

ARE WE THERE YET?

Mid Yorkshire Advanced Motorists Newsletter

November 2022

iam
RoadSmart

Group Number 4178
Registered Charity Number 1053843





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Cover Photo – Coughton Court

Located south of Birmingham at Alcester, Coughton Court is the home of the Throckmorton Family. It is one of the last remaining Roman Catholic houses in the country to retain its historic treasures, housing one of the very best collections of portraits and memorabilia of one family from the early Tudor times. It also has strong connections to the gunpowder plot of 1605

Forthcoming Gatherings and Events

**Monday 7th
November
8pm**

MYAM Social Evening
The AEG Routemaster
Graham Crawshaw

Birkenshaw Liberal Club
10 Croft Street
Birkenshaw BD11 2HT

**Monday 5th
December
8pm**

MYAM Social Evening
Christmas Quiz, Raffle
and Buffet

Birkenshaw Liberal Club

Everyone is welcome at these events and they are an ideal opportunity to meet new people socially, find out about what is going on within the Group and listen to interesting talks on a variety of topics, sharing our skills with other serious drivers and keeping up-to-date on club and driving matters.

Christmas Meeting

For our Christmas meeting we will be having our usual quiz, raffle and buffet but in order to ensure we have enough food to go round we need to know how many people intend coming to the meeting.

We would also like to extend the invitation to friends and family who will be most welcome to participate but we would appreciate letting us know the names of those attending.

Therefore if you intend attending the meeting can you let Janice, or myself, know who is coming by Friday 18th November at the email addresses on page 16.

As usual I'll be the quiz master and at the time of writing the quiz is complete. In fact I have enough questions left over for next year's quiz. There will be some interesting questions and I hope there will be some that my son David doesn't know!

From the Editor

It's that time of year again, the time when fog descends and reduces visibility. As I take our grandson to nursery I have the opportunity to see how other drivers react to fog.

I have my fog lights, both front and rear, switched on in these circumstances but how many other drivers do the same? Many cars have front fog lights fitted as standard these days and rear fog lights have been a legal requirement since 1980 but many drivers do not appear to know how to use them.

The most common situation appears to be front fog lights on but no rear fog light. Occasionally, with a glance in the door mirror, I can see a car that actually has its rear fog light on but this is only a small percentage. And occasionally there is the car with no lights on at all – what was the driver thinking?

One reason may be to do with the way fog lights are switched on. On previous cars I've owned that were fitted with front fog lights, the front and rear lights had separate switches meaning having to remember to operate both switches. More recent cars have had a single switch switching first the front fog lights and second the rear fog light. This seems wrong to me as surely it is more important to have the rear light on in fog so that drivers behind you can see you. If the main lights were switched in a similar manner you'd have just the headlights on without the side/tail lights until the switch was put into the second position. Is there some construction and use regulation that dictates that fog lights must be switched this way?

Keith

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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.

Disclaimer

The items contained in this newsletter are the views of the Members who contribute and not necessarily the views of the Institute of Advanced Motorists (I.A.M.) or MYAM.

GROUP MEMBERSHIP NEWS

Welcome to the Group

No new members this month

Congratulations

On passing the Advanced Test

Nathan Towler - Observer Chris Tomes



A picture to brighten your day - the garden at Brodsworth Hall

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

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 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.



TWITTER We have our own Twitter account which can be found at twitter.com/MYAM4178

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.

Directions to the Birkenshaw Liberal Club

10 Croft Street, Birkenshaw, Bradford, BD11 2HT



From the M62 West leave at Junction 26 and take the A58 towards Leeds. At the second roundabout turn left into Bradford Road (A651) after about 700yds by the George pub, turn right into Town Street. Croft Street is approximately 60yds from the junction (top photo left) but to avoid the potholes carry on up Town Street and turn right into Old Lane. After approximately 100yds turn right into Croft Street (middle picture left between the car and the house next to it).



From Bradford follow the A650. Turn right onto the A651 at the traffic lights just before Tong Academy. Then just after the George pub turn left into Town Street and follow the previous directions.



From the M62 junction 27, take the A650. Turn left onto the A58. After approximately ½ mile turn right into Old Lane After approximately 550yds turn left into Croft Street (bottom picture left).

There is a large car park and the entrance is down the right hand side of the club as shown in the top picture.

Our meetings are held in the function room.

October Meeting - Electric Cars

Unfortunately our speaker for the October social meeting had been double booked and was unable to attend but instead we had an impromptu discussion about the practicalities of electric cars.

Bob showed us extracts from a Channel 4 Dispatches programme, first broadcast last year, plus a video on chargers. Both showed up many of the problems associated with charging an electric car.

