



Borders Observer

www.bordersiam.org.uk

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The bus and the wheel



Inside the bus factory



Borders members at the Falkirk Wheel

Title for a new work of fiction?

No, this headline describes a very enjoyable outing that a small group of members were privileged to enjoy in April. We met at the Copper Pot in Falkirk for a light lunch before travelling a short distance to the factory gates of Alexander Dennis Limited, where we were treated to a first-class tour of the extensive plant.

Lex Anderson, who has worked for many years with the company and is now their Training Officer, showed us how each bus was built up from the a bare chassis to a class-leading vehicle that is exported to such diverse markets as Las Vegas and China!

Having learnt all about the manufacture of one mode of transport, we took another short journey to another unique mode of transport, the Falkirk Wheel, the world's first, and - so far - only, rotating boat lift.

We were not only able to see it up close, but took time to be "uplifted" in warm Spring sunshine.

The British Waterways Guide who accompanied us in our boat gave us a most entertaining and informative talk about the Wheel and canal system.

The accompanying picture shows the happy sailors safely back on dry land!

Peter Sandison

Events Programme

We hope to have a full programme of events in place soon. Check the Borders Group website at www.bordersiam.org.uk for latest information on events.

Wednesday July 5th

Archery Evening, Eastcote House Archery Centre, Eastcote, Hawick TD9 8SZ
Contact Peter Sandison/Charlie Dodds for details.

Tuesday August 1st

Car Treasure Hunt - Contact Raymond Black for details.



Roy Holness receives his certificate for passing his advanced driving test from new group secretary, Bill Allison.

Picture: Bill Allison

Congratulations !

To the following members who recently passed their Advanced Test:

Roy Holness (Car)

Michaëlle Burns-Greig (Car)

Sandy Brownlie (Car)

Welcome !

To the following new members of the Borders Group:

**Darren Duncan
Andrew MacLean
Peter Paige
Deborah Gracie
Craig Forrest**

Chairman's Welcome

Welcome to another edition of our Borders Observer Newsletter.

As many of you will already know our AGM was held in May. Our new secretary is Mr W Allison (likes to be known as Bill). Welcome to Peter Paige who has joined the committee. Negotiations are going ahead for transfer of Membership Secretary from Bob McKendrick to Vicky Woods. The committee will continue to work for the good of the group hopefully with the help and support of the membership.

The Motorcycle members have established themselves as a separate group in their own right. With the inaugural meeting having been held on the 7th June 2006. This has come sooner than expected but the motorcycle section has really taken off. The Borders group committee wishes them all the best for the future.

It is also pleasing to say that there is a strong interest in new blood coming forward to train as Car Observers. These four or five prospective trainees will start training very soon and will be the first to follow the Observer training scheme that most Groups now implement.

It had been hoped that a full syllabus of monthly meetings would be in place for the coming year 2006/07. Regrettably this has not developed but the committee is determined to get to grips with this issue and will have more to report on this in the future. Keep in touch with our web site and newsletter for new info and if you can attend what is already arranged this will help. If any member has an idea or suggestion that they would like to see on the programme of events please contact any committee member.

The feed back that I am receiving about those who are under going their road training is very encouraging and will produce hopefully good results.

Safe Motoring,

*Raymond Black
Chairman*

Comments and Contributions

Again, there's been a delay in getting your newsletter to you. This time I have a cast iron excuse! On 31 March, I became a dad for the first time - baby James is making his presence known at all hours of the day and eating in to my editorial time.

Anyway, I hope that you find this issue interesting and as usual, if you have any comments or suggestions, please

contact me on **01506 412386** or e-mail:

iam@kevham.co.uk.

Your articles and contributions would be gratefully received - after all, it is YOUR newsletter.

The copy deadline for the next issue is Friday 11 August.

