

e-NEWSLETTER



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**TAUNTON GROUP OF
ADVANCED MOTORISTS**
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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 group officers BUT can be inspected at any suitable time provided just cause can be proven.

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Chairman's Corner



Hello and welcome to 2016 and your Spring newsletter. The cold snap has arrived and the air feels fresh. I'm really looking forward to the lighter mornings and longer days - I know I'm SAD (Seasonally Affected Disorder... although some might think of SAD as "miserable, cheerless, and gloomy"!!)

We've had tremendous winds, gusts and heavy rain in the South West causing additional hazards for drivers and for the gazebo covering my Jacuzzi. Gazebos and wind definitely don't go together! The gazebo has been on and off daily and so I've given up now and stored it until the weather has settled.

Driving in gusty wind can be hazardous. As advanced motorists you will know that the 3 types of hazard are;

- Physical features (roundabouts, junctions, bends, brow of a hill etc.)
- Other road users (drivers, pedestrians, cyclists etc.)
- **Weather conditions!**



By Andrew Griffiths





Driving against a continuous headwind or side wind is one thing but dealing with high speed gusts is another as they can be unpredictable. Look out for clues to determine wind strength and direction; tops of trees swaying gives such information as do flags, windsocks, washing on a clothes line and more. And remember that when you're approaching a bend, that headwind will become a side wind causing the car to become more unsettled and you can prepare for this by firming your grip on the steering wheel and perhaps slowing down.

Advice given is that if you have to travel, take warm clothing, snow shovel, blanket, food; rope, first aid kit; this might attract attention though if you are travelling by bus!

It's become a thankless task keeping my car clean in present weather conditions. I washed it the other day and then drove along the M5 only to find a gritting truck in Lane 2 throwing salt over all 3 lanes. I've heard that molasses is added to road salt to help it stick to the road surface, preventing it washing/blowing away; there must be some truth in this because my car had sticky salt all over it by the time I got home. A quick hosing down did very little so here I am waiting for a fine day to wash it

thoroughly. Hey Ho! Andy Poulton, my Examiner will be shocked if he could see it at the moment – no matter what the weather is, his car is always in showroom condition! Andy, I'll have it spick and span when I pop up for an informal MASTERS driving review... and I haven't forgotten that I promised you fish and chips in the Talbot.

This year sees changes to the Advanced Driving Test (ADT). A review led by IAM's Mark Lewis (Director of Standards), involving some Groups and IAM Examiners, aims to make the test fit for purpose in modern day driving. Vehicle technology has changed dramatically – as those of you who came to members evening to hear the talk by Tim Shallcross (IAM) in 2015 will know – and this has been recognised in the review. A pilot has been running in 4 IAM Groups across the country to trial the outputs of the review and Mark will be coming to talk to TGAM Observers on 26th February about the review itself, the pilot and the forthcoming rollout. Clearly, changes to the ADT directly affect Observers because the content of the Skill for Life course they deliver to our Associates will change. Those of our Associates currently being trained won't be





affected as the rollout will be phased in over a period of time.

Since the AGM in October, when committee numbers increased to fill the vacancies I'd highlighted for months leading up to October, I have found time to begin training our Observers for the IMI qualifications now in place. You may recall from earlier newsletters that IMI is the Institute for the Motor Industry and IAM has two Observer qualifications accredited by it and each of these qualifications have an agreed set of standards (called competencies) for Observing. There is a structure in place to ensure these standards are being met and the structure is itself tested for compliance by IMI on a regular basis. So using me as an example, I passed my National Observer qualification 3 years ago and I'm due to be re-assessed by my Examiner very soon to ensure I still meet all of the competencies required for me to retain this qualification. Wish me luck!!

Currently I have two Observers training for the National Observer qualification and I'm hoping more will step forward in due course. Why does TGAM need more National Observers? Because National Observers offer the highest standard of observing provided by the IAM to

drivers wishing to improve their skills and be safer on our roads. The more National Observers we have, the higher the quality and standard of training we deliver **as a Group**. As more and more Groups produce more and more National Observers, the higher the IAM standard becomes... the maths is simple huh?

The entry level Observer qualification is Local Observer. My expectation is that Observers coming in at this level will quickly gain valuable experience and, with additional training, will move on to the National qualification.

I am looking for ideas for what activities you would like our Group to be offering. This goes beyond members' evenings and our new Events Coordinator, Barry Keenan, is chomping at the bit to explore ideas for fun days. How about a Saturday on the skid pan near Exeter? How about a Group visit to the Haynes Motor Museum? Or BOTH? And don't forget that IAM runs "track days" at Thruxton and although it's a bit of a trek up the A303 it is something to consider as an individual or as a Group. So if you have thoughts on what I've mentioned or have you own ideas, either contact Barry or one of the Committee.





I have mentioned on occasions at members' evenings the "ride-along" offered by Avon and Somerset Police. I've done it and one or two others in the Group have too. It's a great opportunity to join a Traffic Police Officer on his/her 8hr Operations shift; being a passenger in a fast response Police car being driven at 140 mph on the M5 is an exhilarating experience. Watching the driver skilfully using the system, you will be amazed how he reacts to something happening **so far off** in the distance such as a car moving into the lane he is occupying; the stopping distance at 140 is over 1000ft (over 340m or 86 car lengths) but depends on many factors including quality of tyres, discs, pads, brake fade due to heat build up. You will be involved in using a radar/laser speed gun - and be present when the police officer stops the driver. A ride-along costs nothing and if you want to apply it is very easy to do on-line; simply search "Avon and Somerset ride along" and you'll find lots of information or just type the following into your search engine and it will take you straight to there, then look at the info on Operations (this is the area you will be wanting); <https://www.avonandsomerset.police.uk/services/ride-along-scheme>

- *Operations – See our Roads Policing officers or Dog Handlers as they get deployed to every day policing incidents and operations, keeping the public safe, enforcing Road Traffic legislation and denying criminals the use of the roads.*

If you need help with your application, just ask me. Sadly individuals are allowed just one ride-along (due to demand) so if you go for it, make the most of it because it will be your first and last!

And finally.

If you have a story to share with us, please send it to David Walton. Topics can be broad-ranging, humorous or making a serious point. It may be about travelling abroad; it may be about strange rules and regulations when driving in different countries. It may be about a memorable route you've driven and wish to recommend to other members in our Group. Who will own up to filling up a diesel vehicle with petrol and share the consequences with us?

Be safe,

Andrew



THE COMMITTEE



Committee meetings (for Committee Members ONLY) are held bimonthly at 7:30pm on the first Wednesday 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.

Chairman	Andrew Griffiths	chair@tgam.org.uk
Secretary/Membership Sec.	David Walton	secretary@tgam.org.uk
Treasurer	Isobel Jennings	treasurer@tgam.org.uk
Associate Coordinator	John Gilbert	coordinator@tgam.org.uk
Support Officer	Michael Wotton	cmmw@tgam.org.uk
SRS Liaison Officer	Grant Lewis	cmgl@tgam.org.uk
Events Coordinator	Barry Keenan	events@tgam.org.uk
Chief Observer/Masters Mentor	Andrew Griffiths	chair@tgam.org.uk
Newsletter Editor	David Walton	ed@tgam.org.uk
Webmaster	Paul Willitt	cmpw@tgam.org.uk
Committee Members	Brian Howe (President)	president@tgam.org.uk
	Janet Loader	cmjl@tgam.org.uk





The first (hopefully) of a series of bio's of new committee members

Mike Wotton

TGAM Observer and Support Officer

I served 33 years in the Fleet Air Arm as an Aircraft Engineer supervising and managing the maintenance on a range of helicopters and fixed wing aircraft. After retiring from the RN in 1996 I worked for a year as a Museum Attendant at the Fleet Air Arm Museum. Following that I was employed as a civil servant at Yeovilton alongside RN, RAF, Army and civilian personnel primarily managing the allocation of military helicopter engines to numerous worldwide locations before retiring in March 2012.

