

# e-NEWSLETTER



**IAM**  
DRIVING ROAD SAFETY



DECADE OF ACTION FOR  
ROAD SAFETY 2011-2020

**TAUNTON GROUP OF  
ADVANCED MOTORISTS**  
**[www.tgam.org.uk](http://www.tgam.org.uk)**



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**TAUNTON GROUP OF ADVANCED MOTORISTS**

# **e-NEWSLETTER**

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#### **DATA PROTECTION ACT**

Members' details, i.e. names, addresses and telephone numbers, are kept on computer for convenience. This information will only be used to further the aims and objectives of the IAM and is only available to Committee Members BUT can be inspected at any suitable time provided just cause can be proven.

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# FROM THE CHAIRMAN



What a great start to the New Year! I had to replace all 4 tyres on my Mercedes E240 Avantgarde! Ouch!

I'd noticed during my POWDER checks (yes I carry them out) that the tyres had been developing hairline cracks. There was plenty of tread left on them (3mm!) and having sought professional advice from my local garage, the advice was that the tyres were perishing due to their age; I average around 5000 miles per annum so I don't cover the miles that tyres are designed for and so they deteriorate before they wear down.

I think the deterioration is due to exposure to the elements and sunshine (but when did we last get any sunshine?). By comparison, the tyres on my 1981 500SL are about 12 years old now but the difference is that the car is always garaged away from the elements, when I'm not having fun driving it on the open road.



**By Andrew Griffiths  
Chairman**





So heading into spring, are we looking forward to some good weather? Did I hear a resounding “YES”? We’ve had a few miserable months of rain and very high winds making life for some very difficult. Driving across the Somerset levels at Christmas the fields were already under water but as I write this, the situation has worsened considerably and the Military are on stand-by. Driving conditions have been treacherous for some weeks and with lots of surface water around, the spray from vehicles has been phenomenal and the risk of aquaplaning significant; increasing one’s following distance and slowing down should be a natural reaction for the motorist but it was shocking to see cars on the A303 travelling in excess of 70mph and very close together. January 2014 was the officially the wettest on record. Bring on the sunshine!

And what of IAM and TGAM? Well, with my Chief Observer’s hat on, I started 2014 with an Observers’ meeting where we discussed some “housekeeping” matters. We have another lined up in March with Staff Examiner (Andy

Poulton) and our local Examiner (Andy Ware) when we will be discussing strategic, technical, policy and marketing developments within the IAM; such meetings with our Examiners are important and invaluable in ensuring our Observers knowledge and skills are kept sharp and are up-to-date and that there is a consistency in the delivery of the Skill for Life training across the UK.

IAM has introduced a new programme of “driving modules” which local Groups have started to deliver to members and non-members across the UK. I will be working with TGAM Observers to prepare to deliver these to individuals and to businesses in conjunction with Mark Trimmer, our Regional Operations Manager, and one of 5 covering the UK; Mark will be our guest speaker at our social evening in April when you can meet him and find out what a Regional Operations Manager does. You can find out more about these modules later in the newsletter. I have arranged with Ella, our Events Coordinator, for one of these modules to be presented at one of our 2014 social evenings.





We have an interesting line-up of events for 2014 so far, with one or two more to be finalised for later in the year. Ella has done well in arranging the Group's events and we kick off in February (19<sup>th</sup>) for an evening with Andy Poulton which, for those of you who know Andy, is certain to be entertaining and informative. Please join us – and remember that you are very welcome to bring family and friends along to any of our social evenings on the 3<sup>rd</sup> Wednesday of each month except August and January.

Last year, I offered members of TGAM a free refresher drive with one of our Observers; the take-up has been slow and “thin” so I'd like to reiterate the offer. Please take advantage of it by calling Tony Hucker (01278 451565) who will make the arrangements for you – it's that easy! And if you know of a friend or relative who would like a free taster of what advanced motoring is about, we offer that too with no commitment – just a drive with an Observer giving helpful and constructive advice. Yes these are free and TGAM Observers give their time willingly... we're such a pleasant and obliging bunch!

And finally, if you have a young driver (18-24 yrs) in the family, there is a financial incentive to get them to do the Skill for Life programme. Somerset Road Safety Partnership is offering to reimburse the full cost of £139 if a young driver passes the Advanced Driving Test. It is a fact that drivers in this age group are the riskiest group of road users due a combination of inexperience, overconfidence, peer pressure and immaturity. The statistics speak for themselves; 30% of car occupant fatalities are drivers aged 17-24, or passengers of a driver aged 17-24. Young male drivers are more than twice as likely to be killed or seriously injured than young female drivers. Little wonder then that the Police and safety organisations are keen to invest time and effort in this area. The number of reimbursements is limited so act quickly and for more information, you can contact me or Serena for more details.

Andrew

Chairman and Chief Observer





# IAM Confident Driving

## A new programme of modules for members and non-members

By Andrew Griffiths

### **Driving shouldn't be a cause for concern.**

There are people on the road who are lucky enough to enjoy every minute they're behind the wheel, but unfortunately there are also people who find driving to be a source of tension or, even worse, actual panic.

### **The causes are varied and can often stem from a specific issue such as:**

driving on motorways or parallel parking on a busy street; emotional factors such as the introduction of a new born child snuggled up in a baby seat; a negative experience such as a road incident, regardless of whether or not you were driving or if you were witness to another driver's accident; the pressure you feel that you're under from other drivers and many other possibilities.

There's not a single answer to overcoming any driving issues that you face. The solution can vary depending on the cause, so we've created an adaptive programme of modules that targets the specific areas of driving development; skills, experience and emotions.

### **A choice of module courses.**

There are 2 on-road practical sessions in your own vehicle;

- Motorway driving (£45)
- Parking and manoeuvring (£45)

There are 4 seminar based modules and are more suited for groups or organisations to book for a number of participants at a single venue. These are;

- Lone and vulnerable drivers (£15)
- Technology in the car (£15)
- Winter driving (£15)
- Distractions in the car (£15)

All courses are bookable from the IAM, on-line or by telephone: They cannot be booked through TGAM. You can find more information on these driving modules on the IAM website (under "drivers-courses-driving support").

Andrew





# THE COMMITTEE



Committee meetings (for Committee Members ONLY) are held bimonthly at 7:30pm on the 2<sup>nd</sup> Thursday of the month at Hatch Beauchamp Village Hall. If, as a Group Member, you need to raise any issue at Committee level, then please feel free to contact any Committee Member to put your views to the next Committee Meeting.

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# GROUP OBSERVERS



## TGAM Observers

Chief Observer and Masters Mentor	Andrew Griffiths
Group Observer and Trainee National Observer	John Gilbert
Group Training Officer	Alan Thomson
Group Observer	Tony Hucker
Group Observer	Isobel Jennings
Group Observer	Janet Loader
Group Observer	Hugh Todd
Group Observer	David Walton
Group Observer	Allan Wellwood
Group Observer	Russ Williams

Group Observers must be fully paid up Taunton Group Members AND National IAM members at ALL times to carry out your vital Observer roles: There are NO exceptions.

Always check that your Associate has an up to date membership card before departing on any observed drives. Please try to make and maintain contact with your new Associates and listen to any concerns or fears they may have. When Associates pass their Advanced Driving Test, PLEASE inform the Associate Coordinator as soon as possible as we have a duty to keep accurate and up to date records. All new Associate Members are normally teamed up with a conveniently placed Observer. If you have any problems please contact our Associate Coordinator, Tony Hucker.

The following IAM & TGAM members are Driving Standards Agency/Approved Driving Instructors:

Nigel Steady 01278 722944

Nick Tapp 07900 900678

Members and/or enquirers must establish their own facts and details when contacting a Driving Instructor. If any other IAM & TGAM Full Member Driving Instructors wish to be on the above list, contact the Group Secretary or the Newsletter Editor. (NB: You MUST remain *full* IAM & TGAM members at all times.)



# FROM THE PRESIDENT



On my 17<sup>th</sup> birthday on 17<sup>th</sup> August 1966, I started learning to drive a car. It was one 1 hour lesson, once a week on Wednesdays after work, in a white “D” (suffix) registered Vauxhall Viva HA. (Those lessons took a substantial chunk of my earnings of around £7 per week as an apprentice plumber). (And NO, I don’t do plumbing anymore). My driving instructor was Mr McKinley, a retired Metropolitan Police Driving Examiner at Hendon Police College. Mr McKinley was medically retired, having been a passenger in the rear of a marked police car that was tee-boned and he sustained a permanent back injury. Upon reasonable recovery, he started his own driving school a few miles south of Dorking, Surrey. But his injury did mean that occasionally he was not able to make every week. So after 17 lessons (partly to keep me up to scratch whilst waiting for my test date to come through due to the Christmas holiday period) the test was eventually set for 17<sup>th</sup> January 1967 when I passed at the first attempt. (30 years later, on the 18<sup>th</sup> January 1997, I passed the IAM Advanced Driving Test). My new Full Driving License, a little red booklet, arrived 17<sup>th</sup> February 1967.

*By now, I hope that you are starting to ‘get my drift’ so to speak. Today, being the 17<sup>th</sup> January 2014 is the 47<sup>th</sup> anniversary of having past my Standard Driving Test and it set me thinking about my driving history. As you can see, the number 17 seems to feature quite heavily, as it is also almost 17 months since I had to stop driving on medical grounds.*



**By Brian Howe**  
**Group President**





I am eternally grateful to Mr McKinley for his patient persistence in correcting my mistakes as we drove around the leafy lanes of Surrey. As autumn then winter approached we carried on regardless of the weather. As my lessons were after work, the evenings soon started drawing in. I was driving in the dark, in the fog, in the rain and even in the snow once or twice. I learned to reverse round corners to the left and to the right, in the dark, in the fog, in the rain and yes in the snow as well. I learned to turn in the road using forward and reverse gears (3 point turn), in the dark, in the fog, in the rain and in the snow. I even learned to perform emergency braking in the dark, in the fog in the rain, but not in the snow, although I was taught to cadence brake in “adverse” weather conditions. I was even taught hand signals, in the dark, in the rain, etc. etc. even though they were being phased out.

I was particularly grateful much later in my driving career, for having been taught to turn into a rear wheel skid in the snow, (on rear wheel drive vehicles) when a 12 metre coach decided to let go to the right on an icy road. Thankfully the coach was empty, (perhaps it wouldn't have let go if it had weight over the back axle) and I managed to straighten it up again. I abandoned the school run without having picked up a single passenger and



returned to the depot for a strong cup of tea. I wouldn't want to be the driver of the car watching aghast, as a vehicle 8 feet 3 inches wide, very nearly 40 feet long and weighing almost 12 tonnes was approaching him at an angle of 45° at nearly 20 miles per hour: An extremely hairy moment that thankfully, I will never have to repeat.

