

for all car and bike members of the Oxford Area Group of Advanced Motorists

<http://www.iamroadsmart.com/groups/oagam>



A Fantastic Opportunity to Make a Real Difference

An Oxford charity is looking for drivers – voluntary and part-time paid



'Aspire Oxford is an award-winning social enterprise and employment charity, established in 2001. We support highly disadvantaged people into employment, to break the complex cycles of homelessness, poverty and re-offending. We offer our clients specialist employment support alongside work experience on our social enterprise businesses. These enterprises deliver class-leading professional services to customers while providing invaluable work experience for our clients. Aspire also runs a Community Transport bus service which is a lifeline for isolated elderly people in Oxford City.'

Aspire has run this vital bus service in Oxford City for nearly three years, providing a specialist, door-to-door minibus service for hundreds of Oxford's most vulnerable, elderly and immobile residents. Aspire's bus service takes elderly residents to social clubs and shopping trips, making a

huge difference to their quality of life. Without this service, many of Aspire's passengers would be unable to leave their homes and would be completely isolated.

Due to increased demand, Aspire was able to expand this bus service after other community transport services had to close following heavy funding cuts. Aspire now needs new drivers to help meet the growing need.

Aspire is appealing for experienced volunteer minibus drivers to help give elderly residents the life of dignity and respect that they deserve.



Aspire would like to hear from people who can volunteer on a regular basis as drivers and join a new team of friendly and committed drivers. This is a fantastic opportunity to give something back to the local community and make a real difference to the lives of vulnerable elderly people.

Aspire is also looking for a part-time, paid driver to start as soon as possible.

Drivers should be aged over 21, have held a full UK driving licence for at least two years and be either certified as a minibus driver or willing to undertake immediate training, which Aspire will provide free of charge. Other criteria apply. Visit www.aspireoxford.co.uk for more information.

OAGAM Observer Tony Chalkly is a driver for Aspire.

Tony says: I joined Aspire at the beginning of the year as a minibus driver, servicing a day centre that I serviced when in The Red Cross.

My task is to collect elderly people from their homes and take them to a day centre in Blackbird Leys, shopping at Cowley Centre or Tesco and a lunch club in Wolvercote. I am always supported by a passenger assistant.

Aspire is a very friendly and easy going organisation that values its workers and trainees alike. Everybody helps those who need help. The clients are very appreciative of the transport provided and, for some, it is the only time they get out.

The Fatal 5, Scanning & Some Seriously Shocking Statistics

Nik Bergson reports on the OAGAM March Meeting



Andy Ford addresses the March meeting.

It was a very well-attended, lively and highly informative presentation given by Andy Ford, Station Manager with Oxfordshire County Council Road Safety and Commercial Training Services. The relaxed approach encouraged lots of lively participation from members of the audience, both during the talk and in the subsequent question and answer session.

I was fascinated by the discussion of how human evolution apparently influences our ability to scan the road accurately. As hunter-gatherers our eyes and brains evolved to focus on only one spot, making our peripheral vision relatively poor. Therefore we actually scan in a series of snapshots, our brains making best guesses to fill in the missing information. This explains why it is so easy to miss something important, and emphasises how crucial it is to double-check by repeating the scan.

As trailed in the February Newsletter, much of the discussion focused upon aspects of the so-called "Fatal 5": seatbelts, phones, tiredness, speed and alcohol. However, it was the KSI (killed or seriously injured) statistics which arguably had the greatest impact.

Recently the historic trend of long and steady decline in KSIs has been levelling off and, even more worryingly, showing some signs of starting to increase again, especially amongst older drivers and riders.

Another shocking statistic left such a strong and lasting impression that I have almost convinced myself that I must have misheard or misunderstood it. I am still trying to get my head around the idea that bikers, whilst making up only 1% of road users nationally, represent as many as 25% of the KSIs.

Self-evidently such revelations underline the crucial importance of training, and not only for bikers of course. It is equally important to try to improve driver awareness, so as to encourage greater consideration for other road users, especially the most vulnerable.

Further details of the Fatal 5 and much more safety advice for drivers and riders can be found on the [365 Alive](https://www.365alive.co.uk/) website.





Many OAGAM members aspire to own a really powerful motor car – and some are fortunate enough to do so. What better way is there to practise your advanced driving skills than in a machine that can take you to the national speed limit in a few seconds? In practice, how can we exploit the performance of such a vehicle?