It has been said that one worry about running an electric car is range anxiety but that is not necessarily the case as a greater problem would appear to be finding a compatible and working charger especially away from home. The two videos indicated that many of the chargers were either not working or would not accept the payment cards and apps that are intended to direct you to a charger do not necessarily have up to date information. One charger was reported as working but was in fact not working as it was offline. All the chargers need to be connected to the internet so that payments can be made. The irony of the offline charger was that it needed to be online to indicate that it was offline. A genuine Catch 22 situation!

Other problems with the charging stations were that often the car had to be positioned correctly to be able to insert the connector in the car. This often meant reversing into the charging point but if you were towing a trailer or caravan then most charging points were inaccessible unless you unhitched the trailer or caravan. Very practical.

Then there was the time to charge which can take an hour or more. What do you do while you are waiting? Have a cup of coffee? On a long journey you'd have to stop several times and there's only so much coffee you can drink while waiting. Another issue is turning up to a charging point to find that it's already occupied, meaning waiting until the car in front has finished charging. There are stories of people being fined for overstaying their time in car parks because of having to wait for a charger.

Charging points vary in their charging rate some offer ultrafast charging but the battery has to be designed to take a high rate of charge. There is also a lot of heat given off

when charging and the higher the charge rate the more heat is given off. That's simple physics. Many battery packs have fans in them to keep them cool.

One point that's not always realised is that Lithium batteries should only be charged at a high rate up to 80% of their capacity once that point is reached the charge rate slows down. They can be charged to 100% capacity but it is not recommended. If you are going on a long journey immediately after charging to 100% it would probably be OK but normally they should only be charged to 80% capacity. Charging at a high rate above 80% can affect the battery life.

Battery capacity also varies with temperature. In winter the capacity, hence the range is lower and also in winter you tend to have the heating on. In a petrol or diesel car the heating is effectively a by-product of the combustion process but in an electric car any heating has to come from the energy in the battery. There are systems that can pre heat your car if you are charging at home but what if you are away from home and miles from a suitable charging point?

Charging at home is another issue. We have to remember that the electricity distribution system dates from the 1930s when the National Grid came into being. No one could foresee the need to charge cars back then. Much of the distribution system is unsuitable for mass charging i.e. when everyone gets home and plugs their cars in and expects them to be charged by the morning. There are many instances of people being refused charging points at home because the local distribution is close to its maximum capacity.

Additionally where is the electricity to charge all these cars going to come from. Currently there are around 32 million vehicles in the UK of which around half a million are electric. If this number rises to, say, 10 million in the future how much power will be needed. A rough estimate with each car being charged by a 7.5kW charger (that's roughly the same as the electric shower we had in our last house) that's 75GW needed. If only around half were on charge that's still around 38GW needed which is roughly what the grid currently provides. So a doubling of generation capacity will be needed. In winter it will be worse, minimum solar input, everyone having their heating on (heat pumps of course if the government has their way) so what happens – power cuts, cold houses and frustrated drivers unable to get to work.

What happens to the used batteries when cars are either scrapped or have their batteries replaced (highly unlikely due to the cost of replacement batteries unless under warranty). One proposal is to use them to store surplus electricity. Fine but will

there be any surplus electricity available to store. Also a typical battery storage facility only stores around 75MWh. Compare this to the pump storage system at Dinorwic in North Wales which pumps water up to a top lake during times of surplus power and uses it to generate electricity during times of high demand. This can provide around 7200MWh.

What happens to all the other batteries that are unsuitable for these storage systems or have been damaged in accidents or taken out of cars that have been scrapped because the battery has failed and the replacement cost is more than the car is worth. These must be recycled otherwise we will be leaving a legacy of piles of scrap batteries for future generations.

One further issue to consider is the question of the weight of vehicles. Cars have been getting heavier over the years partly due to increasing legislation requiring the fitting of items to improve the safety of vehicles plus the manufacturers are fitting more “convenience” items such as electric windows. All these add weight to the car.

Your normal driving licence covers you to drive vehicles weighing up to 3,500kg (3.5 tons in old money). This includes the weight of the vehicle plus the contents (passengers and luggage etc.). However many of the more upmarket vehicles have weights close to 2,700kg. If any of these vehicles has a full load of passengers and their luggage it could push the weight above the limit making your driving licence invalid. To drive it legally you would need an HGV licence! This applies to both electric and ICE vehicles

To be honest I doubt if many of us could afford £145,000 for a BMW XM or £170,000 for a Mercedes Maybach GLS600 but it’s something to think about especially as batteries for electric cars can weigh 500kg (half a ton) or more.

