

Wigan Advanced Motorists can offer:

Car, Motorcycle, Minibus, and Commercial Vehicle courses.

We meet at the Plough and Harrow, Shevington each Sunday morning. Congregate in the car park at around 09:30am for Motorcycles and 09:45am for cars.

Please try to arrive on time as we may be out and about by 10:00am.

From the South:

Leave the M6 at Junction 26 (M58) and at the Orrell exit, turn left. At the traffic lights, turn right for Shevington, the pub is a couple of miles on the left.

From the North:

Leave the M6 at Junction 27 (Standish, Wigan) and turn left up the dual carriageway towards Standish. At the end, turn right for Shevington, the pub is a couple of miles on the right.

Car parking is available at the rear of the building and there is also a public car park on the other side of the road opposite the pub.

Contact details:

Tel: 07071 226693

www.wiganadvancedmotorists.org.uk



WIGAN ADVANCED MOTORISTS

December 2006 Issue 302

Registered Charity No. 518387

Dear all – Seasonal Greetings

Welcome to the December edition of the Group Newsletter.

In this edition I've included an item by myself that I hope to continue each issue. I shall try to create discussion between group members with the intention of creating a 'forum' in order that members can make contributions to the newsletter – it is hoped that by doing this a more interesting and varied news 'read' will result. Also, I hope to contribute technical items to bring members up-to-date with the latest technologies being developed by manufacturers and after-market suppliers.

Simon

AGM - Tuesday 06th March 2007

The Annual General Meeting of the Wigan Group of Advanced Motorists will be held at the Plough and Harrow, Shevington, on the above date.

The meeting will commence at 7:30pm prompt – please be in place by 7:15pm to ensure that the meeting runs as scheduled.

The Agenda will be circulated at a later date.

The Cost of an M.O.T.

The maximum fee for the yearly M.O.T. went up by 14% on 07th November 2006. According to the UK's Transport Minister, Stephen Ladyman, the increase is justified due the extra time required to carry out the new test procedure – an extra 6 minutes compared to the previous routine to include the on-line documentation.

Whilst the figures below represent the maximum fee that you may be charged, it pays to 'shop around'. Some M.O.T. testing stations will continue to offer tests for less than the maximum fee and it's possible to save between 10 per cent and even 20 per cent at some garages.

Prices below:

MOT Class	new fee (£)	increase (£)
I motorcycle up to 200cc:	27.15	3.35
II other motorcycles: (and with sidecars)	34.65	4.25
III three wheelers:	34.65	4.25
IV cars:	50.35	6.20

Long Distance Drivers – should be aware that many motorways, bridges, and tunnel 'toll charges' will be increased in the New Year – certainly the M6 Toll which will increase to £4.00 for cars and £2.50 for motorcycles during busy periods.

I started to reflect on what had just happened and realized that my brake pads had become 'glazed' (highly polished) which reduces the efficiency quite considerably when called upon in an emergency situation. This 'glazing' of the brake pads is due to the style of driving that I adopt each and every trip that I make – this being to adhere to the IAM Advanced Driving Test that I passed and the fact that I try to drive at this standard at all times.

Good planning, forward observation, anticipation, and hazard awareness means that I make very little use of the braking system as I hopefully perform an efficient and safe drive – the constant application of the brakes under very light brake pedal pressure had lead to the front brake pads 'glazing' – this reduces their effectiveness when required to work under very hard conditions – it only takes a few applications of 'hard braking' to remove this glazing if done on a regular basis.

On reflection, I have now built into my weekly drive routine, and when the situation allows, a high speed check of the braking system from around 65mph – this I do as I leave a motorway travelling down the slip road. Careful application of the brakes under firm pressure several times a week means that my brake pads remain efficient and the glaze is removed. I still perform the rolling brake test when I first drive off, this checks that my vehicle's braking system is working, but due to the low speed it's carried out, in my situation, I was not aware that my braking efficiency had dropped due the nature of how I drive.

The above situation may not be applicable to many drivers as I do a lot of motorway driving and very little about town etc. Drivers constantly applying their brakes will not face this situation as the brakes are constantly being worn down – but it's worth considering no matter how you drive.

Ed.

Smoking in your company car - the law

Drivers that smoke should be aware of incoming anti-smoking laws which will govern when they can light up in their cars - and the penalties their bosses face if they break the law.

