

MELKSHAM & DISTRICT GROUP OF ADVANCED MOTORISTS



The Riverside Club

Social Evenings

Our monthly Social Evenings feature a guest speaker or other event, chat, tea and raffle, and are held every 3rd Thursday of the month. They take place at 19:30 at the Riverside Club, Bath Road, Melksham, SN12 6LP, unless otherwise advised – if needed, there is a map on our Website. There is a modest charge of £1 to cover refreshments and a ticket for the raffle.



**Classic British Cars
Austin A30**

Bring a friend: All are welcome, including non-members and members of other groups.

COMING EVENTS (2019)

19:30 Thursday 21 March. Gavin Mills, will be providing a presentation on the Thatcham Research establishment's work.

19:30 Thursday 18 April. There will be a talk on the St John's Ambulance organisation.

19:30 Thursday 16 May. This evening's event has not yet been identified – Please inform Richard if you have any ideas.

19:30 Thursday 20 June. To be allocated.

19:30 Thursday 18 July. Skittles evening at the White Hart, Atworth. Come along, it is always a good evening.

19:30 Friday 13 December. The MAM will be holding its Christmas dinner at the Barge Inn, Seend. Make sure you reserve your place/s early for this ever increasingly popular event.

NEWS ITEMS

Wiltshire Air Ambulance.

Claire Bromell provided an interesting talk to the group at the Riverside Club, on Thursday 22 February. Some of the topics presented were:

- The Air Ambulance is totally funded by charity, at a cost of the order £3.7M per year.
- The teams involved were highly qualified.
- The organisation has a new airbase located at Semington.
- An overview of many of the incidents attended, how they were dealt with, and the impact on the injured individuals' lives, post recovery.
- The participation of recovered individuals, in fund raising for the organisation.

The presentation was well received by the audience.

Melksham Group Membership.

If you have not yet re-joined the group, you are warmly invited to complete and return the membership and Gift Aid forms. Membership cards will be available at the Riverside Club on social evenings.

ARTICLES

The Bonk, by John Morley.

I was born during World War II, in January 1943, and brought up in Charlton, South East London. As a child, I spoke with a broad cockney accent, which sadly, is slowly disappearing from London's streets as the capital becomes more and more cosmopolitan. I can just remember, during the war, as a toddler, crying with fright at the sight of my father wearing a gas mask. After the war, my dad and I queued for ages to buy a tin of boiled sweets, after rationing had been lifted. I also remember, the sights of RAF aircraft, from Biggin Hill, flying over my house, the fuselage of a Lancaster bomber laid to rest on a patch of land near my school, the sailing barges, with their red sails, on the Thames, and the constant flow of cargo ships along the river. Apart from cycling and walking, our main means of transport was by bus, tram, or trolleybus (the latter two being electrically driven – nothing new about electric vehicles then!). Our milk, bread, and Tizer (fizzy drink) used to be delivered by horse and cart.

I lived near the Thames, so I used to play with friends "down the bank", where when playing on the jetties, and barges, I would occasionally fall in, and return home leaking wet and smelly from the contaminated water. I also used to play among the many bombed buildings, and throw stones etc into the brick built water tanks that were used to service fire engines, putting out burning bombed buildings. Walking past a pub, you would often hear a Joanna (upright piano) playing sing along songs, and smell the odours of stale beer, and nicotine.

In May 1954, my family and I joined thousands of other Londoners, along the banks of the Thames, to welcome the queen home on return from her tour of the Commonwealth. I remember

cheering, and waving, believing that I could see her looking out across the river from the Royal Yacht Britannia.



Anyway, back to the main story. I loved cycling, and I used to cycle around the Kent, and Essex country side, and the city of London, including its tourist spots. I quite often used to ride up to The Imperial War Museum, where, in those days, I could park my bike outside the building...how things have changed! I used to cross the Thames via the Woolwich free ferry (a paddle steamer), then I would cycle to Romford, and stand outside of Rory O'Brian's bike shop, where I would spend ages admiring the beautiful hand built bike frames and gear, costing far more than my pocket money could buy.



Woolwich Free Ferry with Sailing Barge

Way back in February 1958, when I was then a young man of 15, my family moved from "The Big Smoke" (London) to Plymouth. I remember my mother, brother, and I, travelled the 250 miles in the back of the removals van, to save money. There were no motorways in those days, so it was a very long drive. It was snowy, and freezing cold for the whole journey, and every now and again, the removal van stopped, so that the driver and his mate could check if we were still alive. We arrived cold and hungry, in Plymouth, and were greeted by my father, and our new neighbours, who made us feel at home providing us with warmth and hot refreshments.

