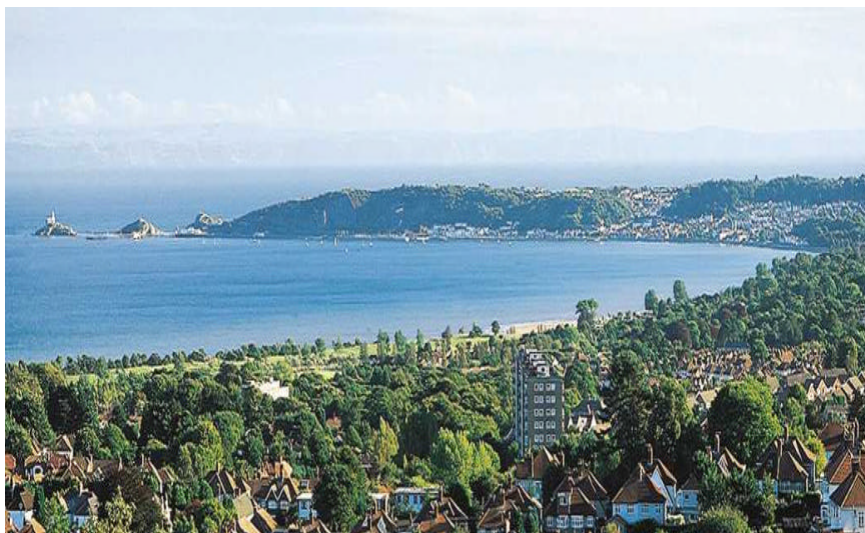




# Swansea Bay Group of Advanced Motorists

Newsletter



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' Overdrive '

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OCTOBER 2004

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No. 2



Hello again everybody,

Well we got the new first issue off to a flying start, and judging by the many comments it was extremely well received by one and all, which is excellent - onwards and upwards as they say. We have changed the name of our newsletter to 'Overdrive' which we feel is a more appropriate one.

The 28<sup>th</sup> Olympiad in Athens came to a fantastic finale. Didn't we do well in the Olympics. Team GB took 30 medals in the Games (9 Gold - 9 Silver - 12 Bronze), and achieved 10<sup>th</sup> place in the medals listings.

From the triumph of Kelly Holmes to the disaster of Paula Radcliffe it all made for an enthralling time for all of us who watched throughout. It was brilliant to see David Davies from Barry have such success in the 1500 metres freestyle swimming - well done our Welsh lad!

Indeed congratulations to all our UK competitors regardless of whether they brought back a medal or not - their hard training and dedication should be appreciated by us all.

Just think in 48 months we'll be in Beijing for the 29<sup>th</sup> Olympiad doing it all again.

Anyway, now back to motoring matters. The days are getting shorter and now is the time to start checking out those car lights and replace any broken bulbs; even check out those antifreeze levels before the onset of winter. Even more importantly check out those tread levels as you all know how little tread actually keeps you on the road - don't you!

Safe driving,

**Editor**

## **DIARY OF EVENTS**

**October  
28  
Thursday**

AGM Trallwn Community Centre  
Bethel Road, Llansamlet.

**November**

No scheduled events

**December**

No scheduled events

## **NEW MEMBERS**

The Swansea Bay Group welcomes the following new Associate members.

Helen Griffiths, Port Talbot  
Oliver Griffiths, Port Talbot  
Jenny Little, Neath  
Elinor Bowen, Swansea  
Kirsty Cucuz, Port Talbot  
Marc Davies, Bridgend  
Steven Thomas, Neath  
Kevin Williams, Bridgend

Let's hope we see you all at our monthly meetings.

## **MEMBERS DEALS**

## **BIGGER IS BETTER**

It seems that as far as women drivers are concerned size does matter - at least when it comes to cars!

A survey by Godfrey Davies, the car rental Group discovered that women drivers are opting for more powerful, better equipped cars than their male counterparts.

Over 40% said that their current car was more powerful than their previous one compared to 30% of men. Women are also more likely to opt for sports cars or a coupe than men.

