

# e-NEWSLETTER

**iam**  
*RoadSmart*

## WESSEX ADVANCED MOTORISTS



[www.wessexam.uk](http://www.wessexam.uk)

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Autumn 2017



# **WESSEX ADVANCED MOTORISTS**

# **e-NEWSLETTER**

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#### **DATA PROTECTION ACT**

Members' details, i.e. names, addresses and telephone numbers, are kept on computer to assist group administration. This information will not be passed outside the IAM. WAM may from time to time publish photographs taken at group events in this newsletter and on the website or display them at publicity events. If you do not wish to have your photo taken or published by WAM, please contact the Editor in writing (contact details on the back page).

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# Chairman's Corner



Hello and welcome to the autumn edition of our newsletter... and our first edition as Wessex Advanced Motorists!

Much has happened over the last 3 months and of course, of most significance is our change of name. You should have received by email or "snail mail" a mail drop explaining the background business case for the change; the Committee has been extremely busy dealing with all of those things which needed to be done to reach the successful outcome.

To remind you, the name change came about to reflect our extended coverage into North Devon, brought on by the unfortunate demise of the IAM RoadSmart Group in Barnstaple.



**By Andrew Griffiths**





IAM were, as you can imagine, keen in the best interests of road safety, to continue to provide support in North Devon and I was very pleased to be asked by Shaun Cronin, our Area Delivery Manager, to consider taking on some EX postcodes in and around Barnstaple along with the 2 National Observers based there who were keen to continue observing for IAM RoadSmart. (more on that in a moment).

Additionally, when Camelot closed its doors 3 years ago, we were pleased to welcome all of its Observers and some of its members to our Group; our Committee considered a name change at that time but due to other pressing priorities, it was put on our “to-do” list.

Consequently, our geographical and postcode coverage now goes way beyond the boundaries of Taunton and its TA postcodes, thereby maintaining IAM RoadSmart’s presence and support in our fantastic neck of the woods in the West Country.

So how did our Committee come to settle on the choice of new name? Well the new name needed to;

- reflect our wider geographical and postcode coverage

- be inclusive to our members in TA, EX and BA postcodes
- be future-proof to accommodate further IAM restructuring
- be appealing
- be original
- be memorable
- be short!
- (not least!) meet with the approval of the IAM Council

And so, based on the bullets above, the Committee considered a number of possibilities but not all fitted the criteria. At that point, a light bulb seemed to illuminate with Wessex written all over it and so Wessex was unanimously agreed!

As you may know, Wessex was one of the most powerful Anglo-Saxon Kingdoms of England with its beginnings going back centuries. It was formed by the West Seaxe (West Saxons)... hence Wessex. Shaun Cronin and I discussed our new name but he thought my (tongue-in-cheek) suggestion of “The Kingdom of Wessex Advanced Motorists” might appear just a little pretentious. Well I did try!





And so, here we are today, Wessex Advanced Motorists. I hope you like it. Oh, and if you'd like a FREE IAM windscreen sticker bearing our new name, I'll have some at our next meeting in September. If you prefer one sooner, please send an SAE to David Walton (address on back page) and you'll get one in the post. There's a proviso however. They are only available to FULL members of IAM and Wessex i.e. you must have passed your advanced driving test.

With our change of name comes new publicity material and branded items such as polo shirts for Observers and on that point, I'd like to welcome our newest Observers, Delphine King and James Dilworth who have joined our group from the ashes of the Barnstaple Group. Del and James are both established National Observers and were keen to continue observing in their area. I and others who I will be volunteering(!) will be working with them to promote Wessex and IAM RoadSmart in North Devon.

Wessex has already had its first IAM RoadSmart pass (under its new name); I am pleased to announce that on 26<sup>th</sup> June, Paul

Green passed the Advanced Driver test; and what a pass it was too! Paul achieved a F1RST with a perfect score of all ones! He was presented with his certificate by the Mayor of Taunton (Cllr. Hazel Prior-Sankey) at our classic car show this month. Read more about the car show in Barry's Report on page 24.

One of the biggest events we attend is the West Somerset Steam Fair. It is coming towards us like a steam train at full speed! I need volunteers to help over this 2-day event, promoting higher standards of driving and road safety in our "patch". Please don't leave it to the few committee members as it's an unfair addition to what is already a huge demand on their time. Volunteers get free entry to the show and have time to enjoy the numerous displays in the main arena. Please read more on this in the Events section.

Enjoy what is left of our British summer and I look forward to seeing you at our members evening in September.

