

NEWSLETTER

Autumn 2008



GUILDFORD & DISTRICT GROUP OF ADVANCED MOTORISTS

Registered Charity No. 1051069

www.guildford-iam.org.uk



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We do not pass your details on to anyone else.

Editor's Notes

Please note that the views and comments herein are published without prejudice, being those of the writers and not necessarily those of the Group or the IAM.

Copy date for the Winter Edition is Friday 21 December 2008

KEY DATES

Observed Sunday Runs 2008

16 November

14 December (Please note this is the second Sunday.)

Observed Sunday Runs 2009 (first 2 dates)

18 January

15 February

Committee Meetings - Ripley Small Hall

Thursday 6 November 2008

In 2009:

Wednesday 7 January

Thursday 5 March

Wednesday 6 May

Thursday 2 July

Wednesday 3 September

Thursday 4 November

Observers' Meeting - Ripley Large Hall (2009 Dates)

Saturday 14th February 2009 8.30am- 12.30pm

AGM and Open Meeting - Ripley Large Hall

Saturday 19th September 2009 8.30am- 12.30pm

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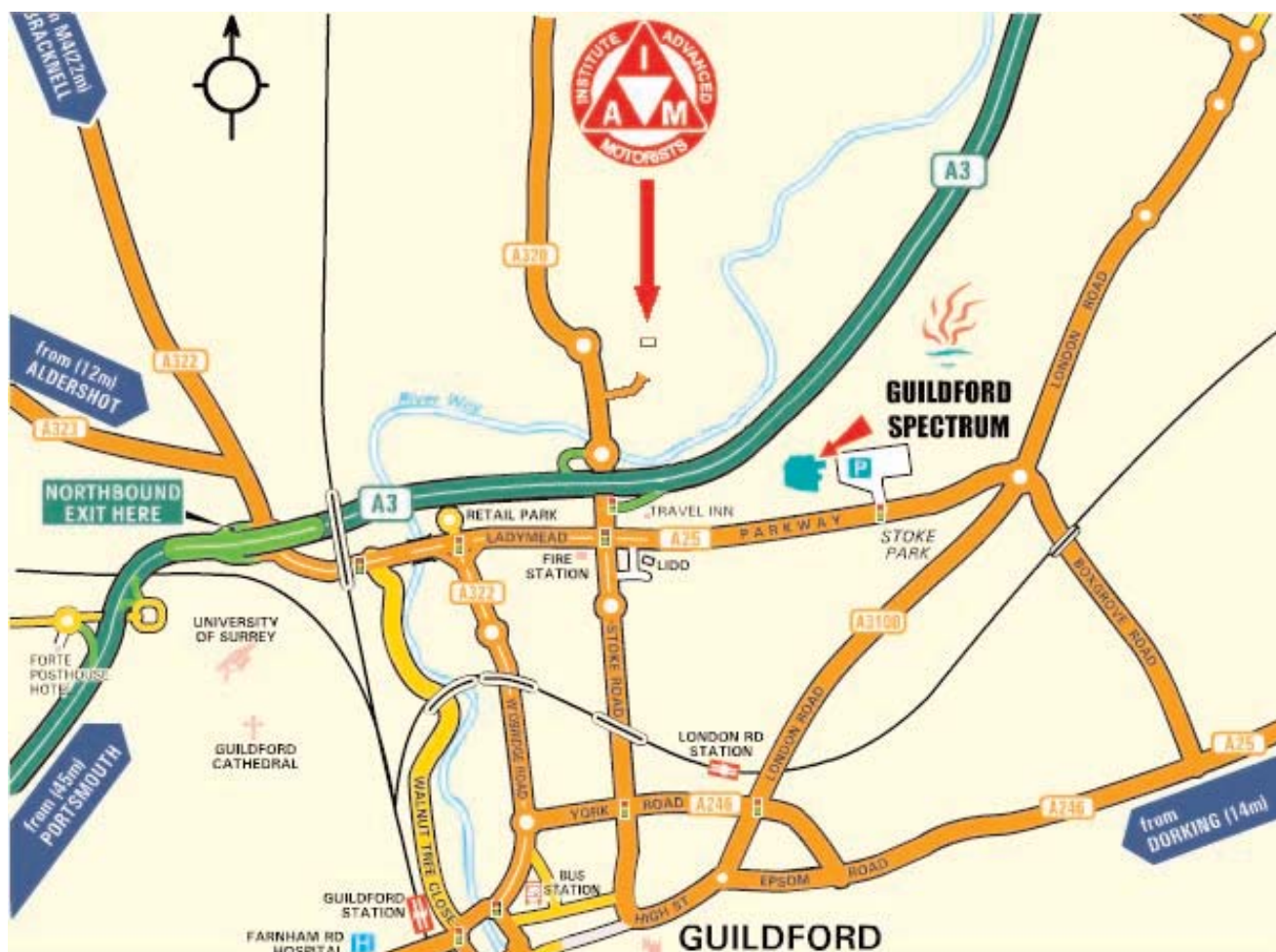
All information correct at the time of going to print.