## **SPEED CAMERA DETECTORS**

Do you have a speed camera detector fitted to your car? If you do then we would be interested in hearing from you.

We hope to carry out a survey of radar detectors and their effectiveness as a road safety tool (as opposed to avoiding penalty points).

If have such a device fitted and would like to take part in our survey contact the Editor at the Group email address [editor@sbgam.org](mailto:editor@sbgam.org)

## **THANK YOU**

Our thanks go to the Directors of Distinction Systems, Swansea for providing the photocopying facilities with which to publish this newsletter - their support is appreciated.

Being a National voluntary organisation we are always pleased to receive support and donations from Companies or Organisations which help us in promoting safer driving standards.

## **RECENT EVENTS**

The Group Dexterity took place on Sunday 12<sup>th</sup> September at Asda. The weather really was atrocious in the morning which definitely accounted for the low turn out by the public, and put an end to what would have been a very successful event indeed. Perhaps next year the weather will be kinder and will see a more successful event.

It goes without saying - a big thank you to those of you who turned out on such an appalling day.

## **FORTHCOMING EVENTS**

**OCT 28<sup>th</sup>**

The Annual General Meeting at Trallwn Community Centre Bethel Road, LLansamlet 7.00 pm prompt.

By attending this important meeting and casting your vote you can make a difference. Please make every effort to attend.



## MEMBER PROFILE

This quarter our Member Profile is of a lady member of our Group.

The lady is Jenny Little from Neath where she lives with her partner Paul and Heather her stepdaughter. Also in the Little residence there are 2 cats, Boddington and Merlot and a dog called Sam.

Jenny currently runs her own Martial Arts company, specialising in the teaching of education and freestyle martial arts to children and adults.

Her teaching sessions are held at Gorseinon, Port Talbot, North Cornelly, Bridgend, Porthcawl along with various other locations in Cardiff and Newport.

Amongst her varied interests she lists Golf, Reading and Socialising with her many friends. She also enjoys Cooking and Keep Fit when she has the time - a busy lady our Jenny.

She has been a member of the Swansea Bay Group for two months and is presently undergoing her Advanced driving test preparation under the guidance of Rhian Knuszka.

Jenny says she enjoys driving but she feels that there are just too many speed cameras on our roads. Many of us share that point with you Jenny, and our report on page 12 of the newsletter looks at the suggested effectiveness that these cameras are having on road safety.

Jenny, thank you for submitting yourself to our interview - the ordeal is now over! We wish you well for your Advanced Driving Test.

## Overdrive **OPINION**

They are indispensable, at least that's what we appear to think judging by the proliferation of the things - what are we talking about here?

Mobile phones - love or hate them they are with us to stay.

Legislation has been brought into force in an attempt to control their use whilst in vehicles and to try to reduce the number of accidents arising from their use.

Not a day goes by when we still see mobiles rigidly stuck to a drivers' ears, with their necks contorted to one side in an attempt to hold the phone or we see the driver with one hand controlling their car, and driver who thinks that they really can control their vehicle, even if an emergency arises. I have seen this happen on a regular basis when I am cruising at 70mph - it beggars belief.

Much research has gone into the effects of mobile phones on the human brain, some of it quite revealing and scary. If even some of the research is to be believed then it is right that the Government imposes fines on those drivers who continue to use hand held mobiles, if only to protect them from themselves - a pity that we don't have the police resources around to enforce these breaches in a more rigorous manner.

## Overdrive **OPINION POSTBAG**

Dear Ed,

I read your article on the 20 mph speed restrictions within school zones. I totally agree with your comments. I too have seen the most appalling breaches of speed within school areas close to my home, and as you rightly say within peak school hours. It is high time speeding in these areas incurred penalty points. Give me the laser gun and I will do the job myself.

**M.S Swansea**

Dear Ed,

re Overdrive opinion < 20mph in school areas >

Since these speed limits are currently not mandatory why should we feel the need to keep to them? After all we (and I don't include myself) constantly break every other speed limit imposed, why would you think that the ordinary driver will treat school areas any differently.

