



Official Provider

Newsletter

Cardiff Group of Advanced Motorists
Affiliated to IAMRoadSmart



Welcome to our refreshed newsletter! It's been a long while since our last newsletter for which I apologise, but we have been taking stock of the newsletter activities including running a survey that many took part in – thank you if you did participate.

The survey showed us that many do appreciate the newsletter and liked the articles. It also showed that you wanted more local articles but few, if any, were willing to write something to help feed the newsletter cogs. I do hope that will change and I would like to see you send us your letters and articles for inclusion here.

The survey also indicated you would like the newsletter more often. With the dearth of articles from members it becomes very hard to provide a regular newsletter and it becomes an exercise of 'filling' with material from newspapers. So following a committee review, we have decided to issue two newsletters per year with articles written by the members as far as possible.

Printing a full glossy-page newsletter for everyone each time is not sustainable for the group in the longer term so we have decided to offer the newsletter as an online version only (although we shall home-print copies for members we know do not use computers). The committee has kicked started with a couple of articles for this issue, but we shall soon run out of ideas for articles so you, our members, need to help us by providing written pieces for us.

We shall aim to produce the newsletter in spring and autumn and we may introduce a further copy if we get sufficient input from the members.

If you are now inspired to write to us about something for the newsletter please email me at chairman@cardiffiam.co.uk. As far as possible we shall print articles as written but we reserve the right to edit articles if needed (or withhold defamatory articles). Letters and articles can be on any topic although road safety and motoring are preferred, but it doesn't matter how tenuous the link! Perhaps you have enjoyed a driving event, or a driving holiday, been on the receiving end of road rage, have some driving tips, want to vent some frustration at roads in our area or fancy reviewing your new car, been to a car show, have tips on car maintenance or simply want to write about your IAM Roadsmart test – all are welcome. We would be happy to hear about unusual hobbies even if they are not car related.

We welcome letters too and I'm happy to maintain anonymity if desired (no contact details will be printed on any published letter anyway, unless requested by the sender, but it is usual to attribute the letter to a name).

So I look forward to the 'flood' of articles and letters from you! I sincerely hope you like the new format; we are trying to keep things simple, light yet informative and fun.

What's on?

Here is a list of our forthcoming events. All our regular meetings take place on the first Thursday of the month at 7.30pm in Lisvane Memorial Centre, Heol Y Delyn, Cardiff.

April: Rod Ashley (Chair of Swansea Bay Group) – a presentation on 'Only Fools and Porches'.

May: Classic cars presentation by Ed Griffith

June: Meet the IAM Examiners & Social Evening – meet our examiners and pose your questions over a light buffet snack and drinks,

We are currently exploring the possibility of visits to Nash Point Lighthouse (provisionally 7th May), Royal Mint with lunch at the Bears Head and Tintern Abbey with lunch at The Anchor Inn Pub. Please watch for email fliers and information on our website.

We shall take a summer recess in July and August and re convene in September.

Who is on the committee?

The IAM Cardiff Group committee members are:

Chair: **Jonathan Coldman**, chairman@cardiffiam.co.uk

Vice chair and Chief Observer: **Richard Furneaux**, chiefobserver@cardiffiam.co.uk

Treasurer: **Linda Harrington**, treasurer@cardiffiam.co.uk

Membership & Secretary: **Jazz Singh Roberts**, membership@cardiffiam.co.uk

Website: **Kevin Roberts**, website@cardiffiam.co.uk

Events: **Ed Griffith**, events@cardiffiam.co.uk

Other committee: **Bob Natton, Shaun Seabrook, Viv Edwards, Viv Colwill, Barri Williams, George Grant.**

Join us on Facebook

Our Facebook page is an excellent way to keep up to date on what's on within the Group. Find us as Cardiff IAM.

Website www.cardiffiam.co.uk

Our website continues to grow and offers another place to find out what's on and learn more about Cardiff IAM and IAM Roadsmart. In 2016 the website was revamped to add more content and rebrand in line with the IAM Roadsmart new branding. We recommend having a fresh look at the website if you haven't been to visit recently!

Early Driving Moments

By Bob Natton, Committee Member

1959. I was 18, the L plates went onto the car (a Vauxhall Victor) and out with Dad for a practice drive. Dad put down the newspaper which he had been reading for a while asking why I had pulled up behind the row a stationary vehicles? Yes - you have guessed it -they were all parked along the side of the road!

1960. The day of my driving test arrived. I started off from a side road and half way out turning right onto the main road the car engine cut out - handbrake on, into neutral and ignition off. The examiner said that if this was to continue happening the test would be aborted. I explained, in a voice as calm as possible, that the car had been serviced 2 days before and the carburettor had now flooded. I turned the ignition on; the engine burst into life with a cloud of exhaust fumes behind and off we went to a successful test.