Observed Runs

Third Sunday of each month at 9.15am, 10.30am and 11.30am

Guildford Borough Council, Woking Road Dept, Guildford.
Telephone 01483 564 814 on Sunday from 9am to 1pm

Appointments for Observed runs -
contact the Chairman on 07817 490 446 or 01252 519 355



Associate Membership £99

Entitles the Associate to 6 Observed Runs in their own vehicle during the 12 months following the date of their first appointment, and includes:

- + the cost of the IAM Advanced Test
- + the first year's membership of the Institute from the date of the first run
- + copy of 'Advanced Driving' manual
- + copy of the Highway Code

Full Group Membership (whilst a Member of the Institute) £5 per annum

DON'T FORGET! Associates aged 25 years and under enjoy a discount of:

£10 off the Associate fee

£10 off the IAM fee

- that's all the benefits of IAM training for only £79!

Help a younger driver be a safer driver - pass on our details!

Welcome

Welcome to the Autumn 2008 edition of the Guildford and District IAM Group's newsletter.

To continue to bring you a newsletter that is informative and relevant, please send your letters, comments, feedback, articles and pictures to the Editor.

The next edition of the newsletter will be mid-January so plenty of time to write a few lines or even bullet points on a subject of interest to you and, therefore, probably also of interest to fellow Members and Associates.

I look forward to hearing from you.

Louisa Wright-Wastell
Editor



In Remembrance of Nick Wright, Senior Observer

It is with great sadness that we announce the loss of Nick Wright, one of our Senior Observers. Nick was an energetic and enthusiastic member of the group who developed our Towing Observed Runs from scratch, the only group in the UK to offer such a facility. He was also instrumental in gaining financial support for the group from his employer. Nick was a regular at our Sunday Observed Runs and I am sure many Associates will remember his clear advice and guidance. It is tragic that Nick, who cared so much about road safety, should be killed when he was struck by a lorry whilst riding his bicycle in London.

The group extends its sympathy to his widow Caroline and their children at this sad time.

Chairman's Report - September 2008

Well the Olympics are a distant memory and Team GB earned an impressive haul of medals. Now we can look forward to 2012 with interest. How will we manage to move all those athletes and officials around the already crowded streets of London? Ideas on the back of a postage stamp please!

Speaking of crowded roads; is it just me or do you think that the state of our minor roads is becoming worse? I feel the number of sunken drains and potholes I see has definitely increased over the past few years. Leaving roads in this state causes damage to vehicles and is dangerous in that cyclists swerve to miss them. In the longer term, this makes roads more expensive to maintain in a good, safe condition. An aware driver should spot these problems well in advance; but if you are unable to avoid hitting a pothole because of the proximity of other traffic or it is dark - and as a result damage your tyres - make sure that you take pictures of the location and claim against the local council. My daughter did this and won!

A word on IAM membership: Many of you will have seen the notification in the latest Advanced Driving magazine that the annual membership of the IAM is to increase next year to £28. This is only the second increase in 10 years, and whilst the jump is quite large, this is a result of not making smaller increases at more frequent intervals, while running costs have increased. We all appreciate that inflation is taking its toll and the IAM is not immune from its effects. Unlike some charities, the IAM receives hardly any donations and no government grants. When compared with many similar organisations, the new IAM membership fee is still competitive and I hope that you consider it to be money well spent. Many benefits are listed in the magazine and you may not be aware that these include discounts e.g. on airport parking and 10% at Halfords (please contact the IAM or visit the website for how these offers apply.) As far as the group is concerned we plan to hold our current annual membership at £5.00 so you do not have a double whammy.

In our continued aim of bringing further awareness of the benefits of IAM training, we are now on the radar of Southern Counties Radio and I have been contacted a number of times to give an IAM view on numerous issues - good publicity for our cause. Of course you can contribute to this by passing on your newsletter once you're finished with it.

