

## Your Committee for 2011

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Articles or letters for publication are always welcome. Please forward your contribution for the Winter 2011 issue to the Editor by the copy date of 14<sup>th</sup> November 2011.

***Terry Whelan, Newsletter Editor***

## Chairman's Report

Well the Group is plodding along steadily but we are getting very few new associates joining. This means that our observers are not fully employed and we have spare capacity at the moment. I would urge you to spread the word and see if we cannot get some new associates. Any bright ideas on recruitment would be gratefully received.

The offer of Skid Pan Training for members at a reduced rate is still on-going. I think I now have three interested parties but we need 12 to make it viable. If you have friends or relatives interested then we would be pleased for them to join us . unfortunately we cannot subsidise them to the same rate as members but the group rate is less than individual rates, if you see what I mean.

From time to time we do try to generate visits or excursions for the Group. Unfortunately, we get very poor response but we are not down hearted! Again, Tom has been looking at possibilities and thought that although we are a motoring group, some alcoholic beverage might be of interest! There are two possible visits that we might pursue, one is to the Three Choirs Vineyard at Newent, and the other to Wadworths Brewery at Devizes. Both could include lunch if desired but tasting at the Three Choirs is £3.50 extra! The Group would provide transport, from Stroud and Cirencester so those who would like to sample the wares would not have to drive. How about it? Let me know if you are interested and we can look at some dates.

In the meantime, I look forward to seeing as many of you as possible at our monthly meetings.  
Safe motoring.

Gordon Burley. Chairman

## Treasurer's Report

At the time of writing (30th August), the balances of the Group's deposit and current accounts amount to £4,443.

Gift Aid Receipts for Financial Year 2010/11

I am pleased to report that the Group has been received £314 from HM Revenue & Custom; as a result of the claim submitted in respect of the subscription payments received from the 72 members, who have made Gift Aid Declarations.

Cheque Payments

Please make any cheques for the (CADAM) Group payable to:

- **Cirencester & District Advanced Motorists**

*Robert Lang, Group Treasurer*

## Membership Matters

Since the last published newsletter, we give a welcome to the following Associates joining the Group:

Neil David	from	Malmesbury
Joanna Dickson Leach	from	Acton Turville
Fiona Riddlestone	from	Chalford, Stroud
Alex Rambault	from	Quennington
Johanna Barton	from	Stroud
David Forbes	from	Minchinhampton

And congratulations to the following Member who has successfully passed the Advanced Driving test and a big thank you to his Observer:

David Bexton - Observed by Gordon Burley.

The new Associates above bring our total current membership to 102, still maintaining our one hundred plus record. **Alan Watt & Gareth Zimmerman.**

## Road Safety

### Fatal Decision? “Just One for the Road”

In Ireland, the two most common offences prosecuted in the courts in relation to drink- driving are Sections 49 and 50 of the Road Traffic Act 1961. Section 49 deals with driving or attempting to drive a vehicle while under the influence of an intoxicant which includes both alcohol and drugs. This is commonly known as %drunk driving+. Section 50 of the RTA 1961 deals with the offence commonly known as %drunk in charge+and this offence is committed if you are in charge of a vehicle in a public place with intent to drive or attempting to drive.

The devastation caused by intoxicated drivers in most countries is well known, but the fact that even a small amount of alcohol increases the chances of a fatal accident is indeed sobering. In this article, Tom Harrington - who is virtually a non-drinker . looks at research and scientific studies into the Effects of Low Doses of Alcohol on Driving Related Skills. It all adds up to, according to researchers is that alcohol, taken in any amount is unsafe for drivers. Note. Detections in Ireland for driving while intoxicated in 2010 were 22.7% lower than in 2009.

The word %alcohol+derives from the Arabic word, al-kuhul and is applied to the many members of the family of alcohols. It is a legal sedative drug which changes the way we feel and it is also a major economic commodity that is associated with substantial governmental tax receipts and considerable expenditure. Historically, doctors recommended moderate amounts of the well-known alcoholic brand . Guinness - for medicinal purposes to assist recovery from illness. However, alcohol impairs nearly every aspect of information processing by the brain and impaired

drivers require more time to to read a road sign or to respond to a traffic signal than unimpaired drivers; consequently, they tend to look at fewer sources of information. Research on the effects of alcohol on performance by both vehicle and aircraft operators shows a narrowing of the attentional fields beginning at approximately 0.04 BAC.