A report from one of the breakdown services last year stated that most of the breakdowns for electric vehicles were not due to battery issues but tyre and suspension failures due to the weight of the vehicles. As they are heavier they can also cause greater wear on the roads. How will the roads be maintained if the majority of vehicles are electric? They will have to be taxed at some point.

I’ve mentioned many of these issues before and although it may seem I’m against electric cars, they are fine but the supporting infrastructure is letting them down. It appears that the government have made decisions without realising the full implications of those decisions and leaving it for “the market” to decide is turning out to be a poor choice.

Tips For Tyre Safety Month

If your tyres don't stop you, what will?

As part of this year's Tyre Safety Month campaign, motorists are being urged to consider the risks involved in inadequate safety checks on their vehicle's tyres and the potentially fatal consequences if they need to stop in an emergency.

This month, we are supporting [TyreSafe](#) and their annual campaign to remind motorists of the benefits and importance of tyre safety checks. But also, to consider the literal message 'If your tyres don't stop you, what will?' As the only point of contact between your vehicle and the road, tyre safety is crucial for safe and effective braking.

Protect yourself and your passengers by ensuring that all the tyres on your vehicles are fit for purpose before embarking on your journey.

Tyre Safety Facts

- 1 in 5 motorists have NEVER checked their tyres.
- 1 in 4 vehicles on the road have illegal tyres.
- 2.2 million+ MOT failures are due to tyre defects annually.
- 15,000+ tyre-related convictions in the past 3 years.
- £600m-£1B wasted in unnecessary fuel due to underinflation.
- 153 people were killed or seriously injured due to defective tyres.

Essential routine tyre checks

1. Tyre Pressure

Make sure all tyres have the correct pressure. This information can be found in the vehicle handbook, and often on the inside of the fuel filler cap or driver's door sill. Failing that, a quick online search of the vehicle's make, model and year will do the trick.

Check the correct tyre pressure for your vehicle on the Tyre Safe website. Simply enter your registration! Click [here](#).

Did you know?

Under-inflated tyres can provide up to 50% less contact with the road.

This can result in reduced vehicle control. Low pressure also reduces the lifespan of your tyres

and uses more fuel. Over-inflated tyres can result in similar outcomes. Although they may use less fuel.

2. Tyre Tread

Ensure that your tyre's tread depth is at least 1.6mm for a car. We recommend 3mm for consistent wet weather performance. This must be across the central $\frac{3}{4}$ around the whole circumference.

For motorcycles over 50cc, 1mm across $\frac{3}{4}$ of the width of the tread pattern and with visible tread on the remaining $\frac{1}{4}$. For bikes under 50cc, all the grooves from the original tread pattern must be clearly visible.

Hint!

Place a 20p coin into the main tread grooves in at least three locations around each tyre. If the outer band of the coin is still visible, the tyres may be under the 1.6mm legal minimum.

3. Tyre Condition

Vehicle tyres will drive over their fair share of glass, stones, and other roadside debris. So it's important to check them for any punctures, cracks or bulges as these are strong indicators of tyre damage.

If there are any irregularities, then the tyre should be checked by a professional and repaired if needed. In some cases, the tyre may still need to be replaced even if the tread depth is still within the legal limit. Additionally, remember to check the age of your tyres. Most manufacturers will recommend that a tyre more than 10 years old should be replaced.

4. Vehicle Overloading

Overloading a vehicle can cause excessive heat and wear on the tyres. It is essential to ensure that the vehicle's overall weight does not exceed its Gross Vehicle Weight (GVW) Rating. This can be found on the VIN plate or on the inside of a door frame.

The excessive heat and wear on a vehicle's tyres will compromise the handling and could lead to a blowout. Not only putting the driver/rider at risk, but their passengers and other road users in danger too. Not to mention the potential for fines, penalty points and even prison sentences in more serious cases.

Check Tyres, Save Money

Are you confident that all the necessary tyre safety checks have been made on your vehicle?

By ensuring tyre safety, you are helping to keep yourself, your passengers, and all other road users safe. With the current concerns around the cost of living, you can save yourself money by ensuring that your vehicle is regularly maintained, and any wear and tear is addressed.

If you feel unsure about your routine tyre safety checks or safe driving/riding practices, IAM RoadSmart is here to help. Our courses and approach to safe motoring prepare drivers and riders to be conscious of their actions while driving.

This includes spatial awareness and stopping distances. Especially when travelling in adverse road conditions coming into the winter months. Our Advanced Driver and Rider courses help drivers to become more vigilant.