***Alex Lewis**, our Chief Car Observer, reflects on the experience of owning and driving a high performance car.*

What is a performance car?

The first question which came to mind when I was asked to write this article is exactly what is defined as a 'performance car'? To give an historical perspective, in 1980, the entry level Porsche 911 produced around 180 bhp. Thirty years later, I bought a compact hatchback with a middle of the range diesel engine, producing... 180 bhp. The first of these cars would definitely be considered a performance car, the second - although it wasn't slow! - most likely not. Performance, thinking crudely about power output, has become much more accessible. 200 bhp cars now have list prices under £25k and 300 bhp is available under £30k. Cars in the latter category are likely to make 0-60 mph in around 5 seconds. I think most people would agree that a vehicle capable of that kind of acceleration could be defined as a performance car.

Moving on from the accessible end of performance, many manufacturers offer sports cars, super cars and even hyper cars. To maintain the historical comparison, today's entry-level 911 has 370 bhp and reaches 60 mph in 4.6 seconds. Supercars typically reach this speed in less than four seconds and the highest performance cars on the market get there in under two and a half seconds.

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Helpful Technology

In addition to the power outputs mentioned above, most modern performance cars are equipped with a range of technology to improve performance and handling. Some of this will work completely in the background, whereas other aspects will require driver intervention. The key is to understand what technology the car has and how it is likely to behave in different situations. In my opinion a deep understanding of the engineering is not necessary - mainly because I have no such understanding! - but rather a feel for how your inputs will change how the car behaves on the road. The gearbox is an obvious example of something the driver should understand - and not just for performance cars of course. For manual gearboxes, this will focus on how to produce smooth gear shifts and how to switch on or off any automated rev-matching function. Some cars will allow relatively easy heel and toe down changes, whereas in others pedal spacing or electronic override of throttle application during braking prevent this. The approach to hazards should be adapted accordingly. An automatic gearbox might be based on a torque converter, a dual clutch system, or an automated single clutch system. They may have fully manual modes, and sports modes accessed through the gear selector. In addition, their behaviour may also be influenced by the broader drive mode the car is in.



Alex, with his Porsche Macan S Diesel

Keeping Everything in Top Condition

Maintenance is an essential aspect of any car ownership and that is no different here. However, performance vehicles may be much more sensitive to items such as slightly uneven tyre wear and hence require more attention. In addition engines may require - or benefit from - more frequent oil changes and servicing than we are used to in other modern cars.

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Sheer Enjoyment vs Behaving Responsibly

Having this level of performance available, coupled with today's increasingly busy and restrictive road environment, poses an important question: as owners of performance cars, how do we enjoy them in a responsible manner? The reality, from my experience, is that many 'work day' journeys leave little opportunity to exploit the performance of all but very modest vehicles, and driver focus is better aimed at maintaining attention levels, and achieving a smooth drive. There are, however, many rural roads where there is an opportunity to exploit the performance and handling of a car, though not the upper reaches of its speed! Windy roads are often the most enjoyable, where you can focus on observation and excellent car control skills to produce a safe yet progressive drive. The more sweeping, open roads - often favoured by motoring journalists - are rather more likely to bring a driver into conflict with the law, so self-restraint is definitely important on such routes.

Watch the Weather

Adverse weather conditions pose a challenge to all drivers in all types of vehicle. However, drivers of performance vehicles may need to exercise particular caution. Whilst most modern performance vehicles offer phenomenal amounts of grip on warm, dry tarmac, they are also relatively easily destabilised in less ideal conditions. This is primarily due to the quantities of power and torque, often directed to just two - usually rear - wheels. The increasing trend towards four wheel drive systems in performance vehicles illustrates just how much of an issue this is becoming. The primary remedy in any given vehicle is, of course, the driver: caution with the throttle and smooth steering inputs will greatly reduce the chances of running into difficulty. This leads on to further consideration of smoothness and mechanical sympathy. For example, to produce a smooth drive in a high powered vehicle it may be necessary to taper off throttle inputs prior to a gear change. Similarly, when maximum performance is not required, a higher gear will make managing the throttle easier as well as being more mechanically sympathetic and reducing the chances of destabilising the vehicle.