There are many opportunities for alcohol-impaired persons to cause injury and death to themselves and others. Driving, flying airplanes, boating, using complicated machinery such as printing presses or other industrial equipment and many other activities become more risky when people engaging in them are alcohol-impaired . even with low amounts. The substantial numbers of people who are injured or who die from alcohol-impaired accidents every year attest to the seriousness of the problem. However, much remains to be determined regarding the more emotional aspects of behaviour, such as judgement, aggression and risk taking. Considering that the majority of alcohol related driving accidents occur at night, there is a need for increased examination on the role of fatigue, circadian cycles and sleep loss.

The study of the effects of drugs other than alcohol is more complex because of the number of substances of potential interest, the difficulties estimating drug levels and the complexity of the drug/subject interactions.

When alcohol is consumed and after it passes through the liver, some of it will hit the brain within minutes. When it reaches the brain this mind-acting drug will begin to impact upon the brain cells and and brain systems. Scientific research has verified the effects alcohol has on brain and upon behaviour. Even though research has not found everything there is to know, there is clearly enough scientific evidence to reach reasonable and well-founded conclusions about how any alcohol impairs driving .

even from the first drink or the now almost redundant %one for the road+.

The first effect of alcohol on the brain is that it begins to close down mental activity. The frontal lobe (brain) is affected with immediate effects of increased enjoyment, euphoria, happiness and the general expression of positive moods. The fact that alcohol improves the drinkers mood in the short term is an important reason why many people drink and that mood change can be regulated according to the amount consumed. This effect feels relaxing, even pleasurable, but is progressively damaging for the complex skills needed to drive safely.

The skills most critical to driving . the brain's ability to observe, interpret and process information from the eyes and other senses - is impaired by alcohol at the lowest levels that can be reliably measured. In April 2000, Professor H. Moskowitz and Dary Fiorentino, published a review of 112 scientific studies into the Effects of Low Doses of Alcohol on Driving Related Skills. Their study reveals that at under 1/8 of our legal limit (80mgs of alcohol per 100 mls of blood) both basic driving skills and divided attention ability were found to be impaired in half or more of the behavioural tests. The ability to divide attention between different sources of information on the road is a critical requirement for safe driving and this ability starts to be impaired at the smallest doses of alcohol.

Evidence shows that impaired drivers tend to focus more on steering when divided attention ability is affected and thus miss out on vital happenings in their peripheral field of vision e.g. the pedestrian about to cross the road, the vehicle emerging from the side road, the car about to pull out from the kerb etc., these hazards would more than likely be spotted more quickly by a sober driver. Given this evidence of impairment of crucial driving skills at under 1/8 of our legal limit for Blood Alcohol

Concentration (BAC), Professor Moskowitz confirmed in July 2001 that:

There is no BAC level at which impairment does not occur. Between 1/8 and 1/4 of our legal limit, impairment of wakefulness was found in half or more of the tests, producing drowsiness in impaired drivers at low BAC levels. Further evidence of this danger came in 2002 from Professor Jim Horne and scientists at the Sleep Research Centre in Loughborough University who found that:

Because of the natural afternoon dip in alertness, even after a normal night's sleep, then a modest alcohol intake at lunchtime (giving BACs well within the pass-range for police roadside breathalysers) presents a potential danger to driving at this time...

Research has shown that the complete impact of a road crash is over in 1/5 th of a second - which is why a millisecond (split second) doze at the wheel due to drowsiness or fatigue caused by a low intake of alcohol, can have such fatal and tragic consequences.

Sleepiness is a factor in about 10% of road crashes in France, 16% on major roads in England and over 20% on midland motorways in England. However, drowsiness is not the only impairment found at under 1/4 of our legal limit. Impairment was also found at this low BAC level for psychomotor skills such as body balance and skilled physical tasks; for tracking e.g. steering within lanes while observing and monitoring the driving environment; and for cognitive tasks . information processing, such as the time a driver needs to read a street sign or recognise and respond to a traffic signal or make a decision.

The greatest danger of the first drink (or just one for the road) upon driving ability is the impairment of information processing skills even at low BAC levels. Alcohol impairs sensible decision-making. It distorts our ability to process information and therefore impairs our ability to assess our own competence to drive. After a drink, you may not feel intoxicated and may believe you can drive safely. This is due to impairment of your brain's cognitive processing capability.