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Letter to the Editor



Much as I enjoyed our Editor's grumblings about his local temporary traffic lights, signs and road cones, it must be remembered that there are two sides to every story. The lights and cones are there to protect the people doing the work and create a safe area for their vehicles and equipment.

Another thing to think about is the safety of the people installing the signs and cones. The most risky part of the operation is setting up the 'temporary traffic management system' and removing it when the work has been completed. Over the years, this has become something that is best done when traffic is quieter – before and after the rush to or from work and school.

Sadly, drivers kill and injure road workers from time to time – and that includes the people working on the large motorway maintenance vehicles fitted with lots of high powered flashing lights and crash cushions. Thankfully, fatalities have become much less frequent than once was the case. However, National Highways records for the trunk road and motorway network show 395 'near miss' events and 43 'lost time' accidents in 2021.

I have been on the other side of the cones from time to time over most of my 40+ years as a highway engineer. It is not always a comfortable place to be.

Please remember that the signs and cones are there for a reason – driver's injure (and sometimes kill) the people working hard to provide a safe road network for you to drive on.

Kind regards,

David Rockliffe

10 Car Features That Are Worthless... But Everybody Wants Them

This is based on another article I found via the internet. Manufacturers are fitting more and more features to cars but are they worth it? The 10 features mentioned are:-

Electronic Parking Brakes – Either manually activated or applied automatically when the car comes to a halt but adds further complexity and expense when it goes wrong.

Automatic Headlights – Senses the ambient light level and turns on the headlights when the detected level is low. (I have these and find they work well)

Keyless Entry – Allows entry and starting of the vehicle without the physical process of inserting the key into the ignition. However it also allows entry if the signal from the key can be detected, boosted and presented to the car. A boon for car thieves.

Paddles Shifters On Non Performance Models - Allows manual control of gear changes on automatic gear boxes.

Motorized Seat Belt Presenter – I've not heard of this on UK cars but it has been seen on some US cars. Once the door is shut it presents the belt to the occupant.

Rear Seat Entertainment – Screens in the back of the front head restraints to entertain the rear seat passengers. A bit pointless now as rear seat passengers can use their phones for entertainment.

Suicide Doors – The rear doors are hinged at the rear. Again I've not seen this on recent UK vehicles.

Head-up Display – Displays information such as speed on the windscreen.

Gesture Control – Uses hand gestures to control functions such as radio volume, but often causes frustration meaning reverting to more conventional methods of control.

Glass Gear Knob – Fitted to some models but why. What advantage does it have?

I'm sure we could list many features that are fitted to our cars but are rarely used. My last two cars have had voice control of some functions. It worked well on my previous car but doesn't work as well on my current car. I also have park assist but it's easier to manually park the car.

As a corollary to this are there any features that can be fitted that you would consider essential or very useful? One I have had on several cars and is, in my opinion, one of the best features is a heated windscreen. Also sat nav can be useful although I tend to ignore it at the start of a journey and only take notice of it closer to the destination especially in an unfamiliar area.

And Finally.....

A GUIDE TO PUTTING YOUR CLOCKS BACK

	SMARTPHONE Leave it alone, it does its magic		SUNDIAL Move one house to the left
	OVEN You'll need a Masters in Electronic Engineering or a hammer		CAR RADIO Not worth it, wait six months

Thanks to Bob Rowles for this advice!

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This Month's Teaser

Have you noticed the subtle change I've made to the newsletter. Hint look at the bottom of the pages.

Last Month's Teaser

Last month I asked "Who is the only person in the UK allowed to drive a vehicle without a registration number?"

And the answer is the reigning monarch.

Your Committee

Chairman	Janice Haigh		myam.chairman(at)outlook.com
Secretary	Paul Macro		myam.secretary(at)outlook.com
Treasurer	Rosie Bricis	07579 965029	myam.treasurer(at)outlook.com
Membership Secretary	Graham Crawshaw	0113 314 9969	myam.membership(at)outlook.com
Youth Liaison	Position vacant		
Speaker Secretary	Position vacant		
Events Manager	Alan Jones	07714 444595	alan.j909(at)btinternet.com
Website	Position vacant		myam.webmaster(at)outlook.com
Newsletter Editor	Keith Wevill	01274 815281	myam.newsletter(at)outlook.com
Chief Observer	Chris Marrison	07798 822935	myam.chiefobserver(at)outlook.com
GDPR Manager	David Rockliff		
Committee member	Bob Rowles		

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

We are in need of Speaker secretary and a Minutes secretary for our committee meetings and someone to look after the Website. Please contact any member of the committee if you are interested in any of these positions.