



Mid Wales Matters



The Newsletter of Mid Wales Advanced Motorists

New Web site: mwam.btck.co.uk

I AM a better road user ...

Volume 10, Issue 3

Registered Charity Number 1109484

In this issue:

From the Chairman	1
Editor's Spot	1
DVLA Selling Data	2
End of Car DIY?	2
Hydrogen Power	2
Casualty Figures Down	2
Member Presentation	3
New Members	3
Associate Courses	4
Observer dates	4
Committee	4

From the Chairman



There's a chance of new life for your old tyres. Long gone are the days of dumping tyres in landfill - this was made illegal in 2006. There are now much better uses for old tyres. The good news is that through the small environmental charge paid to tyre retailers by drivers changing their tyres results in many innovative and different ways to find new uses for waste tyres, including being recycled for carpet underlay, running tracks and artificial sports pitches.

A new tyre recycling scheme will now give motorists the chance to help out the planet when changing their worn out tyres. Approximately forty million waste car and van tyres are generated each year and now there is a responsible way of disposing of them.

Mike Wilson, president, Tyre Recovery Association, said "historically, drivers didn't really know what happened to their old tyres once they were removed from their vehicle. However, from now on, if they go to a 'Responsible

Retailer' they can have the confidence that their tyres are being disposed of legally and perhaps more importantly, in an environmentally friendly manner as possible. "A 'Responsible Retailer' is a retailer who meets a strict set of guidelines who therefore displays the 'Responsible Retailer' badge which has been launched and backed by influential organizations including Motor Codes the government backed self-regulatory body for the motor industry, as well as the Independent Garage Association's 'Trust My Garage' scheme and the Environment Agency. To earn the 'Responsible Retailer' status, garages will be independently audited to ensure the waste tyres they generate are collected by authorised handlers who then dispose of them in the proper manner. Drivers using a 'Responsible Retailer' can then have total confidence that the tyres being removed from their vehicle are being dealt with and reprocessed in a legal and environmentally friendly manner.

To find the location of your nearest 'Responsible Retailer' or for more information about tyre recycling then visit: tyrerecovery.org.uk.

Editor's Spot

A recent survey of 1,705 parents and 373 learner drivers has discovered that almost half of the parents (45 per cent) were worried they'd pass on their own bad habits – speeding, being rubbish at checking their mirrors – to their offspring if they took on the role of driving instructor. Half of the teenagers polled were more worried about being shouted at.

I was fortunate – my father, who taught me all the way to the test, was a very calm and cautious character. My mother helped me with my driving practice by directing me to country pubs, filling her boots and slurrily directing me home. Not an IAM approved method, of course, but aggro I had none!

DVLA selling data to parking firms

The DVLA is earning millions of pounds selling motorists' contact details to parking and clamping firms, the Daily Mail has reported. The Government body - that is trusted by the nation to oversee the vehicle registration scheme - therefore received £10.4 million in 2012 from parking enforcement companies. This was preceded by £9 million in 2011 and £2.4 million in 2010. The total over the last three years is therefore £21.8 million. But why? Supermarket, shopping centre, and hospital car parks can now be monitored by closed-circuit television and number plate recognition systems. These enable parking firms to log the times vehicles enter and leave the premises. If motorists overstay their welcome - perhaps while visiting sick relatives in hospital - the enforcement companies can purchase their contact details for £2.50 per-person from the DVLA. Drivers then receive penalty notices via the post which can be extremely expensive. If these fines are not paid within specified periods they can increase considerably. Whereas parking fines are unpleasant, they are tolerable if the enforcers operate responsibly. However, the Daily Mail reported that more than twenty firms were banned from buying information for three months last year for breaches such as failing to provide adequate parking signs.

Graham Stringer, a Labour MP on the Commons Transport Select Committee, told the Daily Mail: "I do think some of the firms buying the DVLA's information are crooks - and certainly in the past they have used violent and threatening behaviour - and I don't think that is the right thing for the DVLA to be doing. Even when firms are approved there is no proper way of examining them. This is wrong and improper use of people's private information."

