



Driveway

Issue: 178 Spring 2015

From The Chair

Well, Spring is once again in the air and it with comes the usual, and not so usual, round of KAM/IAM activities going on as you will see from the contents, so do please come and join the fun.

Congratulations are due to Rex Mound who has qualified as a National Observer since the last edition of Driveway.

Contents

From The Chair	1
Blue Light Awareness	2
New Members	2
Test Passes	2
A Little Light Relief	2
Notice of Annual General Meeting	3
NPAS Visit –	3
Skills Day 9th May 2015 – Gaydon	3
Driver First Assist –	4
A Few Reminders.....	4
Obituary	4
A Physicist Writes. . .	5
Driving Test Needs Updating	6
Drive Sunday	6

A number of driving related items have caught my attention recently, especially the IAM stance on updating the driving test to reflect prevailing conditions. It is clear from statistical analysis of crashes, that too many young people are dying soon after passing the test. As we saw recently near Brecon, such crashes also maim and kill other, innocent road users. This same group appear to think that they can consume more alcohol, thus impairing their driving, preferring to believe their peers rather than official information.

I saw an item on the number of drivers who continue to drive with more than twelve penalty points. England and Wales' highest points holder is a Liverpool man with 45 penalty points on a full driving licence. He collected six penalty points on three separate occasions for speeding in a 30mph zone and another six points on five other occasions because he failed to provide information about the identity of the driver – he carries the same number of points today as he did in 2014. Why has he not been imprisoned and the vehicle(s) he was driving been seized? Before, rather than after he kills someone?

I was very pleased to see from the IAM Group Scorecard that we have a 92% pass rate for the Advanced Driving Test, with 25% of our candidates in the past twelve months scoring a First. Well done to all concerned!

I see that the IAM call for private car parking firms at motorway service stations not to penalise motorists who stop to rest for more than two hours has been supported by David Davies MP, who said that charging large amounts of money to park for more than two hours could be increasing the risk of accidents caused by driver fatigue.

Enough for now, may I remind you that Notice of the Annual General Meeting is contained within.

I look forward to seeing a good many of you there on the 20th May.
Andrea.



Charity No: 1098808
The Newsletter of Kidderminster Advanced Motorists

Group Contact: 07050 691252 & www.k-a-m.org.uk

Blue Light Awareness

Most drivers try to assist emergency vehicles by moving out of their way as soon as possible. A small minority do nothing, (perhaps because the radio is so loud that they cannot hear). Either way, it is easy to fall foul of the law and with the increasing use of CCTV, automated fines are liable to drop though the old letterbox some time later.

Many drivers make room for emergency vehicles by driving onto pavements and verges. Some will drive across the white "Stop" line at red traffic lights or enter bus lanes. Others will carry on driving whilst the emergency vehicle waits for an opportunity to pass.

What constitutes an emergency vehicle? Rule 219 of the Highway Code lists the following; ambulances, fire engines, police, doctors or other emergency vehicles using flashing blue, red or green lights, using sirens or flashing headlights, or Highways Agency Traffic officer and incident Support vehicles using flashing amber lights.

What is the correct procedure to adopt? Rule 219 advises the motorist to "take appropriate action to let it pass, while complying with all traffic signs.avoid mounting the kerb."

"...while complying with all traffic signs." Keep this phrase in mind. In the event of a driver entering a box junction (and stopping), bus lane or crossing the white "Stop" line at red traffic lights, an offence has been committed. Many drivers have been prosecuted for failing to observe traffic signs whilst attempting to make space for an emergency vehicle to pass. The only time that it is permissible is if directed to do so by a uniformed police officer.

The most appropriate way to deal with emergency vehicles is to signal and pull into a gateway or similar, to enable it to pass. Use a similar tactic when such vehicles are approaching, unless there is ample space for them to get through. With a following vehicle, if there is nowhere to pull in, continue at the safest speed within the posted speed limit until such space is available. Do not drive onto kerbs, pavements or verges.

However, when selecting a spot in which to pull over, consider the numbers and types of vehicles behind, between you and the emergency vehicle. If there is insufficient space for them to pull over safely too, the route may be obstructed and the emergency vehicle delayed.

Do remember that the drivers of emergency vehicles have been trained to find their way through

traffic situations safely. Indicate your intentions clearly and in good time.

The objective for drivers is to stay safe and legal, whilst assisting the passage of emergency vehicles.

An excellent video was released by GEM Motoring Assist in 2011, runs for about five minutes and provides a lot of useful information.

