



Newsletter

November 2017

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

You are invited to the OAGAM 2017 AGM

**8.00pm, Thursday
7th December**

**Exeter Hall
Oxford Road
Kidlington
OX5 1AB**

**All Group Full Members,
Associates and Friends are
invited to attend but *only
Group Full Members may
vote.***

*Due to various circumstances,
we had to arrange the AGM for
a Thursday instead of the
traditional Wednesday.*

*Please accept our sincere
apology if this causes any
inconvenience to you.*

*We are aiming to continue on
Wednesdays for future group
meetings and other events.*

AGENDA

- 1) Apologies for absence.
- 2) Minutes from the previous year.
- 3) Matters arising from the Minutes.
- 4) Amendments or adjustments to this Agenda.
- 5) Chair's Report.
- 6) Secretary's Report.
- 7) Treasurer's Report.
- 8) Election of Group Officers and Committee.
- 9) Address by New Chair.
- 10) Proposal of Subscription Change for 2018.
- 11) Year of the Observer - Recognition of Achievements.
- 12) Any Other Business.

Resolutions:

1. That the Minutes of the 2016 AGM be approved as a true record.
2. That the Annual Report and Accounts for the year ended 31st March 2017 be approved.

1. Questions from Members will be invited following each report.

2. Please vote only if you are a Full Group Member

3. All relevant papers have been circulated to Members.



The Advanced Driving Test - a view from the examiner's seat

We were very grateful when IAM examiner, Stuart Brown, stepped in at short notice to address the November monthly meeting. Stuart conducts advanced driving tests in our area and has tested a number of our car associates in recent months. He is currently an Advanced Police Driving Instructor, a role he has had the past fourteen of his thirty years' service. Stuart is actively involved in improving driver training standards and is also an examiner for RoSPA.

Taking as his starting point an examiner's view of the advanced test, Stuart's talk broadened into more general reflections on the theory and practice of advanced driving. The session was a rich source of valuable advice for both associates and experienced drivers.

Stuart's approach was open and honest. It is very evident that he enjoys his work and is passionate in his ambition to contribute to improving safety on the roads. As he stressed, making the roads safe is a co-operative activity to which, as road users, we must all contribute. It was a warm and positive occasion and we thank Stuart for his time and enthusiasm.

Stuart's Advice

Before You Start

While it isn't essential to the test, it helps to get things off to a good start for the candidate to share with the examiner some basic information about their car. In particular, to point out any new technical gadgetry and what use they intend to make of it.

New Technology

Advanced drivers should embrace new technology, such as cruise control or a speed limiter. If a driver doesn't make use of them, that should be because they have actively decided against their use rather than ignored them as new-fangled nonsense!

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Automatic Transmission

Again, it's not essential to the test, but examiners like to see candidates in cars with automatic transmission demonstrate that they can use the manual override if appropriate. The main consideration, though, is that the vehicle should be under the driver's control at all times.

Avoid coasting

Candidates who coast to a halt with the clutch disengaged or keep the clutch down while they decide which gear to select are likely to fail. Advanced drivers know how to taper or feather the clutch to avoid stalling – and don't steer with one hand while the other hovers and dithers over the gear stick.

Making good progress

This means maintaining an appropriate speed within the legal limit. Candidates who exceed the limit should expect to fail. Remember, too, that 'driving to the conditions' doesn't only refer to the road, weather and traffic conditions. Advanced drivers also take into account the characteristics of the vehicle itself.

The Highway Code

Candidates are expected to demonstrate knowledge of the Highway Code through the way they apply it during the test. Examiners rarely come with a prepared list of quiz questions.

A Positive Experience

Examiners are well practised in calming nerves and putting candidates at their ease. They will approach the test expecting to acknowledge the candidate's skills, not looking for reasons to fail them. The test itself should be a learning experience for the candidate and the test report can be used as a programme for further improvement.



And who could possibly disagree with this notice spotted recently by an OAGAM member on the road into Colchester.

OAGAM at Large

This month OAGAM has been spreading the message of safe enjoyable driving at a number of local events put on by other organisations.

