

Sefton Advanced Motorists

Issue: 293

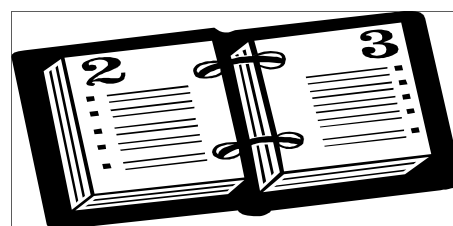
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Forthcoming Attractions



Monday, 16th February; we will be taken into the confidence of **David Piercy** tonight when he reveals the **Confessions of a Coach Driver**.

Monday, 16th March; this month sees a return visit from **Bill Croskell** who will be talking to us about **HGV Awareness**.

Please make a note of these events in your diary and try to come along and support our guest speakers who give up their free time to come and speak to us. All meetings are at the Royal Clifton Hotel, Southport, unless otherwise stated, and start at 8 pm.

Chairman Writes

Hello to you all,

It's a quiet time of year for many of us now, and so finding things to write about becomes harder. So, what about tyres and those funny bits of writing stamped into the tyre walls.

165 / 65 R14 79T E4

That may not mean much to many people but to a tyre person it carries a lot of information.

The number 165 relates to the tyre width in millimetres.

The number 65 relates to the tyre profile or the height of the tyre wall as a percentage of its tread width, also called aspect ratio.

The letter R relates to radial construction.

The number 14 relates to the tyre size and is actually the diameter of the tyre's inner rim measured in inches. Also relates to what diameter wheel it will fit.

The number 79 relates to the tyre's load rating when driven at maximum speed, and is a number found in a table used by manufacturers. 79 will carry 237kg.

The letter T is a speed symbol indicating the maximum speed for which that tyre is intended. T is good for 118mph. Other letters N, P, Q, R, S, T, H, V, W, and Y exist, where N is only rated at 87mph, whereas Y is good for 186mph.

The E4 mark is to show that the tyre has been tested as high quality by European regulatory Authorities.

Other markings found on tyre wall include:

TWI is the abbreviation of 'Tread Wear Indicator' and may be found in the shoulder or upper side wall part of some tyres. This marking is placed on the tyre to indicate where the tread wear indicators are located across the tread pattern. When these special markers in the tread pattern become flush with the remainder of the tread, it indicates the tyre is or is about to become illegal, because of lack of tread depth.



Rotation (followed by an arrow). Tyres with directional or asymmetric patterns should always be fitted such that they rotate in the correct direction as indicated by an arrow marked on the tyre side wall. Failure to observe this is classified as a reason for refusal to issue an MOT test certificate. If a directional tyre has to be fitted so that it rotates in the wrong direction (e.g. temporary use of a spare tyre following a puncture), then without undue delay the vehicle should be taken to a tyre dealer or garage for correction.

Tyre Age Tyres carry a three-digit age code on the sidewall indicating the month and year of manufacture. For example 129 means the tyre was manufactured in December 1999.

M&S - Identifies Mud and Snow tyres

DOT Codes - Coding satisfying the requirements of the US Department of Transportation contain a mixture of letters and numbers such as DOT DVDE MTA 129.

Many other markings are found on the average tyre and most of these relate to other countries where that tyre will be sold.

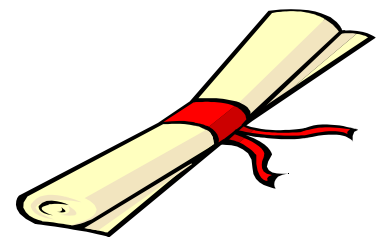
Tim Starkey
(Chair)
Sefton Advanced Motorists

For Lexophiles:

A bicycle can not stand alone; it is two tyred!

Test Passes

Hearty congratulations go to



Brian Johnson

observed by

Phil Kelly

Three More Advanced Drivers



Peter Robinson being presented with his Advanced Driving certificate from his observer, Kevin McAllister.

The all-girls' team is represented by **Laura Nelson**, being congratulated by Rachael Kruger.



The winners of the mixed doubles were **George Milburn** and his observer, Paulette Haigh.

The certificates were presented at the Royal Clifton Hotel during our January meeting.

Thanks to Richard Hardie for providing the photographs.

The IAM goes SEVEN-UP

One morning, about eleven years ago I woke up, as you do, and inspiration came. I rang the Institute of Advanced Motorists, introduced myself and asked them to send me a Membership Application form. They were delighted to do so but went on to explain in detail the necessary procedure leading up to my Advanced Driving Test. This was getting serious. I thought they would be delighted to grasp the chance to welcome me into their ranks, especially as I had passed my REAL driving test some 37 years earlier but, no, I was only offered Associate status until I had proved my ability to go rushing around the world at speeds considerably faster than average. Oh well, I thought, keep them happy. I placated them by going along with their suggestions that seemed to me to be a bit like teaching Granddad to suck eggs but, in the process, I started to realize that the idea of becoming an Advanced Driver meant being a SAFER one. However, not to be deterred, I continued to answer the odd question or two and we seemed to be making good progress until an apparently critical point was reached.