Companies face fines of up to £2,500 for failing to enforce anti-smoking laws which come into effect on 01 July 2007.

All enclosed public places and work places will become smoke-free from that day - including company cars, pool and hire cars - under the 2006 Health Act.

The legislation will make it an offence for those who control or manage smoke-free premises to fail to stop people smoking in them. No smoking signs will have to be displayed.

Where a vehicle is used as a workplace by more than one person, regardless of whether they are in the vehicle at the same time, it will be required to be smoke-free at all times. This is meant to protect people who use the vehicle from secondhand smoke, regardless of when they use the vehicle. Drivers of convertible cars will be exempt as long as the roof is down when they or their passengers are smoking. Smoking will be allowed in vehicles that are for the sole use of the driver and are not used by anyone else, either as a driver or passenger.

If you share a company vehicle with another person, and you both smoke, you can't continue to smoke in the vehicle as this legislation has been developed to protect both smokers and non-smokers from secondhand smoke. As the vehicle is part of the workplace it falls within the legislation and is required to be smoke-free.

Choosing not to smoke in your vehicle with it's associated in-vehicle hazards must be a safer drive - what do you think?

Ed.

EU driving test every 10 years

New EU plans could force thousands of motorists to re-take their driving tests in an overhaul of British motoring laws.

The proposals include ensuring British driving licences are renewed every 10 years and making drivers with common conditions, such as diabetes and angina, undergo compulsory medical checks. UK driving licences are currently valid from the date motorists pass their test until the age of 70, unless motorists suffer a health problem.

Philip Bradbourn MEP, the Tories' Transport spokesperson in Brussels, has stated that "The EU is now trying to dictate to member states what they need to do in terms of driving tests and the issuing of licences. That is wholly unacceptable and totally unnecessary in Britain, where we have the safest roads in Europe".

DAILY EXPRESS Monday 04 December 2006.

Imminent Diary Date

Group Meal on 25th Jan 06
At the Mount, Orrell.

(Deposits to any committee
member on Sunday Morning before 14th Jan
2007)

or contact 07071 226693 for further details

Editor: Brakes Warning

I recently made a journey to South Wales and returned via a fairly quiet, but wet, M6 Motorway. It was about 11:00am and I was travelling in the centre lane following two vehicles in front – my speed was about 65mph.

Allowing for the wet conditions and the speed that I was travelling at, I had left what I judged to be plenty of space between myself and the vehicle in front, in case I needed to brake or slow down etc.

Suddenly, the driver in the vehicle in front 'slammed' his brakes on causing me to react by applying my own vehicle's brakes – I could see that I was getting close to the vehicle quite rapidly. I could also see that I wasn't going to reduce my speed sufficiently in order that I wouldn't end up seriously close to the now stopped vehicle. It felt as if my vehicle's brakes weren't as efficient as I'd expected them to be, this allowing for the wet road surface (my tyres were in good order with correct pressures).

I eventually made a last few seconds manoeuvre by steering into the outside lane, no vehicles were close, and I was able to move around the stopped vehicle.

As I passed the vehicle I also passed the vehicle in front of it – this vehicle's front bonnet had blown open and the driver had reacted by stopping dead in the middle lane of the motorway – the driver following had also reacted in the same manner. I realised that I had come very close to running into the back of the vehicle and that an instinctive reaction had saved the situation. As I continued up the motorway, I considered what had just happened; especially the not so good performance of my own vehicle's braking performance.

New Drivers

If you've just passed your first driving test - congratulations! But remember, if you clock up six or more penalty points in the next two years, you'll lose your licence and have to take the test again.

Statistics show you're most at risk of having an accident in the two years or so after you pass your test - one in five newly qualified drivers have a crash within a year. Your licence could be taken away if you increase that risk by committing offences like speeding.

Penalty points

The main penalty point offences are:

- Speeding: 3-6 points
- Going through a red light: 3 points
- Careless driving: 3-9 points
- Driving without insurance: 6-8 points
- Failing to stop after an accident: 5-10 points

If you run six or more penalty points, you'll get a letter telling you your licence is no longer valid. You should inform your insurance company immediately - you will have to apply for a new provisional licence to continue driving as a learner.

Remember, as a learner:

- You can't drive on the motorway;
- You must display L plates;
- You can't drive a car unless you're accompanied by someone over 21 who has had a full driving licence for at least three years;
- You're limited to less powerful motorbikes.