Madeline and I married in 1968 and we have a daughter, son and a granddaughter.

I passed my driving test in a Ford Anglia 105E at the first attempt at age 18 in the early 60's while stationed at Arbroath in Scotland and took what is now the Skill for Life in 1985 in Truro while serving at Culdrose in Cornwall.

Following a move in 1991 to Prestwick on the west coast of Scotland, four of us IAM members formed a sub group, affiliated to the Ardrossan Group, when I started observing being largely self-taught using Roadcraft.

Soon after moving to Yeovilton in 1994 I joined the Camelot Group resuming observing in 1996 and apart from a 4-year break have continued since.

When the Camelot Group integrated with TGAM in 2014 I moved across and continued as a Local Observer and at the 2015 AGM I was voted onto the TGAM Committee as the Support Officer.

Once a week I work as a volunteer at Haynes International Motor Museum.

I own a 1997 Triumph Stag and am a member of the Stag Owners Club.

I am an ardent supporter of Plymouth Argyle Football Club and try to see as many matches as possible - home matches entail a 180 mile round trip from my home in Yeovil.



GROUP OBSERVERS



Chief Observer and Masters Mentor	Andrew Griffiths
National Observer	David Perkins
Senior Observer	Michael Turner
Group Observer	Godfrey Davey
Group Observer	Guy Denton
Group Observer	Brian Dodd
Group Observer	Tony Hucker (paused)
Local Observer	Barry Keenan
Local Observer	Isobel Jennings
Group Observer	Alan Thomson
Group Observer	Hugh Todd
Group Observer	David Walton
Group Observer	Timothy Wheeler
Group Observer	Michael Wotton
Trainee Observer	Grant Lewis

Group Observers must be fully paid up Taunton Group AND National IAM members at ALL times to carry out your vital Observer roles.

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 Chief Observer, Andrew Griffiths.

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

Nigel Steady	01278 722944
Nick Tapp	07900 900678
Julia Beer	07738 573482
Marie Kynaston	07769 675248

Members and/or enquirers must establish their own facts and details when contacting a Driving Instructor. If any other IAM and 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 and TGAM members at all times.)

CALENDAR



			MARCH
16	W	7:30pm	Members' Evening – Horses on the Highway. Our guest speaker will be Teresa Wort from Conquest Riding for the Disabled
			APRIL
20	W	7:30pm	Members' Evening – Care & Capacity issues and Lasting Powers of Attorney - A talk by Liz Lewis
			MAY
18	W	7:30pm	Members' Evening – TBA
			JUNE
15	W	7:30pm	Members' Evening – Are Electric Cars the Future? A talk by Andy Bowrah
			JULY
20	W	7:30pm	Classic Car Evening & Barbeque



MEMBERS' PAGE



Advanced Driving Test Passes

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

	OBSERVED BY
Bernard Stacey	Barry Keenan
Peter Crea	David Walton
Martin Wills	Hugh Todd
Pete Allfrey	Barry Keenan
Alan Webber 1st	Godfrey Davey
Owen Snowball 1st	Mike Wotton

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

The Membership Register

This quarter we have 8 new group members. We hope you enjoy your association with Taunton Group and we look forward to welcoming you to our meetings, events and activities.

	<u>TOWN</u>	<u>LEVEL</u>
Mairi McCulloch	Wellington	Associate
Paul Dean	Martock	Associate
Eilidh McCulloch	Wellington	Associate
Jen Wicks	Wellington	Associate
James Ottewell	Chard	Associate
Peter Ashdown	Wiveliscombe	Full
Alexander Atkins	Ilminster	Associate
Michael Lane	Taunton	Associate

We currently have 125 members, 13 being active associates. I have attached the year end group scorecard showing our performance last year, with a key to its contents on the following page.

David Walton, Membership Secretary





Group Scorecard for Taunton Advanced Motorists (1005)

Date: Monday, 04 January 2016

Area 1

IMI

	Group	Region Avg
Total Observers	15	24.6

National

Local

	Group	Region Avg	Group	Region Avg
Pass	2	6.4	2	2.1
Referred	0	1.3	0	0.1
OS	1	1.3	1	2.8

SFL Allocated Sales

Area 3

	Total	Region Avg
Last Month	2	3.0
3 month Avg	2	3.0
Last 12 months	29	35.7

Area 2

SFL Status

	Group	Region Avg
OS Enrolments	0	4.5
Average Days	0	283

OS Test Ready	11	45.7
Average Days	164	421

Test Statistics

	12 months	Region Avg
First	7	2.8
Pass	15	13.6
Fail	2	3.1

% Pass

92	84
----	----

Area 4

SFL Statistics

Allocations

	Group	Region Avg
Last Month	2	3.4
3 month Average	2	3.1
Last 12 months	29	35.8

Enrolments

	Group	Average Days	Region Avg	Region Avg Days
Last Month	2	0	3.7	29
3 month Average	2	1	3.1	39
Last 12 months	29	5	36.5	41

Test Ready

Last Month	2	61	1.9	210
3 month Average	2	107	2.1	222
Last 12 months	23	98	19.9	214

See Key on next page





Area 1 -This area relates to observers who are linked to our group as recorded on the Driver, Trainers Examination system (DTE).

- Total Observers includes IMI National & Local
- Pass – relates to number of IMI Nationals
- Referred – relates to IMI Nationals not reaching required competency level
- OS- National applied for awaiting assessment.

Area 2 - Skill for Life status.

- **OS enrolments** - is the number of new associates that have either nominated your group or been allocated to your group, which are still shown as not group enrolled on DTE.
- **Average days** - is the number of days on average your group are shown as taking to enrol candidates, this figure includes those associates who are proving difficult to contact or booked on to a fixed course in the future
- **OS test Ready** - is the number of associates that are awaiting test, after application.
- **Average days** – Equates to the total number of days from purchase to test for associates within your group.

Overall Regional averages are shown for groups within your region allowing you to compare how you as a group are dealing with the associate experience.

Area 3 - Skill for life Allocated sales

This area relates to all of the recorded Skill for Life sales that have been allocated to your group that have been either been Group direct recruitment/sale or IAM web/phone purchase, giving a breakdown for the last month, 3 month and 12 month periods.

Also for comparison we are showing the regional averages for the same periods.

Area 4 - This final area gives more detailed information regarding

- SfL allocation
- enrolments
- test ready candidates

Over the three periods, last month,3 month average and last 12 months. They also show the regional averages for the same periods.

- Test Statistics - show the overall number of candidates presented for test by the group during the previous 12 months. Giving breakdown of F1RST, recommended/pass and not recommended/fail. As well as the group's overall percentage % pass rate. This includes retests.



PRESIDENT'S PONDERINGS



First of all I would like to wish a very Happy, Prosperous and Safe New Year to all our members and readers. I hope you are managing to keep your New Year resolutions.

I am looking forward to a pleasant spring, so that I can remove Bob-E-the-Trike's covers, and to be able to take him out of the shed again, so that I can shed a few of my excess Christmas pounds.

I make no apologies for repeating here that which I have already posted on our TGAM Facebook page.

I thought it might be useful to pass on some interesting statistics from the year 2015. These are according to the IAM Regional Group Scorecard.

