

SIX P O I N T SIX

December 2015

website - <http://www.colchester-iam.org/>



St Botolphs roundabout



***The Colchester Group of
Advanced Motorists***

affiliated to The Institute of Advanced Motorists





EDITORS NOTES:

Welcome to the December 2015 edition of Six Point Six. This is the last bi-monthly edition as from 2016 because of cost concerns we are moving to a quarterly publication.

This edition includes articles on tax evasion, the Volkswagen story and multitasking at the wheel

The committee is always on the lookout for people who can give interesting talks at one of our meetings. If anybody knows of anyone who can give a talk or have any suggestions for the subject of a talk then please contact any committee member

A WARM WELCOME TO OUR NEW MEMBERS

Brian Roberts, Roger Graham, Mark Jones,. Tom Bennett Britton

USEFUL WEBSITES

<http://seniorsdriving.caa.ca/> - A Canadian site providing tips and a practical assessment for older drivers.

<https://www.gov.uk/check-mot-history-vehicle> - As it says a government website to check mot history and thus mileage etc.

WHY IS IT CALLED 6.6?

Did you know at 30 miles per hour you are travelling at 6.6m every half a second? This means if it takes you half a second to react, you have travelled another 6.6m – that is why planning is better than reacting. 6.6 magazine's title reminds readers of this fact.

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John Holmes

Editor



MEETING REPORTS

OCTOBER

Due to the small number of members who attended the meeting this month I decided to have an informal chat about various topics some motoring related some not. Some of the subjects covered were

- Electric powered cars
- In car cameras
- Diesel v Petrol engines
- Experience's that other members encountered on the roads

The evening finished with a raffle

NOVEMBER

Talk by Tony Carter from McMillan Williams Solicitors

Tony is a man with a wealth of experience. His background included Police Motorcycle Instructing and Accident Investigation. He is also a CBT, DAS instructor. If that's not enough, he's also an Examiner for both IAM and RoSPA. To top it all, he is one of a small number of people qualified to be an 'Expert Witness' with regard to Motorcycle Accidents.



Tony spoke for an hour giving information about the process and pitfalls of how the 'Accident Claim' industry operates. It seems that we can all save a bit of money in the short term by not bothering with the 'Legal Protection' that is tagged on to most policies automatically. Instead, if we do have an accident, make use of the 'No claim, No fee' solicitors, and, it would seem, if we have a valid claim, get far more in compensation by using this route.

Tony also dispelled some 'Motoring Myths', undertaking for example, and others. There were certainly a few things that I'd not heard before.



EVENTS

Some of you are aware of Barry Alexander who is a member of our committee and is our events co-ordinator. It is with great sadness that we have to inform you that he lost his son Nick in the Paris attack on the Bataclan concert venue on 13th November.

I am sure that you will understand Barry and his family's distress and that your thoughts are with them.

As a result Barry has withdrawn from his events co-ordination role. so we are looking for someone to help out in this role.

A PHYSICIST WRITES . . .



This is an instance of a regular column Peter Soul writes for the Thames Valley IAM group

The topic burning to be discussed this month almost calls for a black border around the page. Worse, I feel an urge to go out and cover up the insignias on my loyal and lovely car – and then to search back through previous columns and erase all references to its make and model. I’m even wondering what the future holds for any conventional sort of family car...

Admittedly, mine is petrol-driven, whereas the emissions scandal that has hit the motoring world mainly surrounds diesels. Though I have seen hints that petrol models could also be drawn into it. And why not? If a team within a car-manufacturer’s organization was capable of conceiving and putting into practice (worldwide!) a scheme for cheating official emissions tests on one class of car, there must have been a temptation to do the same for the other, even if the advantage gained would be smaller.

Anyway, for how long did they think they could get away with it: indefinitely? Or supposing they accepted that it would be uncovered eventually, what did they expect the consequences would be – just a rap on the knuckles?

