

Illuminating

Ian Lamming drives the new Volvo S90

IT'S dark, very dark and I'm tired, pretty tired. But there's work to be done, money to be earned and a murky road to be negotiated.

Two cars in the drive, there's a choice; one is small, fun and frivolous, the other large and comfortable. What swings it are the lights – the Volvo S90 is packing Thor hammer headlamps, how better with which to punch through the gloom?

This time of year, in the countryside where I live, the asphalt melds into the land. There is so little definition between road and verge that it becomes a struggle to keep any car on the straight and narrow.

If there were any driving aids at all, white edge lines, cats' eyes or chevrons, they have long disappeared under a thick film of grime and dirt, so keeping on the less than straight and narrow is down to the driver.

Thor hammer lights bring the sight of Odin to

the mere mortals who scurry around this world.

They illuminate with such other-worldly force that it could quite easily be daylight not the perpetual twilight zone we call winter. It makes driving so much easier. It sounds obvious, but actually being able to see where you are going takes the stress out of motoring like you would not believe.

S90 is like that. It is there to serve, to make life easy, comfortable, contented. Volvo's latest saloon is huge, not only long but very wide too. It feels like an American cruiser. When I look back I need binoculars to see the boy who appears doll-like on the enormous back seat. He has so much leg room he could be flying first class.

We all sink into sumptuous leather seats – again very American – and float along in a Yankee doodle fashion.

The D4 diesel engine is powerful and very economical. Mated to a slick automatic gearbox

the S90 wafts along in a spirited but relaxed way. Never has a car been so well designed to munch through monotonous miles.

S90 has moved automotive technology on a generation. It feels different, new, 21st century.

It's at this point the eight-year-old is required to play with the technology in the front. The dash is dominated by what looks like an iPad. Off you go then Benjamin...

Touch sensitive, it sweeps and pinches in a digital device manner accessing myriad functions, some necessary to driving, others the pure luxuries of a cyber-world. Stay in the driveway and play to your heart's content.

It is strange though, to a fast becoming old-timer like me, when it comes down to it, the thing that stands out the most, that shines a light on the many talents of this new Volvo, are the fantastic headlamps.

All power to the Viking Gods is what I say.

Fact File

- Volvo S90 D4 Momentum
- Engine: 2.0 diesel
- Power: 190PS
- 0-60mph: 8.2 secs
- Top speed: 140mph
- Combined MPG: 64.2
- Transmission: Automatic
- CO2 g/km: 116