**P.W Swansea**

### **UNDER PRESSURE**

Fed up with checking your tyres every week - now there is no need to any more. HealthMail Limited are selling tyre caps that show you when your tyres are at the incorrect inflation pressure. These ingenious little caps replace your existing dust covers, and should the tyre pressure drop in any tyre, the inner part of the insert turns to another colour - priced at a very reasonable £9.95 (4) plus postage you will soon recover the additional fuel and tyre costs that come as part of having under or over inflated tyres.

Contact - HealthMail Limited (Dept AD047T) - Tel 0871 871 2695 or visit them at their website [www.hml@place4all.com](http://www.hml@place4all.com)

### **HUMOUR CORNER**

A policeman spots a jay walker and decides to challenge him : "Why are you trying to cross here when there's a zebra crossing only fifty feet away?"

"Well" replied the jay walker, "I hope he is having more luck than me."

## REPORT

### Safety Camera report “Whitewashes” figures

A new report which states that safety cameras are saving lives has been criticised for “whitewashing” the figures.

The independent review of the first three years of the Safety Camera scheme claims a 40% drop in deaths and serious injuries in 24 safety camera partnership areas. This has led to 870 fewer people killed or seriously injured per year, including over 100 fewer deaths. There was also a 33% fall in injury accidents, with 4030 fewer per year.

However according to the Association of British Drivers (ABD), the report “is just one of a long line” and actually covers up the fact that Britain has the worst record in the EU at reducing road deaths since cameras became widespread.

The ABD has drawn attention to a decline of just 4% in UK road deaths from their 1994-98 average, compared with 12.6% for France, 22.9% for Germany and 35.5% for Portugal.

The ABD has also highlighted the fact that road deaths have tended to increase in those counties where “cash for cameras” schemes are most aggressively used. In Lincolnshire, Essex and Thames Valley, deaths have increased dramatically since the “cash for cameras” schemes started.

Northamptonshire showed an initial improvement, but has posted one of the worst years in the last 10 years since being blanketed with cameras. In North Wales, home of Chief Constable Richard Brunstrom, deaths were also up on last year.

“The price of this failure is high - lives have been lost that would have been saved by a more enlightened safety policy”, said Mark McArthur - Christie, the ABD’s road safety spokesman. “Also, the quality of life for Britain’s safest drivers has been drastically reduced, with millions of tickets being handed

continued from page 8.

out in circumstances that are nothing at all to do with those that cause accidents. Drivers lives are being made a misery for nothing".

The ABD has also accused those studies that claim that cameras are working, of "cherry picking" statistics which are wide open to distortions. The ABD has examples of local authorities fixing the figures to justify speed reduction measures - choosing 'before' periods carefully, presumably to include as many accidents as possible, or even comparing different time periods or different stretches of road.

McArthur-Christie added "Cameras Partnerships, Local Authorities and the Highway Agency all place every possible obstruction in the path of those who want to examine accident reports for themselves.

They probably don't want to admit that they have made millions of peoples lives a misery for absolutely nothing."

## **CAR REVIEWS**

Any member who would like to take part in carrying out a car review please contact the newsletter Editor. See this quarter's review on page 13.

## **FUN - FUN - FUN**

If any member is interested in getting a Group event organised eg. pub skittles, ten pin bowling or a treasure hunt, etc, etc ?

Contact the newsletter editor if you are interested.

Can we ask you to let us know what non car events you would like to see the Group organise in 2005.

## ARACHNOPHOBIA TALES

A young woman has sold her sports car because she found a tiny spider inside the car. She has got rid of her Mazda 323 after seeing the eight legged passenger on the driver seat.

The lady from Yeovil in Somerset sold the car she had owned for less than a only a year, and now relies on lifts to work at a local hospital.

She said ‘‘I don’t regret selling the car at all. I couldn’t keep it after that.

If the spider had come out when I was driving, I would have crashed’’.

