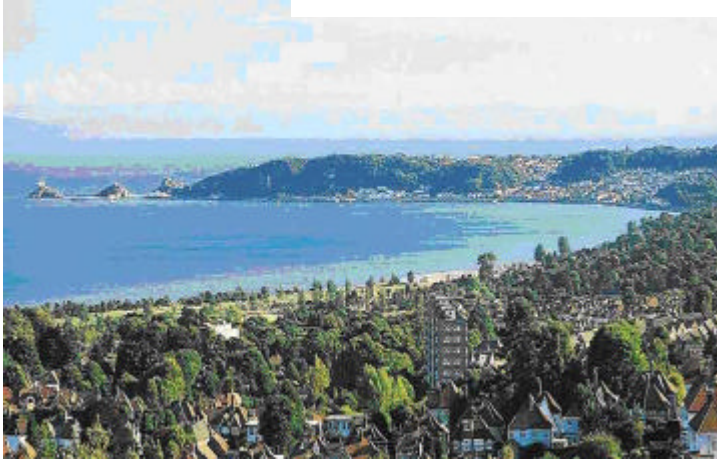




Swansea Bay Group of Advanced Motorists

Newsletter



Copyright of City & County of Swansea

' Overdrive '

JANUARY 2005

No. 3

A very Happy New Year fellow advanced motorists,

The festive season is well behind us now, and you are now keeping to all those New Year resolutions you made - are you not?

I was talking to a traffic policeman friend over Christmas period and we were discussing the reasons for the spate of minor accidents that occur as a result of the clocks moving back by one hour. He said that drivers appear to totally misjudge their distances with the onslaught of darkness as a result of the hour difference. He said that in the majority of cases that he had attended it was clear that the driver at fault, was travelling too close but not necessarily speeding. There was he said a reliance on drivers to rely to much on the driver in front actions' as to what was happening in front of them, and not observing for themselves.

I questioned him further on this, and he put forward the idea that drivers during hours of darkness tend to rely on the brake lights of the car in front as to how they will react rather than keeping a safer distance - and he said this was something that drivers tended not to do in the daylight hours.

Observation, observation, observation he stated was the name of the game - it just appears to go out of the window during the hours of darkness with some drivers he said.

Somehow I tend to agree with his views as the number of accidents I have witnessed over the last few months appear not to have resulted from speed but on sheer lack of observation by the driver.

If any of you out there have other views, please let me have them.

Safe driving

Editor

DIARY OF EVENTS

January

27th
Thursday

Monthly meeting at the Trallwn Community Centre
7.00 pm

February
13th
Sunday

Monthly Observers meeting at Asda, Llansamlet overflow
car park 10.00 am.

New members particularly welcome.

NEW MEMBERS

There were no recorded new members since the last newsletter.

MORE GOOD GATSO NEWS

It sounds like a speeders' nightmare. A speed camera accurate up to 50mph concealed in a road stud as small as a cat's eye. Yes it is true.

The camera is just 130 mm in diameter, and can protrude from the surface by just 5mm and is linked to a computer that can read and decode number plates written in both italic and cursive scripts.

The idea is that it would be used in the approach to areas with lower speed limits. The camera will look at each oncoming vehicle and measure its speed. Then you will have illuminated road studs that will light up on the approach to a pedestrian crossing, say, and a sign could light up to display the registration number of the vehicle, telling the driver to slow down.

The camera is currently on trial with the Scottish Office in Motherwell.

A 'HOLE' LOT OF TROUBLE

Bad road surfaces are being blamed for a 47% increase in car suspension failures during the last five years. Particularly poor are Scottish roads.

Following a survey by warrant firm, Warranty Direct their analysis reveals that Wales comes in as the 6th highest area for claims for suspension and axle failures within the UK. Top of the list is Scotland, followed by East Anglia.

The area showing the least amount of claims is the South West of England

OBSERVER NEWS

Congratulations to Tom Harry on passing his Senior Observers course. Well done Tom.

Also our thanks to Peter Shopland for his time and ongoing advice to all those who successfully completed the Observers course.

RECENT EVENTS

The Annual AGM took place on Thursday 28th October. The new Committee is as published at the rear of this newsletter.

FORTHCOMING EVENTS



Group Treasure Hunt

Mark Whalley is trying to arrange a treasure hunt sometime in February or March, and the event will in all likelihood be on Sunday. Please watch our web site for further details.

QUESTIONS & ANSWERS

Q.

A.

MEMBER PROFILE

Due to the Christmas and New Year break we have been unable to bring you our member profile review in this newsletter.

Don't despair we will be back in the next edition - with another unsuspecting victim.

We advanced drivers can a peculiar lot at the best of times. We expect from other drivers the high standards we set ourselves, whilst knowing full well that most other drivers haven't been trained to such levels. Why haven't they you ask?

