



## 80mg or 50mg?



In December 2008 Members of the Scottish Parliament have urged the Government to almost halve the drink-drive limit. They voted overwhelmingly in favour of a motion by Kenny MacAskill, the Scottish justice minister, for the limit of 80mg per 100 millilitres of blood be cut to 50mg. This is the equivalent of reducing the limit from 2 pints of beer to 1 pint. European limits vary between 20 and 50mg with only Ireland and Malta along with the UK having a higher than 50mg limit.

A study by University College London indicated lowering the limit to 50mg would prevent 65 deaths and 230 injuries a year.

The move was to be supported by the British Medical Association (BMA), the Association of Chief Police Officers and the Royal Society for the Prevention of Accidents.

What do drivers think? Early in 2008 the AA polled 17,500 drivers, two-thirds were in favour of lowering the limit, with more women than men choosing this option, while nearly a third of all respondents called for a zero limit.

So what is actually happening in the UK? Enforcement of drink-driving regulations has been criticised in recent years. The number of breath tests in Britain fell from 765,000 in 1999 to 578,000 in 2004, a slump that the government hopes to address by introducing random breathalyser tests. Road Safety Minister, Jim Fitzpatrick said his focus would now be on better enforcing the existing limit.

The Home Office is also working on a "drugalyser" project to catch out drivers who get behind the wheel while under the influence of drugs.

**The government has decided against reducing the legal limit for alcohol in a driver's blood despite suggestions it could save 65 lives a year.**

*Road Safety Minister Jim Fitzpatrick October 2008*

## ***CAMELOT NEWS***

### **RAY SMITH**

Ray Smith has decided to retire as Chief Observer and also from Observing in general. He has been a stalwart of the Group since passing his IAM Advanced Driving test in 1991. He has been Treasurer several times and at various times Vice-Chairman and Associates Co-ordinator. On behalf of the Group and the many Associates and Observers he has coached, we wish him well in his retirement.

### **EVENING MEETINGS**

We have a full list of first class presenters lined up for 2009. I hope you will consider coming along as the numbers attending dropped away in November and December which was a trifle disappointing as our presenters often travel a fair distance to come along and at their own cost. The list on the next page will hopefully entice you along. Don't forget you can bring a friend and its free!

### **DRIVING IMPROVEMENT**

The Somerset Road Safety Partnership, of which we are members, are putting on a number of free presentations around South Somerset. Several of our members attended the one at Marston Magna and found it to be very interesting. The remaining ones are as below. If you arrive early you may have the chance to go on the Simulator.

20 January 7pm-9pm Ansford (Castle Cary). Carymoore Village Hall,

late J anuary 7pm-9pm East Chinnock, Village Hall, Fordhay

2 February 7pm-9pm Norton Sub Hamdon Village Hall.

13 February 2.30pm-4.30pm William Blake Memorial Hall, MarketSquare, Sth Petherton

17 February 7pm-9pm Function Room, United Reform Church, Abbas and Templecombe

19 February 7pm-9pm Village Hall, corner of Church Road, Sparkford

10 March 7pm-9pm Mudford Village Hall, Main Street, Mudford,

24 March 7pm-9pm Wincanton Farmers, Wincanton Red Cross Hall

### **NEW ASSOCIATES**

428 new Associates joined the IAM following its Christmas promotion. If you are thinking of encouraging someone to take the Advanced Driving course and test then now is the time to apply as one never knows when the cost will increase. You can apply online or contact our Secretary.

## ***EVENTS***

Please remember all meetings are open to members and friends.

***TUESDAY 3 February***

***7-30 pm Marston Magna Village Hall***

***DAVE HILL of the Devon and Somerset Fire and Rescue Service***

***'CONTRACT FOR LIFE'***

***A presentation with a particular focus on young drivers, with case studies from incidents in Somerset***

***TUESDAY 3 March***

***7-30 pm Marston Magna Village Hall***

***TONY ROBINS is a local author who will be giving a presentation***

***THE HISTORY OF STEAM-POWERED AIRCRAFT***

***Yes, its true and its not the 1st April.***

***TUESDAY 7 April***

***7-30 pm Marston Magna Village Hall***

***STEPHEN HALL took part in the***

***PANAMA-ALASKA CAR RALLY***

***in the summer of 2008 and he will be giving us a Power Point presentation of his many adventures en route.***

## DRIVING LICENCE-IS YOURS VALID?

The Daily Mail recently highlighted a story that motorists may be driving illegally on the road because their driving licence was invalid. So what are the facts?

