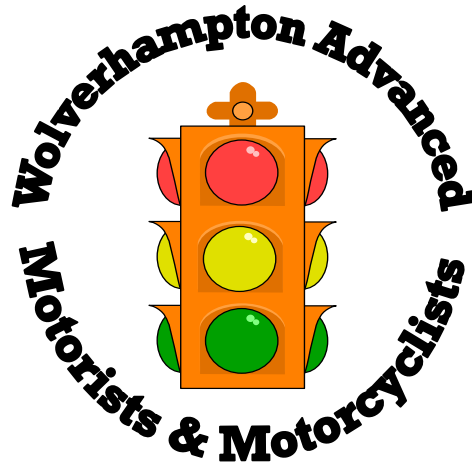




Group 3081



Registered Charity No: 1053330



"The Responsible Motorist"

Newsletter

Affiliated to:



Registered Charity No: 249002

Winter 2001



INTRODUCTION

This is the official publication of the
Wolverhampton Advanced Motorists & Motorcyclists (W.A.M.M.)
Registered Charity Number 1053330

We are affiliated to the
Institute of Advanced Motorists (I.A.M.)
Registered Charity Number 249002

If you require more information
about the Group or the Institute please contact:

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I.A.M. Web Site: www.iam.org.uk



DISCLAIMER

PLEASE NOTE: The views expressed in this newsletter are not necessarily those of the Group, or that of the IAM-London, but are those of the contributor(s).

Contents

▪ INTRODUCTION	2
▪ CONTENTS	3
▪ EVENTS & MEETINGS	4
▪ MEETING LOCATION – MAP & DIRECTIONS	5
▪ CONTACT LIST	6
▪ MEMO TO ASSOCIATES	6
▪ CHAIRMAN’S COMMENT	7
▪ FROM THE EDITOR	8
▪ FROM YOUR CHIEF OBSERVER	
- ‘The Near Miss’	
- ‘Driver Fatigue’ (IAM Fact Sheet – 13 Dec 2001)	9
▪ WELCOME TO NEW MEMBERS	10
▪ CONGRATULATIONS TO TEST PASSES	10
▪ FRIENDS OF THE GROUP	10
▪ GRIEVENCES	10
▪ NOTICE TO ALL FULL / ASSOCIATE MEMBERS	10
▪ GROUP REGALIA	11
▪ GROUP INFORMATION	12
- Fees	13
- Membership Renewal	13
- Membership Application Form	14
- Change of Address details, etc.	15
▪ REFRESHER DRIVES	16
▪ LETTERS	16
▪ ARTICLES	17
- Sandwell Twinning Association	17
- Actual Insurance Form statements	17
- It’s a jungle out there ...	19
- Older Drivers	19
- Road Rage	20
▪ I.A.M. NEWS RELEASES / FACTS & FIGURES	21
- The Advanced Driving Test.	21
- IAM warns of ‘Breezy Riders’ as scooter commuters face their first winter	22
- Mobile Phone abuse now ‘Most annoying habit’ says IAM Survey	22
▪ JOKES	24
▪ VIDEOS	25
▪ SKID-PAN DRIVING	25

Events & Meetings



*PLEASE NOTE:

- THAT UNLESS OTHERWISE STATED ALL DATES ARE 'WEDNESDAY'
- OUR VENUE FOR OUR MONTHLY MEETINGS IS – 'THE FRIENDS MEETING HOUSE' IN WOLVERHAMPTON - SEE THE MAP AND DIRECTIONS ON THE FOLLOWING PAGE (No.5 of 25)

9TH January 2002

7pm – 'Associate Night - Part 1'

Associates – Please attend!!

Evening with your Chief / Senior Observers

8pm – 'Driver Attitude'

Talk by John Bagley and Vic Lewis – Staffordshire Police

12TH January 2002 – **Saturday 7pm prompt.**

'A Tour of the Goldthorne Brewery, Wolverhampton'

by the owner, Paul Bradburn.

Contact: Garth Jones (see page 6)

20 places maximum available for this visit.

£5 per person to cover 'sampling' – payable on the night.

12TH February 2002 – **Tuesday 6.45 for 7pm start.**

'Visit to the RAC Centre (M6)'

- 1½ hour Tour of this establishment for a maximum of 30 people

Contact: Paul Williamson (see page 6)

Please contact Paul – asap/pdq by 7th January latest

– this has proven to be a very popular evening on past visits!

13TH February 2002

7pm – 'Associate Night - Part 2'

Associates – Please attend!!

Evening with your Chief / Senior Observers

8pm – 'Advanced Driving with the Fire Service'

Talk by Kevin Cartwright – West Midlands Fire Service (Wolverhampton Station)

13TH March 2002

7pm – 'Observer Night'

Associates – Please attend!!

Evening with your Chief / Senior Observers

8pm – 'The Work of the Road Policing Unit'

Talk by Mark Wakelam and Ralph Haworth – West Midlands Police

10TH April 2002

8pm – 'Driving Skills for the Car Driver and the Motorcyclist'

Talk by Joe Brookes – former Chief Observer (Cars & Motorcycles) of this Group for many years.

14TH May 2002

□□ **8pm – 'ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING'**

□□ **ALL MEMBERS AND ASSOCIATES ARE REQUESTED TO ATTEND THIS MEETING.**

Your commitment to Road Safety and your Group is needed.

12TH June 2002

8pm - 'Examiners Night'

Talk by IAM Staff / Local Examiners (Names tba) with Question & Answer Session

- Your chance to put them 'on the spot'!

"Being there - gains other insights and the latest NEWS!"



We are here!

