

FORTH VALLEY GROUP  
OF ADVANCED MOTORISTS



IAM Group 6168

Scottish Charity SC023512

# NEWSLETTER 2019

## Issue 32

### Chair's Chat

This is my first "Chair's Chat" since volunteering to act as temporary chair of Forth Valley Group when Angus Maciver retired for the second time at the AGM in May. A very big thank you to Angus for his many years of very effective work for Forth Valley (and the IAM as a whole).

Also a big thanks to Kenneth Grant our newsletter editor for adding the innovative new "Meet our members" section below (really interesting). Who is next?

I've had to make the decision to close the car side of the group to new-entrants due to the lack of volunteers to become observers. Because of retirements and sickness we are now down to only 4 car observers (one of whom is only available during the winter) and so it was completely unfair to car associates to keep adding them to a growing wait-list. PLEASE, PLEASE come forward to volunteer to be trained up as one of our car observers (if you are a full car member). We need people with a small amount of time (you know what it was like when you were an associate – observers can spend as little as 90 minutes a week with just one associate to build up the associate's understanding and driving skills). It's really rewarding and doesn't lock you down to committed times each week – you just arrange times convenient to both of you. Whether you are young, mature or retired we need more car observers. We are planning a "fast-track observer training weekend" where we will train up a group of you from normal IAM Advanced Driving standard to be qualified as "IMI Local Observers". This is an Institute of Motor Industries qualification; with then the opportunity to go on to become National Observers in due course. Please help us improve road safety.

The bike side of the group continues to flourish having a vibrant community of volunteers coming forward to be motorcycle observers and very little waiting time for associates to get started. However, we do need more volunteers for the committee (full member bikers or car people) who can help with administration – I can't both chair the group and run membership for long!

Val and I have been trying to buy an electric car. Not a hybrid, which we feel is not tackling the problem (and anyway, why should we pay for a petrol engine, gearbox, electric motor and batteries – almost two cars in one, when all we want is motive power from clean electricity?). We are partly spurred on by all the recent climate-heating publicity, partly by a friend buying a Renault Zoe and telling us how good it is, and partly by the low cost (capital cost is higher but the running cost very low). We need a new car so this time it has to be electric. The technology really has moved on. We had been worried about how far the battery would take us (range). We often drive down to Yorkshire and back in a weekend to see relatives. That's 260 miles each way. But with a Zoe having a range of around 170 miles that's only one charging stop each way (it charges to 80% in 30 minutes) – and we always stop

at least once each way for a coffee and a break anyway. The re-charge is free in services. It can be re-charged (slowly, overnight) from a normal 13amp domestic electric socket (at our relative's house in Rotherham – for less than the cost of a couple of beers on their electric bill). Problem is we don't want a Renault Zoe (can't carry enough and not 4WD). We don't want a Tesla (even the new "small" Model3 is the size of a bus). We just want a small SUV, should be easy? No! Nothing on the market. The very new Audi E-Tron is the same length as my transit van! What is going on? BMW just sent me a brochure (I'm on their mailing list because I enquired about an i3 last year) – but there were no electric cars in the brochure! Land Rover sent me a brochure – but no electric cars in the brochure! By the time I came back to edit this "chat" a Jaguar brochure had arrived mentioning an "E-PACE"... surely the E means electric? – No, I was naïve, it has a 4 cylinder engine (as designed in the 1870s). Why are they still trying to sell cars to pollute the planet? The technology is there. The Tesla and Zoe both have the range and appear to work well, but no one is replacing the engine and gearbox with batteries and electric motor in cars that can park in town and yet also carry bikes and camping gear. Ford, Toyota, BMW: get on with it! Until then, we'll not buy anything.

Have any of our members bought a pure electric car yet? What do you think of it?

**Mark Elder**  
**Acting Chair & Membership Secretary**

## GROUP NEWS

**Dates for your Diary:-**  
Group meetings - 7.30pm

<p><b>10 October 2019</b> <b>Biker Down</b></p> <p>This talk will be given by Gary Wood of Biker Down and will demonstrate why any road user must know what to do if they are first at the scene of an accident involving a motorcyclist.</p>	<p><b>Falkirk Fire Station,</b> <b>Westfield, FK2 9AH</b></p>
<p><b>14 November 2019</b> <b>Topic TBC</b></p>	<p><b>Smith Museum, Dumbarton Road,</b> <b>Stirling, FK8 2RQ</b></p>

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

Associate	Observer
Neil Cameron      12/05/2019    Bike <b>F1rst!</b>	Fiona Robertson
Ian Mills            23/05/2019    Bike	Lindsay Pyall
John King            31/05/2019    Car	David McCall
Gilbert Henderson    02/07/2019    Bike	Ronnie MacLean
Dominic Somerville    28/08/2019    Car <b>F1rst!</b>	David McCall

## CAR / MOTORCYCLE SECTION

### Meeting our Members

A chance to get to know people in our local group. Over to our first interviewee; meet Euan!

***In which club do you belong: cars or bikes?***

I am a car member although I do have bikes too.

***What is your favourite car or bike?***

I have 3 cars and 3 motorcycles, my favourite of which is a new Audi R8 v10 Plus which seems to turn a few heads! I also own an Audi TT RS Roaster and Mercedes C class for everyday use. On the bike front, fairly ordinary - a Yamaha 600cc Fazer which I bought new in 1998 and bought the same model in 2007; the other is a Yamaha Vity which seems to drop down every pothole and takes a while to come back up!

***What is the key road safety issue that you believe should be tackled?***

When pedestrians at a pelican crossing press the button to cross the road and have to wait for what seems an eternity before vehicles are indicated to stop and by that time they have taken a chance and crossed anyway; an easy fix to reduce the waiting timer.