As for their superiors in the company, did they not even raise an eyebrow when, presumably (and suddenly), the awkward problem of how to get an obnoxiously emitting diesel model through the test seemed magically to disappear? Even if there was only this implied complicity, perhaps a mere rap on the team’s knuckles was a reasonable expectation, for when it all came out (so to speak).

A further puzzle is why this didn’t happen until last month, when the US Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) issued a Notice of Violation of the Clean Air Act. At least two years ago, I’ve read, there were official warnings within the EU that some diesels “substantially exceeded” (on the road) the EU emissions limits. And it was already being recognized that the electronics in modern cars were quite capable of being programmed to detect when a formal test was being carried out, and immediately react by cutting the emissions to bring them within the limit.



Yet another question in my mind is why the whistle wasn't blown by another car-maker: in any competitive manufacturing industry all companies test each other's products, and you would think that excessive emissions might have been noticed and queried. Though a possible answer to this does come to mind...

By the way, the term 'defeat device' that has suddenly appeared actually dates back to that US Clean Air Act of 1970. From then on, apparently, vehicle manufacturers were regularly in conflict with the EPA, over the installing of switches and sensors intended to improve the engine efficiency under certain conditions, but which also increased emissions. In recent years, as we now know, the 'device' only needed to be a reprogramming of the engine control unit (ECU) so as to pass the test, or to boost efficiency, as required.

Who can say where all this will lead: to the death of diesel propulsion? To further improvements in petrol engines, or alternatively to their demise as well, ultimately? To greater efforts in developing other cleaner fuels? To the rise and rise of electric cars? I think this last could be the most likely outcome – if the twin problems of battery capacity and of quick and easy recharging (or at least how to swap a flat battery for a charged one speedily) can first be overcome.

Which reminds me of a report earlier this year that a two-seater electric plane was demonstrated at the Paris Air Show. This may sound impressive, but with a maximum speed of 136 mph and a flying time of one hour, it wouldn't get you much further than an electric car could! Of course the journey would be much quicker, but if you ran out of juice and had to land in a field with no mains supply to it, how could you possibly take off again?

Also in Paris, there are plans firstly to put 1000 electric scooters on the streets very soon, for anyone (having registered for them) to use – and secondly to ban all fuel-burning cars from the capital, progressively, starting with pre-1997 models next year. This (and the car-free day in the city centre last month) is all the initiative of the Mayor, Anne Hidalgo. Whether the long-term scheme reaches completion depends, I guess, on whether she is re-elected in 2020!

Now let me return to the subject of driverless cars, which I first discussed here a year ago. I still haven't seen a short snappy name suggested for them, so again I'll call them autos. Nor have I yet read any reports of the UK trials that I said had been announced (prematurely, perhaps?) for early this year. Though I believe that Milton Keynes, with its extensive loose grid-system of roads, is laying claim to being the place most suited to the serious adoption of these vehicles.

But even in that model metropolis, how will autos escape difficulties such as a stalemate at mini-roundabouts (which I discussed before), and the recently reported fact that they cannot recognize temporary traffic-lights, only permanent ones? And how on earth can autos be protected against what is, so I understand, a simple method (for someone who is both technical and mischievous) of stopping them in



their tracks – by pointing a laser pen at them, pulsed in a certain way, to fool them into thinking that there’s an obstacle ahead, reflecting back the detector-ray? In heavy rain, snow or fog, on the other hand, I doubt if an auto would be able to detect anything in front of it, real or bogus...

Actually, a short and (I suppose) snappy name has emerged: pod, which refers to a particular type of on-call, two-seater auto designed to run on pavements and paths, at up to 15 mph. The obstacle that it faces, in this country at least, is the Highways Act, which permits only invalid carriages to be driven on a foot-way! But even if the law is suitably amended, what will happen when two pods come face to face on a path and are unable to pass each other? My recommendation is that the occupants get out, change pods, and then instruct them to go into reverse.

