



Newsletter ~ December 2015

St Helens Group of Advanced Motorists
Working to make our roads safer every day...



Chair's Remarks

Hello everybody and welcome to the December edition of the Newsletter. The last 12 months have been very busy for the Group and as the year draws to a close it is timely to recall some of the major things that have been happening.

Our main aim continues to be the provision of three Skill for Life Courses per year, each being 8 to 10 weeks in length and comprised of both in-car training and classroom sessions. The Committee is hard working and we are continually looking for ways to engage with members of the public to deliver the safe driving message. Thank you to the committee members, and others, who supported our recent publicity events at a Senior Road Users meeting at the 'Mansion house' and at Whiston hospital. The events highlighted some opportunities for the Group to upgrade its promotional material and we will be doing this in the New Year.

Of course, advanced driving has safety as a by-product of all that we do when we drive a vehicle but for those of us that know what advanced driving is about, we know

that it is much more than just about safety.

'Advanced Driving' improves driving confidence since we become very good at predicting what might happen next. We become more relaxed when we drive since we feel in control and from that our confidence grows. We feel that we are driving our vehicle rather than our vehicle taking us for a drive and from this close relationship we understand what our vehicle is capable of doing. In effect, we get to know our vehicle better. We adopt a 'surviving while driving' or a 'defensive driving' mentality that allows us to assess what may reasonably be expected to happen next. From this, we become safer and more alert when driving which enables us to enjoy our driving much more and, on occasion, we can even get a thrill out of driving the advanced way!

So, if you are reading this and you are not an 'advanced' driver then I hope I have whetted your appetite. If so, then please get in touch.

This time last year the Committee made a commitment to organise

a social event for the Group every month. We have had great success in achieving this and thank you to all the members who support these events. They have been well supported. Let me know if there are any activities that you would particularly like to see organised. Is it somewhere to go and see (indoor or outdoor) or is it a 'challenge' or competition activity for the more adventurous?

Finally, thank you to all the members who have signed up with easyfundraising.org.uk (see page 2). This is money for nothing and is a great way bolster the Group's funds. Basically, the easyfunding site just acts as a gateway to get to your usual on-line shopping sites. There are no issues regarding card security or confidentially by doing this. Please consider this option when you do your on line purchases - Christmas presents for example!

It just remains for me to wish you all a happy and safe Christmas and New Year.

Mark Farnworth,
Group Chairman

Merry
Christmas
&
Happy
New Year!

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Associate Coordinator's Corner

I'd first of all like to congratulate Elizabeth Howlett on her recent Test pass. This particular Course has not been an easy one due to the low number of Associates who had joined in September. We had expected more but, for various reasons, some deferred until January. Accordingly, I would like to thank the Observers for their patience during the Course as, with only three Associates, it has not been easy to keep everyone occupied.

The situation was sometimes eased by potential recruits coming for Assessment Drives and also by John and Alison Matthews who offered to roleplay Associates to help us with Observer Training. This was much appreciated as only on two occasions did all three Associates appear at the same time, although mid-week runs were arranged where possible. Fortunately, they were all able to come to the Training Evenings including the Meet The

Examiner Evening. Thanks must go to Jeff Mather who explained exactly what happens on Test and how it is marked. However, we have done several Assessment Drives and other promotions. Therefore, I am, as ever, cautiously optimistic about much better numbers joining the next Course.

Finally, as winter approaches, I am reminded of some of the Winter Vehicle Checks we gave at a Pilkington's Road Safety Day in 2013.

These were mainly for long journeys and included:

- (1) Do planning in advance, have a good knowledge of the route, rests and stops, and alternatives if there are bad road conditions in some areas.
- (2) Check weather forecasts on the day of the journey. Is the journey really necessary?
- (3) Make sure your mobile phone is charged, with generous credit where possible.