After living in the Big Smoke, Plymouth, Devon, and Cornwall was a dream, with its beaches, countryside, and the wonderful Dartmoor. At that time, Plymouth was being rebuilt after the Blitz, and I remember the Drake Cinema being constructed at Drakes Circus. The new city centre was so smart, with its department stores, and shops. You could buy fresh fish and seafood from the Barbican, where the fishing boats were moored, and where my future wife was brought up.

The terrain in our new location appeared to be mountainous in comparison with London. However, I made my mind up that I would join a local cycling club, and get involved with bike racing. The love of this sport was something that would remain with me for the rest of my life. I contacted the Plymouth CC, and made moves to become a member. I met some of the members on a Sunday morning, at the Plymstock roundabout, with the intention of going on my first club run. I felt a mixture of excitement and anxiety as we started off. However, this did not last long, as on the first climb I was dropped, and saw the riders disappear over the horizon. No one came back for me, and all of the riders were later given a “ticking off” by the club’s chairman. I did not let this put me off, and after getting to grips with a more serious approach to cycling, enjoyed many club runs with my new friends, often cycling across Dartmoor, and up to Exeter.

I was still 15 years old, and had gained some confidence in my ability; enough to decide that I would cycle back to Charlton, in London, to see my relatives and friends. The journey was to be 250 miles, which I would tackle in one day. The week before the ride, I cycled from Plymouth to Western Super Mare and back in a day. This was a round trip of about 220 miles, and I managed to do it along with a club mate. So, after some considerable planning, I left home in Plymouth at 2:30 in the morning. This would mean that, by the time I got to Exeter, daylight would be breaking. My main route was the A30 (as it was in those days), and I remember pulling into a café at 9:30 for a snack and a drink. A couple of people on a nearby table were boasting to the waitress that they had been driving since 6 o’clock that morning. I kept quiet! I continued on my way, mile after mile, feeling as if it was all uphill.

By now, I was well on my way to London, but the “bonk” began to appear on the horizon. The bonk is a cycling phrase, also known as the “hunger knock”, when the body, and brain, lacks glucose, and strange things start to happen. I was finding it hard to concentrate, as if in a dream, and even thought that I could see a water tap on a pipe ahead of me, and I would be able to get a drink from it. It turned out to be a plain post. I pulled into a transport café, and bought a drink and some grub. I must have looked a bit rough, as a lorry driver came up to me and said, “Hello boy, where are you going?” I explained that I was cycling to Charlton, in London. I remember he said “Keep on this road to Stains, and turn right at the third set of traffic lights. So, off I set, with the phrase “Turn right at the third set of traffic lights”, going over and over in my mind. With refreshments inside of me, I began to recover, and made my way into London and the A4 near the Thames. I managed to fall off, after taking a corner too fast, and not one person offered to help me, or asked if I was OK. However, I was not too badly shaken, and after shouting at all around, thanking them for their help, got back on my bike, crossing the Thames at Westminster, passing the statue of Boadicea, and riding along the Old Kent Road, towards New-Cross and Blackheath.

I reached my Aunt Ray’s house, in Charlton, at 7:15 pm, where I was given a warm and loving welcome. In those days, normal people did not have a telephone, and being a young lad, I had no idea what my mum, and dad would have been going through. Apparently they had arranged to phone a public phone box near my aunt’s house, on the hour, every hour, to see if I had arrived, and at last they had been put out of their agony. I stayed for a few weeks with my aunt, and had a good time with my friends and cousins. However, the return journey to Plymouth was made in my uncle’s car!

My cycling career continued throughout my life, with the bonk returning on at least one other occasion, but that’s another story!

Winter Safety, by Jack Iason.

If you use a machine without the guard, or in an unsafe way, the Health and Safety Executive can stop the use of that machine, or fine the owner, or operator, for operating the machine without a guard, or in an unsafe way!

If you use a vehicle in the snow, and ice, without winter tyres, and or snow chains, this is against the road safety recommendations. So therefore, should you be liable for a fine under Health and Safety?

In certain countries if you get stuck in the snow, and you have not got snow tyres or chains, you get an on the spot fine. Also, snow tyres are compulsory in Austria, from I think November to the end of March. I have been on roads in winter abroad, where it is illegal to enter the road without studs, and that is in some towns as well as the country roads.

I drive on winter tyres all the year as I have a camper van, and British grass pitches are not known for their firmness. Also, we go to the Alps, and the high passes can be colder than the British winters, even on the hottest days in the summer. I also carry snow chains, and as a quick fix the releasable cable tie type snow grips, which are quite effective, and I always carry a shovel in the snow.

I find it very frustrating when I can get around, but am barred from doing so by someone who has taken no precautions against the snow and ice!

