

# ARE WE THERE YET?



Mid Yorkshire Advanced Motorists Newsletter

January/February 2026

**iam**  
RoadSmart

Group Number 4178  
Registered Charity Number 1053843





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## **Cover Photo – Statue of Cecil Rhodes in Cape Town**

Cecil Rhodes was born in Hertfordshire. He was sent to South Africa to improve his health and entered the diamond trade founding De Beers in 1888. He entered politics becoming prime minister from 1890 to 1896. His company founded the territory of Rhodesia in 1895. (Photo taken by David Wevill)

## Forthcoming Gatherings and Events

**Monday 2nd  
February 2026  
8pm**

**MYAM Social Evening**  
Huddersfield Trolley  
Buses from 1933 part 2  
Graham Crawshaw

Birkenshaw Liberal Club  
10 Croft Street  
Birkenshaw, BD11 2HT

**Monday 2nd  
March 2026  
8pm**

**MYAM Social Evening**  
A speaker from  
National Highways

Birkenshaw Liberal Club

Everyone is welcome at these events and they are an ideal opportunity to meet new people socially, find out about what is going on within the Group and listen to interesting talks on a variety of topics, sharing our skills with other serious drivers and keeping up-to-date on club and driving matters.

The February meeting will be available via Zoom. Scan the QR code or use the link below.



Topic: MYAM - February 2026 Social Evening

Time: Feb 2, 2026 19:45 London

Join Zoom Meeting

<https://us06web.zoom.us/j/5851212145?pwd=SwXivDAPcqSllvqackberqnH50ujGk.1&omn=84317971749>

Meeting ID: 585 121 2145

Passcode: MYAM

Join instructions

<https://us06web.zoom.us/join/5851212145?signature=uNWSIz9Rqi5quORhXxsrXSltniqmCvVXgGmNI8vTanU>

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### Social Meeting Dates For 2026

The dates for our 2026 social meetings at the Birkenshaw Liberal Club are:-

**February 2nd**

**March 2nd**

**April 13th**

**May 11th**

**June 1st**

**July 6th**

**September 7th**

**October 5th**

**November 2nd**

**December 7th**

The AGM will be held at the May meeting and the December meeting will be our Christmas quiz and raffle. A buffet will be provided at both of these meetings.

## **From The Editor**

Life has a habit of throwing up the unexpected usually at the most inconvenient time. Just after the December meeting my wife Caroline was taken into hospital with a bad cough but despite the best efforts of the medical staff she passed away.

It's only when something like this happens you realise how much of a team we were around the house with each of us having tasks that one of us normally did. Now I am coming to terms with having to do everything in the house. This and making the arrangements for her funeral and beginning the probate process were the prime reason for the delayed appearance of this newsletter. Fortunately I have had the support of family and friends who have helped me with many of the tasks. I have also found that the various authorities involved have also been very helpful. I would also like to thank the MYAM committee for their support and understanding during this difficult period.

This issue also marks a change in the way the newsletter is distributed as it will now be published on the website with a link to the current newsletter being sent to all MYAM members who usually receive their newsletter by email. Those who receive their newsletter by post will be unaffected. Let me know your thoughts on the new system.

As usual I will aim to send out the notification email about a week before the next social meeting.

We are also planning to add the previous newsletters to the website in some form of annual compilation. The exact details have yet to be worked out so watch this space.

**Keith**

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Will any Member wishing to have an item, article or picture included in the newsletter please submit it to the editor no later than the 15th of the month. These may be edited to save space. Thank you.

### **Disclaimer**

The items contained in this newsletter are the views of the Members who contribute and not necessarily the views of IAM RoadSmart (The Institute of Advanced Motorists.) or MYAM.

## GROUP MEMBERSHIP NEWS

# Welcome to the Group

No new associates this month

# Congratulations

On passing the Advanced Test

**Natasha Pickard (First) - Observer Bev Bruce**

**Jacob Stapleton - Observer Peter Kennedy**

**And congratulations to Jeffrey Long who passed his Fellowship retest**

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## **Rowan Atkinson Racked Up The Biggest Car Insurance Payout Ever Seen In Britain**

Rowan Atkinson is best known for playing hapless characters on screen, but away from comedy, the actor quietly set a very different kind of record - one that still stands as the largest car insurance payout in British history. The crash happened in August 2011, when Rowan Atkinson lost control of his McLaren F1 on a slippery stretch of the A605 near Peterborough. The 240mph supercar skidded off the road, slammed into a tree and a road sign, and suffered catastrophic damage.