- (4) Carry a blanket, spade, good winter coat and boots.
- (5) Carry a hot drink in a flask and something to eat.
- (6) Have cards for your Breakdown Association and Bank cards, plus some cash.
- (7) Check Emergency Kit, map, flashlight, ice scraper, de-icer, foot pump and warning triangle.
- (8) On a long journey, take a break every two hours.

Whilst we did mention snow chains and winter tyres, the cost of these must surely be taken into consideration. However, do keep an eye on tyre treads, which should be at least 3mm in winter.

Keep safe and have a good Christmas.

Alan Prescott
Associate Coordinator

An easy way to raise funds

Turn your online shopping into donations for St Helens Group of Advanced Motorists!

Do you shop online? Did you know that every time you buy something you could be raising money for St Helens Group of Advanced Motorists? That's right, over 2,700 well known retailers, including Amazon, John Lewis, eBay and Tesco will donate a small percentage of what you spend to St Helens Group of Advanced Motorists to say thank you for shopping with them.

Easyfundraising has already raised over £5 million for over 50,000 good causes across the UK. So what are you waiting for? Head to www.easyfundraising.org.uk to fundraise for St Helens Group of Advanced Motorists now. Already registered? Spread the word to family and friends to let them know

just how easy it is!

- 1. First go to www.easyfundraising.org.uk
 - 2. Click on "Support a Good Cause"
 - 3. Type in the "Name of Good Cause" as St Helens Group of Advanced Motorists
 - 4. Select our name from the drop down menu, click "Support This Cause" and click "Find"
 - 5. Next to our name click "Support this Cause"
 - 6. It will ask for your Name, Email Address and a Password
 - 7. Tick the T&C's
 - 8. Tick the box to say you don't want the handy hints and tips or you could be swamped with emails
 - 9. Continue and you'll see "We are registered for Gift Aid on this site" - it will ask for the first line of your address and a Postcode. You can tick to allow Giftaid to be reclaimed on your donations
 - 10. Continue to the option to install their toolbar and, if you want it, just follow their instructions
- Once registered, when you want to

do some online shopping you can either access your retailers direct from the easyfundraising website (they have an alphabetical list of all the retailers they deal with) and click "Go Shopping" or you can go direct to your retailer's website and, if you have the easyfundraising toolbar, you can click on the "Activate Donation" button in the top right hand corner and follow the instructions from there (it takes you back to the easyfundraising website and again you click on "Go Shopping"). Either way once you have made a purchase online you tend to get a message saying your sale has been registered for a donation. Donations can take more than 2 weeks to come through from the retailer but there is always a record of what you have raised so far on your easyfundraising account.

It's really easy to use so I think it's definitely worth trying.

Alison Matthews
Group Treasurer



Winter 2016 Course Programme

Course Programme – Starting January 2016

The Introduction and System Evenings will be held at 8pm at the IBIS hotel, Haydock and the Meet an Examiner Evening at the Millennium Centre, St. Helens Town Centre. For all Observed Runs, meet at the IBIS hotel for 10.00am.

Introduction Evening

- Run 1 (Assessment drive)
- Run 2 (Observation, planning)
- Run 3 (Urban)

The System of Car Control

- Run 4 (Rural 1)
- Demonstration drive
- Run 5 (Major roads)
- Run 6 (Rural 2)

Meet an Examiner / Revision Night Q&A

- Run 7 (Mixed)
- Run 8 (Final polish)
- Consolidation run if waiting for test
- Consolidation run if waiting for test

Thursday 7th Jan

- Sunday 10th Jan
- Sunday 17th Jan
- Sunday 24th Jan

Thursday 28th Jan

- Sunday 31st Jan
- Sunday 7th Feb
- Sunday 14th Feb
- Sunday 21st Feb

Monday 22nd Feb

- Sunday 28th Feb
- Sunday 6th Mar
- Sunday 13th Mar
- Sunday 20th Mar

Congratulations to:

Elizabeth Howlett
on passing the
Advanced Driving Test

Notice Board



10% off Skill for Life Christmas gift vouchers

A Skill for Life advanced driving or motorcycling course makes the perfect Christmas present. Thoughtful, challenging and hugely enjoyable, what better gift to give this Christmas.