Be safe out there.

Best,

Andrew







## A message from the Chief Observer

I'm now starting to devote time to training 2 of our members to become IAM RoadSmart Local Observers. Paul Green (mentioned above) and Paul Crowe want to put something back into the group and share their skills with future Associates. For this I am very grateful. I'm not a greedy person but I still need more! At the moment I have just ONE Observer in Taunton. So I will reiterate my invitation; if you think you've got what it takes, why not contact me for a chat? The time to avoid is members evenings as I am usually rushing around for some reason. Emailing me at [chair@wessexam.uk](mailto:chair@wessexam.uk) is the best way. Note the snazzy new email address!

While I have gained 2 National Observers Del and James, regrettably I have lost one. David Perkins (ex-Camelot) is relocating from Yeovil to Solihull in August. David was instrumental in the transition of Camelot assets, Observers and Members to our group. He also played a key role in qualifying our Group Observers to Local Observers under the IMI Awards scheme. I'd like to take this opportunity to thank him for his support and wish him and Jo a happy life "up north".



Trophy presented to David Perkins





David and Jo Perkins with Trophy

One of the monthly performance indicators for all IAM RoadSmart groups is the number of advanced driving test passes achieved. For the last 12 months we have been achieving 100% pass rate with a high proportion of these being F1RSTs. This isn't by chance; it is due to the calibre of Observers we have in our group. They work hard to coach their Associates to the high standard required by the IAM (and through them, by the DVSA).

As Chief Observer, one of my roles is to conduct pre-test assessments on all Associates considered ready for test. This gives the Associate the opportunity to experience what happens on the test but in a less formal environment. But even then, nerves

can kick in (theirs not mine!) and sometimes mistakes can be made perhaps indicating that a new skill isn't quite as embedded as it should be; one or two more drives with their Observer can usually sort out specific issues. So I provide a final check as a backstop.

But I also have my own Associates to mentor through the Advanced Driver Course. So who provides the final check on those? Well, is a final check really needed in this situation (I hear you ask)? Well I could carry out pre-test checks on my own Associates but part of the experience is for them to be "scrutinised" by a stranger (as will be the case with their Examiner); and there is no stranger person than our Events Coordinator, Barry. (That'll get a reaction!) Barry is a National Observer too and as such is admirably qualified to carry out pre-test assessment drives. As a team, Barry and I work well together – perhaps it's something to do with us both being Welsh. But it's a team effort between the all of our Observers, Barry and myself, to ensure that our Associates go for test as well prepared as they can be.

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	<a href="mailto:chair@wessexam.uk">chair@wessexam.uk</a>
Secretary/Membership Sec.	David Walton	<a href="mailto:secretary@wessexam.uk">secretary@wessexam.uk</a>
Treasurer	Isobel Jennings	<a href="mailto:treasurer@wessexam.uk">treasurer@wessexam.uk</a>
Associate Coordinator	John Gilbert	<a href="mailto:coordinator@wessexam.uk">coordinator@wessexam.uk</a>
Support Officer	Michael Wotton	<a href="mailto:cmmw@wessexam.uk">cmmw@wessexam.uk</a>
SRS Liaison/Young Drivers	VACANT	
Events Coordinator	Barry Keenan	<a href="mailto:events@wessexam.uk">events@wessexam.uk</a>
Chief Observer/Masters Mentor	Andrew Griffiths	<a href="mailto:chair@wessexam.uk">chair@wessexam.uk</a>
Newsletter Editor	David Walton	<a href="mailto:ed@wessexam.uk">ed@wessexam.uk</a>
Webmaster	Paul Willitt	<a href="mailto:cmpw@wessexam.uk">cmpw@wessexam.uk</a>
Committee Member	Brian Howe (President)	<a href="mailto:president@wessexam.uk">president@wessexam.uk</a>



# GROUP OBSERVERS



Chief Observer and Masters Mentor & LOA	Andrew Griffiths
National Observer & LOA	Barry Keenan
National Observer	Delphine West-King
National Observer	James Dilworth
Local Observer	Godfrey Davey
Local Observer	Brian Dodd
Local Observer	Isobel Jennings
Local Observer	Hugh Todd
Local Observer	David Walton
Local Observer	Timothy Wheeler
Local Observer	Michael Wotton
Trainee Observer	Paul Crowe
Trainee Observer	Paul Green

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 WAM members are Driving Standards Agency/Approved Driving Instructors:

Nick Tapp 07900 900678

Julia Beer 07738 573482

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



# CALENDAR



## AUGUST

5 & 6	Sa & Su	The WSRA Steam Fayre & Vintage Vehicle Rally at Norton Fitzwarren	
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## SEPTEMBER

9 & 10	Sa & Su	Somerset Moto Fest – RNAS Museum, Yeovilton	
16	Sa	All day	Observer Regional Training Day
20	W	7:30pm	<b>Members' Evening</b> – Regional Groups Quiz

## OCTOBER

18	W	7:30pm	<b>Annual General Meeting</b> – Guest speaker <b>Sarah Sillars</b> , IAM RoadSmart CEO
24	Tu	4-7pm	Diabetes Transition Fair

## NOVEMBER

15	W	7:30pm	<b>Members' Evening</b> – A talk by Mark Evans, Waterway Manager Bridgwater & Taunton Canal, about the history and future of the Taunton Canal.
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## DECEMBER

9	Sa	12:30 for 1pm	WAM Christmas Lunch
20	W	7:30pm	<b>Members' Evening</b> – Christmas Quiz



# PRESIDENT'S PONDERINGS



**Welcome to Wessex Advanced Motorists.** The new name for Taunton Group of Advanced Motorists. Following the disbanding of BANDAM (Barnstaple and North Devon) we were granted extra Post Codes where BANDAM bordered TGAM. I expect there will be a further and more detailed report elsewhere in this publication.

**Look at me over there.** I'm sure I'm not really that serious. All dressed up and nowhere to go? Well, not really. I did have somewhere to go. The Annual Classic Car Show and BBQ of WAM, (formerly TGAM), 19<sup>th</sup> July at our adopted home, Hatch Beauchamp Village Hall. My brief was to meet and greet the Mayor of Taunton Deane, Councillor Hazel Prior-Sankey and the Mayor's Consort, Mr Adrian Prior-Sankey. I managed this task until we met our Judge for the evening, Mr Tony Vaughan-Read. After introductions, Tony continued escorting Madam Mayor, unfortunately I couldn't keep up with them. I decided to stick with Adrian who was moving at a slower pace more akin to my own. So, we continued to wander amongst the great array of 60+ classic cars until the Mayor's refreshments were served. It was a wonderful evening with a great,



**by Brian Howe**



family, friendly atmosphere and I would like to mention a huge thank you to our Events Coordinator, Barry Keenan, who did such an excellent job in organising the evening for us. I also expect that there will be a more detailed report and pictures elsewhere in this publication.

**Stay with the Classic Car Theme** and rewind back to 25<sup>th</sup> June 2017. I was invited by my son-in-law, Dean, to a surprise Father's Day outing. All I knew was that I would be collected at 08.30 hrs and that we would be going via Blandford Forum to pick up Dean's father. I don't know that area of Dorset very well so I had little idea of where we were, or where we were going. Until, I recognised the road into Sparkford and saw Haynes Motor Museum looming up before us. Once at the museum we met up with Dean's brother and their step dad. They had arranged and paid for the whole day, including coffee and lunch, without any of the three dads knowing. I won't go on about all the posh, fancy Vintage and Veteran cars, as good as they are, or the 'Red Room', because my favourite part of the museum is the everyday classics of the 50's and 60's. I include just one

or two pictures, only because I have a true anecdote to tell about one of the cars on show. This brass bulb horn is fitted to a 1930's Morris Bullnose and is almost identical to the one I have in my shed.





## Rewind again back to the Spring of 1969

and bring on the Vauxhall Victor FA saloon, first introduced in 1957. It was a 4 door, 3 box saloon car, powered by a 1500cc 4 cylinder OHV engine, linked to a 3 speed column change (three in the tree), gearbox, driving the rear wheels.



This was the replacement car for the outgoing Vauxhall Wyvern. During that Spring of '69, my previous car, a 1953 Humber Hawk, died of a seized differential and I couldn't find a replacement in any of my numerous local scrapyards, so I had no option but to scrap her.