Mr McKinley's favourite saying was, “Imagine that you are the only sane driver on the road and everyone else is an idiot, then drive accordingly”. Again I say “Thank you Mr McKinley” for preparing me for practically anything that our British weather and all “the Idiots” out there could throw at me.

Brian L. Howe [president@tgam.org.uk](mailto:president@tgam.org.uk)



# MEMBERS' PAGES



By Serena Lonton  
Group/Membership Secretary



There are still 21 of you who have not yet renewed your membership for the current year, so if you would like to renew, please complete the form and send it back to me with your cheque for £7.50 for full membership or £10.00 for associate/group friend membership by no later than 31<sup>st</sup> May 2014. This will prevent your membership from lapsing and guarantee that you continue to receive our brilliant newsletter, which I am sure you will agree is always a very good read.

Please remember that if you are renewing as a full group member, you **MUST** be a fully paid up member of national IAM.

Our group records are now maintained via a new computer system linked to IAM, therefore it is vitally important that this is adhered to, so please check your national membership status carefully before signing the declaration on our renewal form.

Many thanks to you all for your continuing support.





## Advanced Driving Test Passes

Congratulations to three members who have recently passed their Advanced Driving Test.

### OBSERVED BY

Anna Morris

John Gilbert

Hazel Percy

John Gilbert

Allen Pope

Hugh Todd

NOTE: If you have passed the test recently but your name is not on the above list please make sure that you inform Serena Lonton, the Membership Secretary. We would like to present successful candidates with their pass certificates at one of our Members' Evenings.

## The Membership Register

This quarter we have only one new group member. We hope you enjoy your association with the Taunton Group and we look forward to welcoming you to our meetings, events and activities.

	<u>TOWN</u>	<u>LEVEL</u>
Sue Hay	Cullompton	Associate

## February Members' Evening

# TESTING MOMENTS



**A talk from Andy Poulton,  
staff examiner.**

**If you have ever heard one of Andy's  
talks, you won't want to miss this one.**

**Wednesday 19<sup>th</sup>  
7:30pm  
at Hatch Beauchamp Village Hall**



# CALENDAR

## COMMITTEE MEETINGS

10<sup>th</sup> April

12<sup>th</sup> June

14<sup>th</sup> August



### FEBRUARY

19	W	7:30 pm	Member's Evening – Testing Moments, a talk from Andy Poulton, staff examiner
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### MARCH

19	W	7:30 pm	Member's Evening – 'A Century of Developments in Naval Aviation' by John Gilbert
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### APRIL

16	W	7:30 pm	Member's Evening – An evening with Mark Trimmer, IAM Regional Manager
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26	Sa	10:00am	Regional Liaison Forum – AGM at The Exeter Arms, Middlemoor, Exeter
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### MAY

7	W	All day	IAM track based skills day at Croft (N. Yorks)
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21	W	7:30 pm	Member's Evening – How not to pass, a talk by Andy Ware, IAM examiner
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### JUNE

18	W	7:30 pm	Member's Evening – <b>Confident Driving</b> , An IAM presentation targeting specific areas of driving development; skills, experience and emotions.
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# TGAM Christmas Luncheon – 7<sup>th</sup> December 2013

By Serena Lonton

As usual, Oake Manor Golf Club came up trumps, with 26 guests enjoying a delicious traditional Christmas meal followed by coffee and mince pies.

Party poppers livened up the proceedings, although noticeably the squeaky balloons were absent – probably much to the relief of the Oake Manor staff! Apparently they were nowhere to be found in the shops. Perhaps next year...

It was great to see new faces along with the regular ones, and in particular our former chairman Kevin Grose, who due to heavy commitments has not been able to join us at our events for some time. Also, we somehow managed to get all three Andys together – Messrs Griffiths, Poulton and Ware (sounds like a firm of Estate Agents!).

Many thanks to all who donated raffle prizes and to Janet Loader for doing a superb job once again on the organisation front. Also many thanks to Brian Howe for organising the event again.

Brian then thanked all present and the Oake Manor staff for another superb event.









# A Fighter Pilot's Guide to surviving on the roads

By John Sullivan submitted by Janet Loader

**John Sullivan is a Royal Air Force pilot with over 4,000 flight hours and a keen cyclist. In this article he describes why collisions can occur and, in layman's terms, how some of the techniques of flying fast jets can be used to increase your chances of survival on the roads.**

**“What’s wrong with you - are you blind?”**

**Who hasn’t thought this at some point whilst cycling or driving?**

**Now, before we go on, who can say that, at some point in their own driving history, they have not been about to manoeuvre - pull out from a T-junction, etc - when a car or bike seemed to come out of nowhere? Hopefully, it was just a close shave and no doubt quite frightening. You may have wondered how you failed to see it and concluded that they must have been driving too fast or you would have seen them. Perhaps, on such an occasion, you were the recipient of that loud and urgent query, ‘Are you blind?’**

**Well, here’s the bad news - yes, you were. For small but significant periods of time you are completely incapable of seeing anything at all.**

**Most of the time, as I shall explain, this is not a problem. But if it means that you fail to see a vehicle that is just about to occupy the same point in space and time as you are - then this is a big problem!**

**The good news is that understanding why we sometimes do not see things allows us to adopt some defensive strategies that tip the odds back in our favour. This article, then, is a fighter pilot’s survival guide to avoiding collisions.**

**Fighter pilots have to cope with closing speeds of over 1,000 mph, and they don’t always get it right! But crashes are always analysed carefully to learn the lessons that might prevent future accidents. This article reveals the hard-won techniques that fighter pilots are trained to use.**





First some background. We have evolved, over hundreds of thousands of years, to our environment. We are highly adaptable and have eyes in the front of our heads, which gives us binocular vision for judging distance to prey or threats.

Our eyes and the way that our brain processes the images that they receive, are very well suited to creeping up on unsuspecting antelopes. We are even pretty good at spotting sabre-toothed tigers creeping up on us! We are, however, rubbish at spotting vehicles that hurtle towards us at high speed.

### **Let me explain why.**

Light enters our eyes and falls upon the retina, whereupon it is converted into electrical impulses that the brain perceives as images. Clever stuff. Only a small part of the retina, in the centre and called the fovea, can generate a high-resolution image. This is why we need to look directly at something, by moving our eyes, to see detail. The rest of the retina contributes to our visual experience by adding the peripheral detail - hence peripheral vision. Peripheral vision cannot resolve detail, which prevents the brain from being overloaded with too much information, but it is very good at detecting movement. Any movement, such as the twitch of an antelope's ears or the swish of a tiger's tail,

immediately alerts us to something of interest which we can then bring our high-resolution fovea to bear upon. And our eyes move fast, really fast - no doubt spurred on by the motivation of not ending up as food ourselves.

### **So what?**

Well, first, it is an unfortunate fact that if you are converging on a given point with another vehicle at the same speed and assuming that you are both traveling in a straight line, then there is no apparent movement noticeable by the occupant of either vehicle. That is, to the driver of each vehicle, the other will remain in exactly the same position in the windscreen up to the point of impact. There is no relative movement - so our peripheral vision is not suited to detecting it.

Remember, our peripheral vision is not good with detail - in fact, just 20° away from your sightline your visual acuity is about one tenth of what it is at the centre. Not convinced? Well, the standard eyesight requirement for driving in the UK is to read a car number plate at 20 metres. Go outside, now, and stand just 10 metres from a car and look at the number plate. Now, without moving your eyes try and read the number plate of the car on its right or left. Now try it again from 5m. Clinically, you are blind in your peripheral vision.







That's not to say that we cannot see something in our peripheral vision - of course we can. As you approach a roundabout you would be hard pressed not to see a dirty great articulated lorry bearing down upon you, even out of the corner of your eye - obviously, the bigger the object the more likely we are to see it. But would you see a motorbike, or a cyclist?

To have a good chance of seeing an object on a collision course, we need to move our eyes, and probably head, to bring the object into the centre of our vision - so that we can use our high-resolution fovea vision to resolve the detail.

Now for the really interesting part. When we move our head and eyes to scan a scene, our eyes are incapable of moving smoothly across that scene and seeing everything. This makes perfect sense: just like trying to take a picture without holding the camera still, the image would be blurred. So, our clever brain overcomes this by moving our eyes (really fast, remember) in a series of jumps (called saccades) with very short pauses (called fixations) and it is only during the pause that an image is processed. Our brains fill in the gaps with a combination of peripheral vision and an assumption that what is in the gaps must be the same as what you see during the

pauses. This might sound crazy, but your brain actually blocks the image that is being received while your eyes are moving, which is why you do not see the sort of blurred image that you see when you look sideways out of a train window.

Not convinced? Okay, go to a mirror and look repeatedly from your right eye to your left eye. Can you see your eyes moving? You cannot. Now have a friend or partner do the same thing while you watch them. You will see their eyes moving quite markedly. The reason you couldn't see your own eyes move is because your brain shuts down the image for the instant that your eyes are moving. Experiments have shown that it is impossible to see even a flash of light if it occurs within a saccade.

The saccade/fixation mechanism has always served us rather well and means that we can creep up on antelopes without being overloaded by unnecessary detail and a lot of useless, blurred images. But it does present us with some shortcomings now that we routinely climb into metal boxes and hurtle towards each other. Our eyes and brains are just not designed for this - our world has changed far faster than our bodies can adapt.





## So what?

As you get to a junction and move your head right and left to look for oncoming traffic, you need to understand that you cannot guarantee that you have seen approaching traffic. It is entirely possible for our eyes to 'jump over' an oncoming vehicle during one of the saccades. The smaller (and, specifically, the narrower) the vehicle, the greater the chance that it could fall within a saccade. You are not being inattentive; you are physically incapable of seeing anything during a saccade. Remember the 'Think bike!' adverts, where a driver pulls out into the path of a motorcycle? I am convinced that it is the phenomenon of saccades and fixations that is most likely to lead to this sort of accident.

It gets worse. The faster you move your head, the larger the jumps, or saccades, and the shorter the pauses, or fixations. So, you are more likely to jump over an oncoming vehicle and less likely to detect any movement in your peripheral vision (because there is even less time available for slight, relative movement to become apparent).

It gets even worse. Not only can we not see through solid objects; research has shown that we tend not to look near to the edges of a

framed scene. In plain language, we tend not to look at the edges of a windscreen. So, not only do the door pillars of a car represent a physical blind spot, but our eyes tend not to fixate near to it, leading to an even bigger jump, or saccade, past a door pillar. This is called windscreen zoning.

One further point of interest, our ears usually contribute to the process of building up a picture of our surroundings too - the snap of a twig from an unwary paw is another prompt for us to direct our vision towards something of interest. But in our metal cocoons, with the radio or MP3 device playing, this is yet another cue that we are denied.

