

NEWSLETTER

Spring 2009



GUILDFORD & DISTRICT GROUP OF ADVANCED MOTORISTS

Registered Charity No. 1051069

www.guildford-iam.org.uk



Data Protection Act

Members and Associates are reminded that your name, address, telephone number and membership details are stored on computer files to assist with the management of the group and the distribution of Guildford Group correspondence.

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 July edition is Friday 12 June 2009

KEY DATES

Observed Sunday Runs 2009

19 April
17 May
21 June
19 July
16 August
20 September
18 October
15 November
13 December (this is the second Sunday)

Committee Meetings - Ripley Small Hall

Wednesday 6 May
Thursday 2 July
Thursday 3 September
Wednesday 4 November

AGM and Open Meeting - Ripley Large Hall

Saturday 19th September 2009 8.30am- 12.30pm

Printed by:

Cherrill Print 295-297 Brighton Rd, South Croydon, CR2 6EQ tel. 0208 681 7147

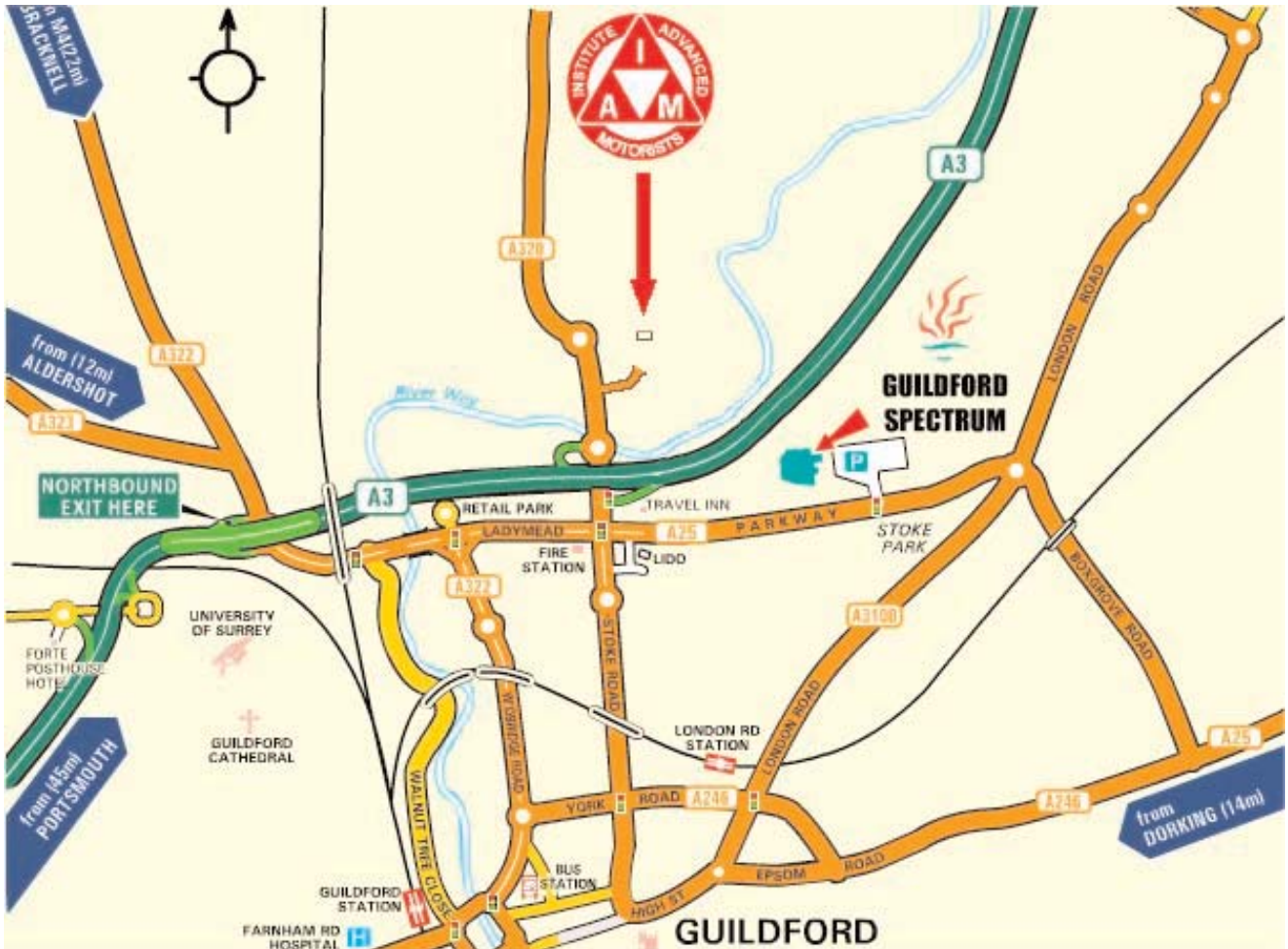
All information correct at the time of going to print.

