

Hull & East Riding Group of Advanced Motorists

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Group Number 4029

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Newsletter

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Summer 2008

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From the Editor

I am pleased to report the new group web site was finally released to the world in early April. I'm happy with the result although I'm struggling to get it to appear on any search engines despite following the instructions in the book. If anyone is a search engine wizz and can offer any suggestions please give me a call.

Although the old website had a facility for readers to request more information about our group and the IAM in general, only a few requests have ever been received. Since the new site has been up and running the response has been comparatively manic. We have had four enquiries in the past month alone. Let's hope it's the start of a trend.

I apologise in advance for the slightly slimmer than normal newsletter this summer. I've been struggling for time having taken up (rather poorly) paid employment recently so the newsletter (and the IAM for that matter) has unfortunately not taken a very high priority. However, as always, thanks to those of you who have contributed to this edition and thanks also to Riverside Motors for their very smart newsletter covers. More of that later.

We have had a particularly good run of speakers at the meetings this year so I would like to extend my thanks to Robert for all his efforts in securing these people and to the speaker themselves. Robert's job is a bit like looking after the newsletter. Providing all goes well, everybody enjoys the results but getting there is nothing but hard work. If you don't believe that, consider volunteering!

I know we don't need to be reminded but it's silly season on the roads with everything from occasional over enthusiastic motorcyclists to caravans and kids on bikes during the school holidays so do be patient and take that extra bit of care. 'Think Bike', look out for Spike and his friends crossing the roads, make sure Teddy doesn't take a tumble and watch the antics of other irritable motorists and road users from a safe distance.

Enjoy the sunshine. I think it's forecast for the 20th and 21st July. See you again in the Autumn edition. Don't forget pen and paper when you go on holiday. Sitting on the beach with a cool drink to hand and nothing else to do but relax, write that article you always said you would and the sun will shine even brighter!

Alan

If you would like to make a contribution to the Newsletter, the closing date for the next publication is

Friday 5th September.

You can contact me any way you like, post; phone; e-mail; call round or just hand it over at a meeting.

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IAM Driving Tips

Did you know that in its mission to improve driving standards the IAM produce Driving Tips accessible by joining one of the email groups or accessing the IAM website.

The tips cover all sorts of subjects and extend beyond points and techniques mentioned in the Highway Code.

However, there are some people reluctant to embrace modernity or who simply don’t have access to email or the world wide web so here are some titles published recently. If you would like printed copies, let me know and I will send any you are particularly interested in. Some of the titles are a little cryptic but with a healthy imagination, most subject matter can be guessed at.

Emergency vehicles; Sharing the road with cyclists; Sorry mate - I didn't see you; Hiring a car?; When teenagers take to the wheel; Smooth operator; Fuel's gold; Driving abroad; Avoid a fine on your phone; Getting there, in a roundabout way...; Watch out below; Too tired to drive; A turn for the worst; Lower fuel bill, despite the budget?; Time for a clean sweep; They're black, they're round, they cost you eighty pound...; Kids in cars: the ultimate distraction; Ignore the yellow at your peril; Give and take; You Little Belter!; Are you "too laid back"?; One eyed monster; Between bottle and throttle - drinking and driving; Severe weather forecast: advice for drivers; Wire rope roads - a letter to MCN from the IAM Motoring Trust; MCN story re wire rope; barriers on roads - an IAM Trust response; Footwear for driving; Yellow Peril; Their life in your hands: kids in cars; Satnav survival guide; When it comes to the crunch...; The true meaning of green; FLOODS - Advice for drivers; The Long and the Short of White Lines; Watch your heels at the wheel; Stay sharp on bends; Use your horn to warn; Are you level headed?; Ten ways to

save the planet (and your fuel bill!); Making sense of acceleration; Too Close for Comfort; See and be seen; How to deal with that tailgater; Don't Drink and Drive; It's Behind You!; Courtesy; Speed Cameras: Reality Check; Reading the Road Ahead; Leaves and Rain Block the Drain; Take Five – A Quick Guide to Less Stressful Driving; Joining Motorways; Ouch. Depreciation Pains; Clocks Going Back; Green for Danger; Box Clever; Eyes Right; Ease Off The Anchors; Child Seats - How The New Regulations Affect You; Screen Test

Alan



Let Sleeping Dogs Lie

. A friend took her dog camping and gave it its own sleeping compartment... during the night my friend had need to pay a visit to the toilet block and on returning to the tent found that the dog had moved into her sleeping bag!! Same dog, different day ... my friend had visitors staying and so everyone had to swap rooms and beds!! My friend decided that she would sleep on the airbed in the front room ... again during the night she needed to pay a visit to the bathroom and when she returned, yes you have guessed, the dog was tucked up and fast asleep on the airbed! Guess it is all down to those creature comforts.