So, you are approaching a big roundabout or junction, looking ahead of course, and the road seems to be empty. As you get closer, you look right and left as a prudent, final check. You see no other vehicles and proceed. Suddenly, there is a blast of horn and a car flashes across in front of you, missing you by inches. Sound familiar?

So what happened? On the approach, you did not see that another car was on a perfect collision course, with no relative movement for your peripheral vision to detect - possibly compounded by being behind the door pillar.





Lulled into a false sense of security you looked quickly right and left, to avoid holding up the traffic behind you, and your eyes jumped cleanly over the approaching vehicle, especially as it was still close to the door pillar in the windscreen. The rest of the road was empty and this was the scene that your brain used to fill in the gaps! Scary, huh?

You were not being inattentive - but you were being ineffective.

Just when you thought it couldn't get any worse, there is also the phenomenon of 'expectation' - your brain is less likely to recognise something that you are not expecting to see. This now enters territory that pilots prefer to leave to a scary breed of creature called the aviation psychologist, but suffice it to say that, if you think that the road is empty, you are less likely to register that a vehicle is actually present.

So, what can we do about it? Well, quite a lot actually, as forewarned is forearmed.

### **Drivers**

Always slow down as you approach a roundabout or junction, even if only by 20 mph or so, even if the road seems empty. Changing your speed will immediately generate relative movement against a vehicle that was otherwise

on a collision course - not only are you then more likely to see it, but you are no longer on a collision course!

Never just glance right and left - this leaves it entirely to chance whether you see an approaching vehicle or not - and if you glance quickly, the odds decrease markedly.

Always look right and left methodically, deliberately focusing on at least three different spots along the road to the right and three to the left - search close, middle-distance and far. With practice, this can still be accomplished quickly and each pause is only for a fraction of a second, but this means that you are now overriding the natural limitations of the eye and brain. Fighter pilots call this a 'lookout scan' and it is vital to their survival.

Always look right and left at least twice. Not only does this immediately double your chance of seeing a vehicle, but, if you repeat the same scan as you did the first time (which, when it becomes a well-practiced habit, you almost certainly will), an approaching vehicle will have moved to a different part of the windscreen by the time you look the second time and is less likely to be masked by a saccade. Just note that this will not work if you charge into a junction at a constant speed





because any vehicle on a collision course will stay in the same position in the windscreen - if you miss it the first time, you will probably miss it the second time too!

Make a point of looking next to the windscreen pillars. Better still, lean forward slightly as you look right and left so that you are looking around the door pillars. Be aware that the pillar nearest to you blocks more of your vision. Fighter pilots say 'Move your head - or you're dead'.

Clear your flight path! When you change lanes, especially into a slower lane, you should, of course, check your mirrors and will undoubtedly have been watching the road ahead of you, naturally. Your last check must be to look directly at the spot into which you are going to manoeuvre, otherwise you could easily have missed a slower motorbike, cyclist or even car in that lane, one that was only in your peripheral vision as you looked ahead, and over which you 'jumped' as you looked over your shoulder or checked your wing mirror.

Drive with your lights on or, if this seems extreme have daylight running lights fitted - if you don't already have them. Aviation research

shows that contrast is the single most important factor in determining the likelihood of acquiring an object visually. This is why military aircraft camouflage is designed to tone down their contrast. On the ground, dark-coloured vehicles or clothing will result in reduced contrast against most usual backgrounds and this is why high-visibility clothing (for pedestrians, cyclists and motorcyclists) and/or bright lights are so important; in the daytime as well as at night.

While it is generally understood that a low sun can make it difficult to see, it is probably not generally understood why: driving into sun reduces contrast, especially when vehicles and pedestrians fall into the shadow of larger, up-sun objects. You must beware that even large vehicles, and especially motorbikes, cyclists and pedestrians, can become completely impossible to see under these circumstances and you must moderate your driving accordingly. This is why fighter pilots attack from out of the sun!

Keep your windscreen clean both inside and out! Seeing other vehicles can be difficult enough, without tipping the odds against you by having to look through a dirty windscreen. You never see a fighter jet with a dirty canopy.







And finally, don't be a clown - if you are looking at your mobile telephone then you are incapable of seeing much else. Not only are you probably looking down into your lap, but your eyes are focused at less than one metre and every object at distance will be out of focus. Even when you look up and out, it takes a fraction of a second for your eyes to adjust. This is time you may not have.

### **Motorcyclists and cyclists**

Recognise that you are especially at risk - not only are you more vulnerable but the narrow profile of a motorbike or cycle makes it far more likely that you can fall into a saccade. So tip the odds in your favour - always wear high-contrast clothing and use lights. Flashing LEDs (front and rear) are especially effective for cyclists as they create contrast and the on-off flashing attracts the peripheral vision in the same manner that movement does.

The relatively slower speed of bicycles means that they will be closer to a point of collision if a vehicle begins to pull into their path. Turn this to advantage - when passing junctions, look at the head of the driver that is approaching or has stopped. The head of the driver will naturally stop and centre upon you if

you have been seen. If the driver's head sweeps through you without pausing, the chances are that you are in a saccade - you must assume that you have not been seen and expect the driver to pull out!

Be aware of when the odds are really stacking up against you. If you are cycling into a low sun, have a think about how difficult it is to see the vehicles in front of you. Now imagine that you are also looking through a dirty windscreen, or one with rain beating against it! Are you content that drivers approaching from behind have a realistic chance of seeing you? Maybe today is the day to take a different route - or time your journey to avoid the sun being straight into the eyes of drivers on that particularly busy stretch of road. Or take the bus.

Having a really low heart-rate at the point at which you go under the wheels of a truck is rather pointless. This is risk management.

So is wearing a helmet - every fighter pilot wears a helmet, even though it won't make much difference if they hit the ground at 700 mph! It's about reducing the chances of less dramatic incidents causing fatal cranial injuries, unnecessarily. Go figure.

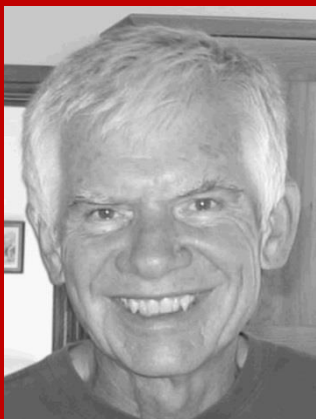




## **MARCH MEMBERS' EVENING**

### **A Century of Developments in Naval Aviation**

**A talk by John Gilbert**



**John is a TGAM member and, having spent many years in aircraft design, is currently a tour guide at the Fleet Air Arm Museum at Yeovilton.**

**Wednesday 19<sup>th</sup> March 7:30pm  
at Hatch Beauchamp Village Hall**

## **APRIL MEMBERS' EVENING**

### **An evening with Mark Trimmer**

**Mark is the IAM regional manager for  
the new southern region**



**Wednesday 16<sup>th</sup> April 7:30pm  
at Hatch Beauchamp Village Hall**





# What are speed limits for, Daddy?

Part of a blog from [mmcmusings.com](http://mmcmusings.com)

## Depends who you ask.

Some people would stick up their middle finger and say “for ignoring”. Others would treat them with the reverence of a holy relic and demand they’re never, ever broken.

A rather fundamentalist view of limits – and their enforcement – has driven road safety policy in the UK since 1992. “Speed kills so kill your speed” has been the cornerstone of road safety. And killing your speed has meant adhering, limpet like and no matter what else, to the speed limit. No ifs no buts.

## It wasn't always that way.

There used to be a statistical basis to limits. You measured the natural speed of traffic along a given road in free-flowing conditions. You then assumed that 15% of the drivers were going too fast and set the limit at the 85<sup>th</sup> percentile. Limits were designed to reflect the idea that most drivers were responsible – otherwise why let them have licences in the first place?

Actually, it's a good bet. Most drivers, despite the best attempts to paint them as kitten-killing

baby-eaters, won't drive so fast they put themselves or others in danger. No-one wants to crash and a road has a natural alignment and 'feel' that gives it a natural speed limit. Most people don't do 90 down a single-track, blind country lane.

This “85<sup>th</sup> percentile” rule gave us 60mph limits in the countryside and 30mph limits in towns. It worked for years – since the 1930s – and meant new drivers and those unfamiliar with a road had an idea of the speed they should drive at. Limits at the 85<sup>th</sup> percentile gave the Police a stick too – when they needed it – to beat people going too quickly. But they left most people alone. The majority drove around the limit speed because, in effect, the majority set it.

For speed limits to have the almost biblical weight government and local authorities now place on them, the numbers themselves must now be based on sound, fully-researched science, surely?

Er, no.

Limits are set because Councillor X (under pressure from residents) and Officer Y set them





that way, often ignoring advice from government and the (rather better qualified) emergency services. And they're backed up with government advice that suggests they use a mean average speed rather than the 85<sup>th</sup> percentile.

This has had the effect of making drivers drive unnaturally slowly on clear, safe, open roads with very few hazards – or break the law by using common sense and driving to the conditions. Blanket limits are now the first-line tool to slow drivers down.

They were never, ever designed to be used this way. Limits were designed to reflect real world drivers driving in real world conditions. It's clear from government advice that they don't work when they're used like this either: *"Specific speed limits cannot, on their own, be expected to reduce vehicle speed if they are set at a level substantially below that at which drivers would choose to drive in the absence of a limit."*

In the mid-1990's, some councils – beginning with Suffolk – began to change the way limits worked. They used them, not to recognise the behaviour of the law-abiding majority but as a tool to lower speeds. Despite massive non-compliance and concern from road safety organisations, the Police and Coroners' Offices, other counties followed.

Councils now use limits as a proxy for safe speeds. Sadly, it's not that simple. Safe speeds vary constantly – up and down – from driver to driver and second to second. Of course, that doesn't give an excuse to rag through the centre of a village at 90mph, but neither – in my opinion – does it give a local authority the right to force a driver to drive at 30mph on a newly lowered road in clear, low-hazard conditions where 60 is safe.

Speed limits were always intended to be powerful, effective servants – but never, ever masters.





## When is a “technological advancement” a major hindrance?

By Kevin Grose

Whilst at the very recent, excellent TGAM Christmas Luncheon held at Oake Manor Golf Club, David Walton (TGAM Editor) casually asked me “IF” I had any articles for the TGAM Newsletter, he would be pleased to receive them. As I have not written anything for ages due to so many other things that have happened recently, I said I would see what occurs and if I get time, I will certainly make an effort provided it’s something relevant – and guess what happened? So, here it is...

As you may or may not know, I sometimes drive certain declared VIPs (within their industry) to various events, airports, meetings, etc., usually in a variety of different vehicles ranging from basic cars and MPVs through to 4x4s and Minibuses. These trips can take place at any time of the day/night and it has been known for me to drive many different vehicles all in one day – the record so far in this job is ten different vehicles in one average day.