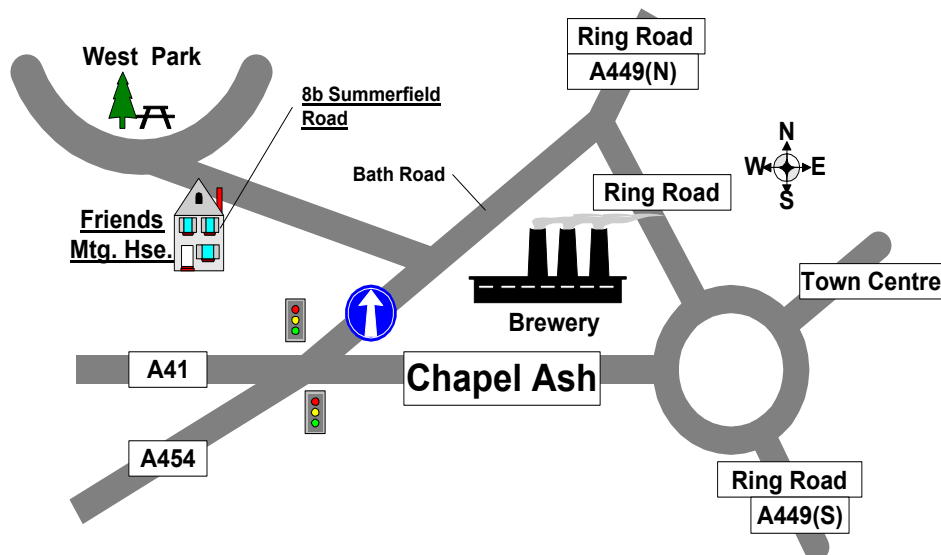
Venue for our Group Monthly Meetings

Is at:

- The Friends Meeting House
8b Summerfield Road
Wolverhampton WV1 4PR

As you get to the gate - follow down the drive towards the back of this property and its car park. The Meeting House is at the very back – a single story building with glass entrance doors.

We are sure that you will find this new venue much more central to our catchment area. Hopefully it will also encourage a higher attendance.



- This map shows that Bath Road is a 'one way road' – albeit briefly - when approached from Chapel Ash.
- You cannot turn right into Bath Road - when coming out of town down (A41) Chapel Ash.
- Taking the Ring Road from Chapel Ash Roundabout - you will need to turn first left into Bath Road then second right to Summerfield Road.
- For other approaches please consult your 'A-Z'.

Contact List - Committee & Trustees

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-Motorcycles
(see – Chairman)

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TEST ADMINISTRATOR

(See - Associate Controller)

EVENTS CO-ORDINATOR

****V A C A N T****

PUBLICITY OFFICER

****VACANT****

ADDITIONAL TRUSTEES

****VACANT****

Memo to Associates

- ❑ **All Associates should be aware that once they are allocated an observer** - it is their responsibility to keep in touch with that observer.
- ❑ **Even if you are unable to make an appointment for a run out in any particular week** - it is up to the associate to telephone the observer and say so. Our observers work on a voluntary basis and have lives of their own to fit around their observing. It is only courteous to let them know when you are unavailable for an observed run.
- ❑ **If associates do not keep in touch with their observer** - it will be assumed that they are no longer active and the observer will be assigned to someone else on the waiting list. Observers are a scarce resource and we have to utilise their availability to the best advantage for all concerned.
- ❑ **When you finally get to the point where you pass the test** – let us know via your observer. If we don't know about your success, we can't celebrate it with you. We are sure that you appreciate the effort and time that your observer has given to you and that you will thank that person personally and possibly through a letter to your newsletter.
- ❑ **Please be considerate** - for the benefit of all concerned.

Geoff Davis - Associate Controller

Chairman's Comment

- It is a pleasure to see that associates are attaining the advanced standard through our Observer guidance and complimenting the process. But, continuing to advertise advanced skills and ourselves we have had no new associates since the last newsletter! Members sometimes ask for their driving to be observed or, after buying a different car, we are glad to help to keep the standard. Note the 'Refresher Drives' and of course standards have to be maintained as an Observer and then there's the 'Ultimate IAM Test'.
- For all, please remember that both Group meetings and '*The Responsible Motorist*' NEED your involvement, it's just not the same without you! Your friends are welcome too.

Please make every effort to attend the meetings, as I am sure they will be enlightening. With the gentle pace of modern life (tongue in cheek), we may find that there are other commitments on the Group night. Book one of them early in the diary, take it in turns with the other events. Also, the Group night brings the latest news!

- It has been said, '*Everything has its beauty, but not everyone sees it.*' Confucius (c550-478 BC). Although he was not an Advanced Motorist, I am sure we have experienced the beauty of seeing road users and road situations, having used observation links, acceleration sense, etc and so made the drive/ride a personal enjoyment. We know that drivers miss seeing problems, but maybe we can take personal pride with our craft on the road when our passengers remain quietly unaware of our actions. (Especially if we don't give it away in a commentary!) The Advanced way is a personal answer to road rage, more need it!

What a wonderful experience it is, to see the Advanced skill working with your use of the vehicle on the road and then the joy too of seeing your associate realising and applying it.

New drivers need experience but ideally they shouldn't have the expense, etc with bad or lazy habits before seeing a safer way! Incidentally, a new driver can take the Advanced Test after 3 months of having passed the L-Test. It is said that human error is the cause of 95% motoring accidents incidents. The Advanced Motorist reduces this by 50% - 70%, leaving 25% - 45% for ongoing Advanced Motoring! The beauty of seeing – well before the incident.

I wonder if Confucius came across potholes, spilt oil, raised manhole covers, . . . ?

- The Government's Driving Standards Agency recognizes the IAM as the largest provider of advanced tests and that the Advanced Test is the highest qualification available to the public. It is to help with promoting Advanced Motoring through a safer culture of driving for life.
- Graham Linton has stepped down as Chief Observer due to work and time commitments. He is to be commended on representing us and discussing learning methods with other Groups, guiding Observers through the new manual and being a responsible resource. Many thanks for all of your hard work.
- Geoff Davis has returned as our new Chief Observer, many thanks for your continuing work in the Group.
- **All Observers** - please e-mail Geoff asap so that he has your current e.mail address on file.

A very Happy Christmas and safe New Year.

Advance the view, anticipation and action.

Garth

From the Editor

Hopefully this issue will have reached you before that seasonal advanced deer sleigh driver has appeared and left all you good people with plenty of prezzies and good cheer! I do trust you have all behaved yourselves this past few months – well – just a little perhaps? Do enjoy yourselves and be good – and – if you can't be good for heaven's sake be careful out there! We live in a dangerous world these days.

Group Membership

You should have paid by now for membership renewal. If you have not renewed please use the form in this newsletter or from your last issue.

Your Group Committee needs you!

We continue to ask for your time and commitment to your group. We are in need of new blood on the committee so that the running can be evenly distributed to give members old and new a better group - one that has a future!