Back in July 1998 the DVLA introduced the photo driving licence. What many people have not realised is that the photo itself is only valid for 10 years when a new one should then be sent to DVLA along with the £17.50. Fee. The reason for a new photo is a security one because a person's appearance will change over 10 years.

Over 90,000 photo licences were due for renewal in 2008 but around 28% of those had not applied to do so. Failure to do so can result in a £1,000 fine and of course an invalid licence which should be surrendered.. The relevant dates are on the front of the plastic card with 4a listing when it was issued and 4b when it expires. Confusingly on the back of the card another 4b gives a person's 70th birthday date as to when a person is entitled to drive.

The DVLA say they write to all drivers on their database advising them of the need to have a new photo. The problem is that around 25% of drivers have changed their address over the last 3 years and unless they advised DVLA of the new address they would not have received the reminder.

Because of the confusion the DVLA says no-one has been fined or had their licence revoked because of this situation. The Association of British Insurers says drivers will still be covered. However should you fail to send a new photo when specifically requested to do so I suspect the DVLA view would change!

This perhaps acts as a reminder to those who reach 70 years old who need to renew their licence then and at 3 year intervals but do not need to send a new photo every 10 years, just the one at 70.



The expiry date is 4b and in this case 02-11-10

## *Welcome to New Members*

Esther Cracknell

Alastair Taylor

Merv Frampton

## *Congratulations on Passing*

### *Associate*

Andrew McIver

Christopher Krasucki

Angela Lodge

### *Observer*

Mike Turner

Ray Smith

Peter Wood

## *Mr Punch Reports*

*MOTORISTS* are still expressing their indignation at a recent disgraceful incident when one of their number, because he could not pay a fine at once, was taken to prison, and forced to don ugly convict garb in the place of his becoming goggles and motor coat.

Miss *MARIE CORELLI* telegraphs : "I am all for anonymity and everything that tends to the avoidance of advertisement. If people must ride in motors, let them have the decency to disguise themselves as effectually as possible, and shun all contact with their kind."

*THE Motor Car* declares, on high medical authority, that motoring is a cure for insanity. We would therefore recommend several motorists we know to persevere.

## HINTS

How do I get rid of the smell of a smoker in the car?

Overnight or longer leave in the car....

- lemon rind
- a glass of vinegar
- untreated charcoal briquettes.
- baking soda on seats and carpet
- vanilla extract on a rag
- half a glass of ammonia for a week
- cat litter after cleaning
- a cut apple until it shrivels
- mix apple sauce and cinnamon

For car sick?

- Bicarbonate of soda
- Biological washing liquid or powder

A smeared windscreen?

- Vinegar and newspaper and don't forget the blades or buy new ones
- Cloth in warm water/white vinegar

And inside the windscreen?

- A fine spray of clean water, a damp chamois followed by a clean dry lint-free cloth

Final solution for the windscreen?

- A hammer and claim on insurance!

Any other solutions? Please email the editor.



## THE MILLE MIGLIA



*An Alfa Romeo 6C 1750 Gran Sport  
in the Mille Miglia 2008*

- James Martin, the celebrity chef, spent £800,000 on buying and doing up a 1948 Maserati A6GCS, 1 of only 15 made, for the 1,000 mile Mille Miglia 2008 car rally. It broke a valve after 200 miles and had to be withdrawn.
- The race has history. It took place 24 times between 1927 and 1957 but not in 1939 as Mussolini cancelled it because of an accident that killed several spectators.
- Stirling Moss and Dennis Jenkinson won in 1955
- The race was banned after a fatal crash in 1957 which killed 11 spectators and 2 drivers
- It became a rally at legal speeds from 1958 to 1962
- Since 1982 it has become a rally of cars dating from 1927 to 1957 and is based on timing rather than speed.
- It runs from Brescia to Rome and back to Brescia.
- It said to be "the most beautiful road race in the world."

## ***REAL INSURANCE CLAIMS!***

- I collided with a stationary truck coming the other way.
- A truck backed through my windshield into my wife's face.
- The other car collided with mine without giving warning of its intention.
- I had been shopping for plants all day and was on my way home. As I reached an intersection a hedge sprang up, obscuring my vision and I did not see the other car.
- I was on the way to the doctor with rear end trouble when my universal joint gave way causing me to have an accident.
- As I approached an intersection a sign suddenly appeared in a place where no stop sign had ever appeared before. I was unable to stop in time to avoid the accident.
- My car was legally parked as it backed into another vehicle.
- I told the police that I was not injured, but on removing my hat found that I had a fractured skull.
- The indirect cause of the accident was a little guy in a small car with a big mouth.
- I started to slow down but the traffic was more stationary than I thought.
- Coming home I drove into the wrong house and collided with a tree I don't have.
- I pulled away from the side of the road, glanced at my mother-in-law and headed over the embankment.
- I thought my window was down, but I found it was up when I put my head through it.