Ed - presumably the lady wasn’t an advanced driver, or she have would have added a further insect check within her normal cockpit drill.

## ROAD RAGE PREVAILS

Drivers of expensive top of the range cars or sports cars are more likely to suffer from road rage incidents than other road users.

According to research carried out by the University of Warwick drivers of flashy or flamboyant cars are more likely to suffer road rage attacks as other motorists try to bring them down a peg or two.

Ed - that’s it then, I am off to buy a Sany@@@@&&&& !??@@

## DEADLINE FOR PUBLICATION

The next issue of this newsletter will be in January 2005.

The last date for submission of articles or letters for publication in this edition will be - **Friday 15th January 2005.**

## **GROUP WEBSITE**

Our Web site is: [www.sbgam.org](http://www.sbgam.org)

Our website continues to be updated by Mark Whalley. The last newsletter has now been added, and is available for downloading to your computer.

## **GRANT APPLICATION**

In the last issue we told you that since the Group had obtained Charitable status we had applied to npower for a Community Initiative Grant of £500 with which our Group could purchase - 2 Skills for Life packages one of which will be presented to the winner at the Group Dexterity Day and the other to the Young Driver of the Year. In addition the grant will also cover a new gazebo, signs, tables, etc for the Group to use at events where we will have a presence.

We believe that total expenditure on all these items will be around £499.90.

Well, we have been successful - npower have awarded us the grant in full, which is fantastic news for us. Our many thanks to npower for their generosity.

## **HUMOUR CORNER**

A policeman couldn't believe his eyes when he saw a woman drive past him, busily knitting. Quickly he pulled alongside the vehicle, wound down his window and shouted "Pull over!"

"No" she replied, "They're socks."

## ASSOCIATES & OBSERVER NEWS

Presently as far as we are aware there are no new Associates waiting for Observers.

Philip O'Mahoney is coming to the end of his Observer training. Tom Harry is progressing well with his Advanced Observer training.

## QUESTIONS & ANSWERS

**Q.** A member has written into say that as short time ago, they were tailgated by another young driver. "I just braked sharply to reduce speed, but this just appeared to aggravate him more." What did I do wrong?

**A.** The bad news is that you did every thing wrong. Never, never brake sharply or accelerate hard - these actions just inflame the tailgater and encourage even more bad driving from them - posing an even further danger to you. You should aim to reduce you speed marginally, and give them the opportunity to pass you by. This is easier said than done particularly in built up areas but if the you can wait until you see a clear patch of road and pull in to allow them to pass, then continue your journey. Do NOT panic and do NOT respond to any gesticulating signs from the other driver.

Once they have passed you, it's only a matter of time before another driver gets the same hassle as you did from the tailgater.

Try to forget the incident if you can - remember you are a better driver than they will ever be, and more importantly you will reach your destination safely.

However, if the incident has particularly upset you or the their driving was dangerous to other road users, then take the number plate details and report it to the police.

Tailgating is becoming all too common a phenomena today



## CAR REVIEW

**Audi A3 1.6 FSi SE.** The A3 is fast becoming the most popular model in the Audi line up. Audi launched their new A3 Sport Back in early September and it promises to put the Audi brand head to head with the likes of BMW, Mercedes.

Our model under review is the existing model.

### HANDLING

The current A3 lives up to its sports hatch intentions that Audi has always striven for. Gone is the suspension that struggled with rippled surfaces and in its place has come fine control and a very composed ride which makes the A3 both comfortable and sporting drive.

### PERFORMANCE

The 1.6 provides a punchy drive yet is economical. There is 2.0 litre diesel injection and a staggering 247bhp V6. There is also a lesser 1.9 diesel or the 138bhp 2.0 litre diesel. They come with five/six speed manuals or the racing style paddle shift, dependent on the engine size.

### INTERIOR

Overall the A3 looks extremely stylish both inside and out. The car oozes the high quality that we have come to expect of Audi.