So I recently had the opportunity to convey several VIPs to an evening event. As instructed, I duly collect my appropriate hire vehicle – a

one year old, low mileage Mercedes Vito 113 CDi Traveliner MPV, really a luxurious van with extra seats and blacked out rear windows, and drive it home to await my already prepared detailed start and collection times for the various VIPs.

I exit my house at 18:00 hours (6 o’clock in the evening) and start the engine. I select “D” for Drive as it has an automatic gearbox and gently ease the accelerator down to go. Nothing happens. I push the accelerator a bit more but still nothing happens. The engine does speed up very, very slightly but the vehicle hardly moves. I check my selection on the gearbox – YES, it’s in “D” so I try “R” (Reverse) but nothing happens. I try “D” again... then “R” again – even “P” (Park) and “N” (Neutral) but nothing appears to be working. I try “D” and “R” several times – NOTHING! OMG (oh my god) as the youngsters say, or “Gotten Himmel, das Kubelwagen ist kaput!” or something like that in German - it appears I have complete gearbox failure. My first VIP is due to be collected at 18:20 hours.







I am slightly confused by this scenario because the engine will not rev up or run any faster so maybe it's an engine fault? This being a very modern vehicle with so many computerised electronics working for you, I turn off the ignition, wait about 10 seconds and try again. All the above happens... again. This is very odd as the vehicle appears to be working fine but just will not rev up or move. Whilst frantically trying again, I accidentally press the electric window switch and then hear a faint whirring/scrabbling noise which I could not hear when the window was shut. This noise was due to the fact that both rear wheels were spinning very slowly on the slightly grassy area where I had parked earlier. The vehicle had not really made any attempt whatsoever to move from the exact spot where I had parked it – it had just spun both its wheels very gently as they could not grip the greasy grassy surface. Obviously, as I had not heard or felt this situation happening at all as you are very cosseted and isolated in a modern vehicle, the rear driving wheels had now dug themselves into the mud. I select “P” and apply the handbrake and get out to have a proper look.

It's not good (Donner und Blitzen!) as not only have the rear wheels sunk into the earth by

some 5 or 6 inches (12.5 - 15 cm), the front wheels have also embedded themselves by roughly the same amount. Time is now 18:05. By this time my elderly mother had appeared wondering what I was playing at! This luxury “Traveliner” could not cope with a bit of grass and had started to trash my “lawn”. Hundreds of vehicles have parked on this piece of grass for over 30 years and never ever, has any one of them ever got stuck like this vehicle. With time ticking away, I'm starting to curse and jump up and down with rage but Mum calmly disappears and returns with two big bits of old carpet to put under the rear wheels. Brilliant – I duly ram these two items under the rear wheels but did not realise the amount of mucky mud now all over the place – hence I now have mud deposits on my very clean and polished Toggi boots; black trousers; the sleeves of my fleece and all over my hands – lovely. I jump in the driving seat, start up and try again. The two carpets just shot under the rear wheels and piled themselves up against the wall behind this grassy area! Oh, absolutely brilliant!

I grab the carpets and try again... yes, a bit of grip and the vehicle moves very slowly but not very far... about a foot! When it did grip, the engine actually revved up a bit. I held it there





on the brake and quickly selected “R” and managed to run back a little bit more than before – YES, we are getting somewhere – time is now 18:10. I try again and move forward a bit but not enough – the engine just will NOT rev up. Backwards again, forwards again, back again, forwards again; my lawn is disappearing under the wheels of this useless heap. I am now getting very angry. A sight not often seen but best avoided by all. I’m now late; I have a useless, big piece of immovable rubbish on my lawn - sorry, what’s left of my lawn; I now have trenches the army could hide in; I have mud all over me; the steering wheel is covered in mud; the pedals are covered in mud; the engine will not rev; the wheels will not grip, etc., etc., this might not sound a lot to most people but I pride myself on NEVER being late; I am usually fairly clean, tidy and smartly dressed; I have extracted so many vehicles from very awkward, sticky, muddy, icy and dangerous situations so my skills and patience are being tested to the limit here – I am on a slow fuse about to explode. If I had had a hand grenade, I would have lobbed it through the window and walked away; if I had had an ACK-ACK gun, I would have ACK-ACKed the Merc away; if I had had a tank, then

I would have driven over it – NO, hang on a minute – a tank could pull it out of its predicament. “Ich vill usen meinen grossen Panzer, jahr”... sorry, I’ll get my Chevy, tie a rope around something and tow it out – YES, cracked it! Time is now 18:15. Ah, one minor problem – “meinen Grossmutter”, sorry - my Mum doesn’t drive and I need TWO drivers... oh, GROSSEN SCHIEZZER (I don’t need to translate that!), WHAT DO I DO NOW? That’s it then – I’m extremely late; this piece of useless junk is deposited on my lawn; VIPs are waiting for me; I’m covered in mud; this is most likely the last job I’ll ever do, I’m finished, game over – alle ist kaput!

I’m just about to make the phone calls when my father arrives home with our Fiat Doblo – I’m saved by this knight on a white steed – well, my Dad in a white diesel Doblo! Very quickly, I tie a rope somewhere under the front of “das Shiteo”, sorry Vito, and then attach the other end under the Doblo – this is it, one last chance to save face; hopefully. Dad takes up the slack on the rope and I “gun” the Vito. Slowly but surely it finally exits my lawn (or more like a bomb crater now) and the rear wheels touch solid tarmac – the engine revs up as normal – IT’S ALIVE! Time is now 18:20.







I quickly detach the rope from both vehicles; shout sincere apologies to my elderly parents and promise to clear the mess up later when I get home and proceed to thrash the living daylights out of this unbelievable piece of utter rubbish to within an inch of its life! After a few minutes, I calm down as I nearly have a VW (eine Wagen fur alle dem volks) attached to the front grill of the Merc. I am being completely stupid (sehr Dumkopf) as no one else on the road knows of my predicament of the last 20 minutes. I switch into safe mode and proceed quickly but safely to my first pick up. I just hope they do not notice all the mud everywhere – anyway, it's completely dark now and their VIP area – the rear seating compartment is completely untouched and still as new. I arrive at 18:35 and say nothing about being very late. It didn't matter actually as they didn't really know what time I was coming, so I had to wait 10 minutes before they were ready!

I'm made aware that my second pick up now didn't want picking up as they had already made other arrangements earlier during the day, so I proceed onto my third pick up and actually arrived about 5 minutes early! Right, all present and correct, I proceed to the venue,

deliver my occupants and arrange the later collection time. I drive home and park on the tarmac driveway to my house. I leave again much later and proceed to the venue to collect my "payload". They are late leaving – very late leaving! Finally, all are there (plus No. 2 pick up) and I deliver them all home safely. I have to refill the diesel tank and return the vehicle to the hire depot. I finally finish at 02:00 hours; yes, 02:00 hours the next day.

So, what does all the above mean? Well, two major things and one minor thing I need to point out. First major thing is that I was not the only one to suffer problems on the night. There were 4 Mercedes Vito 113 CDi Traveliners used for this one off event and three of us incurred traction problems although mine was the only one which needed a tow. One other driver did think that he was going to have to be rescued and only just got himself out of a dangerous situation by being "abusive" to his manual gearbox vehicle. All 4 vehicles had completely ineffective handbrakes – yes, I know all these Mercedes Vitos have foot operated handbrakes but they are also utterly useless, you just as well not have one at all. It is nice of Mercedes to tell you about this facility by flashing up a big red light to tell you the





handbrake is on – it doesn't matter one bit because the brake doesn't work. It appears to be the same regardless of whether it's a manual or automatic vehicle and it appears to be a common fault. This is a £35,000 "commercial" vehicle and I would think that an effective handbrake would be an absolute 100% must for safety sake alone.

Now, the next major thing, I very rarely give an opinion on the very many vehicles I am lucky enough to drive because one man's meat is another man's poison but the above model has to be one of the very worst vehicles I have ever driven. This is an expensive listed £35,000 Mercedes item; the diesel engine was terrible; the automatic gearbox was absolutely diabolical; the controls were extremely awkward; the handbrake operation system was inoperable at times, especially the manual model; the handling was different as there is no feedback to the driver – you could be on gravel, tarmac, ice, etc., and you wouldn't know; the rear access tipping seat strangles the middle passenger when operated to get in the back seats; etc., etc., but the MAJOR problem is what this story is all about – traction control – when the rear wheels start to spin, the engine power disappears –

completely, even pulling away at a junction, this electronic helping device could seriously put you in extreme danger. Fortunately, in my experience, it only bogged itself down on my lawn but the vehicle was completely unable to extricate itself from a level surface, albeit a slightly slippery surface on which hundreds of other different vehicles over 30 years use have not had the slightest problem with, so that's WHEN A "TECHNOLOGICAL ADVANCEMENT" IS A MAJOR HINDRANCE!

Oh, and the minor point – well, it was Friday the thirteenth of December 2013!

### **Herr Commandant Kevin Grose**

(Das Capitan auf dem Panzer Division grossen schiezzer Merc Vito Traveliner volks transporten wagen, gut ja?) My apologies for all the incorrect translations – last time I used the German language, I was still at school – it was eine gut skool aber it was approved!





# Jamming on the Motorway... Or I'm in a Jam, Man!

By Kevin Grose

Whilst driving on the A303, M3, M25 and M23 recently, collecting/delivering various industry VIPs from/to airports, meetings, etc., I do notice a huge amount of “accidents” or as we now call them, incidents about to happen. I observe there are far too many occurring on a very regular basis but I'll only describe a few incidents here which I feel need highlighting for safety sake.

Firstly, the whole 3 lanes of traffic come to a fairly rapid stop on the M3 about 9 miles from Heathrow. Nothing moves for a few minutes, then very slowly a few vehicles take up the gaps initially left when the rapid stop occurred and then we are all stopped again. We all wait. I look all around me to establish what's in each lane and to see if I can see what has caused this “stop” – any flashing lights; hazard lights; people wandering around; anything that may help give some indication – nothing! I do notice however, that virtually every driver has gone for the mobile phone; instantly. No matter what vehicle they are driving, they all have a mobile phone stuck to their ears. I also notice a few individuals shouting and

gesturing to themselves and I assume they are on their hands free phones – if not, then there are some very strange people on our motorways! After about 10 minutes, the traffic attempts to move a bit at a time in the various lanes and no one lane is actually moving faster than any other but that doesn't stop a huge number of vehicles playing a shuffling game from lane to lane to lane. As soon as one lane moves about 10 to 15 cars more, then everybody wants to be in that lane. They change lanes and it then stops. The lane they were in originally now moves so they all shuffle back into that lane and guess what, that lane now stops. This game continues across all three lanes for many miles. I stick in my original lane and over the same distance, I am still roughly next to the original three double-decker buses indicating they are going to Heathrow, as when we initially first stopped even though we both moved considerably ahead of one another at many times. This incident and game playing has added about another 45 minutes of extra travelling time to my journey.