*Kevin Hamilton
Editor*

Life of a Road Safety Officer

Fiona Moore of Lothian and Borders Police gave us a fascinating insight into the numerous activities that are undertaken by today's road safety professional. Interaction with the public starts at an early age, with heavy involvement with Primary school pupils and their parents. Officers work closely with a wide variety of agencies, including the Police, the Council, Road Safety Scotland, Borders

Drug and Alcohol Action Team, and a wide range of voluntary bodies such as the British Motorcyclists Federation and the British Horse Society. At the end of the meeting it was revealed to those who didn't know that Fiona also wore another "hat": she is the Councillor for the local Netherdale ward and as such has a unique insight into road safety issues in the area. The meeting ended with

a very lively discussion and an agreement to cooperate with Fiona and her colleagues on matters of mutual interest, such as the forthcoming Borders "Young Driver Challenge". This major event - the first of its kind in the Borders - takes place at Heriot-Watt University's Netherdale Campus on Saturday 3rd June, and will involve Six of our Observers.

Peter Sandison

IAM seeks Road Safety Champion

This spring sees the IAM mount its annual mission to find the individual whose personal contribution to road safety is worthy of national recognition.

The IAM Dominic Fox Award seeks to acknowledge and celebrate outstanding road safety work, particularly activity that has directly or indirectly contributed to saving lives of young drivers and riders.

"The need has never been more urgent. Young driver deaths have doubled in just five years,"

said IAM Chief Executive Christopher Bullock.

"It is only through bold, creative initiatives in the education of young drivers that this awful trend

can be halted," he said.

Recently released Department for Transport figures show that a third more young drivers were killed in 2004 than in 2000, despite a halving in the proportion of young people with driving li-

cences. The number of deaths per 100,000 young licence holders has increased from 9.7 in 2000 to 19.2 in 2004. And worryingly, this is against an overall downward trend.

"The Fox Award is now established as one of the regular fixtures on the road safety calendar,"

said Mr Bullock.

"Candidates may be new to road safety work but those who have made a contribution over many years, and received recognition by others, are not excluded."

Previous winners of the Dominic Fox Award from the IAM were PC Nobby Clark from Cheshire, Sam Geddes of Adelaide Insurance in Belfast and Simon Ettinghausen of Bexley Borough Council. The first win-

ner of the award was also a PC, John Spencer of Northampton-



Last year's winner - PC "Nobby" Clark with George Goldie OBE

shire Police, in 2002.

Nomination forms can be downloaded from the IAM website, iam.org.uk (in PDF file format for printing). The deadline for nominations is 31 July 2006.

Source: IAM Press Office

Road Signs Quiz

This month, we have a further selection of road signs for you to identify (all sign images are ©Crown Copyright). Some are very common, some very unusual. If you want to demonstrate your knowledge and win a small, worthless prize, send you answers on a postcard to Kevin Hamilton, 89 Ballantyne Place, Livingston, EH54 6TH or e-mail iam@kevham.co.uk by 31 July. Answers will appear in the next issue.

Of course, all of the answers are available in the Highway Code which is available online at: www.highwaycode.gov.uk.



Sign 1



Sign 2



Sign 3



Sign 4



Sign 5



Sign 6



Sign 7



Sign 8



Sign 9

February Quiz Answers

The winner of the February quiz was Morag Sterrick who got the most correct answers - well done.

The answers were: 1. No stopping (Clearway) 2. End of minimum speed limit 3. Contraflow bus lane. 4 Uneven road 5. Accompanied horses 6. Wild horses 7. Pedestrian crossing. 8. Parking place for solo motorcycles. 4. End of 20mph zone

*Kevin Hamilton
Editor*

Sudoku Solution

2	3	5	8	1	7	9	4	6
9	4	8	6	5	2	1	7	3
1	6	7	3	9	4	5	2	8
3	7	9	4	8	5	2	6	1
8	2	1	9	6	3	4	5	7
6	5	4	7	2	1	8	3	9
7	1	2	5	3	8	6	9	4
5	9	3	1	4	6	7	8	2
4	8	6	2	7	9	3	1	5

Most drivers blame others for accidents

Motorists who rely on their basic L-test as a motoring "passport for life" are more likely to blame others when they are involved in incidents or minor accidents, according to a new study by Brunel University in West London.

