



BOURNEMOUTH & DISTRICT GROUP

News @ 1096 January 2016

Happy New Year to you all.

To help keep everyone informed of the group’s progress, we have reproduced part of our Chair Sue Whitcher’s report from our AGM in October:

“The Group continues to be run by a handful of dedicated, hard working members and it is welcoming that we have had someone come forward to take over from Chris as Secretary. If there is anyone else who would like to assist in the running of the Group it is not too late! And even if you can’t help now you can come forward at any time to help the Committee should you change your mind either for a one off task or on a regular basis.

We have had an interesting and varied range of speakers during the year ranging from IAM HQ staff and our Regional Manager to motor dealers and a forensic scientist specialising in traffic accidents. Many thanks to Mike Staton for arranging such a varied programme.

In mentioning Mike, one of the successes of the year was Mike being awarded the Lona Williams Trophy by the IAM South West Regional Forum in recognition of his many years of service to the IAM and his passion for promoting the wider cause of road safety.

Due to falling membership and the inability to recruit new committee members we have faced great pressure over the last few years to maintain our independence as a group.

I hope that the successes this year is a turning point that we can build on. I feel at last that we are starting to move forward, albeit slowly, after a period of simply maintaining the status quo.

I would like to close by congratulating all the Associates who have passed their test in the last year, all the Observers who give up their valuable time to help the Associates achieve their success and all the Committee members for their continued hard work. I would also like to make a special mention of Chris who has served as Secretary twice and each time for several years, but is standing down this year due to work and family commitments. I am pleased, however, that he has expressed a wish to stay on the Committee but not in an Officer role”.

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**Get youngsters on the right “path” for driving:**

The IAM recently put out a press release saying that if you have children or grandchildren who are under 17 you may be interested to know there are places available on driving tuition courses offered by the Under 17 Car Club (U17CC) coming up this Easter U17CC’s Pathfinder project is open to ‘rising 17s,’ and over five days aims to deliver them the key attitudes and skills for advanced driving. Pathfinder has space during Easter break (4-8 April) exclusively for the children and grandchildren of IAM members. Each place costs £170. To find out more visit the U17CC website: membership@under17-carclub.co.uk

A friend recently wrote an article about his “skid pan” experience which I hope members will find interesting:

“The skid pan I used was the newly opened in January 2014 Thruxton Skid Pan at Thruxton Race Circuit, Andover.

My instructor Josh gave me a briefing as to where I had to aim for on the pan, how to use the laid out cones and the braking qualities of the special high grip tarmac surface that is six metres wide and surrounds the perimeter of the skid pan. This ensures control is regained should you slide off the concrete – whether it is forwards, backwards or sideways, it stops the car almost instantaneously. The skid pan surface is a low grip polished concrete skid area of 3,200 metres with plenty of room to slide and spin safely. The water used is filtered and reused from water towers containing 50,000 litres of clean water which feeds thirty four ground level water jets, so no water is wasted for this purpose and there are no additives such as oil to the water. The water jets are remotely controlled by the instructor from inside the car.

The purpose of the skid pan is to learn how to control a car when it is in a skid or slide but, of course, if a car is driven in a manner and at a speed in accordance with the conditions of the road surface, in reality the car should remain under control. However, you can never be so sure; a sudden downpour of rain on a greasy surface or being caught out in an unexpected flurry of snow that has not been forecast, even coming across a patch of black ice or wet leaves on the road. It may never happen you but it is always best to be prepared for every eventuality when driving a car by having all the necessary skills available.

I used my Saab 93 1.9 TID and Josh and I set off gaining as much speed as possible around the cones up to a maximum speed of 40mph on the skid pan. The Saab behaved impeccably, first the back attempted to slide out because of some oversteer and then the front slightly understeered but it was easily and efficiently corrected by the car’s traction control which I had not experienced operating before. It was then decided by Josh to turn off the traction control and spray the skid pan with even more water and, although this did make some difference to the car’s handling, it was still not enough for me to experience a proper skid or slide driving the car. The decision was made by Josh to use their own Mini Cooper S. We started off in first gear, quickly gaining speed and then into second gear – what a difference in road holding this car had in comparison to the Saab. I can best describe it as driving a car across a Teflon coated frying pan that had a generous coating of oil. As soon as I drove the Mini onto the skid pan, I could hardly feel any wheels under the car; it felt as though we had taken off in a light aircraft and we were in flight. The first cone came up and, as soon as I turned the wheel to go around it, the car responded by drifting sideways, with Josh telling me to keep my foot down, and to my amazement it worked. Also, with a slight turn of the wheel, it pulled the car into line as I then had to negotiate the next and so on. The area marked out as a roundabout very quickly appeared in front of me and Josh asked me to go around it anticlockwise, keeping to the outer line all the way round. Eventually the rear end came around and I wasn’t quick enough to floor the accelerator, so we spun around at speed for at least three times before we came to a standstill. After that chaotic spin I learned to change the way I held the steering wheel, also not to shuffle or hold the wheel which tends, I was told, to make too many jerky movements that destabilises the contact pressure on the tyres surfaces when having to turn the wheel quickly, so I had to adopt the one handed flat of the hand turning technique just for the skid pan, which enables the wheel to be turned quickly and smoothly in either direction in the event of a slide on a slippery surface.

Soon I was capable of controlling the car and managed to drive around the skid pan, slipping and sliding but remaining in control. The next obstacle was a remote control water wall obstacle which is on the 110 metre long straight section. I was instructed by Josh to drive down this section at 40mph until I reached a cone then Josh told me to stop and then swing the car around to the right after hitting the wall of water, to hopefully miss the tarmac section. On the first run the traction control was turned on and I managed to stop the car just short of the wall of water. On the second run, with the ABS turned off, I skidded through the wall of water and stopped the car in a broadside just short of the tarmac run off.

To end my session, my “piece de resistance” was driving the car around the roundabout clockwise and anticlockwise at speed with the car in a sideways drift but, happily, maintaining good control using the steering wheel and throttle, which was somewhat like a balancing act with the car, which was all good fun.

This was a very worthwhile experience, it was very informative and well worth the cost, especially as I really did not know the techniques involved with front wheel drive cars.

Although I have always been aware of what each wheel of my cars have been doing, this course has heightened that sensitivity and feel for the car that I’m driving. I also have renewed confidence driving in extremely wet conditions. Just recently, I read that these courses can make drivers over confident; as a result of this they have been known to drive too fast in conditions that are likely to make road surfaces slippery and they lose control of their cars. The idea of these courses is not to enable you to drive faster in slippery conditions but more to help you survive a slide or skid should it happen. Thanks to Ray Harris-Hawkins

Congratulations to the following associates who have recently passed their test:

Suzanne Haynes, Robert Cooper, Jonathan Wood, Geoffrey Gallyon, Jacqui Oldfield and David Gover.

Our next meeting will be on 4th February at Kinson Community Centre, Pelhams Park, Millhams Road, Kinson at 7.45pm for 8pm. Our speaker will be Clare Heaton, Bournemouth Road Safety Officer. Our speaker for our meeting on 3rd March will be Alison Whitley, Bournemouth Council Emergency Planning Officer. Please do come along and bring your partners, neighbours and friends.

Disclaimer: The views and opinions expressed in News @ 1096 do not necessarily state or reflect the views of the Bournemouth & District Advanced Motorists Group.