This left me in urgent need of a replacement car. After searching the classified ads in the Dorking Advertiser, I found an advert that went as follows. "For Sale. 1957 Vauxhall Victor. Abandoned in my church car park in Epsom. Tax and MoT. £15". I rushed straight round to the public phone box just round the corner and agreed to meet the Vicar in his church car park the next morning. He informed me that the previous owner had left the car there one Sunday, when it failed to start. Unfortunately he had subsequently passed away and the car had been left where it was because the surviving family were not interested. After the car had stood there for a couple of months, he had sought permission from the family to sell it. They apparently said sell it or scrap it. He preferred the former and thanked me for my interest. I exchanged £15 for the keys and after writing me a receipt, the Vicar hurried back into his church leaving me to it. The battery was willing but the neglected old girl refused to start. As I was at the time, a member of the AA, I found the nearest phone box and called them, saying where my car was and that it refused to start. (In those days you always carried a few of the old pennies as it took fourpence



to connect a call). After a short wait the man from the AA arrived and asked what the problem was. He obviously wasn't daft because he could see the car had been standing for a while, so I admitted that I had just bought it. "I'm very sorry," he said, "but I can't help you. That's not what we are here for". I pleaded ignorance of the finer points of AA membership and said that the car wasn't at my home and I could prove it was mine with the receipt. Thankfully he very kindly said that as he was here and they weren't busy, he might as well have a look. It turned out after about 15 minutes that the spark was strong but no fuel was passing through the carburettor. This he expertly stripped, cleaned out the jets and the fuel line and reassembled everything. Then with the choke out, a light foot on the accelerator pedal and a turn of the key, the engine finally coughed into life. He stayed until the engine was warm and poured a little Red-Ex directly into the carb and replaced the air filter box and left me with a warning, "Please do not abuse the AA Service in this way again".

I thanked him profusely, and made my promise. We shook hands and he departed with a wry smile. I drove home on the A24 through Ashted and round Leatherhead closely followed by a huge cloud of white smoke and back to my mum's house in Dorking. Fortunately, by the time I arrived, the cloud had dispersed and the exhaust was clear. I gave the car a thorough wash off and discovered that it was hand-painted grey with brush marks as deep as tram lines. I checked all the levels, what we in the Advanced Motoring world now call a POWDERY check, and it was only the screen wash bottle and the engine oil that needed topping up. I drove the car around for a couple of weeks to make sure everything was OK, then I rubbed it down and hand-painted it red. This was a mistake as the red was too translucent, so the following day I rubbed it down again and painted it with Valspar Blue Gloss. Wonderful paint for a car.

A few months later in the Summer of '69, Alice and I drove our £15 Vauxhall Victor FA from Dorking to my aunt's place in Lapford, Nr





Crediton, Devon for a two week holiday. In those days it was a journey of nigh on 200 miles as there was no M3 or M5 and precious few dual carriageways. One had to negotiate all the roundabouts of Basingstoke and Andover, as well as the myriad of towns and villages. All went well until our return from a day trip to Woolacombe, (incidentally now part of WAM's newly extended area), when climbing the steep hill out of the seaside resort. The car slowed and chugged and smoked its way to the top where we stopped to allow it a few minutes to cool. I limped the old girl, (that's the car, not Alice), back to the garage at the bottom of Lapford village, left it there and walked up the hill to my aunt's. The following afternoon I went down to the garage with some trepidation. But all they needed to do was replace the spark plugs, clean the points and bleed the brakes for a total cost of £5. My now, £20 car, served us well until December '69 when she failed her MoT due to chassis corrosion. I part exchanged her for £30 discount off a £295, 1964 Ford Consul Cortina Mk I De Luxe 1200 in medium blue with a white roof.



I may tell you a little about my 1953 Renault 750 (also known as a Renault 4CV) purchased for the great sum of £25, perhaps in the next scintillating issue of this fine publication. Stay safe on the roads and don't forget to make your POWDERY checks before you drive off on your hols.

Brian L. Howe



# COORDINATOR'S REPORT



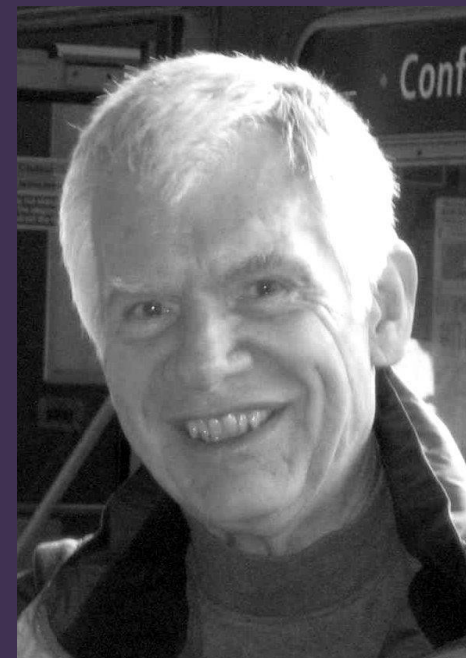
The last three months have been a very busy time for our Observers due to a very healthy inflow of applicants for our Advanced Driving Course. I would like to welcome the 7 Associates who have signed since the last newsletter, namely, Chris Roberts, Kenneth Priest, Jane Lawrence, Jess Haynes, David Pearl, Rikk Earthy and Perry Chesterton and wish you all every success when it is time to take your Advanced Driving Test. We also have 4 new full members; James Dilworth, Delphine West-King, Chris Marshall and Tony Drew.