Previous research has shown that drivers who regularly blame others for near-misses instead of taking responsibility for their own part in such incidents are more likely to be involved in fatal road accidents.

The Brunel study, carried out by Prof. Neville Stanton and Dr. Guy Walker, shows that drivers who improve their abilities behind the wheel are less likely to "play the blame game" and more likely to read the road and expect the unexpected.

Nearly 70% of drivers who received advanced coaching showed significantly safer skills in a number of key areas, including cornering, gear changing, seating position, safe distances, use of mirrors and speed, according to the scientific comparison of normal and advanced drivers.

The IAM (Institute of Advanced Motorists) commissioned the study to examine whether advanced coaching can be proven to change drivers' attitudes, skills and knowledge.

Peter Rodger, IAM Chief Examiner, said:

"This research shows that motorists who think that simply accumulating years of experience on the road is enough to improve their driving are wrong. What makes the difference is having extra coaching, just as it would be in any other activity.

"Drivers are more likely to blame chance or bad luck, if the only training they've ever had is those early driving lessons. But they're more likely to take responsibility for avoiding and responding to incidents if they've taken the trouble to try to improve their skills later in life."

In a measure of people's attitude towards whether they believe they are controlled by luck or chance, or have 'self' control over their actions - normal drivers score 60 per cent worse than drivers with advanced coaching, and show significantly more of the attitude that previous research has shown to be implicated in involvement in fatal accidents.

Professor Neville Stanton of Brunel University said:

"There were 207,000 accidents in Great Britain in 2004, involving 281,000 casualties, according to the latest Department for Transport statistics. Whilst we

have one of the best records of lowering casualties, there is still much to do. The more we can understand driver behaviour and what affects it, the better chance we have of further reducing road accidents.

"This is why we felt it was important to conduct such a rigorous study into whether 'practice makes perfect' in terms of ability - or whether people need further coaching to improve how they drive.

"This is the first research of its kind and the results are telling. The performance of those who did not receive coaching was erratic, but those who were coached showed marked improvements in the three main areas of driving - skills, knowledge and attitude. These three skills are interdependent - when all three are improved, a driver is likely to be safer. It's as simple as that."

Peter Rodger added:

"The findings of this research lay to rest the old joke that advanced driving is all about where you position your hands on the steering wheel. It shows the value of lifelong learning in motoring, just as in the fields of work. All drivers should be encouraged to continue developing their skills, long after their driving test."

Source: IAM Press Office

Bosses failing employees who drive for work

More than half of all employees (53%) who drive as part of their work say they have never received any information or training from their employers about the risks they face while on the road, according to a new survey for the IAM (Institute of Advanced Motorists). Seven out of ten say their employers neither offer nor require medical check-ups (70%), a driver risk assessment or training (75%), or training on basic vehicle safety checks (75%). And six out of ten (64%) say their employers have not offered or required even a basic eyesight test.

The frightening scale of employers' apparent lack of concern for employees who drive as part of their jobs is revealed in a survey of 1000 drivers from across England, Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland. The survey was carried out for IAM, the UK's leading organisation dedicated to improving driving standards.

According to the survey, only one in four employers checks that a pri-

vate car is insured for business use (24%) or, if it is over three years old, that it has a valid MOT (27%). Only just over half (54%) of employers periodically check the validity of their employees' driving licences. It is estimated* that a 1000 people a year are killed while driving for work - nearly a third of all road deaths - and another 13,000 are seriously injured.

Christopher Bullock, IAM Chief Executive, said:

"We are shocked by the scale of these findings. Too many employers think their responsibility for employees when they're at work ends at the front door or the factory gate. Employers who fail to look after staff who are out on the road risk accidents that can result in employees being killed. Quite apart from being irresponsible, it is bad for their business."

Nearly half of employees admit that pressures from their employer or work lead them to break the speed limit (48%) or lose their temper with other

motorists (46%). One in five (20%) admits to using a handheld mobile while driving because of work pressure.