TGAM had 15 Observers, the Region Average

was 24.6. Skills for Life sales, TGAM had 29, the Region Average was 35.7. You may need Fixodent for this next one. Test Statistics, TGAM had 7 F1RSTs, 15 Passes, and 2 Fails. TGAM's percentage pass rate was 92%. The Region Average was 2.8 F1RSTs, 13.6 Passes and 3.1 Fails. The Region Average percentage pass rate was 84%. TGAM gained 29 Enrolments, which took an average of 5 days to allocate Observers. The Region Average was 36.5 Enrolments which took an average of 41 days to allocate Observers. Last one coming up. TGAM had 23 Associates test ready in an average of 98 days each. The



by Brian Howe





Region Average was 19.9 Associates test ready in an average of 214 days each.

In most of the 'Scores' that matter, TGAM was way ahead of the Region Average. To me, these figures suggest that Greater Somerset is one of the best areas, certainly in the Southern region, to take, and pass, the IAM Skills for Life, Advanced Motoring Test. For this I have a few thank-you's to offer.

First, I thank all of TGAM's Observers, at Group, Local, National and Senior level for their skill in passing on their own knowledge of Advanced motoring. I thank the Observer Training Team of National and Senior Observers for their Mentoring of the Group and Local Observers. To make this system work, we have others to thank, like John Gilbert, TGAM's Associate Coordinator, we have a Group and Membership Secretary David Walton, to keep all the paperwork and communications in order. David is also our Newsletter Editor. We have a Group Treasurer, Isobel Jennings, to keep our finances in order. And also, let's not forget the sterling work put in by Geoffrey Stoate, who retired as Group Treasurer late last year at the wonderful age of

91 years young. We have an Events Coordinator, a previously vacant post recently taken over by Barry Keenan, to keep us interested and entertained. (No pressure there then Barry). We have Committee Members and Group Members who help at our Social Evenings and events, making tea and coffee, running the raffle, putting out tables and chairs, and marshalling at events when needed. Not forgetting our Support Officer, Mike Wotton. I thank you and salute you all.

Last, but not least by any means, I have to thank the GLUE that binds us all together, keeps us in check and motivated, and keeps our feet firmly on the ground. That is our Group Chairman Andrew Griffiths, National Observer, Chief Observer, and Masters Mentor. Andrew is so generous with his time, that he has willingly sacrificed a large proportion of his retirement time, and often works more hours for TGAM and IAM than he used to be paid for prior to retirement. You are more appreciated than you know Andrew.

Brian L. Howe.

IAM PC/CV. TGAM Hon. President.





Successful Candidates say Thank-you

Extracts from mail received from grateful new full members

I had a wonderful time learning to develop my driving skills with Barry Keenan, my observer, from IAM.

I have wanted to sit for the Advanced Test for many years but, as most people will understand, life kept getting in the way. However, my husband and I visited the Steam Fair in Taunton, earlier this year, where dedicated volunteers were manning the advertising tent for IAM, so, with great aplomb my husband encouraged me past the tent flap and I signed up.

Unbeknown to us, our telephone had been blown up by a recent storm and we were uncontactable for over four weeks. Eventually, I received an e-mail saying that Barry was trying to contact me and by various means we made contact and we arranged my first lesson. I had no idea what to expect. I was 17 when I passed my ordinary Driving Test and that was 45 years ago!

I met Barry outside his house and within minutes of meeting him I was in fits of laughter. He had summed me up straight away and he knew exactly how to develop my skills as a driver. We



Fiona Attwood receiving his F1rst certificate from Brian Howe and Barry Keenan, her observer

had an instant rapport which developed even more over time.

His suggestions for change were always made with high praise for what I was doing at that time.

His instructions were crystal clear and all of them were supported by a sensible explanation for their execution.





Barry is a superb teacher. He has the gift of being able to impart his knowledge in a clear and concise manner while retaining a wicked sense of humour. I would not have achieved such a high pass level without his belief and confidence in my ability.

I owe him my thanks for his patience, my admiration for his expertise and my undying gratitude for making me laugh so much that I could, once again, take pleasure in my driving.

Thank you Barry for everything. I miss our drives already.

Fiona Attwood

I am sending a very big "Thank you" to Barry Keenan for his invaluable help as my Observer in preparation for the Advanced Driving Test.

I understand that the official line for Observers is to give guidance and advice. Barry certainly gives this in good measure but at the same time his great sense of humour is not far away making the learning process that much more enjoyable.

And then there is 'encouragement', especially welcome when you're having not quite so good a day. On the other hand, Barry is very good at emphasising the positive aspects of your drive

which then leads on to the theme, "Yes, you are quite capable of passing, it just needs a bit more polish".

I thoroughly enjoyed Barry's demonstration drive with the very lively commentary and I felt that I learned a great deal from this. But, hold on, I couldn't possibly keep up the commentary like he does, I'll just have to modify it... and it seemed to work out OK in the end!



Bernard Stacey with Barry Keenan, his observer.

So, my grateful thanks to Barry for all his guidance, advice, encouragement, patience and humour - and I'm so pleased I didn't let him down.

Dr Bernard Stacey





Owen Snowball being presented with his certificate by Brian Howe and Mike Wotton, his observer.

Many thanks to my Observer Mike Wotton for helping me to prepare for my Advanced Driving Test. It was a real eye opener to see how much my driving needed improving and how many bad habits I had picked up over the years. I'd also like to say thank you to my Examiner Andy Ware for all his guidance and whose short hand drawing of the route we took looked like a secret code. I have to keep reminding myself that the lessons are not over. There will always be more to learn and improvements I can make to my driving. Many thanks again.

Owen Snowball

March Members' Evening

Horses on the Highway

**Our guest speaker will be
Teresa Wort from Conquest
Riding for the Disabled**

**Wednesday 16th March 7:30pm
Hatch Beauchamp Village Hall**

April Members' Evening

A talk on Care & Capacity issues and Lasting Powers of Attorney

**The speaker will be Heledd Wynn, an
Associate Solicitor with Clarke Willmott**

**Wednesday 20th April 7:30pm
Hatch Beauchamp Village Hall**



A TESTING TIME FOR THE IAM? NOT AT ALL!

Extract from Insight November 2015

Following on from the success of IAM's cooperation with Auto Express last year on the Christmas drink-drive campaign, we achieved our biggest 2015 feature in motoring magazine Auto Express last week, thanks to the co-operation of Home Counties North Advanced Drivers Group.

The magazine's consumer editor Joe Finnerty approached IAM's communications team asking if we could provide a group of volunteers to undertake a mini driving test.

Auto Express was launched in 1988 and has become Britain's biggest motoring magazine with a weekly circulation of more than 60,000. The feature was timed to mark the 80th anniversary of the driving test, and Auto Express wanted to see if the test was fit for purpose – or had become seriously outdated and was in need of an overhaul.

We approached Home Counties North group chairman Neil Bromyard with the idea. Neil

duly rustled up a group of volunteers, divided up between advanced drivers and others who had no advanced tuition at all.

Assessors Debbie Wiseman and Peter Rowland were armed with clipboard and pen, to see if the group of volunteers had indeed slipped into bad habits or had kept their standards high since taking their driving tests.

The results spoke for themselves. While five of the seven of those who had had advanced tuition passed Debbie and Peter's mock test, only one of the five non-advanced drivers did.

Rodney Kumar, IAM senior communications executive, said: "Achieving such a big feature in Auto Express was very significant for the IAM. It is highly influential and respected – people take what they say seriously.

The feature also got across the value and relevance of advanced driving, which is worth its weight in gold."





DVLA – “Is there anything else we can do to improve this service?”

By Kevin Gould Grose

Have you used any of the new services offered by the DVLA lately? No, then you are definitely missing out big time.

Firstly, if you have a private number plate then the old process to transfer your number was very time consuming, somewhat confusing and could be very frustrating making sure you got all the details correct. It costs a fair bit as well and could also entail you having to actually physically appear with your vehicle and every document under the sun relating to that vehicle at the nearest local DVLA office which would be either Exeter or Bristol in the past. The postal process was always flawed in some way and would normally take several attempts to get the job done properly in the end.