Buy before the 20th December and save 10%

Sad News

Denis Painter, a founder member of the Group passed away on the 8th November. Denis was instrumental in the setting up of the Group in 1985 and held a term as Group Chairman. Sincere condolences to his wife Anne (Associate co-ordinator in the 1980's) and family

Roadcraft

Roadcraft, Manual is the definitive source of information for all matters relating to Advanced Driving and the System of Car Control. It is a good read for both Observers and Associates. The Group has purchased 20 copies of the new (2013) version of Roadcraft for members to buy at only £10 each. This is a significant reduction on what you would normally buy these for on the High Street or via the internet.

New arrangements for Group Meetings

The Ramada Hotel, Haydock has become the centre of the Groups operations following our move there several years ago. The hotel has now become part of the IBIS Group and we have been informed that we now have to pay for room bookings. The committee has considered this new situation and has decided to move its monthly Committee Meetings and the Meet the Examiner/Revision evening to the Millennium (Walk in) Centre in the Town Centre. For the moment, the Sunday morning runs will be operated from the IBIS hotel (meet in its lounge area) and the Intro/System nights and AGM will be also be held at the IBIS.

We continue to make enquires about other venue options. If you have any suggestions then please let me know. **Mark Farnworth**



IAM News Release

Is the driving test fit for purpose? Experiment shows just half of drivers would fail test again if re-taken

3rd December 2015

Is the driving test fit for purpose? Experiment shows just half of drivers would fail test again if re-taken

Half of experienced drivers would fail their driving test if they were asked to take it again – if the results of an experiment by Auto Express and the Institute of Advanced Motorists (IAM) are anything to go by.

The industry-leading magazine and website (autoexpress.co.uk) magazine joined forces with the Britain's biggest independent road safety charity in an exercise to see if the UK's driving test, which marks its 80th anniversary this year, still meets its objective in allowing only the most competent drivers onto the road.

The IAM found 12 experienced drivers who were prepared to undertake a mini-driving test again and discover if they would pass their test if they had to take it in today's conditions.

Going by the criteria of the IAM's qualified assessors on the day, just 50% (six of the 12 who took part) would pass if they took it again today. Auto Express revealed that 46 million people have taken their driving test since it was introduced in 1935. Back at the start the pass rate was 63% - today it has fallen to just 47%.

Of the 12 volunteers, seven had undergone advanced driver training with the IAM. Of those, five passed the mini test. And of the five who had had no advanced

tuition, just one passed.

Added Sarah Sillars, IAM chief executive officer: "The results of our joint experiment were very interesting. It shows that keeping your skills topped up and knowledge of the Highway Code current is crucial in making safer drivers and riders. "Road skills cannot be allowed to lapse. Keeping your skills current through advanced tuition and other proven methods can only be a benefit to everyone who uses our roads."

#Wheelsinwinter IAM launches winter road safety drive

23rd November 2015

In 2014, 12,445 accidents took place on built up roads that were either flooded or wet in the dark – a 19% increase since 2010. As the days shorten and weather conditions worsen the IAM has launched its #wheelsinwinter campaign to support motorists in driving safely this winter.

As part of the #wheelsinwinter campaign, the IAM will be introducing a new animated video featuring Al the Alien on its social media platforms. The animation will be used as a visual aid to help novice drivers gain familiarity with a number of hazardous situations faced on winter roads.

Other contributory factors to road accidents in 2014 include:

- Snow, sleet, rain or fog – caused 368 fatal or serious accidents
- Slippery roads – caused 1,279 fatal or serious accidents

Sarah Sillars, chief executive officer at the IAM, said: "It is clear from the statistics that people need to change their driving behaviour when faced with poor weather conditions

and more hours of darkness.