Peter Soul



DRIVING PENALTY POINTS COST OVER £132 MILLION A YEAR,

Penalty points on driving licences are costing UK motorists over £132 million a year in higher insurance premiums, according to new research by the Institute of Advanced Motorists (IAM) and MoneySuperMarket.

Of these it's the drivers with the highest number of points who are unsurprisingly paying the most – those with 10-11 points, and 12 or more have respectively paid 81.8% and 89.3% more for their car insurance.

In terms of regions, motorists in London, Glasgow and Birmingham are having to shell out the most, paying more than £8 million, £4 million and £3 million respectively in more expensive insurance.

The IAM and MoneySuperMarket have calculated the increase in premiums for drivers with one to three penalty points, four to six points, seven to nine, 10-11, and 12 or more for every postcode area of the country, as well as major towns and cities.

The research shows that even getting the lowest number of points (between one and three) is costing drivers in London more than £2.4 million, Glasgow £1.5 million and Birmingham more than £1.2 million.

It adds that across the UK those with one to three points will pay an extra £49.5 million in higher insurance, those with four to six points an extra £57.4 million, seven to nine £18.9 million, 10-11 £3.5 million and 12 or more £2.6 million.

The full top ten is:

London - £8,079,529
Glasgow - £4,080,190
Birmingham - £3,423,840
Nottingham - £2,833,865
Newcastle - £2,642,079
Cardiff - £2,586,075
Sheffield - £2,535,609
Edinburgh - £2,070,783
Swansea - £2,036,358
Manchester - £2,026,561

People in Bournemouth, Brighton, Bristol, Chester, Coventry, Derby, Leeds, Liverpool, Norwich, Oxford, Portsmouth, Preston, Southampton, Stoke and York have all paid more than £1 million in additional insurance premiums.



Bath and Plymouth sit just below the £1 million mark.

MoneySuperMarket says that those with one to three penalty points have paid 5.1% more for their insurance than someone with no points at all in the past year.

Having four to six points really hikes premiums up, costing motorists 25.8% more. Having seven to nine points has cost drivers 45% more in the past 12 months.

Sarah Sillars, IAM chief executive officer, adds: “If people don’t understand the safety dangers of the offence they have committed which has earned them the penalty points, they should certainly understand the damage it will do to their bank balances.

“And someone with multiple points and fines is paying through the nose for car insurance; just think what other things they could use that money for. Driving safely could put thousands back into your pocket.”

Kevin Pratt, insurance expert, MoneySuperMarket, says: “When it comes to driving offences, points definitely don’t mean prizes. In fact, points on your driving licence mean pounds – extra pounds payable on your car insurance. Insurers want to know about your motoring offences so they can build up a picture of what kind of driver you are.

“The more points they see for offences such as speeding and careless driving, the higher your premium will be. A typical £500 premium would increase to around £525 for someone with just a single three-point speeding offence. But someone with six points on their licence could see their premium leap to £625.

“Drivers with points on their licence should shop around and compare prices when it is time to renew their insurance as it is highly likely they will get a cheaper offer with another provider.

“The message is simple: points on your licence puts pounds on your premium. So stick to the speed limits and drive with care, courtesy and attention to avoid unnecessary costs.”



MULTI-TASKING AT THE WHEEL A POTENTIALLY FATAL MYTH, FINDS IAM

Expert psychologists have concluded that multi-tasking whilst driving is a myth – and the most dangerous of those driving multi-tasks is texting and talking on a mobile phone, according to a new report produced by the Institute of Advanced Motorists (IAM) and the Transport Research Laboratory (TRL).

The research focuses on the dangers involved when drivers try and engage in more than one task, indicating this can have a ‘detrimental’ effect on the quality and accuracy of driving performance.

The findings come from a report launched this week titled ‘The battle for attention’, jointly produced by TRL researchers Dr Neale Kinnear and Dr Alan Stevens, and the IAM’s director of policy and research Neil Greig.

