



## Wigan Advanced Motorists

Registered Charity No. 518387

Newsletter 304

Welcome to the February / March edition of the group newsletter.

As you will notice, I'm trying a new format that will be more printer-friendly when accessed via our own Wigan website, with a lot more information than previous editions, and including more information taken directly from the IAM website.

In this edition I have included the minutes from the recent AGM – these will be attached to the rear in their original format. Also, I will be including items that do not directly relate to driving safety, but will hopefully be of interest to those who have an interest in all things to do with motoring – an example being the origins of vehicle manufacturer 'badges' and the story behind their design. I hope you find this of interest.

Simon.

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### When is it a 30mph road?

Having read the article in the latest edition of the IAM magazine (Advanced Driving) with regards to when is the road a 30mph speed limit, I thought a few lines on this subject would be useful.

The rule for limiting a road's speed to 30mph is very simple and it goes back to the 1920s. It is 30mph, 'where there are three or more lamps throwing light on the carriageway and

placed not more than 185 metres (200 yards) apart'.

The rule is sensible and generally works well because most of these roads have the look and feel of a 30mph limit. But in recent years, the speed limit on many roads has been reduced to 30mph, for highway safety or environmental reasons, or because of local community pressure. These may be now 30mph roads but their overall physical impression remains that of the former 40 or 50mph, or national limits.

As advanced drivers, we need to be aware that this situation is becoming ever more likely as road congestion increases – it may be worth considering that if there are lampposts along the road, then treat it as a 30mph limit unless you see a sign informing you of a higher limit – Ed.

For the full article - (Advanced Driving Spring 2007 – page 16)

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### Government increases pressure on motorists.

Government pressure on motorists to curb emissions is continuing its unrelenting pace with a new initiative called Smarter Driving. Announced by transport minister Gillian Merron the aim is to get drivers to inflate their tyres, avoid over-revving and remove clutter from their cars.

Ms Merron said carbon dioxide from car exhausts could be cut by 8% if all drivers in Britain followed the government's advice. The total reduction would be over 5.5 million tonnes a year of carbon dioxide and would also save motorists over £2 billion in fuel costs.

'The way we drive can help to reduce our impact on the environment and by using less fuel, motorists can save money too,' Merron said.

The motoring campaign comes ahead of the publication of a draft Climate Change Bill, which will set in law a goal of cutting national CO2 emissions by 60% by 2050.

An online calculator on the transport ministry's Act On CO2 website allows drivers to estimate how much they could cut their fuel bills by changing their motoring habits. It showed that someone driving 12,000 miles a year could save around £100 off an annual £1,250 bill.

The Smarter Driving recommendations include:

- Under-inflated tyres mean more CO2, so, make sure tyres are pumped up correctly.
- Don't over-rev the engine
- Change up a gear a little earlier where possible.
- Less clutter in a car means less CO2 - the less weight carried, the easier it is for the engine and the less fuel it uses.

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### Lada makes a comeback at Geneva.

The Russian vehicle manufacturer, AvtoVAZ, recently unveiled the rebirth of its Lada brand at the recent Geneva Motor Show. The new Lada C is a sleek looking contender for the European C-segment and is a far cry from old communist-era Rivas and Samaras of the past. The new car will be powered by a 2.0 litre petrol engine, and is the first fruits of

AvtoVAZ's new alliance with contract manufacturer MagnaSteyr.



The new platform will become the base for the next generation of Lada production cars, which will be launched in the near future.

MagnaSteyr has designed the platform, but AvtoVAZ's own Russian designers have styled the Lada C, which is part of a family of cars to be built on the platform, including a saloon, a five-door hatch, a compact MPV, and a crossover.

Strong sales in Russia have kept the Lada alive – the company still builds around 700,000 cars a year!

Would you have guessed that the vehicle above was a Lada? I wonder if the company will have the same success that Skoda has seen over the past few years – at one time both were the basis of many motoring jokes, but look at Skoda today! (Ed.)

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### Jam-beater

Drivers stuck in motorway traffic could find the hard shoulder opened in a bid to ease congestion. Ministers are considering opening the safety lanes to speed up traffic during peak times. The idea follows a successful trial in Birmingham.

## Call for more m-way services

Increasing congestion and safety concerns have led to government plans for more motorway service stations.

The Department for Transport wants to see the number of stations rise dramatically under proposals that could also see them double in size. Ministers want to increase the number of stops for safety reasons.

They are normally around 30 miles apart to equate to half an hour's driving time, but as the network gets busier it could mean the time gap is longer. The changes, drawn up in a consultation paper for the DfT, would see new service areas built on particularly busy motorways.

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## Motoring costs

The cost of bus and train travel has outstripped the price of motoring since Labour came to power.

While the Government considers pay-as-you-drive road tolls to persuade people to curb their car use, the latest statistics show that the prices passengers face have risen far faster than those absorbed by motorists.

According to the Office for National Statistics bus fares have risen by 52.9% over the past 10 years, while figures from the Office of Rail Regulation show train fares rose by 46.2% between January 1998 and the start of 2007.