Brize Norton Road Safety Week



We were recently informed by RAF Brize Norton that they planned to run a road safety week towards the end of November and were inviting local IAM groups to participate.

Geoff Ayres and Paul Flint agreed to help and Paul gives this account of the day:

We duly set off on the morning of November 20th. After checking into Brize and getting passes for us and the car, we parked in a compound close to the entrance where all driving assessment and examinations take place.

We were housed in a portakabin where we were introduced to our first candidate. After the toss of a coin Geoff did the first driving assessment. I meanwhile waited for the next candidate. After some time I was told that the other people who had signed up for the morning assessment had cancelled.

The staff member responsible for the day's smooth running suggested we went out for some refreshment and we were driven to a local pub for a very nice lunch and soft drink.

On returning, we discovered that only one of the three afternoon candidates was still available. It was my turn this time and I was introduced to Seb. Once we were out on the road it was clear Seb was a good driver and very quick to make the small adjustments to his driving which I suggested. He told me that he had been a pilot for twenty three years - about the same length of time he'd been driving. Currently he flies the Airbus A400M, as well as Lancasters and Dakotas, and is a pilot instructor.

After a rather disappointingly poor start to the day it was such a great end to meet Seb and take him for a driving assessment.

Safety on the A34

We attended a meeting supported by the Newbury IAM group to discuss the recent report on possible improvements to the A34 in our area. Unsurprisingly, there was widely expressed concern that poor driving was as much – or more - to blame for accidents and other incidents on this road than simply bad road design. If you would like to contribute to the discussion or feel strongly enough to write to your MP, you'll find more information the [A34 Action Group](#) website .



THE CLAUDIA CHARTER

FOR SAFER CYCLING IN OXFORD



The [Broken Spoke Bike Co-op](#) is a do-it-yourself bicycle workshop based in the centre of Oxford that teaches people of all ages and backgrounds how to ride and repair bicycles. Their aim is to create a culture of cycling in Oxfordshire.

We have been in touch with Broken Spoke with a view to opening a conversation about ways in which cyclists, bikers and motorists can co-exist safely on our increasingly busy roads. We'll be asking what cyclists expect from motorists and, maybe, what they especially wish we wouldn't do and we'd like an opportunity to explain what we consider good practice on the part of cyclists - all in the cause of raising the level of safety for all road users.

It is hoped that this conversation will happen in the pages of the OAGAM newsletter next year.

In the meantime, we were pleased to attend the launch of Broken Spoke's Charter for Safer Cycling in Oxford. The Claudia Charter is a response to the death of Claudia Comberti, a member of Broken Spoke, who was killed on Botley Road while cycling on 9th May 2017. The Charter's stated intention is *to spark conversations, support dialogue, and create positive change - things that Claudia was always working towards.*

For more information about the Charter visit claudiacharter.uk.



A happy moment (left) from a recent natter night at the Lamb & Flag in St Giles, Oxford.

These occasions are for all OAGAM members. Come along and enjoy a bit of friendly chatter and general conviviality.

Keep an eye out for email invitations and don't feel shy about turning up. Natter nights are for you.

October Test Passes

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

Congratulations to **Peter Hilton** who has gained a F1RST in his Advanced Driving Test. Peter has recently retired after a long career in the Police Service and also has a long history with the IAM, as he explains:

My most sustained involvement with the IAM began in 1995 when, nearly half way through what turned out to be a 47 year career in the Police Service, I was offered the role of President of the Milton Keynes branch of the IAM.

In accepting the position I think I felt a connection, not least because I had previously run traffic areas within Thames Valley Police - first Oxfordshire and then additionally Buckinghamshire. Dealing with the fatal consequences of driver error were at that time an almost daily experience somewhere in the Thames Valley.

I had first come across advanced driving as something 'taught' by Blackpool Borough Police to my then civil servant aunt in the very early 1960s. She passed her advanced test in a Wolseley 1500 - complete with walnut dashboard, as I recall.

