



NEWSLETTER 2019- Issue 30

Chairman's Chat

I would like to wish all of our members a Happy New Year and hope that it is a safe year on the road for you all.

Our bike section is quiet at the moment but looking forward to the March event at Ingliston which always brings in some bikers signing up for a riding course.

The car section is ticking along quietly with no great influx of new associates recently.

The new Chief Executive Mike Quinton is attending a meeting in Glasgow on the 10th of January and it will be interesting to hear what he has to say about IAM RoadSmart.

Looking ahead to our AGM in May I would again appeal to any of our members to consider coming forward to take over the role of Chairman as I plan to retire again from this position.

Angus Maciver
Chairman



GROUP NEWS

Dates for your Diary:-
 Group meetings - 7.30pm

7th February 2019	
<p>Topic: John Baxter from Blood-Bikes Scotland is talking about their service delivering blood and other urgent medical supplies for the NHS. A new Forth-Valley weekday service is starting soon, come along and find out how you might be able to help.</p>	Falkirk Fire Station, Westfield, FK2 9AH
7th March 2019	
<p>Topic: Transport Scotland on Average Speed Cameras (Provisional).</p>	Smith Museum, Dumbarton Road, Stirling, FK8 2RQ
9th May 2019	
AGM	Smith Museum, Dumbarton Road, Stirling, FK8 2RQ

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

Associate	Observer
Andrew Dougall (Car) 26/07/2018	Angus Maciver
James Bruce (Bike) 22/09/2018 F1rst!	Ian MacDonald
James (Hamish) McDonald (Bike) 29/09/2018	Lindsay Pyall

CAR / MOTORCYCLE SECTION

A Trip to Le Mans

If you are a bit of a petrol head you really need to do this once in your life. It's quite an experience. The Le Mans 24-hour race has been run nearly 90 times now and is in the middle of June each year. There are 4 classes of car in the same race (some of the classes being faster than others – which makes it exciting in itself because the faster cars are having to overtake several times in each of the laps).

It is nothing like the, in my view, quite boring Formula 1 races in that it is still organized by people who are clearly volunteers and enthusiasts. And it is very non-commercialized. For example, spectators can, and do, camp just about anywhere (for example on the verge at the side of the entrance!) and the day before the race you can just walk around the pit area chatting to the teams and watching the mechanics making last minute changes.

The racetrack is mostly a public road that is closed for the duration of the race, but is open to the public even on the morning of the race and within an hour or two of it finishing.

A friend and I stayed in an official campsite on "Porsche Curves" which provides a nice embankment for planting my camping chair to watch the cars into the night. With a bit of timing and some prior information we calculated that, even after braking hard enough to make the brakes glow orange in the night, the faster cars were going through our bend at 150mph.



Do I need a ticket? Yes if you want to get a good view. There are a few places where, without a ticket, you can get close enough to see some action, but it's very crowded. Tickets cost about £80 for the whole event but that gets you into many areas at the trackside. A seat in the grandstand is extra (about £50 from memory) – but I'd recommend that to (a) have a sit down occasionally and (b) for watching the start and finish. There are many grandstands and you need to choose which. I'd recommend Grandstand 21 – it's right at the start/finish and it's opposite the pits (the one above the pits is also excellent but you can then only see into the pits if you go down to the front row). During most of the race (not the busy start and finish) I found my grandstand ticket would get me into any grandstand because most of the seats are empty with owners wandering around the various grass viewing points and the marshals are pretty laid-back. It is France.

There are plenty of big screens around the track so you can keep up with what dramas are happening elsewhere while you lounge in the sun on a particular curve. Also take (or buy from one of the numerous sellers) a small radio to listen to "Radio Le Mans" for the commentary.



The event goes on for a couple of weeks with a festival in the town centre and drivers parades and side races but the main race is 3pm Saturday to 3pm Sunday. However, I'd recommend arriving Thursday evening, having Friday to look at all the displays and the pits and be fresh for the race (you won't sleep much Saturday night even if you want to). Don't try to leave Sunday afternoon – the entire place is grid locked. Monday is a relaxed drive back to get a mid-afternoon channel train.

Travel: You can fly to Paris and get the ATV train to Le Mans and there's a tram to the racetrack but the drive is half of the adventure. Definitely drive. Everyone (nearly) on the road is going to or from Le Mans in all sorts of exotic cars. In our channel crossing train carriage we had a current model Porsche 911 Turbo right behind us and an AC Cobra in front of us and a Maserati in front of that. Of course everyone gets out of their cars and chats. It's an amazing atmosphere even before you reach the track.

As I said above we camped in an official site next to the track (which had beer/food tent, a big screen, loos, parking and even showers) but many people camp outside the official sites and some people use hotels. Hotels apparently have a great atmosphere but you have to suffer the gridlock and parking nightmare every day, so I would not use hotels – and if you were to miss the night time racing you would miss a real spectacle of red-hot brakes and sparks as things fall off cars (there's a safety "catch net" all the way around the track between cars and spectators!).

Other tips: Take earplugs and a sun-hat, and a camping chair. If you take a camera you will want a long lens. Don't be tempted to speed on the toll roads, not that you would, but the French police realize it's a great opportunity to raise €s from their British friends and clearly some British drivers have not heard how good they are at camouflage!

Would I go again? Well I've now been twice but I wouldn't go every year. I might try "Classic Le Mans" next time which is for old cars that did Le Mans 30 years ago or more.

Mark Elder

NATIONAL NEWS

Global NCAP's first five star car in India: the Tata Nexon

Following recent four star safety announcements, the Tata Nexon becomes the first made in India, sold in India car to achieve Global NCAP's coveted five star crash test rating. The Mahindra Marazzo also does well, achieving a four star result.

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

Traffic congestion beats social media as drivers' biggest worry, says IAM RoadSmart

Traffic congestion is now the top concern among UK motorists, overtaking other drivers on mobile phones. However people checking social media on the move is still seen as the biggest risk to personal safety.

<https://www.iamroadsmart.com/media-and-policy/newsroom/news-details/2018/11/15/traffic-congestion-beats-social-media-as-drivers-biggest-worry-says-iam-roadsmart>



Highway Code changes

Story from Road Safety GB.

The new Highway Code will highlight how to avoid the dangers of close passing a cyclist, and encourage people to adopt the 'Dutch reach', a method of opening a car door with the hand furthest from the handle, to force drivers to look over their shoulder for cyclists and other passing traffic.

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

Your Committee 2018/19

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