

IAM
DRIVING ROAD SAFETY
CARDIFF GROUP

Newsletter



Cardiff Group of Advanced Motorists
Affiliated to the Institute of Advanced Motorists



“March Edition”



Contact Us:- 07586 338009

Website:- www.cardiffiam.co.uk

Email:- enquires@cardiffiam.co.uk

CARDIFF IAM - DIARY 2015

FUTURE GROUP MEETINGS:

at 7.30pm, Lisvane Memorial Hall, Heol-y-Delyn, Cardiff.

7th May – Dr Dan Griffith, Arup (Consulting Engineers), and Managing Engineer

4th June – Details To Follow

2nd July – No Meeting

6th Aug – No Meeting

3rd Sept – Chris Street, Police Collision Investigator

CONGRATULATIONS TO THE FOLLOWING MEMBERS WHO HAVE PASSED THEIR IAM ADVANCED MOTORISTS TEST

Mr Gareth Davies of Penpedairheol, who passed with a 'first score – many congratulations! [Observer – Richard Furneaux, Examiner – Steve Cotton]

Mr. Thomas Kelly [Observer – Peter Welch, Examiner – Lyndsey Williams]

Mr Gregg McLeod [Observer – Peter Welch, Examiner – Steve Cotton]

Miss Rachel John [Observer – George Grant, Examiner – Lyndsey Williams]

Mrs Susan Street [Observer – Peter Welch, Examiner – Lyndsey Williams]

CHAIRMAN'S NOTE

Hello everyone! It looks like the worst of the winter is behind us and the first signs of spring are sprouting up. Thankfully it's not been a terrible harsh winter but it certainly provided us with a longer spell of cold weather.

Within the Cardiff Group we continue to work hard to provide a varied monthly programme of guest speakers. We recently had Bill Lee telling us some of his experiences behind the scenes of the Royal Tournament. I do encourage you to attend our events. Coming up in June we are likely to replace our normal Thursday meeting with a weekend barbeque event somewhere in our area. We are currently researching venues and hope to make it a social event – just pray for good weather! Keep an eye on flyers and the website for details.

Finally, you will have seen that we have had to increase our fees for Members and Associates this year. It has been more than 8 years since the Group fees changed so we have done well to hold things as they were. The main change is that we are dropping the two-yearly fee option as this created quite a lot of admin for us. We will now charge £10 per year for Full Members. Associates will be charged £15 per year (we hope this may be an incentive to pass the IAM test). These changes will take effect from 1st April 2015. We will soon be able to take electronic bank transfers where you can set up a standing order for your membership fees. We have a few small things to iron out regarding administration when paying by this method but look out for information on our account details soon. We will always accept cheques too for those not using the internet systems. And as I mentioned last time, please make sure you are a paying member of the main IAM in London as well.

Wishing you pleasant and safe motoring,

Jonathan Coldman,, Chairman

MP AND IAM ANGRY OVER MOTORWAY SERVICE CHARGES

Tired drivers should not have to pay to take a vital and life-saving rest at motorway service stations, an MP and a road safety charity have said.

David Davies and the IAM have hit out at charges imposed by private firms on motorists who stop for more than two hours to avoid falling asleep at the wheel.

Mr Davies has teamed up with the IAM to call on the government to change its policy on the two-hour free parking limit, which service station operators have to comply with.

The Monmouth MP, who previously worked in the haulage industry as a continental lorry driver, wants longer hours set before parking charges apply.

He argues that drivers should be allowed to rest properly instead of opting to go back on the road to avoid having to pay hefty fees.

“Charging large amounts of money to park could be increasing the risk of accidents caused by driver fatigue,” said Mr Davies.

“This is profiteering plain and simple. There is no justification whatsoever for making a charge.

“It is bad enough that motorists pay over the odds to buy a coffee or snack at a service station without the worry of paying vast charges for taking forty winks. Limiting parking time at motorway service stations is clearly contrary to the main reason for their existence – to provide rest stops.”

Mr Davies’ campaign has been backed by the IAM. While the government encourages drivers to take regular breaks as part of its key objectives on motorway service areas, the IAM would like the campaign to receive financial backing. The issue forms a key part of the charity’s manifesto.

Through its THINK! Campaign, the Department of Transport suggests that almost 20 per cent of accidents on major roads are sleep-related; sleep-related accidents are more likely than others to result in a fatality or serious injury; and men under 30 have the highest risk of falling asleep at the wheel (2).

Driver and Vehicle Standards Agency (DVSA) information suggests one-fifth of accidents on motorways and other monotonous types of roads may be caused by drivers falling asleep at the wheel (3).

Neil Greig, IAM director of policy and research, said: “Service areas are meant to be about safety and taking a break on a long boring journey. All too often these

days they are more about selling things at inflated prices to a captive audience. The two hour parking rule leaves many drivers confused and worried that they may inadvertently go over the time limit if they stop for a break, which is not a good recipe for safer motoring.”

REVEALED – THE UK’S WORST DRINK AND DRUG DRIVING HOTSPOTS

(with thanks to the Daily Telegraph)

A study has found Wales has four towns in the top 20, including top offender Llandrindod Wells with nearly two offences per 1,000 drivers.



Wales has four towns in the top 20 in the list of the UK's worst drink and drug driving hotspots

Wales, Scotland and the north of England contain the worst hotspots for drink and drug driving in Britain, a new study has revealed.

