



# LAM BUNKER NEWS

Edition 9



## Back on the road again

When permitted we may be considering that motoring holiday abroad. As from January 1st there are some changes regarding taking your car abroad.

This from the Government website:

### **The rules for driving, passports, EHIC cards, pet travel and more may change from 1 January 2021.**

You need to take your Great Britain or Northern Ireland driving licence with you to drive abroad. Check yours is still valid and renew your driving licence online if it's expired or about to expire. You'll need to apply to renew your licence at least a week before you travel.

If you're taking your own vehicle, you also need to take your log book (V5C) and your insurance certificate. If you're taking a vehicle abroad that you've hired or leased in the UK, you'll need a VE103 certificate.

### **Check if you need an international driving permit (IDP)**

You might need an international driving permit (IDP) to drive in some non-EU countries. Check if you need an IDP. You can get IDPs over the counter at the Post Office. You might need one for each country you're visiting. Do not apply for an IDP if you're moving abroad. You'll need to either exchange your UK licence or apply for a new one in the country you're moving to.

### **Check the overseas driving rules**

Make sure you follow overseas driving rules, including local speed limits and drink driving laws. You may be breaking the law and get a fine if you do not.

Depending on the country you're visiting you may need:

- extra equipment - e.g. reflective jacket and a warning triangle in many countries
- emission stickers (permits) in some European cities - you may need to buy these weeks before you go abroad
- headlight converter stickers
- a GB sticker

If you're hiring a car, it's your responsibility to check you have the equipment you need.

- Check the rules in European countries on the AA website.
- Check the travel advice for countries outside Europe.

### **Check your insurance if you're taking your own vehicle**

Your UK vehicle insurance gives you a minimum of third party cover to drive your vehicle in EU countries. Check with your insurer if your policy covers extra things like theft or damage.

From 1 January 2021, you need to carry a physical copy of a 'green card' for the vehicle in which you are driving, in these countries:

**EU (including Ireland) Iceland. Serbia. Andorra. Norway. Liechtenstein. Switzerland.**

Grahame Ottewell

**WINTER TIP No 3: GETTING A GRIP**

At what outside temperature do your tyres start to lose their grip? Is it -1C, 1C, 3C? Many drivers are astonished to learn that the average tyre (and they are all different) starts to lose its grip at 7C. On my own car, I receive an ice warning on the display when the outside temperature drops to 4C. So beware! Specialist winter tyres will behave differently, and on some cars - particularly large heavy ones with rear wheel drive - winter tyres might be considered essential. But they will need to be changed with the seasons and the summer tyres stored.

JOHN WATSON, Chief Observer

**My First car - my favourite car**

Picture this... its 1973 and I'm 18 years old, listening to Slade / Status Quo / T Rex on the cassette player on the passenger seat, windows open so that all could catch the emitting cool music. I felt like the queen of the road in my 1958 grey Morris Minor with a large orange yogi bear sticker on the door.

Bought for £35, it had shiny reddish leather seats, split windscreen, dipped headlight button by my left foot and flick up indicators although I think it must have been converted in some way because the indicators also had flash lights.

It's just as well it was built like a tank because having not long passed my driving test, I often hit the gateposts as I backed out. I won't say that my driving was erratic during this time but I spend a great deal of money bribing my younger siblings not to tell my mother about the near misses whilst they were in the car.

It saw me though the last of my adolescent years and into serious work and it ferried me and my family on fun days out and holidays. It puffed its way up the Long Mynd, over the Yorkshire Moors and The Horseshoe Pass to our nearest seaside.

A few years later it began to fail and it would break down at the most inconvenient moments; one such occasion was right on the Welsh bridge in Shrewsbury during rush hour where I left it and ran off to find someone to help. It must have taken me a long time because the next day someone told me at work how far the queue had built up in the town before some people pushed it over the bridge themselves (that's over it, not off it, although I'm sure that's what they felt like doing!).