Well we agree with you. The standard driving test only caters for the basic needs of drivers, most of which is at relatively low speeds, and we know that after their test most drivers will attain consistently much high speeds during their driving life, or alternatively cause road rage by not adhering to national speed limits.

It would probably overwhelm the system if the driving test was extended to include some or all of the advanced driving skills, but in the interests of reducing road deaths levels the case for insisting on a higher level of training for drivers certainly stacks up.

With the ever increasing levels of road signs, the increasing volumes of traffic and the extension of speed cameras throughout the country a driver requires all the advanced driving skills they can muster to avoid becoming another statistic.

The present driving test whilst providing the basics skills, does not give the driver all the skills required, nor can they achieve them on their own.

The Government if it really wants to stop the 'carnage' on our roads (their words not ours), really need to sign up to a scheme which will ensure that all drivers are trained to the highest standards. Motorway driving has to be included within this framework.

As to whether the Institute of Advanced Motorists plays a major part in this, remains to be seen. But only by the Government ensuring that every driver has been trained up to, and passed an 'Advanced and Approved' driving course can they truly hope to reduce the level of accidents and deaths that occur every day on our roads in the UK. We as advanced drivers have been there, we have done the hours and we know what is required - sadly the Government does not appear to hear the message - and so the carnage goes on unabated.

On average 10 deaths a day, every day - I rest my case.

GOVERNMENT MESSAGE TO ROAD HOGS

In a bid to rid our motorways of what is commonly known as “Road Hogs”, the Government is urging drivers to keep to the left-hand lane on motorways unless overtaking, as part of a new Highways Agency safety campaign.

Messages encouraging better lane discipline will be shown on the M1, M6, M18 and M62 for a week, beginning today, in the hope of reducing accidents and congestion on Britain's motorways.

David Jamieson, road safety minister, said: “We are committed to tackling congestion and making our roads safer. Poor lane discipline causes frustration to drivers and can disrupt the flow of traffic.

We have all seen people on the motorway sitting in the wrong lane and experienced the inconvenience and congestion it causes. Just sticking to the simple rule of staying left unless overtaking could bring real benefits to all road users.”

The messages displayed will read ‘Keep left unless overtaking’ and ‘Don't hog the middle lane’ to remind drivers of the safe driving advice in the Highway Code.

Section 238 of the Highway Code advises motorway drivers to keep in the left-hand lane unless they are overtaking slower-moving vehicles and to return to the left again after completing the overtaking manoeuvre.

REPORT

TOUGHER MEASURES TO TARGET DRUG DRIVERS

New powers to help tackle the dangers of drug driving can be used from today announced David Jamieson, Road Safety Minister.

A new Code of Practice means that drivers will be compelled to undertake roadside impairment tests if the police suspect they are driving under the influence of drugs.

The Code details the way trained police officers must conduct the tests to help judge whether someone may be unfit to drive. Refusal to participate is an offence in the same way as failure to provide a breath test.

David Jamieson said: "Drug driving puts lives at danger and is as irresponsible as drink driving. Drivers should never get behind the wheel when they are unfit to drive. Law abiding motorists are fed up with anti social drivers who put not only their own lives at risk but those of other innocent road users.

"The Code of Practice issued today will help to further drive down the number of casualties on our roads. Testing will mean that a trained officer will have more information on which to judge whether a driver may be impaired and more evidence when deciding whether to make an arrest."

The Code of Practice details the tests to be undertaken, how they should be administered, the kind of observations that may be made and the inferences that may be drawn. It also deals with the training for officers and their authorisation by Chief Constables. More than half of the police forces in England, Scotland and Wales already have officers trained in impairment testing with others set to follow.

The tests are a range of tasks including a pupillary examination, the walk and turn test and the one-leg stand. Other training helps officers to recognise the outward signs of drug recognition.

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.

BEING AN ADVANCED DRIVER CAN BE FUN TOO

If any member has an idea or suggestion as to getting a Group event organised e.g. pub skittles, ten pin bowling - please let us know.

WOULD YOU BELIEVE IT

Back in November I was at a meeting in Bristol, the point of which I forget now - however the following event I will not forget.

A young lady attendee was at the meeting, when I noticed the IAM Skills for Life leaflet in her Filofax. During the break I introduced myself and told her I couldn't help noticing the IAM form, me being a member and all that.

She said that she had been thinking of joining the IAM, but she had recently had 9 points on her licence and she had just been notified that she had received another speeding ticket which was going to give 12 points - an immediate ban, but she was going to put herself at the mercy of the Court.

She said that she had been thinking of joining the IAM because she thought it would give her some ideas as to how to avoid speed cameras. I mentioned that she might wish to give it some further consideration before committing herself to a long and arduous process and politely changed the subject.

So Nicola from Avon if you ever read this, you will know who I am.