Wales has four towns in the top 20, including top offender Llandrindod Wells with nearly two offences per 1,000 drivers, car insurance comparison site Moneysupermarket has found.

Swansea is at number four (1.76), Cardiff at number six (1.712) while Newport is at number 12 (1.62).

Scotland has five towns in the top 20 with Inverness in fifth place (1.72), Kirkcaldy at number seven (1.70), Aberdeen at 13 (1.62), Dundee at 18 (1.56) and Galashiels in 20th place (1.54).

Blackpool is the worst English town (1.85) followed by Crewe (1.76) in second and third place, while Shrewsbury (1.70), Darlington (1.69) and Northampton (1.67) make up the bottom of the top ten.

Kevin Pratt, car insurance expert at Moneysupermarket, said: "There are serious consequences for those caught breaking the drink and drug-driving laws. Those found guilty will receive a driving ban of at least 12 months, a fine of up to £5,000, and in some cases, a prison sentence of up to six months. Even after a ban is served, a conviction will see insurance premiums shoot up by an average £350 - which is more than the cost of some people's policies in the first place."

NEW 'DRUG-DRIVE LAWS' A BIG STEP FORWARDS, SAYS IAM

The IAM has described the introduction of new drug-driving laws as 'a big step forward for road safety.'

There will be a new offence of driving while over the prescribed limit of certain drugs as of Monday 16th March 2015. For the first time ever limits have been set for illegal drugs including heroin, cocaine, LSD and cannabis as well as a number of medicinal drugs including morphine and methadone.

The new procedure will bring detection of drug driving into line with the widely understood drink driving enforcement procedure. Police will no longer need to prove that driving was impaired. They will simply obtain a blood sample and show that any of the specified drugs are present above the prescribed limit.

Roadside drugalysers (or an impairment test) can be used in the first instance to test drivers - all this is broadly similar to the way drink/driving processes have operated in the past.

The IAM added that in the case of prescribed and over-the-counter medication users should read the accompanying information very carefully, to see if the prescribed dosage will impair your ability to control your vehicle.

Estimates suggest as many as 200 drug driving related deaths occur every year in the British Isles. Surveys suggest that one in ten young male drivers have driven under the influence of cannabis, and 370,000 have driven under the influence of class A drugs (1).

Sarah Sillars, IAM chief executive officer, said: “The new law is a real step in the right direction for the eradication of driving under the influence of drugs. The IAM has always stated there should be no doubt to drivers and riders as to what the correct course of action should be; no-one should be driving while under the influence of alcohol or any illegal drugs in your system. Many drugs impair the senses to a massive degree – if you are not in full control of your vehicle, you become a severe danger to yourself, your passengers and other road users. It is a self-centred action and those committing it are now being punished with the full force of the law. Now at last, there is a real deterrent.”

She added: “We also urge drivers and riders not to forget how prescription drugs can affect your ability to control a vehicle. Don’t ignore the instructions and think you know better.”

AS DRIVING TEST REACHES 80 YEARS OLD, IAM SAYS IT’S TIME FOR A ‘SYSTEM OVERHAUL’

As the driving test reached its 80th anniversary in the UK in March 2015, the IAM says its time the way we teach new drivers received a comprehensive overhaul to keep it relevant to today’s driving landscape and to the problems faced by young people on the road.

The Road Traffic Act was passed in 1934; the legislation that paved the way for compulsory driving tests in the UK a year later.

The biggest developments in the driving test came into effect in the past two decades: in 1996 a theory test was added to the practical element. From 2002 learners also had to pass a hazard perception exam.

However as it stands now, the driving test does not include any testing of a driver’s ability to cope safely with country roads, poor weather or driving at night – three aspects we know are the main risk factors in the first six months of solo driving.

Road accidents remain the biggest killer of young people in the UK, higher than both alcohol and drugs. In 2013 there were 191 people under 24 killed and 20,003 injured as drivers and riders of cars and motorbikes.

In the past five years (2009-13) there were 1,037 people under 24 killed and 120,958 injured on UK roads as drivers and riders – while the overall trend has been falling, these figures are unacceptable.

Neil Greig, IAM director of policy and research, said: “The driving test needs to become a much more integrated part of a graduated licensing system that picks up on best practice from around the world. For instance, Austria has a ‘second phase’ licensing system, where young drivers come back in the first 12 months after the test for further interventions to examine attitude changes and skills.”

Young male driver casualties have dropped by a third in in Austria as a result of the initiative.

The IAM advocates the following changes to the driver training ‘system’ as part of its manifesto: road safety education to be part of the National Curriculum, support for a minimum learning period prior to taking the practical test, the inclusion of high speed roads in the test itself, support for limits on peer passenger numbers after the test is passed, and a lower drink-drive limit for new drivers.

The IAM also wants to see learner drivers allowed on motorways so they can learn from an expert rather than on their own after passing the test.

Neil said: “The driving test today does test a driver’s ability to a very high level, but it has fallen behind what is urgently needed today in 2015. This must be addressed as a matter of urgency by the next government.”

He added that the driving test needed to take into account whether the influence of new technology and driver aids; such as satellite navigation and cradle-held mobile phones used as navigation devices, should play a part in a 21st century driving test.

