

# NOVEMBER 2013

ISSUE 11 /13



## CHALLENGE

### *CHESTERFIELD ADVANCED MOTORISTS* GROUP NEWSLETTER



Annual Conference – 5 October 2013

facebook



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*DATA PROTECTION ACT*

PLEASE NOTE - Details that members have supplied to the group are held a database for Groups use. If you object to your details being held this way, please inform the Secretary in writing.



## **Fuel figures, VW campers, and tyres..... From the President**

I know that the topic has been discussed several times before in the past, but I now have some real facts about those magical figures that all the manufacturers claim for their vehicles.

The “New Driving Cycle” is the current official economy test and this is how they do it.

Figures quoted are for urban, extra urban, and combined. For the urban test the car is on a rolling road and is accelerated and decelerated several times as well as holding a steady speed and sitting at idle.....max speed is 31mph and an average of 9mph!

Extra urban is 50% driving at a steady speed plus the previous tests. Max speed is 75mph , but the average is 39mph!

Conditions..... Tests conducted in a lab on a flat rolling road, no head or tail winds, no hills and temperature is always between 20 and 30c. Also all electrical features are switched OFF, no lights heater, radio etc. The real difference to real driving is that the tests are carried out AT A SNAIL’S PACE, from rest to 9mph takes 4 seconds, to 20mph-12 seconds, and to 31mph-26 seconds... not very realistic! He tests are carried out over only 2.5 miles for urban, and 4.3 miles for extra urban.....so now you know.

And .....the long, long journey of the VW Camper van is to end on December 31 this year. Over 10 million have been made in 63 years. (It is called the Type 2, as the Type 1 was the Beetle). The need to fit air bags and ABS has been quoted for the decision.

An after thought.... There is a firm who will fit a Porsche 911 engine to the van for £127,000!

And finally... Do you know how to find out the age of your tyres? There is a panel on the side of every tyre, there are four figures usually preceded by the letters DOT. The numbers represent the month and year of manufacture. Apparently in Poland (for some reason) buyers always inspect before buying and reject anything over six months old! Perhaps we should start doing the same as a tyre has a recommended life of only a few years before they “go off”

Any comments?

.....More next time.... Stay safe and happy.....

Mike.

## October message from the Chair.

As October closes and the clocks go back an hour it means we all have to adjust to different driving conditions. Winter is fast upon us and it won't be long before we're defrosting our cars in the morning so all car checks including screen wash need to be done now, not later.

October for Chesterfield group has been interesting with Bob Stone and myself attending the national IAM conference to update us on the strategy of the IAM and what it means for local groups, all will be shared back at committee. I'll leave you with some winter car advice below, have a great November and remember, let's be careful out there.....

### Before you leave on your winter journey

**Tyres:** If possible, considering buying winter tyres, which are designed to grip the road better in icy, wet and snowy conditions. If this is not an option, ensure your standard tyres are inflated correctly and that you have a minimum of 3mm of tread on your tyres to cope with wet and slippery conditions.

**Battery:** In winter, the battery will run down quicker than in warmer weather. Make sure you do a regular long journey to top it up or trickle-charge the battery.

**Engine:** Modern engines are more robust than older ones. All the same, depress the clutch when starting as this will reduce drag on the engine when starting, and preserve the battery.

**Screenwash:** Keep this topped up and use a proper additive at the right concentration to prevent it freezing.

**Fuel:** Keep your tank topped up - that way if you are caught out, you'll have enough fuel to make it home or run the engine to keep warm. However, it's essential to keep snow from blocking the exhaust as noxious fumes can leak into the vehicle.

**Windows:** Clear all snow and ice from the windscreen and the roof of the car before driving off. Do not use water to de-ice windscreens. Hot water can crack the glass, and the water will only freeze again on the screen or on the ground where you are standing.

**Locks:** A squirt of WD-40 will prevent your door locks freezing up. If they do, heat your key with a lighter to melt the ice.

**Warm clothing:** Your car may be warm on the inside but if you have to step outside, you could be in trouble if you have not got any warm clothing with you.

Always pack the following: warm coat, hat, gloves, sturdy boots, a blanket to keep you warm if you get stuck. Take some food, chocolate, biscuits, water and a hot drink if you can. Always carry a fully charged mobile, and some old bits of carpet, or cat litter, to put under the tyres when stuck and a shovel to clear snow.

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## TEST PASSES – CONGRATULATIONS

**Ann Sharp.** Passed 8.10.13 and her observer was Jan Creswell.

**Andrew Murley.** Passed 8.10.13 and his observer was Selwyn Gough.

**Helen Jessop** passed on 16 October, and her Observer was Chris Lake.

**Mark Walker** Passed 16.9.13 and his observer was Selwyn Gough.



Mark Walker being presented with his Certificate by Ray

## IAM Testimonial

My driving career started on January the 26th 1976 with my first experience of the Queens Highway on a moped, within a year however I was where I really wanted to be, behind the wheel of a car. My dad was a mechanic so I had been around cars from an early age and I was already able to drive our Bedford van confidently albeit off road (mainly on disused airfields).