Tricia

Another Perspective

Having recently picked up and read a copy of a relative's IAM local area magazine I noticed the attention being given to some of the road markings in Beverley.

As a regular cyclist and having used some of the 'controversially' marked roads I found them a joy to cycle on. Let me explain.

The Highway Code Rule 163 states: "Give vulnerable road users at least as much space as you would a car". Unfortunately this doesn't happen often enough with most motorists, close overtakes are unnerving and cause air turbulence which are unsettling on a bike. The larger the vehicle and passing speed the worse this becomes. Could you react in time if a cyclist you are passing veered off after hitting one of the numerous potholes in the area?

The road markings in Beverley are making drivers think and pay attention to cycles, giving them the road space they are entitled to.

Imagine this scenario. Two vehicles and a cycle on a single carriageway road. The car travelling in the same direction as the cyclist waits behind until the oncoming vehicle is clear, pulls out giving plenty of space and continues on its way, a delay of a few seconds. Unfortunately what happens all too often is a "must get past" attitude towards the cyclist resulting in very close overtake of them.

Every car that has overtaken me on the marked Beverley roads has waited to pass.

As a car driver I appreciate the uncertainty the markings cause, it causes me to think, to slow down, to assess road conditions. Surely a good thing? There seemed to be a concern over head-on collisions with not having a central divider. I look for cars, buses, HGV's - they are easy to see and pull over to avoid. We (as drivers) need to pay more attention to other road users.

Personally I regard most on-road cycle lanes in the area are far too narrow and useless as they encourage close overtaking. The cycle lanes marked on the roads in Beverley are also nice and wide (DtF recommend 1.5 metres) giving a good passing clearance. As drivers we exercise lane discipline: we 'stay in our lane'. If I, as a cyclist, am in my cycle lane green painted strip I am 'in my lane' so can be passed. The markings take little account of Rule 163 above.

The sun has finally appeared, petrol prices are horrendous, and going to get worse. Go get the bike out of the back of the garage and dust it off! Smile and wish me a "Good Morning" if we pass. You never know, you might even enjoy it! See you on the roads.

Gary Day

JIT

I've never worked in the car industry, but I have come across a manufacturing philosophy called JIT or Just in Time.

These days of cutting costs and improving performance to compete with our world cousins for our share of the market demands that well defined strategies need to be adopted and applied to ensure a manufacturer ties up the least amount of money in stock while turning out the maximum amount of product as quickly and efficiently as possible.

There are many different techniques which can and are applied to different manufacturing industries and it's anyone's guess which is the best, but one, which has been applied to the car industry, is called Just in Time.

One difficulty in making cars is that a lot of the parts are large, like seats, and they require a large amount of expensive warehouse space after delivery to the factory but before use. One way the car industry decided to solve this problem was to introduce JIT where the seats, and many other parts, were delivered to the assembly plant just as they were required for assembly.

You might think a bit demanding on the seat supplier but, the car giants spend vast amounts of money on their products consequently supplier competition is keen which means for such high stakes the suppliers will try almost anything to retain their position as a subcontractor to these high volume manufacturers.

JIT takes car assembly to such a choreographed art form that a lorry full of car seats will be required to arrive at the assembly plant at 3.35pm 14th April to fall in with the production going through the plant at that time.

Many of the large car manufacturers apply this philosophy and it seems Volvo do the same in other aspects of their business. You will have noticed the smart new cover which graced the Spring edition of our newsletter. Under normal circumstances such an event would have justified more than a mention in the newsletter itself, extending thanks to the sponsors for their generous contribution to our group's publication, but we didn't think we were going to get the covers in time.

Robert Thomson spends many, many hours each year trying to enlist the support of local car businesses to sponsor our newsletter cover in return for some cover advertising and being seen by the public to support a local road safety group. This year Robert asked the local Volvo dealership at Riverside Motors if they would be prepared to provide this year's covers. The decision was made and the process of designing and producing the covers began - except they didn't mention JIT.

Getting desperate as the publication day approached, the newsletters were already printed but no covers.

True to the philosophy of JIT, the covers arrived just in time for Neil, stapler in hand, to assemble the publication, stuff into envelopes and deliver to the April meeting.

Clearly, the group would like to thank Riverside Motors for their kind offer of newsletter cover sponsorship for this year but please, have a thought for Robert's state of mind. He's not a well man, you know.

Alan

Chairman's Chatter

The right way or the wrong way? I was reading in the newspaper the other day that one of the London Boroughs is to experiment with allowing bicycles to travel the "wrong way" on one way streets. Apparently this is to try to encourage more people out of their cars and onto bicycles. The Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea has decided to test two-way access for cyclists on 6 residential roads. If there is no significant increase in collisions, it will extend the policy to other streets. Many other councils are expected to copy the idea to capitalise on the recent surge in the popularity of cycling. Whilst some councils have created "cycle contraflows", Kensington and Chelsea will make the changes simply by changing the road signage. No-entry signs will be replaced with "no motor vehicles" signs and blue signs indicating that bicycles are permitted to travel against the flow.

