

# ARE WE THERE YET?

Mid Yorkshire Advanced Motorists Newsletter

August 2020

Group Number 4178

Registered Charity Number 1053843

**iam**  
RoadSmart





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### **Cover Photo – RHS Gardens at Harlow Carr**

With Covid-19 restrictions being slowly lifted David Rockliff visited the RHS gardens at Harlow Carr near Harrogate and took the cover picture. Not all of the facilities are currently available, however it's a sign that, to quote the song, things are getting better.

## **Forthcoming Gatherings and Events**

### **MEETINGS CANCELLED**

Because of the current Covid-19 situation the committee is following government guidelines and has cancelled the Skill check meetings, the social meetings and the committee meetings at the Carlton Club. We will be reviewing the situation regularly and hope to resume the regular meetings as soon as possible following the review.

The audited accounts and reports are ready and will be presented to the members as soon as possible following the review. The AGM has been provisionally rescheduled to October 5<sup>th</sup> and we are aiming to publish the AGM agenda and the 2019 AGM minutes in the September newsletter.

The rescheduling of the AGM will not affect the 2021 AGM which will be held, circumstances permitting, in May 2021.

We will inform members of the resumption of the social and skill check meetings via the newsletter, and our Facebook and website pages.

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### **MOT Testing**

IAM RoadSmart has welcomed the Government's announcement that mandatory MOT testing is being reintroduced from 1 August 2020. Due to the COVID-19 outbreak, drivers were granted a six month exemption from MOT testing in March. However, as restrictions are eased, all drivers whose car, motorcycle or van is due for a MOT test from 1 August will be required to get a test certificate to continue driving their vehicle. Drivers with a MOT due date before 1 August will still receive a six month exemption from testing.

Commenting on the announcement to the media, Neil Greig, Director of Policy & Research, said: "A clean bill of health given by a MOT station is a good starting point for regular safety checks. If your MOT is overdue, it is your responsibility to ensure your vehicle is fit to be driven. Misplaced confidence in the roadworthiness of your vehicle could cost lives."

## From the Editor

Following last month's newsletter I've had several replies commenting on some of the articles and contributions for future issues, so many that I'm having to hold one back until next month. I'm not complaining so keep the contributions coming.

I always try to plan an issue or two ahead for the front cover and possible articles. It's surprising how a chance sighting can trigger a train of thought resulting in another item for the newsletter. Of course not all the ideas are suitable! I have a couple of ideas in preparation one of which will be featuring in next month's issue and I think it will be of interest to many of our members especially those with an interest in classic cars. This is in addition to publishing the 2019 AGM minutes so it could be a bumper issue.

How are you coping with the lockdown? Have you found new interests or revived old long forgotten interests? I've been taking the opportunity, like many people, to attempt to get rid of some of the accumulated "junk". In spite of many trips to the tip I've only made small inroads into the task. It doesn't help that there are so many interruptions as detailed in the latest part of the lockdown diary. I have a task list but it keeps getting longer! At least with restrictions being eased we can start planning visits and even thinking about holidays.

The committee is continuing to hold our monthly meeting by video conferencing and despite a few technical problems it works well, in fact we may hold some of our meetings in this way after the current situation has ended. We are continuing to monitor the situation but we cannot resume our social meetings and face to face committee meetings until the Carlton Club is fully open.

In the meantime keep safe and drive safely.

### Keith

Will any Member wishing to have an item, article or picture included in the newsletter please submit it to the editor no later than the 15th of the month, these may be edited to save space. Thank you.

## GROUP MEMBERSHIP NEWS

# Welcome to the Group

New Associates

James Tuke

# Congratulations

On passing the Advanced Test

No tests this month.

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## **Observed Runs and Skill Check Sessions still on hold**

You may have seen in the IAM RoadSmart Membership e-mail sent on 10th July that they issued a statement advising that Advanced Driver coaching will start again on Monday 20th July.

The MYAM Committee discussed this at length during the last Committee Meeting and came to a decision that we, as a Group, will not be restarting in car Observed runs at this time. We feel that the risks are still too great to our Associates, Members and Observers.