It can be found at <http://www.bluelightaware.org.uk/>
Bob Fox

New Members

Jane Mallard	Blakedown
John Fry	Eardiston
Tony Jauncey	Hartlebury
Adam Moore	Tenbury Wells

Welcome to the Group. Enjoy the challenge.
Bob Fox.

Test Passes

Candidate	Observer
Roy Graham	Rob stokes
Mike Jenner	Mary Drummond
Carole West	Mike Gardiner

Congratulations to all concerned.
Bob Fox.

A Little Light Relief

Paddy phones an ambulance because his mate's been hit by a car.

Paddy: 'Get an ambulance here quick, he's bleeding from his nose and ears and I tink both his legs are broken.'

Operator: 'What is your location sir?'

Paddy: 'Outside number 28 Eucalyptus Street'

Operator: 'How do you spell that sir?'

Silence.... (heavy breathing) and after a minute.

Operator: 'Sir, can you hear me?'

More heavy breathing and another minute later.

Operator: 'Sir, can you hear me?'

This goes on for another few minutes until....

Operator: 'Sir, please answer me. Can you still hear me?'

Paddy: 'Yes, sorry bout dat. I couldn't spell eucalyptus, so I just dragged him round to number 3 Oak Street.'

Notice of Annual General Meeting

Wednesday 20th May 2014 – Stourport Memorial Hall.

Doors open 7.00pm for a prompt 7.30pm start!

The AGM Reports will be posted on the KAM website shortly before the meeting, enabling the actual AGM very short (no more than half-an-hour). Audited accounts will be available on the website and in hard copy at the meeting.

As a charity we are required by law to have a Chairman, Secretary and Treasurer and these have to be elected on the night. Presently these positions are held by:

Chairman: Andrea Beech.

Secretary: Christine Lacey.

Treasurer: Megan Weaver.

All 3 Officers are prepared to offer themselves for re-election.

Other committee posts are held by: Mark Griffiss (Chief Observer), Joe Crofts -Observer Team Leader), Bob Fox (Newsletter Editor), Rex Mound, Brian Elliott, Rich Brewer and Neville Simpson.

To be considered for any of the Officer positions or to join the committee, applicants must have been a full member of the Group for a minimum of 12 months and in order to stand as an Officer must be nominated and seconded by two other full members. The committee reserve the right to co-opt members onto the committee at any time.

Nominations for each of the Officers must be presented to the committee not later than 29th April 2015 in readiness for the last committee meeting prior to the AGM, thereby enabling preparation of election papers should these be required.

The speakers this year are Anna Higgins and Rod Reynolds from the Safer Roads Partnership (you know, those lovely people responsible for all those speed cameras!!) As well as the presentation, there will of course be an opportunity to ask questions, so this is a great opportunity to find out more about them.

For the first time this year, we are actually going to try bribery to get you along to the AGM! We know it can be a rush for you to get there, especially as we are starting earlier this year, so for the princely sum of £2, we will provide you with a fish and chip supper! So that we know how many to cater for, please can you confirm your attendance, NOT LATER THAN 13TH MAY 2015 by email to kidderminsteriam@gmail.com .

I look forward to seeing you there.

Andrea Beech

NPAS Visit –

Wednesday 6th May 2015

At long last, we are able to offer another date for the proposed visit to the National Police Air Service at Halfpenny Green. The date is Wednesday 6th May. This will be our first and last chance to make this visit as NPAS will cease to operate out of Halfpenny Green later this year. If you are able to join us, please email us at kidderminsteriam@gmail.com by 29th April 2015.

Skills Day 9th May 2015 – Gaydon

This is your final call for the Skills Day at Gaydon. There are very few places left, so if you have not already done so and wish to take part, please contact Brent Prince IMMEDIATELY. His email address is a4bjp@yahoo.co.uk

Driver First Assist –

12th September 2015

As a result of the presentation by David Higginbottom from Driver First Assist (DFA) in December, we had a number of people sign up for DFA training. This has been booked for Saturday 12th September. It is a full 7 hour day. As well as the training, participants will receive a DFA Toolkit which includes: DFA logoed long sleeve hi viz, first aid kit, ID card, certificate, key ring and window sticker. Usual cost is £144.00 but DFA are offering a discount to IAM members on a sliding scale depending on numbers. Presently, the cost stands at £85 per person (including VAT), which will come down to £80 per person if we have a full house of 12 people. Please let us know ASAP if you would like to apply for this training.

Anyone who missed the presentation can find out more from www.driverfirstassist.org. Please note, once you have paid (and we will request this probably in August) this will be NON REFUNDABLE. I intend to keep a waiting list should we get more than the maximum 12, so it is possible we may be able to find someone to take your place, but don't rely on it. Please look upon this as a commitment!
Andrea.