PENALTY POINT SWAP SHOP

New Freedom of Information data obtained by Confused.com reveals nearly three million motorists currently have penalty points on their licence, with 70,158 currently holding nine points – just three points off a potential ban. Should 12 points be accumulated by a driver then they are usually disqualified from driving altogether.

And according to additional research commissioned by the leading price comparison website, it’s clear that some drivers are willing to go to extreme lengths to rid themselves of the penalties and dodge a potential ban. One in 16 motorists (6%) have asked a friend or relative to take penalty points for them, with a shocking one in twenty (5%) motorists admitting to having actually paid someone to take their penalty points for them.

Of those who admit to falsely swapping penalty points, more than half have done so three times or more (59%), suggesting that many motorists are adopting a cavalier attitude to the practise.

The most common reason cited by motorists for asking someone to take their points is to keep a clean licence (48%), while a quarter (25%) admit they asked someone else to take their points because they were facing a driving ban.

More than a third of motorists (34%) have received penalty points at some point for a motoring offence, with the majority of these points being handed out for speeding (80%). It has been nearly two years (11th March 2013) since former cabinet minister Chris Huhne and his ex-wife Vicky Pryce were sentenced to prison terms for perverting the course of justice after they lied about swapping speeding points.

Worryingly, more than one in 10 motorists (11%) are unaware that it is illegal to take penalty for a friend or relative, with nearly three quarters (72%) of those who said they would take someone else's points admitting that they would do so for their partner. They would also be willing to take points for their children (37%), parents (35%) and siblings (22%).

More than a third of those who have taken points for someone else (37%) said that they did so because the driver in question could have lost their job. However, it's not always a self-less act, as a similar number of people (36%) said they took someone else's points because they were paid to do so.

And it would seem that some professions are more inclined to swap points, with motorists in the hospitality industry topping the list (26%) followed by those who work in the property (17%) and research industries (11%). Furthermore swapping penalties seems to be more prevalent amongst younger motorists with 15% of drivers aged 18-24 admitting to asking friends/family to take penalty points, compared to 7% of 35-44 year olds.

With only just over half (54%) of those who have swapped points admitting to being caught, perhaps it is not surprising to learn that 15% of motorists believe that the penalty points system is not fit for purpose. As a result, 39% of motorists are calling for those who swap penalty points to face criminal prosecution.

Legally, motorists are obliged to inform their insurers that they have points on their licence, however many are failing to do so, with more than one in six motorists (16%) admitting they haven't informed their insurer they have points.

Upon further analysis of the FOI data obtained, it emerges there is currently a motorist still on the road, despite having 45 points on their licence (9 for speeding offences and 36 for failing to disclose the identity of the vehicle driver). This is a result of a loophole within the current point system which states that an MS90 offence (failing to disclose the identity of the vehicle driver) is not something that a driver can be disqualified for.*** It is therefore perhaps understandable why many people may be calling the current points system in to question.

Neil Greig, director of policy and research at the Institute of Advanced Motorists comments: "It's appalling and rather concerning that so many people are paying others to take their penalty points. Not only is this putting other road users at risk of bans, it also means drivers who are prone to speeding remain on the roads when they could well be facing bans. As well as tightening up fraud detection, more education and retraining courses covering a wider range of traffic offences would make our roads safer for everyone."

LOWER DRINK-DRIVE LIMIT SUPPORTED BY UK DRIVERS

(with thanks to Paul Hudson, Daily Telegraph)



The UK (apart from Scotland) now has the highest drink-limit in the EU

Three quarters (74 per cent) of UK drivers want a lower drink-drive limit, according to a survey that has been published in the wake of Scotland reducing its drink-drive limit earlier this month.

In the UK-wide survey of 1,000 drivers, 31 per cent said the UK should get in line with Scotland and most of the EU by lowering the limit to 50 milligrams of alcohol

per 100 millilitres of blood (50mg/100ml) – a limit also set to come into force in Northern Ireland next year.

More than two in five (43per cent) said the UK should go further by introducing a limit of 20mg/100ml that's already in place in a number of EU countries, including Sweden.

Only a quarter (26 per cent) said the limit should remain at the current level of 80mg/100ml – a limit shared only by Malta within the EU.

Road safety charity Brake, which published the results of a survey it carried out with Direct Line, is calling on politicians of all parties to make a zero-tolerance 20mg/100ml drink drive limit a key manifesto commitment for next year's general election.

The survey also found almost unanimous support for tougher measures to tackle repeat drink drive offenders, who currently face the same penalty no matter how many times they are caught, with 95 per cent of people saying that repeat offenders should face higher penalties.

Julie Townsend, deputy chief executive of Brake, said: "The current drink drive limit in England and Wales sends a confusing message and asks drivers to do the impossible – guess when they are under the limit, and guess when they are safe to drive. Even very small amounts of alcohol impair driving, so the only safe choice is not to drink at all before driving. The law needs to make that crystal clear."

Brake advises that being under the legal limit does not mean you are safe to drive. It suggests that people who need to drive the next day limit themselves to one or two alcoholic drinks the night before.

COUNCIL PLANS MOBILE PHONE DETECTOR FINES FOR MOTORISTS

(with thanks to Gordron Raynor and Gregory Walton, Daily Telegraph)

Britain's hard-pressed motorists already face ubiquitous speed cameras, rampant parking wardens and treacherous potholes.