As forensic physician Dr. Morris Odell puts it:

The problem is that most people feel fine at low blood alcohol levels, so they don't realise they're already at risk.

That is why the decision to take the first drink, when intending to drive, can be the fatal decision . because it leads to a downward spiral of impaired decisions to have one more, then another and another. At 1/3 of our legal limit both visual functions (including the brain's control of the eyes) and choice reaction times (multiple responses involving information processing as well as simple reaction time) begin to show impairment. At 1/2 of our legal limit vigilance (including alertness) was impaired in half or more of the scientific tests . and perception skills (including hazard perception) were beginning to show impairment. By 3/5 of our legal limit both perception skills and visual functions were impaired in half or more of the scientific tests. By 3/4 of our legal limit tracking skills were impaired in half or more of the tests. And by 4/5 of our legal limit half or more of the tests were showing impairment in cognitive tasks, psychomotor skills and choice reaction time.

The combined effect of all these impairments after low alcohol intake is that:

" The driver's ability to judge distances is reduced at low BACs

" The driver's speed of scanning the total road environment is much slower and people, objects or other dangers may be missed

" The impaired driver takes too long to make all the vital decisions made second by second at the wheel . or even makes the wrong decisions

" The driver's judgement is impaired . for instance increasing the willingness to take more risks when driving

The cumulative result is that, just one drink leads to another, so one impairment leads to another. The conclusion of Professor Herbert Moskowitz is:

"As the BAC level increases, more and more components of behaviour are involved in producing a more complex set of impairments+

This highlights the fact that driver involvement in fatal crashes does not start at our legal limit but gradually builds from BACs at one eighth of our legal limit, showing that low BACs are a danger factor. Impairment due to alcohol is not some obscure theory discovered in a laboratory. It has consequences . real, brutal, heart-breaking consequences. As a leading researcher puts it:  
"Let us begin with an obvious conclusion supported by the preponderance of research evidence in this field; namely the higher the BAC level of the driver, the greater probability of a crash.+"

Professor Moskowitz goes on to say that crash rates increase with any departure from zero BAC. But the highest risk of collision, starting at the lowest BAC levels, is among young drivers . hence the focus of new campaigns.

On 23 July 2001, this body of scientific evidence dispelled one of the most enduring myths of drinking and driving folklore . the mistaken belief that a few drinks makes you more relaxed and a less risky driver. As Hans Laurell of the Swedish National Road Administration said:

For 30 years, I have had a hard time fighting off the hordes of people who claim that small amounts actually improve performance. Herb (Moskowitz) permits me to bury this myth.+ The overall impact of this evidence is challenging for both individuals and for all of society by showing that:

- " Every drink impairs driving
- " Every drink increases the risk of a collision
- " Just one drink before driving increases the risk of death and injury for other road users
- " That drinking and driving should not be condoned
- " It follows that society and everyone involved should promote safe choices . using designated drivers, taxis, public transport, walking or just refusing to drink and drive.

Alcohol is cleared from the body at a rate equivalent to about 15 milligrams of alcohol per 100 millilitres of blood in one hour. That's about equivalent to about  $\frac{3}{4}$  of a half-pint of standard strength beer, eliminated per hour. Therefore, a heavy drinking session . such as a Christmas office party . which raised a driver's BAC to a total of 200 milligrams of alcohol per 100 millilitres of blood (well over the legal limit for driving) by midnight, could take 13.33 hours to clear the body . that's until after lunchtime or 1.30pm the next day Therefore, the morning after poses significant risks and is a very dangerous time for impaired

driving. (A good rule of thumb would be to leave at least 12 hours between the ~~u~~bottle and the ~~u~~throttle).

However, the danger of counting units and trying to calculate personal BAC by the hour is revealed by scientific evidence published in October 2004, by researchers at the University of Ulster and Queen's University, Belfast. A total of 48 social drinkers, between 18 and 43 were tested in a hangover and no hangover state, approximately one week apart. The results demonstrated that memory and psychomotor performance were impaired on the morning after heavy social drinking, despite blood alcohol levels of zero or very near zero.

