

# The Borders Observer

Newsletter of the Borders Group of Advanced Motorists – [www.bordersiam.org.uk](http://www.bordersiam.org.uk)

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Please address any comments or contribute articles to the Editor. These would be gratefully received!

## First the good news ...

A draft of the next Borders Road Safety Plan reveals that accident figures for the Borders are at a record low. Eight fatalities were recorded on Borders roads in 2001, compared to 15 in 2000. This also compares very favourably with the average of 21 fatalities recorded between 1981 and 1984. In

### Advanced Test Passes

#### —Congratulations

to:

John Jolly

Frank Pinder

Richard Scott

addition, the number of seriously injured was reduced from 98 to 89, and the number of slightly injured was down from 510 to 483. Apparently the trend for casualties for the first

two months of 2002 continues downwards.

Inspector Sandy McLaren, who spoke to us at our last AGM, is reported as being perplexed by the reduction in the unaudited figures for 2001. It appears possible that the outbreak of foot and mouth may have led to a reduction in traffic volumes in the Borders. However, the level of reduction in traffic does not correspond with the high drop in casualty rates, and other factors may be at work. Whatever emerges, any casualty, of whatever severity, is one too many, and it is incumbent upon us to continue seeking to improve our own driving, and influence others to improve theirs!

You can play your part in this by continuing to

support the Group. In particular, remember that you can undergo a voluntary re-assessment, either an “official” one, with an IAM Examiner, or through one of the Group’s “Observers”.

We hope to arrange an event in next session’s syllabus which would give existing members who feel a bit “rusty” (in their driving – not their vehicles!) a chance to catch up on the new “system” and what it entails. Perhaps someone might even offer to come forward for “Observer” training, the best way to keep up your standard!



## Spreading the message

Our programme of weekend courses continues to develop, and our next course, on the weekend of 20th/21st April, is already fully subscribed.

If you know someone who might be interested please ask them to get in touch, as we would like

to offer at least one more course this year.

In addition, if you know an organisation that you think would like a presentation on advanced driving, please contact Raymond Black, our Chairman. In order to make it easier to get out

and about to promote our cause, and facilitate our training programme, we hope to make a bid for Lottery funding to help pay for presentation equipment, such as a data/video projector, video playback unit, and a laptop for Powerpoint presentations.

## Highlights of recent meetings

### September 2001

Peter Fuller, Transport Policy Manager of Scottish Borders Council, gave us an excellent presentation. Peter, who is an IAM member, was heavily involved in drawing up the Council's Local Transport Strategy. He presented his topic in the form of a quizz, which left most of us floundering, but stimulated a lot of interesting discussion!

Peter demonstrated an amazing grasp of the many issues involving transport policy, from road safety to air quality, showing how deeply he cared for the future well-being of the Borders. He also kindly distributed some copies of the comprehensive and beautifully produced Strategy document, and

offered to provide further copies for members who missed the meeting.

### February 2002

John Cleland himself (ex British Touring car Champion) hosted us personally on this visit, during which we got to see behind the scenes at both his Volvo and Jaguar dealerships. It was not hard to see how John attracts customers from a much wider area than the Borders, and many of us left regretting that we were unable to drive away in one of the quality motors on show!

### March 2002

For the March meeting we had a "double act", with two fascinating

talks. The first was by a Senior Traffic Warden from Edinburgh who is responsible for looking after the "Greenways". He told us how the Edinburgh Greenways scheme developed, and moved on to speak about the much-maligned "Blue Meanies" and their successors, the "Enforcers".

His colleague, the Borders' first "mobile" traffic warden, gave us an amusing account of her working life in the Borders. Her attitude was far removed from the stern stereotype portrayed in the media, and in fact both speakers seemed remarkably cheerful and free of the scars one might expect in people of their calling!

## Now the not so good news ...

A recent edition of the BBC's *Tomorrows World* featured some of the latest research into the effects of alcohol on driving. A team of researchers at the University of Bristol's Department of Physiology have been looking into the coordination of the hand and the eye when an individual is driving under the influence of alcohol.

They have discovered that the "lead time" between the eye looking ahead



would still allow you to be below the legal limit.

During the programme, a female

and the hands moving the steering wheel is adversely affected after you drink alcohol, even after a relatively small amount that

medical subject sat in front of a giant plasma screen negotiating her way around the hazards of a simulated driving course. In front of her a small black box watched every movement of her left eye as it scanned the road ahead.

The moral of the experiment, which is due to be road-tested in real cars in the next phase of the research, is that if you are going to drive, don't drink

## Web matters



The website of the Borders Group, at [www.bordersiam.org.uk](http://www.bordersiam.org.uk), is now up and running. As the webmaster, I would welcome any thoughts, ideas and contributions from the membership as to how to improve the first version of the site. I am endeavouring to keep it as up-to-date as circumstances allow: if you spot any glaring errors or omissions please let me know!

One of the new links from our site is to the recently established site of the "Scottish Groups Association", at [www.iam-scotland.org.uk](http://www.iam-scotland.org.uk), which is intended as a vehicle to keep us abreast of what the other Scottish Groups are up to. Again, any feedback on this would be very helpful!