We have held some fantastic events this year including an excellent 'Better Driving' lecture at Ripley Village Hall by the Surrey Police Driving School. They followed this up a few weeks later with a series of commentary drives for a number of the Observers to improve their skills.

A further evening lecture on motorway driving is scheduled for Thursday 13th November at Ripley Village Hall starting at 7pm - see details later in this newsletter. My thanks to Terry Moody for organising these events. Also we had an excellent series of skid control courses which were pretty much sell out events. These will be repeated next year so keep checking your newsletters for dates so you don't miss out.

At the end of last year there was a slowdown in the number of Associates joining the group and we expected this to get even worse with the increased cost of Skill for Life in the spring. However, over the past eight months things have improved and despite the poor weather at the Surrey County Show, the number of Associates joining has increased - we have had 99 new associates join the group so far this year. Not all those have gone on to take the test but I am sure that they will have gained from the training. One area which continues to raise concern though is the high number of Associates who just fail to turn up for their runs. On average we lose 10% of all slots each month and this excludes those who informed us in advance that they could not attend. Last year I deleted twelve Associates who failed to attend for three months in a row and never managed to contact us. If you can't make your run, please do phone, it may mean we can help another Associate. On a positive note, the level of test passes remains good.

Continuing the drive to develop better driving, the IAM has been publicising the DriveCheck assessment with Age Concern. This is a single Observed run and provides an individual with an assessment of their driving. As a result we have seen a large increase in applications from senior citizens many of whom have a good standard of driving skills. So far we have completed thirty five DriveCheck this year and many of those have gone on to take the full Skills for Life course.

As you might expect, the group does not run by itself, and I would like to thank all those people who give freely of their time and who help the group to run smoothly. Their enthusiasm, energy and commitment ensure that we continue to play our part in improving driving standards and road safety within the Guildford area. I would like to thank all of the Observers and the team who help on the Sunday runs (Shân, Christine and John), Tony our Webmaster, Louisa our Editor and of course my fellow committee members without whom the management of the group would not function. I would also like to thank those Members and Associates who gave freely of their time to stand in the rain at the Surrey County Show. The Group could not achieve so much without the time and effort put in by these willing volunteers, my thanks to everyone.

If you have some skill or time you can spare to help the Group we are always looking for additional volunteers. Could you help publicise the group? Organise a social activity? Every little helps to ease the burden on the rest of us and makes the Group more meaningful for the Members. One area we are considering at the moment is to have a stand from time to time at the front entrance to a supermarket or similar venue to encourage others to join the group. Please let me know if you would be prepared to help.

Wishing you safe and enjoyable motoring, and best wishes for the new year, until our next edition in January 2009.

Paul Wallace-Stock
Group Chairman

Your Letters

Dear Paul

I wanted to drop a line to inform you that I took my Advanced test under the examination of Alan Hobbs and I am pleased to say that I passed with Alan commenting on the form that I carried out 'a professional drive with good flow, concentration and anticipation. Excellent.

Naturally I was thrilled to receive these comments and am sure that the team of Observers should take most of the credit for my success and perhaps you could pass this on to them. In particular, my two senior observed drives with Terry Moody and Peter Holt banished any sense of complacency I might have had and helped me a lot.

Many thanks for the work you do and I shall see if I have time to become an Observer myself.

Kind regards

JA

Driving Safe in the party Season

As the autumn party season approaches - Hallowe'en, Bonfire Night, dare we mention Christmas parties and the usual birthdays and other celebrations, it is important to remind ourselves of the dangers of consuming alcohol and driving, and why it is not worth having 'just the one'.

This is a recent release from the IAM Head Office:

An eleven year license endorsement is just one of the many consequences of a drink offence, although this isn't widely known. There is no foolproof way to check your Blood Alcohol Concentration (BAC) limit before you get behind the wheel, so the IAM's message to motorists is: If you're going to drink, don't drive, and if you are going to drive, don't drink.

Previous surveys have shown a staggering 50% of Britain's 32 million motorists have owned up to driving after drinking alcohol. "Just one" is often followed by another, especially if people are buying rounds of drinks. And a generous round-buyer may get you a large wine or a double measure of spirits without you realising. This may be a well-meaning gesture, but it could put you over the limit.

Your ability to drive can be affected by even a modest amount of alcohol, at any time of year. Even if you are actually within the limit, alcohol still affects your judgement.

If you're driving abroad, alcohol limits vary for each individual country, with some countries even having a zero alcohol limit.