A DVLA spokesperson said that "information is only provided under strict controls" and that if a company does not meet the standards it will "stop the release of keeper information". Furthermore, the spokesperson claimed that their fees merely cover "the cost of processing applications". This expense must be considerable. The Daily Mail has therefore reported that Parking Eye - the DVLA's most prolific customer - spent £899,000 in 2012. Others include: Experian Aldermaston (£746,190), Ranger Services (£624,160), Town & City Parking (£245,070), HPI Ltd Equifax (£226,988), and Roxburghe UK Ltd (£218,903). Creative Car Park and G24 Ltd also spent over £100,000 each in 2012.

The End of Car DIY?

Warranty Direct has conducted a study that reveals that do-it-yourself repairs on cars is fast becoming a long lost art due to our cars becoming 'computers on wheels'. Duncan McClure Fisher, Warranty Direct's managing directors said "the days of changing oil, filters and replacing light bulbs on the driveway are fast becoming a thing of the past in some cases, they already are." Unable to carry out these tasks themselves, car owners are paying millions of pounds a year to garages to do the work for them, with average labour costs now reaching £ 96 an hour and some charging as much as £ 200.

The well-known cars such as the Renault Clio and Ford Fiesta are now built so complicated and high tech that it would take a professional mechanic to change a headlamp ninety-six minutes on the Clio and approximately half an hour on the Fiesta. Even to change the car's engine oil and filter is pushing on to forty minutes. With parts and labour these are bills we could do without.

Mr McClure Fisher pointed out that back in 1994 it took ten minutes to change the headlamp on an Audi A4 and the bulb would have cost £ 6.12, now in 2013 the equivalent model would not only need the bulb replacing but the whole light cluster would cost three times as much and nearly an hour in labour time. Garel Rhys, President of the Society for Automotive Research at Cardiff University said "the rot started with sealed beam systems which means you can't even change a headlamp."

Roadside rescue company the AA conducted a survey last year that showed seven drivers out of 10 did not know how to check the engine's oil level, while one driver in ten did not even know how to open the car bonnet. They also revealed that nine per cent of their members had put off the most simple tasks such as replacing blown bulbs or wiper blades, while more than one in four drivers do not carry out the most basic checks such as oil, water and tyres.

GM and Honda to Develop Hydrogen Powered Car

General Motors and Honda have confirmed they will co-create the next generation of hydrogen-powered vehicles by the end of the decade. Joining forces, of course, will enable these motor manufacturers to share expertise and benefit from numerous economies of scale. There are also plans to enhance the hydrogen refuelling infrastructure that must be convenient to use and widely available before motorists embrace this type of transport. And it seems that the partnership has the potential to succeed.

General Motors Chairman and Chief Executive Officer, Dan Akerson, said: "this collaboration builds upon Honda and GM's strengths as leaders in hydrogen fuel cell technology", and "this is the best way to develop this important technology which has the potential to help reduce the dependence on petroleum and establish sustainable mobility".

A hydrogen-powered vehicle – much like a traditional alternative – stores its fuel in a tank. This hydrogen is then propelled through a fuel cell that mixes it with oxygen to create the electricity that powers the car's electric motor. In turn, this spins the wheels and fuels secondary systems such as the radio. This set-up has several advantages over today's vehicles. Firstly – unlike a petrol, diesel or hybrid – a hydrogen car only emits water vapour and heat rather than hazardous pollutants. Clearly, this is good news for the planet that some claim is fast running out of fossil fuels. It also eliminates the two major flaws that currently limit the practicality of battery-powered cars: range and refuelling time. A hydrogen vehicle can therefore travel far further and be charged in minutes rather than hours. So, it seems that hydrogen cars might be common in the future – assuming the technology/infrastructure can be produced en-masse for a fair cost.