But now one council wants to use cameras to spy on car owners who merely have a phone user on board - even if it's not being used by the driver.

Norfolk County Council has joined forces with police and road safety group *Think!* to devise the system, which took three months to build, in response to residents' complaints about phone use by motorists.

A single detector and warning sign has been in use in the county since April 2014 and is moved between different test locations.



It uses a signal detector to sense when a phone is in use which in turn triggers a nearby warning sign to flash.

And though fines are not yet being issued, the technology could easily be developed to turn it into speed camera-style automatic fine collector. Motorists caught using a phone behind the wheel currently face an on-the-spot fine of £100 and three penalty points.

Iain Temperton, a casualty reduction officer at Norfolk County Council, said: "It's a testbed, and if a new version of the technology comes along or it can be linked to a camera or automatic number plate recognition system it's something we would look towards."

However the system is unable to distinguish between drivers, passengers and legal hands-free systems raising the prospect of a lengthy appeals process for those motorists wrongly fined by the system.

And though such a system would require Home Office approval, Mr Temperton's comments will also raise suspicions that the technology will be used to raise revenues in the same way as some existing speed cameras.

Mr Temperton said: "Mobile phone use is the subject that drivers complain about most in other drivers and they want us to do something about it. We have had a complete mixture of feedback, from people who think it's marvellous to people saying it's a complete waste of time. People don't like to be reprimanded over mobile phone use, it touches a nerve."

The phone detectors cost £4,500 each and have so far been funded from fees paid by those motorists opting for speed awareness courses following brushes with the speeding laws.

Olly Samways, a technical sales engineer for Westcotec which sells the system, said: "At the moment we are not trying to develop a system for law enforcement but I assume it will happen in five to ten years. If it keeps progressing we will keep looking into it. There has been a lot of interest and we have had inquiries from other counties."

A spokesman for Norfolk County Council said: "It does have its limitations, for example pedestrians walking along using their mobile phones will set it off so we have to place it in areas with low pedestrian footfall. As to the future, there's lots of possibilities with it."

The Department for Transport last year released figures showing a 30 per cent dip in the number of motorists being prosecuted for using a mobile telephone behind the wheel in the past two years.

However phone use, along with speeding, drink driving and seat belt offences, is still considered one of the major causes of fatal road accidents.

FACEBOOK ADDICTION SEES MOBILE PHONE USE AT WHEEL SOAR

(with thanks to Steven Swinford, Daily Telegraph)

Hundreds of thousands of motorists are using their mobile phones at the wheel to access Facebook and other social networking websites, an official survey has found.

More than 500,000 motorists used their mobile phones while driving last year, an increase of almost 50 per cent since 2008.

The rise is being fuelled by the "addiction" to social networking websites, particularly among young people.

According to a survey of tens of thousands of drivers, on average 1.5 per cent of car drivers use their mobile phone at the wheel.



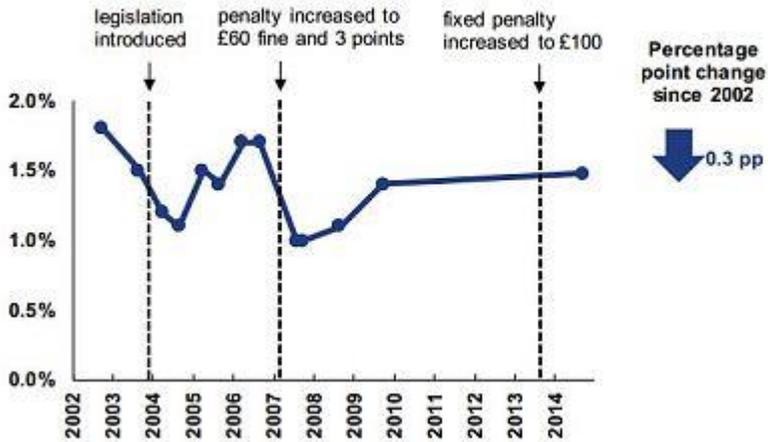
However, young people aged between 17 and 29 are four times more likely to use their mobile phone while driving.

The White Van man is also far more likely to use a mobile phone while driving than other motorists, with 2.7 per cent of them spotted using mobiles.

The DfT report found that two thirds of those seen using their mobile phones were using them to text or for access to social networking websites.

Motorists who use their mobile phones while driving face £100 fines and three points put on their licence.

Chart 4: Hand-held mobile phone use by car drivers¹, England (weekdays and moving sites)



Source: Department for Transport

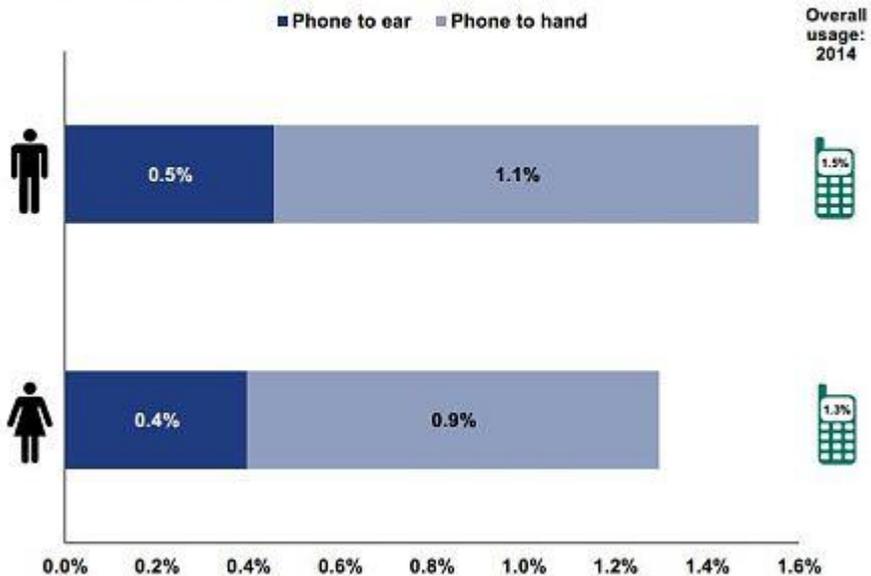
Other figures revealed that there has been a significant fall in the proportion of children who wear seatbelts in cars.

