

The Borders Observer

Newsletter of the Borders Group of Advanced Motorists
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Please address any comments or contribute articles to the Editor. These would be gratefully received!

Mike wins Cup for the Borders!

Mike Dall, who only joined the Borders Group in 2000, has since passed his test on both two and four wheels, and recently become our newest "Observer", triumphed at the 2002 BP Inter-Group Competition at Tulliallan Police College on September 14th. This yearly competition, which in-



cludes entries from all the Scottish Groups, has never been won by a "Borderer" before, so this represents a major achievement for Mike on behalf of the Group!

Advanced Test Passes

—Congratulations to:

John Brown

Isabel Reilly

Kynoch Todd

cludes entries from all the Scottish Groups, has never been won by a "Borderer" before, so this represents a major achievement for Mike on behalf of the Group!

The competition consisted of:

a) The Road Drive

A 45-minute assessed drive with the entrant in his or her own car. The drive was examined by IAM examiners and marked to Police Class One standards.

b) Manoeuvrability

This consisted of a very tight course laid out on the Parade Ground. BP supplied a Renault Clio for this section.

c) Written Paper

This was based on knowledge of *Pass Your Advanced Driving*

d) Skills or 'Mystery' round

The contents of this round consisted of a quiz about the location of Scottish Lochs. Not being a geographer, Mike did not take to this task, but in the event he was must have been equal to it!

For his efforts Mike received a cheque for £200, a plaque, and a Cup. In addition the Group benefits to the tune of £500!

Our warmest congratulations to Mike, pictured here with the Cup and plaque, who has achieved a notable distinction that has eluded the Group until now. This will hopefully spur other members into having a go at the Competition in future years. It **can** be won, as Mike has shown! You will find a personal account of Mike's special day at Tulliallan on our website at:-

<http://www.bordersiam.org.uk/news.htm>

Programme notes ...

*** Please note that the meeting on October 1st will take place in the George & Abbotsford at 7.30 pm.

The theme is "mental manoeuvrability" (a special type of motoring quiz!), for which there will be a prize! Do try and come along if you can!

If you are hoping to come to the meeting on Tuesday **February 4th** at the BP oil refinery, we would like you to submit your name to us, as BP require a list of visitors in advance of the visit.

And don't forget the following forthcoming meetings:

November 5th:

Visit to Borders General Hospital

December 3rd:

"Looking Out for You" - Mr. R Hall of Trading Standards

January 14th*:

"Fire Prevention for your Car, Home and Workplace"

*(Please note this is the **second** Tuesday in January.)

Highlights of recent meetings

April 2002 - "To sleep: perchance to dream ..."

Mrs. Jean Gall, Chairman of the Scottish Association for Sleep Apnoea (SASA), which is a registered charity, gave us a thought-provoking talk on this potentially life-threatening condition.

Recent research has indicated that sleep apnoea may be a condition as prevalent as asthma or diabetes. And yet, once diagnosed, the condition can be very successfully controlled. At the end of her fascinating presentation, which was accompanied by a video, Jean kindly distributed leaflets about SASA, which has a very active branch in the Scottish Borders. Anyone who would like a leaflet can obtain one by writing to SASA at this address:

Todds Murray WS, 66 Queen Street, Edinburgh EH2 4NE.

May 2002 - AGM, followed by the Inspector and the Fiscal

At the Annual General Meeting the Chairman thanked the outgoing Treasurer, Martyn Buckley, for his contribution to the development of the Group, both as an office-bearer and as an "Observer", and wished him well for the future. Members were pleased to accept the nomination of Charlie Dodds as Treasurer and welcome Mike Dall onto the Committee.

After the AGM members were privileged to have two distinguished speakers, Inspector Sandy McLaren of Lothian and Borders Police Traffic Department, and Graham Fraser, Procurator Fiscal.

The former gave us the good news about the reduced road casualty figures for 2001, but explained that even these figures

would have to be improved on if the Government's new targets for casualty reductions were to be met.

Mr. Fraser, Procurator Fiscal for Roxburgh and Berwickshire, gave us a fascinating insight into the work of the Procurator Fiscal Service and highlighted certain types of traffic offence prevalent in the Borders. These included the tendency of some Borders drivers to emulate on the public roads the speeds achieved by the late and great Jim Clark on the racing track. He also described the "Volvo" effect, which led some motorists to believe they were invulnerable in their fortresses of metal. What they tended to forget was that their bodies, however intact externally following a crash, were not designed internally to withstand an impact at speed.

His presentation was enlivened throughout with good advice as to how to avoid meeting him in a professional capacity!

June 2002 - Horse Sense or What!

As the Borders is well-known for its love of horses, it was appropriate that the issue of horses vs. vehicles was addressed. If you want advice, go to a professional. And it was a thoroughly professional "performance" that we witnessed from Ms. Fiona McQueen of the Cowdenknowes Equine Centre, Earlston. She gave those of us present there on a very pleasant summer's evening a fascinating insight into the psyche of the horse and its behaviour under stress. From an outline of the history of the horse, to a live demonstration in a "mock-up" of the A68 in her paddock, members were captivated by her knowledge and enthusiasm. There was even a free ride for the bravest!

July 2002 - Fleet management with GPS (Global Positioning System)

Our own Mike Dall, who operates a taxi in Edinburgh, but hails from the Borders, gave us a fascinating insight into a state-of-the-art taxi dispatch system used by the company he works for, ComCabs. The system, developed by an Australian company, Sigtec, uses GPS to provide significant benefits for both drivers and passengers. As the position of vehicles on duty is always known, the closest or most suitable vehicle is dispatched following a request. This not only creates faster job turn-around times for the driver, but can significantly reduce waiting times for passengers. Mike also showed us photographs of the equipment required for the cab, which include a microwave radio, a receiver positioned on the roof, and a display unit on the dashboard. He also gave us a fascinating insight into the life of a taxi driver in Edinburgh, which would probably have lasted all evening had we not all had homes to get back to!

September 2002 - Frailties of Mark 1 Eyeball

Mr. Jason Kinsley Willis, a Borders-based optometrist, laid bare the frailties of this critical - especially for the motorist! - faculty, in yet another outstandingly informative and entertaining evening. As well as showing us what can go wrong with our eyes, and passing round glasses and goggles that simulated the effects of some of the major eye defects, Jason gave us practical advice on topics ranging from night driving to laser treatments. No-one present appreciated until Jason's presentation the range and severity of eye problems, and we all left enlightened and thankful for the gift of sight good enough to allow us to drive about in safety!

Turning a pastime into a profession!

Another of our Observers, Elliot Oliver, has distinguished himself by passing the Driving Standard Agency's three-part exam to qualify as a driving instructor. As the overall pass rate is only 25%, this represents a considerable achievement for Elliot, who passed the exams first time. Although continuing with his "day job" as a printer, Elliot has started his own business in Hawick, called "First Gear", but is steadily building up a clientele of learner drivers evenings and weekends. To help publicise his new profession, Elliot ran a competition in *Hawick News*, based on knowledge of *The Highway Code*, with a prize of five free driving lessons.

The lucky lady who won the competition, which was held in August, should be well placed already to pass the theory test! And with Elliot's expert tuition she should have an excellent chance of passing the road test! Elliot featured in the newspaper himself, collecting his new dual-control Yaris from Border Toyota.

The picture to the right shows Elliot during a break at our latest successful Advanced Driving course, which was held on the weekend of September 28th/29th at the Innovation & Development Unit at Heriot-Watt University's Scottish Borders Campus.