## *ISA - 'Intelligent Speed Adaption'*

Potentially large reductions in road deaths and injuries - thought to be as dramatic as 29 per cent - could result from a widespread adoption of the new 'Intelligent Speed Adaption' (ISA) proposals recently put forward. The IAM, contributors to the Government's Motorists Forum, has backed the scheme but would like to see new digital speed maps, at the heart of the ISA system, to prioritise potentially lethal rural roads.

"ISA may be able to ensure that all cars observe speed limits, provided that critical safety conditions are met and tested. However, even with these assurances, an understandable deep-rooted concern about 'Big Brother' will have to be overcome." said Neil Greig of the IAM. Like an in-car navigation system, ISA uses global satellite positioning (GPS) and a digital map to establish a car's location and what the speed limit is at that point on the road. This information can be used to:

- tell the driver the speed limit through a display on the instrument panel (Advisory ISA)
- control the speed of the vehicle, if the driver so wishes (Discretionary ISA) or
- automatically control the speed of the vehicle (Controlling ISA).

Once ISA is set to keep the car to the speed limit, it does not allow the driver to accelerate beyond it. The system may apply the brakes lightly if the limit is exceeded by a certain amount (for example, while going downhill). However Neil Gregg points out "Drivers could keep their foot firmly on the accelerator, secure in the knowledge that they cannot exceed the maximum permitted speed - so they could fail to drop their speed to below the limit when conditions require it. That abdication of driver responsibility would not be helpful to road safety in the long run."

These results are from a study sponsored by the DfT by MIRA and Leeds University which involved 20 Skoda Fabia Elegance 1.4 cars fitted with the technology and driven by private and fleet drivers in the Leeds and Leicestershire areas for 6 months. The technology is of interest because of the known relationship between speed and risk of an accident and also because of the relationship between speed and injury severity in an accident.

The IAM believes that certain safeguards need to be built in before extensive ISA trialing, including a very high standard of reliability of equipment and speed limit data.

## ANNUAL 'MOT' TO BE RETAINED

The IAM has welcomed the Department for Transport's decision and put an end to several years of uncertainty by keeping an annual MoT test, rather than moving to a two-year interval.

"The UK posts one of the highest MOT failure rates in Europe. The government may have made the right decision on safety grounds but it has yet to prove that consumers are getting value for money. That can only be done by consistent high quality implementation of the MOT scheme and transparent reporting of future trends so that we have the full picture". said Neil Greig, IAM Trust Director. IAM research acquired in 2008 through the Freedom of Information Act revealed that 21.6 per cent of three-year old cars fail their first MoT test - a higher failure rate than in some European countries that do first road-worthiness tests after four years (the European minimum).

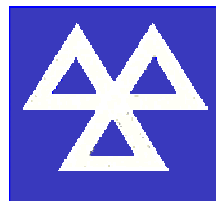
The IAM also has unanswered questions for garages and manufacturers:

- Why are so many UK cars failing the first MoT test after just three years when three-year warranties and service agreements are common? Is it because:
  - garages do the MoT test *before* the three-year warranty service instead of after it - if so, why?
  - manufacturers' service schedules do not cover all the points needed to pass a MoT test - if so, why not?

A 2007 IAM Trust survey showed that motorists viewed the MoT test as an essential road safety measure but that they suspected that failures were influenced by a garage's wish to carry out unnecessary work.

In the 2007, 21.6 per cent (580,754) of three-year old cars failed their first test. Among 836,646 individual failure faults, the top 10 were:

- 1 Lighting and signalling
- 2 Tyres and wheels
- 3 Drivers view of the road—Cracked/chipped windscreens etc
- 4 Brakes
- 5 Steering and suspension
- 6 Fuel and emissions
- 7 Reg. plates and VIN
- 8 Seatbelts
- 9 Body and structure
- 10 Road wheels (loose, missing wheel nuts etc)



## Drinking and driving

A Somerset vicar who had a "generous" glass of port at the end of a village harvest supper could lose his job after being convicted of drink-driving. The Rev Alan Elwood, whose parishes include Kingsbury Episcopi, East Lambrook and Hambridge in South Somerset, was banned from driving for a year by magistrates in December after admitting driving with excess alcohol in October. Elwood was driving back to his home in Folly Road, Kingsbury Episcopi, shortly before 1am when he was pulled over by police on patrol in Puckington and failed a roadside breath test. He was arrested and taken to Yeovil police station where he gave a blood sample which showed a reading of 97mg of alcohol in 97mg of blood. The legal limit is 80mg.