In 2009, 96 per cent of children in England and Scotland were wearing seatbelts, compared to 91 per cent last year.

Robert Goodwill, the transport minister, said the mobile phone figures showed the problem was not just drivers making phone calls, but also texting and using the internet.

"We will keep further deterrent measures under consideration," he added. On seatbelts, he said it was "very concerning to see a decline in seatbelt use, particularly among children".

Chart 5: Use of hand-held mobile phones by car drivers' split by gender, England and Scotland (weekdays and moving sites)



Source: Department for Transport

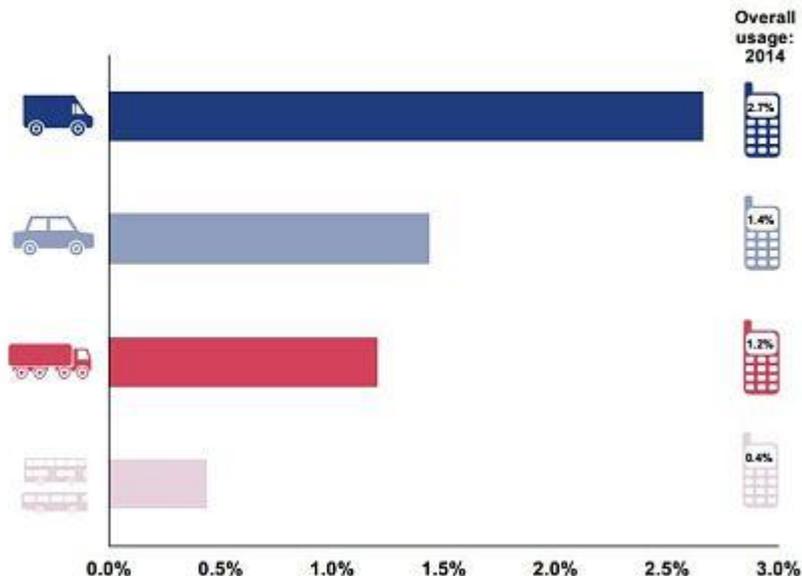
The RAC Foundation said the figures were "a worry", while the Institute of Advanced Motorists said they were "very disappointing".

The AA said the answer to mobile phone usage at the wheel was "more cops in cars", while the decrease in young people wearing restraints was "a cause for concern".

A spokesman said: "It's very worrying, especially as young people are very highly represented in accident stats. This addiction to mobile phones it's only getting worse.

"People need to understand that checking their Facebook status could kill people. There are a number of people who are serving 10-15 year campaigns. We need more police on Britain's roads."

Chart 3: Use of hand-held mobile phones by driver type, England and Scotland (weekdays and moving sites)



Source: Department for Transport

DRIVERS CAUGHT TWICE ON PHONE SHOULD FACE A BAN, POLICE URGE

(with thanks to the Daily Telegraph)

Motorists who are caught for a second time using a mobile phone at the wheel should be banned from the roads, says a leading police officer.

Suzette Davenport, Chief Constable of Gloucestershire, accused the Government of failing to get tough with offenders because it might be a vote-loser.

Miss Davenport, who speaks on roads policing for the Association of Chief Police Officers, said: "My view is that if someone is caught twice using a mobile phone within a period of time we should be considering things like disqualifications for short periods of time.

"I believe if we don't do something fundamentally different we are going to have lost this," she told BBC Radio 5 Live's breakfast show

She said that with a general election looming, the Government did not want to bring in tougher laws. Miss Davenport said: "I don't think it would be popular with lots of people.

"There are lots of things I talk about with government, lots of different interest groups. They listen to those people and an election is not too far away, so I am sure they will not want to pick up and run with anything they feel is not likely to be helpful to them in the next election."

Using mobile phones at the wheel creates a "significant risk", she added.

But Robert Goodwill, the roads minister, denied that the election was a factor and said the Government was considering raising the penalty for using a phone while driving from three points to six.

He told the show: "I've certainly not had representations from colleagues saying, 'don't do this, because of the election.' I may have had colleagues saying, 'don't do this because we need to think about the actual numbers of people we catch.'

"And I think it's important that police and crime commissioners and chief constables look at the resources they put into this, as opposed to other, more easy to detect crimes like speeding."

He added: "People must be more aware of the incredible danger of using their phone when driving and it is time this practice becomes a cultural taboo. We will keep further deterrent measures under consideration."

Her comments come as new regulations to clamp down on motorists driving under the influence of drugs come into force.