In 1987 a police 'Intermediate Advanced Course' gave me a 'Class 3' allowing me to drive traffic cars. Following my retirement as a police officer in 2007, I was persuaded by my advanced driver wife and eldest daughter and the MK local IAM group to do the whole thing again, giving me my first IAM 'pass'. Following my retirement from the service completely, earlier this year, and fast approaching that age when my driving licence will expire, trying 'the whole IAM thing again' was on my list of things to do.

Passing with a 'First' this time was a great feeling. I believe none of us can know how good we really are and that - whatever was once or has been the case - we should not assume anything of our driving standards. Thanks to Tony, Kevin and my examiner for their time, care and professionalism. As a direct result I enjoy my driving even more - again!

Well done, Peter. We are delighted to welcome such a distinguished new member to OAGAM.

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Peter receives his F1RST certificate from his observer, Tony Chalky.

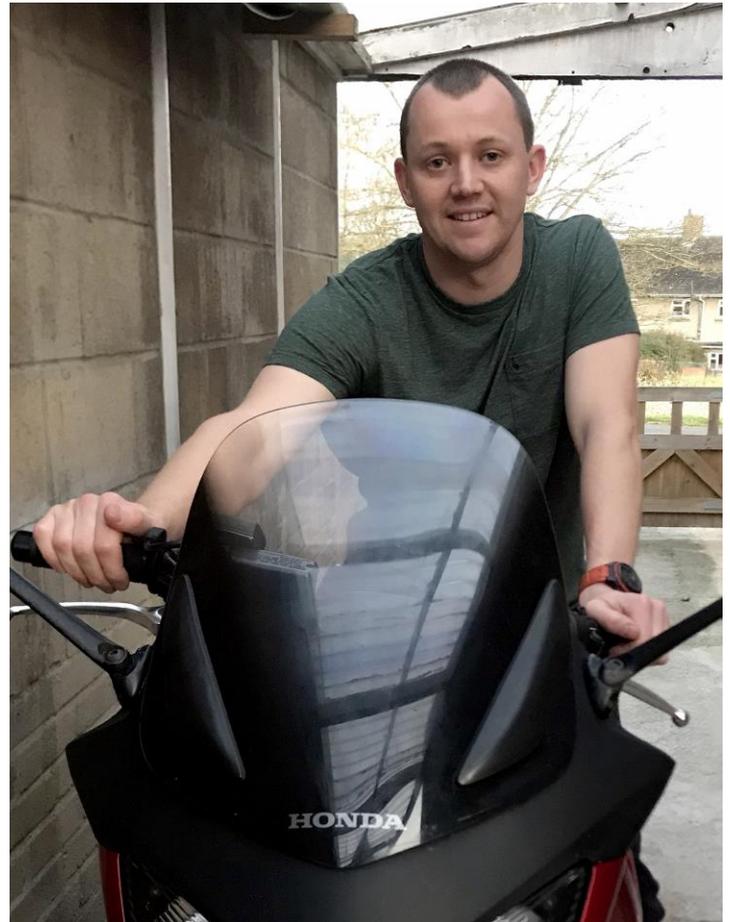
Paul Taylor, Advanced Rider:

I am a plumbing and heating engineer. I got my first bike three years ago when I began commuting from Witney to Oxford. I started on a small scooter – a PCX 125 - and then rode a CBF125 which my wife got me as a surprise birthday present.

I quickly took my bike test and moved up to my current CBF600. Soon after that my father in law and my wife bought me the IAM advanced motorcycle course as a present.

I really enjoyed my training rides with David Lisk and gained a lot from them. I feel I am more confident and safer on my bike now which is exactly what I hoped to gain from the course.

Thank you David !



Sam Reynolds, Advanced Driver:

Before this year, I'd heard of the IAM but didn't know much about it. Then a shaky recent history with insurance claims, coupled with the fact that my partner was expecting, made me recognise that something needed to be done. Fortunately, my dad was kind and generous enough to gift me the IAM course. Being an advanced driver himself, he knew how beneficial it would be to both me and my wallet when the time to renew my insurance came around again!

Over the past few months, I have been lucky to have a number of observers and I have to thank them for taking time out of their schedules to help me become less reactive and more proactive in my driving. I find that it's becoming rarer and rarer that I'll be caught out by unknowns and it's made me a much safer driver, with the stamina to undertake journeys further afield without needing to consider whether I'll still have the alertness to be safe on the return trip.