Observed Runs

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

Guildford Borough Council, Woking Road Dept, Guildford.
Telephone 07817 490 446 on Sunday from 9am to 1pm

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



Associate Membership £139

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

Applications for Associate Membership made up to and including 1 May 2009 will be held at the current price of £99

Welcome

We hope you're looking forward to spring and some welcome warmer weather.

In this edition of the newsletter there are some dates of interest: skid pan courses, the Surrey Police better driving lecture, Group open meetings and of course the Sunday runs.

This year Guildford and District IAM will not be attending the Surrey County Show - thank you to all those helpers and visitors to the stand over the last few years. Maybe we'll see you there next year.

I hope you enjoy this issue - as always your comments, contributions and feedback is always welcome.

Louisa Wright-Wastell
Editor



Your Letters

Thanks for all your letters, we're delighted so many are benefiting from the IAM training. Here are a few letters received since the winter newsletter:

"Many thanks to the Guildford Group for helping me pass the IAM Test. You helped me achieve such a high standard that the Examiner suggested that I consider becoming an Observer."

"Just a quick note to say that I took my test today with Alan Hobbs and passed well. I am delighted and grateful to all the Observers at Guildford IAM who brought me up to the required standards for the test. It has been a very worthwhile 6 months."

"I would just like to say thank you to the great team at Guildford IAM. I passed my test last Saturday, and have really enjoyed the whole experience, made possible by such positive help and encouragement from my Observers. Everyone has been so friendly, and well organised; really impressive."

"I took my Advanced Driving test today, and I passed! Please can you pass on my thanks to all the observers at the Guildford Group for their time and brilliant guidance."

"Having taken monthly observed runs since August last year, I finally took the test run...and, to my great relief, passed. Will you kindly express my thanks to the Guildford Group...the Observers who collectively subjected themselves to seven hours of terror at my hands, and assure them that their dedication and advice were finally rewarded."

"I am pleased to advise that I passed my test this morning... could I thank the Observers and the rest of your team for their unfailing help, support and friendliness."

"I would just like to say how grateful I am to the group for the sound advice which allowed me to prepare thoroughly for the test. All the Observers contributed to improving my knowledge and driving skills and I was particularly grateful for coming under the critical but constructive eye of Terry Moody, and David Penson for my last two runs. My thanks also to all those involved in the administration of the group - it's a very efficient and friendly organisation and I have no hesitation in recommending my friends/family to join the group. All in all, it has been a very enjoyable and rewarding experience."

"I write to report that I have been recommended for Membership following a successful IAM Test run on Saturday. It was an exciting moment when the verdict was delivered but I also felt sad that my observed runs have come to an end. I really enjoyed receiving advice and challenges from the excellent Observers who guided me through the four runs and I am indebted to the excellent demonstration run that was given by Terry Moody - his story about finding a bottle under his tyres has ensured that I perform a visual check before getting into my vehicle - I actually found an empty can of Sprite under one of the tyres one day! Please pass on my thanks to the rest of the team."

Chairman's Report March 2009

We never get snow in England these days; not like when I was a child! Oh yes we do! I know there has been a lot of criticism of the local authorities for not being prepared but are we really being fair to them? I used to live in a small German village which had snow every winter and they had a system whereby a company in the village with large vehicles was contracted to clear the village streets. The local council provided the company with a snowplough and gritting attachment and when it snowed the owner was contacted by the police and told to get on with the task, irrespective of the time of day or night. This worked because they knew it would snow every year and that the roads would need clearing. In our part of the UK it rarely snows to any degree and the cost of providing for this occasional contingency far outweighs the likely risk. If we want the capability to clear the snow we must be prepared to pay for it through our council tax.