However, now you just go online, put in a few details, pay the required fee of £80.00 by credit/debit card and within a few days, all the

required paperwork arrives through the post 100% correct – in my case, it took exactly four days – all done, signed, finished and dusted. I then popped into my local trailer centre on the same day where they are DVLA licensed to legally produce new number plates, paid my £12.00 for two new plates and duly fitted them an hour later. All done – absolutely brilliant, and your £80.00 transfer/retaining fee now lasts for TEN years and does not have to be renewed every year for another £25.00 per annum fee – it is very rare that any institute like the DVLA would do anything to save you money!

Best bit is, at the end of the online application, it asks if there is anything else they can do to improve this process – I always answer, “Just leave it alone because it really works”... and it really does – a big round of applause to the DVLA for having a website that really works, well done!





Secondly, have you ever had to “SORN” a vehicle by making a declaration that a vehicle is garaged/kept off the public highway recently? No, then once again you are missing out. You just go online, give them the reference number from the log sheet or tax renewal form and Bob’s your Uncle – well, that’s if you actually have an Uncle Bob! Again, within two days this time, I had received my DVLA confirmation through the post that my vehicle was now declared “SORN’d” and without really thinking about it, four days later I received a refund cheque for the unused road tax left on my vehicle – double whammy!

Again, the DVLA asks me online if there is anything else they can do to improve this process – NO, leave it alone... IT REALLY WORKS!

About a month later, I had to declare another vehicle off road as the car was “given” to a garage owner I know to sell on my behalf and it had a fair bit of road tax left on it and as you may or may not now know, when you purchase

any vehicle now, YOU have to tax it from the date of purchase – you cannot now transfer any leftover tax with the vehicle. So, said vehicle was dropped off to the garage in the first week of December but was agreed not to declare SORN until nearer the end of the month in case there was any immediate interest in this car. Didn’t really think about things until just after Christmas and then remembered the need to SORN this vehicle and the garage had all the documents. Rang garage but owner not actually there that day and the mechanic left in charge didn’t have a clue (and didn’t have the time) to rummage around and try and find the details for me. This is on the 30th December and he did say he would try and get back to me and I fully understand that time was an issue. So, on 31st December, I went to the premises and then discovered they were closed for the day – donner and blitzen, or words to that effect! I then noticed the massive steel door/gate was slightly opened on the side of the premises and luckily, the owner was actually there and just





about to leave – “We’re closed” he says....”Yes, I know that but I do need those details... TODAY” He wasn’t happy, but with my charm and understanding... and wishing him a very Happy New Year, he slightly thawed his reluctance to help and we finally found the required details in his mountain of paperwork, piled up on his work desk! It only really took about less than 5 minutes and I duly apologised for holding him up for that time even after explaining that his mechanic had not got back to me, so it was his fault really! I drove back home, went online and made the application to SORN this vehicle – the time is now 12:30pm on 31st December 2015. On 5th January 2016, a DVLA tax refund cheque arrives in the post – how can you ever fault an efficient and reliable service like that – absolutely brilliant! So, please DVLA – don’t change anything online when it really works – as the old saying goes, “If it ain’t broke, don’t fix it”

Kevin Grose... avid supporter of the DVLA!

Julia Beer Driving Instructor

I am a qualified driving instructor with an IAM F1RST. I provide high quality driving lessons using resources and teaching styles designed to meet your needs.

My aim is to make the car a safe environment, where you can learn and build confidence. So get in touch, I am here to put your mind at rest.



For more information and contact please see details on my website

<http://www.juliabeerdrivinginstructor.com>

Rally legend Paddy Hopkirk appointed IAM ambassador to champion older drivers' interests



be championing the cause of the older driver for the organisation in the future.

Paddy, now 82, needs no introduction to a generation of motorsport enthusiasts. He won the Monte Carlo Rally in 1964 in a Mini Cooper, and he and his co-driver Henry Liddon remain the only all-UK crew to win the iconic event.

Belfast-born Paddy went on to win other world championship rallies, arguably the greatest of which was the Acropolis in 1967.

Rally legend Paddy Hopkirk has been appointed Mature Driver Ambassador by UK's leading independent road safety charity, the Institute of Advanced Motorists (IAM) and will

However he and co-drivers Alec Poole and Tony Nash became famous for giving up a certain victory in the epic 1968 London-Sydney Marathon, when they stopped to rescue a





fellow rally driver from his car which had burst into flames – undoubtedly saving his life. In particular Paddy will be promoting the IAM's Mature Driver's Assessment (MDA) while also delivering safe driving advice – an area he is passionate about.

Paddy, who also received an MBE in the Queen's New Year Honours this year, said: "I am delighted to be involved with the IAM. Our joint goal is to bring the numbers of people killed and injured on the roads down as low as we can. It's something I know the IAM is dedicated to just as much as I am, so we are a great match.

"With the numbers of drivers age 70 or more now increasing by over 10,000 a month, the Mature Driver's Assessment is a great way for older people to gain the reassurance they need on increasingly congested British roads."

Older drivers are statistically less likely to commit a motoring offence than those in their teens and 20s and are less likely to be in a serious or fatal road accident.

In 2014 the IAM discovered that while 36,001 people between 20 and 30 were disqualified from driving in the previous 12 months, just 10,025 people in their fifties and just 3,874 in their sixties were. However some older drivers face certain challenges such as coping with reflexes that are not as keen as before, deteriorating eyesight or hearing, and the potential onset of Alzheimer's disease and dementia.

The IAM believes enlightened policies and practical actions are needed to help older drivers keep safe and competently mobile for as long as possible, and to help them decide when the time has come to stop driving. Giving up driving too early places a direct burden on health and other services, which can no longer be independently accessed.

The Mature Driver's Assessment is a 60-minute one-off session in the driver's own vehicle administered by a qualified assessor. The assessment gives an overview of any areas of the candidate's driving that might need improving as well as any areas of





concern. There is no pass/fail rating at the end, but every candidate is given a written report of how they have performed.

Paddy himself has taken the Mature Driver's Assessment and was relieved to find he had fared extremely well in it.

He said: "I really enjoyed taking the MDA. Everyone needs to revisit their abilities, and to get that from someone who is both independent and sympathetic to the driver is very valuable."

Many who have taken the Mature Driver's Assessment then go on to do the IAM's Skill for Life course leading to the Advanced Test, which gives candidates the chance to gain a comprehensive set of new skills for safer and enjoyable driving. Paddy's sons and daughter have taken the IAM's Advanced Test and passed.

Paddy added: "Everyone can be a better, safer driver – even someone who has won races and rallies.

"I've always said rallying is all about the ability to control the car, not just the speed of it.

These are skills that can translate easily to driving on road. You need to get to know your car – how it will act and react if you encounter unexpected conditions."

Since the end of his active racing career, which includes five starts at the Le Mans 24 Hours and five Circuit of Ireland rally wins, Paddy has continued to be involved in the motor industry. He has run a successful car accessories company, and has promoted the MINI for many years as one of its best-known drivers.

He has also appeared on numerous television shows celebrating his race and rally achievements over the years.

Neil Greig, IAM director of policy and research, said: "We are delighted to have Paddy on board to promote the IAM and our Mature Driver's Assessment. He is the perfect example of how being older shouldn't be a barrier to a safe and enjoyable motoring life.

"Older drivers should always be aware their faculties might not be what they used to be, but as long as these are identified early and addressed, they shouldn't be stopped from getting behind the wheel."





A Tale of Success

By Andrew, Chief Observer

One of my key roles as a National Observer, Chief Observer and Masters Mentor is to mentor others to achieve the IAM Masters qualification and the IAM National Observer qualification.