Drivers will be prosecuted if they are caught exceeding limits which have, for the first time, been set for eight illegal drugs and eight prescription drugs.

The levels for the illegal drugs, which include heroin, cocaine and cannabis, mean there will effectively be zero tolerance for drivers with the substances in their system.

Police will be able to use "drugalysers" to screen for cannabis and cocaine at the roadside. Officers will also be able to test for these and other drugs including LSD, ketamine and heroin at a police station, even if a driver passes the roadside check.

The prescription drugs for which legal levels have been set include morphine and methadone. The specified drug-drive rules will run alongside the existing legislation which makes it an offence to drive when impaired by any drug.

Mr Goodwill said: "The Government's message is clear: If you take drugs and drive, you are endangering yourself and others and you risk losing your licence."

THE NEW SUMMER TYRE THAT WORKS IN SNOW

(with thanks to the Daily Telegraph)



Michelin is about to launch a new tyre, which it claims offers the braking performance of a conventional summer tyre despite being certified for winter use.

Traditional winter tyres don't perform well on hot asphalt. Meanwhile summer tyres offer limited grip on snow and ice, and conventional all-season tyres fail to provide optimum grip in any conditions. However, the new Michelin CrossClimate is said to feature a new tread pattern and compound that solve these problems, potentially bringing an end to the hassle of switching tyres for the colder months of the year.

Thanks to its official certification, the CrossClimate could even be used all year round in countries such as Germany where winter tyres are a legal requirement.

However, Michelin believes the new tyre is especially relevant to drivers in the UK where winters are generally mild with a few days a year of snow thrown into the mix.

A 2014 study found that 65 per cent of European motorists use summer tyres all year round, jeopardising their safety in treacherous conditions. And another found that 4 in 10 European motorists view the seasonal tyre swap as a constraint and leave it until the very last minute to change.

'STOP TWEETING AND LISTEN' SAYS GREEN CROSS CODE MAN

(with thanks to Nicola Harley, Daily Telegraph)

The Green Cross Code Man has revamped himself for the smartphone generation - this time targeting adults as more than half admit using their phones while crossing the road.

Now tweeting, texting and wearing headphones feature in the code alongside the traditional Stop, Look and Listen.

Listening to music, wearing headphones, talking on the phone and surfing the web have helped account for more than 10 per cent of road casualties.

The Green Cross Code is now hoping to reach the internet generation with two new films aimed at adults instead of children.

The most at risk of being injured are people aged 25 to 59 who account for 36 per cent of all road casualties.

Research by insurance company MORE THAN, revealed 30 per cent of pedestrians will regularly cross the road while using the internet and social media on their phones, 40 per cent while texting and 60 per cent while on a call and 40 per cent while listening to music.

It showed 63 per cent of adults say they will regularly cross the road in an unsafe place and 87 per cent will walk out into the road between parked cars.

Star Wars actor David Prowse MBE maybe more well known for trying to turn people to the dark side in his performance as Darth Vader, but now he has resurrected his role in helping save lives on the road by starring in new films to remind adults of the importance of the Green Cross Code.

He first played the Green Cross Man 40 years ago to teach children about road dangers and is returning for Road Safety Week 2014 - only this time teaching adults about the importance of stopping, looking and listening when crossing the road.

The film shows him speaking to people listening to music on headphones and using a smartphone while crossing the road.

He said: “Stop, look and listen: they’ve been the three basic pillars of road safety for decades, but they’re being ignored en masse every single day. When the original Green Cross Man public information films ran, road accident rates reduced significantly. But that was in the days before pedestrians wandered around glued to their smartphones or wearing giant headphones, now it appears adults are completely out of practice with road safety.

“Road safety is a real passion point for me. I hope these new films, and MORE THAN’s Green Cross Code for grown-ups, can have the same positive impact on roadside behaviours as the original series did. As I’ve always said: pedestrians need to use the Green Cross Code, because I won’t be there when they cross the road.”

Research by MORE THAN showed that 39 per cent of pedestrian road injuries are caused by adults not looking properly when they cross the road.

Dan Robinson, Head of Motor at MORE THAN said: “You only need to spend a few short minutes observing pedestrians to see how many will cross the road while looking at their smartphones or listening to music through headphones. The study showed that there’s not only a basic ignorance of the Green Cross Code but, there’s a real disregard for basic road safety in today’s society: a consequence not just of technological advancements, but our general impatience when we’re getting from A to B.

“David’s Green Cross Man is one of the most memorable road safety characters of all time, but the important information he dispensed to the nation in the 1970s and 1980s seem to have been forgotten by many. With it being Road Safety Week, we felt it was high time the most iconic road safety figure returned to remind Britons everywhere that you’re never too old to use the Green Cross Code.”

The new code is as follows:

THINK! about the road, stop talking on the phone and find the safest place to cross, then stop - avoid crossing between parked cars

STOP! texting and tweeting when crossing the road

LOOK away from your phone and look all around for traffic, especially bikes and electric vehicles that you can’t hear

LISTEN! for traffic, not your music. Take off your headphones and listen

WAIT UNTIL IT'S SAFE TO CROSS! If traffic is coming, let it pass

LOOK AND LISTEN AGAIN! When it's safe, walk straight across the road

ARRIVE ALIVE! Keep looking and listening for traffic and don't use your smartphones and music as you cross

LEARNING TO DRIVE AND FLY IN WARTIME CARDIFF

(with thanks to Dr Eric Joseph)

Some weeks ago I came across my Air Training Corps 'Certificate of Aircrews Proficiency of seventy years ago' (Fig1).