"Winter driving needn't be difficult, and with a few small changes driving in bad weather conditions can be made far safer and more enjoyable. We advise motorists to avoid travelling in severe weather conditions – could you delay that visit to the shops or walk to school instead? But if you do need to travel, prepare properly and read our advice to ensure you and your loved ones are safe."

Multi-tasking at the wheel a potentially fatal myth, finds IAM

3rd December 2015

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.

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.



Extract from IAM INSIGHT November 2015 Edition



Sarah enjoyed meeting group members at the IAM Annual Conference

TURNING TALK INTO ACTION

By Sarah Sillars OBE, chief executive officer

I hope you have had a chance to digest everything that took place at the IAM Annual Conference, and if you didn't get the chance to go yourself members of your group have fed information back about what happened.

Perhaps you followed the activity on social media, especially on our conference hashtag #iamconf15? You can still see all the posts here.

Nearly 400 of you came on at least one of the two days, and we are delighted that you spared some or all of your valuable weekend to join us. I know that you came from the four corners of the UK, Republic of Ireland, Turkey and beyond to meet us at Aston University Business School.

The theme of the conference was how we work with you – how we foster closer links with you, our groups; and how we give you the tools you need to carry out your role for your associates.

The conference featured a series of workshops with new topics as well as revisiting areas that needed more attention from the past.

In addition, we were very pleased to have young people from the Under 17 Car Club who led their own workshop on Saturday. We know how important it is to understand what drivers aged 25 and under respond to – and we have much to learn in understanding and working with Generation Y and Z.

For young people, technology moves at an alarmingly fast pace. Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, Snapchat, Vine ... what's in and what's out? So we are fos-

tering strong links with the U17CC, and are keen to understand exactly what we need to be doing to attract a younger audience.

Other areas covered in the conference were strategy, led by myself and Ken Keir, chair elect; group engagement by Paul Woozley and Amanda Smith; observer succession planning by Dave Shenton and Toby Shaw; Standards, by Mark Lewis and Richard Gladman; and attracting new riders by PC Chris Smith from Dorset Police (Sunday only).

These areas were carefully chosen to ensure the latest developments in each of those sectors were communicated to you. We hope that you had ample time to discuss everything you wanted to say about them – we were really pleased with the level of questioning and debate.

This helps us to move ahead constructively. In the past we've shown that if a system doesn't work, we are more than willing to relook and if necessary consider another way forward.

I am sure that you will have received a feedback form by email by now. Unlike some organisations, where feedback disappears into a dark corner of an office never to be seen again, yours will form part of an action plan that will be progressed, shared and followed through.

We at the IAM; and me personally, are accountable to you. So watch this space and we will be sure to tell you more about how the events of the IAM Annual Conference will be turned into action.

SARAH



Commercially available DVD Resources

Ultimate Driving Craft (DVD 100 minutes): Chris Gilbert has a relaxed teaching style which is very suitable for a DVD audience. The DVD covers many advanced driving techniques throughout the range of driving environments (urban, rural, motorways, bad weather, progressive etc) with an initial emphasis on the benefit and development of commentary as a method of driving "self development". The DVD instruction is given in the form of an Instructor's style of commentary which Chris delivers in a very listenable manner.

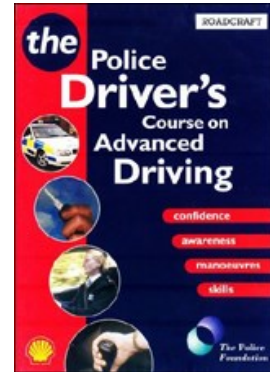
Advanced Roadcraft (DVD – 68 minutes): This DVD features general skills and techniques for driving safely and progressively in the range of road environment and includes tips for driving at night. The techniques and skills presented cover much of the syllabus of the

Police Roadcraft Manual including a section including demonstration of safe overtaking, a twenty minute demonstration of advanced driving through busy city traffic and a section on motorway driving.

