



NEWSLETTER

2016 - Issue 23

Chairman's Chat

This summer has been a busy one for our observer teams in the group. We have had a good intake of associates which has resulted in people having to wait to commence their observed drives/rides.

All of our observers have been issued with their handbooks for the new Advanced Driving and Riding Courses and we hope to soon be offering the new courses to all associates.

In the world of driving I note too that the Driving Test is again being modified to reflect real life scenarios.

The proposals include the following:

- Increase the 'independent driving' part of the test from 10 to 20 minutes.
- Ask the candidate to follow instructions on a Sat Nav as an alternative to following road signs.
- Manoeuvring – driving into and reversing out of a parking bay
- Ask a safety question whilst candidate is driving, for example asking a candidate to use rear heated screen.



I can understand some of the above but I would have thought it much safer to ask for a reverse park and then drive out rather than the other way around.

I hope you have all had a good summer despite the weather we've had and look forward to seeing you at one of our winter meetings.

Angus Maciver

GROUP NEWS

Dates for your Diary:-

Monthly meetings

13th October 2016 Title 'The Long way Up' - by Wilson Hutchison A motorcycle adventure from Patagonia to Alaska. A trip through 15 countries, 2 continents lasting 4.1/2 months.	Falkirk Fire Station, Westfield, FK2 9AH
17th November 2016 Title TBA	Smith Museum, Dumbarton Road, Stirling, FK8 2RQ
9th February 2017 Title TBA	Falkirk Fire Station, Westfield, FK2 9AH
9th March 2017 Title TBA	Smith Museum, Dumbarton Road, Stirling, FK8 2RQ
11th May 2017 (AGM)	Smith Museum, Dumbarton Road, Stirling, FK8 2RQ

Congratulations to the following people who have passed their IAM Test:

Associate		Observer
John Wilson (car)	17/05/2016	Gerry Smyth
Jim McAulay (car)	04/07/2016	Gerry Smyth
Sam Barber (bike)	05/07/2016	Ronnie Maclean
Andy Stark (bike) F1rst!	17/07/2016	Mike Calvert
Chris Ellen (car) F1rst!	22/08/2016	Angus Maciver
Madge Kennedy (car)	02/09/2016	Angus Maciver

CAR / MOTORCYCLE SECTION

THE MIDDLE PEDAL

Ask any driver of a vehicle with manual transmission what the middle pedal does. You will get a funny look and the answer "it's the footbrake, of course".

Yes, but it was not always thus. This was brought back to me whilst watching a recent television programme entitled Petrol Age. The presenter was let loose in an absolutely gorgeous Lagonda to drive round Brooklands. He immediately remarked on the pedal layout as it had a centre accelerator.



This reminded me of an occasion in my student holidays when I worked for an Edinburgh Ford dealer. One day I was asked to drive an elderly Ford Ten van to their other garage. I got aboard and immediately noticed that – for the first time—I was faced with a layout where the brake was on the right, the accelerator was central and the clutch was on the left. My next thought was that I had to drive this vehicle across central Edinburgh with all its bustling traffic, junctions and hazards. Vision from the driver's seat was not wonderful. However the journey was completed without incident.

I have to say that the situation certainly concentrated the mind.

Neill Watt

THE SELF-CONSCIOUS TAILGATER

I bet you've been there – on your bike in traffic and the car/van/lorry/bus behind you is almost warming up its front bumper on your exhaust. There are a number of reasons for this. Ignoring the stereotypes (aggressive/careless/moronic) there are actually potentially good reasons for this occurring – namely that it's harder for the driver behind you to estimate the gap given the small profile of the bike. Well, that's what we're told.

Anyway, as an all year round bike commuter in Edinburgh I've been looking for ways to reduce the amount of tail gaiting going on behind me. First and foremost though is the very simple and important rule – if you're being tail gated, extend the space IN FRONT of you, so you are much less likely to need to brake sharply, and thereby reduce the chances of the (insert adjective) driver behind hitting you.

Now, onto my attempts to improve my conspicuousness.

1. High Vis – I'm currently sporting a green and yellow high vis vest – the theory being that IF they notice you, you look more like a paramedic and maybe they'll give you more respect...
2. More lights – I have a Givi top box which had red reflective panels around the middle and extending round the sides. I mounted red LED strips underneath the strips and wired them into the rear running lamp. Clearly more effective in low light/at night.
3. Extra brake light – this time it was the turn of the central reflective panel on the Givi top box – I installed a pair of very bright 'eagle eye' LED's behind it and wired them into the brake light. So I now have that extra brake light, much higher and closer to the following driver's line of sight.

Did any of these have any noticeable effect? No. Well, all is not lost, the bike is way more visible than before, but what next? Well, I ride with a helmet camera, why not get a rear facing camera?

So, back to ebay – I procured a GoPro lookalike for a stupidly low price – I secured it to the lid of the top box, bang in the middle. And do you know what? It turns out most drivers really don't like to tail gate when there's a camera pointing right back at them! I see it every day – the vehicle behind closes up, and up, and then suddenly drops back – they never did that before – not for the high vis, not for the extra lights, not for changes in positioning, but put them on camera and oh boy, they really don't like it!



So there it is – the camera cost a whopping £11 – it works – sometimes... Well, what do you expect for £11? The SD card cost more than the camera! Sometimes it's on, sometimes it's not. But the car behind doesn't know if it's on or not.

There we are – a cheapo camera mounted rear facing in a prominent position has done more to stop people tailgating me than all the lights and high viz.

What can I conclude from this? It wasn't that they couldn't see me, or had problem judging their following distance – they just didn't care – they tailgate everything, not just bikes – let them by and they just tailgate the car in front – it's their default driving state - but shove a video camera in their face, and suddenly they become self-conscious and behave a whole load better.

Isn't human nature fascinating?

Mike Calvert

NATIONAL NEWS

Road safety: global health issue

In countries like Vietnam and India, unique incentives – along with fines – are encouraging safer behaviour for drivers and pedestrians alike

<http://www.roadsafe.com/roadsafetyglobalhealthissue>

Jaguar Land Rover to begin UK real-world tests of autonomous technologies

Under the plans, the carmaker will roll out a fleet of more than 100 research vehicles over the next four years, with the first of these research cars to be driven on a new 41-mile test route on motorways and urban roads around Coventry and Solihull later this year.

<http://www.roadsafe.com/jaguarlandrovertobeginukrealworldtestsofautonomoustechologies>

Driving test changes to 'better reflect real-life driving

Changes to the driving test will better reflect real-life driving, says the [Driver and Vehicle Standards Agency](#) (DVSA).

<http://www.roadsafe.com/drivingtestchangestobetterreflectreallifedriving>



AEB makes an impact

Three new models recently launched by European manufacturers have been independently tested for safety by Euro NCAP.

<http://www.roadsafe.com/aebmakesanimpact>

Your Committee 2016/17

Chairman and Chief Observer	Alan Penman	07966 897354	chairman@forthvalleyiam.org.uk
Secretary	David Legge		secretary@forthvalleyiam.org.uk
Treasurer	Shazad Gul		
Membership/Liaison Secretary	Mark Elder	07973 217256	membership@forthvalleyiam.org.uk
Newsletter Editor	Kenneth Grant	01324 228126	newsletter@forthvalleyiam.org.uk
Motorcycle Chief Observer	Lindsay Pyall		
Vice-President	Angus Maciver	07801 951508	angus.maciver@blueyonder.co.uk

Forth Valley Group website: www.forthvalleyiam.org.uk/

Enquiries to Membership tel: 07973217256