So January 26th 1977 arrived and at five thirty in the afternoon the arrangement had been made by my father, to “take me out for a spin” - perhaps not the correct terminology for a learner driver. OMG! Rush hour in Nottingham! Vauxhall Viva’s, Hillman Minx, Ford Escorts and the ubiquitous Transit were everywhere. The van suddenly seemed massive, wouldn’t steer straight, had really sharp brakes and the clutch just didn’t seem to work the same as it did on the airfield, certainly not smooth. And for some reason every time I had to stop at traffic lights it stalled, must have been something wrong I said, muck in the carburettor said dad!

So it began, and over the years I have had various cars and in them travelled many, many miles, including driving on the continent, small Greek islands and Milton Keynes! For the last 15 years driving has been part of my job travelling up to 40k per year and with increased mileage and busier roads comes more risks. However it was not these thoughts that prompted me to work towards and take the advanced driving test. It was a chance meeting Sunday morning May 2013 in the car park at Sainsbury’s Chesterfield, when my wife & I saw the IAM caravan in the corner, and decided to have a chat. My son Marcus, at only 19 had already written off one car and, although we did not know it, was just about to write off a second so we thought that a little extra training would do him good.

Two friendly folks (Ray & Jan) took time to talk to us and explain the aims of the IAM, its benefits (particularly the potential to reduce the number of write offs that Marcus seemed hell bent on increasing), and all that was involved in taking the test.

What about introducing a little competition into the proceedings to see who can pass first, father or son? And so the deal was done. Both Marcus & I signed up and after an initial run to assess our ability and see how much training we required we began our observed runs. Marcus with Jan and me with Selwyn and over the next couple of months we had various run’s out that covered everything from positioning on the road, observation both near and

far and that very challenging part of the test “commentary”. It’s one thing “thinking it” but “talking it” to a relative stranger and keeping it all coherent whilst still concentrating on the main objective to become a more skilful and aware road user is a different thing.

Eventually it was deemed that I had reached the required standard so I put in for my test. The day arrived, 16<sup>th</sup> September, and I travelled to Mansfield and met with my allotted examiner Nigel Hutson. He immediately made me feel at ease for the next 1 ½ hours and felt quite relaxed and concentrated on the job in hand. At the end of the test run Nigel informed me that I had passed and with mostly 1’s and only a couple of 2’s I was very pleased with myself. Marcus is continuing to be observed by Jan and a fine job she is doing too. She has been very patient, understanding and given up lots of her own free time to support and mentor him, hopefully he will put in for his test very soon and even though I may have beaten him to the pass I feel that he is aiming for a “first”.

In closing, I would just like to say that anyone wishing to improve their driving skills and throw a little challenge into their lives could do a lot worse than taking to Jan, Ray or indeed any of the other “friendly folks” at the Caravan in Sainsbury’s. The one thing that comes across clearly from all of the people that both my Son & I have had contact with at Chesterfield IAM is their enthusiasm. All give up their free time to pass on knowledge and guidance that not only makes your driving safer but more enjoyable. With regards to my driving skills now I have taken the advanced test, I feel that I am much more observant particularly in the distance with my eyes constantly flicking to main beam. I think that even whilst adhering to the speed limit I am making very swift progress and making the most of my positioning on the road. Going forward I will continue to practice the skills and positively encourage all my friends and family that drive to consider taking the “Skills For Life” course.

A big "Thank You" to the Chesterfield branch of the IAM from Marcus and me.

Mark Walker.

## **2013 Annual Car Conference**

An informative day. We had selected four workshops each to attend, and my thoughts on those attended are below.

The Conference was opened with a few speakers before splitting to the workshops.

From Alistair Cheyne the message was to be a Forward Looking company at that the IAM are striving to be the 'Go To Organisation' for all road safety matters.

The message given out by Simon Best was for a single and consistent voice when asked for views and to give out Reliable and Insightful advice without individual interpretations countering messages.

Mark Trimmer and Dennis Clements gave a short presentation on the integration of three southern groups. Though the initial approach had been made to five groups a couple dropped out during the negotiations. The main benefits being promoted were a smaller central Committee of 7 (not 26) less administration, a single point of contact for the Local Council (the groups being covered by a single Council) and better choice for Customers (as in more flexibility being offered for 1 to 1, courses etc).