Commentary Driving (DVD- 75 Minutes): This programme presents the development and expert examples of driving commentary. The programme features 3 commentary sections.

Roadcraft - The PoliceDriver's Course on Advanced Driving
Rather than being purely instructional this DVD follows police candidates on an advanced driving course run at the Metropolitan Police Motor Driving School, Hendon. The DVD complements "Roadcraft: The Police Drivers Handbook" by showing the instructors coaching the candidates

through advanced driving techniques and particularly the System of Car control. The course includes the range of driving situations covered by the Group and additionally includes sections on night driving and skid pan training.



Contact Phil Sharples on
01744 29886 or
philetsan187@gmail.com

Courses and Discounts

Young Driver Group discount

Due to a generous donation to the Group, we are able, **subject to funding availability**, to offer the following discounts to younger drivers who fall into the following age ranges at the start of the course.

Age 26 to 35

Skill for Life Course is initially reduced to only £124 (£25 discount). After completing the Course and taking the Test a generous £35 refund is paid (irrespective of outcome) making the course only £89

Age up to 25

Skill for Life Course is initially reduced to only £109 (£40 discount). After completing the Course and taking the Test a generous £50 refund is paid (irrespective of outcome). Phone Julie Brown on 07814 415559 (after 6pm).

IAM Young Drivers Assessment

Momentum is designed for 17-25 year olds who have passed their driving test, and incorporates two modules: an interactive online assessment, followed by an on-road session with an IAM examiner. *Momentum* does not involve an exam and there is no risk of failure; it offers a quick, low-cost option for improving the confidence, awareness and safety of younger drivers.

Momentum costs £45, a sum that will be taken off the full Skill for Life programme if purchased within 12 months of the *Momentum* assessment. *Skill for Life* will develop on feedback from the *Momentum* assessment and will help drivers to safely predict hazards, anticipate other drivers' behaviour and more accurately assess road and traffic conditions.

Employer sponsorship

If you drive, even very occasionally, for an employer they may be a source of sponsorship for the SfL. This is particularly relevant for small to medium organisations without a vehicle fleet that rely on employees to use their own or company vehicle on company business. Health and safety legislation places a responsibility on employers to assess risk and provide suitable measures such as training to minimise such risks. So if you are considering further driver training and your employer requires you to make occasional deliveries, go for the post, pick up visitors or visit customers then you could ask your employer for help to cover all or part of the cost. The sponsorship you gain, however, is a matter between you and your employer.



Motorists demand end to insurance policy jargon

New research shows thousands of drivers think their insurance policies lack transparency and are difficult to understand. We identify the most common problems.

Jargon and confusing policy terms are motorists' biggest bugbears when it comes to insuring their vehicles, new research has found. A study carried out by analyst Consumer Intelligence has found widespread dissatisfaction among drivers about the customer service they get from insurers.

Failure to explain

And the most serious complaint relates to providers' failure to explain how policies work and what exactly policyholders are covered for. Consumer Intelligence's report found that more than half of motorists said that car insurance should be made more transparent and easier to understand. The survey also showed that there was strong demand for insurers to offer UK-based call centres – one in 10 drivers backed such a move – while almost a quarter said they wanted the option to be able to manage their policies and make claims online. Motorists also want to see an end to the practice of offering relatively expensive renewal quotes which can then often be reduced with a bit of haggling.

'Offer best price upfront'

Customers said insurers should simply offer their best price upfront when the current policy was about to run out.

Katy Ratcliffe, head of marketing at Consumer Intelligence, said: "Customers want more than an annual renewal reminder and are vocal in their wish for a closer relationship based on trust and transparency. "Providers need to focus on how good they are at making customers happy and understanding what customers want from them. "They should work out why customers are leav-

ing and decide the type of customers they want to attract. "What stands out is the need for consumers to feel they are being treated fairly which is in line with what regulators want."