Your Group Newsletter:

1. What is missing from it? In a nutshell – contributions from yourselves.
 - Only three persons from the membership has sent anything since the last issue beyond those from your Committee Members that appear in this issue. We do need your input to reflect a Group Newsletter.
2. How could it be improved? Your constructive comments would be appreciated. Remember these should be supported by possible solutions.
3. What do you particularly like about it? It nice to hear this also, so that we can continue a theme, common topic articles, etc.

Your articles, letters, comments, etc. are always welcome.

These can be sent to me by post either written or on a diskette. Ideally e.mail is best as an attached file. Items sent on diskette or by e.mail should preferably be in Word.doc format, which saves me having to create your detail again. Should they not be part of the following issue please be assured that they will be put on file and used.

****CONTRIBUTORS - PLEASE NOTE: the closing date for any input into your Spring / Summer Issue is – Saturday March 30th 2002.** Material for inclusion does not just appear like magic! 'Harry Potter' is fictional, folks!

Events:

- Ideas for future Group Events – would be gratefully received from you at any time. They will need to have some detail to go with them so that they can be looked at and actioned.
- Those mentioned on the Events page plus those that appear elsewhere – could you give some real time to support these happenings? Please enter them into your diaries!

E-Mail Addresses

Have you got an e-mail address?

- If so please tell your Membership Secretary, Paul Williamson and myself by sending us a test message identifying your address.
- Should you fill in the 'Group Membership Form' / 'Change of Address Details' at any time please complete the e-mail part.
- Knowing your electronic address will enable us to contact you better and quicker.

In closing my ramblings, may I ask you to contribute to your group's future by giving it some of your time and effort. The group is you!

Tony Robson (robson@jantony.freemove.co.uk – see Committee Contacts page also)

From your Chief Observer

****FULL AND ASSOCIATE MEMBERS** -- CARS & MOTORCYCLES**

Please note on 'Observed Runs / Rides' and 'Pre-Tests' – a valid Group Membership card must be produced upon request. Should this card not be shown or be invalid that particular activity cannot take place.

Keep looking ahead - be aware something may go wrong.

Whilst driving along a road on a clear day, with good visibility, in an area of 'up to 40mph', with no vehicles in front, I approached a gradient over a canal bridge. On the other side of the canal, from a T-junction on the left, a large furniture van type vehicle appeared. I saw the vehicle had pulled up at the Give Way sign, so I pressed on, cautiously. With only a glance round he drove on, turning to his right, unaware that a vehicle was on the main road, and was so close to the junction. Thinking time was cut down dramatically to about a second or so. In this time I chose to use the junction slip lane. Fortunately, the lorry driver continued with the maneuver. As I was about to steer round the back of his vehicle, he made a 'sorry' gesture through his side window meaning he had made an error, by not looking to his right for another couple of seconds before driving off. The car following the lorry from the T-junction was watching what was happening, and held back, I was then able to go behind the lorry and back onto the main road. From start to finish, the total time was about 10 - 15 seconds, during this time I was very concerned! Although I had considered braking on the main road, everything had happened so fast, I felt it was better to brake and steer round the situation. In this instance, I was fortunate in having 'an escape route', which came in handy!

It is so important to be aware of the immediate features; such as road surface, what is the condition? Is it dry, wet, muddy, does it have loose material at the side, not normally used by vehicles? If this is the case and use of these areas are necessary; they may induce skids and perhaps loss of control. Of course, speed should not be ignored, as it tends to be a feature in many situations. Had I have been travelling faster, for instance, the end result may have been different. Situations like this one, can happen in moments.

IAM Fact Sheet No. 15/001 - Driver Fatigue (Issued 13th December 2001)

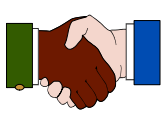
Driver sleepiness is thought to cause at least ten percent of all road accidents and as many as one in four accidents on motorways and trunk roads. Over 39,000 serious injuries and nearly 3,500 deaths occurred on roads in the UK last year, according to DTLR statistics. Drowsiness is now considered to be a major cause; the killer claiming more lives than alcohol. Falling asleep at the wheel is increasingly preceded by feelings of increasing sleepiness that drivers are aware of but often ignore. They will wind down the window, turn up the radio, stretch etc, but drive on.

Neither these latter methods nor the willpower to stay awake have much effect in overcoming sleepiness. The IAM has prepared this advice:

- Drivers should plan their journeys with the potential problems of sleepiness in mind.
- If they feel tired, drivers should get off the road, find a safe parking place, drink one or two cans of energy drink.
- One can of a 'functional energy drink' will almost eliminate this level of sleepiness and sleep related driving impairments for about an hour after being absorbed by the body.
- Two cans of a 'functional energy drink' will almost eliminate this level of sleepiness and sleep related driving impairments for 90 minutes after being absorbed. But nevertheless, drivers should get adequate sleep, and not see functional energy drinks as a substitute for sleep.
- Men are more at risk of having a sleep related accident as they drive faster, have an over-confident image of their driving skills and are less likely to stop and take a break if they feel tired.
- Most accidents happen between 2-6 a.m. and mid afternoon between 2-4 p.m., when the body's natural clock is set at daily low points. Be aware of the additional risk driving at these times.

Do drive safely!

Geoff Davis. (Chief Observer Cars)



Welcome - and Congratulations !



New Members

Welcome to: -

Car Associates:

-

Motorcycle Associates:

-

- on joining the Group.

Advanced Test Passes

Congratulations to: -

Car:

Patrick Bough
Mel Roberts
David Williams
Barbara Linton

Observer:

Bill Goodreds
Andrew Poller
Richard Lloyd Jones

HGV:

Phil Denning

Observer:

Garth Jones

REMEMBER - one good way to **maintain** your proven skills is to become an Observer yourself. By passing your expertise in this way onto others you can enjoy their success also! A further contribution to road safety from you and your assigned associates.

Friends of the Group

Members may not be aware but there are the following categories of Group membership:

- Group Full Member
- Group Associate Member
- Group Honorary Member, and
- Group Friend

The 'Group Friend' category is defined within the group rules as a member of the public that can be accepted as 'a group friend' in the absence of special reasons rendering an applicant unacceptable. This category of membership is not intended for those who have been Group Full Members, for those who have been and are no longer IAM Members, or for those who have been Group Associate Members unless they have taken and failed the IAM Advanced Test and may only be awarded by the individual decision of the Group Committee.