The council say that they are recognising what happens in practice and this is no doubt true. However, I wonder if legitimising a contravention of the Highway Code is the correct way to proceed. Once the first breach is made then others will surely follow. How about cycling on pavements? I am not anti-bike. I have one and intend to go bike riding much more (weather permitting) this summer. My concerns centre on the possible increase in rage and frustration felt by motorists stuck in heavy traffic in our towns and cities, who see bicyclists beating the crush by basically breaking the law. Cyclists are very vulnerable and this measure could increase the dangers that they face. If this proposal is taken up piecemeal across the country then both cyclists and car drivers could get quite confused as to what is allowed or not allowed. Let's face it, it is not too difficult for cyclists to dismount and walk the, usually, short distance along the one way street.

Anyway, food for thought and discussion.

Neil

Data Protection Act

Members names and addresses are kept on a computer held by the Membership Secretary for the sole purpose of mailing group related correspondence and will not be made available to other organisations or individuals.

200,000 and Counting

Sometimes I feel quite proud of my motoring achievements. I was chuffed to death when I passed my driving test back in 1972 and I bought a Wolsley Hornet 997cc in rusty white and a maroon roof. I was pleased to get 113,000 miles out of my Escort Mexico before I had the engine re-bored and tidied up. I was delighted to clock up my first quarter of a million miles years ago and I was pleased when I passed my advanced driving test.

More recently I was delighted when our old blue Honda Civic's odometer ticked over to 200,000 miles with *very* little repair work done on the car save a new clutch pressure plate and bearing. Oh, and a radiator. However MOT time approached, and although we knew the car needed a new rear exhaust box, we had placed a limit of a couple of hundred pounds of other repairs otherwise, as John Wayne might have said in his best southern drawl, "It's sayonara, old friend."

Tricia and I were both first-rate chuffed when apart from a couple of advisories, like suspension about to fail and avoid placing your feet through the hole in the floorpan while driving, the car passed just with its new rear box. (Meal out tonight perhaps?)

A couple of days later and six o'clock in the morning the bedroom phone rings. (Tricia works nights at Market Weighton and drives home at six in the morning.) "Hello, it's me. The windscreen wipers won't work and it's snowing. Can you come and get me?"

I replied, "Sorry I'm not at home at the moment, but if you would like to leave your name and number after the tone I'll get back to you." It didn't work.

I arrived at Market Weighton with my multi-meter, torch and a slack handful of fuses to replace the one I assumed had blown due to the extra load of accumulated snow. A quick fumble under the dash and I find the fuse in tact. "Oh dear." I said. A further fumble outside and I find the wipers will move by hand. Now they've never done that before...

"I can't do anything here. You take the other car, get home and get some sleep. I'll take this one and I'll just keep stopping to wipe the windscreen by hand."

When we both got home, I took a better look in the light and discovered, as I had expected, the linkage, consisting of a metal rod with a plastic socket at each end, had worn at one end and the plastic socket was no longer able to grip the ball adequately and had popped off. A simple solution: replace the linkage.

I considered a scrap yard but there aren't too many of these cars around now and even if I could find one, likely as not I would have to remove it from its previous home and it would almost certainly be as worn as ours. A genuine Honda guaranteed replacement part was the only answer so off Tricia went, old part in hand and all the necessary numbers: chassis number, body-

shell number, registration number, date of first registration, date of birth, telephone number for the Samaritans...

We knew the part would have to be ordered and were pleased when only the next day a call was received from Dave in the Parts Department telling us our part was in and it would be £25.36. "What? I didn't order a gold plated one!" Etc etc.

Another job for me. Come the weekend and windscreen-wiper-linkage-fitting-time arrived. I had already cleaned up the rest of the wiper and motor assembly and all that was required was a blob of grease ... Oh no. That means (da-da-daaa music) it's ... somewhere in the garage! Time for a coffee.

While enjoying the coffee and playing with my part (!), I noticed through the plastic bag containing the linkage, a tidy little blob of grease had already been injected, like a tiny icing flower, into each plastic socket at the ends of the rod. 'Hallelujah' music! Last slurp of coffee and up, up and away!

Another half an hour and the job was a good 'un.

I've actually forgotten now why I started this article other than to mention the very tidy, thoughtful blobs of grease ready applied for D.I.Y. mechanics with totally disorganised garages, like me. But I suppose the moral could be: even though you're feeling really good about getting your 200,000+ mile car through its MOT and despite a subsequent failure, it only cost another £25.36 to fix, there's always someone going to spoil it. It didn't rain for the next three and a half weeks.