Kym, a 45 year old sales representative from Doncaster, told the survey: "I'm very naughty. I have one phone with a hands free kit and another without and have them both on the go at the same time."

Only one in eight (12%) employers is said to have a policy banning the use of mobiles except when stopped. And the survey found that one in four (24%) of employees said their firm had no policy at all on using mobile phones.

Overall, when employees were asked to what extent they thought their employers were concerned about their personal safety on the road whilst driving for work, three out of ten (31%) replied that their employers were not very or not at all concerned.

Source: IAM Press Office

Roundabouts

It is not uncommon to come across drivers who go out of their way to avoid certain roundabouts.

Even experienced drivers consider them to be “high risk” locations, and feel uncomfortable with them, no matter what size the roundabout is.

The single most common mistake at a roundabout is only looking to your right as you approach, because that is where you expect traffic to come from. But what about the car ahead of you – can he see something that you can't?

It is better to gather as much information as you can – start to check to your right, straight ahead, to your left, and all your mirrors as you approach the roundabout. By carrying out your observations in this sweeping/scanning motion, you are more likely to pick up if the car in front decides not to go for some reason.

The classic rear end shunt, caused by the driver ahead not going when you think he's going, can thus be avoided. Help yourself further by keeping a good gap between you and the vehicle waiting to get on, so if he changes his mind half way you have room to stop without compromising yourself.

Drivers often approach the roundabout with the plan to continue unless they have to stop because of other traffic. The problem here is that you may notice another car just as you get close to the roundabout, but you are more likely to speed up, opting to “take a chance” because it is difficult to change your mind at the last moment.

A slightly different, but very much more effective mental outlook is to approach the roundabout thinking “plan to stop but look to go”.

As you scan, remember you are looking for gaps, as well as vehicles. And once you are on the roundabout, remember not everybody will position themselves correctly to get off: you could find somebody sweeping across you to get to their exit. Remember that the lorry or bus needs lots of room, and try not to be actually alongside it. On a mini roundabout, if you are approach at the same time as an oncoming vehicle, clearly indicate your intention and then do a visual check – try to catch the driver's eye and send a message to avoid the ambiguous situation when nobody is quite sure who should go first.

Source: IAM Press Office

Level Crossings

It may be that we are all under time pressure. But drivers these days are more inclined than ever before to “chance it” at lights. And not just “amber gamblers” – drivers can be ignoring red lights as well.

This is particularly dangerous at a level crossing.

So much so, a new advertising campaign has been launched, focussing on drivers who ignore red lights, and sometimes barriers, and “take a chance” at level crossings. It's aimed at commuters who drive to work and mothers on the school run. Apparently around four people a day

gamble with their lives at level crossings showing a red signal, and one a month dies as a result. That is a considerable death toll for something that could only save seconds on a typical journey.

The problem has been portrayed as one of the biggest risks of “catastrophe” on the rail network. 13 people died at crossings last year.

Rail chiefs insist that level crossings are safe if used correctly – even the unmanned, unbarriered ones. But if they are misused, the chances of surviving being hit by a train, no matter what vehicle you are in, are virtually zero.

If you are approaching a level crossing be prepared to stop if the signal goes to amber. Use your mirrors to see if there is somebody following you too closely and if so, gently brake in order that you can send them a cautionary message.

Once the trains have gone and the signal is off again, take a moment to glance both ways before you go across the line, just in case. In heavy traffic when the queue sometimes covers the railway line, never, ever be tempted to stop on the track or half way. Blocking a half-barrier crossing is extremely dangerous.

Source: IAM Press Office

Mirror, Mirror....

Do you remember the old mantra “mirror, signal, manoeuvre”?

Experienced drivers develop their mirror skills to the next level, by “scanning” and even using a glance over their shoulder to remove the dreaded “blind spot”.

“Scanning” mirrors involves checking all three mirrors in sequence, starting with one side mirror, then checking the interior mirror and finally finishing on the other side mirror.

To be consistent and effective, you should use all the information that is available to you when you are driving.