Dr Kinnear, who is a principal psychologist in the study of human behaviour and transport, and Dr Stevens, who is chief scientist and research director with internationally recognised expertise in ‘Human-Machine Interaction’, both reviewed existing research behind in-car distractions to understand the various cognitive processes and complexities in driving.

They said texting engages three of the five key areas of distraction to a ‘high’ level – cognitive, visual and manual. A mobile phone conversation also engages three of five areas of distraction to a ‘high’ level – cognitive, audible and exposure time.

Figures from the Department for Transport (DfT) in 2013 found 2,995 cases where distraction in the vehicle was listed as a contributory factor to accidents. A further 1,627 cases were listed where distraction outside the vehicle was a contributory factor.

The report says: “Research has confirmed that tasks almost always interfere with other tasks carried out at the same time. The brain never actually focuses on two tasks at the same time – it switches back and forward between them.

“As driving is so complex and requires various cognitive processes, taking on another task when driving can mean a driver is unable to pay sufficient attention to all the activities required for safe driving. This can lead to a processing failure resulting in a loss of control, putting the driver and other road users in physical danger.”



MORE THAN 17,000 CONVICTED OF CARELESS DRIVING IN PAST TWO YEARS, AND ESSEX IS THE HIGHEST

The Institute of Advanced Motorists (IAM) can reveal that more than 17,000 people have been convicted of careless driving offences since police were given the power to issue fixed penalty notices for it two years ago.

The figures come from a Freedom of Information request by the IAM, Britain's biggest independent road safety charity, to every police force in England and Wales.

The statistics cover the two years from August 2013 to August 2015. A total of 17,468 people were convicted of this charge in this time period.

Some 33 out of 43 police forces responded to the IAM's request. The force area with the highest number of people convicted was Essex (3,630), followed by Humberside (1,998), Nottinghamshire (1,139), Derbyshire (949) and Hampshire (929).

On 16 August 2013 police were given the power to give on-the-spot penalties for drivers who put other road users' lives at risk for offences such as tailgating and poor lane discipline (reference 1).

The rest of the top 12 overall numbers of people convicted according to police force area were:

6. Thames Valley: 924
7. Surrey: 830
8. West Yorkshire: 804
9. Cheshire 720
10. Greater Manchester 607
11. Lancashire 578
12. Dyfed-Powys 440

Sarah Sillars, IAM chief executive officer, said: "While these offences fall under the lower end of the scale for motoring transgressions, such driving behaviour could easily have caused a serious accident.



“Tailgating is an aggressive action designed to intimidate another driver, while unpredictable lane-changing is both thoughtless and dangerous.

“We hope these on-the-spot fines and remedial courses have helped concentrate the drivers’ minds and make them think twice about these potentially hazardous manoeuvres in the future.”

In the case of Essex with the highest number of people convicted 2,958 of them undertook a course, 484 went to court and 188 took a conditional offer.

In Humberside, the second highest area 1,469 attended and completed a retraining course and 364 have been put forward for consideration for court prosecution.

Nottinghamshire’s 1,139 were issued with fixed-penalty notices and a summons to court issued to 72 of those.

A more detailed breakdown of actions deemed to qualify for the offence of careless driving was provided Merseyside Police; which showed 32 drove on the wrong side of the road, or the wrong way down a road (driving without due care and attention), 13 for bad driving at a roundabout (same category), 12 for tailgating and two for intimidating or obstructing a cyclist.

A full list of all 33 police areas who responded, and number and breakdown of careless driving offences can be downloaded here: <http://bit.ly/1ZCLHjl>



DRIVER ERROR CITED IN MORE THAN 117,000 ROAD ACCIDENT CASUALTIES –

Analysis by the Institute of Advanced Motorists (IAM) has found that human factors continue to significantly outweigh other reasons for crashes on British roads, and have called again for drivers to look on improving driving skills as part of their lifelong personal development.