****ATTENTION: - TO ALL FULL / ASSOCIATE MEMBERS****

Grievances

We volunteer to work for the improvement of road safety through better driver and rider skills. We wish to inform all in the Group, that if anyone feels that they have a grievance, then please make contact with the committee as soon as possible, so that information and experiences can be made clear and settled in a timely manner.



Group 3081

Group Regalia



Registered Charity No: 108330

MA 1 Jacket (Black)	£26.50
Sweatshirt (Black, Red, White)	£13.50
Polo shirt (Black, Red, White)	£10.00

All of the above are inclusive of being embroidered with either the car or motorcycle logo.

ORDER FORMS ARE AVAILABLE THROUGH GARTH JONES.

Tax Disc Holders (Car)	£1.00
Reflective IAM logos (Red or Green self adhesive)	£1.00 pair
Motorcycle fairing stickers (Group logo)	£1.00 pair
Helmet ('DO NOT REMOVE' etc.)	£1.00 pair

AVAILABLE FROM - GARTH JONES

Wolverhampton **A**dvanced **M**otorists and **M**otorcyclists



(Group 3081)
(Registered Charity No. 1053330)

Group Secretary:
Mr. P Williamson
16 Lesscroft Close
Pendeford
Wolverhampton
West Midlands WV9 5LJ
Tel: 01902 831183

INFORMATION

Thank you for your interest in the Institute and we hope that this information will answer many of your questions and help develop interest of Advanced Motoring through us.

As an Associate member, we undertake to guide you to the required standard to pass the Institutes Advanced Driving Test. The Associate enrolment fee of £75.00 is for Car, Motorcycle, Mini-bus and Commercial drivers. This includes: -

- An up-to-date "Highway Code",
- An I.A.M. book - "How To Pass Your Advanced ... Test",
- An Observer,
- A Pre-Test, and
- The Test fee.

An Observer will be appointed to you, to aid your learning of Advanced Motoring. This guidance usually takes about an hour a week by mutual agreement. When your Observer considers you to be sufficiently trained, a pre-test Drive with the Chief Observer or a Senior Observer will take place and advice given about the drive / ride and your application for the Advanced Test.

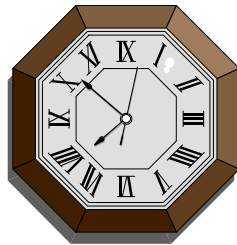
An appointment for the Test is made via the Group and the I.A.M. London, with a local Examiner who is a Police Advanced Driver. The test takes one and a half-hours and covers about thirty-five miles. All types of road are involved and it includes parking and slow manoeuvres. All of this will have been perfected with guidance from your Observer.

The I.A.M. Test fee is £45.00 (£30.00 for the test and £15.00 for your first years Full Membership of the I.A.M.) The £15 will be either refunded or held by the I.A.M. pending a further test if you prefer should you be unsuccessful.

During your 12 months Associate Membership of the Group, you will receive a quarterly Group Newsletter, informing you of activities arranged for all in the local Group. These include Talks, Lectures, Group facilities and visits to various venues that you may feel will be of assistance to improving the standard of your driving. All of the Group meetings are free and you and your interested friends will be made welcome.

Group Membership Fees

ASSOCIATE MEMBERSHIP: (upon joining – car or motorcycle)	£75
<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ This includes the cost of your Advanced Test and 1st years IAM Membership (the latter refunded for test not being passed).▪ Also copies of the I.A.M. publication 'Passing your Advanced Driving Test' / 'Passing your Advanced Motorcycling Test' – plus – 'The Highway Code'.▪ Guidance up to the time that a Senior Observer recommends you for the Institute Advanced Test. (You will then only receive a check drive / ride prior to this Test).	
ASSOCIATE MEMBERSHIP RENEWAL:	£10
FULL MEMBERSHIP: (Effective 1 st April, 2001)	£10
FAMILY/JOINT MEMBERSHIP:	
<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ (2 <u>FULL</u> members at the same address - (Effective 1st April, 2001))	
	£15



'Membership Renewal' Time – was - 1st April, 2001

- If you are a **FULL MEMBER** - and you have not yet renewed your Group Membership for the current year, please do so as soon as possible. The fee due is £10 (£15 for Family / Joint Full Members).
- If you are an **ASSOCIATE MEMBER** - renewing for the current year the fee due is £10.
- **ALL MEMBERS** – please note applicable fees and effective dates listed above.

Please forward your Cheque (payable to – 'W.A.M.M.' and with your Group Membership number on the back) to:

- Mr. G. Foulkes
23 The Heathlands
Wombourne
Staffs.
WV5 8HF

**** IMPORTANT – ALL 'FULL' MEMBERS PLEASE NOTE:**

- Your London Membership is in addition to that for your Group.
- If you are an Observer you have to be a fully paid up member of both.

Wolverhampton Advanced Motorists and Motorcyclists



Group 3081 (Registered Charity No. 1053330)

I wish to apply for *Full / Associate Membership of the Group in the following category of Vehicle(s):

*Car / Commercial / Motor Cycle / Mini-Bus

*Manual / Automatic

Other Modifications:

Surname:*(Mr.,Mrs.,Miss,Ms.,etc.).....Forename(s):

Preferred Name: Address:

.....Post Code:

Tel. No: E.Mail Address:

Date of Birth: Occupation:

When are you available for guidance? *Daytime / Evenings / Weekends.

ASSOCIATE ENROLEMENT FEE: - for Car / Motorcycle / Commercial / Mini-Bus:..... £75
(This includes: - 'The Highway Code' and [I.A.M. publication]'How to Pass your Advanced Test')

FULL MEMBERSHIP FEE: - £10.00 Group Membership No. IAM / Ref. No.

I enclose a *Cheque / Postal Order / Cash for £ Cheque / Postal Order No.
(made payable to "Wolverhampton Advanced Motorists & Motorcyclists" or "W.A.M.M.")

Please note -The function of the Observer - is limited to making comment or giving advice so as to help the associate improve their standard of driving. As the driver or rider of the vehicle - you are deemed to be in control of it at all times during an observed run. Associates are also expected - to attend the occasional associate evenings.

Has any Court in the last three years ordered a conviction to be endorsed on your license? *Yes / No
(If yes please give brief details in the space provided below, including dates.)