I'll have to have a word with Him next Sunday.

Alan

PS ...



To my darling husband,

Before you return from your overseas trip I just want to let you know about the small accident I had with the pick up truck when I turned into the driveway. Fortunately not too bad and I really didn't get hurt, so please don't worry too much about me.

I was coming home from Wal-Mart,

Grumpy Old Men



This smart sign has been in place on Sutton Road 200 yards west of its junction with Leeds Road all this year and, if I had noted the date, would suggest that it had been in place for much of 2007. The next road junction in front of it is the roundabout on Holwell Road and this is 0.4 miles in front. Since

the sign has been in place, there have been no alterations to the roundabout road markings. This is clearly lack of thought or organisation in the section that put the sign up in the first place.

Geoff Beecroft

Just so that Geoff is not considered to be the *only* grumpy old man around, I can't believe how many times, at temporary road works, the 'road narrows on the left / right' signs are placed the wrong way round. Surely even if the people who place the signs don't know what they are doing, as is clearly the case, it's a 50/50 chance of getting it right and, in practise, they seem to be placed incorrectly far more often than that. Perhaps the graphic is not graphic enough or they don't know their left from their right.

Alan

and when I turned into the driveway. I accidentally pushed down on the accelerator instead of the brake. The garage door is slightly bent but the pick up fortunately came to a halt when it bumped into your car.

I am really sorry, but I know with your kindhearted personality you will forgive me. You know how much I love you and care for you me.

I am enclosing a picture for you. I cannot wait to hold you in my arms again.

Your loving wife,

P.S. Your girlfriend called.

From Ray Grange

Who's Who in the Group

Honorary Life Member	Doug Harrison Dennis Blackburne Eileen Found	
President	Ivor Nicholson	875791
Vice Presidents	Stuart Donald Ken Harbert	871443
Chairman	Neil Scruton	01964 552932
Secretary	Andrew Noble	627497
Treasurer	Beryl Day	833351
Associate Coordinator	Angie Bird	01262 488425
Publicity	Wendy Robinson	
Minutes Secretary	Wendy Robinson	
Meetings Coordinator	Robert H Thomson	844764
Host	Bill Cundill	643429
Other Committee Members	Angie Bird Stuart Donald Stephen Mills Paul R Tee Robert H Thomson Frank Watson	01262 488425 667045 820797 844764 823535
Chief Observer	Ivor Nicholson	875791
Senior Observers	Angie Bird Bill Cundill John Pearce	01262 488425 643429 654165
Senior Observers (Advisory)	Stuart Donald Doug Harrison	
Group Shop	Ivor Nicholson	875791
Refreshment Sales	Geoff Beecroft	781876

Andy Deyes Explains the Speed Seminar



Andy Deyes is involved with local road safety issues and has been instrumental in producing events like 'Car Safe' with which our group was involved a couple of years ago. Andy is also involved with the 'speed seminar' which is offered to drivers guilty of travelling a couple miles per hour above the posted speed limit as an alternative to taking the points.

The principle thought behind the seminar is one of education rather than simple penalty. An attending driver was likely to have been intending to keep to the speed limit but, for some reason - most likely poor concentration, has allowed his speed to drift upwards slightly.

The first question Andy posed was whether it is driver skills or attitude which persuade drivers to venture above the speed limit. The question has a simple answer as he related an observation he made while travelling as a passenger in a marked police car. "Oddly enough," remarked Andy, "I didn't see anyone exceed the speed limit while I was being driven around!" The point being that all drivers know they should stick to speed limits and do so when reminded by the presence of a highly visible police patrol car. It is not a skills issue but more one of mental attitude.

The first half of the seminar is conducted by a driving instructor. Instruction and interactive discussion continue into the second half lead by a police officer. The whole seminar is aimed at getting offending drivers to reconsider their actions and acknowledge the many consequences of any collision and the compounding contribution made to a crash by excessive speed.

Techniques we use on a routine basis are explained and discussed with the drivers in the hope that the seminar can provide some education to the vast majority of road users who, having obtained their driving license many years ago and have not updated their knowledge since. The basic considerations of what can be seen, what can't be seen and what might reasonably be expected to happen are extended with the relatively recently introduced concepts of identifying and prioritising hazards.

The police use some quite hard hitting scenarios and videos to press home the psychological after effects of being the cause of injury or death. Evidence and stories given by crash victims or bereaved relatives add to the thought processes.

Inevitably someone asks the question about the use of the money paid by the attendees. The answer is really quite simple. Some is used to cover the costs of providing the seminar while any remaining is used to contribute to other road safety initiatives and educational programmes and to provide, for example, the fluorescent armbands and other attire provided to children in an attempt to raise their awareness of responsible use of the public highways as pedestrians. A point some adults would benefit from remembering. Apparently the 'cool' colour for youngsters both boys and girls this year is fluorescent pink rather than the more traditional orange or yellow which tends to be seen as institutionalised.