We are continuously monitoring the situation and will discuss any changes before any decision to restart is taken.

We too are really looking forward to returning to Observing but I hope you agree with this stance and that it has been taken with everyone's best interest and safety in mind.

**David Rushfirth – Chief Observer**

# MYAM Online



**WEB SITE** Our website is packed full of information and is the go to place for everything you need to know about our events, courses, meetings and news about us as a Group. How about copies of the newsletter going back a few years.

Need to know who the Committee are or see our Observer team? We are all on there.

See us at [www.iamroadsmart.com/groups/midyorkshire](http://www.iamroadsmart.com/groups/midyorkshire)

We are adding to the content all the time so keep dropping in to see what we are doing.



**FACEBOOK** provides details of events and local news. Go and visit [www.facebook.com/midyorkshireiam](http://www.facebook.com/midyorkshireiam) and like our page.

How about inviting a few of your Facebook friends to like our page too. It helps getting our name out there.

**The Group Telephone number is 0113 314 9969**

## **Data Protection – Privacy Notice (GDPR)**

Mid Yorkshire Advanced Motorists (MYAM) is committed to looking after the information that it holds on behalf of its members in a way that complies with the General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR).

MYAM has a legitimate interest in keeping sufficient personal information to communicate with its members and other local people with an interest in road safety, and to permit the renewal of subscriptions. A member can ask to see a copy of their personal information, correct any errors and ask for all or part of it to be deleted.

MYAM is affiliated to the Institute of Advanced Motorists (IAM) and will use a member's information to support them if and when they are assessed by IAM. MYAM will also ensure that any data shared with IAM is accurate. We will not share your details with anybody else.



## The Depot Cat and the Stolen Fuel

The Wick depot of Scotland and Highland Omnibuses had a rather fat cat. He had his own bed in the depot controller's office and was very well looked after. After the Dounreay Day Workers buses came in the garage in the early evening the garage was closed up until around 2230 when the two night shift buses went out. The depot staff were instructed that before they closed the garage the cat was to be put in the controller's office with food and not left outside.

One night the Depot Transport Supervisor on the way back from a meeting in Inverness, rather than taking the direct route to Thurso, decided to go the long way round by Wick.

On arrival at Wick garage he was surprised to see the cat sitting outside the garage.

His first reaction was annoyance that someone had gone home and left the cat outside. He swept the cat up and unlocked the door only to find a rather startled driver filling up fuel cans. There had been a fuel theft issue for some time and the employee was caught red handed.

If the cat had not been outside then he would not have caught the thief. One of the depot staff was instructed by the Managing Director to purchase a steak for the cat as a reward!

### Graham Crawshaw



**All the latest transport technology here.  
A Penny Farthing seen at the Beamish Museum.**



## Lockdown Diary part 4

The best laid plans of mice and men often go awry, very true. One weekend in June I'd planned various things to do during the following week but it was not to be.

Monday lunchtime turn on the TV to watch Countdown, the red light turns green then starts flashing red, switch it off and back on, the same. Looks like the TV is b\*\*\*\*\*d. Watch Countdown on the small TV upstairs then start looking for a replacement. It's not as easy as you might think as TVs have changed over the last 10 years, they are now all "smart" and some of the features on the old one which we use regularly have been removed from most of the latest sets. Our old TV had the provision to connect a USB hard drive which allows us to record programmes and pause live TV. Very few of the new TVs have this feature but eventually find one with this feature and it's available locally so ring up and arrange to pick it up. It seems that every man and his dog are out driving so it takes ages to get to the retailer to pick up the TV.

Next problem is setting up the TV. It's not the usual set up as it has to be wall mounted and there are a lot of connections to make. Get it set up so Caroline can watch Eastenders and decide to do a proper installation tomorrow.