I was in the French Alps in mid-January when we had 35cm (14 inches in old money) of snow over night and whilst I had snow chains, even these did not work because the car bellied on the deep snow. I needed a larger vehicle to clear the top surface of the snow in front of me before I could proceed. On return to the UK the chains stayed in the car - you never know. On the first morning of the snow I helped push a number of cars and it was apparent that the drivers had little knowledge of how to drive in such conditions. Keep in a higher gear than usual (progress and fuel consumption go out of the window in these conditions) and go very easy on the brakes and accelerator. Just the skills you learn on the Skid Control Course so if you have not signed up visit our website www.guildford-iam.org.uk for details. In Germany you are required by law to fit snow tyres from September (an accident after this date with no snow tyres invalidates the insurance.) Would we accept such a law in the UK? It would keep the traffic moving!

By now many of you will have or will shortly receive your membership renewal forms from the IAM. I appreciate that there has been a large fee increase. The reason is that the IAM decided, mistakenly in my view, not to put up the subscription fees on a regular basis so in effect we have been getting our membership at an unrealistically low fee for the past five years. Even with the increase I hope you agree it is still good value for money; especially if you are able to take advantage of the various discounts, covered in the winter newsletter. As far as the group is concerned, while we do not wish to get into the same situation as the IAM, we are keeping our membership at £5.00 for an individual and £7.50 for a couple living at the same address. This is one of the cheapest fees of any group in the UK and has remained unchanged for nine years. Currently our finances are healthy and there is no need to increase our subscription fees. Your renewal form is enclosed with this newsletter and we are grateful for your continued support.

There has been a change on the committee in that Elizabeth Nelson-Walker has retired as the Membership Secretary. Your Committee thank Elizabeth for all of the hard work and effort she has put in to maintaining our membership database over the past few years, which has been crucial to the efficient running of the group. We welcome David Pearce who has agreed to assume the role and we wish him well in his duties.

In addition, congratulations to Terry Moody, one of our Senior Observers, who takes up a new committee role as Police Liaison Officer, and we look forward to many more of the informative and enjoyable Better Driving Lectures - the next one is in October and more information appears later in the newsletter.

In this issue you will see a report on the November meeting at Ripley. Sorry it is late; it should have appeared in the winter issue. There is also a report of the equally successful meeting held in February.

Many of you will recall that for a number of years the group has taken a stand at the Surrey County Show. We used to get financial assistance from IAM Head Office in London as many of the people who attended were from outside the group area. Last year we did not get a subsidy and it cost the group over £800. The weather was atrocious and we hardly spoke to anyone all day, a similar situation occurred the previous year. Your Committee has decided that there are better ways of investing group funds than trampling them into the mud of Stoke Park. We are setting up stands at local shopping centres and this has proved to be extremely productive, at a greatly reduced cost. If you are able to spare a couple of hours, usually during the week, then please contact me, we'd be delighted for support in spreading our safer driving message.

Summer is approaching and now is the time to make sure that your vehicle is given a thorough check before those longer holiday journeys. Remember that several countries in the EU now require you to have a fluorescent vest inside the vehicle (not in the boot.) I drape mine over the driver's seat so that the police do not need to stop me and ask if I have one. You also need various other things. Details can be found on the AA website.

Happy motoring
Paul Wallace-Stock
Chairman

November Open Meeting - Report

On Thursday 13th November last year 150 intrepid souls came out on a winter's evening to attend a lecture given by Surrey Police. Terry Moody, who organised the meeting, made the introductions and then the Chairman presented Christine Wallace-Stock with a Certificate in recognition of her election as an Honorary Member of the Group.

The first half of the evening was a presentation on motorway driving given by Alan Bone and Vince Bailey from the Surrey Police Driver Training Centre at Burpham.