Atkinson escaped with a shoulder injury, but the car did not fare so lightly. Most of the rear of the McLaren was destroyed, and its 6.1-litre V12 engine was reportedly thrown around 20 yards from the wreckage. What followed would make motoring and insurance history. The vehicle involved was no ordinary supercar. Atkinson had bought the McLaren F1 in 1997 for £647,000, at a time when it was already regarded as one of the most advanced road cars ever built. Only 64 were produced, and its carbon-fibre construction and bespoke engineering meant repairs were never going to be straightforward.

Instead of being written off, the car was sent back to McLaren's factory in Woking, where specialist technicians undertook a painstaking rebuild. The process took around a year of work - and the bill was staggering. Insurers ultimately paid out around £900,000 to £910,000, smashing the previous UK record for a single motor insurance claim, which had been set just a year earlier.

Makes the average repair cost look trivial!!

# MYAM Online



**WEB SITE** Our website is packed full of information and is the go to place for everything you need to know about our events, courses, meetings and news about us as a Group. How about copies of the newsletter going back a few years.

Need to know who the Committee are or see our Observer team? We are all on there.



See us at <https://www.myam.org.uk/>  
or scan the QR code.

We are adding to the content all the time so keep dropping in to see what we are doing.



X We have our own X account which can be found at [X.com/MYAM4178](https://x.com/MYAM4178)

**The Group Telephone number has changed to 07412 986690**

## **Data Protection – Privacy Notice (GDPR)**

Mid Yorkshire Advanced Motorists (MYAM) is committed to looking after the information that it holds on behalf of its members in a way that complies with the General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR).

MYAM has a legitimate interest in keeping sufficient personal information to communicate with its members and other local people with an interest in road safety, and to permit the renewal of subscriptions. A member can ask to see a copy of their personal information, correct any errors and ask for all or part of it to be deleted.

MYAM is affiliated to the Institute of Advanced Motorists (IAM) and will use a member's information to support them if and when they are assessed by IAM. MYAM will also ensure that any data shared with IAM is accurate. We will not share your details with anybody else.

David Rockliff is our GDPR Manager. Please contact him if you have any GDPR related issues.

## Directions to the Birkenshaw Liberal Club

10 Croft Street, Birkenshaw, Bradford, BD11 2HT



From the M62 West leave at Junction 26 and take the A58 towards Leeds. At the second roundabout turn left into Bradford Road (A651) after about 700yds by the George pub, turn right into Town Street. Croft Street is approximately 60yds from the junction (top photo left) but to avoid the potholes carry on up Town Street and turn right into Old Lane. After approximately 100yds turn right into Croft Street (middle picture left between the car and the house next to it).



From Bradford follow the A650. Turn right onto the A651 at the traffic lights just before Tong Academy. Then just after the George pub turn left into Town Street and follow the previous directions.



From the M62 junction 27, take the A650. Turn left onto the A58. After approximately ½ mile turn right into Old Lane. After approximately 550yds turn left into Croft Street (bottom picture left).

There is a large car park and the entrance is down the right hand side of the club as shown in the top picture.

Our meetings are held in the function room.

# December Meeting - Christmas Quiz and Buffet

Our December meeting was the now traditional quiz, buffet and raffle with yours truly as the quizmaster.

It's not always easy to set the quiz, trying to find new questions and a format for the team questions. I take inspiration from many sources including TV quiz shows and other quizzes I have participated in.

This year one of the team questions was based on a quiz from another society I am a member of, advertising slogans from the 60s onwards. I have to admit that I didn't know all of them at the time.

The second team question was based on anagrams, the clues lead to two words that were anagrams of each other. As an example Canine Deity was Dog God.



**Intense concentration in the room**

Whenever I compile the quiz I try to find questions that I hope my son David does not know the answer to. It doesn't always work though.

While the teams puzzled over the team questions I asked the 20 general knowledge questions followed by a little light relief when the buffet was opened. As always there was plenty to go round, Thanks Ben.

We always have a raffle for Christmas which was drawn while everyone was eating and trying to work out the difficult questions. Then it was time for the answers.

The results looked promising as the team David was in started in joint second place however after the second round results they had taken the lead by a small margin and then won with an outstanding final round. No prizes for the winning team, just the honour of winning.

I suspect I will be running next year's Christmas quiz but if anyone would like to have a go at setting it please let me know. It's not that difficult and I can give guidance if necessary.

**Keith**

## **Caroline**

It is with great sorrow that I have to announce the passing of my wife Caroline in early December.