After about 5 to 6 miles of this scenario, the M3 widens to allow access to the M25 North & M25 South and I need to go south to Gatwick. The two outer lanes appear to be moving slightly quicker and I assume all these vehicles are going south like me. I courteously indicate and take up any allowed spaces given up to allow me to venture into the outer two lanes. I thank every single vehicle that allows me to do this and I am then, finally in the outer lane building up speed to the nationally indicated level. About 500 / 1000 metres from the junction M3 / M25N & M25S there are two cars on the hard shoulder which appear to have been in a very minor incident – a very minor traffic accident of a few broken lights and a few scratches to the bumpers. Nothing major in the real world but this “incident” caused at least a 9 mile tailback of motorway 3 lane traffic – if I had the time I would work out with a calculator (see below) exactly how many actual motorists / vehicles were delayed for over an hour by these two idiots causing all this mayhem. Two cars in a very minor bump, nothing else. This may appear unbelievable but that was all the evidence available to verify this major holdup....and I have a VIP witness!

Same section of motorway on a different day/

time but ONLY about a 3 mile queue this time. Same antics – mobiles, shuffling, etc., but this time I needed to go to Heathrow, so no using the outside lanes on this occasion. Stop / start / stop / start traffic and I stay in my lane. There’s an older Subaru Forester behind me with what appears to be an older gentleman and lady occupants. He maintains a reasonable gap between himself and my rear end – I’m talking about the car – and carries this out for about 2 miles of this queue. I think he then realises he needs to go south (Gatwick maybe?) so he makes his way safely across to the required lane. His space is taken up by a very young lady driver in her Renault Clio. A mobile is initially stuck to her left ear and then she appears to be texting with the phone in or on her lap. She is not watching the traffic at all and as I move along there is now a fair gap between us. She then realises what has happened and pulls away quickly to take up the gap. She pulls away very quickly – so quickly, I doubt if she’s going to stop in time from rear ending my car; but she does stop, just – I didn’t get out and actually measure the distance between our cars but I bet it was about 6 inches! As soon as she had stopped, she started texting again and not looking at the road. I move forward slightly to





increase the gap between us. She's still texting and not looking at the road. The traffic moves a bit and I move off gently with the flow. Doesn't last long as we all stop again. Young lady has not realised there's a gap now left behind me again. Ah, I note in my rear view mirror she has stopped texting but only because her mobile is now stuck to her ear again! She also pulls away very quickly again to fill the gap that has now been left. Again, she just about stops in time behind me – might be 7 or 8 inches this time. I move forward again to increase the gap between us. This scenario continues for about the last mile before I need to turn towards Heathrow but every time it happens, I am not sure whether a piece of paper could be passed through the gap left between our two vehicles at times! She was continually texting and using her mobile to her ear. She continually pulled away rapidly every time. She continually braked aggressively every time but not once did she ever appear to look any further than the rear of my car. I never observed her looking in her rear view mirror once and she certainly didn't look all around her at any time. This was a young lady completely preoccupied with her mobile and completely unaware of her surroundings. This is bad enough on a normal

road but this was on a major motorway and on one of the busiest junctions in the UK. I did anticipate moving lanes to get her off my back, but then I didn't need to as she suddenly realised she was in the wrong lane and without looking, indicated and pulled straight into the next lane. Fortunately, the minibus in that lane had left sufficient gap to allay any incident. She stayed there for about a minute and then carried out the same manoeuvre into the next outer lane. By that time my exit from the M3 onto the M25 North was complete and the young lady went on her way – I just hope she made it all in one piece.

The lane shuffling scenario was even worse a few weeks later, leaving Gatwick on a Friday afternoon at about 17.00 hours (5.00 pm). It took me over 2 hours to cover about 10 miles of the M25 South section just before exiting onto the M3 South. The number of motorway lanes vary considerably along this part of the M25 and the "locals" obviously know which lanes to use to speed up their journey. That's a laugh – speed up your journey – the indicator signs tell you the average speed is 40 mph – we are all stopped stationary. The indicator signs tell you the average speed is 50 mph – yeah, right – guess what, we are all stopped stationary. Please obey the indicated







speed limits – I would love too, even moving at 40 mph would be nice! What I did notice on this particular bit of the M25 is the number of lane changes made – hundreds and hundreds I would imagine, maybe even thousands although it is indicated that you should stay in lane! The locals can change right across the 3, 4, 5, 6 or 7 (maybe more) lanes within seconds but then they change back again so I can only assume that just gaining that one space in front all the time is well worth all the effort. The locals must have to do this every work day, maybe twice a day or more, 5 days a week or more – it really is unbelievable. You hear all these stories about the M25 – all I know is that it must be the biggest car park in the UK at times and even more worrying – I don't think there is an answer to solve this – if you made the M25 wider with more lanes, then you would just have 6 or 8 lanes of stationary traffic about 5 miles long instead of 3 or 4 lanes of stopped traffic 10 miles long. There is no easy cure to this.

It is not only the motorways that have traffic jams. On another journey, albeit on a Friday afternoon again, I encountered ten different traffic jams. I don't mean the couple of cars jams or the five/ten minute jams, no I mean a real time waster jam involving hundreds or

thousands of vehicles. I leave my home and venture out onto the A358 Taunton to Ilminster road. I drive two miles and encounter my first jam at the Ilminster roundabout – about a hundred and fifty car jam. Get to the roundabout fifteen minutes later and nothing there to cause a hold up. Right (it's left actually), onto the Ilminster bypass and the traffic is very heavy but moving; slowly. At the other end (South Fields) another long queue for about a mile... mmmmm, this is going good so far! Anyway, continuing along the A303 – big queues at Podimore roundabout – the traffic lights are completely useless here and only allow a few vehicles through in a short time. Another fifteen/twenty minutes lost here but now onto the last bit of dual carriageway before Camel Hill (Blue Haze) – guess what – complete gridlock for last five hundred metres – 50 mph – you must be joking as we are all stopped. More minutes tick away and we are finally moving at a snail's pace. This continues until we are past the Sparkford roundabout and about a mile onto the dual carriageway towards Wincanton – yipeee kiyaaaa (Die Hard) we are now travelling at the national speed limit of 70 mph! This continues for miles... but then, not very many miles as I then hit the end of another jam at the end of





the Mere bypass – the bit which narrows down to a two lane carriageway and then climbs a hill with an overtaking lane; if only I could overtake! It appears this is a long queue stretching many miles and consumes much more time but finally it clears out a bit on the dual carriageway near the Salisbury (Wylie) turn off. We are on our way again but not for long as there appears to be a massive queue now leading into Winterbourne Stoke. This is a long queue and finally after sitting in traffic for ages and ages, this queue extends all the way along the A303 to the Amesbury roundabout and the queue going the other way is even longer! I'm glad I am only stuck in a 6 mile queue – the other way was about 11 miles!

All these hold ups must waste so much fuel let alone our precious time. There must be millions of engines running needlessly, using valuable natural resources at an alarming rate because we are all stuck in stupid traffic jams usually caused by some idiot or moron through their inconsiderate/reckless driving or their broken down vehicle left causing a major obstruction when they could have just moved it a few metres to help other road users – they do nothing but sit in their vehicles and stick a mobile phone to their ear and are

completely oblivious to the mayhem and distress they have caused – it is complete and utter selfishness. Anyway, after all these holdups, I then encounter the usual M3 delays, along with the usual M3/M25 Junction delays and finally the usual M23 delays. The Gatwick airport collection was a dream but then I had to turn around immediately and make my way back home to Somerset. Fortunately due to the time of day, I only really encountered a slight delay leaving the M25S to join the M3 south bound. All that queued traffic had virtually disappeared by the time I was coming home and it was an absolute pleasure to drive the roads quickly and efficiently in complete control and within the national speed limits for all types of carriageways. The idiots and morons had obviously all gone home – I just wish they would stay there!

PS: I did do a quick calculation allowing 6 metres (18 ft) per car (including gap) over 1 mile (1,760 yds) equals approx 300 vehicles in a single lane, so that means 900 vehicles approx per mile on a motorway, times 10 miles equals 9,000 vehicles – that's a lot of fuel and time being wasted.

**Kevin Grose**







# HELP – I’VE BEEN CUT OFF!

By Kevin Grose

On the morning of Monday 23<sup>rd</sup> December 2013 during the extreme weather conditions recently prevalent, a tree fell right across my village main road and completely took out the telephone line (s). The tree completely blocked the road and its fallen presence caused much entertainment – well, it did for me watching from the window of one of my bedrooms. I had heard an almighty crash a few minutes earlier but thought nothing of it until I pulled back the curtains and saw a vehicle slowing down quite quickly and then negotiate a U-turn in my near neighbour’s driveway. He then travels back towards me and hesitates on taking the small lane next to my house. He stops and is then fiddling with something on the dash of his vehicle. I immediately think, “Oh, blinking sat nav again!” as it always confuses people and sends them up this lane, even when they do not need to go there!

Anyway, he then drives away back down the main village road. Another car arrives quite quickly but leaves it rather late and brakes very firmly. He hesitates for quite a while with brake lights blaring on, then gingerly turns in the same driveway and drives back off down the same route as the first driver. I think to myself that this a bit strange until I then look further up the road and see the top of a very big tree present in the field opposite me which curves away from my house. I look even more closely and can now see this fallen tree right across the road with its top half in the field. “Ah, that’s why they are all turning around and looking quite confused”. Another dozen or so vehicles arrive over the next thirty minutes and the presence of the tree completely throws them as I witness no end of strange manoeuvres that get carried out before they make their final exits.





Is it really that hard to actually turn your vehicle around in the road and go back from whence you came? Well, it appeared it was for these drivers as they all made a complete hash of a very simple manoeuvre. One would take about ten attempts of shuffling the car back and forwards before making off – not sure if they were just too lazy to turn the steering wheel or what? Others would drive flat out towards the tree maybe thinking it was a mirage and would disappear by the time they actually got there. They then braked extremely hard and then pondered what to do next before ramming the vehicle in reverse BEFORE even looking what was behind them – there were a few near misses with horns blaring, etc. I think one did actually do a text book turn in the road all under complete control and well observed – well done! What was a bit more alarming was that all this was taking place in torrential rain – a complete downpour of the wet stuff. Most amusing was one attempt at reversing from the fallen tree into my neighbour's huge driveway entrance – I think that was about fifteen attempts as this driver just could not reverse in a straight line – he was in the hedge; he touched the kerb; he

drove onto the verge; he almost hit another car; etc., I know I shouldn't laugh but it was hilarious as he had no idea whatsoever how to extricate himself from the predicament. This is a fairly wide two lane road with a driveway entrance you could easily turn a 42 tonne articulated lorry in without any trouble at all and this driver couldn't even turn his small car around – yes, ladies – it was a bloke this time as he had a huge black beard (maybe that was getting in the way of his steering wheel). The antics of the various drivers kept me amused for quite some while.