### **Workshop – Integrated Groups**

The IAM was launched in 1956 and SFL introduced in 1999. There are about 211 Groups with 90,000 members and we conduct just over 4000 tests a year.

The new managers for the reworked areas are Mark Trimmer(South), Andy Boulton (Midlands) with others still to be appointed.

It was reported that there were some 5 Groups without Treasurers, 2 without a Chair and 1 without a Secretary and some 70 with duplication of Roles (Chair, Sec, Treas., Chief Observer).

Integrated Groups with central Admin and satellites offered a solution –

the roles were not set but it was suggested the split be Finance, Test Quality – Training, Socials

Roll-out is voluntary but the lessons learnt from this first exercise suggest that any proposals should involve the full committees of all Groups.

### **Workshop – Test Standards** - Mike Lambert / Steve George

They recommended reading the Common Confusions document on the HQ site (latest version Dec 2012). Our standards are based on the content of HTBABD. There is NO 10% margin on speed to overtake.

In answer to questions, messages were -

- Restraint is a skill, prove you can control your speed.
- Straight Lining - You can cross lines if safe to do so and there is no risk. Even on roundabouts as the paint is only a guide, but must not inconvenience or cause distress to others.
- On Rotational steering – you cannot fail due to technique but the IAM does not support this and promotes Push-Pull/
- Left Foot Braking – acceptable in automatics

### **Workshop – Masters**

It is not Track Skills brought to the road, so no heel/toe or fixed steering.

There have been 150 applications with 2% failing and 15% getting distinction (80+%)

It is “How You Drive Fast, not How Fast You Drive”.

The Masters test is for cars, not any road legal vehicle.

It is considered to be above First/HPC/RoSPA/DiaDiamond/API

Commentary is not Labelling/Listing but “Observation-Action-Reason”  
Shutdown Drill  
Demonstration of Knowledge and Understanding.

Five ‘P’s and 6 ‘S’s.

- Presentation / Presence (stealth on the road) / Performance / Progress (max) / Perfection (Roadcraft).
- Safe / Systematic / Smooth / Speed / Space (margin) / Sparkle

### **Workshop – IMI**

This session was to promote the new tests and seeking consistency throughout so HQ can promote our services to external organisations. So far there had been 336 applications with 170 Passes and 21 Referrals.

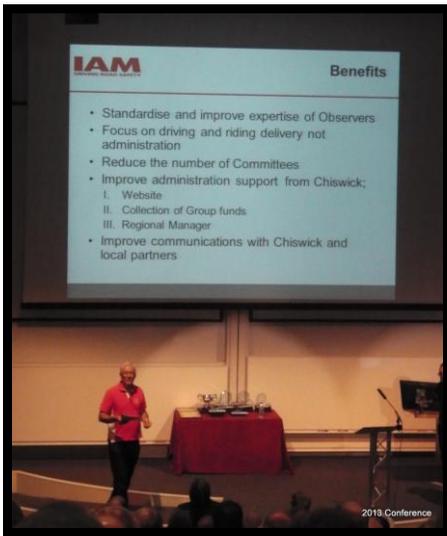
### **Closing Session**

This was mainly about the awards, and we did not win either the Newsletter or Technology categories and then a public Thank You to Chris Tatlow on his retirement.

### **Displays.**

There were a few displays around the building, including our own which looked good and an HQ stand selling the new clothing.

Bob Stone  
Secretary  
Chesterfield (4077)



***More photos from the Annual Conference at Warwick***

Our Group display created by Jan



Q and A session



## Thoughts from the Editor

Firstly, does anyone know how **DIFFICULT** it is to try and put the Newsletter together when you have two 6-month-old kittens who love nothing better than to walk on – or even lay - all over the keyboard while you are trying to type?

Anyway, three articles grabbed my attention recently, two from a national daily newspaper. One article quotes “One pothole every mile” on the roads. And the rest, I thought. There are still three potholes at the beginning of our cul de sac from the harsh winter of 2011/2012! Councils in Britain have paid out £2.5 million compensation to motorists during 2012-2013, for damage to their vehicles, and this is a 79% rise from 2011-2012. And 2013 hasn’t even finished yet.

The other article reported the consideration of a ban on ‘novice’ drivers from driving between 10pm – 5 am unless accompanied by a passenger aged 30 or above. Young drivers would also be banned from using all mobile phones, including hands-free. Insurers welcomed this stating that a curfew between 10pm – 5 am could prevent 28 deaths and 2035 casualties and save £102 million each year. However the AA believe that this could prevent young parents from driving with their children (but shouldn’t children be in bed by 10 p.m. !?) and make it impossible for teens to get home from shift work.