The figures from the Department of Transport show that in 2014 driver/rider error or reaction were cited as contributory factors in 74% of accidents, involving more than 117,000 casualties. Some 20,830 of these were in London alone.

Police can cite up to six factors for the cause of each accident they report.

The second highest factor was 'behaviour or inexperience' which was cited as a contributory factor in 26% of accidents, accounting for more than 40,000 casualties. In London the number was 9,508.

The main contributory factors were (reference 1):

Contributory factor reported in accident/Number of casualties/Percentage of accidents cited in

- * Driver-rider error or reaction/117,524/74%
- * Behaviour or inexperience/40,778/26%
- * Injudicious action/39,354/25%
- * Impairment or distraction/21,916/14%
- * Road environment contributed/20,253/13%
- * Vehicle defects/3,230/2%

Neil Greig, IAM director of policy and research, said: "People often blame their car, the road, or the other driver for the accidents and near misses that they have. These figures show that in the vast majority of cases, it's the driver or rider themselves who is to blame.

"Changing attitudes is the key factor when it comes to reducing the numbers of casualties on our roads. People must accept responsibility for enhancing their own skills and recognising their limitations.



VEHICLE EXCISE DUTY EVASION STATISTICS: 2015

The rate of unlicensed vehicles observed on the road was much higher in 2015 than when previously surveyed in 2013, following changes in the licensing system. 1.4% of vehicles in traffic unlicensed in 2015 0.6% in 2013 In 2015, the rate of unlicensed vehicles in traffic in the UK was estimated to be 1.4%, compared with 0.6% in 2013. About 1.5% of all vehicles in use were unlicensed. This is equivalent to about 560,000 vehicles. This could cost about £80 million in lost VED revenue over the course of a year, about 1.4% of the total amount due. Some of this potentially lost revenue will have been recovered through DVLA enforcement activity or by vehicle keepers paying arrears of duty late.

Of the unlicensed vehicles identified in the survey: 58% had been unlicensed for no more than 2 months at the beginning of the survey 45% were more than 10 years old 41% had changed hands since transferable vehicle tax was abolished on 1 October 2014

These statistics estimate the rate of Vehicle Excise Duty (VED, or road tax) evasion among vehicles seen on UK roads, and the associated revenue loss. They are based on observing registration marks of vehicles in traffic via a roadside survey carried out at 256 sites across the UK in June 2015.



“IT’S CHEAPER TO PAY THE CHARGES” SAY A QUARTER OF UK COMPANIES

Almost a quarter (23%) of UK firms would prefer to pay a charge than invest in upgraded fleets to operate in clean air zones, research by RAC Business has revealed as a government consultation into UK-wide zones comes to an end today (Nov 6).

RAC Business has found a significant number of UK firms expect to be punished financially by the introduction of schemes such as the Ultra Low Emission Zone, or ULEZ, set to go live in London progressively from 2018, with cars and light commercial vehicles affected from 2020.

The research with 500* UK businesses, showed that 27% of firms run fleets with vehicles that already comply with the standards required by London’s ULEZ. However, a further 23% say it will cost less to accept a charge each time they drive into the zone than it would to upgrade their vehicles.

Drivers in vehicles that would be subject to charges could be paying £12.50 for cars and up to £100 for HGVs in London’s proposed ULEZ. But almost one in 10 (8.5%) say they cannot afford to upgrade their vehicles in order to avoid the charges, and 5% say they will have to operate their business outside of the ULEZ or areas affected by similar schemes elsewhere.

In addition, one in five businesses said they would expect their leasing firms to supply greener vehicles that already comply with the new regulations, which for vans and lorries will be the Euro 6 standard. And, 15% said they would invest in new technology such as electric and hybrid vehicles.

The consultation by the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra) could give the green light for local authorities in major cities across the UK to introduce similar schemes.

The new zones, which may need to go further than the existing low emission zone currently operational in London, could see charges introduced for the most polluting vehicles, or in some cases as a last resort they could even be banned altogether.