It reminded me of those wartime years in Cardiff, Stukas divebombing the docks by day, and the night bombing raids when the noise from our anti-aircraft batteries at the Cyncoed Tennis Courts was more frightening than that of the exploding bombs. The Home Guard had built a fortified post to the East of Llanedeyrn Rd which fortunately was never called upon to resist a German attack.

A.T.C. Form 3



AIR TRAINING CORPS

Certificate of Proficiency

This is to Certify that

Cadet Eric Joseph

of No. 293 (Cowbridge Grammar School) Squadron/Flight

is granted this Certificate of Proficiency for having successfully passed the Air Training Corps Proficiency Examination as : Aircrew

E. Joseph
Air Marshal
Chief Commandant and Director General
of the Air Training Corps.

Dated at the Air Ministry
this 8th day of January 1945.

I was sixteen years old and dying to learn to drive. Driving licences first introduced in 1903 were suspended from 1939 to 1946 so when my eldest brother David was back on leave from the Army and invited me to take his Austin Seven tourer and teach myself how to drive I was delighted.

Cars were much simpler in those days. They had direct steering so that the heavier models required quite a lot of force to turn the wheel. In order to change gear we had to learn the procedure called "double declutching". This consisted of listening to the engine speed and judging when to change gear without causing that shattering grinding noise. Brakes were not as efficient as they should have been so the drag of the "passive" engine was used as an adjunct. Hand signals had to be learnt. There were no automatic ones.

There was very little traffic on the roads. After an hour or two around what was largely deserted Penylan and having mastered the "crash" gearbox I considered that I had learnt to drive and was eventually issued with a provisional licence.

I was never subsequently called upon to undergo a test until I volunteered to sit the I. A. M. Cardiff Advanced Drivers Test in 2005. This I passed first time at the age of 78. Sixty two years later.

Learning to fly with the Air Training Corps in those days was almost as informal. We schoolboy volunteers met at the technical site in the South West corner of R.A.F. Pengam Moors (now Rover Way) where we learnt the theory of flight and the basics of gliding. We had two gliders and a converted balloon winch to haul them into the air. We were encouraged to make short and then longer "hops".

In the summer holidays we went to RAF camp at Pembrey for two weeks where we flew with Commonwealth Aircrew who were returning from active service. This was the highlight of our training. We seventeen year old youngsters were very keen on getting in to the R.A.F. Had it not been for the end of the war I might have become a regular member of RAF Aircrew.

Pengam Moors airfield had a varied history. Known initially as "Splott Aerodrome" it was built as a private club on land purchased from Lord Tredegar. It fronted on to the Severn Estuary. A sea wall had to be built to protect the single grass runway from damaging gales.

In 1905 Ernest Willows built his first airship at Pengam. In 1910 his third airship "The City of Cardiff" flew from Cardiff to London. Following the outbreak of war in 1939 the runway was extended and No 614 Glam. Squadron RAu:xAF was formed and took up residence. They carried out target spotting using Hawker Hinds and Hawker Hectors and were later re-equipped with Lysanders. Later still the squadron was transferred to Llandow.



(Fig 2. - the familiar aerial approach to the runway.)

Pengam Moors was largely used for repairing and rebuilding spitfires and hurricanes prior to shipping them from Cardiff Docks to overseas theatres of war. The main part of the airfield lay vacant for almost a decade after the war, until 1963 when the Rover Car Company built two huge warehouses running parallel with the disused runway. The factory closed in 1984 and the area remained derelict until 2001 when Tesco established a supermarket there.

Eric Joseph

(Born - Cardiff 1927, Specialist Dental Practice 45 years

Fellow of The Royal College of Surgeons of England 1954, President of BSRD 1975, Hon. Senior Lecturer Kings College Hospital Medical School –Present)

A PHYSICIST WRITES . . .

(with thanks to Peter Soul, Thames Valley Group of Advanced Motorists, January 2015)

An article in the last *Advanced Driving* magazine brought an awkward fact to our attention: cars have been putting on weight – or more to the point, width. Some previously slim models such as the Mini have widened by 18 inches over the years (though the Mini did it, untypically, in one extraordinary burst of growth around 15 years ago, in becoming the MINI).

The reasons are mostly attributable to the car-occupants, who have not only themselves broadened, but have also demanded features such as bucket seats, room for three in the back, extra storage space, more powerful front-wheel-drive engines, and doors able to accommodate speakers, electric windows and side-impact protection.

You wonder how many drivers have rolled their new car into their old garage, and then discovered that they couldn't get out! Me, I confess that for twenty years or more my garage has been occupied by other items: if it wasn't for them, possibly my Mk 6 Golf *could* be squeezed in (with me then being able to squeeze out, I mean), because the article mentioned that this model has put on only seven inches or so, across the beam, since the days of the Mk 1 in the 70s. And that's even with incorporating the features that I've listed above.

Full marks to the VW design team for this, then. *But* (while I have them in mind) not many marks for providing my car with no flat space inside to put things down on safely. The top of the dashboard, for example, is four square feet of useless undulating surface. Do vehicle designers actually drive cars? Does their eye for a nice profile neutralize their common sense for how practical it will be? Do they simply think differently from the rest of us – or from me anyway?