New drivers worst affected

Gemma Stanbury, head of motor insurance at Confused.com, said there were a number of policy terms and conditions which frequently caused confusion among consumers. "Generally, customers who have been quoted for car insurance for years have a grasp of the main four elements of a policy: breakdown cover, legal expenses protection, courtesy car and windscreen cover.

"Although in some cases it's worth checking what level of cover they get with each for the associated cost," Stanbury said. But for new drivers in particular, many of these areas can be hard to understand, and apparently minor differences in cover levels can turn out to be important when it comes to making claims. Stanbury says there are three common areas of confusion for less experienced policyholders:



Courtesy car and hire car Provision

Many insurers say they will provide a courtesy car if the policyholder's vehicle is involved in an accident and needs to be repaired. However, this may depend on the garage having a courtesy car available, and you may not be entitled to one if you are at fault for the accident. If your car is written off or stolen, however, you are unlikely to be entitled to a courtesy vehicle – even

though this is when you really need one. Instead, you may be able to pay extra for hire-car cover for ensure you can still get around if this happens.

Excesses

If you make a claim where another driver is not at fault, you normally have to pay the first part – this is known as the excess. However, your excess is formed of two elements, the voluntary and the compulsory excess. As you might expect, everyone pays the compulsory excess, while you can choose how much voluntary excess to pay when you buy your policy.

The higher the voluntary excess, the lower your premiums are likely to be. But if your insurer has a compulsory excess of £150 and you choose a voluntary excess of £250, you will have to fund the first £400 of any claim.

Legal expenses cover

Many insurers offer to cover legal expenses as part of their standard policy, while with other providers you have to pay around £20-30 a year extra for this protection. Legal expenses cover will pay your legal bills if another driver takes action against you – for example for negligence – or if you want to do the same to another motorist. Cover is usually limited to around £50,000 or £100,000.

Chris Torney 28th Aug 2015 for confused.com



Chris is the former personal finance editor at the Daily Express. He's been a journalist for more than 10 years and contributes to a wide range of finance and business titles.



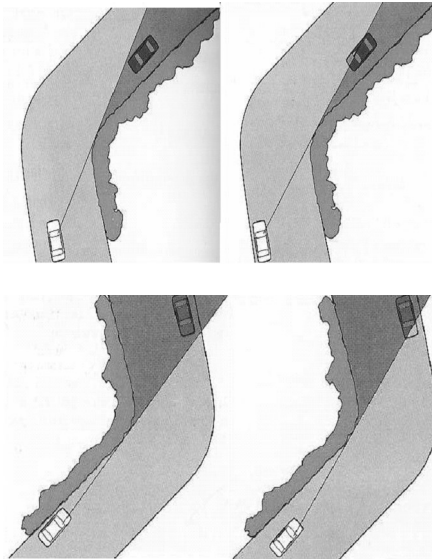
Driving Tips

Country Driving

Driving in country areas is perhaps the most demanding of all driving since speeds are generally high and there can be a hazard around almost every bend. Observation needs to be particularly good and is the key element in the gathering of **INFORMATION**. You need to repeatedly look as far ahead as you can - to see bends looming up in the distance, to see changes of speed limit signs, to see pedestrians, horses, tractors, side roads etc. A good knowledge of 'observation links' will make your planning a lot easier. An 'observation link' is making an association between what you can see and what you can reasonably expect to happen as a consequence. If you see houses in the distance then expect a reduced speed limit. If the road has a line of trees down one side and the line curves in the distance, you know a bend is approaching. If you see a church in the distance then expect parked vehicles or pedestrians anytime (particularly on Sunday mornings).

