 75% of members who have already renewed their membership for 2010 and for their continued support. Annual subscription for group membership is due on 1st January each year and renewal notices were sent out at the end of last year requesting payment of the £10 fee. Over half our membership pays their subscription by banker's standing order and this is the preferred method to ensure that membership does not lapse. If you have not received your membership renewal notice and MWAM membership card for 2010 please let the membership secretary know and these will be sent to you again. Members are also asked to return the 'Renewal of MWAM Membership' form in the addressed envelope provided. This contains the details held on each member and affords the opportunity to amend any of these. This form should be returned to the membership secretary even if all details are correct as its primary purpose is for each member to declare that they are current members of the IAM. They are asked to enter the expiry date of their **IAM membership** on this form. Unfortunately unless you hold a current IAM membership you are not allowed to join a local group and we are not permitted to accept your renewal. If you have not yet returned your renewal form and/or payment please do so as soon as possible. Equally if for some reason you have decided not to renew please return your membership card with your resignation confirmation.

Geoff Smith - Membership Secretary

Publicity and Events

The next event at which we would very much appreciate your support is on Saturday, February 27th at Morrison's supermarket car park in Aberystwyth. Our display will be there from 10am until 4pm. Please let Nigel Godman know if you can spare an hour or so to assist us. His contact details can be found at the end of the Newsletter.

Just to whet your appetite – a Ferrari will appear at our gazebo!

In Brief

A shopping centre in China has opened a car park that offers woman drivers wider than normal parking spaces to accommodate what it sees as their "special needs." One of these is "a different sense of distance."

Driving in China is notoriously dangerous with nearly 73,500 people killed in accidents last year – just over 200 a day.

Martyn Jarman, 72, has bought back the car he got for his 21st birthday. He paid £10,500 for the rare prewar British Salmson that his father bought for £20 in 1958. Mr Jarman sold it in 1961 to pay for his wedding. "My marriage didn't last," he said, "but fortunately the car did."

Older Drivers are Safest

Drivers over 70 are no more likely to cause crashes than any other driver, and are considerably safer than younger drivers, according to a report published by the IAM.

Neil Greig, IAM Director of Policy and Research said: "The report contradicts the common assumption that older drivers are a danger on the roads. Just eight per cent of drivers are over 70 and they are involved in around four per cent of injury crashes. But 15 per cent of drivers are in their teens and 20s and they are involved in 34 per cent of injury crashes."

Older people rely heavily on their cars, and the ability to drive gives many older people better mobility and access to more activities. Men in their seventies make more trips as car drivers than men in their late teens and 20s.

Mr. Greig added: "The IAM recommends that, rather than seeking to prevent older people from driving, we need to make them aware of the risks they face, and offer them driving assessments to help them cope with these risks."

Greg Lewis of Age Concern/Help the Aged said: "We believe that where drivers wish to continue behind the wheel beyond the age of 70, only convincing reasons should prevent them from doing so."



Mr. Lewis added: "An elderly person's risk of being killed or suffering a serious injury as a result of a road crash is between two and five times greater than that of a younger person because of their increased physical frailty."



Other key findings:

- In the next 20 years the number of male drivers over 70 will double, female drivers will treble.
- Drivers over 70 are safer on bends and overtaking than 50 year olds, but are more at risk at roundabouts, junctions and slip roads on high speed roads.
- In some traffic situations, older drivers are less likely to be in a crash because they tend to adopt a more careful and restrained driving style.
- No particular age was identified where there is sudden increase in crash involvement.
- Older drivers self regulate and take fewer trips on motorways, in poor light or wet weather, or at peak times.
- Drivers over 85 are four times more likely to have caused a crash than to have been an innocent victim of one.
- Crashes in which older women are to blame peak about five years earlier than those for older men.

"The IAM strongly believes that there is no case for compulsory retesting of older drivers at an arbitrary age. More research is needed on the best age to renew driving licences and there needs to be a wider debate on the introduction of restricted licensing," said Mr. Greig.

New Members

Congratulations and a warm welcome to the following associates who were successful in their IAM Advanced Driving  or Riding Test 

Name	Location	Observer	Date
Paul Kingsley 	Refail, Welshpool	Chris England /Mike Hilton	Nov 09
Roger Mantle 	Newtown	Nigel Godman/ Angela Davies-Jones	Jan 10

Associate Course Dates

Denotes Car Course



Denotes Motorcycle Course

Course	Start Date	Day	Times		Location
10/2	24/03/2010	Wednesday	7:00 PM	9:30 PM	The Bracken Trust, Llandrindod Wells
10/3	26/05/2010	Wednesday	7:00 PM	9:30 PM	The Bracken Trust, Llandrindod Wells
10/4	28/07/2010	Wednesday	7:00 PM	9:30 PM	The Bracken Trust, Llandrindod Wells
10/5	29/09/2010	Wednesday	7:00 PM	9:30 PM	The Bracken Trust, Llandrindod Wells

Static Observer Training Dates

Date	Day	Times		Location
20/03/2010	Saturday	10:00 AM	12:00 PM	The Bracken Trust, Llandrindod Wells
07/07/2010	Wednesday	7:00 PM	9:00 PM	The Bracken Trust, Llandrindod Wells
31/10/2010	Sunday	2:00 PM	4:00 PM	The Bracken Trust, Llandrindod Wells

Please note that all the above-published dates and venues may be subject to change due to circumstances beyond the committee's control. For the latest information, visit our web site: mwam.powys.org.uk or contact the group secretary.

Please contact our Chief Observer Paul Wilson if you require any further details.

Note that all driving observer training sessions are now organised by Area Observer Co-ordinators who should be contacted for the dates and venues of each area session.

Your Committee

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