We met at work just after she started at the company in Leicester I was working for at the time and it wasn't long before we started going out together. I helped her move into the house she'd just bought and shortly afterwards I proposed to her.

We married in 1990 and two children followed in quick succession (then we found out what caused it!). We managed to survive a couple of bouts of me being made redundant and then in 2000 I was made an offer we couldn't refuse so we moved up to Yorkshire.

I was a member of the Leicester IAM group when we met so she didn't have much choice about joining and she passed her IAM test in 1989, joining me on the committee shortly afterwards. We were one of four married couples on the committee. Caroline was the speaker secretary for four years then the newsletter editor after the chairman/newsletter editor left for pastures new.

After moving up to Yorkshire we ended up living near Caroline's parents meaning she could indulge in one of her favourite pursuits, horse riding. We both joined the Dewsbury and Batley IAM group in 2011.

Following early retirement we became grandparents in 2019 which Caroline loved although getting up early to take them to school was hard work at times.

Late November last year she developed a cough which seemed to get worse and at the Christmas meeting she wasn't her normal self. After a couple of days I called an ambulance which blue lighted her to BRI where she was diagnosed with flu and a pneumonia infection on one of her lungs. She was taken to the Intensive Care Unit, sedated with various medications being applied. In spite of all the medication her condition deteriorated and she passed away peacefully on the Saturday morning with all her family around her.

So I have lost my best friend of nearly 38 years and wife of 35 years.

**Rest in Peace Caroline.**

## Record Number Of Cyclists Riding On Motorways

A record number of cyclists have been reported for riding illegally on motorways, official figures show.

More than 1,000 people were spotted travelling on a pedal cycle on Britain's fastest road networks, triggering an emergency response, in 2024. That year 1,037 cyclists were reported for breaking the law, nearly double the 556 logged in 2022. Between 2020 and 2024, a total of 3,228 people were recorded riding a bike on UK motorways despite the Highway Code stating that "motorways must not be used by cyclists".

The country has roughly 440 miles of smart motorway, where there is no hard shoulder, meaning cyclists would often be travelling in live lanes where lorries and cars travel at up to 70mph. Analysis of the data from National Highways, which runs the country's motorways, suggests the law is most likely to be flouted around major cities, particularly at weekends. When National Highways receives a report of a cyclist on a carriageway, it uses digital gantries to warn motorists with a sign which reads "cyclist in road", which is often accompanied by a reduced speed limit. On other occasions, a red "X" sign, which closes the lane to traffic, is imposed. A traffic officer or police car is also often dispatched to try to pick up the cyclist.

Cycling on motorways was most common on the M60, the orbital route around the city of Manchester, where 434 reports were logged between 2020 and 2024. The M25, the London orbital, also proved a popular shortcut for those cyclists prepared to risk lives. A total of 270 cyclists were spotted on the 117 mile-long road. But, in 2024 a total of 81 cyclists were seen on that busy motorway, double the 40 spotted in 2021.

The M1, Britain's oldest full-length motorway, had 269 sightings over the same five years. Then the M6 in the West Midlands had 222 such reports. The most likely time to encounter a cyclist was at the weekend, when more than 1,000 reports were filed over the five years. The peak time for cyclists to travel on a motorway was between midday and 7pm. However some cyclists were seen in the early hours of the morning, possibly in the hope that the roads would be quieter. The data show the vast majority of cycling alerts were filed by the police (2,639), traffic officers (226), the general public (204), with a few reports from paramedics, firefighters and contractors working on the roads. In 2020, a cyclist was fined for riding one Sunday on the M60 near Cheadle.

In a social media post, North West Motorway Police said: "Patrol just stopped a cyclist on the M60 near to Junction 3. Tried to advise, but cyclist couldn't understand what the issue

was.” In 2021, a cyclist was filmed by police riding under a motorway gantry that warned motorists of a “report of cyclist” and imposed a 60mph speed limit.

In 2023, a Deliveroo rider was arrested on the M6. He was later detained for immigration offences. That same year, a cyclist was stopped on the M8 in Scotland as he rode home with a bag of Asda groceries hanging from the handlebars. Earlier, a cyclist who was stopped by police on the M25 claimed his phone’s route planner directed him on to the motorway.