Putting the Car Through Its Paces – Safely and Legally

An additional option for those wishing to gain additional safe and legal experience with the car is to take it on a track. In a safe training facility - usually in the company of a coach - it is possible to experience the car's performance at much higher speeds without putting other road users at risk. Also, it may be possible to experiment with the car's handling at - and beyond - the limit of grip. Some manufacturers have dedicated facilities for this kind of training. For example, if you buy a new Porsche you will be offered a half day's training at their facility in Silverstone. Similar courses are also offered on a commercial basis. Of course, some drivers will have an inherent interest in track driving and a number of commercial providers run track days. But be aware that normal road insurance will not cover any of the activities referred to above so drivers may wish to consider additional track day insurance.

Further Training

If you are reading this article you will almost certainly have passed, or be training to pass, the IAM Advanced Driving Test. To do this, you will have had additional training beyond the DVSA test standard, and demonstrated a higher level of ability. To enjoy a performance car to its full, some may wish to consider additional training. Within the IAM the Masters standard looks towards making as much safe and legal progress as is available - certainly something many performance car owners will seek to achieve. More specialised training is also available from professional coaches, many of whom will provide both on and off road training. It is not appropriate to name any specific coaches here, though I would be happy to discuss my experiences with any OAGAM member who is thinking of going down that route.

OAGAM Rides & Events

!! RIDEOUT DOUBLE-HEADER !!

Moto Gymkhana vs Ride The County

Ted Tattersall invites bike members to choose between two exciting outings on Saturday 19th May. The deadline for letting Ted know your choice is 5th April.

For this date we have not one but two rideout events for you to choose from. Just simply decide which one appeals to you the most, let me know your choice by 5th April. Email me at rides.oagam@gmail.com and I'll make all the arrangements. Easy!

Option 1

Moto Gymkhana at Donington Park – Experience Day £45

If you haven't seen Moto Gymkhana in action then you need to see it to believe it. Moto Gymkhana is a high energy, technical motorcycle sport that doesn't take itself too seriously. It's all about skill – requiring accurate control, bursts of speed and ruthless braking. Rider ability not horsepower is the key to steering round a course of obstacles in the fastest time. You can take part on any kind of motorbike and learn some great techniques.

The official Moto Gymkhana Association for the UK is holding an experience day at Donington Park on May 19th. You use your own bike, have three and a half hours of track time and receive expert tuition throughout. If you want to learn how to tip your bike on its ear then give it a go. I reckon this'll be as good as any track day for developing bike control skills.

You can find more information at <http://www.motogymkhana.org/>. At time of writing (20/03/18) they have availability at 13:00 for up to 12 riders. Don't hang about – let me know soon!



Option 2: Ride The County Treasure Hunt Challenge

We have run this event several times in the past and it has always been a popular ride. This year's RTC event takes on a treasure hunt format. There are 25 clues across six counties to collect – choose either a set number of clues to find or miles to ride.

There's no word yet on the start point - or

which counties are covered! - but the ride ends with a BBQ at the Masons Arms in Brize Norton.

The event is run in aid of Thames Valley Air Ambulance – there is no entry fee but participants are

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expected to make a donation through Just Giving at the time of sign-up. If you fancy having a fun rideout chasing clues and plotting mileages this is the one for you.

There is more information at www.ridethecounty.org.uk

Rides & Events for 2018

The calendar is filling up nicely for 2018. Keep a look out on the new OAGAM website for the latest or check out the OAGAM newsletter at the beginning of each month. The Wednesday evening rides (and drives) start on April 4th, meeting at Exeter Hall 7pm for 7:30 departure, and continue through the summer on the first Wednesday of each month. Also coming up – Paul is leading a ride to the Prescott Bike Fest on Sunday 15th April, then to Sulgrave Manor and Bicester Scramble the following weekend (Sun 22nd). All details are available on the website *events calendar, and I'll put out a reminder nearer the time.

*<https://www.iamroadsmart.com/groups/oagam>

Happy riding

Ted



Don't Forget!

**The deadline for letting
Ted know your choice
for 19th May:**

5th April.

Email Ted at

rides.oagam@gmail.com



**If you are planning to
come along on 4th
April, please register
by following this
link:**

[4th April Sign Up](#)

Don't forget that on the first Wednesday of the month from April to September we are running a series of drive outs for all OAGAM members who wish to polish their advanced driving and observing skills.