With the financial cost of a road fatality in the order of £1,400,000 each there has to be a desire to minimise the number of killed and seriously injured on our roads. The main point of the seminar is to promote a more considered and responsible approach to driving and the advice to consider taking further instruction from a professional driving organisation, like the IAM, if the need is felt.

Alan

East Riding Council, Plus Four Points

It would be really nice, and it would make me feel all puffed-up, if I could report that the bus stop, placed within a couple of yards of a new pedestrian crossing on Manor Road in Beverley, has been re-sited as a result of an article I wrote for the last newsletter. But I can't.

Pleasingly, the Council *has* re-sited the bus stop just at the end of the zig-zags but they did it before the newsletter was printed.

On the other hand, we could have a mole in the group. Perhaps my computer's bugged or maybe someone from the council saw me taking the photograph. Or perhaps I'm paranoid! (Keep that to yourself.)

Anyhow, the bus stop and crossing are now suitably separated while still each providing a much needed facility. Well done ERYC!

Alan

Test Passes

Andy Deyes was kind enough to present the test pass certificates at the April meeting.

Congratulation go to Jerome Ellerby, photographed below with Andy Deyes, who was guided to success by Tom Smith.

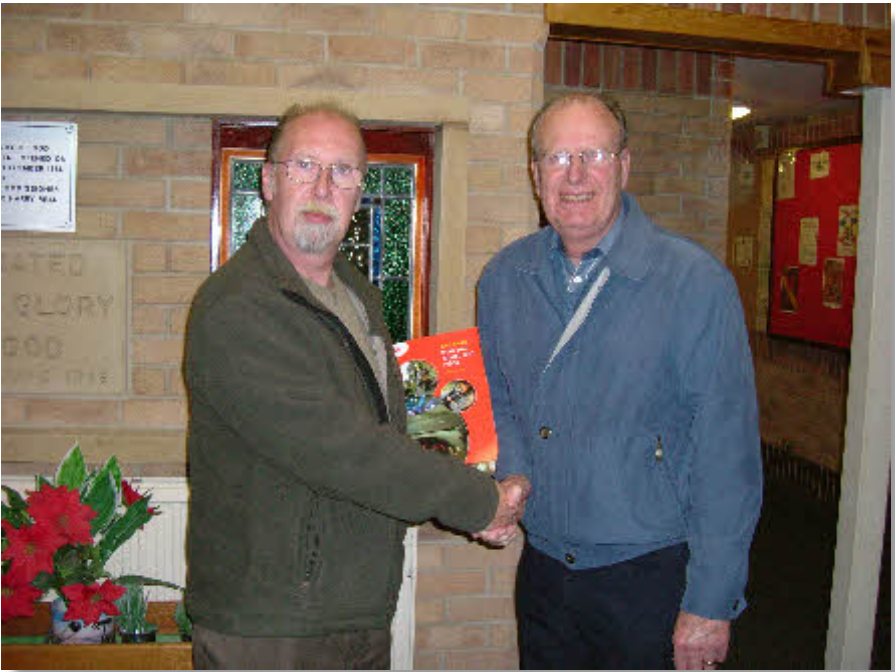
Over the page, Bill Cundill is photographed with his latest success, David Douglas who demonstrated his abilities when he recently passed the advanced test.

Peter Steele, again photographed Andy Deyes, over and below, was coached by Geoff Tee and successfully achieved Advanced Driver status when he passed his test recently.

Ashley Turner was also successful but was not present to be presented with his certificate.

Well done to you all and, as always, thanks to the observers who give so generously of their time and knowledge in order to guide associates to success in the advanced test.







John Medland PhD was present at the June meeting to receive his certificate after successfully completing his Advanced Driving test. John is photographed with his observer Dave Allum proudly displaying his certificate. Congratulations!

A Mini Experience From Astle Grimsby

For some time our crucial entertainments officer, Robert Thomson, has been trying to get our local BMW dealership to come and give us a talk about the reborn Mini. Robert's call was answered by Pete Andrews, the MINI Manager of Astle Grimsby MINI who kindly travelled to talk at the June meeting.

Pete explained how the BMW brands of Rolls Royce, Mini and BMW cars are promoted independently in order to allow each to retain and develop its own valuable identity.

The Mini story started back in 1959 with the release of the Alec Issigonis design which succeeded at providing an affordable, practical and safe car in a compact package. The Austin 7 and the Morris Mini Minor provided exactly that. With its innovative transversely mounted engine and a wheel at each corner, the passenger compartment was immense compared to the overall size of the car at under ten feet long. The diminutive boot became a bit of a

joke but the cars proved immensely popular and one of the most successful popular car marque was born.