The gear box became the big problem and my brother in law taught me how to work the clutch and accelerator to get it into gear which I later understood was double de-clutching but it was no use, it had to go. It was bought by a local man who wanted to do it up so I would like to think that it still out there somewhere but probably unlikely.

It wasn't long after that I began to drive company cars right through until my retirement and by then I only had to consider my dog when choosing a car. None of them have been or will be remembered with the same affection as my old Morris Minor. R.I.P - PKF 354

Lynn Wittenberg

**Do you have a first car / favourite car you would like to share with us?**

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**WINTER TIP No. 4: STEER SAFELY**

As advanced drivers, we learn to steer smoothly and purposefully for maximum control. But how firmly do you grip the steering wheel? Many drivers tend to grip the wheel too tightly. (Yep, before training to be an advanced driver I was one of them.) It certainly IS vital to keep a firm grip of the wheel when driving through standing water, on very rough surfaces, or in very windy conditions. But in most conditions gripping the wheel too tightly can lead to jerky, poorly controlled steering. Many drivers become tense when driving in icy and snowy conditions, and grip the wheel even more tightly, making smooth steering impossible. And smooth steering is vital, particularly when the outside temperature has plummeted. Jerky steering can lead to a deadly skid. So be aware of how tightly you are gripping the wheel. And in winter conditions, advanced drivers always first ask themselves: "Is my journey really necessary? "

JOHN WATSON, Chief Observer

**Petrol prices rise for third straight month adding £2 to a fill up.**

The price of petrol shot up by 3.5p to 120p a litre in January – a price last seen the day before the first Covid-19 lockdown on 22 March 2020 and the third consecutive monthly increase, data from RAC Fuel Watch reveals. Diesel also went up by more than 3p a litre from 120.05p to 123.43p (3.38p), making for the second rise in as many months. Both fuels, however, are still around 7p a litre cheaper than they were a year ago.

At these prices a full 55-litre tank of unleaded will set drivers back £66 which is nearly £2 (£1.92) more than at the start of January. The diesel equivalent is £67.89 – up £1.86. Compared to the May 2020 low of 105.81p for petrol, a complete fill-up is now around £8 more expensive and diesel nearly £7 (111.23p a litre on 21 May 2020). The hike appears to have been led by the supermarkets which are extremely influential in retail fuel pricing, currently selling 60% of all fuel sold in the UK.

RAC fuel spokesman Simon Williams said: "Petrol car drivers have sadly seen three months of rising pump prices taking us back to a level last seen at the start of the first lockdown late last March and adding a couple of pounds to the cost of filling up.

"The increase stems from \$5 being added to price of a barrel of oil although this has been cushioned by the pound strengthening a little against the dollar. One thing's for sure prices are nowhere near the lows we saw in late May when petrol was just under 106p a litre and was diesel 111p. "These latest fuel prices unfortunately show the power of oil production cuts in getting the barrel price back up from the floor at \$13.21, when the impact of international travel restrictions first hit last April, to the \$55 mark now.

"Eyes will now be on the Chancellor who will face a difficult decision at his Budget next month as to whether to pile further misery on drivers by raising fuel duty at a time when pump prices are on this rise and many household incomes are being squeezed as a result of the pandemic."

**REMINDER** - we have arranged our first end of month online meeting for **Sunday 28th February 2021 at 10.00am** with a format close to that used at Fradley and the involvement of a guest speaker. We would like to welcome as many members as possible to these EOM meetings until such time as our Administration, support team and volunteers will be able to welcome you back to Fradley Village Hall.

See email dated 10th February or contact [lichfieldadvancedmotorists@gmail.com](mailto:lichfieldadvancedmotorists@gmail.com) for invite details.

**We would like to hear from you: If you have anything you would like to contribute to the Bulletin then please email to: [lamjohnwatson2020@gmail.com](mailto:lamjohnwatson2020@gmail.com)**