On the day in question the Rev Elwood had conducted three communion services in the morning and in the evening had gone to the local pub for a harvest festival service and supper. He drank two pints between 5pm and 6.30pm and only had a little to eat. Shortly before leaving a little before midnight the landlord offered him a generous glass of port which he drank. His lawyer said " he now sincerely regrets it as he was only marginally over the limit and feels deeply ashamed."

The Rev Elwood was also fined £300 and ordered to pay £43 costs and a £15 victim surcharge. He was also offered the opportunity to attend a drink-drive rehabilitation course which could shorten his ban by three months.

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In a survey of 4,000 motorists, one in 12 drivers aged 17-25 reckoned there was no chance they would get caught if they exceeded the legal alcohol limit. This compared with a ratio of one in 25 for older drivers in the poll by road safety charity Brake and breakdown service *Green Flag*. Brake said the statistics were worrying, especially as 35% of car crashes in which alcohol is a factor involve a drink-driver who is under 25.

## *Drinking and driving*

### **Christmas and New Year 2008 in Somerset**

More than 180 people were arrested for suspected drink driving, failing to provide a specimen or driving while unfit through drugs on the roads of Avon and Somerset in the run-up to Christmas. Police say that 41 of those caught between the start of December and Christmas Eve were aged under 25.

Supt Andy Pullan, head of the road policing unit, said: "There's no failsafe guide as to how to stay under the legal drink drive limit, or how much you can drink and still drive safely. That's why we urge people not to drink at all if they're driving." Officers, expect to have stopped around 10,000 motorists by the end of the festive season.

### **The morning after.....**

Mike Tindall, the English International rugby player and close friend of Zara Philips has lost his licence for 3 years for driving whilst over the limit the 'morning after.' Four out of five motorists suspect they have driven while over the alcohol limit on the morning after a night out or party, according to the AA. People aged over 65 were least likely to think about whether they may be over the drink-drive limit in the morning. Those aged 25 to 34 were most likely to consider their alcohol levels before driving. Drivers in Scotland are the worst in Britain for driving over the limit the morning after a boozy night out, according to research. A survey of 11,000 motorists found Scots would still use the car even though they suspected they were unfit to drive. If you drank 4 pints or 3 large glasses of wine during a night out it could take as long as 12 hours for the alcohol to leave your system.

Recent research by the Parkers Guide and featured on BBC Breakfast in December found cheap breathalysers (often under £15) are inaccurate but the higher end ones by AlcoSense (around £60) to be effective and that brand is endorsed by Sir Stirling Moss. Quoted in Fleet News and Parkers, Hunter Abbott of AlcoSense said: "We desperately need to see regulation of [personal use self-test] breathalysers in the UK.

At the moment there's a free-for-all and there's no test for accuracy or consistency, which means anyone can sell a device in the UK as a breathalyser - it doesn't actually have to be accurate. When you are potentially talking about the difference between life and death regulation is imperative."



## Help for the driver

What do David Beckham, Sir Alex Ferguson, Wayne Rooney, Caprice, Jeremy Clarkson, Colin Montgomery, Freddie Flintoff, Emma Parker Bowles and North Yorkshire MEP Timothy Kirkham have in common? Answer. They have been represented by solicitor Nick Freeman, also known as Mr Loophole, in regard to road traffic prosecutions.. Sir Alex was prosecuted for driving along the hard shoulder of a motorway but his defence was that he needed to get to a Service Station to use the toilet. This was because he was suffering from acute gastroenteritis, which was backed up by his doctor. He was found not guilty of driving illegally because of exceptional circumstances. Jeremy Clarkson was prosecuted for failing to name the driver of a Alfa Romeo he was loaned by the Company which was photographed when speeding. His case was dismissed as it should have been the owner of the car, Alfa Romeo, who should have been prosecuted according to the law. Timothy Kirkham was supposedly doing 35 mph in a 30 mph limit. The court hearing was cancelled when the prosecution withdrew the charge after it was pointed out there were several mistakes in serving the evidence. The MEP was pleased as he already had 9 points on his licence.

Nick Freeman is well known for acting for celebrities in motoring cases. He had been a partner in a Manchester Law practice from 1983 until 1999 when he started his own practice which specialises in road traffic matters. He has now offered to help in framing road safety law and eradicate the many loopholes there are in them at present.