Finally, although alcohol-impaired driving appears to be a single-issue, it is in fact a complex problem that includes various dimensions such as alcohol abuse, underage drinking and other social concerns. Solutions need to be equally complex and wide-ranging, demanding a comprehensive creative and flexible approach. It is important to view alcohol-impaired driving within the broader context of public health implications of alcohol abuse. As a result solutions must take into account drinking patterns and groups particularly at risk. Countermeasures vary widely from country to country but generally aim to persuade people not to drink and drive. Initiatives can be separated into four broad categories; public education, policies, enforcement and sanctions. However, measures chosen and applied in a given country must enjoy the support of both Government and public.

Without Government commitment, measures to prevent impaired driving can have little long-term effect. Efforts to reduce the effect of impaired driving can be most effective and sustainable when stakeholders from various sections and disciplines work together. As the problem of drink-driving affect society at large, it needs co-operation from a variety of sections and disciplines to combat and solve it. Government efforts through enforcement can be pooled

with an input from the alcohol industry, community-based groups and academic institutions to address the problem. The experience of different countries shows that collaboration among a variety of stakeholders can result in a larger and more sustainable reduction of impaired driving crashes and incidents where one of the major contributing factors in crashes was the driver's fatal decision to have "just one for the road". And then succumb to the fatal attraction of consuming more of the highly desirable but potentially harmful and dangerous beverage . the "social lubricant".

***T. Harrington August 2011***

## **Young Drivers**

Half of young men killed or badly hurt in car crashes were driving vehicles more than a decade old, new research has revealed.

It has led to the Institute of Advanced Motorists, which uncovered the link, to urge parents to help their children buy the best car they can, for safety's sake.

"It makes sense that any driver will take better care of a new car, and especially one which they're still paying for," said IAM director of policy and research Neil Greig. "Young drivers are the highest risk group on our roads and the insurance industry claims that 20 per cent of young drivers crash in their first year.

"Parents should help their child choose the best car they can get for their money. A new car won't be an option for everybody but there are plenty of used cars that will be almost as good . you do need to do some thorough research though."

The Institute has highlighted what to look for when choosing a first car for a young driver. Its suggestions include:

\* New Car Assessment Programme (NCAP) safety rating . purchasers should check for four stars in the adult rating category and should not accept less than three, even for older vehicles.

\* Insurance group . group three or under is recommended. This allows a wide choice of small cars and makes premiums cheaper while no-claims discount multiplies.

\* Manufacturers' warranty . longer manufacturers' warranties are becoming the norm. The IAM says there are now "plenty" of used cars available that are still covered. Buyers should check small print; there might be mileage restrictions.

\* Depreciation . vehicles depreciate at differing rates. Be aware that a three-year-old bargain might turn out to be worth very little when you sell it.

\* Mileage . many small cars are only used for local trips and don't clock up high mileage, so buyers shouldn't be tempted to pay too much for low mileage.

Young Marmalade, which specialises in young drivers' insurance, says the "obvious conclusion" of the IAM's research is that young drivers are safer driving new, low-powered cars with more safety features.

Nigel Lacy, co-founder of Young Marmalade, said: "We fully support the IAM recommendations but at Young Marmalade we have taken that thinking a stage further and offer the car and insurance as a combined package."

Young Marmalade provides small-engined cars with excellent safety features and insurance as a combined package. By purchasing cars in volume, the company says it is able to offer reduced premiums for young drivers.

***David Williams, The Daily Telegraph, 09 Jun 2011***

## **IAM News**

### **Fewer Pedestrians Killed as Drivers Stop Speeding**

Latest road safety figures from the DfT show that compliance with 30mph urban speed limits continues to improve while pedestrian fatality levels are falling.

In 1998, 69 per cent of cars were driven faster than the limit in 30mph zones in free-flow conditions . by 2010 this had dropped to 46 per cent. Those exceeding 40 mph in a 30mph limit has halved since 2003, now down to 16 per cent. At the same time, traffic levels are declining on all types of road . a trend observed from 2006 onwards.

Pedestrian fatalities have also reduced significantly, down 40 per cent since 2005 from 671 to 405. Ninety-six per cent of pedestrian accidents happen on urban roads.

Reducing traffic speeds and risk in towns has been high on the road safety agenda, but rural roads, on which drivers are still most likely to be killed, now require even greater priority to reduce casualties further.

IAM director of policy and research Neil Greig said: "The good news is that drivers are not driving faster on the less crowded roads . and more people are sticking to the limit in urban areas where there are many hazards. A combination of consistent road safety messages, new road layouts and police enforcement appears to be paying road safety dividends for city people.