The aim is to offer sociable and enjoyable evenings to support:

- excellent associate training;
- new associates attracted by taster sessions;
- the maintenance of observer standards;
- helping full members to keep their driving up to standard.

Meet Exeter Hall, Kidlington from 7.00pm for 7.30 pm departure.

February Test Passes

We offer our warmest congratulations to members who passed the advanced driving or riding test last month.

*In last month's newsletter, Nik Bergson shared his experience of training to become a Local Car Observer for our group. **Simon Denton**, Nik's first associate, passed the advanced test with a F1RST. Here, Simon recounts the experience from his point of view...*



I have been driving since I passed my test shortly after my 17th birthday, some 36 years ago. I had considered advanced driving for some time to refresh skills and check for bad habits but discounted it as I assumed there would be high cost and it would take a good deal of time.

Having now had the benefit of observed drives and taken the test, I understand how the IAM works and what fantastic value it is thanks to the observers and examiners who freely give their time and experience. I really do not believe the IAM does enough to promote itself in this respect.

I think the other aspect that the IAM could promote more is the enjoyable nature of the observed drives themselves. I had forgotten the pleasure of going for a drive through the Oxfordshire countryside, having got into the habit of driving solely for the commute to work or simply just "get there".

On making contact to arrange my first observed run I was asked if I would consider allowing a trainee observer to join us, which I was happy to agree to.

On the first observed run or two Nik was in the back seat, observing the observing, and was fairly quiet, perhaps asking questions for clarification.

After a couple of runs Nik took the passenger seat and began selecting runs - including a particularly challenging route around Bix - and taking more of a lead in feedback. I imagine it was a rewarding experience for National Observer Andrew Carter to watch two people developing their skills at the same time under his guidance.

I remember Andrew and Nik having a conversation about how the observer training helps take driving to the next level. I can understand that: the whole IAM approach towards coaching people for their advanced test is about continuous development from unconsciously incompetent to unconsciously competent.

I am now considering becoming trainee observer myself and would hope that, if I were to do so, any associate who eventually worked with me would have as enjoyable an experience as I did.

If you are interested in joining the OAGAM team of observers contact:

**Alex Lewis Chief Observer for Cars;
or Paul Thompson, Chief Observer for Bikes.**



The Advanced Driving Course prepares you to drive cars of all shapes and sizes!

*Advanced Driver **Patrick Jocelyn** was in Denver when we contacted him to give us his reactions to passing the Advanced Driving Test with a F1RST. He sent us this picture of himself with the car he had hired to go to the mountains for the skiing - noting that, thanks to his IAM qualification, was nominated as designated driver for the hire car and that his colleagues commented on the smooth driving.*

Patrick says:

At the age of fourteen, I started driving around my friend's Dad's field in an old Ford Escort MK1 and since then have always loved cars, - going fast, sideways, or just for a careful drive. I passed my driving test in my Dad's car, second time round, but with hardly any lessons and within three months of my 17th birthday. So, 30 years later, I decided that it could not hurt getting some training and feedback on all the bad driving habits I had picked up along the way.

I joined the IAM Oxford group, who were friendly and ready to help improve my driving and awareness of other users of the roads. I spent a few Sunday mornings with the charming Geoff Ayres, who observed my style and gave feedback and advice on my driving ability to improve both safety and, more interestingly, courteousness to others.

Passing the exam with a F1RST was a real pleasure and demonstrated how good the Oxfordshire team is in improving driver skills and awareness. It all makes for smoother and calmer driving, which has also been noticed by all my family.

I love cars and like to go fast, sideways - on private roads and race tracks - and often go out for just a drive but now I feel safer and indeed more courteous on today's busy roads.

I cannot recommend enough the IAM course and experience if you want to improve your driving.



A badge used to be available for F1RST members. Come on IAM! It's surely time for an updated version.

*Advanced Driver, **Caroline Duchesne**, reflects on the experience of successfully completing the Advanced Driving Course:*

I am delighted to have passed the Advanced Driving Test and huge thanks are due to my patient Observers, Brian Layt-Williams and Geoff Ayres for their time, good humour and encouragement.

I have been driving since the early 1970s and was conscious that, since taking the basic driving test, I had fallen into some poor habits. Added to which, over those decades, driving conditions have changed dramatically and require more from drivers in order to stay safe - the increased volume of traffic, new legislation, technological advances in the vehicles we drive, etc. I therefore felt the need to maintain and improve my driving skills so that I can be confident that I am as intelligent and safe a driver as I can be.