DEADLINE FOR PUBLICATION

The deadline for the submission of articles or letters to the April 2005 edition of this newsletter will be - **Friday 8th April 2005**

GOOD BYE DAEWOO

The Daewoo brand name ceased to exist as a new car brand in Europe on the 1st January, as General Motors completes the global launch of the Chevrolet brand.

The UK network of Daewoo retailers will be re branded as Chevrolet. Existing stocks of Daewoo will be re branded with the Chevrolet badge.

Jonathon Browning, GM Europe vice-president stated "Chevrolet has a global presence in more than 70 countries with sales last year of more than 3.6 Million vehicles.

The new range of Chevrolet cars will provide an affordable entry brand in GM's new European product strategy as we move forward with Vauxhall supported Saab Corvette and Cadillac."

ARTICLES FOR PUBLICATION

If any member has an article they would like published or indeed questions they would like answered, then contact us and we will be more than happy to help.

HUMOUR CORNER

A kindly Dutch motorist stopped to help three teenagers push-start their car. It wasn't until the vehicle drove off that he realised that the car was his wife's about-town runner.

SCHEME HIGHLIGHTS RURAL ROAD RISKS

The Government has launched a new safety campaign targeting drivers using rural roads.

Almost two-thirds of fatalities happen on the UK's rural infrastructure and Government studies have shown that drivers are taking less care when driving in the countryside.

Transport Minister David Jamieson said: 'We are committed to improving road safety on every road in the country but too many accidents are happening on quiet country roads.

'It is only right we highlight the dangers and urge motorists to take the same care as they do when driving in urban areas to avoid crashes.'

Studies from the Department for Transport have shown that 33% of drivers believe fewer crashes occur on rural roads because they are quieter.

A spokesman from the Government's Think! Campaign, said: 'Do not think it is safe to break the speed limit on rural roads just because there is less traffic.

'There are unforeseen hazards, such as blind bends or animals in the road that could lead to crashes. At slower speeds you would be able to react to these unforeseen hazards more quickly.'



CAR REVIEW

This quarters car review is on the Kia Picanto 1.1litre 4 door model ,and was undertaken by David Phillips and John Evans respectively. They tested the car through a variety of highway layouts. Dave has driven many cars throughout his working life as a driving instructor.

HANDLING

The car performed extremely well during the evaluation. The steering was precise and visibility was excellent.

PERFORMANCE

Acceleration proved to be very positive, with little fuss coming from the engine. Gear changes were smooth with no signs of roughness throughout.

INTERIOR

All instrumentation was well placed for ease of use. The seats were comfortable and the driving position was good. Our car had c/l, efw, alloy wheels, A/C,CD player with MP3 player and leather steering wheel.

Technical Details

Engine	1.1 1086cc
Transmission	Manual
Power	64bhp @ 5500 rpm
Torque	97Nm @ 22800 rpm
0 - 60 mph	15.1 seconds
Top speed	96mph

Consumption mpg. 43.5 mpg

O.T.R price £ 6,995

Overdrive's rating ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓

with a 3 year unlimited warranty the Kia Picanto is sure to be an excellent buy

SAD HUMOUR CORNER

George McGuinness was forced to take drastic steps to get behind the wheel of the car he loved. The garage mechanic from Sunderland was the proud owner of an 1974 Mini Cooper but his 27 stone physique prevented him from getting behind the wheel. A strict programme of dieting resulted in George losing no less than 5 stone so he and his Mini could be reunited

" KILLER " CAMERA

A Coroner has questioned the role of speed cameras saying that they can kill by distracting drivers. His comments came at the end of an inquest on a woman who died after she was run over by a motorist who was apparently distracted by the sight of a speed camera in Greater Manchester area.

GATSO NEWS

The latest speed camera is situated in Llangyfelach Road, Brynhyfryd just opposite the entrance to Parkhill Terrace. Enquiries with the Speed Camera Partnership resulted in the now familiar line - " We cannot reveal the reasons for its Implementation, however following a review taken earlier it could be shown that its siting would be on safety grounds."

Ed. So presumably the decision is not based on the fact that a number of recent traffic level surveys have been carried out on this stretch of road, and they see the installation of the camera as an excellent spot to generate even further income - being sited in a downhill position will certainly catch many motorists here. And they have found another "tree" to hide it behind!

The Speed Safety Camera partnership must be running out of excuses by now!

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

Do you have anything to sell? 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.

CONTINUING THANKS

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

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
mark.whalley@sbgam.org

ELECTED OFFICERS

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

COMMITTEE MEMBERS

Derek Evans	Lloyd Phillips
Martin Sullivan	Ian Guy

Newsletter Editor	Philip O'Mahoney	editor@sbgam.org
Webmaster	Mark Whalley	mark.whalley@sbgam.org

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.

Registered Charity no. 1103484

Swansea Group Website <http://www.sbgam.org>

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