About thirty five minutes after the initial incident of the falling tree, our local constabulary arrived and duly parked his BMW Police car right across the road with all the lights flashing – blue, red and hazards – you couldn't fail to miss it as it was lit up like a Christmas tree! He also duly put up a POLICE SLOW sign towards me leading away from the Beamer and then traversed the tree somehow and put up another sign on the other side of the fallen tree. Within minutes, two Land Rover utility vehicles arrived (not sure if they were BT or Electric / Power due to the atrocious rain conditions) and with suitable





hi-vis jackets, etc., this fallen tree incident was now being appropriately controlled and manned safely on both sides of the road / tree. All these authority personnel must have been fully soaked to the skin during their time present as the weather was truly dire and unforgiving over this period and my commendations to all for their efforts in such bad conditions.

Now, you can't really miss a normal hi-vis fluorescently painted Police car parked in the middle of the road with all its lights flashing, can you? It is quite a highly visible item, I would say even in extreme conditions but it seems certain members of the public must either be completely blind or maybe they need further training of some sorts because a least half a dozen of them, then tried to drive around the Police car, past the Police Officer and then wondered what was actually blocking their road – one white van man even drove right up touching the tree! I am not sure what he thought was going to happen but even more worrying to me was did he even see the Police sign; the Police car; the Police Officer? It appeared there may have been a few words discussed and from the hand gestures

witnessed, I think he was told to kindly turn around and find another route; absolutely unbelievable! His attempt to turn around in the huge driveway was amusing as well with various wheel spins and antics that really beggars belief – that poor van must endure a hard life of abuse on a daily basis in the hands of such an idiot – they shouldn't really be allowed on our roads.

So, there you have it – a genuine incident witnessed by me which provided such a vast array of amusement during a very miserable and wet moment of the day. I am just glad it all happened here on a relatively quiet country village road and not on any major route because the level of incompetence and complete disregard for the law displayed was extremely worrying. Mark my words, ladies and gentlemen – the idiots are all out there in their assorted vehicles and on our roads at all times of the day. Be extremely aware, take care and drive safely whenever you venture out on the roads.

**Kevin Grose** (Tree's cleared but still cut off and waiting to be reconnected several weeks later... along with many others!)





# WHEN IS AN (OF)FENCE, NOT AN (OF)FENCE?

By Kevin Grose

Further to my other article about a tree coming down and cutting off my phone line for weeks, at the very same place this morning, a car “drove” off the road; up a kerb; over a grass verge; through a substantial hedge; down a slight sloping bank; through a wire and post fence; into a grass field and finally finished off this unusual manoeuvre by trying to rally cross around the field to make it’s exit out through a 5 rail steel farm gate, which the driver then must have discovered, was securely padlocked! Game over, as they say.

I don’t think it would have mattered anyway if it had been unlocked as the car had entrenched its self so much in the muddy, slippery grass leading up to the gate that all traction appeared to have been completely lost. I must admit it had done extremely well to get where it had done, considering the wet, grassy conditions and can only imagine that the driver just kept his foot down and kept going through sheer momentum to get that far.

I noticed this car at about 08:00 hours and immediately thought, “At last, someone has

come to repair my phone line...” but it was sadly not to be as the car was still there two hours later and no sign of any movement whatsoever. I could see it was a black coloured car and due to a prior incident a few months ago (that’s another story), I did wonder if it was the same car so I walked up the road to verify the facts. No, it was not the same car and as I arrived, the local country Estate Manager had just arrived to see what had happened. The car had a bit of body damage around the front spoiler, etc., and a small dent on the A pillar on the driver’s side along with a dent in the driver’s side front wing – it did not look too bad considering its earlier, previous designated route. The grass was a bit chewed up and the hedge was flattened a bit but most damage was to the fence – maybe broken posts and dented wire fencing damage.

I would think the driver was an extremely lucky person because this incident could have been much worse due to the layout of the surrounding landscape. A few more feet and he would have hit the remains of the fallen tree





that had taken my phone line out. Either way of where the car had actually slithered through the hedge, were much bigger and thicker sections of hedging plantation which would have caused much more damage. The car could have rolled over into the field given the route taken and then clobbered the remaining tree.....there were so many other factors but luckily the car appeared to have just slithered right through on a route of the least damaging destruction and if the gate had been fully opened and the car had managed to drive right out of the field, then apart from the tyre marks on the grass, there would have been very little evidence of any incident whatsoever. The car was recovered later by a local breakdown service and the assumed kindness of the local land owner by unlocking the gate to allow access.

What had caused all this? A little bit of frost or ice on the road earlier in the morning I would assume as the road was still slightly slippery when I walked up it to investigate it all. I would assume the car simply didn't make it around the very slight corner and just ploughed straight on across the road; up the kerb; etc., etc. I don't think excessive speed was involved as the tyre marks left everywhere indicated that for almost all the time, the tyres

were making contact with all the various surfaces – road, kerb, bank, field, etc., so I would imagine everything just happened very slowly otherwise there would be gaps between the various tyre marks left where the car would almost certainly have been air born at some time during the incident if excessive speed was being used. So you see, “When is an offence not an offence?” You could say that due care and attention was not being displayed but who would expect a main village road to be that slippery? Was it a combination of wide tyres on a slippery corner? Was it the weather? Was it a young, inexperienced driver? Who really knows as I believe it may have just been one of those moments where everything just happens very slowly and there is absolutely nothing that can be done to stop it or bring it all under full control again.

Again, I think the driver was extremely lucky indeed and maybe a good lesson has been learnt to always “expect the unexpected” and “drive within your means” and I suppose the only real offence made was the one of breaking the fence! Be careful as it can be very slippery out there.

**Kevin Grose** (the things I see from my window!)







# PAVING THE WAY

**Late news from our scooter roving reporter, Brian L. Howe**

From our newsroom we go over to our scooter roving reporter, Mr President live on the pathway to town. “Mr President, can you tell us about the conditions where you are now?”

I certainly can. Good morning to all of you who are tucked up in your nice cosy, warm studio, or listening in on the radio in your nice cosy, warm cars. Here in Wellsprings, a suburb of Taunton, at 11 o’ clock in the morning, there is still a minute trace of frost in the shade, on my back lawn. I’m suitably dressed in scarf, sheepskin jacket (faux!), tweed flat cap and leather gloves. Despite the bitter cold of 5 to 6°C, (well, it’s cold to me. I have to take Aspirin every day.) I am preparing myself for the 1½ mile slog to Taunton town centre. I have just opened my bike shed to retrieve my mobility scooter and everything is dripping wet. The walls are wet and the inside of the roof is dripping with either thawing frost or condensation. The seats of both scooters and the wheelchair are covered with spots of mildew, so everything has to be cleaned and the wheelchair taken indoors to dry off.

Thankfully, Bob-the-Bike is ok. There’s no sign of rust and a quick wipe down removes the moisture. As I relock the shed I think to myself, ‘there’s a flat panel heater in the attic, when I return from town I will fit that up in this shed’.

Before moving off, remembering my Advanced Motorist background I check that the battery is showing a full charge, check the lights, although I am pretty sure I won’t need them, and check the steering is free and not rusted up. The tyres I know are ok because they were only fitted a few months ago and they are foam filled. No punctures or tyre pressures to worry about. The only down side of them is that they firm up the ride a bit more. On opening the slimy wooden gate, another thought pops into my head. ‘Must treat the fences and gate in the Spring.’

Quick explanation: There is no way that anyone on a pavement mobility scooter can negotiate standard 4 inch deep kerb stones without getting off and manhandling the machine. That sort of defeats the object of using it to improve their mobility





There is no Easy Access/Safe Crossing Point, (dropped kerb with Tac-Tile surface to advise the sight inhibited), on my side of the street, so I have to cross the road using the driveways of other residents, which means I sometimes have to cross at quite acute angles. Leaving the lower end of Holford Road, I now have to cross Quantock Road as there are no dropped kerbs on the pavement that passes the old folk's bungalows. At the bottom of Quantock Road I have to turn left to find a safe place and then cross Wellsprings Road at an acute angle to the right, which means that traffic can sneak up behind me, and my scooter is restricted to 4mph. This is not a comfortable feeling and can be quite worrying when I hear vehicles but can't really tell which direction they are coming from or going to. I have to make the crossing here due to no safe place at either side of the T-junction for me to turn left into Kingston Road. Now around the corner I find that the pavement runs out a few yards down the road and, YES! You've guessed it; there is no safe place available to get me safely onto the pavement across the road. This section is tarmac covered broken paving slabs. Talk about papering over the cracks! Now I have a 100 yard dash (well, more like 30 to 40 yards) of no pavement (or footway

as the local and parish councils call them), before I can cross Kingston Road into the mouth of Peile Drive to access the pavement on the other side of the road. This section of pavement, from the old Bishop Fox School down past the County Veterinary Clinic is covered in wet rotting leaves and the occasional dog excrement and it is difficult sometimes to tell the difference. Also the leaves get very slippery if there has been a sharp frost causing walking sticks to slip away from you. Crossing the entrance to the Vet's, the pavement is very uneven and there has been a puddle there for weeks covering more than half the path. The next section alongside the lay by is made up of uneven patch repairs interspersed with small but annoying pot holes.

Now at the new houses where the Cottage Inn used to be and on to the Grumpy Old Cold chippy, I have a section of new, even tarmac. Oh what joy in simple pleasures. Even my scooter seems to perk up and accelerate to a dizzying 4½ mph. Just round the corner from the chippy's there is a safe level place to cross, yet just down the road at Gladstone Street, the safe place has a drop of nearly 2 inches to the road. Passing the flats is that dog excrement or more wet leaves, so I give it





as wide a berth as I can without dropping off the kerb into the road. More uneven path repairs. When on a scooter with no suspension, these uneven patches play havoc with arthritic joints as I hang on for dear life so as not to slew off the pavement. I am safely across the Greenway Road crossing despite two spine jarring drops from pavement to road surface and up again the other side. At the crossing point of Railway Street, the pavement drops an alarming 6 or 8 inches in less than the length of the scooter. If I didn't have anti-tip wheels on the back, I would be in danger of falling off on the return journey home. WOW!! What's this? The mini street sweeper is scrubbing away all the pigeon poo under the railway bridge. I just have to pass the machine instead of avoiding multiple piles of guano. It normally squelches under the tyres as I can't possibly avoid all of it. Then I unintentionally carry it round the town with me. That can't be healthy can it? Moving on past the shops I am faced with a TNT 7½ tonner parked with all wheels on the pavement, outside Ralph Colman's bike shop. Squeezing past, trying not to get my coat dirty I make it safely to the Station Road and Priory Bridge Road traffic lights. It nearly always takes an age to cross here as there is only one pedestrian crossing phase, which is fine until some nincompoop

driver exiting Priory Bridge Road, stops at the red light that is meant for traffic leaving the town centre. In doing so, they obstruct the safe crossing point and I have to wait for the next phase. Because of the timing of the lights, it is impossible for me to cross both Station Road and Priory Bridge Road in the same phase, so I normally continue across Canal Road and up to the crossing at the Morrison's traffic lights. But, this action causes another problem. I have to go round the outside of the bollards at Canal Road as there is a shallow trough about 4 inches across left from when the road was resurfaced but not finished right up to the Tac-Tiles. It would hardly be noticed crossing with a car, but on a scooter with no suspension...