The AA says the driver of a small family car has seen their motoring bill rise from 41.52 pence per mile in 1997 to 56.15 pence in 2005 – 26%.

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## Wednesday woe

Car drivers on the road between 5-6pm on a Wednesday are more likely to have an accident than at any other time during the week.

Studies of more than 30,000 crashes in 2006 by incident management firm Accident Exchange showed this to be the most dangerous time with 17.8% of accidents happening.

Brian Gregory, chairman and founder of the Association of British Drivers, said: 'Perhaps thoughts are not on the task of driving but on last weekend or plans for the upcoming one.'

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## Safety fears over new cat's-eyes

Plans to install a new type of cat's-eye on our roads have been put on hold due to, ironically, safety concerns.

The units being installed on Britain's roads work with light-emitting diodes (LED's) that, instead of merely reflecting a vehicle's headlights, flash by themselves at up to 100 times a second.

However, Rebecca Jasiczak, an epileptic from Essex, claimed to have narrowly avoided a seizure while driving on a main road where the flashing cat's eyes had recently been installed.

The Highways Agency has launched an investigation into claims that the LED's could trigger a fit and, until it is finished, all plans to install more high-tech cat's-eyes have been suspended.

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## Door mirrors: accident prevention

Thousands of accidents could be prevented each year if drivers adjusted their door mirrors properly.

Masterlease, a fleet management company, surveyed 1,700 UK drivers and found that 80% admit their mirrors are not aligned correctly.

The study comes soon after the Department for Transport published figures as part of its road casualties report revealing that 15,000 UK motorists were involved in an accident as a result of their vision being affected.

Recent reports have blamed poor car design for restricted views, but Masterlease says most problems with blind spots would be eradicated if mirrors were correctly adjusted.

The company's risk management expert Gavin Jones said the accidents could be easily prevented and drivers to ensure they have their mirrors lined up correctly.

He said: 'The mirrors are there for a very good reason but, according to our study, drivers are not making the best use of them and this is leading to unnecessary accidents.'

'When a driver is concentrating on the road ahead, it is all too easy to lose track of cars overtaking or changing lanes to the rear, especially if mirrors are not in the right place.'

Jones said the problem was particularly serious if different people shared the same vehicle. He advised the best way to test mirrors are lined up correctly is to get someone to walk around the car. They should be visible in at least one of the mirrors at all times.

### **Step by step guide to adjusting your side mirrors**

#### **1. Move your driver's side view mirror outward**

Roll up the window and press your head against the glass. Adjust the mirror so that you can just see the edge of the car. Remember, you should be looking back down the lane beside your driver's side, not at the side of your car.

#### **2. Move your passenger's side view mirror outward**

Place your head in the centre of the car (directly behind the inside mirror mount) and adjust the outside mirror so that you can just see the edge of the car.

### **3. Check to see what your mirrors show**

When you're in your normal driving position, you won't be able to see the sides of the car but will be able to see other vehicles in the adjacent lanes.

### **4. Ask a friend to walk around the back of your car**

As your friend circles your car, make sure that s/he can be seen from every angle. As s/he moves from your rear view mirror to go to your passenger mirror, you should be able to see her/him at all times. Likewise, there should be no interruptions in continuity as your friend travels from a rear view to a driver's side view in your mirrors. You haven't got it right yet until all blind spots behind you are removed!

Source: Masterlease

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### **AA warning on vehicle checks**

Thousands of company car drivers face a summer of overheating and seized engines due to their ignorance of basic vehicles checks.

Two-thirds of CCDs do not check the coolant and oil levels of their cars as often as recommended, while one in five admit they have no idea how to do so.

A survey compiled by the AA reveals that the vast majority of employees using cars for work are not doing enough checks, although 80% said they would do so if they were shown how to.

Last year alone, the AA attended 13,000 call-outs relating to coolant issues and 12,500 for engine problems due to low oil levels.

The bill to companies from repairs, administration and lost working time could run into millions of pounds as a result.

The issue of maintenance checks has come into sharp focus in recent years as service intervals have increased and drivers assume that modern cars are more reliable and therefore need less looking after.

Particularly at risk are drivers who use their own cars and organise their own servicing.

Roger Williams, head of major fleets and leasing at AA Business Services, said: 'This research reveals a worrying trend. Although company car drivers are likely to have maintenance checks as part of their contract, motorists who drive vehicles bought through cash-for-car schemes, or use their own vehicles for business, could be at an increased risk of breakdown by failing to complete basic checks on their vehicles.'

Reacting to the problem, the AA has urged fleets to remind drivers of the issues and has created a number of podcasts demonstrating how to do simple tasks, which fleet managers can forward to colleagues.

They can be found at

[www.theaapodcasts.com](http://www.theaapodcasts.com)

### AA podcasts

- Changing a wheel
- Checking the oil level
- Checking coolant
- Checking windscreen wipers
- Packing a vehicle safely
- Preparing for a journey
- Driving in Europe

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### Vehicle 'logos'

Have you ever wondered where your car logo came from? What is the story behind the design? Here is a small selection of the more well known 'badges'.

