

The Borders Observer

Newsletter of the Borders Group of Advanced Motorists
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Inside this Issue

Borders bikers now on board! p. 1
Alnwick rules! p. 1
Programme notes ... p. 1
Women on Wheels p. 2
Is parking your lot? p. 2

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

Borders bikers now on board!

Thanks to the great enthusiasm and commitment of various people, including our own Mike Dall, winner of the 2002 BP Inter-Group Competition, and Glen Guthrie, an experienced member of the Edinburgh Group of Advanced Motorcyclists (EDAM), the Borders Group now has a two-wheeled wing. There are already some Full members, and the first (female!) Associate has started working towards the Test.



Some equipment has been bought for the bikers, with some more to follow, hopefully courtesy of Lottery funding. If you know anyone who might be interested in becoming a member, please pass on the news! You might even consider joining the ranks of the two-wheelers yourself: the Borders is great biking country, m.p.g. is excellent, and bikes are easy to park!

Alnwick rules!

Some of that Harry Potter magic must have rubbed off on the victorious members of the Alnwick team, who triumphed in the first trans-Border competition between the recently formed English Group and our own local “muggles”. The Competition consisted of various elements, including manoeuvring, a written test, and an assessed drive. The event was held at Heriot-Watt University’s Galashiels Campus under the watchful eye of Robbie Noble of the local police traffic division, who kindly adjudicated the road drives. It is hoped to repeat the event regularly, with the venue alternating between each side of the Border. The muggles will want their revenge next time!

Programme notes ...

*** Please note that the **2003 AGM** will take place on Tuesday 6th May in the George & Abbotsford Hotel, Melrose, at 7.30 p.m.

The highlight of the evening promises to be a presentation by Ian Dallas, the Staff Examiner for Scotland. We are

privileged to welcome Ian to our AGM, at which we are also looking forward to welcoming “new blood” onto the Committee.

We also hope to hear the members’ views on the programme for the coming year, which has yet to be finalised. If you

are unable to come to the AGM, please get in touch with the Chairman if you have any views or suggestions!

The June Meeting of the Group will also take at 7.30 on in the George & Abbotsford, on Tuesday 3rd. The programme will be advertised in advance.

Women on Wheels

“Women on Wheels” Day

The Police Road Safety Unit organised a day for women drivers at Police Headquarters in Hawick on Saturday 1st March. The Borders Group was invited to help in the daylong event by giving assessed drives to all the participants.

Our Assessors - Bob McKendrick, Peter Sandison, Don Wainwright and Jack Wilson - duly presented themselves at the “nick” to meet 13 rather apprehensive ladies who were somewhat unsure of the sanity of their decisions to volunteer. Split into four groups, the ladies rotated around each of the four topics.

Their day included:-

- An audio-visual talk on Safe Driving.
- An hour’s Demo Drive with the police driver instructor Andy McLean at the wheel of a marked patrol car. (The reactions of other road users at the sight of a police car on their tail gave them some amusement!).
- A hands-on (the car!) experience with AA Patrolman John.
- An hour’s Assessment Drive with our Group Assessors with a few tips (driving!) thrown in.



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Some ladies were so nervous their shaking felt more like a wheel out of balance! However they all survived to say how much they had enjoyed and learned from the day, and realising how much they could still learn about driving, eight of them asked for enrolment forms for our “*Skills for Life*” course.

Anyone telling friends about our “*Skills for Life*” course may like to note that it has recently increased in price nationally to £85 for cars. There is a additional charge of £30 for motorcycle Associates as a contribution to their Assessor’s petrol.

Contact our membership secretary Bob McKendrick for a joining pack or further information about the Group and its activities.

Acknowledgement: Bob McKendrick

Mum’s the Word!

According to a recent survey of 500 households by Vauxhall, children reckon their mums are the safest drivers, but fathers are more fun on the road. Of the children questioned, ranging in age from eight to twelve, nearly half saw mum being safer behind the wheel, whereas only one in three cited their dad.

One in three thought dad drove too fast, as opposed to seven per cent who said that of their mother. Apparently dads were also five times more likely to be on their “mobile” whilst at the wheel.

On the other hand, mums were thought more likely to get lost, and apparently took longer to park [*Editor’s note: see tips below!*].

Dads were considered to be more fun behind the wheel because they played more games - although in-car pursuits such as “I spy” are now being challenged by Gameboy-style electronic games.

More seriously, someone’s telling “porkies”: while only five per cent of the parents questioned admitted being in a crash, one in four of their children said they had!

Acknowledgement: Associated News Media

Is parking your lot?

It may be a myth that women cannot park, but a mathematician, Rebecca Hoyle, of Surrey University, has devised a series of equations that will apparently get a Volvo-size estate into a Mini-sized gap. The formula helps a driver to perform the perfect S-shaped manoeuvre, leaving the wheels flush with the kerb, but not so close that it is impossible to get out. It should work for any vehicle and any roadside gap, telling the driver whether or not it is worth even trying to fit into a particularly tight space. Written out in full, the formula reads:

$$p = r - \frac{w}{2}, g \geq w + 2r + b, f \geq w + 2r - fg$$

$$\max \left(\left(r + \frac{w}{2} \right)^2 + f^2, \left(r + \frac{w}{2} \right)^2 + b^2 \right) \leq \min \left((2r)^2, \left(r + \frac{w}{2} + k \right)^2 \right)$$

It takes into account the width of the car at the widest point (w), the mid-point between the axles (g), the distance from c to the front (f) and back (b) of the car, the minimum radius of the turning circle (r), the distance from the parallel car at the outset (p), the optimal distance from the kerb at the finish (k) and the distance from the car front at the finish (fg).

Got it?! What it really boils down to is five basic steps:

1. Choose a space at least as half as long again as your own vehicle
2. Start parallel to the vehicle parked at the front of the gap with rear ends level
3. Turn the wheel to full lock reversing slowly and steadily
4. When the vehicle reaches 45° angle, turn the wheel to full opposite lock, still reversing slowly
5. As the vehicle approaches the kerb, straighten up.

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