



Borders Observer

www.bordersiam.org.uk

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Borders Test Success



Edna Dickinson receives her certificate from Bob McKendrick

Events Programme (provisional)

Our events co-ordinator, Jean Gall has lined up the following speakers and visits for the coming year.

Due to the refurbishment of the venue at Heriot Watt, the venue for all "in-house" events after the AGM will be Old Parish & St. Paul's Church, Scott Crescent, Galashiels.

2007

May 1st: AGM - Speaker - Ian Dalling, RoSPA Advanced Drivers Association, Regional Examiner - Heriot Watt, Netherdale

June 5th: Sat-Nav - Speaker from Halfords

July 3rd: Visit to Dryden Riding School, Dryden, Ashkirk, Selkirk

August: No Meeting

Sept 4th: Visit to Ostles Tyres, Currie Road Industrial Estate, Galashiels

Oct 2nd: Visit to Fire Station. Galashiels

Nov 6th: Eyesight requirements for driving - Speaker: Alan Hall, Dispensing Optician in Galashiels

Dec 4th: To be confirmed (Social Event?)

2008

Feb 5th: Visit to Mazda Showroom of Brown Brothers, Peebles

Mar 4th: To be confirmed

April: DVLA Assessment for Disabled Drivers - this may involve a trip to Edinburgh and may be a Saturday

Chairman's Welcome

Another year in the life of the Borders Group of Advanced Motorists is almost over. It's been a year when all has not run smoothly and the membership at times I am sure must be questioning if they are receiving value for money. But sometimes things are out of our control and I apologise to those members that have turned out at the monthly meetings and been disappointed that the guest speaker has not turned up.

On a more upbeat note the next Car Advanced Driving Course is on Saturday 5th May 2007. The venue once again will be BSW Timber plc, Earlston by kind permission from A.J. Brownlie. There is still room for one or two more names if anyone is interested.

There is much going on in our own Region and we are trying to put as much information out to the membership as we can. I do hope that some of you will

participate and help if asked or just go along and have a look.

This year Kevin Hamilton our Newsletter Editor is stepping down. Kevin has done a fantastic job with the Newsletter. Jean Gall is also retiring from Events Secretary. New blood required, please give these positions some thought as our AGM is coming round fast.

I am also finding it difficult to give as much of my time to the Group as I used to. So if someone else would like to put their name forward for Chairman please do so. Bill Allison our Secretary is coming to the end of his first year in office and has done a sterling job going that extra mile to represent the group at various meetings and gatherings. What the Borders Group needs is more members willing to take responsibility and help keep the Group alive for the future.

Raymond Black

IAM Special Assessment

Following the article in the last newsletter about Bill Allison achieving a gold award in his RoSPA test, Steve Shepley the IAM's Regional Co-ordinator contacted me to point out that the IAM actually had the toughest test for civilian drivers. He wrote:

"The toughest test in the UK open to civilians is in fact our very own Special Assessment, three hours of concentrated, commented driving and a full marked and written debrief.

It is actually marked to the same standard as the police advanced driving test, and you can't get better than that!"

Sounds too hard for me - especially since I only managed a silver award in my RoSPA test! Maybe our intrepid secretary, Mr Allison will have a go and report back in a future newsletter?

Kevin Hamilton

Newsletter News

I hope you enjoy the latest edition of Borders Observer.

This will be my last edition of Borders observer as I've decided to step down as newsletter editor. I'd like to thank everyone who has contributed over the last couple of years - I've really enjoyed putting it together and I hope you've enjoyed reading it. If you're interested in taking over, please contact the group secretary, Bill Allison.

Kevin Hamilton

Congratulations !

To the following members who recently passed their Advanced Test:

Edna Dickinson
Debbie Gracie
Alan Hall

Welcome !

To the following new members of the Borders Group:

Keith Miller
June Martin
Craig Thom
Charles Watson
Dr Neil Dickson

NOTICE OF ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN by order of the Group Committee that the Annual General Meeting of the **Borders Group of Advanced Motorists** will be held at 7.30pm on Tuesday 1 May 2007 at Room A17, Heriot Watt University, Scottish Borders Campus, Netherdale, Galashiels. This is to enable the Officers to present their Annual Reports and Accounts for the year ended 31 March 2007 for approval by Group members and to conduct an election.

Secretary: Bill Allison

Date: 31 March 2007

All Members, Associates and friends are invited to attend but only fully paid up members of the IAM and of the Group may vote. A Member entitled to vote at the AGM may appoint a proxy to vote in his/her stead. A proxy need not be a Full Member of the Group.

All officers and committee members are retiring and those noted below are offering to stand for re-election at the AGM.