I confirm that the vehicle(s) that I shall be driving during observed runs shall be suitably insured, taxed and it will have a current MOT certificate (if applicable). I will remain fully responsible for the safe driving of the vehicle(s). As a 'Full Member' (if applicable) I also confirm that I am a current valid member of the IAM (London) and quote my membership number above.

Signed: Date:

Please forward Moneys and this completed form to:

Cars/Commercial/Mini-Bus/Motorcycle:

Mr. P Williamson
16 Lesscroft Close
Pendeford, Wolverhampton WV9 5LJ

How did you hear about the IAM?

*Delete as applicable



Change of Address details, etc.

Membership category: (Tick as applicable)

- Car
- Mini-bus
- Motorcycle
- Commercial

Name: **D.O.B.:**

New Address

.....

Post Code **Telephone**

E.Mail Address:

Membership Nos.: (Group).....(IAM / Ref.Nos)

Signature

Please show as:- Associate / Member / Observer

PLEASE COMPLETE AND RETURN TO:

Mr. P Williamson
16 Lesscroft Close
Pendeford
Wolverhampton
West Midlands WV9 5LJ

Refresher drives

Refresher Drives . . . they could help drive you *f o r w a r d*.

As the need for these varies throughout the year please contact Nigel Brown so that when enough people have expressed interest a meeting can be arranged. The meeting point and contact details are below.

Fourth Monday of the month:
Goodyear Training Centre
Contact: Nigel Brown
(01902 - 752443)

Short drives each lasting about half an hour for members, observers and associates to drive, direct, or learn as a passenger. A short de-brief follows each drive before changing drivers.

- Members can maintain their advanced driving standards.
- Observers can enjoy meeting and discussing their skills with others.
- Members and associates can see and discuss with other observers what is involved in being an observer, etc.

Letters

Dear Garth,

After what seems like an eternity I finally took my Advanced Driving Test in HGV on Sunday 25th November and passed.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank you for being my observer and guiding me in certain aspects of Advanced Driving.

I would also like to thank Graham Linton for taking me on my pre-test drive and taking me down a certain road and getting me "stuck " with the on-coming traffic on such a narrow road.

As regard to what yourself and Graham Linton mentioned about becoming an observer, I will give the matter some thought and will get back to you with an answer after Christmas.

Yours Faithfully
Phil Denning.

Dear Sirs,

After driving relatively safely over the past 38 years I considered myself a really good driver and decided to train for my advanced driving test – but oh how wrong can one be!

I was assigned Richard Lloyd Jones in Stourbridge as my observer who soon put me straight! Over the years I had picked up many bad habits without even noticing. However over the weeks Richard gave me many hours of his own time and never-ending patience and guidance got me up to scratch.

I have recently passed my advanced test and would like to take this opportunity of thanking Richard most sincerely for sharing with me his expertise and knowledge of the road in steering me through.

Yours sincerely
David F. Williams

Articles

Sandwell Town Twinning Association

Sandwell is “twinned” with the French town of Le Blanc Mesnil which is located a few kilometres north-east of Paris.

The Association aims to promote friendship between the people of Sandwell and Le Blanc Mesnil.

We arrange a visit to Le Blanc Mesnil each year. We travel by coach leaving on Thursday morning aiming to be across the Channel by late afternoon. Thursday evening we spend in a hotel close to the coast, then on Friday we make our way to Le Blanc Mesnil with stops on the way. This year we stopped in Rouen and visited Monet’s Garden. Friday evening we arrive in Le Blanc Mesnil and are met by our host families and are guests in their homes for the weekend. Over the weekend there are a number of organised events including a coach trip into central Paris, a social evening on the Saturday and on Sunday a day out for guests and hosts to a local tourist attraction. This year we visited the historic “royal” town of Provins. As part of the visit we saw a fantastic Falconry Show. Leaving Le Blanc Mesnil on Monday morning we make our way back home. We break up our trip home visiting a suitable site on the way, then having lunch and time for some shopping before crossing the Channel to arrive back in Oldbury late in the evening.

The visit to Le Blanc Mesnil in 2002 will be from 4th till the 8th of April.

Later in the year a group from Le Blanc Mesnil will visit Sandwell. During this visit members will provide hospitality in their homes and the Association will arrange visits and social events similar to those in France. The date of this visit in 2002 has not yet been finalised but should be in our January Newsletter.

The Association holds a monthly “Events Evening” usually on a Wednesday in the Council House in Oldbury at which we normally have a speaker.

- Visits to places of local interest are also arranged.
- A summer holiday in France has been arranged for members over the past few years.
- Social events are also arranged including our annual Christmas Dinner Dance.
- A monthly newsletter is sent to members with details of these activities and other articles.

Membership is open to families and to single people living in and around Sandwell. Please join us as a guest for an evening without commitment.

For more information please contact:

Mrs. P. Phillips (Tel.No: 01384 634162 / 0121 557 3130) – or -
Alex Robb (Tel.No: 0121 501 1205).

[Editor: Contact with the Sandwell Twinning Association was by Bill Goodreds. We welcome inter-group contact of all interests and thank Alex Robb very much for his contribution to our newsletter.]

Actual statements made by drivers involved in accidents on their motor insurance claim forms ...

- Coming home I drove into the wrong drive and collided with a tree I don't have.
- The other car collided with mine without giving warning of its intentions.
- I thought my window was down, but I found it was up when I put my head through it.
- I had been driving for 40 years when I fell asleep at the wheel and had an accident.