Also beware the dangers of driving the following day after drinking. If you drive at twice the legal limit, you are 30 times more likely to crash, and a long sleep or a large cup of coffee after drinking the night before may not be the quick fix you expected to allow you to safely get behind the wheel. There could be sufficient alcohol in your system to still push you over the legal limit for many hours after you have stopped drinking. So remember to leave at least twelve hours between the "bottle" and the "throttle".

Why not offer to be the (non-drinking) designated driver? You'll save money and you'll be popular with everyone else you're giving a lift home to.

But the general rule to be safe no matter where you are driving remains: **don't drink and drive.**

POLICE "BETTER DRIVING" LECTURE - Ripley Village Large Hall

THURSDAY 13th NOVEMBER 7pm

See PC Alan Bone presenting on "Motorway Driving"

All are welcome to this FREE event - refreshments provided

Please contact Terry Moody

Beware Tiredness - The ‘Silent Killer’

The Institute of Advanced Motorists (IAM) calls driver fatigue a silent killer and in a sense, that is just what it is.

If you plan to drive out to visit friends, family or on day trips, and may be driving a long way or late at night, the following article will help you plan and avoid fatigue affecting your driving.

Fatigue operates in much the same way as alcohol. Drivers who are slightly tired will not drive as well or as safely as those who are alert. As tiredness increases, mental and physical performance drops until eventually the driver falls asleep. Research suggests that one in five motorway crashes are related to driver fatigue, although statistics are limited: Drivers who are tired are seldom willing to admit it and those who crash can be too badly injured to recall the events leading to the collision.

But it is clear there are far too many crashes arising from driver fatigue. The IAM says that although fatigue is unavoidable there are a number of simple steps we drivers can take to reduce the problem:

Start Alert

- Get plenty of rest before a long journey, don't drive if you feel tired, or unwell
- Wear comfortable loose clothing
- Adjust the driving seat in a car to a comfortable upright position and adjust the heating/air-conditioning to a cool – not cold – temperature

Stay Alert

- Try and avoid driving during the night when you would normally be asleep
- Early afternoon is also a high risk period to lapse in concentration
- Take regular breaks, at least every two hours
- Get out of/off your vehicle and walk around at the breaks, don't just sit in the seat

If You Feel Tired

- Act quickly and do not try to “drive through” the fatigue. Turning up the radio volume and opening the window, or turning the air-conditioner to the coldest setting in the hope that these will keep you awake won't work
- If you must continue, find a safe place to stop, have a caffeine rich drink and then take a short nap for at least 20 minutes. This will give the caffeine time to get into your system and gives you a “power nap”. You can only do this once in a journey – it won't work a second time
- If you feel more awake continue, but bear in mind that you will have to stop reasonably soon. If you still feel tired, sleep until you feel fresh enough to continue.

Learner Driving Down Under by Shân Hughes

A recent visit to family to Australia highlighted how different the approach is for learner drivers in Oz as opposed to the UK.

If you've turned 16, then you're able to start out on the trail to getting your driver license.

Getting your full license takes more than a couple of years, and there are different rules for driving depending on whether you're on your Ls, your 'red' Ps (also known as P1) or your 'green' Ps (also known as P2.)

The test is staged and whilst the learning starts earlier than here, the staged progressive approach gives a very positive and reinforced message to all drivers.



Here's a summary of what learners in Australia need to do:

1. Pass the Driver Knowledge Test (DKT) – this gets you a learner license
2. Hold your learner license at least 12 months for drivers under the age of 25
3. Complete 120 hours minimum driving practice (log book records the driving experience)
4. Pass the Driving Test – progress to a Provisional License – stage 1 (P1 or 'red' Ps)
5. Hold your P1 license for a minimum of 12 months
6. Pass Hazard Perception Test – progress to Provisional License – stage 2 (P2 or 'green' Ps)
7. Hold your P2 license for a minimum of 24 months
8. Pass the Driver Qualification Test (DQT) – progress to a full license

My cousin managed to progress from her red Ps to green Ps while I was there and it was cause for acknowledgement and celebration. No longer would she have to limit herself to one passenger after 11pm and she could drive a bit faster on motorways - conditions placed on her at those stages. This seems a much more sensible approach - something for the lobbyists to look at perhaps?