I was invited by IAM to provide mentoring to an Observer in the Barnstable Group (one of our immediate neighbouring IAM Groups). Delphine King was keen to raise her game by going for the N O qualification. As you may have read in previous newsletters, this qualification is accredited by the Institute for the Motor Industry.

I made arrangements to meet up with Delphine and as we subsequently chatted over coffee at Costa in Hankridge, I could tell then, that this was one determined lady with a great character and personality. Delphine had retired from teaching but continued to remain very active in school sports activities in Wellington and frequently travelled there from her home in Ilfracome

where she lived with her husband, David.

Through thick and through thin, Delphine gave it her all and was making significant strides in her progress. Just as she was approaching test standard – I had already been in contact with IAM and with her Examiner to start making the arrangements – David died very unexpectedly. He had been such an inspiration to Delphine, encouraging her throughout her training with me. Such was that inspiration that Delphine was determined to continue training and more determined than ever to pass the National Observer qualification “for David”.

In no time at all, Delphine was out on test with her Examiner, Craig Gande. I knew Delphine would be nervous but she later explained to me that within just a few minutes of meeting him, Craig had made her feel settled and relaxed. The outcome was what Delphine had worked hard for... a very convincing pass.





I'm proud of Delphine. She worked hard from day one and gave each training session everything she had. She was very proactive between training drives too, reading Roadcraft from cover to cover more than once, taking herself on long self-assessed drives and then challenging me with loads of driving-related questions. I had the pleasure of meeting David on two occasions, each following training drives in Barnstable with Delphine.



The three of us chatted over coffee ... I felt I'd know them for years, relaxing as it was. Delphine came to see me a couple of days before Christmas and proudly showed me her N O certificate. We just had to mark this occasion with a couple of photographs!

And there's no stopping her! Delphine is putting

her new skills to work and is currently training some Associates at the Barnstable Group. She's also planning to work with her Chief Observer training others for the IAM Local Observer Qualification.

Congratulations Delphine!
Andrew





A modern IAM – as told by a teenage driver

By Eloise Peabody-Rolf



I am not an average young driver or an average IAM member, to be honest I don't really fit in either group. I'm 17, and seven weeks after passing my DVSA driving test, I became an IAM member. I'm really proud of this achievement –

general attitude towards a driver with L plates was often so inconsiderate. There seems to be a universal view that younger drivers equal danger and with the stats on young driver accident rates, that's not surprising. I was lucky

how did I manage it?

I have been a member of the Under 17 Car Club (U17CC) for the past six years and therefore gained a huge amount of pre-licence experience in a safe environment.

The club's instruction methodology had prepared me well as I ventured out onto public roads. What did I find most challenging? The sheer volume of traffic, impatient and distracted drivers, how narrow some country roads were and multi-lane roundabouts!

I was disappointed to find the





enough to be part of the U17CC team invited to run the young driver's workshop at the 2015 IAM Annual Conference, where it was a pleasure to meet many of you. Although many members were very accepting, there seemed considerable surprise that 17-year-olds can be and are advanced drivers.

U17CC members progress through its structured grading system, so when the opportunity to take the advanced test was



offered, I jumped at the chance. It was daunting as it was rather short notice, however I managed to squeeze in some observed drives with Terry Simpkin, one of the U17CC instructors who's also a national observer, and was delighted to pass.

It was sad to find when I told my (non U17CC) friends of my achievement, very few had heard of the IAM, and thought that the test was perhaps like Pass Plus.





When I explained what the test involved, most couldn't understand why I bothered as I was already 'on the road'. To many of them driving is seen as a convenience, simply to get from A to B, rather than a skill to be mastered and enjoyed.

I've since given the matter a lot of thought - I wish there was an easy answer to what needs to be done to encourage young drivers to want to improve their driving skills.

I appreciate that the number of young people who are lucky enough to get the opportunities I've had are small, however I would love to see (non-commercial) schemes such as U17CC and the 'Pathfinder' programme the Charitable Trust runs with their proven benefits, far more widely available.

I believe road safety should be taught from an early age, included in the national curriculum. Also learning to drive should be not simply learning what's required to pass the test, as

this doesn't prepare newly qualified drivers adequately - no wonder they have accidents.

Coming into the IAM, I believe the organisation has so much to offer young drivers and riders.

However young people need to be made aware of the IAM and it be made more accessible to them. Ways need to be found to bridge the 'generation gap', to encourage existing members to engage with young people, and vice versa.

It needs to offer young people a chance to take advantage of the experience and passion for driving IAM members clearly have, and to develop, enjoy and be proud of their driving skills without being too daunting.

As for me; I am very proud to be a member of the IAM and look forward to continuing my development as a driver. I also want to encourage my friends to share my passion for driving and road safety.

With every good wish to you all for 2016!

Eloise





WHEN THE SKIDS ARE ON YOU!

By Kevin Gould Grose

Do you remember some time ago when I wrote about trying to extradite a Mercedes Shito MPV, sorry Vito luxury van, from my front grassed parking area and all the stress and problems of actually getting this heap of rubbish off, of this place?

Well, just before Christmas (2015), my daughter parked in exactly this same place as she has done many hundreds of times before and for the first time ever, got well and truly stuck. Fortunately for her, two things were on her side – firstly, the electronic system on her car did actually allow her to rev up the engine a bit to persuade the car to move back and forwards in a rocking motion to get it off my lawn; secondly, Granddad was there and he just said, “Go on, boot the bu**er – just give it some stick” and finally, the car does in fact leave my lawn and she proceeds off down the road taking the remains of my lawn with her and distributing the remnants all over the road on her way! Nice! So, that’s two times the lawn has been re-laid and the remains of my old lawn are spread all over the road leading into Taunton somewhere!

There are two major factors that are very similar with both the above mentioned vehicles – they both have sophisticated electronic skid/traction control systems – one that obviously works to some degree and one that obviously does not; and they both have massive wide alloy wheels with very low profile wide tyres which just do not offer any grip whatsoever on a wet, grassy surface.

Now, thinking that all the car manufacturers have spent many millions of pounds on developing clever anti skid and traction control systems for all their cars, you would think it could cope with a bit of grass, wouldn’t you - especially in England where there is a fair bit of grass around in our country. I am all for something on a car that helps the average driver maybe cope better with that little something extra that sometimes occurs when we drive on today’s roads but when all that sophisticated and complicated costly extras adds nothing and incurs other problems, is it all worth it in the long run?

Years ago, during my amateur rallying days, we would drive all sorts of cars through atrocious





mud, stones, gravel, wet tarmac, grass, fields, etc., and very rarely got stuck – if we did actually stop going forward, we would go back slightly and then blast forward some more until you really could not go any further, like you would on trialling/trialling events. Then, several helping hands would appear from nowhere and either help you up the last bit or turn you around and send you on your way back down again and there were NO electronic interventions of any sort to help, just the driver using their accumulated skills to control that car to get it to whatever point he could and a little bit of grass NEVER stopped any of us... EVER!

So, do we all now think that because we have all this electronic help on our vehicles, said vehicles will take us anywhere? Or is it now, that when one does get stuck somewhere, no one offers to help; unlike the old days, where help was always just around the corner! Who knows, maybe I am just getting old, but that is the way it seems.