- I collided with a stationary truck coming the other way.
- A truck backed through my windshield into my wife's face.
- The guy was all over the road. I had to swerve a number of times before I hit him.
- I pulled away from the side of the road, glanced at my mother-in-law's face and headed over the embankment.
- In an attempt to kill a fly I drove into a telegraph pole.
- I had been shopping for plants all day and was on my way home. As I reached an intersection a hedge sprang up, obscuring my vision and I did not see the car.
- I was on my way to the doctor with rear end trouble when my universal joint gave way causing me to have an accident.
- As I approached the intersection a sign suddenly appeared in a place where no 'Stop' sign had ever appeared before. I was unable to stop in time to avoid the accident.
- To avoid hitting the bumper of the car in front, I struck the pedestrian.
- My car was legally parked as I backed into the other vehicle.
- An invisible car came from nowhere, struck my car and vanished.
- I told the police that I was not injured, but on removing my hat I found that I had a fractured skull.
- I pulled into the lay-by with smoke coming from under the bonnet. I realised the car was on fire so I took my dog and smothered it with a blanket.
- I had one eye on a parked car, another on approaching lorries and another on the woman behind.
- We were enjoying a quiet drive along a country lane. There were high hedges on both sides, suddenly a large horse landed on the roof of the car. Please find enclosed repairs estimate for damage.
- The insured failed to observe the end of the pier and careered off into the Irish Sea.
- The indirect cause of the accident was a little guy in a small car with a big mouth.
- I was going down the car park ramp when I hit a giant plastic mouse.
- The car had to turn more sharply than was necessary, owing to an invisible lorry.
- I knocked over a man. He admitted it was his fault, as he had been run over before.
- I was sure that the old chap would never make it to the other side of the road when I struck him.
- The front van Toyota reversed me. I horned her but the driver did not response it.
- I was thrown from my car as it left the road. I was later found in a ditch by some stray cows.
- A pedestrian hit me and went under my car.
- The pedestrian had no idea which direction to run so I ran over him.

It's A Jungle Out There ...

It's a jungle out there, well not really, it's worse than a jungle. It's a stretch of roadway and in place of the ravenous tigers, stampeding rhinos and slithering anacondas, are your co-workers, neighbours and friends. That nice lady from the church choir and the cheerful kid who bags your food at the local supermarket, even Mum, Dad, Brother, Sister and your best friends. They're in a hurry and you're in their way. So step on it! That light is not going to get any greener! Move it or park it! Tarzan had it easy. Tarzan didn't have to drive to work.

More often the new ethos of road anarchy manifests itself in the mundane, the non-signalled lane change by the driver next to you, the guy who tailgates you if you go too slow and the person ahead who brakes abruptly if you go too fast. Each transgression accompanied by the flashing of lights and blasting of the horn.

Driving is a curious combination of public and private acts. A car isolates a driver from the world, even as it carries him through it. The sensation of personal power is intoxicating. Sealed in your own little pod, you control the climate with the touch of a button, from the arctic tundra to equatorial tropic. You are virtually sound proof and your seat has more positions than a sun-lounger. You can't listen to that old Rubettes tape at home, for thinking the kids will think you an old dinosaur, but in your car you can sing along to 'Sugar Baby Love', with no fear of ridicule. The safety belt is strapped snugly across your body and if that fails there is the air bag to save your life. Little bells and lights go off if you make a mistake or there is a problem with the mechanics of the car. The illusions of power, of anonymity, of self-containment pile up. You are the master of your domain. Actually driving the car is the last thing you need to worry about. So you can pick your nose, break wind, fantasise to your heart's content. Who's to know?

Jack Levin a Sociologist at North Eastern University's program for the study of violence says "There is a real illusion of anonymity combined with potency because you have a machine you can command". Top it off with the stress of work and people perhaps feeling insecure there, or with troubles at home and it can make for a dangerous combination.

Older Drivers (source: www.driving.co.uk)

As a life long driver, by the time we reach our 60s and 70s, we will have acquired a wealth of motoring experience which should help us travel safely on our busy roads.

Statistically, elderly drivers are less likely to have an accident than young and inexperienced drivers. Experience however has to be balanced with the inevitable effects of ageing. With time physiological and psychological changes can affect our ability to drive safely. These changes don't start at any specific age. They are gradual and there is no necessary correspondence between 'biological age' and 'age in years' but, for the population as a whole, from age 60 onwards, the risk of being involved in a blameworthy accident increases steadily.

Senses

Our sight, hearing and judgement of speed and distance are not quite as sharp as when you were younger. These are all vital factors in driving and they often deteriorate very gradually, so you may not be immediately aware of the full extent of the change.

Eyesight

It is particularly important to have regular eyesight checks with a qualified optician. If you are unable to meet the required eyesight standard of reading a number plate at 67ft (the length of a cricket pitch) in good daylight, you are committing an offence. If you need spectacles or contact lenses to meet this standard, make sure you wear them when you drive. If you can meet the standard but have cataracts, avoid night driving on unlit roads and driving against the glare of bright sunlight. If you have glaucoma or any other eye disease consult your doctor or specialist about your fitness to drive and, if so advised, report the condition to DVLA.

Physical Movement

Arthritis or stiffness will restrict your movements and your ability to make effective all round

observations, and can also affect our vehicle handling skills. There are special accessories designed to meet the needs of older drivers. A General Practitioner can advise on exercises that can also help.

Reaction Times

Driving safely requires good awareness. Observation errors and misinterpretation of information are common factors in accidents involving older drivers. Reaction times get slower with age. Be prepared to make adjustments when age related changes affect your safe driving performance.

Medicines

Older drivers are often unaware of the effects that medicines (even non-prescription ones) can have on their concentration. Check with the doctor or pharmacist about the side effects of any medication prescribed for you.

Highway Code

Research has shown widespread ignorance of the provisions of the Highway Code. Ignorance of the law is never an excuse. It is never too late to refresh your knowledge to keep up with the changes.

Driving Licence renewal

Drivers who wish to continue driving after the age of 70 have to renew their licence every three years. This means completing a form that makes a health declaration and paying a fee. Licence application forms and information leaflets are available from Post Offices.

All drivers are required by law to notify the Driver and Vehicle Licensing Agency (DVLA) of the onset or worsening of a medical condition which might affect ability to drive safely, including eyesight problems.

These legal requirements are intended to ensure your safety and that of other road users, but responsibility for deciding when you should give up driving rests largely with you.

Road Rage (source: www.driving.co.uk)

Intolerant and inconsiderate motorists who are driving too fast are unlikely to realise that they're unsafe. Drivers who are behaving badly are probably perfectly happy with the way they drive, believing that their own attitude is okay they don't see a need to change, after all, it's other drivers that have the problem !

Who are these 'Tarmac Terrorists'? - These seemingly anonymous antisocial elements of drivers who have a complete disregard for our society's values? Are they ...

- the inexperienced young male drivers, enjoying the thrill of danger showing off to impress their passengers and young female pedestrians?
- the social misfits? Drivers who don't fit in well into society and who break laws of other kinds.
- the 'Joyriders' who express themselves by driving somebody else's car dangerously fast, ditching and then burning it?
- the Machiavellian Prima Donnas whose style causes antagonism?
- the drivers of white vans ?
- just ordinary drivers who have an 'easy attitude' towards traffic laws?