Things change quickly, particularly in a busy urban environment and you want the best information you can get (ie the most recent) before you commit to a manoeuvre.

If we take signalling as an example, ideally all three mirrors should be checked before you apply the indicator. So, if you are going to signal to the right, you start with the right exterior mirror, then the interior mirror, the left exterior and finally the right exterior again.

The reason we finish there is that this is the direction you intend to go and so it will let you know if it is actually safe to put on the indicator. You might want to delay a moment perhaps to let another road user react to your intentions.

On the other hand, if you were signalling to the left, you would start with the left exterior mirror, the interior, the right exterior and back to the left exterior before applying the indicator.

As you start your turn, another quick glance in the relevant mirror is reassuring.

When changing lanes, it is a good idea to get into the habit of supplementing the mirror scan with a right shoulder check, which assures you that there is nothing “sitting” in your blind spot, moving along at a similar speed to you and so remaining undetected. A fast moving motorbike will be picked up by this glance, even if your mirror check a moment earlier failed to pick up that the rider was changing lanes and overtaking at the same time.

These shoulder checks should be no more than a glance, however: your primary attention must be on the road ahead. Some advanced drivers even use a left shoulder check to keep an eye out for bicycles, for example.

Remember the faster you travel, the more you rely on your mirrors. And at lower speeds, you are more likely to need to check for a blindspot.

What is the IAM?

The Institute of Advanced Motorists (the IAM) is a charitable body with 3 very simple aims and objectives -

1. To improve the standard of driving and riding on the UK's roads.
2. The advancement of road safety.
3. The administration of an Advanced Test.

The Advanced Driving Test has been in existence since 1956 (and the Advanced Riding Test for motorcyclists since 1976). Due to the existence of around 200 local IAM Affiliated Groups throughout the UK, all charitable organisations in their own right, the support for people wanting to prepare for and pass the IAM's Advanced Test is unparalleled throughout the UK. The support of the Groups means that the Advanced Test is available and probably achievable for ANYBODY who has an interest in improving their driving skills.

By "improving their driving skills" we are not talking about those who want to enter motor-sport but anybody who feels the way that drivers are left to their own devices once they have passed their "L" test is not good enough, or even that the nature of driving has changed since they passed their "L" Test, especially in today's unforgiving traffic and

The Test gives a thorough workout of driving ability, allowing the candidate to alter their drive according to the conditions and environment of the road. The types of road vary from quiet country roads, motorways to busy town centres. In each case there are hazards and situations that need to be avoided and taken care of using the methods and

to show restraint and composure to deal with tricky hazards that may become apparent throughout the drive. Such as in a town centre situation, where observation is used to pick out hazards in situations that are constantly changing. The main objective is that the candidate has to perform well in all situations rather than excel in one.



roads.

The 'Test'

The Advanced Driving Test lasts for about 90 minutes and usually covers between 30 and 40 miles along all types of road.

The Examiner will hold a Police Advanced Driving certificate (either serving or ex Police Class 1) and will have extensive experience from working within the Traffic sections of the Police Force.

techniques that advanced driving gives. There may be situations where the candidate can show flair and panache (or what we term as Sparkle) on an open country road where optimum progress can be gained at maximum safety, using optimum road positioning and excellent observation. All this combines to give a brisk smooth drive, at the legal limit on the open road. In other situations, the candidate will need

Many people often comment on the Test after taking it and more often than not, the comments revolve around how much they enjoyed the drive. On Test the candidate gets to "show off" the new skills that they have been tuning for the weeks during their course. The Advanced Driving Test **IS NOT EASY** but is within the reach of most motorists with the right guidance.

How do I join?

Visit the IAM website at <http://www.iam.org.uk/Skill4life/> and gain a 'Skill for Life'.

Alternatively, contact any of the Borders Group committee who will be pleased to tell you more about Advanced Driving.

IAM DriveCheck

A unique new service from the IAM, Britain's leading dedicated road safety organisation, was introduced in May to offer Britain's 30 million driving licence holders a chance to give their car driving skills an "MOT".