### Plus

Many people are served with penalty notices relating to parking. If you look at the website: [moneysavingexpert.com](http://moneysavingexpert.com) you will find a section on 'Parking ticket appeals' which explains all about parking tickets and their validity. There are so many precise definitions about correct signage, paint, parking bays etc that on appeal to a Tribunal 70% are successful. However you need to follow the correct procedures yourself if you feel aggrieved about a parking fine.



One tip is to always carry a camera and take photos, with the time and date displayed, of the location of the supposed violation.. Another tip is don't pay the fine if you intend to appeal as you will be admitting liability. Then of course you could get your fine paid for you! Yes, if you put your story on the [magi-cari.com](http://magi-cari.com) website and it is chosen as the 'best story' of the day they pay the fine for you.

## MR PUNCH REPORTS

ONE of our special correspondents started out to try the effect of taking notes from his motor-car whilst proceeding at top-speed. The experiment took place in June ; but we have only just received the following account of the result.

*" Started away and turned on full head of smell steam, I mean. Over Southwark Bridge, fizz, kick, bang, rattle ! Flew along Old Kent Road ; knocked down two policemen on patrol duty ( ' Knocked 'em in the Old Kent Road ' ) ; fizzed on through New Cross and Lewisham at awful nerve-destroy- ing, sobbing pace, ' toot toot-ing ' horn all the way. No good, apparently, to some people, who would not, or possibly could not, get out of the way. Cannoned milk-cart entering Eltham village, ran into 'bus, but shot off it again, at a tangent, up on to the footpath, frightening old lady into hysterics.*

*Onwards we went, leaping and flying past everything on the road, into open country. Ran over dog and three chickens, and saw tandem horses take fright and bolt ; dust flew, people yelled at us and we yelled at people. Came round sharp corner on to donkey standing in road. ' Boosted ' him up into the air and saw him fall through roof of outhouse ! Whirr-r-up ! bang ! rattle ! fizzizz Bust !*

*" Where am I ? Oh, in hospital oh, really ? Seems nice clean sort of place. How long ? Oh, been here about six weeks have I, really ? And what ? Oh, both arms, you say ? and left leg ? Ah by the way, do you know anyone who wants to buy a motor ? What, no motor left ? By Jove ! that's funny, isn't it ? Well, ' I think I'll go to sleep again now."*

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WHAT rushes through the crowded street  
With whirring noise and throbbing beat,  
Exhaling odours far from sweet ?  
The motor-car.

Who flies before the oily gust  
Wafted his way through whirling dust,  
And hopes the beastly thing will bust ?  
The pedestrian.

Who as the car goes whizzing past  
At such law-breaking stands aghast,  
(For forty miles an hour is fast) ?  
The policeman.

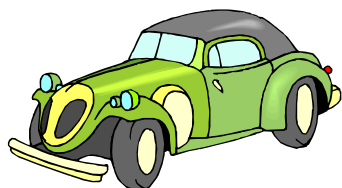
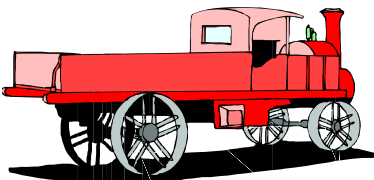
During the recent cold spell I mentioned to my passenger that back in the 50's heaters in the car were a £5 optional extra, which surprised him. In the cold weather drivers wore sheepskin coats and gloves while passengers wrapped themselves in rugs. Most cars in the 30's had opening windscreens enabling the driver to see in freezing fog while the wretched passengers froze to death. To prevent misting a cut potato was rubbed over the screen - no de-icers in those days.

Although the internal combustion engine is much the same in principle everything else has changed dramatically-synchronised gearboxes, disc brakes, power steering, air con, better tyres, radios and so on. My father's pre-war Vauxhall 14 had synchromesh on 3rd and 4th gears and the manual recommended changing from 1st to 3rd, an early example of 'block changing',

Then in the 50's and 60's were various gimmicks such as perspex deflectors fitted the front of the bonnet before the advent of windscreen washers. We did have intermittent wipers, particularly on Ford's, which worked from suction from the engine so they stopped working when you put your foot down and flapped like hell when you took your foot off the accelerator!. Initially set belts were optional and I asked for them to be fitted in my 1965 Mini Pickup despite the salesman saying 'You're not going to use them are you?' Do you remember the Esso advert 'Put a tiger in your tank'? We drove round like morons with a tigers tail attached to the petrol cap.

In other respects motoring was a joy, no motorway speed limits pre-1970, and almost empty roads except for summer Sundays Pre-War when everyone drove to Weymouth or West Bay.

I hope I haven't bored you with these reminiscences but there is a tendency to look back to the past when you reach a certain age, although I still enjoy my motoring thanks in part to the IAM.



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