



OAGAM events are taking a break over the Summer...

The next monthly meeting will be on *Wednesday 6<sup>th</sup> September*. The topic is still to be confirmed.

On *Wednesday 4<sup>th</sup> October*, OAGAM member John Walker is presenting a session about the threat posed to drivers by cybercrime (details on page 2).

Monthly meetings will then continue on the first Wednesday of the month.

If you have suggestions for topics or speakers please get in touch with Ian Hicks, Events Co-ordinator, via [events.oagam@gmail.com](mailto:events.oagam@gmail.com).

...and the OAGAM Newsletter will take a break until September.

However, monthly ride outs and drive outs will continue in July and August on the third Wednesday of the month and news of these and other events will be circulated via email as usual.

If you have suggestions for topics to be covered in the newsletter please get in touch with Andrew Carter, Newsletter Editor, via [newsletter@oagam.org](mailto:newsletter@oagam.org).

## Meet our new Membership Secretary

We are delighted to welcome Phil Hine (right) to the OAGAM Committee as Membership Secretary.

Phil has been an advanced rider and member of the OAGAM since 2008. He is also an advanced driver, having passed his test in June 2016.

Phil is passionate about driving and riding and has recently returned from a two week road trip in the USA with his wife. They hired a Ford Mustang V8 convertible for the trip - a perfect choice for the Pacific Coast Highway!

Phil says: *I have really enjoyed being a member of OAGAM and regularly attend ride outs and meetings which have given me the opportunity to learn and further improve my skills. I am delighted to be able help the committee with their excellent work.*



*Bikers in front of mountains is quite a theme this month...*

Phil can be contacted via:

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On the subject of membership, we are still finding some confusion about the difference between the IAM and OAGAM. Once you have passed the advanced test, you become a member of the national organisation (IAM), with a separate option to join its local branch (OAGAM). The flowchart below illustrates the journey from purchasing an advanced course to becoming a full member.

### **IAM RoadSmart & OAGAM – from Associate to Full Membership**





## June Meeting: Behind the Scenes at the British Motor Museum

*Two volunteers from the British Motor Museum at Gaydon - Vince Hall and Roger Pantling - gave us an entertaining and informative presentation about the museum.*

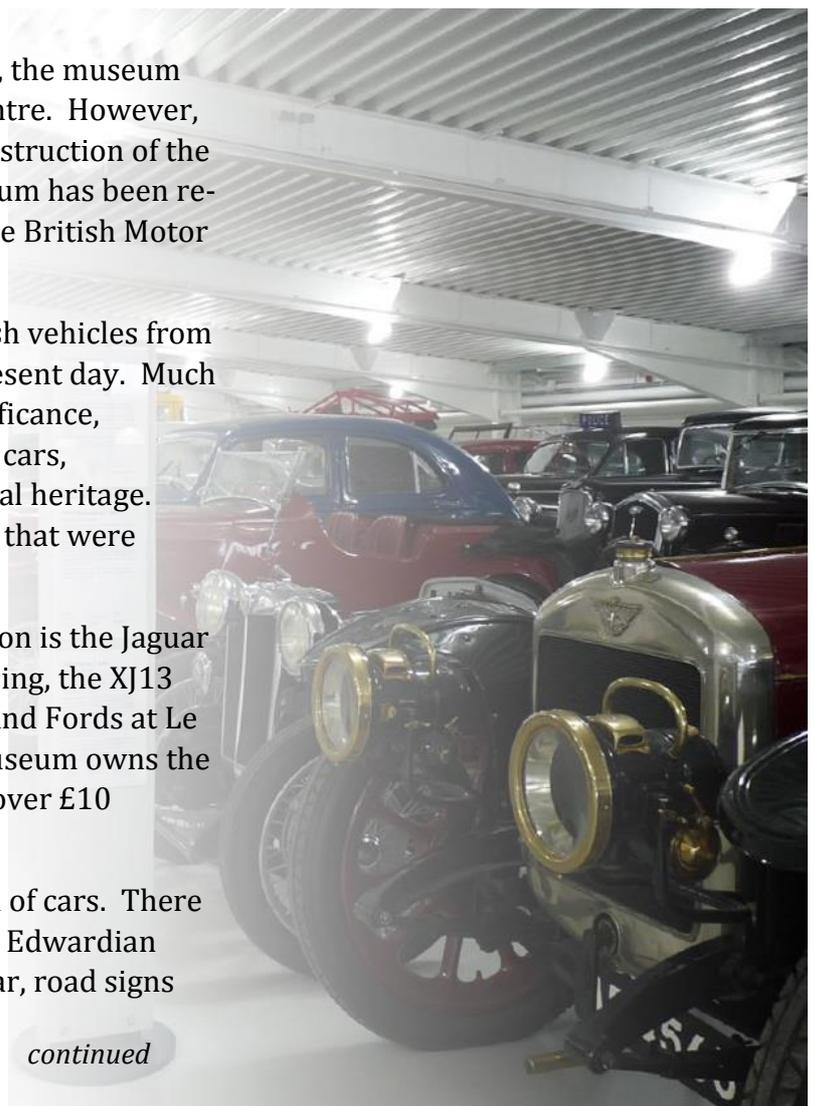
Originally opened nearly 25 years ago, in 1993, the museum was formerly known as the Heritage Motor Centre. However, following a major refit programme and the construction of the new collection centre and workshop, the museum has been re-branded and re-opened in February 2016 as the British Motor Museum.