POSITION yourself for left hand bends towards the right hand side of your lane on the approach - but don't drive on or over the white centre line. Positioning in this way will give you an early view of any danger at or beyond the bend. However, don't position in this way if there is oncoming traffic (move back to the centre of your lane for safety) or if you might wrongly give the driver behind the impression that you intend to turn right at or beyond the bend. For right hand bends position towards the left of your lane for improved observation but only if there are no nearside hazards such as cyclists or pools of water. Never position yourself so far to the left that you drive over debris in the gutter along the roadside.

As you approach a bend consider whether you will need to reduce your **SPEED** in order to negotiate it safely. Don't immediately think of reducing speed by using the brakes.



you may be able to lose all your unwanted speed by deceleration only. If you see SLOW written on the ground before a bend it is going to be tighter than normal so select a lower, 'responsive', gear. If there are 'sharp deviation' chevrons its going to be even tighter.

A responsive gear is a gear that provides good engine braking if need be or good acceleration. If the road is level and you know your speed is correct for the bend then take your foot off the brake and change to the GEAR (if necessary) that is most appropriate for your speed. Remember, hand off steering wheel to change gear as your foot comes off the brake.

In the photograph below we can see 'SLOW' written on the road and chevrons on the bend ahead. There is a side road on the bend and looking over the hedges we can see farm buildings after the bend.

The bend looks tight so we would probably take second gear for the bend and use the mirrors before any reduction of speed. There may be a farm entrance after the bend so we would moderate our acceleration just after the bend and then accelerate normally if it is safe and legal to do so.

You are now almost to the bend-



your position and speed are correct and you are in a responsive **GEAR**. If your timing has been correct you should have a few seconds to return your left hand to the steering wheel (assuming you changed gear) and prepare yourself to steer into the bend. Use your accelerator pedal to 'drive' through the bend at a constant speed. Do not increase your speed through the bend since this will make your car less stable on the road. Once you have a good view of the road beyond the bend then **ACCELERATE** away from the bend provided there are no hazards ahead or a reduced speed limit area.

In the photograph below we are coming out of a bend. Visibility is very good and the road is dry and clear. Good acceleration/progress could be made on this section of road. Remember to check your mirrors before increasing speed (a motorbike rider travelling behind may want to go for an overtake!).





Driving Tips

Bends – the factors to consider

- Positioning for safety/observation
- Vehicle Stability
- Correct speed of approach - a 'safe' speed

Only when the above three criteria are consistently met can we consider maximising speed through bends

Bends – the factors to consider

- Check your mirrors before reducing speed for the bend.
- Have you positioned for observation or safety as appropriate?
- Have you removed your foot from the brake before selecting a lower gear?
- Can you hear engine braking after the gear is selected? [you should not]
- Were the brakes applied a second time after the gear was selected? [ideally, you should not!]
- Does the car feel stable as it goes through the bend?
- Check your mirrors before accelerating away from the bend.
- Is the amount of acceleration correct taking into account of what is ahead?
- Successful Advanced Driving in Rural areas requires a continual application of the System.

Motorway Driving

Joining: Motorways are joined using slip roads which are usually two lane carriageways. When travelling down a slip road use your mirrors so that you know the position of vehicles behind and to your side. At the earliest opportunity a check over your right shoulder will tell you the amount and movement of traffic on the motorway. If the traffic is heavy you may have to decelerate or even brake so that you can spend more time searching for a gap. A right indication would be a good idea on a busy motorway to 'wake' people up to your intentions. If the traffic is light and there is no

one behind a right indication may not be required. Use the full length of the acceleration lane, if you need to, to get onto the motorway. However, only use the full length if there is a gap to go for. Don't drive to the end of the acceleration lane hoping a gap will develop.

On the Motorway: Frequent use of the mirrors will keep you informed about the speed and position of vehicles behind. Before changing lane remember to carry out a side-ways glance into the lane you intend to move, in case there is a vehicle in your mirror blind spot. When glancing just move your head, not your body. A full shoulder check is not necessary and would be dangerous at high speed.