Alan began his presentation by outlining the features which class a road as a motorway. Fairly obvious, you might think, but there were a few quirky bits of information. Alan went through the rules as to when you can stop on a motorway - the first two, which are fairly obvious, are if you have broken down or you become unwell. The next one was a surprise to everyone including Alan; you may stop on the hard shoulder to retrieve an item which has fallen off your own or another vehicle or to assist others in this action. I should say here that this practice is not recommended in the Highway Code where the advice is to stop at the next emergency telephone and inform the Highways Agency of such a problem. Whatever you decide to do please ensure safety - your own and of others. Other points which were discussed included the various different signs that one can expect to see on a motorway and exactly what meaning/effect they have.

Whilst many of us are aware that motorways are marked 'A' in one direction and 'B' in the other, most did not know that the slip roads are lettered 'J', 'K', 'L' and 'M'. A good bureaucratic solution and sounds like a recipe for disaster!

I don't know if others have noticed but why 43.8 and not 43.5 or 44.0? I know that sometimes an obstruction may mean the precise distance cannot be shown on the sign but that does not explain why the next sign after this one is 44.3!



Alan then talked about adverse weather conditions and in particular what to do if you break down and have to walk to the nearest emergency telephone. He said that you should not walk with your back to the approaching traffic. This is fine but I doubt if many of us would walk 400yds backwards to a telephone! Perhaps if there is not much difference in the distance it would be better to walk to the farther one if you are facing the traffic - but then you have to walk back! Personally I would try to walk on the other side of the barrier and at all times wear a fluorescent jacket.

Following the presentation there was a lively discussion period, which covered things such as Breakdown Lane Running which is already happening on the M42 and is due to be extended to the M25, and road/congestion charging which is currently being considered by thirty five local authorities.

The discussions could have gone on all night had not a tea-break intervened.



The second part of the evening took the form of a presentation by Chief Inspector Stuart Sang who is in charge of the Surrey Roads Policing Unit (the old Road Traffic Department.) Stuart went through the role of the unit and what it is trying to achieve and how. He said he had intended to have many more police cars on the road, but with limited manpower most would be crewed by only one person. Therefore, he was now introducing more motor-cycle patrols instead. We have all seen the calming effect of a high visibility police vehicle. But everything has a cost and whilst we would all like to see more police on the roads there is limited finance available.



Stuart then talked about his initiative last year in targeting bikers with a view to improving their riding habits rather than just prosecuting them once they have made mistakes. Although initially the biking community did not welcome this initiative, it soon became apparent that it had had the desired effect of reducing the accident rate.

The next target will be those on four wheels, you have been warned. The aim is to educate before an accident rather than punish after the event.

We are likely to see a greater use of Driver Re-education Courses, (Speed Awareness Courses) which are being considered for

introduction in Surrey during 2009. This is where drivers can elect to attend one of these courses (for which they have to pay) in order to avoid having penalty points on their licence.

One point of interest is that the Highways Agency now controls the motorways, although they have no powers of arrest (a classic example of responsibility without authority so loved by many.) The police only attend if there is a major incident or accident. Those police you do see on the motorway are usually en-route to another event.

Again there followed a debate where proportionality was discussed. Should the police have greater discretion as to when to prosecute? For instance, if someone is doing 90mph on the motorway at 3am are they really a danger to others? Would it not be better to educate them on the error of their ways rather than just punish them? Conversely, someone driving past a school at 40mph at 3.30pm should be given no latitude.

Stuart made the point that someone using a mobile phone, even hands-free, is three-times more of a hazard than a drunk driver. A sobering thought, if you will excuse the pun.

The evening finished with final thanks to the presenters, to Christine for the refreshments and to Terry Moody for all his hard work in setting up and organising the evening. An enjoyable and lively evening made all the better by the excellent turnout.

The next lecture is planned for 29th October - please check the newsletter and website for information.

Members' Meeting - February 2009

On 14th February fifty members of the group gathered at Ripley Village Hall. Firstly I would like to apologise to those who were upset that the talk did not start at 9a.m. My intention was to offer those attending the chance to meet and chat before the formal part of the meeting. I will make this clear at future meetings.

The Chairman opened the meeting and briefed everyone on various initiatives currently under way to spread the word about better driving, particularly to the younger drivers.

The Chairman then had the pleasant task of presenting an Advanced Driving Certificate to Ken Chapman who recently passed his IAM test.



We all congratulate Ken and hope that he continues to drive to the high standard he has achieved. A number of other members have passed the test in recent weeks and their names appear later in this newsletter.