The museum curates over three hundred British vehicles from the turn of the Twentieth Century up to the present day. Much of the collection is of historical and iconic significance, including many first off and last off production cars, prototypes, competition cars and cars with royal heritage. The museum has no fewer than seven vehicles that were owned by the Queen or her direct family.

The most valuable car in the museum's collection is the Jaguar XJ13. Built in the mid-1960s for endurance racing, the XJ13 was intended to compete against the Ferraris and Fords at Le Mans. However, it was never raced and the museum owns the sole XJ13 that was built. It has been valued at over £10 million.

But the museum doesn't just house a collection of cars. There are many other motoring artefacts dating from Edwardian times, including examples of lights, driving wear, road signs and other memorabilia.

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Moving behind the scenes, the volunteers explained some of the wide range of work they do. One area of activity is in the archive where many documents, drawings and plans of cars are kept and made available for researchers and restorers. Volunteers have also been responsible for the collection and collation of oral histories from local people involved in the automotive industry. The volunteers also provide guided tours of the museum and collection centre.

With the opening of the new collection centre in February 2016, the museum was able to bring together its reserve collection under one roof and, importantly, open that collection to the public. Volunteers guide visitors around the collection centre which is housed on two floors and includes many of the Land Rover and Range Rover fleet, including Road Rover, the first prototype and forerunner of the Range Rover family. The ground floor houses a mouth-watering display of the best of the Swallow Sidecar Company's products, re-named to Jaguar after the end of hostilities in 1945.

The building also houses a workshop where the museum's cars undergo routine maintenance and light restoration where appropriate. Many of the museum's vehicles are loaned to other museums or displays such as NEC classic or Silverstone classic. The cars are occasionally driven to these events.



The workshop (left) with its six four-post lifts is the envy of many of the museum visitors.

Yet other volunteers are engaged in the restoration of a 1960 Standard Ensign which is undergoing a nut-and-bolt restoration, including replacing panels and a complete re-paint, a job done by carefully brushing, rubbing down and polishing.

All in all this was an intriguing view of what the public sees and a glimpse into the behind the scenes activities in what is evolving into one of the key national repositories of our automotive heritage.

The presentation aroused a lot of interest and we look forward to a combined bike and car visit to Gaydon before long. If you can't wait for an OAGAM visit to The British Motor Museum, full details of opening times, entry fees and how to get there can be found on [the museum's website](#).