1971. During my IAM test in my 848cc Mini I was driving along a narrow road with very high hedges. The examiner and I were both 6 feet tall and were about 14 stones in weight. Negotiating a tight right hand bend a brewers lorry, travelling faster than appropriate, appeared taking up the width of the road. My car was brought smartly to a controlled stop, although stomachs retched! The brewers lorry stopped very close to the front of my stationary car. Checking my rear view mirrors I reversed some distance to a passing place, luckily there was no other traffic about. The lorry passed by and I proceeded with test. The examiner, looking down at his clip board, said, "Mr Natton, I shall NOT be asking you to carry out ANOTHER emergency stop during the test!". I successfully passed.

What's driving me potty?

By Jonathan Coldman, Chair

I know I'm not the only person to complain about these but really the proliferation of these is driving my potty! What am I talking about? Potholes and speed bumps.



Picture 1: Damaged wheel

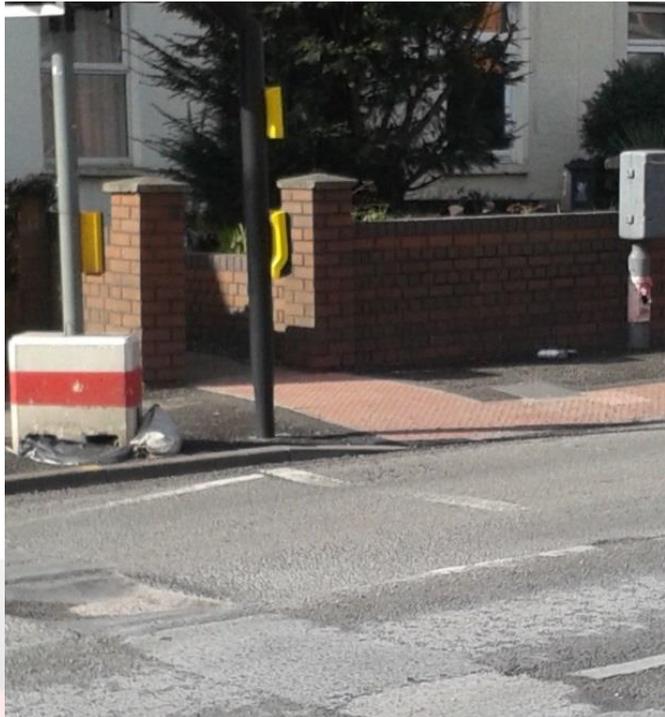
Potholes seem to be the bane of everyone's life and I fell foul of them last year when I hit a very large unmarked hole at night at 30mph. It bucked my wheel and cost me the tick end of £800 to replace along with two new tyres. You see with four wheel drive cars, having different tread depths on the same axle is not good and so I had to replace the second front tyre to match the buckled wheel one.

Yes I tried to claim via Cardiff Council and they were having none of it as their defence is 'we have a programme of monthly inspections'. The fact that road works had been and gone between their monthly inspections on that stretch of North Road in Cardiff and that I had picture evidence of the hole counts for nothing. So I'm £800 down. I was lucky as the thud it produced driving over the hole and the massive shudder the car with took I could have done far more damage – I did have my

wheel alignment checked (twice) to be sure my suspension geometry and shock absorbers were still ok. They were.

I know some of you will be saying it's my fault for driving a car with expensive alloy wheels. But you try replacing your alloys and see how much they cost you. Not many cars these days are sold without alloys and many are these diamond-cut alloys costing a fortune.

Potholes seem to spring up (or down) almost overnight and with such congestion there's often little a driver can do to avoid them. This means drivers are facing huge bills to replace wheels, tyres, suspensions and drive shafts. And the Councils (at least Cardiff) seem to be able to hide behind dubious inspection programmes and not pay out.



Picture 2: The offending pot hole

Another area I'm bubbling with frustration about is speedbumps but more specifically these 'speed tables'. These are the flat topped speed bumps that sometimes have a zebra crossing on. It seems to be the option of choice for Cardiff Council when considering traffic calming.

My gripe is on the approach ramp and exit ramps of these systems. In Cardiff I know of several that appear far too steep on the approach and/or exit causing the vehicle to bounce violently if taken at any speed whatsoever. I wish I knew the regulations for the design of these to challenge the council.

Secondly these speed control systems are not good for the environment. Cardiff Council seems to be happy to cause more pollution and contribute to vehicle emissions by installing speed bumps. With drivers having to slow for the approach and then the acceleration after the bump causes more emissions than driving at a steady speed. You can also add to this the noise pollution this creates from the vehicles powering on after the bump.