Automotive cladding

People of all ages who are by their nature impatient, aggressive and selfish will probably drive the same way, but what is it that attracts polite, considerate people who have an even temperament to disregard danger, take unjustifiable risks and lose their tempers when they get behind the wheel ? A human response to any stressful or frustrating situation is anger. Wrapped in our protective metal armour we're less likely to be calm or polite if we're affected by another driver's mistake..

Space Invaders

Human beings, like animals are territorial. The car's safety space or cushion is an extension of personal territory, so when other vehicles get close we sense that our personal space is being threatened and our driving style can change depending what happens in this space. Compare your driving manners when travelling on business through a busy town, or an overcrowded motorway with when you're on holiday motoring through a quiet village out in the country.

Lifestyle Factors

The pressure of a busy lifestyle in a competitive and work orientated society puts drivers in a desperate hurry, looking for any advantage, such as a gap or short-cut. Where territory is 'defended' and a manoeuvre is obstructed, the consequences can be lethal.

Domestic troubles at home, or a bad day at work will influence your mood to the extent that you're likely to be less considerate and tolerant of the 'stupid' mistakes made by other road users.

It won't happen to me. All through our lives we calculate risk against advantage in one way or another. Similarly, when we're driving, the ease of a car's handling and implicit belief that its design will protect us, can encourage us into taking deliberate risks.

Your Living Room on Wheels

Inside the cosy cocoon of motor car metal - the outside world is like quickly moving images on a television screen or computer monitor. We feel comfortable with our homely gadgets such as radios, cassettes and telephones. Our human instinct to survive seems to fail as comfort seduces us towards a high risk driving strategy.

Good Driving is No Accident

Most of the UK's 31.9 million motorists consider themselves good drivers, the evidence they feel supports their claim is that the majority have no endorsements on their licences and almost 60% have a full no claims insurance bonus. How can they be driving badly ?

To measure the level of bad driving objectively, the annual records for motor vehicle violations show over 7 million offences, excluding parking occurred. During the last three years in excess of 4 million endorsements were issued by the Courts. Several million verbal warnings are issued yearly by traffic police officers in preference to reporting an offence for prosecution.

New drivers under the age of 21 have three times the average of motoring offences. Studies of their style of driving suggests they commit fewer technical errors than drivers in the 20-45 age range, but the mistakes they make are more serious and relate to a failure to anticipate, more likely to lead to dangerous manoeuvring and loss of control.

Belligerent driving phenomena, commonly associated with young men, is typically a human lifestyle problem as women are becoming increasingly aggressive.

What may seem a minor traffic violation to the driver making any of the above mistakes, is perceived as aggressive or inconsiderate by others. The incidence of raising tempers and disagreement between drivers seems to become more common place to each generation of drivers as our roads get more congested, fortunately, driver aggression to extent of physical assault is still rare.

To share the roads without conflict we have to tolerate seemingly aggressive and intimidating acts committed by other drivers.

IAM News Releases / Fact Sheets

THE ADVANCED DRIVING TEST

What the Examiner expects

The Test takes about 90 minutes, over all types of roads and using your own car. The four essential qualities are **Concentration, Observation, Anticipation** and **Planning**. The Examiner is the holder of a Police Advanced Driving Certificate. A full understanding of what is expected can be found in the IAM publication "Pass Your Advanced Driving Test" or "Pass Your Advanced Motorcycling Test" as appropriate. A number of important points are mentioned here:

THE PRINCIPLES OF ADVANCED DRIVING

- Do you concentrate properly and avoid distractions?
- Can you read the road and anticipate potential hazards in good time?
- Are hazards dealt with in a planned and systematic way?

- Do you use your mirrors before changing your speed or position and do you always give a signal to other road users if they will benefit or appreciate one?
- Can you drive with reasonable restraint, but not indecision?
- Is your judgement of speed and distance accurate?
- Do you drive with courtesy and consideration for other road users, including pedestrians?
- Are you always in the right place on the road, travelling at the right speed with the right gear engaged and able to stop safely in the distance you can see to be clear?

HANDLING SKILLS

- Are steering actions safe, smooth and accurate, and do you pass the wheel through your hands?
- Are gears smoothly and correctly selected?
- Do you make full use of automatic transmission, if your car is fitted with it?
- Is your braking smooth and progressive?
- Do you use "acceleration sense"?

ADVANCED DRIVING SKILLS ON THE ROAD

- Do you keep up a reasonable pace and maintain good progress if conditions permit?
- Do you anticipate and react correctly to the situations developing ahead?
- Are the correct road position chosen and signals given in good time for the next manoeuvre?
- Are all signals, signs and road markings observed, obeyed and approached correctly?
- Are overtaking manoeuvres carried out smoothly, decisively and safely?
- Do you drive with proper restraint and proper sensitivity of control when the roads are slippery or visibility is reduced?
- Are manoeuvres such as parking, reversing, carried out smoothly and competently with effective all-round observations?

Advanced Drivers are expected to control the risks, despite the incorrect actions of others. Every journey can have its unexpected moments.

However, even successful candidates have made minor mistakes, which did not prevent them from passing the Advanced Driving Test.

IAM WARNS OF "BREEZY RIDERS" AS SCOOTER COMMUTERS FACE THEIR FIRST WINTER

Issued 7th November 2001

Recent scooter buyers facing their first UK winter on two wheels should take extra care. That was the warning today from the Institute of Advanced Motorists (IAM) on the eve of the International Motorcycle and Scooter Show at the NEC.

The IAM message is aimed at "breezy riders": the new generation of scooter owners who perhaps took to two wheels for the first time this summer but who may not appreciate the extra risks on two wheels as winter sets in.

Gale force winds, slippery surfaces and poor visibility are just some of the problems facing two wheelers who are at their most vulnerable at this time of year.

"Experienced bike riders - especially those who have prepared for their advanced riding test - know all about the problems of staying upright in winter," explained IAM Chief Examiner Bryan Lunn.

"But some scooter riders are still getting used to life on two wheels. They also now have to cope with bad weather. If you are commuting by scooter, there is plenty for you to concentrate on. Having the right gear helps - but just as important is the right attitude."

Mr Lunn pointed out that the latest DTLR road casualty figures show an eight per cent rise in the number of casualties on two wheeled motor vehicles - and that the number of deaths had increased by 11 per cent, to 605.