## Congratulations to our May passes

Well done to **Di Grover**, who has passed her advanced driving test. Di tells us: *I passed my test in 1988 and have always enjoyed driving. I was a 'yellow van girl' courier for more than ten years and certainly picked up some bad driving habits during this time, though I'm proud to report that at one point I was the only courier out of sixteen with a completely clean licence! Throughout my working life I have also driven mini buses and 7.5 tonne lorries - yes it's on my licence, I'm THAT old!*

*I also do many miles in my beloved 24.5ft motorhome and because of this my father, an advanced driver himself, encouraged me to enrol. Unfortunately he passed away before I could join but I inherited his car so in memory of him and using his car I'm pleased to say that I passed my advanced driving test.*

*Thanks to my patient and knowledgeable instructor, I found the experience rewarding and enjoyable from the start. I've erased some bad habits, learned to read the information around me better and to use the mechanics of my car to improve safe driving.*

*I would recommend the advanced course to anyone, particularly young drivers, as it teaches confident safe driving in a really skilful way.*

Very special good wishes and congratulation go to **Gregory McCann** who recently gained a [FIRST](#) in his advanced riding test. Greg has been a Product Development Engineer for Jaguar Land Rover for four years.



Greg explains: *I got my CBT and did my A2 Licence in 2014 with the help of JLR's 'Employee Learning Scheme' (ELS) which gives their employees a grant each year to learn something new outside of the work environment. I re-sat the big bike test in 2015 to upgrade to an A licence.*

*I used to ride my SV650S to work most days and go for ride outs on weekends but decided to upgrade last year to a brand new Triumph Street Triple Rx which I now ride and love.*

*I decided to do my IAM Advanced Motorbike training because I had heard about Blood Bikers and decided I wanted to be one. One of the criteria was to have gained an advanced motorbike qualification which is why I used my ELS scheme money to sign up to the IAM Advanced Motorbike Scheme.*

*I'm grateful to Chris Finnigan who carried out my observed rides and gave me all the necessary tips and information to get me ready for the advanced test. Thanks, too, to Paul Flint who carried out my cross check ride and finally Derren Clark for carrying out my test ride and calming my nerves before we set off.*

*Now I have my IAM Advanced Motorbike qualification I am looking forward to signing up to be a volunteer Blood Biker and doing my bit to help out whilst having an excuse to ride motorbikes - which I love to do!*

*Although I signed up purely to become a Blood Biker, I gained so much more from the advanced motorbike scheme. I now feel far more confident in my riding and I am able to place myself in the safest position on the road at all times which I realise I was not doing before. I would also consider further training with IAM or even volunteering to be an observer and help other riders obtain their advanced motorbike qualification.*

Congratulations to **Neville Guibarra** (right) and **Peter Marshall**, who have passed their advanced riding tests.

Peter says: *I am an RAF pilot flying the C130J Hercules from RAF Brize Norton.*

*I started riding around five years ago and purchased a Honda CBR 400 RR baby blade.*

*Unfortunately for me, the bike was older than I was and given my lack of mechanical talent and the amount of work that the bike needed, I decided to upgrade to a Triumph Street Triple R which I am still riding to this day.*



*I felt that my riding was stagnating so set myself the goal of volunteering for the Oxfordshire Blood Bike organisation with the IAM course being the natural precursor. I was very fortunate to be paired with the fabulous Lynda Harding who not only facilitated my progress but made it a thoroughly enjoyable experience.*

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## **The next monthly meeting is not until September but don't forget the Ride Outs and Drive Outs.**

**Meet at Peartree Services on 19<sup>th</sup> July and 16<sup>th</sup> August: 7.00pm for a 7.30pm start**

The ride outs are well-established and popular dates in the OAGAM calendar, much enjoyed by all bikers who regularly take part.

The car drive outs are new this year and have replaced the summer demo drives of previous years. Thanks are due to Geoff Ayres and Alex Lewis for their enthusiastic promotion of these events. So far, the drive outs have been aimed at supporting associate training and encouraging full members to maintain their standard of driving. Observers have also used the opportunity to drive together and compare notes.

Geoff and Alex are keen to see the drive outs evolve further. What about having your driving assessed by different observers to see whether they agree? Or maybe take part in a competitive treasure hunt of some kind?

Car members who have suggestions of activities for the drive outs are invited to contact Geoff or Alex with their ideas via [oxfordiamcars@gmail.com](mailto:oxfordiamcars@gmail.com).