I'll include some more in the next newsletter.



The BMW roundel is a stylised, rotating airscrew (aircraft propeller) - the white prop and the blue representing the sky. BMW (*Bayerische Motoren Werke*) built military aero engines for the planes used by the German Air Force during World War II.



### ALFA ROMEO

Are the Red Cross and crowned serpent devouring a human figure a warning to Alfa Sud owners who might complain about their front wings falling off? No, the symbols are the coat-of-arms of the city of Milan and related to the Crusades, hence the cross. The figure being eaten is a child or a Saracen, depending on who you listen to.



### LAMBORGHINI

Lamborghini's logo is quite simple to decode...it's a charging bull! You see, Mr. Lamborghini himself loved bull fighting; this is shown not only by his logo but by the names of the cars...almost all Lamborghini car names have had some connection to bull fighting, be it a particular bull or a breed.

## Animal fat to be turned into diesel

American oil company ConocoPhillips and Tyson Foods, the world's biggest meat producer, have announced that they will produce diesel from pork fat.

Cows and chickens will also be transformed to power motor vehicles.

The companies say that this renewable source of energy will be cleaner than conventional diesel. It is hoped that it will be available at petrol stations by the end of the year.

"It is chemically equivalent to diesel itself," said Geoff Webster, who is managing the scheme for Tyson Foods, in an interview with the BBC World Service.

"It has lower carbon dioxide, it is zero sulphur, so many positive benefits for the environment."

ConocoPhillips expects to produce 175 million gallons of animal diesel a year and hopes to start mass production in 2009. That will add another 15,000 barrels of diesel a day, which amounts to about 3% of the company's total diesel output.

Tyson Foods made clear that it would not be processing animals simply to get the fat to turn into diesel. The fat will only be sent as a by-product of meat-production.

Tyson Foods and ConocoPhillips have yet to discuss the issue of animal diesel with vegetarian, religious or animal rights groups.

When the diesel is eventually produced, it will be pumped into a network and mixed with other types of diesel, making it impossible to tell at the pump whether the diesel is made from animal fat or not.

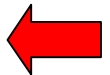
The company expects to spend approximately \$100 million (£50m) over several years on the project.

"A recent report published by the United Nations concludes that the meat industry is responsible for more global warming emissions than all the cars, trucks and planes in the world combined."

"Clearly, the answer to global warming isn't to fill gas guzzling cars with ground up remains of tortured animals, it is to go vegetarian, which is something every person can afford to do and should do for the sake of their own health, animals and the environment," said animal rights group PETA.

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## Members Social Evening



### Fire Service Driver Training

Rick Kenworthy ( ADI / Response Driving Instructor / Examiner and Driving Instructor) from Greater Manchester Fire and Rescue Service is coming to give us a talk on driver training. I am sure it will be a very interesting and informative evening.

All members are more than welcome to attend at The Plough and Harrow Shevington on Tuesday 12th June for a 7.30 start.

Gary Whittaker

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## IAM Factsheet 13/001

### THE SCHOOL RUN

Many children are injured close to their home on residential roads. Over 70 per cent of drivers break the speed limit on these roads - and many of those drivers are parents. The "school run" brings with it a 20 per cent growth in rush hour traffic and as a result, a greater risk to pedestrians. But the IAM and other experts such as the AA say that realistically the school run is here to stay until cultural attitudes change and key barriers are removed. This advice has been prepared by the IAM to make the "school run" safer.

- Avoid taking the car if you can. Walking, cycling and public transport are all better options, not only for children, but also the environment. Children cycling to school should be proficient and wear a helmet, with bright, all-weather clothing.

- If you have to drive, offer to car share with other parents and take it in turns rather than add to congestion around schools. When you have an informal arrangement, set an example by attending a defensive driving course such as that offered by the IAM.

- Allow plenty of time for the journey. Crashes cause delay and are normally caused by drivers going too fast and driving too close to the car in front. Leave five minutes earlier to reduce stress.

- Drive well within the speed limit. Maintain a sensible safety gap - remember the "two second rule". At 35mph you are twice as likely to kill someone as you are at 30mph. Yet within the car, this feels hardly any different. The school approach presents many hazards – including children not concentrating fully as they cross the road.

- Park considerately and safely. Never double park, block driveways or simply rely on the footbrake to keep the vehicle still as children climb out of the car. Consider parking 100 yards or so away from the school gate and completing your journey on foot. This gives you an opportunity to teach children about using the road and reduces congestion at the school gate itself.

- Never stop on the yellow "zig zags" by the school gate, even briefly. Always ensure you let the children out on the pavement side (or if

there is no pavement, the side away from the traffic).

- Do not drive on the pavement in an attempt to allow oncoming vehicles to pass. Wait until the way ahead is clear rather than risk injuring a pedestrian.

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## 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](http://www.wiganadvancedmotorists.org.uk)

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