A National Highways spokesman said: “Motorways are designed for high-speed traffic and cycling on them is both unsafe and against the law. “Cyclists on motorways are vulnerable and can pose a risk to themselves and other road users.” “When reported, our traffic officers are often deployed alongside police, sometimes requiring lane closures while cyclists are escorted off the carriageway. Cyclists should always use appropriate routes away from motorways.” A spokesman for the Department for Transport said: “Cycling on motorways is not only dangerous, it is illegal, and there are penalties in place for those who break this law.” A cyclist caught riding on a motorway faces a maximum fine of up to £2,500 and can be prosecuted for a variety of offences – including dangerous cycling – under the Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984, Road Traffic Offenders Act 1988 and Road Traffic Act 1988.

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As a follow on from the above we have recently had several very foggy mornings and while taking my grandchildren to school I have noticed several cyclists riding with no lights on at all and wearing dark clothing. This makes them virtually invisible until you are more or less on top of them. There are one or two who have a single light either on the front of their bike or on their helmet but they have no rear red light. This must be a recipe for an accident but if an accident happened who would be to blame? What are the regulations on lights for cyclists?

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## **Speed Limit Transitions**

In the latest RoadSmart magazine there is a question about the speed limit on the A361 abruptly changing from 50mph to 20mph with little if any prior warning.

There is an instance of an even greater abrupt limit change on the A55 North Wales coast road from Bangor to Chester where at one point the limit changes from 70mph to 30mph again with little warning. Having driven along that road many times I can see why the limit at that point is 30 but shouldn’t there be a graduated limit change with say an intermediate limit of 50mph to avoid sudden braking. Let me know your thoughts on the subject.

## Nearly half of young drivers illegally use phones to text at the wheel

Texting, social media use, and video calling is rife among 17-24-year-old drivers.

For new drivers within two years of gaining full licence, being caught using a mobile phone illegally risks leaving them with an astronomical £12,000 bill.

Almost half (43%) of drivers aged 17-24 admit to illegally writing or reading a message at the wheel while driving, while a third (34%) confess to using a handheld mobile phone to record footage or take a photo while driving. This compares to one third (29%) of drivers aged 35 – 44, and just 16 percent of drivers aged 45 to 54.

The survey, conducted by the UK's leading road safety charity IAM RoadSmart, reveals a concerning snapshot of young drivers over the last 12 months as they struggle to detach themselves from the distractive nature of a smart phone. Asked if and how frequently they have used a handheld mobile phone over the previous 12 months, one in eight (16%) said they have illegally read or written messages while driving on at least half of journeys, which increases to 43% when including those admitting to doing it 'once or twice'.

For taking videos and photos, 13 percent say they have carried this out on at least half of journeys. Despite most cars and phones having hands free technology, the research shows that half of younger drivers continue to hold their phones while driving.

And four in ten (41%) younger drivers say they have made video calls using hands free technology which, while technically legal, carries a huge risk of distraction and eyes being taken off the road.

Using a handheld mobile phone behind the wheel is illegal, even when stopped at traffic lights or in a queue. Penalties include a £200 fine, up to six penalty points, and potentially losing your license if you passed your test within the last two years under the provisions of the Road Traffic (New Drivers) Act 1995.

According to new analysis by IAM RoadSmart, a £200 fine could be the least of concerns for young drivers who are not only dicing with death but also risking crippling legal, insurance, commuting and retest costs totalling up to £12,000.

### **COSTS**

A typical 19-year-old male that receives a CU80 endorsement for using a mobile phone whilst driving may find themselves with a whopping £10,675 in additional insurance costs, almost £700 in alternative transport costs, and more than £800 for refresher lessons, new test costs

and fines. To put this into context, the total amount is the equivalent of one year of university tuition, a decent second-hand car or several all-inclusive holidays in Europe.

Using a handheld mobile phone while driving for interactive purposes has been illegal since December 2003. In 2017, the penalties increased from a £100 fine and three licence points to £200 and six points. In March 2022, the law was updated making it illegal to hold a phone for any reason while driving, not just for interactive communication.

Many police forces consider it to be part of the ‘fatal four’, causing significant distraction at the wheel.

Department for Transport data shows that in 2024, there were 154 people killed or seriously injured (KSIs) where using a mobile device was identified as a factor, while there were 920 KSIs attributed to distractions either inside or outside of the vehicle.

**IAM RoadSmart Director of Policy and Standards Nicholas Lyes said:**

“The statistics show that a troubling number of young people are not only dicing with death, but they are also putting themselves at huge financial risk giving into the urge of using their smart phone. While the fear of missing out or FOMO appears to be a huge problem when behind the wheel, younger drivers should be far more worried about the implications of illegal phone use.”