Just to add to the above – said Granddad disappears up the back of the house across the back lawn to retrieve one of the trailers we keep there under cover. He's gone for ages and I think he must be loading something into the trailer to take with him; lawnmower, tools, etc. I'm

waiting and waiting by the front gates to open them and let him out so I can continue walking my dogs. I wait and wait and then I am aware of a strange clicking noise along with a whirring noise which stops and then starts again, and stops, and starts again, and I think what on earth is that? So, I walk up towards the rear of the house and see this rope leading from the rear door of the workshop which in turn is connected to a hand operated winch, who's steel cable is then connected to the front towing eye of our Suzuki R Wagon (with trailer attached) which I can now see is somewhat all bogged down on our wet, water sodden rear lawn; and has dug itself into the lawn by spinning its wheels and now leaving the poor old Suzuki almost buried up to its front bumper in mud – the rear lawn now looks like a tractor pulling contest has taken place, even with a bit of ploughing thrown in! Instead of getting some help, Granddad has connected the hand winch to the workshop bench leg in an attempt to extradite the Suzuki from its muddy resting place, hence the strange noises I heard of clicking (winch) and whirring (spinning wheels) and now the sight of bl**dy mud everywhere!

Kevin Grose - going to remove all lawns and concrete everything over!





WHEN THE SKIDS ARE ON YOU – TWO!

By Kevin Gould Grose

Further to my previous item on the effects of skidding, here is a true story which has happened over the last two weeks and it involves a “magnetic” small tree! One day at the end of a week, my Mother was made aware of a strangely parked small medium blue car just outside our house which appeared to be causing quite a commotion with the early morning traffic that normally travels pass our property. The driver of this blue car appears to be somewhat confused and not sure where he is going or what to do. Suddenly, a Land Rover appears from nowhere and the pair of vehicles then depart the area and make off towards the near village. Nothing really strange about that you may think, but later on in the same day, I am guiding some local council employees towards a blocked drain just up from our house and right where this drain is and the small tree, there appears to be bits of plastic, glass, and shattered car bodywork which just happens to be of a blue colour; the same blue colour of the car mentioned above!

From the tyre marks and grass markings, it appears this car has travelled across the road

from its correct side, hit the kerb side on the wrong side and implanted itself into the small tree on the wrong side of the road depositing most of the front end of the car all over the place. There are no main indicators of WHY this has happened – there are no black skid marks indicating any forced braking or anything else to show any action taken to avoid this incident; it was like the car was just drawn to the tree like a magnet! Later in the day, I had to post a letter and I did spot a small blue car in a driveway with the whole front of it completely wiped out – no bumper, no lights, grill, etc., all gone and it all looked to have been freshly done and normally, there is also a Land Rover parked in the same driveway; even Inspector Clouseau could work this one out!

On the Monday of the next week, again fairly early in the morning, we are made aware of many flashing blue lights and various engines running and on looking out the window, I can see a POLICE SLOW sign just outside our house with two Police vehicles randomly spaced up the road towards the main village. Can't see anything else, just that.

It is extremely cold and just thought it might be a





problem with the hill leading up to the village may be slippery having maybe not been properly gritted the night before. Later on, the Police cars are gone but the SLOW sign is still there albeit now lying in the road as someone had obviously run over it! I don't know HOW anyone could run over a very visible and reflective sign standing almost a metre high and a metre wide but someone had made a very good job of demolishing it including the substantial steel frame that holds it up – it was mangled!

I had to go to Langport and on my return, I noticed a Police car outside my property. Luckily, my Father also saw the car and spoke with the Officer who then informed him that a car had hit a tree and was now “parked” halfway into the field adjoining the road. Funnily enough, it was the same tree (and drain) as the medium blue car had hit, although this time the car was dark blue. I then wandered up the road to have a look because this was hard to believe because you could not see this car at all but it was true and there was the dark blue car partially hanging from the exact same tree that the medium blue car had hit last week. I must admit that this dark blue car had made a much better job of trying to destroy the tree than its predecessor! It had also taken out quite a bit of the hedge as well. Again, strangely enough, it appeared that no avoidance action whatsoever had

been taken; it was like the car had again been drawn to this exact tree – it must be magnetic!

I am very worried now because every car that travels down from the main village might be drawn to this tree as these two incidents are not the first to happen here, at this spot – there have been several incidents at this point over the years and two years ago, another car caused extensive damage and finally went through the hedge into the adjoining field. It had tried to retrieve itself but only succeeded in tearing up the soggy field with leaving huge tramlines all over the place – evidence of all the damage which was duly recorded on the Estate Managers mobile phone! The owner of the car had to then kindly ask permission to collect his car by asking for the metal gate to the field to be unlocked first; he wasn't very popular! There have been a few others in the same predicament over some years but no one can seem to explain why all this has happened almost exactly in the same spot?

As on TV you have the program of the “Unexplained” well, here it is – is it just stupidity or is it really magic? But now I have cracked it – it has to be only one of two things, either drivers not paying attention to their driving, or it really is a magnetic tree; I'll let you decide which one!

Kevin Grose – very careful around the magnetic tree!





My First Car

By Brian Howe

My first car was a 1957

Ford Popular 103E Reg. 969 DPE.

It was purchased in October 1966 at the then seemingly high price of £40.00, which was approximately one month's wages as a plumber's apprentice.

Regular, (later 2 Star), petrol was 4s/11d per Gallon, (four shillings and 11 old pennies, now 25 pence). 4 gallons, (18.18 ltrs), bought for 4 pennies shy of £1. Today the same amount of fuel would cost £18.16.

The **Ford Popular**, often called the Ford Pop, is a car from Ford UK that was built in England between 1953 and 1962. (The 103E ceased production in 1959 and was superseded by the 100E). When launched, it was Britain's lowest priced car.

The name Popular was also used by Ford to describe its 1930's Y Type model. The Popular name was also later used on basic models of the Escort and Fiesta cars.

Overview	
Production	1953–1959
Assembly	United Kingdom, Australia
Body and chassis	
Body style	two door saloon two-door tourer (Australia) two-door roadster utility (Australia) two-door coupe utility (Australia)
Powertrain	
Engine	1172 cc straight-4 side-valve 30 b.h.p.
Transmission	3-speed manual
Dimensions	
Wheelbase	90 in (2,286 mm)
Length	151.5 in (3,848 mm)
Width	56.5 in (1,435 mm)
Height	64.5 in (1,638 mm)
Curb weight	1,624 lb (737 kg)
Chronology	
Successor	Ford Popular 100E





When production of the older Ford Anglia and Ford Prefect was stopped in 1953 the Popular was developed as a budget alternative, based on the old, pre-war style E494A Anglia. The E494A was, in turn, a facelift of the Anglia E04A, which was a facelifted version of the 7Y,

itself a re-bodied Model Y. Thus through several adjustments, updates and name changes, a design with provenance dating back to 1932

was produced by Ford for 27 years. It was powered by a Ford side-valve 1172 cc, 30 b.h.p. (22 kW), four-cylinder engine, coupled to a 3 speed manual gearbox. The car was very basic. It had a 6 volt electrical system, a single vacuum-powered wiper, no heater, vinyl trim, and very little chrome; even the bumpers were painted, and the Bakelite dash of the Anglia was replaced by a flat steel panel. The Popular 103E differed visually from the Anglia E494E in having smaller headlights and a lack of trim on the side of the bonnet. Early 103Es had the three spoke banjo type Anglia/Prefect steering wheel as stocks of these were used up, but most have a two spoke wheel similar to the 100E wheel but in brown. Early Populars also had the single centrally mounted tail/stop-lamp of the Anglia, but this changed to a two tail/stop lamp set up with the lamps mounted on the mudguards and a separate number plate lamp. 155,340 Populars were produced.



This car proved successful because, while on paper it was a sensible alternative to a clean, late-model used car, in practice, there were no clean late-model used cars available in post-war Britain, owing to the six-year halt in production caused by the Second World War. This problem was compounded by stringent export quotas that made obtaining a new car in the late 1940s and into the early 1950s difficult, and covenants forbidding new-car buyers from selling for up to three years after delivery. Unless the purchaser could pay the extra £100 or so for an Anglia 100E, Austin A30 or Morris Minor, the choice was the Popular or a pre-war car.