## ***Can you think of your best driving or riding experience so far?***

Well there are many, but this year I was lucky enough to go to the German Formula 1 Grand Prix and I thought going all that way I could make a week of car experiences for myself and my two adult sons (read more on the next page!).

## ***How do you envisage the future for drivers or riders in the UK in 5 years' time?***

I do see more and more electric cars coming on the scene and would probably try one; in fact I have test driven the Tesla range and the VW Golf but do particularly like the noise of a fast car engine especially in a tunnel! The thought of driverless cars is very hard to get your head around. I hope the government can get the charging infrastructure in place. I spoke to a Shell representative at Goodwood Festival of Speed who informed me that Shell now have a car charger that takes 10 minutes on the forecourt to achieve an 80% charge of the battery.

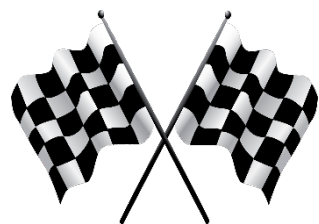
## **GRAND PRIX ADVENTURE**

This year I was lucky enough to go to the German Formula 1 Grand Prix and I thought going all that way I could make a week of car experiences for myself and my two adult sons.

We started in Stuttgart with a visit to the Porsche Museum and wished to take the Porsche factory tour but it was their summer break. The museum is easy to find as it has its own train station, and we received a great tour from an English-speaking lady who was very knowledgeable. Then we visited the Porsche dealership where there were a few used Porsche GT3 RS with a higher price tag than cost new.

The following day we had an appointment to visit the Mercedes AMG factory (you must own one to get the honour!). We were treated to a first class tour of a working factory where they have strict procedures and a "one man one engine policy" - although they do also employ female builders - and it is tightly controlled. If they start to build an engine they must finish the job. Then the engine is attached to an electric motor for 3 minutes to bed all the components in. If a new prototype is tested it runs full throttle with fuel for 3 consecutive weeks to prove its reliability. After this tour we visited the Mercedes Museum in Stuttgart which is on many levels; you travel to the top on an elevator and work your way down and we spent the rest of the day exploring the fascinating building with cars, trucks and buses galore!

On the next day we moved to the town of Neckarsulm to visit the Audi Forum which is a massive dealership. Every day 300 customers collect their new pride and joy; this is at the front of the large factory where they produce cars totalling 260 per shift, 24 hours per day! The tour we scheduled allowed us to see them be transported to the designated areas by coach. We also witnessed driverless cars on test navigating the roads as they intend to have driverless buses on site by 2020. I had hoped to see the Audi R8 and Lamborghini being made which I did request and normally you can get into that area but I was informed that the Audi factory would be closed due to new machinery being installed to make the Etron. However, at the time I enquired it was due to a new car being developed which was secret until launched so I'm not sure of the real story.



The following day, through mega traffic on the autobahn where you can do any speed, we almost managed 25kms per hour, and on the opposite carriageway heading into the city vehicles were at a standstill. Our destination was Manheim, a town close to Hockenheim for the Grand Prix and using our phones for guidance as the car satnav was in German only.

And now, onto Friday for the first practices for the Grand Prix. The weather was sunny (42 degrees!) and the cars were flying. Pierre Gasly crashed out and his car had to be rebuilt; they reckoned he was driving to keep his job which seemed accurate as he has now been replaced. Everything else went smoothly as did the qualifying stage the following day. The scorching weather continued until Sunday when the Grand Prix was hit with a mega storm; providing some added atmosphere for a packed crowd of 160,000. Our seats were just

below the sheltered area and out in the open so waterproofs were required, which an hour before were plentiful and reasonably priced but now scarce and 40 Euros!! The race start was delayed and once they were on the third lap it was decided that it was safer to have a standing start rather than a rolling start. A large screen offered a great view of the track. Between the seating area and the race track was a drag strip which proved to be the end for a few drivers, so it looked more like a skating rink. Carnage then ensued. Charles Leclerc and Nico Hulkenberg became casualties then Lewis Hamilton hit the wall, but against the rules he proceeded to cut across to the entrance to the pit lane. Max Verstappen spun 360 degrees on the track. Valtteri Bottas then crashed out on the other end of the track. In the end it was a super win for Verstappen, and for Sebastian Vettel a major comeback from 20<sup>th</sup> on the grid to finish second to great cheers from the German fans followed by Daniil Kvyat.

And the final challenge: the wait for transport to return to our hotel; with 160000 people moving at once!

**Euan Murray**

## **NATIONAL NEWS**

### **How safe are you on Britain's main road network?**

This annual report tracks the safety of the main 'A' roads where most of Britain's roads deaths are concentrated, and which can be targeted.

This year's survey shows, overall, the number of deaths on Britain's roads has changed little since 2011.

<http://www.roadsafe.com/how-safe-are-you-on-britain's-main-road-network>

### **Intelligent Parking: A Tale of Five Cities**

Today, more than half of the world's population lives in cities. By 2050, the UN projects that figure will increase to about 70%.

Whatever the actual percentage ends up to be, one thing is uncontestedly true: all of those cars and people will exert a heavy burden on our mobility systems and infrastructure.

<http://www.roadsafe.com/intelligent-parking-a-tale-of-five-cities>



## Top 10 jobs the UK needs for the self-driving vehicle revolution

Groundbreaking study with organisations such as Highways England and the Centre for Connected Autonomous Vehicles (CCAV) plots the UK's CAV 'Roadmap to 2030' including the skills critical for a self-driving future.

<http://www.roadsafe.com/top10jobstheukneedsfortheselfdrivingvehiclerevolution>

### Your Committee 2019/20

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Committee Member	David McCall		

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