Watching the web cams in different countries this winter, the tractors and emergency vehicles, including snow ploughs, all have chains! So why on the news this morning (2 February 2019) was there people pushing an ambulance up a hill without snow chains?

I rest my case!!

Aquaplaning.

Apparently, the speed at which a car will aquaplane is equivalent to 9 times the square root of the car's tyre pressure in p.s.i. For example: The square root of a tyre pumped up to 36p.s.i. is 6, multiplied by 9 is 54. So the aquaplane speed would be 54m.p.h. Try it out if you don't believe it!



PUZZLES AND QUIZZES

Know Your Driving and Car?

Answers at the end of the News Magazine. **If you're not sure, have a guess.** (No cheating please!)

QUESTION		ANSWER
1.	What is the official name of the lightweight track-focused version of the Ferrari 458?	Ferrari 458 Italia racing, Ferrari 458 Speciale, Ferrari 458 Scuderia, or Ferrari 458 Challenge Stradale?
2.	At £5,995, what is the cheapest new car on sale in the UK?	Dacia Duster, Dacia Sandero, Hyundai i10, or Suzuki Alto?
3.	Which car brand recently came top of the JD Power survey for dealer satisfaction?	Audi, Lexus, Jaguar, or Mercedes?
4.	Which supercar manufacturer celebrates its 50 th anniversary this year?	Aston Martin, Ferrari, Lamborghini, or Lotus?
5.	What is Skoda's slogan?	Cheap and cheerful, Better than you'd think, Practically brilliant, or Simply clever?
6.	What is the name of the VW Group's new modular architecture, which shares things such as platforms, engines, and electronics, across a range of cars including the VW Golf, Audi A3, and Skoda Octavia?	VWP, ESP, PDC, or MQB?
7.	Porsche has just launched the latest 911 Turbo, but in what year was the first 911 Turbo launched?	1970, 1974, 1980, or 1984?
8.	The bi-annual Frankfurt motor show takes place next month, but with which motor show does it alternate?	The Paris motor show, The London motor show, The Geneva motor show, or The Detroit motor show?
9.	The Goodwood Revival takes place next month, and in the RAC TT Celebration boasts the most valuable grid of racing cars in the world. But roughly, how much is this field of incredible machines worth?	More than £500 million, More than £300 million, More than £100 million, or More than £30 million?
10.	Volkswagen boasts that its Type 2 Kombi van is the longest produced model in automotive history. But in which country has it been in continuous production since 1957?	Austria, Brazil, China, or Germany?

FUN CORNER

What do you call a funny motorbike? *A Yamahahaha!*

What kind of car does a Jedi drive? *A Toy-Yoda.*

Where do Volkswagens go when they get old? *The old Volks home.*

A cowboy walks into a German car showroom and says: *'Audi!'*

Two fish are sitting in a tank. One looks over at the other and says: *"Here, do you know how to drive this thing?"*

Get a new car for your spouse... *It'll be a great trade!*

Two cheese trucks ran into each other. *De brie was everywhere.*

What did one traffic light say to the other traffic light? *Don't look now, I'm changing!*

My wife bet me that I couldn't make a car out of spaghetti. *You should have seen her face when I drove pasta!*

READER'S LETTERS/EMAILS

Please see Jack Iason's article on Winter Safety - Thanks Jack.

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

None this month.

Please forward any questions on motoring and cars etc to john_morley@live.co.uk and an expert will hopefully answer them within the News Magazine.

Members who have news items or articles that may be of interest are invited to forward them to John Morley at: john_morley@live.co.uk. Please title all emails "MAM News Item".

FURTHER NOTICES

- **Email addresses:** Help the environment - if you have an email address but receive your newsletters by post please let the Editor, John Morley, know your email address. You will benefit from early receipt of the News Magazine, early notice of special events, and we save on postage, time and effort, as well as using up fewer trees! A win-win situation.
- **Speakers:** If you know of someone who could give us an interesting talk, or have a suggestion for a talk, at our social evenings, please advise the Events Coordinator, Richard Clark or Caroline Marsden.
- **Publicity:** Current post vacant.

- **Contact Details:** If you move house, or your email or telephone number changes, please inform John Morley so that you don't lose contact with us.
- **Drive Check:** Remember that MAM is offering a FREE observed run for all potential new members so tell your friends now! For more information please contact David Major.

CONTACT US

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Disclaimer

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Answers to the quiz:

1. Ferrari 458 Speciale
2. Dacia Sandero
3. Jaguar
4. Lamborghini
5. Simply clever
6. PDC
7. 1974
8. The Paris motor show
9. More than £100 million
10. Brazil