I have arrived at the Morrison's crossing, quite safe, as there is a central reservation with guard rails and two separate pedestrian phases. It is a shame though that the damaged guard rail hasn't been repaired following a careless collision with a presumably innocent motorist. I am now turning left towards the Priory Bridge to go through the gates onto the River Tone footway/cycle path towards Morrison's. This route is a little longer but safer than negotiating the cars haring around their car park, ignoring the Zebra Crossing markings.





Now what!! Workmen have blocked most of the footway with their pickup truck and some temporary plastic fencing. They have ripped out most of the shrubbery and left a lovely level, unguarded access to fall into the river Tone. They are also in the process of painting what few railings there are as the loose bricks rattle beneath my wheels sounding like an out of tune piano keyboard. Now, visitors to the town arriving by rail, can negotiate the pigeon poo under the railway bridge, trip over a loose paving brick on the Tone footway, fall unimpeded into the river and happily exclaim in a loud voice, "Oh my!! What lovely railings Taunton has." "OUCH!" SPLASH!! "HEEELP!!" As I approach the Coal Orchard footbridge I notice that the damaged railing still hasn't been re-fixed to the brickwork. Undeterred, I continue along the pavement passed the Coal Orchard car park towards Taunton Bridge. On this section the tarmac is particularly uneven and quite dangerous. It pitches in different directions due to the roots of the three large trees that have been recently felled. The stumps were ground to sawdust to level the gardens, but nothing was done to level the footway. This is another area where someone who was perhaps a bit heavier than me on a smaller pack-away scooter could quite easily tip over and fall off being shall we say 'top

heavy'. I turn left at the bridge and rattle out another bad tune on another loose paving brick keyboard and cross North Street at the Pelican crossing in front of Debenhams to continue into the Goodlands Tarmac Gardens. But this area I cannot criticise, because it is an awful lot smarter than it used to be with all those uneven, broken, pink paving slabs and multiple puddles.

Safely at the Shed Cafe, I now have time to wind down and relax with a nice hot cup of tea in friendly and cosy surroundings before my granddaughter, Emma-Jane, arrives with baby Caleb, my great grandson who is now almost 10 months old. Oh what joy simple pleasures bring.

Before I hand back to the studio, I would like to ask for 2 or 3 volunteers to help with an experiment. I would like to attempt the journey I have just made, in my wheelchair to highlight potential problems, safety issues and dangers to Taunton Deane Borough Council and Somerset County Council, Highways Dept., of disabled people using Taunton's footways, pathways or pavements, whatever you want to call them. Handing back to the studio now, it is goodbye from me, Mr President, for now. Stay safe out there whether walking, cycling, riding, driving or scootering.

Brian L. Howe





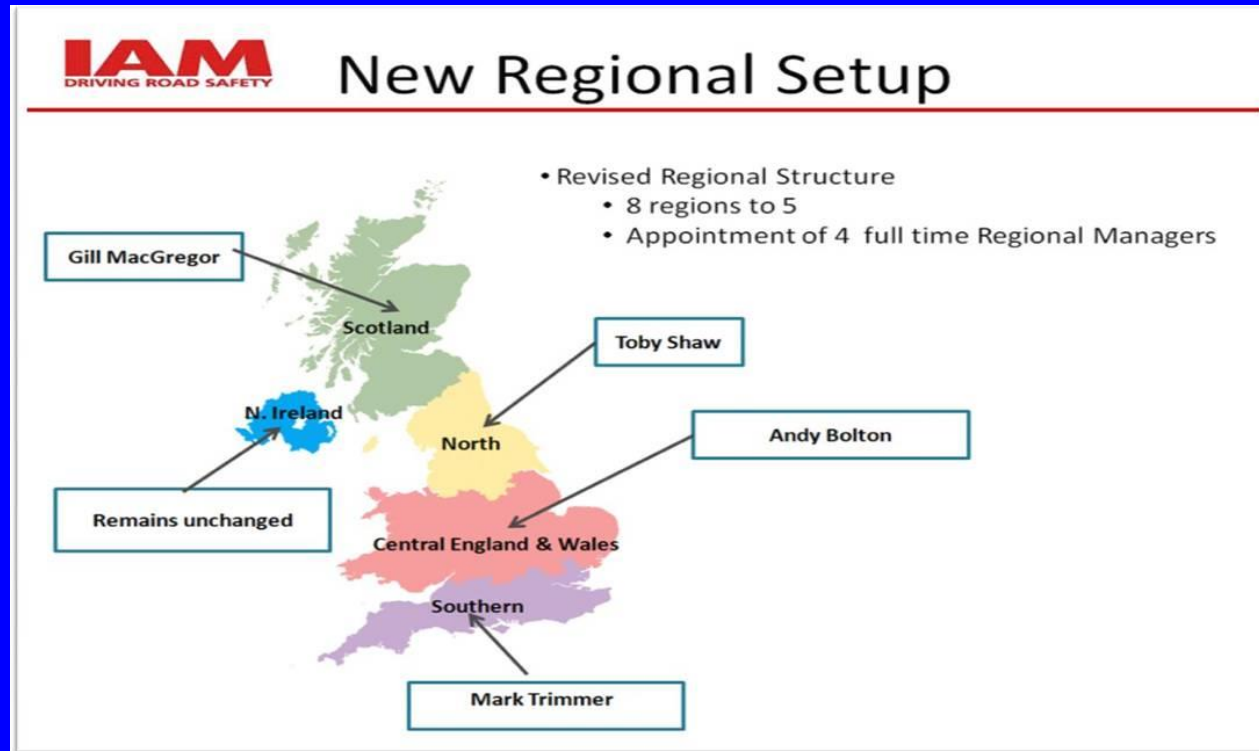
# New Regional Managers

Information from Mark Trimmer, IAM Regional Operations Manager

As you may be aware, IAM have been working toward creating 4 Regional Operations Managers across the UK. I'm pleased to inform you that Gill MacGregor and Toby Shaw now complete the team.

Each region will have their own Regional Operations Manager. The role of the Regional Operations Manager (ROM) is to support local volunteer groups with a main focus on creating membership and retention of existing members.

The ROM's will also look to create opportunities for IAM through partnerships with Councils, Road Safety Partnerships as well as developing opportunities with Commercial customers. ROM's will also assist in the roll out of any new products for example IAM Modular along with managing levels of customer service.







## Groups in the new Southern Region

### Grp# Car Group Name

1189 Barnstaple & North Devon  
2166 Basingstoke & District  
1153 Bath  
1096 Bournemouth  
1009 Bristol  
1054 Camelot  
2010 Central Southern  
7223 Chelmsford  
7139 Colchester  
1267 Cornwall  
1083 Dorset  
2093 East Kent  
2023 East Sussex  
1024 Exeter & Torbay  
2062 Guildford  
7140 High Wycombe  
1198 Melksham  
2103 Mid Kent  
2224 Newbury  
7043 North East London & Essex

### Grp# Car Group Name

1134 Plymouth  
2047 Portsmouth  
1123 Salisbury Plain  
2052 South Eastern  
7059 South Essex  
2035 South of London  
2065 Southampton  
1060 Swindon  
1005 Taunton  
2061 Thames Valley  
1116 Weston & Mendip  
2018 Worthing