Current Officers

Name	Position	Status
Raymond Black	Chairman	Offering to stand for re-election
Peter Sandison	Vice-Chairman	Offering to stand for re-election
Bill Allison	Secretary	Offering to stand for re-election
Marjorie McKendrick	Treasurer	Offering to stand for re-election

Committee Members

Name	Position	Status
Bob McKendrick	Committee (Membership)	Offering to stand for re-election
Jean Gall	Committee (Events)	Retiring
Mary Davison	Committee (Publicity)	Offering to stand for re-election
Kevin Hamilton	Committee (Newsletter)	Retiring
Peter Paige	Committee	Offering to stand for re-election
John Brown	Committee	Offering to stand for re-election
Charlie Dodds	Committee	Offering to stand for re-election

Nominations are invited from Full Members to stand for committee. The Nominee must be willing to stand for the committee and sign the nomination form. By signing the nomination form the Nominee is affirming his/her ability and intention, if elected, to attend committee meetings regularly.

Only fully paid up Members of the IAM and of the Group may nominate committee members or be nominated as committee members. All nominations must be seconded by a fully paid up Member of the IAM and of the Group.

The nomination form must be returned to the Group Secretary (Bill Allison) by **24 April 2007**.

Nominations will only be accepted from the floor at the AGM provided a written nomination for that Committee position has not been received and the Nominee is present and agrees to be so nominated.

Nomination Form

Name	Position	Nominated by	Seconded By	Signature of Nominee

Reading the Road Ahead

A good, safe drive is about a mixture of techniques, but high on the list must be the need to use your car's brakes in a smooth and progressive way.

To do so you need to develop observation and anticipation, so that you begin your braking at an early stage and always leave a decent margin for braking more heavily if the need arises.

Many drivers tend to brake too late and too hard. Or arguably less dangerous, but equally annoying, some drivers have the habit of "comfort braking" - touching the brakes to enable themselves feel better, even if they have no intention of slowing the car to any measurable degree. They do so in the belief that they are being careful drivers.

It is better by far to learn to read the road ahead. Not only do you get

early warning of developing hazards, you can respond by adjusting your speed using only your throttle. Have you ever seen a "cascade" of brake lights ahead of you? An advanced driver will judge the speed and distances involved and, having left a decent gap, be able to follow in safety by letting the speed "fall away" and so avoiding the need to brake.

Think too about your positioning on the road - can you maximise your forward view by putting the vehicle in a slightly different position on the carriageway? This should not be an abrupt repositioning, but a smooth change in your line to enable you to see ahead that little bit better. Careful adjustment of road position improves the view ahead, particularly through corners.

Source: IAM Press Office

Less Stressful Driving

How long does it take you to get from A to B? If you are like most people, you will know typical journey times for regular trips that you make. Phrases like "I made great time", or "it only took me to get to here today" are typical comments we hear every day. We tend to judge the quality of a trip by how short it is. In fact, we are creating our own time expectations and this puts us under pressure when we can't meet them. To make matters worse, these are often self imposed.

Over the next week actually time the same journey twice. On the first occasion, drive as normal, trying not to go faster or slower than usual. The next time you undertake the same trip, consciously drive in a more relaxed and less hurried manner. If you

compare the two journey times you will often find that, if your trip was a relatively short one, the difference can be measured in - at most - minutes. If the journey was two, three or even four hours, the difference is likely to be no greater than twenty to thirty minutes.

Ask yourself how you feel after completing each trip. Is there any difference? What is your stress level like? What have you done with all those precious minutes you saved?

The chances are that you will feel more relaxed and refreshed after the second trip. This is more likely to be that case if you accept that there are many things outside your control - the weather, traffic delays due to accidents, road works or simply traffic volumes.

Fewer overtakes, less chance of mistakenly going too fast through a speed camera - a more relaxed journey all round.

If things do go wrong, it is useful to focus on what you can do, rather than on what you can't. If you have a mobile phone, you can ring ahead to explain that you are delayed so that alternative plans can be made. In this situation the mobile phone can be really useful: once that call has been made, you will drive in a more composed way. The pressure is off if you have rung ahead to say you have been delayed by a few minutes. Needless to say, that call should ideally be made when you have pulled over somewhere convenient and legal - or at least from a hands-free unit.

Source: IAM Press Office

Too close for comfort

Drivers who "tailgate" - drive too close to the car in front - are a menace. They probably don't realise how intimidating their habit is. The most benign interpretation is that they are simply trying to indicate to the guy in front that they want to get past. That's all very well, if the person in front has somewhere to go - but that isn't always possible. Other lanes may be busy too, and it isn't always an option to remove yourself instantly from the path of the tailgater.

Yet statistics tell us the single most common crash in the UK is the classic rear end shunt. So what can we do to avoid it?