The cars were affordable, economical, usable and terrific fun to drive: a characteristic which has been retained throughout the various incarnations of the Mini.

1961 saw the introduction of the Mini Cooper which added even more to the sporty feel of the small family saloon and with the introduction of innovative hydrolastic suspension in 1965, the development process continued.

The first major revision came along in 1967 with the Mk2. Some of the more traditional features were lost as the design succumbed to the public's



desires for all things modern - like wind up windows rather than the rather insecure and noisy sliding ones.

From 1969 variants like the Clubman, van and pickup were introduced before meeting their demise in 1981 but the Mini soldiered on and acquiring fuel injection in 1992 but the relentless march for improved safety meant that the limits of the basic design concepts had now been reached and the marque could not continue without a complete re-design. It would be a brave company who tried to retain the appeal and feel of the Mini yet fulfil the requirements of Euro NCAP.

The Frankfurt Motor Show of 1997 saw BMW introduce the reborn MINI. Had they done it?

The motoring press thought so and with the introduction of the Mini One and Cooper versions in 2001, BMW had a success story on their hands.

The original go-cart handling was retained and with the much improved safety the MINI entered the premium small car market with immediate success despite some doubt expressed by the popular motoring press about its not inexpensive price tag.



A really significant introduction to the MINI was the TLC package which, for a very nominal and impossible to refuse £100, gave the new owner a dealer provided total care package which meant that each car would be maintained to specification and could also be updated with the latest enhancements all free of further charge. This included 50,000 miles or up to five years of maintenance thus ensuring each car, independent of its age, would be operating with optimum performance, safety and economy.

Consistent with all current trends, the fresh introductions appeared thick and fast and included a 1600cc supercharged Cooper S with intercooler taking the engine power for this pocket rocket up to 163 BHP with an improved torque some 40% up on previous models. Enthusiasts who wanted a more economical version were satisfied by the introduction of the first 1.4l diesel powered MINI which was fitted with the Toyota Yaris engine as it was the only one at the time which would fit.

2004 saw the 200,000th MINI roll off the Cowley production line and the MINI taking the 15th place in UK sales. This meant that one in three cars produced by the BMW Group was a MINI. The stiff body of the MINI allowed the introduction of a convertible.

Ever mindful of the customer, BMW introduced the second version of the car taking on board existing owner's comments. NCAP significantly influenced the re-design with that elusive fifth star for pedestrian safety now attained. The opportunity was taken to introduce German engines and

gearboxes and 'eco' enhancements like 'efficient dynamics' which allows the engine management system to intelligently cut the engine in appropriate circumstances. Regenerative braking allows energy normally dissipated in slowing down the vehicle to be diverted into charging the battery, reducing the demand on the engine driven alternator so saving fuel. A shift indicator was also added to inform the driver the optimum time to change gear based around his driving style.

The redesigned diesel version introduced in April 2007 is able to return up to 72.4 miles per gallon using 'overboost' technology to increase torque while reducing emissions.

With each MINI individually configurable providing, theoretically, 50,000 different variants, the characterful MINI is certain to continue its success story into the next decade. The design of the original Issigonis has, through necessity, been left behind but the MINI spirit lives on.

Pete generously presented a new MINI to everyone who attended the meeting and we each eagerly await delivery. (Only a joke but you should have been there.)

Sincere thanks to Pete for visiting us, for providing an interesting talk and for bringing along a rather super blue MINI for us to admire.

Alan



The Highways Agency Talk to the May Meeting

As we drive around the country most of us, from time to time, use part of the motorway network: those 'special' roads which enable high-speed motorway allowing short journey times and cost effective travelling. Or so we all hope.

Again, from time to time, we have all sat, for varying durations, on the carriageway going precisely nowhere. "Another holdup. What's going on now?" we might mutter as we resign ourselves to the inevitable delay. It's a fact of life that things happen on any road, but the effect of even a small disruption on a high speed route can explode out of all proportion and the queues start to build immediately. Frustrating and costly.

The motorway police exist primarily to enforce the law with a secondary role of traffic control at incidents. However there is another uniformed agency whose prime task is to ensure traffic flow is maintained. Able to manage traffic to ensure we can all use the motorways effectively with minimum delays and in optimum safety, the Highways Agency patrol and monitor the motorway network using patrols on the roads and suite of high-tech equipment feeding information into strategically placed control centres around the network.

James and Steve, based in Doncaster, kindly attended our May group meeting to explain in more detail the services provided by the Agency.

The prime purpose of the Highways Agency is to maintain traffic flow on the country's motorway network. They only manage the motorways but are there to offer help to motorway users and to ensure we all have safe, reliable journeys as we travel around the country. Although from a police background, James was keen to point out that Agency staff are independent of the police although they clearly work closely with the police to manage collisions or other events on the carriageways.