If you are visiting Australia then check out www.geared.com.au

Open Meeting

A Group Open Meeting was held on Saturday 13th September. Paul Marshall, one of our local examiners, gave the main presentation. He chose as his theme the Advanced Driving test and what he, as an examiner is looking for from candidates. Paul went through the system (IPSGA) in fine detail and used it to illustrate various aspects of an Advanced Drive, highlighting areas where some candidates have experienced problems in the past and at the same time he dispelled a number of myths. It was an extremely illuminating and interesting talk and it was a pity so few of the Observers, Members and Associates attended. They missed an excellent presentation.

Some of the main points were as follows:

The Test

Paul made the point that it is a 'subjective' test and as such is dependent upon the situation, which prevails on the day. He cautioned about looking for guidance on the internet as the views expressed often conflict with those of the IAM and are, in some cases, wrong. It is not unusual to be nervous at the beginning of the test and he tends to ignore minor errors in the early stages of the run. His main point is that it should be treated as a normal run. Minor mistakes happen and provided they are not repeated continuously will not result in a fail. Do not worry about past mistakes - they have gone; concentrate on the next problem. He listed in order of priority the requirements for a good run: Safe, Statute (Legal), Systematic (i.e. in accordance with the IAM System), Swift (make progress), Smooth, Sympathetic and Special (non-assessed items such as commentary, cockpit drill, moving brake test, etc.) Finally he stated that not all of the examiners have snow on the roof and a number are under 30 years old! This does not detract from their ability as examiners but it has unsettled some candidates.

Failures

Occasionally there are failures and Paul believes the majority of these are down to errors in not understanding and/or applying the system. There may be secondary problems but usually they all link back to a failure to apply the system correctly. It is essential that all Associates understand the system and this means being able to explain its operation and to then demonstrate it on the road. Sometimes drivers are hesitant - it is far better to be positive and decisive as at least other drivers can see what you are doing even if it is not strictly correct. Not travelling up to the legal limit is not in itself a cause for failure. However, if someone travels at 40 mph along an open road with a national speed limit and then enters a hazardous area and maintains that speed it demonstrates that either they were not really reading the road or did not have sufficient confidence in their own ability to drive on the open road at the higher speed. Another item is not using the nearside mirror when exiting a roundabout. This will help identify the cyclist who draws up along side whilst you have been stationary.



Gears

When using gears on hills, generally go down a hill in the same gear as you would go up it. Select the appropriate gear before a hill. When changing gears have the thumb down for first and second but up for all other gears for grip. Know your vehicles performance. One point he made was that the time taken to change gear should be the same no matter how fast you are travelling. As a general rule do not change gear and turn at the same time. There may be occasions when this is permissible provided the vehicle is balanced and under control. Fifth/sixth gear is considered as a cruise gear and should not be selected until the cruising speed has been achieved.

General Points

Read the road, do not assume. Just because there is a bend it does not necessarily mean you have to crawl around it. Use the limit point and treat every bend on its own merit. In the same vein be aware of the limit point over a bridge and ease up if appropriate. On narrow country roads, consider the closing speed of other vehicles. If you are both doing 60mph that is 120mph - could you avoid an accident? In respect of courtesy the use of flashing headlights can cause confusion. In general it is better to present the opportunity by providing a gap for someone to fill than to send a message, which could be misconstrued. On positioning; safety must come first. It is no good after an accident to say 'well I was in the right'. Do not be afraid to use the accelerator, it is not a Sunday potter. If you have an automatic by all means demonstrate that you understand kick down/hold down but do not drive it as a manual. Also, poor weather does not necessarily mean slower driving. It depends on the situation.

Paul finished his presentation with the following key points: Think about bikes, their position and speed. Keep your vehicle in balance, as a general rule do not mix steering, gear change and braking. Be decisive, at least that way other drivers will know what you are trying to do. Use the engine to control the vehicle and aim to use the accelerator to make minor adjustments.

Other Matters

As time was short the item on Fuel-efficient driving was not covered however it appears as an item elsewhere in this newsletter. Gerry Raleigh then gave a short talk about buying a second hand car and what help there was available on the Internet to assist your consideration and to protect you from buying a rogue vehicle, which may have been an insurance write-off. An item on this will be in the next Newsletter

The Chairman then covered a few items from IAM HO.

Fluorescent Jackets

The French authorities have introduced a rule that a fluorescent jacket must be carried at all times in the vehicle. The rules are not completely clear but it seems that the jackets must be in the body of the vehicle and that in an emergency the driver must put it on before getting out of the vehicle. You have been warned!