The easiest thing to do is remove ourselves from the problem. Aim to change lanes on the motorway or dual carriageway, but only when it is safe to do so. Clearly indicate your intention to pull over. That way you can let the tailgater get past you, even if he or she is driving too fast for the conditions and/or breaking the speed limit.

Don't be tempted to impose the speed limit on somebody who is clearly hell bent on breaking it.

And if you choose not to let the tailgater past, there is a danger that he will try to "undertake" you, posing an additional risk for other road users.

We are often asked what can you do if you're being tailgated in a 30mph zone on a single carriageway?

Pulling over here may not be practical either. But do not be intimidated into speeding up just because somebody is right on your back bumper. Instead, create an additional stopping distance between you and the vehicle in front so that you when you do brake, you can do so smoothly.

Think of yourself as adding a little "buffer" zone for the tailgater, whether he appreciates it or not.

When the time comes to brake, you can do so gently, giving a clear signal of your intention via your stop lights. The more time your stop lights are on, the more time the tailgater has to register that and pull back.

What is the IAM?

One of the IAM's key goals is to help its Members and Associates develop the advanced skills that help make driving and riding a more enjoyable and rewarding experience.

Being an advanced driver or rider is a journey of continuous learning, and one of its key stages is the internationally recognised Advanced Test. Pioneered by the IAM, it is this for which we are perhaps best known.

There is, however, much more.

Established in 1956, the IAM is the UK's leading road safety organisation dedicated to raising driving and riding standards and reducing the number of collisions that occur on our roads.

We do this in a number of ways:

- ❑ by playing a major role in the development and promotion of new road safety ideas...
- ❑ by influencing policy at all levels of government...
- ❑ and through our Skill for Life programme which enables drivers and riders to prepare for our Advanced Driving and Advanced Motorcycling tests.

Widely respected in its field, the IAM advises, and is consulted by, leading organisations world-wide with responsibilities for Road Safety. today's unforgiving traffic and roads.

The 'Test'

Recognising that the majority of collisions are caused by driver error, the IAM's Advanced Driving Test was introduced in 1956 with the specific objective of significantly improving driving standards using the principles of Advanced Driving pioneered – and applied with great success – by the Metropolitan Police.

In 1976, the IAM realised that motorcyclists, too, would benefit from advanced training and the Advanced Motorcycling Test was established.

To date, over 350,000 people have taken the Advanced Test, and of these over 300,000 have passed and gone on to become IAM Members.

The Advanced Driving Test lasts for about 90 minutes and will usually cover between 30 and 40 miles along all types of road, town driving, motorways (if available) or dual carriageways, and even country lanes.

Your Examiner will hold a Police Advanced Driving certificate and will have extensive experience from working within sections of the Police Services throughout the UK.

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 techniques that advanced driving gives. There may be situations where the candidate can show flair and panache on an open country road where 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 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.

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 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 all vehicle users given 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.

Mobile phone law and you

Drivers who think they can "beat the ban" on hand held-mobile phones when new laws becomes effective later this month by simply buying hands-free kit for their cars are still putting themselves and their passengers at risk.

That's the warning from the IAM, the UK's largest independent organisation dedicated to road safety and driving standards.

Under the Road Safety Act, from Tuesday 27 February, motorists using hand-held phones at the wheel will face a stiffer penalty - £60 - and three points on their licence.

"Inevitably some drivers will think that they should buy a hands-free kit and the problem will go away," said Peter Rodger, IAM Chief Examiner. "That would certainly suit the manufacturers. But drivers should be aware that they are potentially buying trouble - even when you are hands free, research has shown that you are four times more likely to crash because your concentration is split," he said.

"If you do have to use a hands-free kit, keep your conversations short and simple and you should be aware that there are other laws you can be prosecuted under if you are involved in a crash.

"The best advice is to switch off before you drive off - and if you really can't do that, be prepared to stop and find somewhere legal and convenient to return that missed call or check your messages.

"Driving with a hand-held mobile phone is anti-social. Nobody calling you should expect you to risk your life - and your licence - to talk to them on a hand-held phone while you are at the wheel," he said.

"So hands-free does not mean you will get off scot-free. No call is that important that you should risk your life, or that of your passengers."

Three years ago the IAM launched a sticker campaign cautioning "Don't talk to Phoney Drivers".

Mr Rodger said that a full question and answer briefing on mobile phones is available on the IAM website, iam.org.uk, together with other driving tips and advice.

Classic Cars

Classic cars and historic vehicles were not designed for the traffic conditions we are likely to experience on today's roads, so drivers have to compensate accordingly.

At the same time, old vehicles are frequently the centre of attention wherever they travel: this gives drivers of such vehicles an opportunity to set an example by safe, considerate and courteous driving as well as meaning that drivers around them may be distracted.