Tuesday morning take down all the old connections to the TV, refit them to suit the new TV and check it's all working. Now to set up the TV how I like it. The supplied manual is a bit Mickey Mouse but there is a more detailed manual on the internet. Get it set up then go down to take Caroline's parents dog for a walk. On the way back get a call from our daughter, the tyre pressure warning light has come on and there's a funny noise. Looks like a puncture. Arrange to go over later to check it out.

Yes the tyre has a puncture. Fortunately there is a spare, a skinny wheel, but it's still a spare wheel. Fit the wheel and put the old wheel in my boot to get it replaced. She's only had the car for 4 months but when she bought it accepted their "offer" of tyre and wheel insurance so the cost of the replacement tyre should be covered.

Wednesday, ring round the tyre dealers suggested by the insurance company and decide on one with a tyre in stock. Drive down to get it changed. The tyre is replaced and the necessary forms are filled in but the insurance company requires that the tyre is kept for 28 days for possible inspection but the tyre place do not do that. Decide to take the tyre home and store it in our garage. Get home and finish filling out all the forms and send them off. Daughter comes round and the wheel is refitted.

On the way to get the tyre replaced I notice our local tip is now open. Great news as we've got three large bags of garden waste to get rid of. Make a note to visit the tip tomorrow.

Thursday and four trips to the tip later we are ready to start refilling the waste bags.

Friday, mow the lawns and start trimming the hedges but the ancient hedge trimmer has other ideas and part way through the trimming starts emitting smoke and stops working. Decide that the easy option is to get a replacement as I've had to repair it several times in the past.

It's turning out to be an expensive week as we now have a new hedge trimmer as well as the TV but at least we can get rid of the hedge clippings and the other waste.

Decide to start clearing up the garage so sort out all the odd bits of wood I've accumulated over the years and make a pile to take to the tip. The rest gets put away but in a more orderly fashion. Then it's sorting out all the other stuff so I can actually use the work bench. There must be better ways to keep busy!

Our daughter has now received a cheque to cover the replacement tyre so I can now dispose of the old one. Anyone fancy a tyre shaped planter? Quick update as the old tyre is now no longer available as the tyre retailer that replaced it actually took the old one back for disposal.

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## **The Other Plague**

There's no getting away from the bombardment with news about the plague. That plague, the one from China. Wherever you turn there is an opinion, an opposing opinion, a different opinion, an argument over who holds the correct opinion. You know what I mean. And we have until quite recently been expected to confine ourselves to barracks with no escape from it.

However, there's another plague that is rarely mentioned. And if it is, it is to argue over ways to promote it, not stop it. I mean cycling. It is patently obvious to those of us who have been driving during the lockdown, for legitimate reasons of course, that there are more cyclists on the road than there were. It was one way of taking your daily exercise and the weather has been pretty favourable to cyclists throughout the spring. People have had more potential leisure time too, so in many ways it is hardly surprising that we see more cyclists. That said, you will be familiar with the observation you are liable to make that seems correct but actually is not. With cyclists, I have the distinct impression that I always come up behind one struggling uphill at 12 mph on a twisty road with solid double white lines for the next mile and a half. Probably not true but it seems like it is. It's your call if you

choose to overtake a cyclist in such circumstances, but remember it would most likely be illegal or risky or both.

Yet the mention of an overtake points to the opportunities cyclists provide to hone your overtaking skills. They make ideal targets, not to be hit, I hasten to add, but for an overtake. Generally they will leave you an adequate margin to do it within the speed limit, which implies you may not need a massive length of clear road to overtake safely. So look upon the plague of cyclists as an opportunity to hone your skills while you can. Remember to look to the furthest point of distance as every new road vista opens before you, and mark any pedal pushing people you see. Plan early; you will usually have a better view of the road ahead than if you were planning to pass a motor vehicle, whatever its size. Cyclists do not present such a visual obstruction. Adjust your speed early, so that any oncoming traffic will have cleared the cyclist before you close up, thereby allowing you to go through the standard procedure. Timing is everything. Move out without accelerating, check finally that the road is clear then accelerate quickly past on the opposite side of the road, affording the cyclist maximum room. Look at the height of a cyclist, and imagine that height falling horizontally across the road in front of you, and there you see the space you should give. Enough to allow him to fall off and still not get hit! Except by the road.