“Thinking differently”: I would like to explore this general idea further, as there's evidence of it all around. If I see a car arriving at a red light (or some other hold-up that's visible from a good distance away) at high speed plus heavy braking, I think of the pointless waste of fuel and brake material – but the driver is clearly thinking of something else, or not thinking at all.

Then there's the fondness that some motorists have for the gear-stick, expressed by caressing it all the time with their left hand, even on bends and corners: are they confident that the hand will never suddenly be needed on the steering-wheel? And I can't imagine the thought-processes that allow a vehicle to be left parked absurdly and damagingly with a tyre, or even two, half-off the edge of a kerb (something I seem to notice every other day).

It's not just on the road that I observe the effects of brains being used in a different way from mine. I run a volunteer group of adopt-a-street litter-pickers (now more than 260 strong, and covering at least 80% of our town of Earley), but we are only needed because of the many litter-*droppers*: what on earth is going through the mind of people when they discard an item on the pavement or verge? Do they assume it will quickly fade away to nothing?

By the way, I heard recently of some extraordinarily effective tricks for getting litter disposed of properly: painting green footprints on the ground, leading towards a litter-bin, actually induces people to follow them and do the necessary! In train carriages, if a fresh lemon aroma is fed in through the ventilation system, it somehow encourages passengers to take their coffee-cups and newspapers away (why should it be the train company's job to clear up them up anyway?). And there's no doubt that when a street is kept reasonably clean, less litter is dropped on it...

Here's a different sort of puzzling behaviour: everyone knows, surely, the importance of keeping a PIN-number secret. If a crook gets to know it and then manages to steal or copy the card, your money becomes his. Yet in shops I constantly see customers punching in their number 'openly' so that it could easily be noted or filmed. Do they think there's no risk at all? Me, I cover the keypad (with my wallet) every time – ready for the one time that it could matter.

But let's get back to motoring. Some drivers evidently still believe that there are no significant dangers in using a mobile phone while on the move. But it's almost inevitable that talking (whether via a hand-held or a hands-free phone) to someone who is not in the car will take your concentration off the road ahead. A recent study on a driving simulator established that the effect was equivalent to having drunk three shots of vodka!

And yet, astonishingly, it is possible to circumvent this (I mean the problem with the mobile, not with the vodka): if the distant party can actually see the driver or better still the road ahead, on a video-phone of some sort, their conversation instinctively becomes 'participatory' with the driving, just as if they were a passenger – aware of the traffic, maybe pointing out hazards, and so on. And as a result, the added risk to the driver in using the phone is much smaller.

This too was only demonstrated on a driving simulator, so it might not be valid in real driving. And it's unlikely to be allowed as an exemption to the law against mobile-phone use, as there's no easy way of ensuring that drivers have set up the necessary video connection. But anyway, if you would like to know more about the study, listen to the R4 programme *All in the Mind*, available here: www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/b04svjbn.

There was an interesting discussion too, in the programme, on why vehicles parked on motorway hard shoulders are less noticeable (to approaching drivers) than you might think. The reason is that they are pointing in exactly the same direction as the rest of the traffic, and so don't stand out from it – regardless of the fact that they are stationary. We were told that if you are obliged to stop on the hard shoulder, the trick for protecting your car by making it more 'visible' is to park it at an angle (pointing into the verge, I would suggest, rather than the other way).

That's assuming, of course, that the car hasn't become too wide for this to be feasible!

Peter Soul

Group Committee

Chairman

Jonathan Coldman, 25 Murrayfield Road, Birchgrove, Cardiff, CF14 4QW
Tel: (02920) 617106 Email: Chairman@cardiffiam.co.uk

Vicechairman & Chief Observer

Richard Furneaux, 17 Bron Las, Penpedairheol, Hengoed, CF82 7TB
Tel: (01443 831216) Email: Chiefobserver@cardiffiam.co.uk

Secretary & Membership Co-ordinator

Jazz Roberts, Tel: 07586 338009, Email: membership@cardiffiam.co.uk

Treasurer

Linda Harrington, 12 Bronwydd Avenue, Penylan, Cardiff, CF23 5JP
Tel: (02920) 463851 Email: Treasurer@cardiffiam.co.uk

Webmaster

Kevin Roberts, Email: Webmaster@cardiffiam.co.uk

Newsletter Editor

Ian Kolvin, 21 Bangor Street, Roath Park, Cardiff, CF24 3LQ
Email: newsletter@cardiffiam.co.uk

Gift Aid

George Grant, 6 Church Street, Ynysybwl, Pontypridd, CF37 3LD
Tel: (01443) 790143 Email: Giftaid@cardiffiam.co.uk

Events Officer

Edwin Griffith, Email: Events@cardiffiam.co.uk

General Committee

Viv Colwill, 47 Beech Tree Way, Greenacres, Nelson, CF46 7NU (01443) 451463

David James, 2 Chapel Street, Abercanaid, Merthyr Tydfil CF48 1RX 07733 070888

Bob Natton, Tel: (02920) 764671

Viv Edwards, Tel: 07773 573699

Shaun Seabrook

John Stevens

Barri Williams

facebook

www.facebook.com/CardiffgroupIAM

Follow Us On:

twitter

twitter.com/CardiffIAM