These cars became popular as hot rods from the late 1950s when people started drag racing them due to their lightweight construction. This practice started in the United States with Ford's 1932 Model B/18, while the Ford "Pop" as it was affectionately known became the

definitive British hot rod - a reduced sized but readily available British alternative, a role it still plays today to a considerable extent.

A car tested by The Motor magazine in 1954 had a top speed of 60.3 mph (97.0 km/h) and could accelerate from 0-50 mph (80 km/h) in 24.1 seconds. A fuel consumption of 36.4 miles per imperial gallon was recorded. The test car cost £390 including taxes.

In Australia

The Popular 103E was introduced into the Australian market in 1953 but not with the British two-door saloon body style. Instead, it was offered as a two-door tourer, a two-door roadster utility and as a two-door coupe utility. The tourer was a re-badged Anglia 103E tourer and the roadster utility, which featured a step-side body, was called a Plumber's Utility.

Information adapted from Wikipedia, the free encyclopaedia.





Recent Releases from the IAM Press Office

Driving safely in storms

Tips from the IAM's director of standards, Mark Lewis, are about driving safely in storms. Here's how you can make your journey a safe one for the road.

- If weather conditions are extremely bad avoid starting your journey. Take note of any weather warnings and traffic updates in your local area – this will help you make an informed decision.
- Driving in strong winds can be extremely dangerous, unsettling your car and even pushing it to change direction. Grip the steering wheel firmly and be mindful of vulnerable road users, such as motorcyclists, who will need more room than usual.
- Always look well ahead for gaps between buildings and be careful when overtaking

larger vehicles – in both instances gusts might be particularly strong.

- The movement of trees on the roadside can give a useful indication of wind strength too.
- Be wary of debris on roads and allow yourself enough space to move around it if necessary. Driving at a steady speed will also ensure you give yourself more time to slow down before a hazard.

Mark said: "Keep an eye on the vehicles ahead of you – looking for clues as to how the wind may be affecting them will give you advanced warning of where it may be gusting strongly.

"Stormy weather can be extremely unpredictable – be prepared for the worst. And as always, avoid the journey where possible."





In a different light

This week's tips from the IAM's director of standards, Mark Lewis, are about driving with the correct lights on under different circumstances on the road. Read our latest tips to find out more.

- Lots of cars now have dashboard warning lights to let you know of a bulb failure, however, you should still check your lights manually on a regular basis. If any bulbs need replacing, change them beforehand to reduce the risk of any road incidents taking place.
- Use your full beam lights only when you're driving on an unlit road and where there is no vehicle in sight ahead of you. However, remember to switch back to your dipped headlights to avoid dazzling other road users, including pedestrians and cyclists.
- Dipped headlights can be used during any time of the day and should be switched on

in poor weather conditions. Don't rely on daytime running lights as the rear lights will not switch on with them – they are not sufficient in reduced visibility conditions.

- If you cannot see beyond 100 metres when it's misty switch on your fog lights. It's illegal to drive with fog lights on in clear visibility so don't forget to turn them off.
- Hazard warning lights may be used when your vehicle is stationary to warn that it is temporarily obstructing traffic. However, don't use them while you're driving or being towed unless you are on a motorway or unrestricted dual carriageway and you need to warn drivers behind you of a hazard.

Mark said: 'It is so important to make sure you can see and be seen at all times, so keep all lights working correctly and use them when you need to'.





IAM's Peter Rodger becomes Honorary Life Member of AIRSO

The Institute of Advanced Motorists' (IAM) head of driving advice, Peter Rodger, has been presented with an Honorary Life Membership from the Association of Industrial Road Safety Officers (AIRSO).

AIRSO, a charity that has been dedicated to the delivery of road safety education and training for over 50 years, held the ceremony during its Annual General Meeting at The Oxford Hotel in Oxford on 20 January to present a number of awards to individuals who have contributed to road safety. Peter was recognised as only the 12th individual to become an Honorary Life Member in the last 25 years.

Peter was rewarded for his long-standing contribution to road safety during his time at the Metropolitan Police and at the IAM. His career in the police force spanned 30 years, where he served as an inspector in traffic patrol and driver and rider training for lorries, buses and motorcycles, as well as in training to fellow police officers involved in collision investigation and traffic laws.

Peter joined the IAM in 2005 as chief examiner and regularly spoke at conferences and in the

media on road safety issues surrounding driving and riding.

Alongside being a member of the IAM, Peter is also a member of the Motor Schools Association.

On presenting the certificate the chair of AIRSO, Dr Lucy Rackliff, said: "We are proud to honour Peter Rodger with Honorary Life Membership. His contribution to road safety has played a key role in raising the standards of driving and riding for over 30 years. And his continuous efforts to making our roads safer must not go unnoticed."

AIRSO continues to play an influential role in reducing the number of road casualty incidents on busy and often congested roads by providing support to practitioners from the voluntary, statutory and private sectors.

Ken Keir, IAM's chairman, said: "We are delighted that Peter's ongoing commitment to improving road safety has been recognised by AIRSO. We would like to take the opportunity to congratulate Peter on becoming an Honorary Life Member of AIRSO – he truly deserves it."





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

Expert psychologists have concluded that multi-tasking whilst driving is a myth – and the most dangerous of those driving multi-tasks is texting and talking on a mobile phone, according to a new report produced by the Institute of Advanced Motorists (IAM) and the Transport Research Laboratory (TRL).

The research focuses on the dangers involved when drivers try and engage in more than one task, indicating this can have a 'detrimental' effect on the quality and accuracy of driving performance.

The findings come from a report launched this week titled 'The battle for attention', jointly produced by TRL researchers Dr Neale Kinnear and Dr Alan Stevens, and the IAM's director of policy and research Neil Greig.

Dr Kinnear, who is a senior psychologist in the study of human behaviour and transport, and Dr Stevens, who is chief scientist and research director with internationally recognised expertise in 'Human-Machine Interaction', both reviewed existing research behind in-car distractions to understand the various cognitive processes and complexities in driving.

They said texting engages three of the five key areas of distraction to a 'high' level – cognitive, visual and manual. A mobile phone conversation also engages three of five areas of distraction to a 'high' level – cognitive, audible and exposure time.

Figures from the Department for Transport (DfT) in 2013 found 2,995 cases where distraction in the vehicle was listed as a





'contributory factor to accidents. A further 1,627 cases were listed where distraction outside the vehicle was a contributory factor.

The report says: "Research has confirmed that tasks almost always interfere with other tasks carried out at the same time. The brain never actually focuses on two tasks at the same time – it switches back and forward between them.

"As driving is so complex and requires various cognitive processes, taking on another task when driving can mean a driver is unable to pay sufficient attention to all the activities required for safe driving. This can lead to a processing failure resulting in a loss of control, putting the driver and other road users in physical danger."

Sarah Sillars, IAM's chief executive officer, said: "This is proof, should it be needed, that multi-tasking and driving simply don't mix. Whilst there are plenty of distractions to tempt the driver, the individual needs to know that the phone, or internet, or the iPod simply don't matter – driving is the only activity that should occupy your mind while at the wheel.

"It's important that we work with the government, car makers and educators to deliver a renewed focus on driver training and road safety – and that people know that distractions can be fatal."

A full copy of the report can be downloaded here: <http://bit.ly/1HamVI4>





Independence and mobility key for older drivers, IAM report finds

The majority of older drivers want to continue driving as long as they are safely able, according to a survey commissioned by the Institute of Advanced Motorists (IAM), citing independence and convenience as the main reasons.

The report, called Keeping Older Drivers Safe and Mobile, surveyed more than 2,600 drivers and ex-drivers between the ages of 55 and 101 and was written by Dr Carol Hawley from the University of Warwick Medical School.