Of course my journey to becoming a better driver has only just begun and I'm sure that building from my now much better habits will push

me to becoming the safe driver that I strive to be.

Many thanks to Andrew Carter and Paul Barrand for all of their guidance on my observed runs - their help has been invaluable.

continued



Andy Howells, Advanced Rider:

I passed my motorbike test nearly forty years ago and have never been without a bike since – using it for my daily commute.

However, having retired last year, my thoughts turned to touring and I bought a pre-loved Pan that just fitted my needs – and budget.

A tour of France this summer with friends was a great start to my new approach to riding and, prompted by two of them who were advanced riders, I knew it made sense to follow suit.

It's been particularly valuable to learn how to make safe progress on the open road and to realise that relying on intuitive habits isn't necessarily the best way to do things. Since I passed the advanced test, the other guys have seen me become a more confident and safer rider – what more could I ask?



*In the February newsletter we congratulated **Lisa Collins** on passing her advanced driving test.*

*Here she is again, this time celebrating the successful completion of her **Local Observer** training with John Lang.*

Congratulations to Lisa and thanks for volunteering for one of the most important IAM roles.

A New Era For Learner Drivers



David Gallagher, IAM RoadSmart younger driver ambassador, finds few worries about the new DVLA driving test.

It's often easy to forget as advanced drivers that our journey started, as did everyone else's, as a learner driver. The kind of assessment that we had when learning to drive varies from person to person depending on how recently you passed your test. Britain's young drivers are facing an imminent change to their driving test.

The date the DVSA driving test will change is 4 December. The new test will be adopting different manoeuvres and scrapping some of the old ones, and it will include a section where the candidate has to follow sat-nav instructions.

There will also be two vehicle safety questions asked during the test; a "tell me" question where the candidate will explain how they carry out a safety task at the start of the test, and a "show me" question where the candidate demonstrates how to perform a safety task such as using the windscreen washers whilst driving.

When I took my driving test in 2011 there was a change to the test incorporating more independent driving into the test, naturally this caused a lot of uncertainty with learner drivers who were scared that if they couldn't remember specific instructions they might fail a test that they'd otherwise pass with the old format. With change imminent I expected the case to be the same with this latest change to the driving test, so at a young drivers' road safety night last month I took the opportunity of talking to a number of learner drivers and driving instructors (including my own driving instructor) about it.

Amazingly not one of the people I spoke to (out of about 30) were worried or concerned about facing the new test. Most people said that they would prefer to pass under the old system but that was because they hoped to be at a standard to take their test before the changes were in place.

Learners felt that it was important to embrace vehicle technology rather than discourage it and some even felt that existing licence holders should undergo some kind of assessment to prove that they are competent using the equipment that their vehicle has ... wouldn't that cause a stir?

I'd love to hear your thoughts on the latest changes to how our newest generation of drivers are to be tested, my email is david.gallagher@iam.org.uk

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The Perfect Gift

10% off IAM Advanced Courses



Advanced driver and rider course gift voucher packs make thoughtful, caring presents for family and friends. They are available now with a 10% saving at just £134 instead of the usual £149 price.

These popular packs are the perfect, thoughtful and enjoyable gift that contains everything needed for anyone to take our course and become a qualified advanced driver or rider - an ideal opportunity to pass on to someone else the skills that you benefit from as an advanced driver or rider.



Go to the Gift Voucher Shop on the IAM website or call 0300 303 1134, quoting 'gv10' to purchase by phone and save 10%. The packs are valid for twelve months and IAM RoadSmart don't need to know who you plan to give them to when you purchase them, so they are ideal to keep for future use.

OAGAM Group Scorecard

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

Test Statistics				Status: 01/11/2017
(over the last 12 months)				
	OAGAM Group	OAGAM Car	OAGAM Bike	Region Avg.
	12 months	12 months	12 months	12 months
First	10	5	5	3.1
Pass	32	16	16	10.1
Fail	9	5	4	2.1
%Pass	82	81	84	86