Classic car drivers should know the limitations of their vehicles. Safety features we take for granted today (airbags, ABS etc) are not there to assist if the worst comes to the worst. The steering column is often a metal pole pointing directly at your chest. And the driving style will have to be quite different if somebody is used to modern vehicles with low profile radial tyres and anti-lock disc brakes. Historic cars and motorcycles are sometimes able to travel at similar speeds to modern traffic, but lack the same levels of braking, adhesion and handling. So it's good advice to polish up your driving if you have a classic – to prevent a crash happening in the first place.

How can advanced driving techniques help the classic car driver? The advanced driving coaching provided by organisations such as the IAM includes:

- · An emphasis on looking further ahead
- · Techniques for interpreting what you see, so that you can plan your driving
- · Techniques for spotting hazards – and even predicting ones you can't yet directly see
- · A consistent, systematic approach to handling hazards

As well as the reduced risk of incident, such planning ahead delivers a smoother drive which reduces wear and tear on your pride and joy!

In addition to polishing up your driving skills, what else can you do to protect yourself and your car?

Before setting off, the vehicle needs a check, especially if the car is returning to the road after any lengthy "lay-down".

The braking system was not designed for today's traffic conditions, and so deserves special attention to make sure it's in the best possible condition. Brake fluid should be drained and replaced at least once every three years and more frequently if the storage conditions are damp.

Classic cars need a bit more routine maintenance than modern cars. Bear in mind:

- Fluid levels and operation of lights (where fitted) should be checked prior to each journey.
- Tyre condition and pressures should be checked prior to each journey.
- Tyres do not last indefinitely, even in storage, and especially when exposed to outside conditions. Pneumatic tyres should be replaced if there are signs that the walls are damaged or that they have become inflexible. Tyres should be replaced, whether they are worn or not, after a number years in accordance with manufacturers' recommendations or other appropriate guidelines.

We take rear view mirrors for granted. But many old cars were fitted with no more than a single small interior mirror and many motorcycles have none. Cars and motorcycles should be fitted with external mirrors, preferably on both sides, but certainly on the side where overtaking traffic will pass. Get into the habit of checking over the shoulder in blind spots – especially in slower vehicles.

Many national classic car clubs and registers are affiliated to the IAM and may be able to offer their members discounts on the normal cost of the Skill for Life programme.

Source: IAM Factsheet

Courtesy

Driving experiences can be less than positive sometimes. But one of the things that makes even the most stressful journey more bearable is the simple act of courtesy between road users.

Nowhere is this more apparent than at junctions. If it's busy and you are joining a queue of near stationary vehicles, none of whom are making any progress on the main road, you are in a position to extend a little courtesy.

Make an effort not to block that junction. Why not pull up a few feet behind the car in front, in order that you can "let out" a driver trying to emerge from a side turning?

If that driver is turning left, and joining the queue, that's no real hardship. And if they are turning right, they will bless you if you at least allow them a little room to emerge and "have a look".

That said, just because you are letting that driver out, there's no guarantee that everybody will. So make a point (before you create that gap) of checking your mirrors. For example, there may be a motorbike

"filtering" at a reasonable speed approaching you down the outside. So if your emerging vehicle assumes all is well your side, because you have "let him out", how do you know that he will spot the bike? He may well be looking the other way in order that he can complete his right hand manoeuvre and so be totally unaware of the bike coming towards him.

Sometimes courtesy is motivated by self interest. If you pull over behind a parked car in order to let another road user pass at a "pinch point" and you do so in good time, everybody benefits. Your positive "body language" makes it clear you have anticipated the blockage and that you are letting the on coming vehicle past.

They get through quickly and you will be able to move on quickly as well. The alternative is two moving vehicles moving very slowly, trying to squeeze parked past cars, and worried about crunching their mirrors.

Remember a little courtesy can be catching. Make a point of thanking other road users when they have done you a small favour.

Source: IAM Driving Tips

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 website achieve IAM Approved Quality status in 2006 - well done to Webmaster, Peter Sandison for gaining this recognition.

The site address is www.bordersiam.org.uk



IAM
DRIVING ROAD SAFETY

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Affiliated to the Institute of Advanced Motorists

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Views expressed in *Borders Observer* are not necessarily those of the Editor, the Borders Group or the IAM.

Hey you!!



Yes you!

I've got a tasty little job for you...

- ✓ **Light duties**
- ✓ **Massive recognition**
- ✓ **No experience or qualifications needed - just a brass neck :-)**

Oh - and phone and email

We need someone to organise our monthly speakers and events. The calendar for the next 12 months is already in pretty good shape so you won't have much to do for a while, but we want new ideas that will attract new and younger members.

You could do it !

Yes you could !!

Yes YOU - phone me !!!

Office 01896 848305, mobile 07768 511931, 01750 22550 (19:00-21:00)