Obituary



It is with great sadness that I report the death of Bob Jackson, President of the Central England & Wales Forum (CEW). Although most of you will not have attended a forum meeting, those of you who have, will undoubtedly have met Bob. He was always sitting on the very back row and from there he would listen to all the discussions, debates and arguments and was always ready with some pithy comments, often heckling but always with the wellbeing of the forum and what it stands for at his heart. Indeed, the Forum was, I believe Bob's brainchild all those years ago and he missed very few meetings. We on the CEW committee are going to miss him greatly, as a colleague, as a sounding board when we needed advice and, above all, as a friend. I shall personally miss Bob, too. We became great friends over the years and there will always be a gap on that back row. Our thoughts go out to his wife, Sandra and their two daughters, Andrea and Tamsyn.

A Few Reminders.....

Observing what is going on around you can help you cope better with hazards and reduce the risk of a crash. Apply the system of driving, Information, Position, Gear, Speed, Acceleration (IPSGA).

Look out for wet leaves or pools of water on the road that can easily upset a car's balance. In such circumstances make sure you give yourself enough time to slow down to avoid skidding, and remember it is an offence to splash pedestrians when driving through a puddle. (Section 3 of the Road Traffic Act 1988¹).

A cluster of lampposts in the distance may be an indication of a major junction. A row of lampposts or trees on a rural road can help you assess the direction the road is taking. In the dark observe the headlight beam of the car in front of you to assess the road ahead.

If following a bus or school coach, look out for passengers movement inside. Often an indication

of passengers getting off at the next stop, be ready to slow down. Look out for pedestrians appearing suddenly from in front of or behind the bus.

Motorcyclists are not easily spotted. Be vigilant – check mirrors and blind spot regularly. Three quarters of urban motorcyclist crashes happen at junctions, be extra cautious. It is often the driver who is at fault.

Look out for pedestrians crossing the road. One third of urban accidents involve a pedestrian or cyclist. Slow on the approach to a zebra crossing, give way to pedestrians on and about to use the crossing. At light controlled crossings, if lights are green look for waiting pedestrians.

Stay safe.

A Physicist Writes. . .

An article in the last Advanced Driving magazine brought an awkward fact to our attention: cars have been expanding. Some previously slim models such as the Mini have widened by 18 inches over the years (though the Mini did it, atypically, in one extraordinary burst of growth around 15 years ago, in becoming the MINI).

The reasons are mostly attributable to the car-occupants, who have themselves broadened, but also demanded features such as bucket seats, room for three in the back, extra stowage, more powerful front-wheel-drive engines, and doors accommodating speakers, window motors and side-impact protection.

You wonder how many drivers have rolled their new car into their old garage, and then discovered that they couldn't get out! For twenty years or more my garage has been occupied by other items: if it wasn't for them, possibly my Mk 6 Golf could be squeezed in (with me then being able to squeeze out), because the article mentioned that this model has put on only seven inches or so, across the beam, since the days of the Mk 1 in the 70s. And that's even with incorporating the features that I've listed above.

Full marks to the VW design team for this, then. But (while I have them in mind) not many marks for providing my car with no flat space inside to put things down on safely. The top of the dashboard, for example, is four square feet of useless undulating surface. Do vehicle designers actually drive cars? Does their eye for a nice profile neutralize their common sense for how practical it will be? Do they simply think differently from the rest of us – or from me anyway?

“Thinking differently”: I would like to explore this general idea further, as there's evidence of it all around. If I see a car arriving at a red light (or some other hold-up that's visible from a good distance away) at high speed plus heavy braking, I think of the pointless waste of fuel and brake material – but the driver is clearly thinking of something else, or not thinking at all.

Then there's the fondness that some motorists have for the gear-stick, expressed by caressing it all the time with their left hand, even on bends and corners: are they confident that the hand will never suddenly be needed on the steering-wheel? And I can't imagine the thought-processes that allow a vehicle to be left parked absurdly and damagingly with a tyre, or even two, half-off the edge of a kerb (something I seem to notice every other day). It's not just on the road that I observe the effects

of brains being used in a different way from mine. I run a volunteer group of adopt-a-street litter-pickers (now more than 260 strong, and covering at least 80% of our town of Earley), but we are only needed because of the many litter-droppers: what on earth is going through the mind of people when they discard an item on the pavement or verge? Do they assume it will quickly fade away to nothing?