Follow the Highway Code rules about lane discipline and moving back to the left after overtaking. The maximum legal speed limit on a motorway is 70 mph. Take this into account BEFORE overtaking. Don't 'lane hog' by driving in the centre or right hand lanes and disregarding available space in the lane to your left. If you are driving at the legal limit you have no right to impede traffic behind that want to go faster. Be alert when approaching junctions. If the motorway is busy then it would be anticipated that the slip road will also be busy, so consider moving to the middle lane to allow easier access for joining vehicles. If the motorway has little traffic then change to the middle lane if you SEE a vehicle coming down the slip road.

Don't automatically change from the left to the middle lane at all junctions. Think and use your judgement. Whether you do or don't change to the middle lane will depend on the circumstances, but in either case frequent left hand glances at junctions are necessary.

Change lanes and overtake smoothly. When indicating to change lane let your indicator flash at least three times BEFORE you change position. If you see that there is nothing to your side or behind you for a few



Photo courtesy of Gordon Betteley

Hundred metres then consider NOT indicating to overtake. Drive at a safe distance behind the vehicle in front. The 'two second rule' is a good 'rule of thumb' but it is advisable to give yourself more than this if you can, perhaps four seconds on a wet road.

Leaving the Motorway: Get into the left lane in good time. Don't leave this too late so that you have to 'force' your way into the left lane. While approaching the junction you want, maintain your speed up to the start of the deceleration lane – if you can. This will not be possible if you begin to draw nearer to slower vehicles in the left hand lane. Avoid severe deceleration or flashing brake lights on motorways - for obvious reasons. If following traffic is sufficiently close then indicate your intention to leave the motorway, otherwise don't. A good point to start indicating would be at the 300m (yard) marker post.

Mark Farnworth
National Observer



COMMITTEE MEMBERS & CONTACT DETAILS

Group President

Lady Kirsty Pilkington

Group Vice-President

Mark Farnworth

COMMITTEE OFFICERS 2014/2015

Chairman

Mark Farnworth 07929 978788
editor@shgam.org.uk

Vice Chairman

Ken Nevitt

Secretary

John Matthews secretary@shgam.org.uk

Treasurer

Alison Matthews

Membership Secretary

Julie Brown

Lead Observer

TBA

Associate Co-ordinator

Alan Prescott 01744 756298

Training Officer

Ken Nevitt

Group Contact

Julie Brown 07814 415559 (after 6pm)
contact@shgam.org.uk

Jim Cunliffe 01744 733485
Sue Hunt 01942 724627
Marilyn Waugh 01744 602367
Philip Sharples 01744 29886
Frank Rigby 01942 256274

TRAINING TEAM

Ken Nevitt (Chair) 01744 756298
Alan Prescott 01744 733485
Jim Cunliffe 07929 978788
Mark Farnworth 01942 655825
Alf Birtle 01942 256274
Frank Rigby

Newsletter Editor

Mark Farnworth editor@shgam.org.uk

Web Manager

Nicky Farnworth webmanager@shgam.org.uk

EVENTS (social and recruitment) TEAM

Marilyn Waugh 01744 602367

Sue Hunt 01942 724627

Julie Brown

HEAD OF FIELD OPERATIONS

David Shenton Dave.shenton@iam.org.uk

NORTHERN AREA MANAGER

Toby Shaw Toby.Shaw@iam.org.uk

REGION 5 FORUM

Chair: Julie Williams jly2958@hotmail.com

Secretary: Alan Filson aafilson@btinternet.com

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or the St Helens Group.*

Newsletter Contact Details

Newsletter Editor, Mark Farnworth

Tel: 07929 978788

Email: editor@shgam.org.uk

**Articles for the Newsletter should be submitted no later than the 15th of the month
prior to the month of inclusion.**

Group Website: www.shgam.org.uk

Email: webmanager@shgam.org.uk