Although the report found 84% of driver respondents rated their driving ability as good to excellent and 86% rated their confidence as a driver as good to excellent, there were some factors which would persuade them to give up their car keys.

The survey stated: "Most current drivers would consider giving up driving if they had a health condition or a health professional advised them to stop driving.

"General practitioners, doctors and opticians/optometrists are the most influential people to give advice on giving up driving."

Given the reasons why older people value driving, it is no surprise that older people are reluctant to give up their vehicles. Some 82% said that driving was 'very or extremely important' to them, and women were significantly more likely to rate driving as 'extremely important' than men.

The top five reasons why older drivers wanted to keep driving were:

Reason	Frequency	Percentage of survey
1 Independence	422	18.0
2 Convenience	416	17.7
3 Mobility/getting around	203	8.7
4 Freedom	202	8.6
5 Lack of public transport	148	6.3





Despite their determination to keep driving, the majority were in favour of measures to increase their safety on the roads including retesting and checking of various aspects of drivers' health and competence to remain behind the wheel.

Almost 60% said drivers should retake the driving test every five years after age 70, 85% said drivers should pass an eyesight test every five years once they have reached 70, and more than half said that drivers aged around 70 should be required to have a medical examination.

Sarah Sillars, chief executive officer of the IAM, said: "A driving licence is a passport to freedom for all ages but particularly so for older drivers. As grandparents it's about helping their family access jobs, education and childcare as well as keeping themselves independent and

mobile. The psychological impact of a giving up a driving licence shouldn't be underestimated.

"Reaction times and physical mobility are affected by age and all drivers need to make an informed decision about when to give up. We need to make it as easy as possible for mature drivers to make that choice armed with the full facts and all the support they need.

"While some might need to accept the decision they cannot keep driving safely on the road, we believe some are pushed into giving up before they really need to. A professional opinion counts for a lot, and there are many organisations that offer advisory voluntary assessments that will give an older driver the confidence they need to enjoy many more years of happy motoring – including ourselves."





Mature drivers favour checks on over 70's, IAM finds

The majority of older drivers are in favour of tighter rules on checking the health and suitability of over-70s to drive* – even if those checks could take them off the road themselves – according to a new report by the Institute of Advanced Motorists (IAM), Keeping Older Drivers Safe and Mobile.

And more than half demonstrate that they self-regulate to stay safe, by avoiding driving in challenging situations like busy traffic, after dark, in rush hour or bad weather.

The IAM worked with Dr Carol Hawley and her team at Warwick Medical School to survey more than 2,600 drivers and former drivers on their opinions, habits and motoring history, for the first major survey of its kind for two decades.

While mature drivers travel significantly fewer miles than other age groups, 84% of them

rated their driving ability as 'good to excellent' and only 6% had ever considered giving up driving.

Despite that a very high proportion of respondents were in favour of measures to increase their safety on the roads. Almost 60% said drivers should retake the driving test every five years after age 70, 85% said drivers should pass an eyesight test every five years once they have reached 70, and more than half said that drivers aged around 70 should be required to have a medical examination.

Nearly all of the respondents, 94%, agreed that GPs should be required to inform patients if their medical condition may affect their fitness to drive and half agreed that a flexible licensing system should be introduced which could restrict types of roads and conditions for some older drivers.





The IAM's survey found respondents wanted some rules to extend further than older drivers – 84% agreed that all drivers should pass an eyesight test every 10 years after first passing, regardless of their age.

The report also found just how important driving is to this group. Some 82% said that driving was very or extremely important to them, a figure that increases for women. Independence and convenience were cited as the main reasons for wanting to continue driving.

The number of drivers over the age of 70 is set to double over the next 20 years and with more than one million licence holders over the age of 80, there is a pressing need for enlightened policies and practical actions to help them keep safe and competently mobile for as long as possible.

Sarah Sillars, IAM chief executive officer, said:

“Driving is about so much more than getting from A to B and nowhere is this more apparent than in this age group. It helps maintain self-esteem and freedom and is essential for combatting social isolation.

“There are certain issues that affect mature drivers more so than other groups however, such as reductions in mobility and a slowdown in reaction times. The great news from this survey is that mature drivers themselves are aware of the risks and support action to review their safety.

“Voluntary self-assessment and better education via GPs are important techniques for helping drivers understand how long they can continue to drive safely for. And for those needing a confidence boost or a little extra reassurance on today's busy roads, the IAM's Mature Driver Assessment could be something to think about.”





You're as cold as ice

This week's tips from the IAM's director of standards, Mark Lewis, are about driving safely in frost and ice. With temperatures near freezing, here's how you can ensure your journey is a safe one for the road.

- Make sure you have cleared your windows and side mirrors before starting your journey and use the heater settings to remove mist and condensation. Avoid using hot water to pour over your windscreen as it's more than likely that it will freeze up again. Never apply heat to a door lock as most modern locks now have plastic components.
- Keep an eye on your tyres. The legal minimum tread depth should be at 1.6mm – but for safe travel you should not let the depth go below 3mm. Whatever you do, avoid travelling with worn tyres at all costs as this will increase the likelihood of your car skidding. If you can afford them, winter tyres do offer a real grip advantage.
- If you're driving a manual vehicle, avoid using high revs and set off gently in second gear. This will improve control and reduce the risk of wheel spin. If you're driving an automatic

- vehicle, select the 'winter' mode, (if there is one), which will automatically lock out first gear and reduce the risk of wheel spin – if unsure, refer to your handbook for more advice.
- If your car loses grip you should take your foot off the accelerator and point the front wheels in the direction you want them to go. All steering and braking inputs must be as gentle as possible in icy conditions. Front-wheel-drive vehicles are generally better in icy conditions, but if your car is a rear-wheel-drive always take it extra slow and steady when changing direction.
- Increase the distance between you and the vehicle in front, especially in slippery conditions. The same applies for when you're approaching a junction or a sharp bend – drive at a steady speed that allows you to stop well within the available distance.

Mark said: "Even when frost thaws, ice will stay around areas that are often shaded or near bridges that are exposed to wind-chill. Consider how you drive through these micro-climates and be prepared to slow down if you need to.

"If road conditions are too slippery, simply avoid starting your journey."





Don't let your MOT become an epic fail

Many people don't prepare their car for an MOT at all, when a set of simple checks could save you time, money and inconvenience. Many cars fail on the basic items we're about to highlight, leaving you rushing around attempting to fix them at late notice and possibly great expense.

Mark Lewis, IAM director of standards, says start on the outside:

- Wash your car. This will allow you to see any damage, especially to wheels
- Check tyres. Make sure there is no damage and there is a tread depth of at least 1.6mm across the central three-quarters of the tyre width and around the whole circumference of the tyre
- Clean your windscreen so you can see any cracks
- Make sure all lights are working get someone to help with brake lights or look at a reflection in a shop window or garage door
- Lift the wipers and check the feathered edge (the thin part of the blade that touches the screen) for any damage. Then wipe them with a damp cloth

- Look under the car to see if there are any fluid leaks

Now let's talk fluids!

- Make sure all fluids under the bonnet are topped up – these areas are often marked in yellow
- Make sure the windscreen washer nozzles are working and aim at the windscreen
- Don't forget about the rear wash-wipe if your car has one
- Moving inside:
- Make sure the horn works
- Does the parking brake hold the car?
- Pull all the seat belts out the entire way and make sure they retract. Unwind if necessary

Mark said: "These basic checks will help make your chances of passing an MOT much greater. So many fails are as a result of these issues.

"But what I have suggested should not just be a once-a-year activity – these are checks that should be part of a weekly routine to ensure your car is safe to be driven day in, day out."





Closing date for the spring edition of the TGAM e-Newsletter is 20th April.

All contributions would be very welcome.

**All items should be sent to
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