Called DriveCheck, the IAM initiative is an hour-long driving assessment, conducted by hand picked and trained observers from many of the IAM's 200-plus groups.

Introduced as part of the IAM's programme of events to mark its 50th anniversary, DriveCheck has been designed to offer every driver an opportunity to have their driving assessed, no matter where they are in the UK.

In future it will be available at £35, but for this, the IAM's 50th anniversary year, the fee has been reduced to £25 – and there are 2,000 free places available as well.

"Whether they are young drivers, older drivers, new company car drivers, so-called 'rusty returners', or any other drivers, the IAM DriveCheck Assessment is ideal," said IAM Chief Executive Christopher Bullock.

"Some people will be more concerned about a friend or relative's driving and so a special DriveCheck voucher is also available as a gift to buy.

Only a minority of new drivers go on to take Pass Plus after their L-test. We would like to think DriveCheck will be useful for the others, but especially for all those who took their L-test sometime ago.

"Ironically, serious crashes are often caused by drivers who over-estimate their ability. I would like to think that some of those drivers too will take up DriveCheck – before it's too late! If you have had a near miss, or an unwelcome brush with speed cameras, this service could also help."

Mr Bullock said that DriveCheck is aimed at those who want to be safer and more confident at the wheel, but don't think they want to commit themselves to doing a full IAM advanced driving course.

"Those who take DriveCheck automatically become associates of the IAM and will continue to get driving advice," he said. "All we ask is that you are a licence holder and you give us one hour. Your safety must be worth that. Taking just an hour out to concentrate on your driving style could give you a fresh approach to driving. Many of us are used to putting our car in for an MOT: why not have an occasional test of our driving skills as well?"

Any driver who would like to sign up for DriveCheck should visit the IAM website, iam.org.uk, or phone the IAM on 020 8996 9600.

Sudoku

I have another Sudoku for you but this time I'm including the solution (that way I won't lose the solution like I did last time!)

For those who don't know (where have you been?) Sudoku is a simple logic puzzle which has taken the UK by

storm over the past year. The rules are very simple:

Fill the grid so that every row, every column and every 3x3 box contains the digits 1 to 9. There is only 1 possible solution.

It's graded as being of easy difficulty. The solution is on page 4.

			8	1		9		6
9	4			5			7	
						5	2	
	7			8				1
		1	9	6	3	4		
6				2			3	
	1	2						
	9			4			8	2
4		6		7	9			

Chevy Crash test woe

In recent years, the increasing number of cars obtaining top marks for adult occupant protection in Euro NCAP's tests has led some to demand the introduction of a new benchmark and a sixth star.

However, results announced in February by Euro NCAP prove that whilst some manufacturers are forging ahead in their safety development, others still have a long way to go.

Of the six cars tested by Euro NCAP in this recent phase, only two achieved the top five star accolade for occupant protection in Europe's leading independent crash tests.

Claes Tingvall, Euro NCAP Chairman said,

"I am pleased to see that two of the six cars have achieved a maximum five-star rating for adult occupant protection. It is reassuring that more and more car companies are now placing an emphasis on safety and we are happy to recognise their achievements.

However, we want to encourage the highest levels of safety in all cars and, in that regard, there is still work to be done. Euro NCAP will continue to provide consumers with the best information available regarding the safety of new cars."

The Chevrolet Aveo was singled out by Euro NCAP for the unacceptably high risk of life-threatening injury to the driver's chest, which was highlighted by the frontal test. As a result, the car's final star was struck through. Although the Aveo scored enough points overall to qualify for three stars, Euro NCAP insists on a minimum level of performance in each of the frontal and side impacts. While the Aveo's performance in side impact was good, it did not score enough points in the frontal test to be given a three-star rating.

Source: EuroNCA

Borders Group Website

For those of you who are 'web enabled', why not visit the Borders Group website for up-to-date information on group events and news.

The site has useful information on the workings of the group and advanced motoring in general. There is also an archive of old newsletters and a range of useful motoring links.

The site address is www.bordersiam.org.uk



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