Not law enforcing but with a brief to manage traffic flow, it is an offence to ignore the directions of Highways Agency staff.

At a first glance one of the Highways





Agency patrol vehicles could be mistaken for a police vehicle in its high visibility livery, but this comes only out of the common need to be very conspicuous as the vehicles are often stationary on the carriageways and hard shoulders. The same is true of the staff. High visibility is essential in such a potentially dangerous environment as is warm and weatherproof clothing which is abundantly supplied to the patrol staff. Just imagine standing at the top of the M62 as it crosses the Pennines in the middle of winter dealing with a collision or a shed load. I think I would appreciate that extra fleece as well.

James and Steve are two of about 1500 Agency staff operating out of seven control rooms covering some 2000 miles of motorway in England. If you have the misfortune to break down on the motorway and call for assistance from one of the emergency roadside telephones, it is to one of the Agency staff you speak. They will manage your incident from that point by monitoring your situation from the roadside cameras and on calling in patrols, if necessary, to provide additional visibility to your vehicle. Although not permitted to provide any mechanical assistance, like the motoring organisations which provide breakdown cover, they will for example provide you with a relatively safe haven in which you can carry out simple repairs like changing a wheel. They can provide advanced warning to other motorway users by showing rearward facing, vehicle mounted, flashing amber lights or

deploy cones or whatever the patrol deem to be appropriate for your situation.

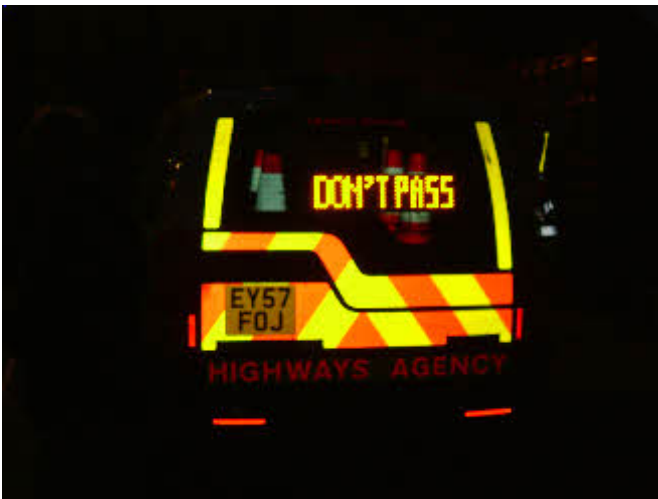
The vehicles used by the Agency are capable, four wheel drive units equipped with all the kit necessary to deal with most foreseeable situations. Traffic control equipment like signs, cones and lights; people things like ponchos, blankets, space blankets,

a basic first aid kit and clean-up equipment like spill kits, a brush and shovel are all part of the carefully stowed baggage to be found filling one of their vehicles. The odd roll of gaffer tape and water are also carried and can sometimes be all that is required to allow someone to get on their way.

The vehicles are also used to control the flow and speed of traffic to permit, for example, a window to allow debris to be removed safely from the carriageway. Most things seem to have fallen from vehicles. If you can name it, it is likely that somewhere in the country one or other of the Highways Agency staff will have picked it up from a motorway. Perhaps drivers don't notice the sofa they had on their roof-rack when they started off is no longer there as

they pull into the service area for a break or maybe they just want to avoid prosecution for having an unsafe load and so don't report it. Either way it is likely one of the Highways Agency patrols will be called in to deal with the obstruction.

As a parting shot, Steve suggested everyone





should have some sort of provision for dealing with a breakdown - join the AA or RAC or perhaps your insurance covers you with Green Flag. On most motorways the local police limit the amount of time a broken down vehicle can remain on the motorway and compulsory removal by the establishment

is likely to cost you £130 plus. The £35 you pay to the AA suddenly seems quite good value for money don't you think.

A statistic. An unprotected vehicle parked on the hard shoulder is likely to survive an average of eleven minutes before it is hit! If you do break down, that's a good reason for getting out of your vehicle and getting up the verge, if there is one, call the Agency using the road side telephone (the direction arrows on the marker posts show the direction and distance to the nearest one) and wait for the knights on fluorescent jackets to arrive. The extra protection they afford may allow you to complete a simple repair yourself or at least, you and your vehicle to survive long enough to be recovered by your breakdown service.

A very interesting and educational talk and sincere thanks to Steve and James and the Highways Agency for travelling to see us and for giving us a very comprehensive presentation.

Alan

Car Jack Scheme

Dave Allum passed me a note at a recent group meeting warning of new car-jacking scheme.