You will meet the troublesome ones, three abreast, or a bunch occupying as much road as a decent sized truck. Those who are absolutely impervious to the following vehicle and regard the entire road as their domain. It merely requires a bit more patience and planning, but it still provides you with an opportunity that is valuable in today's road conditions. The chance to complete an overtake safely and entirely within the law is never that common these days.

Just remember not to push it too far, overtake too closely, or otherwise frighten anyone on a bike. Remember they are rather delicate. And remember too that the old chestnut has recently resurfaced from the cycling community that in any accident involving a car and a cyclist the driver should always be held responsible, choose what the cyclist does and however unwise it may be. One fervently hopes that our legislators will not fall for that one!

## **Mallard**

I have to be careful what I say here as my brother is a keen cyclist but I'm sure we've all seen examples of cyclists behaving badly. Many seem to be youngsters who try to perform "wheelies" while wavering all over the road oblivious to any traffic around them. It is perhaps one incentive to fit a dashcam to prove, one way or another, who is responsible for the accident.

Just another thought, shouldn't all users of the public highway have to have insurance. Motorists have to be insured but should it be extended to cyclists, horse riders etc. Perhaps insurance could be optional but encouraged for those classes of road users. What do you think?

Ed



**Where's the Bison? Spotted by Les Plumb**

## **Fuel Consumption**

Following on from last month's item on petrol prices I received an email about an app for Android phones called Fuelio. This allows you to enter details of fuel amount and cost every time you fill up and it will calculate your fuel consumption and costs. You can also use it for service reminders and other expenses. If you wish to try it, Google Fuelio.

When I bought my first car back in 1975 I started keeping a record of the fuel consumption by recording the mileage and amount of fuel at each fill up. I then used my newly acquired calculator to work out the fuel consumption for each trip and the overall fuel consumption. This was a little time consuming but when I got a PC with Excel I set up a spreadsheet to do the same job. I also added the price paid which allowed me to calculate the overall fuel costs, price per mile, trip mpg, overall mpg etc.

One interesting thing about fuel consumption is that it varies significantly with journey type, the time of year and many other factors. No way is it constant. If you track your fuel consumption you'll find it is higher in the winter (lower mpg), improving over the summer. Long journeys are better than short, hardly surprising, and fuel consumption is higher in hilly areas, such as Yorkshire compared to comparatively flat areas, eg Leicestershire. (Well that's been my experience)

Keith

# Cycle lane road signs and markings – Tips from IAM RoadSmart

Do you know your solid white line cycle lane from your broken white line cycle lane?

New powers have been granted to local councils to enforce cycle lanes – but do you know your road markings? Ignorance of the law is no defence, so with new bicycle facilities popping up all over our towns and cities at the moment, as cycling is encouraged to ease pressure on public transport during the Coronavirus pandemic, it is now more important than ever to know where and when you can park.

Cars or motorcycles illegally parked on mandatory cycle lanes can force cyclists to deviate from their path and put them at risk of conflict with passing vehicles. From today (22 June 2020) councils can use CCTV vans to record offences. There will always be a right of appeal if signage is unclear or mistakes have been made, but that can be a time-consuming hassle with no guarantee of success.

Neil Greig, IAM RoadSmart's Director of Policy and Research, therefore has these top tips to help brush up your knowledge and ensure you know the rules of the road around cycle lanes and where you are allowed to park:

- Dust off your Highway Code and Know Your Traffic Signs knowledge. You can view both online to make sure you're familiar with road signs and markings and what they mean.
- Rule 140 of the Highway Code is the main one for cycle lane advice. It states: "You **must not** drive or park in a cycle lane marked by a solid white line during its times of operation. Do not drive or park in a cycle lane marked by a broken white line unless it is unavoidable. You **must not** park in any cycle lane whilst waiting restrictions apply."
- When it comes to a cycle lane marked with broken white lines, use common sense in relation to the term 'unavoidable'. While you should not normally cross them, there may be occasions when the confines of space or the nature of traffic dictate it as unavoidable.