Another problem for all powered two wheelers is slipping on diesel left by careless refuelling. Earlier this year, [thousands of bright new stickers](#) for fuel tanks on trucks were distributed free of charge to IAM Fleet customers and through trade bodies such as the Road Haulage Association, sponsored by Texaco.

The IAM has produced a booklet [Safer Scootering - How to keep out of trouble on your scooter](#) which is available free of charge (normal price £1.99) to the first 500 visitors to the IAM's stand at the International Motorcycle and Scooter Show. The IAM stand is number T120 in Hall 19.

The IAM has 80 local IAM motorcycle groups which provide theory and on-road preparation for the IAM Advanced Motorcycling Test. The test covers most scooters as well as traditional motorcycles. Any scooter rider or motorcyclist who wishes to improve their road skills can contact the IAM on 020 8994 4403.

MOBILE PHONE ABUSE NOW "MOST ANNOYING DRIVING HABIT" SAYS IAM SURVEY

Issued 22nd October 2001

A nation-wide survey by the Institute of Advanced Motorists (IAM) has revealed that the single worst driving habit on UK roads is steering with one hand while using a hand-held mobile phone.

The survey of IAM UK wide delegates, representing the IAM's 100,000 plus advanced driver members, disclosed the top driving gripes across the country.

The most common driving fault - at 34 per cent - was using a hand-held mobile phone, followed very closely by "lane hogs" - drivers who refuse to move into the correct lane on motorways and dual carriageways - at 33 per cent.

In third place came "the tailgaters" - drivers who are too close to the vehicle in front - at 21 per cent. A wide selection of other irritants, such as speeding regardless of the conditions and driving with fog lights in clear conditions, made up the remaining 12 per cent.

"We did this survey two years ago and it is a sad reflection on the attitude of drivers that mobile phone abuse has since moved up the list of driver irritants," said IAM Chief Executive Christopher Bullock.

"Is that phone call so urgent that it's worth risking your life - let alone the lives of others? These phoney drivers are a major irritant and a road safety hazard. We know the police act when they see this offence being committed. But it often seems to the responsible motorists that these one-armed merchants are getting away with it," said Mr Bullock.

"The IAM has until now resisted calls for special legislation to deal with drivers using hand-held phones, arguing that there are already sufficient powers. But we should be gathering hard data about how many crashes are caused by drivers on hand-held phones. STATS 19, the road accident data sheet is the place to do this and we would like the police and the DTLR to include these details, where hand-held phones have been a distraction leading to an accident."

Mr Bullock restated the IAM's long standing car phone advice to drivers, pointing out that the IAM is not anti car-phone - but it is anti dangerous driving.

"Never use a hand held phone when you are driving. Even if you have a hands-free system, you should avoid using the phone while driving as it distracts you from the main task. If you receive a call while driving, keep your conversation short and tell the caller that you can't talk at the moment. Then find somewhere legal, safe and convenient to return the call," he said.

Jokes:

Answering Machine Messages

1. Hi! This is John:

If you are the phone company, I already sent the money.

If you are my parents, please send money.

If you are my financial aid institution, you didn't lend me enough money.

If you are my friends, you owe me money.

If you are a female, don't worry, I have plenty of money.

2. Hi! John's answering machine is broken. This is his refrigerator. Please speak very slowly, and I'll stick your message to myself with one of these magnets.

3. Hello, you are talking to a machine. I am capable of receiving messages. My owners do not need cladding, new windows, or a shower unit, and their carpets are clean. They give to charity through the office and don't need their picture taken. They are also very happy with their current phone service. If you're still with me, leave your name and number and they will get back to you.

4. The School Special. A - is for academics, B - is for beer. One of those reasons is why we're not here. So leave a message.

5. If you are a burglar calling to check, then we're probably at home cleaning our weapons right now and can't come to the phone. Otherwise, we probably aren't home and it's safe to leave us a message.

6. Hi. I am probably home, I'm just avoiding someone I don't like. Leave me a message, and if I don't call back, it's you.

7. You have reached the CPX-2000 Voice Blackmail System. Your voice patterns are now being digitally encoded and stored for later use. Once this is done, our computers will be able to use the sound of your voice for literally thousands of illegal and immoral purposes. There is no charge for this initial consultation. However our staff of professional extortionists will contact you in the near future to further explain the benefits of our service, and to arrange for your schedule of payment. Remember to speak clearly at the sound of the tone. Thank you.

Two men were having a conversation.

A: "My ears got burnt!"

B: "How did that happen?"

A: "You see, I was ironing and the phone rang and instead of picking up the phone I picked up the iron."

B: "So how did the second one get burnt"?"

A: "The person called back."

What are dogs?

1. Dogs spend all day sprawled on the most comfortable piece of furniture in the house.

2. They can hear a package of food opening half a block away, but don't hear you when you're in the same room.

3. They can look dumb and loveable all at the same time.

4. They growl when they are not happy.
5. When you want to play, they want to play.
6. When you want to be alone, they want to play.
7. They leave their toys everywhere.

Conclusion: They're tiny men in little fur coats.

Videos

Group Videos are available and free on loan for ALL Associates, Members and Observers to use. They are good as reminders or as an introduction to Advanced driving or riding for the family, friends or colleagues, and help to advertise the Group.

System of Car Control	12 mins	You Only Live Once	13 mins
Old Highway Code	60 mins	Driveability	32 mins
Positive Driving	30 mins	Drive Without Fear	14 mins
Chris Johnson Fund	40 mins	3 Simple Life Savers	14 mins
Safe Motorway Driving	36 mins	Skid Pan	80 mins
Roadcraft	90 mins	New Highway Code	60 mins
Horse Sense for Motorists	11 mins	Top Rider	25 mins
Aggressive & Bad Driving	15 mins	I Just Didn't See You	20 mins
Sharing the Road with Emergency Vehicles	16 mins		

- Available from Garth Jones at Group meetings, please reserve your copy prior to the night.
- These Videos should returned, if at all possible, by the following Group Meeting to Garth or another attending Committee member in his absence please.



If you want to find out what to do: -

- == when a skid happens,
- === how to control a skid,
- === in rear wheel and front wheel drive cars,
- === learn and practice cadence braking and more
- === **Contact - Garth Jones** - to see about a session.