Points on License

The rules regarding points on one's license has changed and therefore, having points on a license, provided the person is not banned from driving, will not prevent them from taking the Advanced Driving test. Also if a person has been banned they may take their advanced training and test as soon as they have their license reinstated. This is sensible as surely we should be trying to improve the skills of those who have transgressed rather than punish them further.

IAM Website

The IAM are now sending out a regular e-newsletter to all members where they have an e-mail address. To register just go to www.iam.org.uk.

Publicity

The IAM are putting in much greater effort to publicise the organisation. News releases are being sent on a regular basis to newspaper editors and articles are appearing in local papers at regular intervals. They are also publishing a series of 'Driving Tips'. Both these items can be found on the IAM Website.

Fee Increase

The chairman has covered this in his annual report but he did make the point that the group was not intending to increase its membership fees next year.

Annual General Meeting

The AGM followed the Open Meeting.

A Date for Your Diary - Thatcham Visit on Friday, 28 November

Most of you will have heard of the Motor Insurers' Repair Research Centre at Thatcham in Berkshire. The centre operates guided tours and they tell me that several IAM groups have already been along to have a look round.

Tours start with a presentation and video on Thatcham, followed by visits to the research workshop, crash and sled laboratories, and their training facilities. The whole tour takes about two-and-a-half hours and would commence at 2.00 pm on a day during the week. (They are closed at the weekend.)

The tour includes light refreshments on arrival, and the cost is £15 per person.

If there is sufficient interest among Observers and Associates, then I will arrange a visit to take place probably in February next year. I need to know how many people would like to come. If you would like to join our party for the guided tour, I can be reached on 01372 452500.

We can only accommodate about eight people on the tour, so with such limited numbers, if you are interested, please let me know before **Friday, 28 November**. Places will be allocated on a first come, first served basis.

Terry Moody
Senior Observer

We Welcome...

Michael Bird	Andrew Davis	Peter Jenner	Mark Nash	Claire Perry
Richard Price	Jeanie Satterwhite	Philip Truscott	Gang Wang	Rachel Scott-Thompson
Margaret Hallendorf	James Phiri			

Recent Test Passes

Our congratulations this issue go to:

Jon Austen	Terry Corben	Gavin House	Steve Price	John Seccombe
Nathan Child	Donald Forbes	Shane Hyde	Austin Robilliard	Olga Skipworth

Well done for passing your Advanced Test!

Observed Run Stats

Month	Numbers Booked in Advance	Cancelled	Failed to Attend	Runs Conducted
June				
July	56	12	18	36
August	58	20	6	33
September	54	11	6	37
October	48	11	5	31

Do try and make your booked run so that we can help more drivers!

Observer Profile: Gerry Raleigh: Senior Observer, Group Treasurer and Test Co-ordinator



Why did you take the IAM test? I planned to take the test for many years before I did, having read about it in a motoring magazine in the late 80s. What finally pushed me to do the test was the thought that I was carrying around my (then) young children in the car and also I was doing up to 40,000 miles of driving per annum.

What was the Test like for me? My examiner was John Moore who sadly passed away some years ago. John managed to calm me despite being late due to unbelievable traffic on an exceptionally wet autumn day. He then managed to navigate me on a route that avoided further traffic problems, even if we did encounter a couple of flooded roads!

First car: A very dodgy Renault. Mechanically it was awful and electrically even worse!

Current car: BMW 530 diesel - Excellent to drive and easily capable of 40mpg on long journeys.

Most scary moment: It was a dark, winter evening and I was driving in lane two of a dual carriageway going past other traffic at 70mph when the car beside me in lane one suddenly swerved into the side of my car and pushed me into the central reserve. On this particular piece of road there was no central barrier and so I ended up wrestling with the car along the grassed central reserve while facing oncoming traffic! Luckily I got back to my own side of the road. The other driver also stopped and then I discovered the reason for her erratic behaviour: A large plastic bin had fallen off a pickup in front and instinctively she had thrown the steering wheel over to avoid it. Unfortunately I had been in the way. The perpetrator was long gone and never seen again. Luckily nobody was injured and we managed to drive our cars away from the scene. No real harm done but it could have been much worse.

Other interests: Aside from family and work, I am also a keen photographer and imbibor of real beers, particularly real ales, Belgian and German beers. I like drinking and driving but of course not at the same time!

Do you have a friend or relative that would benefit from our advice and guidance?



**If so, please put them in touch with
Chris Hughes
Contact details on the inside back page**

**Please pass on or recycle this newsletter
once you're done with it!**