But let's get back to motoring. Some drivers evidently still believe that there are no significant dangers in using a mobile phone while on the move. But it's almost inevitable that talking (whether via a hand-held or a hands-free phone) to someone who is not in the car will take your concentration off the road ahead. A recent study on a driving simulator established that the effect was equivalent to having drunk three shots of vodka!

And yet, astonishingly, it is possible to circumvent this (I mean the problem with the mobile, not with the vodka): if the distant party can actually see the driver or better still the road ahead, on a video-phone of some sort, their conversation instinctively becomes 'participatory' with the driving, just as if they were a passenger – aware of the traffic, maybe pointing out hazards, and so on. And as a result, the added risk to the driver in using the phone is much smaller.

This too was only demonstrated on a driving simulator, so it might not be valid in real driving. And it's unlikely to be allowed as an exemption to the law against mobile-phone use, as there's no easy way of ensuring that drivers have set up the necessary video connection. But anyway, if you would like to know more about the study, listen to the R4 programme All in the Mind, available here: www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/b04svjbn.

There was an interesting discussion too, in the programme, on why vehicles parked on motorway hard shoulders are less noticeable (to approaching drivers) than you might think. The reason is that they are pointing in exactly the same direction as the rest of the traffic, and so don't stand out from it – regardless of the fact that they are stationary. We were told that if you are obliged to stop on the hard shoulder, the trick for protecting your car by making it more 'visible' is to park it at an angle (pointing into the verge, I would suggest, rather than the other way).

That's assuming, of course, that the car hasn't become too wide for this to be feasible!
Peter Soul

Driving Test Needs Updating

The driving test today is 80 this year. Passed in 1934 The Road Traffic Act paved the way for compulsory driving tests in the UK a year later but the biggest developments came into effect in the past two decades; in 1996 a theory test was added to the practical element and from 2002 learners also had to pass a hazard perception exam.

The driving test does not test a driver's ability to cope safely with country roads, poor weather or driving at night – three aspects we know are main risk factors in the first six months of solo driving. Road crashes remain the biggest killer of young people in the UK, higher than both alcohol and drugs.

Neil Greig, IAM director of policy and research, said: "The driving test needs to become a much more integrated part of a graduated licensing system that picks up on best practice from around the world. For instance, Austria has a 'second phase' licensing system, where young drivers come back in the first 12 months after the test for further interventions to examine attitude changes and skills."

Young male driver casualties have dropped by a third in Austria as a result of the initiative.

The IAM advocates the following changes to the driver training 'system' as part of its manifesto: road safety education to be part of the National Curriculum, support for a minimum learning period prior to taking the practical test, the inclusion of high speed roads in the test itself, support for limits on peer passenger numbers after the test is passed, and a lower drink-drive limit for new drivers.

The IAM also wants to see learner drivers allowed on motorways so they can learn from an expert rather than on their own after passing the test.

Neil said: "The driving test today does test a driver's ability to a very high level, but it has fallen behind what is urgently needed today in 2015. This must be addressed as a matter of urgency by the next government."

He added that the driving test needed to take into account whether the influence of new technology and driver aids; such as satellite navigation and cradle-held mobile phones used as navigation devices, should play a part in a 21st century driving test.

IAM Press Release

Drive Sunday

As the first Sunday of April is Easter Day, Drive Sunday has been brought forward one week to Sunday 29th March at 10.30am at The Lock, Wolverley. Thereafter Drive Sunday will be on the first Sunday of each month as usual.

COPY DEADLINE FOR NEXT EDITION OF DRIVEWAY - 25 JUNE 2015

Who's Who in KAM

Chair:	President: Mike Doyle		
Secretary:	Andrea Beech 01562 700730	07837 200967	andrea-kam@uwclub.net
Treasurer:	Christine Lacey 01384 396267		kidderminsteriam@gmail.com
Chief Observer:	Megan Weaver 01299 871278		meganweaver21@hotmail.com
	Mark Griffiss 01384 351314		mgriffissceilings@blueyonder.co.uk

Committee Members:

Joe Crofts	07944 174694	jcrofts@blueyonder.co.uk
Brian Elliot	07752090452	bp414elliott@btinternet.com
Rex Mound	07983 818350	rex.mound@btinternet.com
Neville Simpson	07711 908509	simpson.n@blueyonder.co.uk
Rich Brewer	07980901444	richiebrewer@hotmail.co.uk
Driveway Editor: Bob Fox	07855817318	bob@bobfox.demon.co.uk

Views expressed in Driveway are those of individual contributors and do not necessarily represent the views of the Editor, Kidderminster Advanced Motorists Group Committee or The Institute of Advanced Motorists.

No responsibility can be accepted for errors or omissions.