Thirdly these road systems can seriously damage our vehicles. People seem oblivious to the damage driving these steep sided bumps can cause. Like potholes earlier, you can seriously damage suspensions, steering, drive shafts, oil sumps and exhausts.

So what can be done? Probably nothing but I do think that traffic would flow much better without them and greater use of road markings might be just as effective and less dangerous to our environment and vehicles.

I now take these speed bumps at an absolute snail's pace which I know must annoy other drivers. Having had to already fork out for a new wheel I now don't want to damage my expensive adaptive dampers on my suspension. Once bitten, twice shy and all that!

Supercars I have driven

By Shaun Seabrook, committee member

The adventure started in 2014 when I was given, by my family, an Everyman voucher to drive three supercars. They had chosen exactly the right cars: a Lamborghini Gallardo, a Ferrari 360 and an Aston Martin DB9. We all travelled to a track near Loughborough and, to make a weekend of it, we stayed overnight.

I drove the cars in the above order on a twisting track with multiple corners and found it easy to use the sequential paddle shifts. The instructors sitting beside you are excellent and guide you through the process. Initially they told me which gears to use, but as I gained confidence, they just told me what revs I should change up at.



The grip in the Gallardo was amazing and the power fantastic, even though you are nowhere near the limit on the short track.

Next came the Ferrari, which was an open top to add another dimension. It did not have the same level of grip or seem as fast as the Gallardo, but the engine sounded great with the open top.

Last was the Aston, with its 007 pedigree you just have to have it on your wish list. It's a heavier car and, being front engine, it did not handle as well as the other two through the corners and you had to make completely different gear selections around the track. It's a grand Tourer!

What a great experience!

Part two came in 2016. In April, it was my father's 80th Birthday and my Mum could not think how to celebrate it as a family event. She phoned me one day after talking with my brother, and said "what about your dad having a supercar experience?" I should explain, once a year we go to a classic race meeting like Goodwood or Silverstone, but he has never expressed an interest in driving something exotic even after me enthusing about my earlier experience. I said "are you really sure?". A week later she said "it's all I can think of". I did the research with Everyman and as they live in West Sussex, the Top Gear circuit at Dunsfold, which is very near to them had slots available.

It fell on me to suggest it to Dad. I rang him up during an advert break and said his wife and other son had come up with this idea. It was a short conversation and his immediate response was not yes. I said "I'll ring you the same time tomorrow". In 24 hours, my Mum had talked him into it.

The three of us were driving on the Saturday after his birthday. I came up the day before with the family and brought my Playstation, steering wheel and game with the track on it. I sat him down in his living room with the wheel set up and let him have a go round the track we were going to drive for real. The steering wheel had a paddle shift and I said this was part of the fun. I told him if they were to suggest driving it in fully automatic, he was to say "definitely not" and to enjoy playing with the paddle shifts.

The day came. It was a beautiful day, thankfully, if somewhat bracing. We arrived with the whole family in tow, including grandchildren. My dad and brother had the same initial package as I had done previously, but I went for the next package up. I was to drive the Ferrari 458, Lamborghini

Murcielago and McLaren 650s. I was told to mention the Murcielago on booking in as I might be the only one driving it. Already with an air of trepidation it did not help when the lady told me that was not possible as it had been written off last week. It was replaced in my line up with the uprated Gallardo.

For my dad and brother, they enjoyed their drives, and my dad's confidence grew with each car and he was looking very sporty in his last drive, the Gallardo.

For myself, the first drive was the McLaren. As I put my foot down on the straight, the acceleration was just awesome, the power was unrelenting, and I just went through the gears. However, there is a sharp hammerhead curve at the end of the straight and I ran out of courage, so started braking long before the instructor told me to. The same thing happened on the next lap, and I cannot tell you what speed I was doing, or even if I reached seventh gear, as I was just concentrating on that view ahead.

As I returned to my family in the pits I was speechless; the only word I could utter was "awesome".



The Ferrari 458 was brilliant, but not as frightening, and I was able to start looking at racing lines around the track.

The Gallardo was last, and again, the speed down the straight caused me to lose my courage, but not quite in the same way as the McLaren.

Finally, I have to admit that I chickened out of the chauffeured saloon car ride and let my oldest daughter use my ticket alongside my brother and father. My brother said he saw 150 mph down the one-third-of-a-mile straight!

The whole experience was fabulous and to experience it with all my family was a joy. The family took lots of photos and we also bought the photo package from Everyman, which meant I could share it back home with all with all my friends and colleagues.

I highly recommend you have a go.

Specifications: -

McLaren 650S BHP=641 0-60=2.9s Top Speed = 207 mph

Ferrari 458 BHP=562 0-60=3.4s Top Speed = 200 mph

Gallardo 560-4 BHP=553 0-60=3.4s Top Speed = 201 mph