The note has been widely circulated via email but of course not everyone has email so for the un-enlightened:-

You walk across the car park, unlock your car and get inside. Then you lock all your doors, start the engine and put into reverse. You look into the rear-view mirror to back out of your parking space and you notice a piece of paper stuck to the middle of the rear window. So, you shift the gear stick back into park or neutral, unlock your doors and jump out of your car to remove that paper or whatever it is that is obstructing your view. When you reach the back of your car is when the car-jackers appear out of nowhere, jump into your car and take off!

Your engine was running, you would have left your purse in the car and they practically mow you down as they speed off in your car.

Be aware of this new scheme that is now being used in Gasgow and Manchester and is making its way across the country!

Just drive away and remove the paper later! A purse contains all your identification, and you certainly do not want someone getting your home address. They already have your keys!

Dave Allum

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Chief Observer's Column

One year has passed since I wrote my first Chief Observer's Column, giving me time to reflect on what I have written. I have found it difficult to find sufficient 'observing only' topics to write about, so in fact have included various subjects which I hope have proved interesting. For the future I propose to keep to this pattern.

Since its approval at the Observer Training Night, the new Annual Drive observers have with their Senior Observer has started. The new format places more emphasis on the explanation, by the Observer, of advanced driving techniques than on the driving. I have carried out a demonstration drive with Senior Observers Bill Cundill and John Pearce as my passengers and have sat in with Bill, John and Angie while they gave a demonstration drive. In each case the passenger is assumed to be an Associate just starting their guidance runs. Discussions with other Groups have shown the importance of Observers keeping up to date with current advanced driving techniques, and the new Annual Drive helps with this.

Moving away from observing, I still get 'entertainment' from looking out of my window at vehicles/drivers waiting at the level crossing which my house overlooks. A new occurrence is the passenger doors opening on 'white vans' and the passenger(s) getting out. Why you wonder? It's the new No Smoking rule which applies to all places of work – which includes vehicles. The passengers, who presumably are gasping for a smoke, light up amazing quickly and I wonder if they manage to smoke a complete cigarette in the 2 to 3 minutes the crossing is normally closed.

One slight change in my life has proved interesting. It is the possession of a bus pass, which allows me to travel free on service buses. One of my first journeys was when I took my car in for servicing and decided, instead of using a taxi to get the 7 miles home, to use the buses. This entailed a journey from Hesse Road to the City Centre where I got on a bus for Cottingham, which stops outside my house. The total journey time was 55 minutes – double the time by taxi – but at no cost, and time with me is not normally an issue. I have since used the buses on many occasions and find the experience as a bus passenger interesting. Firstly, as one is not driving, and sitting fairly high up, time can be spent looking at the shops etc on the journey. Then there is the experience of been driven in a large vehicle and seeing how the driver makes progress. I do admire the way the drivers keep their vehicles moving, even through the smallest gaps, although perhaps they are a bit more 'pushy' than I would be. (but they do have a schedule to keep to.) I now have no hesitation in going into town on the bus, whereas before I used to work out the difference between petrol plus parking fee and the bus fare and usually opted for the car.

For the future I have got planned a bus trip to Barton, where I propose to look around and visit the Nature Reserve. This will be a considerable saving with no Humber Bridge Toll to pay.

Oh the joy of being a senior citizen.

Ivor Nicholson
Chief Group Observer

Didn't You See The Sign There, Sir?

This is a view of the southern end of Gillshill Road in East Hull.



Here we have a nicely placed sign to let motorists know that there is something ahead round the corner. Pity that it was not installed so that when the tree grew bigger, we should still know what it said.

But what should it say? What does it say?

Have a guess - for that is all you can do - then take a look over the page to find out what the pedestrian can see.

Geoff Beecroft

Disclaimer

This newsletter is a forum for Members, Associates and friends of the Kingston Upon Hull and East Riding Group of Advanced Motorists and all are cordially invited to submit articles for inclusion. It should be noted however that a contributor must accept full responsibility and liability for the factual accuracy of any article they submit. Readers should note that an article is likely to reflect the views of the contributor, and its inclusion does not imply endorsement by the IAM, any other individual or organisation unless specifically stated. The editor reserves the right to edit, abridge or reject any submitted contribution.

Group Meetings

Group meetings take place normally the second Monday in the month at the Church Hall on Icehouse Road in Hull city centre. Entry is from the car park.

For those of you who might like to attend the next meeting, the Group web site at www.sentinel38.karoo.net/iam gives a MultiMap location.

In keeping with the Committee's desire to make the meetings as informal and interesting as possible the routine business is usually kept to a minimum and the rest of the evening given over to topical discussion and a guest speaker.

The meetings are open to all; Members, Associates or just anyone who is interested in discovering how to improve their own driving skills so please invite a guest or two.



This is what is actually mounted on the post In Gillshill Road.

As a driver approaches he would have an indication of the school crossing patrol as the 'Patrol' with its arrow is visible but the triangular warning signs are completely obscured by foliage.

Geoff Beecroft



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