Casualty Figures Down

The Department for Transport has revealed that last year's casualty figures were the lowest since records began in the mid-twenties. As such, the number of people killed on the roads – in cases reported to the police – fell from 1,901 in 2011 to 1,754 in 2012. Furthermore, the number of people seriously injured on the roads fell from 23,112 to 23,039. However, the number of cyclists killed increased by 10%, from 107 in 2011 to 118.

The Institute of Advanced Motorists Director of Policy and Research, Neil Greig, said: "IAM welcomes a return to the long-term improvements in road safety. Last year was a clear warning for government that complacency in road safety cost lives." Mr Greig added: "The IAM has always warned that failing to match investment in segregated facilities with the growing numbers of cyclists would lead to an increase in death and serious injury and this worrying trend continues. A 10% increase in cycling deaths in a year when the weather suppressed cycling trips is a real red danger signal that simply cannot be ignored."



Member Presentation




Bill Smith from Newtown is pictured on the left receiving his IAM certificate from, and being congratulated by, Mike Lovelock the IAM Staff Examiner at the observers meeting held at the Bracken Trust on 3rd July 2013.

Bill was awarded a **FIRST** grade, which is only given to those associates who achieve a score of 1 in virtually every category. IAM Examiners do have the discretion to recommend a candidate even if they score a '2' in no more than three categories although Legality and Slow Manoeuvring must score a '1'.




New Members

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

Name	Location	Observer	Date
Peter Roberts 	Builth Wells	Humphrey Morgan	Dec 12
Bill Smith  FIRST	Newtown	Angela Davies-Jones	March 13
Caroline White 	Llanrhystud	Rees Thomas	March 13

Associate Course Dates

 Denotes Car Course  Denotes Motorcycle Course

Course	Start Date	Day	Times		Location
 13/4	25/09/2013	Wednesday	7:00 PM	9:30 PM	Bracken Trust, Llandrindod Wells

Static Observer Training Dates

Date	Day	Times		Location
26/10/2013	Saturday	2:00PM	4:00PM	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 Secretary Geoff Smith if you require any further details.**

Your Committee

GROUP CHAIRMAN Francis Torrens	Ael-y-Bryn, Plas Heulog, Milford Road Newtown, Powys SY16 2EQ	01686 622019 frank.torrens1@btinternet.com
SECRETARY & MEMBERSHIP SEC. Geoff Smith	Heddfan, Cortay Park, Llanyre Llandrindod Wells, Powys LD1 6DT	01597 823442 geoff.smith@gcs104.plus.com
TREASURER & CHIEF OBSERVER Nigel Godman	21 Park Avenue, Kerry Newtown, Powys SY16 4DA	01686 670176 ngodman0@googlemail.com
OBSERVER CO-ORDINATOR - SOUTH Humphrey Morgan	Kielder, Ithon Road Llandrindod Wells, Powys LD1 6AS	01597 822082 humph@btinternet.com
MOTORCYCLE CO-ORDINATOR David Tompsett	Catton, Pont Robert, Meifod, Powys SY22 6RB	01938 500789 dandjtomp@yahoo.co.uk
Pat Allen	Tan House Cottage, Dolau Llandrindod Wells, Powys LD1 6TL	01597 851668 patriciaj.allen@btinternet.com
Mandy Giordano	Maesmelan, New Radnor Presteigne, Powys LD8 2TN	01544 350297 mgiordano@agrins.co.uk
Howard Roberts-Jones	56 Dolforgan View, Kerry Newtown, Powys SY16 4DZ	01686 670502 webmaster@mid-wales.net
OBSERVER CO-ORDINATOR - NORTH Vacant		
MOTORCYCLE CO-ORDINATOR Vacant		
NEWSLETTER EDITOR (Non-Committee) Berwyn Woolnough	50 Lakeside Avenue, Llandrindod Wells, Powys LD1 5NT	01597 823217 ridge50@btinternet.com

Mid Wales Advanced Motorists (MWAM) publish this Newsletter to provide a means of communication within the group to Members and Associates. The opinions are those of the Editor and individual contributors and do not necessarily represent the view of MWAM or the Institute of Advanced Motorists to which it is affiliated.