### Technical Details

<b>Engine</b>	1595 / 4
<b>Transmission</b>	Manual
<b>Power</b>	113 / 6000
<b>Torque</b>	114 / 4000
<b>0 - 60 mph</b>	10.9 seconds
<b>Top speed</b>	122 mph
<b>Consumption mpg.</b>	32.1 Urban 52.3 extra Urban 42.8 combined
<b>O.T.R price</b>	£ 17,960

**Overdrive's rating**      ✓   ✓   ✓   ✓

## **HUMOUR CORNER**

I saw this on the back of a van in Oxford:

CAUTION: BLIND MAN DRIVING

On the side of the van (after I passed it to check out the driver):

OXFORD VENETIAN BLIND CO

## **GROUP XMAS DINNER**



The Group's annual Xmas Dinner will take place on Thursday 9<sup>th</sup> Dec 2004 at Tree Tops Country Club.

4 Course meal, Cabaret & Disco.

Cost is £ 17.50 per person.

As we go to press -

**THIS EVENT HAS BEEN CANCELLED DUE TO LACK OF INTEREST**

**Important** - Please note a valid IAM membership card will be required at time of making purchases.

**HARRIS BROS TYRES** – Ystrad Road, Swansea West Industrial Estate, Fforestfach.

Offer £10 off wheel balancing & tracking to members of the Group.

Please ask for Mike

**K & J BRAKES & HOSES** – Alemein Road, Morfa Industrial Estate, Landore, Swansea

Offer various Trade discounts on a wide range of products.

## **FOR SALE / WANTED**

Members who have items for sale, can if they wish advertise in this section - free of charge

## **ADVANCED DRIVING TESTS**

Please remember to notify John Evans (01639 638123) or Viv Harrison (01792 413481) of your test success. Publishing results encourages those Associates who are about to take the test and also gives us an indication of how the Group is performing.

The pass rate in the Swansea Group had been extremely high, which is down to the high level of 'tuition' that all our Observers carry out with their Associates before they are put forward for their Advanced driving test.

## **GATSO NEWS**

If any one has news of a new speed camera having been installed in your area please let us know. It's not that we condone speeding, but we would like to get behind the statistics the Speed Camera Partnership and Local Authority are using to justify the ongoing installation of these cameras in our area.

Most recent : Peniel Green Road, Llansamlet just off Junction 44  
Westbound

New sites : Llangyfelach Road, Treboeth - Both facing oncoming traffic

1 opposite Parkhill Terrace  
1 just below Kings pub Llangyfelach Road

## **EDITORIAL CONTRIBUTIONS**

Members who feel they would like to contribute an article to the newsletter or to our web site please email the following members at their Group email addresses :-

Contributions to the Newsletter  
Contributions to the Website

[editor@sbgam.org](mailto:editor@sbgam.org)  
[mark.whalley@sbgam.org](mailto:mark.whalley@sbgam.org)

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## ELECTED OFFICERS

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Honorary President	Gethin Williams, Stadium Garage Group
Honorary Chief Observer	Peter Shopland
Chairperson	David Phillips
Vice Chairperson	Paul Harrison
Secretary	John Evans
Treasurer & Membership Secretary	Viv Harrison
Events & Observer Coordinator	David Phillips
Minute Secretary	Rhian Knuszka
Publicity Officer	Sian Sullivan

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## COMMITTEE MEMBERS

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Ian Guy	Philip O'Mahoney
Mark Whalley	Tom Harry
Martin Sullivan	

Newsletter Editor	Philip O'Mahoney	<a href="mailto:editor@sbgam.org">editor@sbgam.org</a>
Webmaster	Mark Whalley	<a href="mailto:mark.whalley@sbgam.org">mark.whalley@sbgam.org</a>

## DISCLAIMER

The aim of this newsletter is to inform, entertain, enrich and create a platform for discussion - any views expressed herein may not necessarily be that of the Committee of the Swansea Bay Group or of the IAM governing body .

The Editor 's decision to allow or edit any article for publication in this newsletter is final.

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**IAM main Website** <http://www.iam.org.uk>