"What car will you be using for the Observation Drives and the Test?" I was asked. "An Austin Seven ... 1932 A box saloon," I replied. No answer. "She's called Betsy" I prompted. I think that the next 30 seconds can best be described as a pregnant silence. I didn't know what else to say and my new-found friend seemed to be having difficulty in choosing from many viable options! Finally, he made his choice. Can this car be driven at the National Speed limit?" he asked. "No," I answered confidently, wondering if we had reached a stumbling block. From here onwards, our conversation focused exclusively on this point. He, the Advanced Motorist, explained that they needed this facility for the Test. I didn't help my case here by saying I thought that they were anxious to test the driver, not the car. He explained that they needed me to drive at 70 mph to assess me properly and I explained that I had been with BSM for 26 years and never once met a Driving Instructor who didn't know a pupil's capability to drive safely after only 50 yards and at less than 10 miles per hour.

We were getting nowhere. I had set my heart on passing my IAM Test in Betsy but he was totally failing to reconcile to her limitations and, at the same time, see her as being suitable for the Test. Thankfully he brought matters to a conclusion for the present by asking me to leave it with him and he would consult with his colleagues. He rang me back a few days later to advise me of the decision of the IAM which was confirmed by a full page letter which said, in a nutshell, "No thank you." The tenor of their message was not that it was not allowed by their rules but that "it would not be in the spirit of the organisation." Groucho Marx would not join a Club that was prepared to accept him as a member but Betsy and I did not want to join an organisation that did not want us as members. So, I withdrew my application and the matter was laid to rest until the Essex A7C New Year's Day run this year. In conversation with two elderly gentlemen the subject of the IAM and "Betsy" came up. A third gentleman joined us, John Stone, a member of the committee of the Chelmsford and District Group of Advanced Motorists, who stated that he would be only too delighted if I were to re-apply for membership and, in a matter of days, he was able to assure me that my application had not only been approved but they were only too pleased to reverse the earlier decision.

You go, next, to an Associates evening - mine was at the Essex Police Social Club in Chelmsford - and meet several more hardy members as well as several more slightly nervous Associates and you start to realize that they are not all elderly blokes like me. Firstly, the IAM has many ladies among both members and current applicants and, secondly, there are plenty - both blokes and ladies - in all age ranges from recent qualified drivers upwards. Not quite the Gentleman's Club some people seem to think it is.

You quickly learn more about what is expected from you as an Associate and what will happen to you in due course. Firstly, for example, you are told that you will have a volunteer Observer allocated to you for your first Observed Drive. Daunting, perhaps, but they handle it well and you find yourself actually looking forward to it. And after the first one you realise that you are looking forward to the next one too. The Observed Drives are like the driving lessons we have all taken in the past

but, instead of telling you what to do, they tend to suggest that you might like to try a slightly different way. Far more civilized but with a purpose and a very positive aim. They don't even flinch when you make a mistake but perhaps that is because you are using your own car, not theirs. If you KNOW that you have made a mistake they don't even mention it! However, what they do ask you to do is to learn "The System" that they, and the police, use to help you to bring more method and understanding into your driving. "The System" as the IAM see it is the key to their preferred way of driving and, as you begin to learn it, understand it and apply it, you start to find that, in the main, they are putting names to things that you tend to do anyway. Well, I hope you are! You quickly find that there are good safety reasons and logic behind all that they advise and, although some points may seem just a little far-fetched, the logic brings you back to earth when it is said that if a small hint here and there only saves your life once it is still worth it! After you have several Observation Drives under your belt, your Observer puts you forward for a mock test and, following satisfactory completion, you are, then, advised to apply for the real thing. Two weeks later, you receive a call from one of the Examiners, suggesting that a convenient date be agreed between you. The day arrives and, feeling like a schoolboy who hasn't done his homework, you set off for your Test. However, my Examiner, Ken Howard, proves to be just as charming and helpful as ever and off you go. At this point, I can only say what happened to me. The day was Saturday, 16th August and Ken was explaining that, although he had chosen a route that covered suburbs, country lanes, fast dual-carriageways, etc to make it as wide-ranging as possible, it should also be fairly quiet and peaceful. The Test lasted about an hour and a half but it seemed only ten minutes after we started that we pulled back into the police club grounds, parked and switched off the engine.

Ken smiled, shook my hand and said "Thank you, Eric and Betsy, for a very good drive." And that was it. The end of learning to be an Advanced Driver. Or Was it? They encourage you to continue your membership and come to monthly meetings and events but, either way, you have already learned the most important message of the lot. Nobody, but nobody, ever finishes learning to be an Advanced Driver! What a tremendous end to this story that last sentence would make but there is one further thing that ought to be said, in all fairness. Congratulations must not only go to the IAM for their primary aim of continually striving to improve Road Safety but also for their preparedness, as an organisation, to



Eric (left), Ken and Betsy at the end of the test - and still learning

look at an earlier decision, say they were wrong and change it. They, for their part, assure me that they would be delighted to receive further applications from drivers who would like to take their IAM in their Classic Cars and, for my part, I would be thrilled to find that many Austin Seven and other Classic Car drivers had a go for their IAM and, in the process, made the world a safer place for us all. You are never alone in an Austin Seven.

Eric Jones and "Betsy"

This article came to us in a rather roundabout way but is, nonetheless, worthy of inclusion and gives a, heartening, balanced view. Many thanks to Richard Hardie and his friend who extracted it for us from the Austin Seven Club magazine.

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GROUP No. 5143

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