Once I had grasped the IPSGA system, I found it encouraged a more thoughtful approach to driving, increased my awareness of other road users – including a higher tolerance towards them! - and encouraged me to apply more care and attention to each and every car journey. Driving with my mind in gear has made life behind the wheel all the more enjoyable - and safer.

When embarking on the course I gave little thought to taking the advanced test - I was keen to merely learn and absorb the teaching but, as my observed drives progressed, tackling the test became a significant goal for me. I actively enjoyed putting in the work and practice to achieve a successful outcome.

And the learning process will continue.....

Have You Paid Your OAGAM Subscription?

Current 2017 group subscriptions expire on **March 31st 2018**.

The Committee would like to thank all Members and Associates who have responded and renewed either online via OAGAM WebCollect or by posting off a cheque.

If you have not done so already, please renew ASAP.

Click on the logo below to visit the WebCollect home page.

giftaid it **Make your OAGAM Group Membership Subscription worth more.**
Gift Aid adds an extra 25%.

Please support this initiative to boost our group income at no cost to you!

Gift Aid declaration forms are available from OAGAM Treasurer, Paul Thompson.

Email: treasurer.OAGAM@gmail.com

2018 Events Checklist

Wed 4 Apr 2018

7.00pm for 7.30pm - OAGAM Drive-out & Ride-out Meeting

Meet Exeter Hall, Kidlington

Sun 15 Apr 2018

9:00am - 4:00pm - Prescott Bike Festival Ride-Out

Gotherington, Cheltenham

Sun 22 Apr 2018

8:30am - 4:00pm - Ride-Out to Sulgrave Manor & Sunday Scramble, Bicester Heritage

Meet Peartree Services

Wed 2 May 2018

7.00pm for 7.30pm - OAGAM Drive-out & Ride-out Meeting

Meet Exeter Hall, Kidlington

Sat 19 May 2018

Moto Gymkhana or Treasure Hunt?

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Wed 6 Jun 2018

7.00pm for 7.30pm - OAGAM Drive-out & Ride-out Meeting

Meet Exeter Hall, Kidlington

Mon 25 Jun 2018

4:00pm - 8:00pm - Cassington Bike Night

Cassington, Witney

Wed 4 Jul 2018

7.00pm for 7.30pm OAGAM Drive-out & Ride-out Meeting

Meet Exeter Hall, Kidlington

Wed 1 Aug 2018

7.00pm for 7.30pm - OAGAM Drive-out & Ride-out Meeting

Meet Exeter Hall, Kidlington

Sun 12 Aug 2018

9:00am - 4:00pm - Brackley Festival of Motorcycling

Fri 17 Aug 2018 - Mon 20 Aug 2018

Keswick Trip

Wed 5 Sep 2018

7.00pm for 7.30pm - OAGAM Drive-out & Ride-out Meeting

Meet Exeter Hall, Kidlington

Wed 3 Oct 2018

7.00pm for 7.30pm - OAGAM Monthly Meeting

Exeter Hall, Kidlington

Wed 7 Nov 2018

7.00pm for 7.30pm - OAGAM Monthly Meeting

Exeter Hall, Kidlington

Wed 5 Dec 2018

7.00pm for 7.30pm - OAGAM Monthly Meeting

Exeter Hall, Kidlington

Check for updates of this list by visiting <http://www.iamroadsmart/groups/oagam>



and finally...

OAGAM Committee: Contact Us

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Group Scorecard

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

Test Statistics				
(over the last 12 months)				
	OAGAM Group	OAGAM Car	OAGAM Bike	Region Avg.
	12 months	12 months	12 months	12 months
First	11	7	4	3.5
Pass	32	15	17	11.3
Fail	6	4	2	2.2
% Pass	88	85	91	87

IAM/OAGAM Code of Conduct

- We treat everyone equally and fairly
- We adhere to policies of IAM RoadSmart
- We only communicate the IAM RoadSmart position
- We take responsibility for our actions & decisions
- We take pride in where we meet and host events
- We respect confidentiality of information gained as an official via memo/data
- We respect confidentiality of individual personal information
- We respect all members regardless of gender or beliefs