RAC Business corporate sales director Jenny Powley said: “It may be three years before the first Ultra Low Emission Zone goes live in London and five before cars and light commercial vehicles are affected, but the results of our research suggest there is still a lot of work to be done to ensure businesses are ready for the changes that could be mirrored across the country.



“It is a concern that there are a large proportion of businesses prepared to pay the charges instead of looking at alternative vehicles. This is presumably because they think it will be more cost-effective to keep their old vehicles and pay the charges that they will be subject to, rather than invest in new compliant vehicles.

“But in fact a lorry driving into central London once a week would cost a business an extra £5,200 a year and a car making a daily trip would cost the business, or individual, an extra £3,000 per year in charges.

“It’s a false economy to think you might save money by not ensuring your fleet is ready, but we can see that smaller businesses in particular will have concerns about the cost implication. That is why as an industry we need to be looking at how this transition is made without some firms feeling like they are being penalized unfairly.”



ASSOCIATE INFORMATION

The observed drive is not the only aspect of training, the training meetings are equally important and much essential information is obtained from them. Associates are reminded that attendance at these is mandatory and also demonstrates their commitment to the idea of advanced driving and the Colchester group.

While you are waiting to start the practical side, please read your copy of PASS YOUR ADVANCED DRIVING TEST. This will mean that when you do start you'll have a good idea of what's involved. If you want to ask any questions please feel free to give me a call, otherwise I am usually at the group meetings and will be happy to talk to you there.

Would all associates taking the test please let their observer know what the test date is and let me know the result. You may think HQ Test Examiners keep us informed, but it is not part of their brief so we will not know otherwise. Many thanks.

Our list of Observers

Pat Corps *	Louisa Davenall
Ralph Young*	Ian Scott-Thompson
Brian Davies	Sarah Woodcock

*DENOTES SENIOR OBSERVER

CONGRATULATIONS

Rachel Bowen passed her test on 16th October her observer was Louisa

Brian Davies
Associate co-ordinator











SIX POINT SIX



CONTACT DETAILS






Colchester Group of Advanced Motorists - President: Ralph Young

COMMITTEE			
<u>Chairman</u> Pat Corps			
<u>Honorary secretary and Deputy Chair</u> Robert Jezierski			
<u>Membership secretary</u> Heather McCabe			
<u>Honorary Treasurer</u> Robert Murray			
<u>Associate/Observer Coordinator</u> Brian Davies			
<u>Webmaster</u> Rob Wilson			



SIX POINT SIX



<p><u>Newsletter Compiler</u> John Holmes</p>			
<p><u>Events co-ordinator</u> Barry Alexander</p>			
<p><u>Minutes secretary</u> Louisa Davenall</p>			
<p><u>Catering</u> Ann Hardwell</p>			
<p><u>Shop & Raffle</u> Ronald O'Hare</p>			



EVENTS

All evenings are for all members and associates, these will be held at:

**Marks Tey Parish Hall
Old London Road.
Marks Tey,
Colchester
CO6 1EN**

*All meetings will be held in the small room
**except April and June which will be
held in the council chamber***

It is a requirement for associates to attend training sessions to enable them to be familiar with advanced driving techniques and skills, prior to, and alongside their observed drives. It is also important that those of you who have already passed your advanced test attend, to further your skills as an advanced driver.

2015	
December 15 th	Group meeting training night
2016	
January 19 th	Group meeting - Chairman's quiz
February 16 th	Group meeting training night
March 15 th	Group meeting details to be finalised
April 19th	Group meeting training night
May 17 th	Group meeting details to be finalised
June 21st	Group meeting training night
July 19 th	Group meeting details to be finalised together with AGM
August 16 th	Group meeting training night

All meetings in small room start with tea and coffee

Training nights start at 7:30 and may include a raffle;

Other night's doors open at 7:30 for an 8:00 start and include the buying of raffle tickets. AGM evening will start at 7:30