The main part of the morning was a talk by Chris Gilbert. Many members and associates will remember that Chris features heavily in the Roadcraft video, which is often played at the Sunday morning runs. He has also produced an excellent DVD on Driving Commentary. For over twenty-two years, Chris taught at the Metropolitan Police Driving School at Hendon where he trained hundreds of police officers in the art of advanced driving to the highest standard in the world.

Chris started his talk by outlining his career in the police and interspersed this with many amusing anecdotes. Then he explained the history of the System which was initially formulated by the Earl of Cottingham in the late 1920s and further refined in conjunction with various racing drivers in the mid 1930s. It has been revisited a number of times over the years but has fundamentally remained unchanged. The basic rule was 'drive at a speed whereby you can stop in the distance you see to be clear'. Ring any bells? In respect of speed the mantra was 'speed with responsibility'.

He then went on to cover a number of items including the development of driving skills in others and also how to develop a commentary. I will not try to repeat his talk verbatim but here are some of the nuggets:

Thinking of the recent cold snap, unless you are parked on a slope or on a public highway, do not apply the handbrake. This stretches the cable for cars still using this system and it risks the brakes freezing onto the disks. Also ABS is not good in snow and ice. If you do not have sufficient traction to turn the wheels it will not work. Can you still do cadence braking? No doubt many of you will have seen the poor state of the roads after the cold spell resulting in numerous potholes, which can damage

Police "Better Driving" Lecture

We are pleased to announce that this year's Police Lecture has been scheduled for Monday, 26th October at Ripley Village Hall.

Once again we are delighted to have the services of Alan Bone and Vince Bailey from the Driver Training Facility at Burpham and this time the theme for their presentation will be "BETTER HAZARD AWARENESS SAVES LIVES"

A topic which is certain to be of interest to all road users.

Not only will we have Alan and Vince with us, but also in the second half of the evening we shall be joined by a member of the Surrey Police Collisions Investigation Unit who will be talking about his work and also answering questions.

The evening is open to all IAM Members, Observers, Associates and you are welcome to bring along a non-member if you wish. Refreshments will be provided.

This lecture is bound to be very popular, so if you would like to come along, please contact Terry Moody as soon as possible to be sure of getting a seat. Please put the date in your diary NOW to avoid disappointment!

vehicle tyres and suspension.

As we get older our eyes deteriorate and this is particularly noticeable in the dark. In addition to getting one's eyes tested Chris recommended turning down the intensity of the dashboard light.

He then covered driver training and whilst this was aimed primarily at the Observers in the audience it had some useful pointers for Members and Associates alike. Everyone has a limit point where they cease to learn - they reach overload. It is important to identify this and to stop trying to feed in more information. Observers need to be aware of this but so to do Associates, as there are times when we all reach a plateau where we do not seem



to be improving. The message is to stick with it and eventually it will come good. Mistakes happen when the driver is under pressure, there is no such thing as the perfect driver.

It is important to recognise this and not to dwell on

mistakes when they happen - particularly important during the test. Mistakes are one-offs; faults are consistent errors and need addressing.

Chris then talked about increasing one's horizon. Many drivers drive with their eyes on dip when they should be on main beam. He compared our focal length when walking, which is quite short to that when driving in town where it increases and then to the motorway where it increases again. This happens naturally without us being aware but it is the barest minimum and we should be aiming to look much further ahead in order to anticipate potential hazards.

After the break Chris covered the commentary. He likened developing the skills to a ladder. You need to take it one step at a time. Initially it might just be talking about what the road is doing and the road signs. This can then be broadened to include other vehicles and eventually what you are doing about it, how will it affect your driving. In order to develop the commentary it might be advisable to drive slower than usual so that things do not happen so fast. The more things you identify to add into your commentary the more selective you need to be in what you say or else it becomes historical and of no practical use. In general be economic with words but be systematic.

He ended his talk by showing a video of a high speed commentary drive on a good minor road where speeds of 120mph were achieved despite the presence of other vehicles. It gave us all an indication of the high standard achieved by the police and gave us a target to aim for.

It was an interesting session with something for everyone.

Surrey Police "Better Driving" Lecture

“BETTER HAZARD AWARENESS SAVES LIVES”

Monday 26th October - 7pm sharp

RIPLEY VILLAGE HALL

Terry can be contacted by telephone on 01372 452 500

Member Information

We Welcome...