Meeting at Peartree for the June drive and ride outs



## It Can't Get Better Than This...

*Despite having passed his advanced riding test over three years ago and using his bike most days for a 50-mile round trip commute, OAGAM member **Ian Hicks** had never done a long-distance trip or more than 200 miles in one day.*

I had the opportunity to join three friends for a week's ride through France, down into the Pyrenees and into Northern Spain to get a taste of the Picos d'Europa mountain range, before catching the ferry from Santander back to Portsmouth. I jumped at the chance and mid-May saw us driving down to Portsmouth to catch the overnight ferry to Caen.

The week's journey was blessed with really fine weather, mostly in the mid-twenties, reaching up to over thirty occasionally. My friends all had BMW 1120 GS machines and I was a bit concerned that my 650 Suzuki would struggle, but I need not have worried. We all kept to a good pace, typically covering 250 miles or 400km each day.

I just loved driving through the French countryside. Each day found us driving slightly different styles of roads, but in general I'd say the traffic was really light, the road conditions good and the bends and views were sublime. At the end of each day we said to each other: "You know, it can't get better than this." But each day it did.

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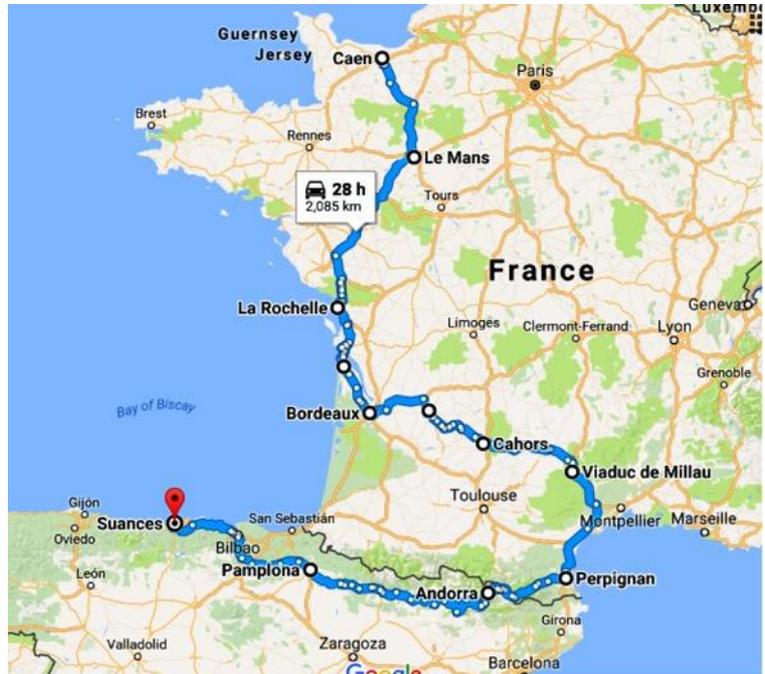
The areas around Millau and the Gorges du Tarn were incredible, the Pyrenees amazing and as we got further inland we started to see snow-capped peaks, albeit at a distance. By the time we reached Soldeu just outside Andorra, we were riding through a ski resort complete with a covering of snow.

My particular favourite venue was in the Picos - a ski resort called Campo Alto. There was no snow, and the ski lifts, snow cannon and piste markers all looked a little forlorn against the brown background of the mountains. But what amazing views as the clouds cleared below us and we looked down on all sides at the countryside spreading out.

So, what did I learn on this trip? For a start after completing 290 miles on day one, I thought I can't do this, but each day the riding got easier, as I became accustomed to it. I learned to really relax my grip on the handlebars while riding and also to use pressure on the footrests to steer the bike around the gentle bends and undulations.

I'm pretty certain I always remembered to do my "lifesaver look" – though over my left rather than right shoulder. Standing on the footrest occasionally to ease the strain on my shoulders (and other body parts) was a great help.

So, the 64 000 dollar question; would I do this again? Absolutely! It was a fantastic experience. We were really lucky with the weather, but I think even if we had encountered more rain than we did, I'd still have enjoyed it almost as much.



*The Route to Spain*



*In the Pyrenees*



## Institute of Advanced Passengers?

Are we ready for driverless cars?