However despite this positive effect in urban areas, road safety on rural roads, where the majority of serious accidents and fatalities occur, needs much more attention. In the UK, between two-thirds and three-quarters of fatalities occur on rural roads, yet driving on rural roads still isn't a mandatory part of the basic driving test. Most young drivers get plenty of exposure to urban hazards but often their first experience of a rural road comes after the test when they are on their own. This is unacceptable.

### ***IAM News Release 22 July 2011***

## **Car Use Down as Fuel Prices Rise**

Eighty per cent of drivers have changed their driving behaviour to save fuel, according to the IAM's latest opinion poll. Of the 2,500 people polled, half said they had changed to a more eco-friendly driving style.

Other changes in behaviour include:

- " Making fewer journeys (38.10%).
- " Walking shorter journeys they previously would have driven (34.54%).
- " Using public transport more (21.48%).
- " Cycling shorter journeys they would previously have driven (19.19%).
- " Buying a more fuel-efficient car (18.08%).

Drivers are not keen to give up their cars completely . 74 per cent were against this idea . but more than half said they stick to the speed limit to keep fuel consumption down, and more than 70 per cent check their tyres regularly. Turning off the air-con and emptying the car of unnecessary clutter were also popular methods.

IAM director of policy and research Neil Greig said: "The days of cruising the motorway at eighty, regardless of the cost, are over. With rocketing fuel prices it is clear that drivers are changing their behaviour, which is good for their health and the environment. You don't need a new car to become a greener driver. You just need to change your driving style.

"For millions of motorists driving is a necessity, not a luxury. Rural drivers especially need their cars for work, socialising and family life. If drivers can reduce their car usage that's great, but for those who can't, driving as economically as possible is the answer."

How to improve your MPG and cut carbon emissions:

" Keep your vehicle moving rather than stopping and starting. Look further ahead and slow down earlier to avoid stopping. Driving at a constant speed is far more fuel efficient than heavy accelerating and braking.

" Check your tyres. Under-inflated tyres have a big impact on fuel economy.

" Put your car on a diet. Remove unnecessary weight, including roof racks, car clutter and heavy items in the boot.

" Try to avoid using air conditioning and climate control at low speeds as they increase fuel consumption. Open a window. But at high speeds, close your windows to maintain the aerodynamics of the car. Use air-con to get the car to a comfortable temperature, and then turn it off to save fuel.

" Clean screens rarely mist up - so you don't use the heater and air-conditioning less.

" Try changing up your gears earlier; for petrol engines at 2,500 rpm (revs per minute), and diesel engines 2,000 rpm

“ Reverse into parking bays: manoeuvring with a cold engine uses more fuel, so make the most of having a hot engine.

“ It will take most cars at least a couple of miles to warm up and run efficiently. Could you walk or cycle?

“ Drive at an even pace over speed humps. Slowing down and speeding up drinks more fuel.

“ Stick to the speed limit.

***IAM News Release 1 July 2011***

## **Group Meetings**

The Group usually meets at 7.45 p.m. on the first Wednesday of each month (except December, when the meeting is held on the second Wednesday - and August, when no meeting is held).+

Meetings are usually held in Daglingworth Village Hall. Notice will be given of any planned exception to these arrangements.

Daglingworth Village Hall is located in the centre of the village of Daglingworth, which is situated approximately 2½ miles to the north-west of Cirencester, off the old Gloucester Road: Grid Ref.

SO993051 - Postcode GL7 7AA. Refreshments of tea or coffee and biscuits are provided. Family, friends and visitors are always welcome as guests.

### **Dates for your Diary**

November 5th

#### **A day with Mike Addis (IAM Examiner)**

Each course day will begin at 10am and will finish at 4pm. There will be a mid-morning break when coffee, tea and cakes will be provided. It is suggested that you bring a packed lunch for the break between 1 and 2pm

In addition to instruction for new candidates and an introduction to advanced driving for others, this is an ideal opportunity to polish-up your own skills and be rid of those bad driving habits. All are welcome. Bring a friend or two! There is NO COST but please let Alan Watt know that you wish to attend.

## **And Finally**

### **The Lone Ranger Rides Again**

"Kemo Sabe", meaning an all knowing one, is actually a mispronunciation by Native Americans of the Spanish phrase, Quien lo Sabe, meaning one who knows."

And %Tonto+is also Spanish, meaningō õ silly!