How on earth these bans could be ‘policed’ I do not know. Also, I think it unfair to put so much blame of accidents involving mobile phone use on to ‘young’ people because in my experience it seems to be the age of about 40 upwards who I have seen using mobiles whilst driving. I know a few in the 40-60 age group who say “I have hands free, so that’s OK” – but to me trying to have a conversation over the phone whilst driving is still a distraction – a bit like two bored children in the back seats – well, maybe not quite as distracting as that but you know what I mean! Any more thoughts on how to impose a ‘curfew’ would be interesting to hear.

Finally, it seems that according to the Road Safety Foundation, Derbyshire/Cheshire has the very dubious honour of having “The most dangerous road in Britain” – the A537. But we all know it is not the actual ‘road’ that is the problem .....

## A View From Guidance Officer – Ray Parker

The other day I set off to go into town, after reaching the end of my road to turn left I had to wait for traffic. The traffic in question was a fire engine trying desperately to turn into my road. I pulled well over to the left to give him room, however he still could not turn into my road due to what I call a total idiotic muppet of a car driver waiting and stopped blocking the entrance or exit from my road. Now I looked and she could have backed up to clear the way but instead she moved forward a couple of feet making life even more difficult for the fire service. Just what was going through her tiny brain?????? I can remember back to 1971 when taking driving lessons and my instructor told me never to block a side road in case of emergency services wanting access. Just one of the many things he taught me. This happens regularly on Heaton Street, I too have had my way blocked by people who think it is ok to block side roads. All I can say is please give it some thought when you find yourself in a stream of traffic.

I take out many associates for mock tests and for guidance and one thing always makes me cringe. When passing parked vehicles you must give as much room as possible, at least a doors width. If possible get over beyond the white line. A door could open, an animal could run out, a child or even an adult could come out from a parked car. You need the room and space to react to any given situation.

Overtaking moving vehicles is similar, the vehicle you are overtaking may not have seen you and could change his/her position on the road and that could be disaster for you. Overtake and give them a wide berth. Cyclists and motorcyclists have their own problems. They could fall off, they can be drawn into you by the wind your car creates, especially large vans and lorries. I had a car overtake me and she was only inches from my handlebars, it's scary believe me.

It seems to me that a lot of drivers set their course and go into auto drive. They give little or no thought as to what is going on outside their own little world. When you get in that vehicle you are supposed to be in charge and control. You have to think about what other road users are doing and where they are going. Be alert and on guard, anything can happen out there. Anyone who knows me knows my favourite bit of advice, ***Always expect the unexpected.*** If you adhere to that then you won't go far wrong. Apart from that follow the system of car control in everything you do and all will be well.

If you are not feeling your best try not to drive, if you do you will not be alert enough to keep you safe, and that's what it's all about.

## **Delays To Associate Sign Up**

At the recent Social evening Pat Doughty made a comment about our Group having 3 Associates who had been waiting over 76 days. As the man responsible for initial contact with Associates I was concerned about the source of this statistic and the bad impression it created.

In True Lies, Damn Lies and Statistics style the figure was not correct, yet it was. The following will probably appeal most to Mike Dickerson, our President, who likes number puzzles and I will avoid any political reference to School League Tables. It was a statistic applied simplistically.

We had 1 associate who had been waiting 1 day, another who had been waiting 20 days and a third 210 days. The average 'wait' is therefore 77 days. However if the measure had been taken on the Tuesday not the Thursday the result would have been 1 with 18 days and one with 208 days so an average of 113 days. So by Thursday we were improving as our average was going down!!

Our (my) process is to contact Associates promptly once HQ e-mail details through to me and I then invite them to the next Guidance, when they can be signed-up. Thus the normal wait should be about two weeks (some will make contact at the start of the month, others at the end).

Our 'poor' performance was driven entirely by a single Associate. This person was contacted initially when we were notified by HQ and invited to Guidance, but did not attend and sign-up. Further contact has elicited the response that the person has been very busy and will continue to be and will join us when they have time. Thus we have a problem where our 'wait' time will continue to rise until such time as this Associate is able to join us. When contacted, HQ offered no solution to avoid this happening.

Bob Stone, Secretary



## WHATS ON IN THE NEAR FUTURE

Sunday November 3 <sup>rd</sup>	Guidance	Sainsbury's Car Park 9.30 am
Saturday November 9 <sup>th</sup>	Guidance	Sainsbury's Car Park 9.30 am
Thursday November 21 <sup>st</sup>	Social Evening	Mark Hallam, our Area Examiner
Tuesday November 26 <sup>th</sup>	Committee Meeting	Chesterfield Library Café 7.30 pm

### December:

Sunday 1<sup>st</sup>

Guidance

### **NO SATURDAY GUIDANCE IN DECEMBER**

Tuesday 17<sup>th</sup>

Committee Meeting

Thursday 19<sup>th</sup>

Christmas Social