*Tim Shallcross, IAM RoadSmart's, Head of Technical Policy and Advice, isn't sure how ready we are to take advantage of 21<sup>st</sup> century technology.*

The House of Lords Science and Technology Select Committee has been considering the implications of self driving cars. One part of their conclusion was this: "...autonomous cars could have negative implications for drivers' competence, making drivers complacent and overly reliant on technology. This is of particular concern in emergency situations, where a driver may react slowly to taking back control of a vehicle."

I'm not sure this will be the greatest concern. As head of technical policy, I do love a gadget and my latest car (three years old, but new to me) has them in spades. I simply tell it what maximum speed I want stick to and it does the rest; it keeps a safe distance behind the car in front, slows down with the traffic, brakes on hills to control speed, stops if the car in front does, starts again when it moves off, follows the white lines above 30mph, or follows the car in front below 30mph. It makes traffic queues quite entertaining, and that's apart from the self-parking magic and some very clever headlights. It uses radar, cameras and ultrasound sensors to explore its surroundings and "sees" easily through fog, rain and darkness.

As I said, I'm a sucker for gadgets; I once bought a Mark IV Ford Zodiac because it had an electric aerial. I couldn't wait to get my first car with electric windows, but most of these hi-tech goodies have real safety benefits; the car doesn't get distracted, the radar measures distances with pinpoint accuracy and it reacts far faster than I can.

However, when it came to ploughing through the vast array of settings, it became clear that the previous owner hadn't really used any of this functionality. The settings for the stereo, sat-nav and so on had been altered, but all the driving assistance systems were still at the factory defaults. It seems likely the first owner drove it as a standard car and did it all himself. It gets me wondering how many drivers actually use the functionality to the full - and how many will as they become more standard.

Anecdotes from IAM RoadSmart colleagues bear this out; tales of people who never use cruise control because it feels out of control; an interview where the presenter confessed to not using the self-park function on her car "because she didn't trust it," examples of huge manuals with several hundred pages to wade through to figure out what the car will do, and how you make it do it.

The technology is becoming more and more widespread and the potential safety benefits are great - but the problem may not be slow reactions from drivers used to letting the car do it all, as their Lordships suggest. It might be educating people about how the car is designed to be driven in order to get the safety benefits in the first place, at least until the steering wheel goes altogether.

IAM RoadSmart are organising a conference later this year to bring a wide range of expertise to the issues raised by the transition to driverless cars; if we want to reap the safety benefits, this issue may be one to consider.



## Festival of the Unexceptional

*If you have enjoyed a visit to The British Motor Museum...*

We continue the theme of summer outings for car enthusiasts, by drawing your attention to **Hegerty's Festival of the Unexceptional**, at Stowe House, near Silverstone, on 22<sup>nd</sup> July.

This event, now in its fourth year, celebrates the ordinary run-of-the-mill-cars and commercial vehicles that filled our streets and roads the day before yesterday.

The sights, sounds and smells of a display of vehicles from the sixties, seventies and eighties are guaranteed to transport you back to those childhood trips in the family car or will perhaps bring back memories of your own first car.

The annual *Concours de l'Ordinaire* includes classic cars and commercial vehicles from across the globe that were built between 1966 and 1989. Feel the nostalgia overwhelm you when you see immaculately preserved examples of the Morris Marina, Hillman Avenger, Nissan Cherry and more.

Further information [here](#) or in this article from the [Daily Telegraph](#).



**Date:** 22<sup>nd</sup> July  
**Time:** 10.00am – 3.00pm  
**Where:**  
 Stowe House  
 Bucks, MK18 5HZ

## OAGAM Group Scorecard

The group scorecard (right) is published here each month and shows the test statistics for the previous twelve months.

Test Statistics				Status: 01/06/2017
(over the last 12 months)				
	OAGAM Group	OAGAM Car	OAGAM Bike	Region Avg.
	12 months	12 months	12 months	12 months
First	6	2	4	3.1
Pass	31	17	14	10.2
Fail	8	6	2	2.3
% Pass	82	76	90	86

Many thanks to Ian Hicks for supplying so much excellent material for this newsletter.