“Even if the risk of a serious collision isn’t enough to deter this behaviour, losing your licence so early on will stunt your employment chances, disrupt education and will put you at a significant financial disadvantage.”

“Enforcement remains one of the best tools to combat the epidemic of illegal phone use at the wheel, and would-be criminals should be aware that forces are using new cameras to catch people.”

“It’s almost a decade since the penalties were increased for mobile-phone related driving offences, and we would support upping the fine level once again. Perhaps a good place to start might be by matching the fine to the price of a new smart phone.”

“Education is also important – young people need to realise that using a phone at the wheel can have devastating consequences.”

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## **Britain’s Pothole Plague: How Does Your Council Perform?**

Ministers have named and shamed 13 councils for failing to do enough to repair potholes. The Department for Transport (DfT) has published a dashboard that shows each area’s progress in the upkeep of public roads. A traffic light ranking system has been applied to each local highway authority (LHA), which scores their performance in spending a £7.3bn pothole fund released by Rachel Reeves last year. Councils that do not spend the money effectively, or leave roads

unrepaired, have received a red rating, while a handful have been rated as green. The councils were scored on three measures: the condition of the roads, their spending record and “best practice” for repairs. The 13 worst offenders include five councils run by the Conservatives, four run by Labour, three run by Reform UK and one by the Liberal Democrats.

Labour had the smallest proportion of its councils with a red rating – 5 per cent of a total 83 councils – while Reform scored the worst, with a quarter of its 12 councils rated red. The red areas were Bedford, Bolton, Cumberland, Derbyshire, Greenwich, Kensington and Chelsea, Leicestershire, North Lincolnshire, Slough, Suffolk, Waltham Forest, West Northamptonshire and Westmorland and Furness. Labour also had the most councils rated green, with eight of the 15 best areas in Britain, while Reform had just one – Worcestershire.

The remaining 125 areas received an amber rating. Whitehall sources said a council was only likely to be rated green if it had spent its entire pothole funding grant on road repairs, and demonstrated a long-term plan for maintenance in future. Reform and Lib Dem councils ranked equally badly for the state of their roads, with 16.7 per cent of councils given a red rating for condition. On spending, Tory councils fared worst, with 19.2 per cent rated red, while Reform performed worst for maintenance best practice. Heidi Alexander, the Transport Secretary, said the dashboard would let the public “see how well councils are doing in delivering the improvements they want to see in their local area”. “For too long drivers have paid the price because our roads were left to deteriorate,” she said. “I have heard time and again their frustration on footing the bill because they hit a pothole – money they should never have to spend in the first place. “We’ve put our money where our mouth is, increasing the funding for local highway authorities with £7.3bn to fix roads and given them the long-term certainty they have been asking for.”

Fixing potholes is usually a local political issue that is not managed by Westminster. However, Labour strategists believe a strong performance in fixing roads will help the party show the public it has delivered meaningful change on issues that affect voters’ day to day lives. Morgan McSweeney, Sir Keir Starmer’s chief of staff, is understood to have taken a personal interest in pothole policy from inside Downing Street. Ministers hope that the £7.3bn funding settlement for road repairs over four years would allow cash-strapped councils to invest in longer-term pothole prevention measures, rather than patching holes when they arise.

There are also concerns that councils have spent money intended for potholes on other issues. Councils have been told to publish data on the number of potholes they have fixed, or lose out on 25 per cent of their future funding from the DfT.

Edmund King, the president of the AA, said: “The top transport demand for 96 per cent of AA members is fixing potholes with increased investment in repairing and upgrading roads. “We welcome this government initiative to hold local highways authorities to account which should help to promote the Pothole Partnership objective of more proactive and permanent repairs.”

Have you ever had to make a claim against the council for damage caused by a pothole? If so were you successful. Let me know.

# And Finally.....



## **A Genuine Zebra Crossing**

(Photo taken by David Wevill)

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## **This Month's Teaser**

What simple feature did James Moyan of Ford introduce to cars in the late 80s that made life easier when refuelling?

## **Last Month's Teaser**

Last month I asked "Slade won the 1973 Christmas number 1 battle with Merry Xmas Everybody but what was the highest chart position for the rival for the top slot Wizard's "I Wish It Could Be Christmas Every Day"?" The answer is Number 4.

## Your Committee

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Due to computer hacking and high levels of spamming we have had to remove the hyperlinks to our e-mail addresses and have replaced the @ symbol with (at) so you will need to retype the address in the correct e-mail format, i.e. replace (at) with @, with no spaces.