### Grp# Joint Group Name

2107 East Surrey  
2167 Isle of Wight

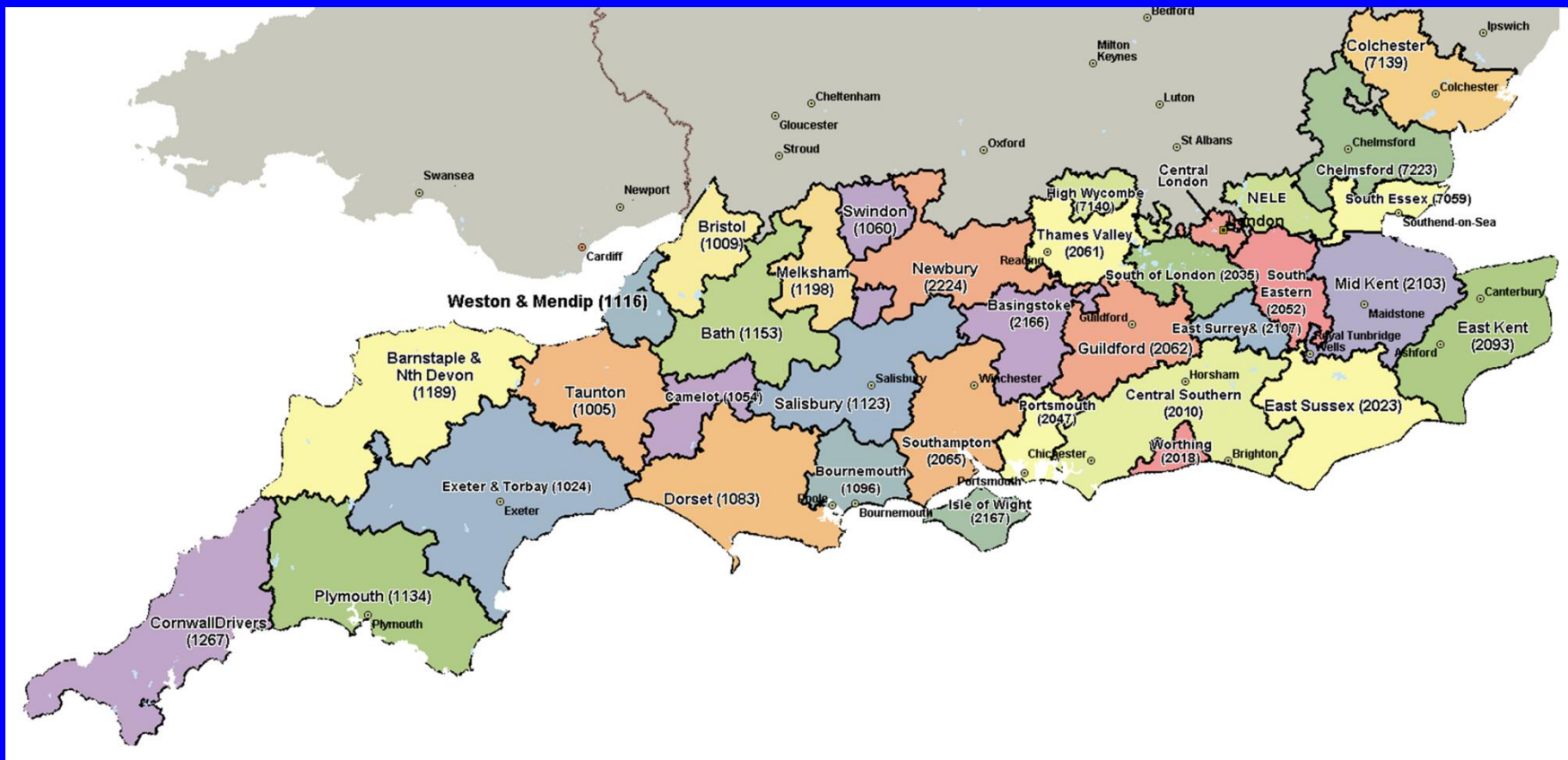
### Grp# Motorcycle Group Name

1208 Bournemouth & Wessex Bikes  
1258 Bristol Bikes  
1244 Cheddar Valley Bikes  
7251 Chelmsford Bikes  
1254 Cornwall Bikes  
1113 Devon Bikes  
1264 Dorchester & West Dorset Bikes  
2206 East Kent Bikes  
7225 East London Bikes  
2222 East Sussex Bikes  
2095 Kent Bikes  
2179 London Bikes  
7207 Middlesex Bikes  
1248 Plymouth Bikes  
2211 Solent Bikes  
1241 Somerset Bikes  
2181 Thames Vale Bikes  
2234 West Sussex Bikes  
2155 Wey Valley  
1250 Wilts & Bath Bikes





# Car Group Map







## Recent Releases from the IAM Press Office

### Motorists support for speed cameras goes down in 2013

The use of speed cameras are supported by the majority of the motoring public, according to the latest research published today by road safety charity, the Institute of Advanced Motorists.

Eighty per cent of motorists accept the use of speed cameras, but this is down one per cent on last year's survey. Seventy nine per cent think that speed cameras are useful to reducing injuries, a fall of six per cent from the 2012 findings.

There is still scepticism amongst the motoring public. Over half of drivers (52%) do not believe that cameras are only sited at locations where accidents happen. Almost half of drivers think that raising money is the main purpose of safety cameras.

Scottish motorists are the least likely to have

someone in their household with speeding points but they are also the most against speed cameras and speed awareness courses.

Support for speed awareness courses has increased. Three quarters of motorists support the use of speed awareness courses up from 70 per cent in 2011.

IAM chief executive Simon Best said: Speed cameras are a successful road safety solution at key crash sites and it's important that the government and safety camera partnerships work to maintain a positive view so that the rising suspicion amongst motorists does not become a trend."

"During times of austerity, drivers are increasingly seeing speed cameras as revenue raising apparatus and are sceptical of their importance for road safety."





# A third of drivers don't enjoy it anymore

A third of drivers simply don't enjoy driving anymore, according to a poll by road safety charity, the Institute of Advanced Motorists (IAM).

The main reason given for not enjoying driving on the roads was the cost of fuel (51%) closely followed by congestion (41%), no longer excited by driving (28%) and less leisure time (25.9%).

Other findings include:

- Overall thirty-nine per cent of respondents still consider driving and riding for fun as their hobby.
- One third of respondents still go out for a spin.
- Fifty-three per cent of respondents think compared with other road users they are good drivers, with just over forty-five per cent responding that they are very good.

- Seventy-eight per cent of respondents would usually drive when out with their partner.
- Half of respondents don't always feel relaxed when their partner is in the passenger seat.

It seems that other road users are the problem with over sixty per cent of respondents stating that it's the behaviour of other drivers on the road that makes them feel the most nervous. This was followed by bad weather conditions and driving near to lorries.

IAM chief executive Simon Best said: "With congestion and fuel prices it's easy to understand why many people think driving is a chore. But the UK still has some of the most beautiful roads in the world and if you have the right skills and confidence in your ability driving can be as enjoyable as ever."







## New 45 points record for driver

A man from Liverpool accumulated 45 licence penalty points in November, according to figures released by the DVLA following an IAM freedom of information request. The points were all for failing to disclose the identity of the driver or exceeding statutory speed limit on a public road, between 1<sup>st</sup> October 2012 and 20<sup>th</sup> June 2013. This beats the previous record of 42 points.

The second-highest points total, 36, went to a man from Warrington, Cheshire, who was caught driving without insurance six times in less than two weeks, between 20<sup>th</sup> February and 2<sup>nd</sup> March 2012.

Other notable offenders include:

- A woman from Lincoln with 34 points, who was caught speeding three times and failed to give information to identify the driver four times between 15<sup>th</sup> January 2012 and 26<sup>th</sup> September 2012.
- A female from Hull with 31 points, who was caught speeding eight times in two months, between 29<sup>th</sup> September 2011 and 29<sup>th</sup> November 2011.
- A man from Westcliff-on-Sea, with 30 points

who was caught speeding six times in just two weeks, between 30<sup>th</sup> September and 13<sup>th</sup> October 2012.

Failing to give the identity of the owner, speeding, and driving uninsured are the most common reasons for points. Of the top twenty licence-points holders, only three are women.

IAM chief executive Simon Best said: “Last September, the IAM highlighted a driver with 42 points on their license and we were told that more would be done to address the issue. Incredibly, we now have someone driving with 45 points. DVLA must rapidly overhaul their systems and working relationships with the courts to ensure that the whole principle of 12 points and you are off the road is not undermined.

“Any suggestion that some drivers may be able to speed with impunity and then talk themselves out of a ban puts our whole approach to enforcement into question. The police and the motoring public need to have confidence that those caught speeding or breaking other motoring laws will be dealt with equally.”





# One in five drivers is over 65

There are now more than seven million drivers over the age of 65 on the UK's roads, according to road safety charity, the Institute of Advanced Motorists (IAM).

The number of drivers over 65 reached 7,191,192 in November 2013. This makes up for 19% of all drivers with full driving licences. The figures come from driving licence data published by the DVLA in December 2013.<sup>1</sup> They also show that:

- There are 4,068,498 drivers over the age of 70.
- There are 1,101,779 drivers over the age of 80.
- 195 drivers are over 100 years old

Of the drivers over 65; 367,711 or 5% have points on their licence.

For drivers over seventy the figure is 195,773 or 5% with points.

35,498; 3%, of drivers over 80 have points.

This compares favourably with middle-aged drivers. The age group most likely to have points on their licence is 42 year-olds. Of the 816,915 licence holders in that group, 82,929 or 10% have points.

For younger drivers the figures are 3,339,826 licence holders, 270,817 with points, or 8%.

This supports research by the IAM that shows that older drivers are in fact safer than many other drivers. Where older drivers have slower reaction times, they use their experience on the road to compensate by driving at slower speeds on all occasions and allowing more space between them and other road users.

IAM chief executive Simon Best said: "In twenty years time, one in ten people will be over 80 years old. Responding to an older population is a significant policy issue for government, health and transport agencies – a greater number of people will require help with their mobility and acting now can ensure the right support networks are in place numbers increase. Easy access to driving assessments, better advice from the medical profession and car and road designs that mitigate the effects of ageing should all be top in 2014. The overarching policy aim should be to keep people independent and driving safer for as long as possible."





# Motorway breakdown

Road safety charity the IAM is offering weekly motoring tips from Britain's top advanced driver, Peter Rodger. This week, he is advising on what to do if your car breaks down:

- Plan ahead: keep a reflective jacket, warm waterproof clothes and a torch in your car. Put the number of your breakdown company and your membership number in your phone. Some breakdown services offer free mobile phone apps, often even if you are not a member. Use the phone's GPS system to find your precise location.
- Get out of the vehicle by the left-hand door and make sure all your passengers do the same. If you have a high-viz jacket, put it on and make sure everyone is standing well away from moving traffic. If there is a safety barrier, wait behind it.
- Where possible, coast to an emergency

telephone. If you use your mobile phone, you may be asked to give the number on the nearest marker post, located every 100 meters or on a square blue sign every 500 metres.

- Don't attempt a repair on the hard shoulder of a motorway, call your breakdown company.
- If you feel threatened by someone, get in the passenger seat, lock the door and dial 999.
- Be safe and be patient while you wait for help to arrive.

IAM chief examiner Peter Rodger said: "Breaking down is stressful, but be prepared by knowing what to do and when. Thinking about these things in advance will place you in a better position in case it happens and relieve some of the strain."





## **IAM comment on quarter three provisional road casualty statistics**

The latest Department for Transport road casualty statistics released today show a welcome decrease in the overall number of deaths and serious injuries in the year ending September 2013. However, despite the decrease, the IAM are concerned that two-wheeled road users are still a growing risk and must be given even greater priority for investment and education.

- For reported road accidents in the year ending September 2013: 1,730 people were killed, a 2 per cent drop from 1,761 in the year ending September 2012. The number of killed or seriously injured casualties fell to 23,380, a 6 per cent decrease compared with the previous year.
- For the year ending September 2013, there were 184,010 reported road casualties of all severities, 7 per cent fewer than the 197,700 for the year ending September 2012.
- In the year ending September 2013 there were 1,730 reported road fatalities, a 2 per cent drop from 1,761 in the year ending

September 2012. The number of killed or seriously injured (KSI) casualties fell by 6 per cent, to 23,380 and the total number of casualties fell by 7 per cent to 184,010. In comparison, motor vehicle traffic rose by 1.1 per cent over the same period.

- A total of 8,490 car user KSI casualties occurred in the year ending September 2013, a fall of 6 per cent from the previous 12-month period.
- KSI casualties for the vulnerable road user groups – pedestrians, pedal cyclists and motorcyclists – showed overall decreases of 10, 2 and 6 per cent respectively.

IAM director of policy and research Neil Greig said: “It is reassuring to see an overall drop in the number of road casualties. But the fact remains that nearly a quarter of road deaths are a result for criminal driving acts such as dangerous driving, drink driving, careless driving and aggravated theft. Targeted action by the police to drive down the numbers of these criminal driving acts could potentially have huge societal benefits.”





**Closing date for the Summer Edition of the TGAM e-Newsletter is 20<sup>th</sup> April.**

**All contributions would be very welcome.**

**All items should be sent to  
“The Editor” at [ed@tgam.org.uk](mailto:ed@tgam.org.uk) or  
by mail to David Walton at  
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