Rennie Alexander	Thomas Hewitt	Tamara Lake	Donald Pearson
Stephanie Andrew	Norman Henthorne	Yaeko Mori	Paul White
Paul Cale	David Kennard	R Allan F Morris	Sandra Williams
Helen Harper-Smith	Masakata Koda	James Morris	Charlotte Wise

Recent Test Passes...

Ollie Almond	Kyria Cardy	Freya Davey	Andy Griffiths	Phillip Jukes
Andy Cole	Ken Chapman	Chris Dipple	Peter Hudson	Hilary Newman
Jon Austen	Alexandra Couzens	John Dixon	Peter Kerly	James Phiri
Jean Bonham	James Cross	Donald Forbes	Nigel Robathan	Simon Roe
Mark Rolfe	Micheal Wrigley	Michael Young		

Well done for passing your Advanced tests!

Observed Run Stats

Month	Numbers Booked in Advance	Cancelled	Failed to Attend	Runs Conducted
January	50	7	7	36
February	52	8	7	36
March	51	14	4	33

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

Personal Profile - David Pearce, Membership Secretary



David is our new Membership Secretary, and here we find out a little more about him!

I was born and went to school in Bristol before college in London. I am married and I have three children all of whom have now left home. Spent first twenty five years of my working life in export so I've seen and driven (or been driven) in some interesting places. I've burned my hand on a car in Iraq (+55C) and been stuck in a taxi when the doors froze in Stockholm (-35C). My most interesting drive was in Honiara (Solomon Islands) when I drove across the island to see remains and mementos of WWII battles. For much of the 1990s I worked for a small food company in Wales, having a five hundred mile weekly round trip from Guildford to the company offices in Tywyn.

Why did you take the IAM test? After thirty years as a company car driver I was having to get my own insurance and I couldn't get any no-claims bonus as I had no personal record. I'd done a similar programme for one of my companies about twenty years ago and thought an IAM qualification might help. I also realised that I'd probably picked up some bad habits in the forty years since I passed my test and felt that this was a good time to check my capabilities, particularly as I'd recently changed back from driving automatics to a manual gearbox.

What was the test like for you? Because of the Defensive Driving programme I'd done previously, I'd had a sort of practice test and generally knew what to expect. It was less stressful than negotiating with supermarket buyers, which I had been doing for many years. I had no need to pass and felt under no pressure. The Examiner was friendly, but clearly watching every move I made. I actually enjoyed demonstrating my capabilities and was delighted to find I'd passed at the end of the run.

What was your first car? A green and white Triumph Herald, registration UDB435. It was several years old when I bought it and cost me about £100 in 1967.

What is your current car? A 2.5l Mondeo Ghia X

What was your first prang? My first prang was in driving my girlfriend's new Mini. I was looking over my right shoulder at traffic coming round the roundabout and pulled away into the gap. Unfortunately the car in front didn't. Minor damage to the car; greater damage to my pride and our relationship! However, all were mended and we've now been married for almost 37 years.

What are your other interests? Cricket. I'm a lifelong supporter of Gloucestershire CCC and was chairman of my local club in Surrey for 10 years, playing for them until the late 1990s. I retain many of my west country allegiances and at football, to the horror and amusement of my children, I still support Bristol Rovers. Today my interests are more sedentary. I play a little bridge, am researching my family tree (I have traced more seven hundred blood and marriage relations covering eleven generations as far back as 1680) and enjoy holidays, particularly cruises. Having discovered computers and digital photography I can bore people for days with my photo collections. However I do try to get out on the golf course when the weather is good.

*Guildford and District
Group of Advanced
Motorists*

IAM
DRIVING ROAD SAFETY

SKID CONTROL COURSES



**Ever tried a skid control course?
It could save you embarrassment or a life!**

Courses are at Goodwood race track on various dates throughout the coming year. A 3-hour course covers an initial briefing on the causes of and coping with skids. Most of the time is spent on provided car developing your own skills and coping with others. C

Last places available!

MAY and JUNE!!

£45 for Members/Associates of the group
£50 for non members (Family and friends)

Interested? Please contact the Chairman via the Guildford IAM website