- It is your responsibility as a driver to check signage on street lights or poles to find out exactly what the parking restrictions are and the hours of operation of the cycle lane. These may have changed since you last visited your town centre. Even if a cycle lane looks temporary, if it has a solid white line it will be mandatory and the parking and stopping advice will apply.
- You can ‘pick up and set down passengers’ but that means you must never leave your vehicle unattended or stay too long. Loading information will be on plates or on kerb markings. If in doubt park or load somewhere else.
- With the introduction of pop-up cycle lanes and other initiatives to promote walking and cycling and keep public transport use to a minimum, check before you head out on the roads. Your local roads may be familiar to you, but they may have changed since you last ventured out on them.

Neil added: “Watch out for more cyclists than before on our roads. They have no airbags, crumple zones or seatbelts to protect them. Treat them the way you would want to be treated. It is important to give people the space - at least 1.5m - they need to use the road. At this time you should also expect a wider range of ages and abilities as more people try it out for the first time to avoid public transport.”

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## An Amazing Internet Coincidence

One of our neighbours, Steve, recently had a significant birthday and to celebrate we held a socially distanced party in our cul-de-sac. As part of the celebration another of our neighbours, Elaine, baked a cake. Now Steve has a classic car, an Austin Metropolitan which featured on the September 2018 newsletter front cover, so Elaine wanted a picture of a Metropolitan on the cake.

There are companies who can produce edible transfers so she contacted one who sourced a picture from the internet. When the cake was shown to Steve’s wife she noticed that not only was the picture of a Metropolitan in the correct colour but it was actually a picture of Steve’s car. What are the chances of that happening?

Needless to say Steve was delighted and the cake went down very well with all the neighbours.



# And Finally.....

## Sorry Anglesey Full

During the lockdown period there has been much talk about closing down beaches and other attractions. This reminds me of an incident that happened in 1978 in North Wales. At the time the only way onto Anglesey, and on to the ferry terminal at Holyhead, was via Telford's suspension bridge across the Menai Straits. As you can imagine, especially if you have been there, this was a major bottleneck during the summer holiday season with traffic converging from the A5 from the Midlands, the A55 from Liverpool and the A487 from Caernarvon. This would cause tailbacks through Bangor and down the A55 and A5.

One bank holiday weekend the tailbacks were especially bad when a notice appeared on the A5 just outside Bangor saying "Sorry Anglesey Full". At first glance it looked official being black writing on a yellow background. It wasn't long before the news spread to Liverpool and was broadcast on their local radio stations. It then reached the BBC in London and was broadcast on Radio 2 and also appeared on the local TV. Understandably the Anglesey tourist board were not happy as they hadn't put up the notice.

What had actually happened was that one student had difficulty in getting home because of the traffic. (It was often said that the tourists got stuck on the main roads but the locals got stuck on the back roads. I had my own way of getting through Bangor at the time avoiding driving with the traffic trying to get to Holyhead) He was so incensed by this that he found a board, painted it yellow and stuck on the "Anglesey Full" message. The big giveaway was that in the corner of the notice was a small panda, the symbol of the Bangor Rag. It's amazing how far that one small action spread and how many people actually believed it!

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## This Month's Teaser

There are four limits for vehicles on the Menai suspension bridge. What are they?

## Last Month's Teaser

Last month I asked "Who was Don Mclean's song American Pie written about?" The answer is Buddy Holly. Congratulations to Graham Crawshaw who emailed me with the correct answer 2 hours after I sent out the newsletter.

## Your Committee

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Due to computer hacking and high levels of spamming we have had to remove the hyperlinks to our e-mail addresses and have replaced the @ symbol with (at) so you will need to retype the address in the correct e-mail format, i.e. replace (at) with @, with no spaces.

## URGENT REQUEST

**David Speight has taken on the role of Speaker Secretary but we still need a minutes secretary for our committee meetings. Please contact any member of the committee if you are interested this position.**