Currently we have a total of 18 Associates at various stages of the Advanced Driving Course. But that is not all we do. Eight drivers have signed up for our free driving assessments recently and these drivers might, possibly, continue on to take the full Advanced Driving Course. In addition we have recently provided motorway driving experiences to a couple of young drivers in cooperation with Somerset Road Safety.

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

Richard Garratt  
Iain Pye (F1rst)  
Paul Green (F1rst)

OBSERVED BY  
Hugh Todd  
Hugh Todd  
Andrew Griffiths



**By John Gilbert**





# Events Corner



Doesn't time fly? It hardly seems that I've put my (metaphoric) pen down from writing the spring newsletter and here we are in autumn already!

Much has been happening over the last few months. But the first thing to mention is our rebranding from The Taunton Group of Advanced Motorists to **Wessex Advanced Motorists**.

All of our recruiting paperwork now reflects this change and alongside, our new IAM RoadSmart feather flag bears the name Wessex Advanced Motorists too so that people can now get a sense of the area that we cover. And if you click onto 'Find Your Local Group' on the new IAM RoadSmart website and put in your postcode, you'll find that you're directed to Wessex Advanced Motorists giving our contact details and a link to our website. *(the old tgam one I am afraid for just a few more days ED.)* Couldn't be easier.



**By Barry Keenan, Events  
Co-ordinator**







Oh! And if any of you decide that you need to email me (or any of the committee members) don't look at my email address and think it's wrong. It really is just [events@wessexam.uk](mailto:events@wessexam.uk) I haven't misspelled it, honestly. We've just dropped the .org.uk suffix and gone straight for the simple @wessexam.uk address format.

II

In May the Avon & Somerset Police and Crime Commissioner and team held their staff meeting at the Worlebury Golf Club in Weston.

Never being one to let an opportunity slip by, Robbie Downing IAM RoadSmart Area Service Delivery Manager and Weston & Mendip Advanced Motorists offered the PCC and her team the chance to take an observed drive with the Group. TGAM, as we were then, were invited to send an Observer and so our gallant Chairman, not wishing to hog all of the limelight for himself, nominated me!

And what a well organised day it was too. Neil Bayliss, Weston & Mendip's Newsletter Editor, had already been out and recce'd six routes so all I had to do was pick one. (And the instructions were dead easy to follow too!)

For each of the Observers it was, in effect, just a standard Assessment Drive with a new Associate. However, what was different was the fact that this team of Associates had the power and authority to actually do something at a local political level about enhancing matters of road safety. As yet I've yet to see any signs that what Neil and the team delivered has actually come to fruition, but to be fair, it was aimed mainly at the Weston & Mendip area as a test case and has yet to work its way further down south, so watch this space, as they say.

For ourselves, May saw Brian Standring, Taunton Dementia Champion pop along and give us a very interesting and interactive talk on helping those people living with dementia. I have to say that in a previous life I worked closely with those living with Dementia, but even I picked up a couple of new hints and tips that I was completely unaware of.

In June we were visited by the Mayor of Taunton Deane, Cllr. Hazel Prior-Sankey and her husband, Adrian. Adrian gave a very fine and interesting talk on the history of Taunton whilst Hazel joined in later to give a brief about





the life and role of a Mayor. It was really exciting stuff. Sadly it was also one of the hottest days of the year and only about 10 or 12 people turned up to hear them talk. For those people my thanks for being so involved with the discussion topic, for those of you who were unable to come; you really missed a treat!

June saw Andrew Griffiths and I flying the new Wessex Advanced Motorists flag at the Somerset County Show at Taunton Racecourse. For those members who popped in to say hello, it was really good to see you!

Our last Member's Evening of this quarter was last Wednesday, 19<sup>th</sup>. That was the night of our very own Classic Car Show, and what a night that was! (For a fuller report and photographs by Matt Murray, see my article on the show later in this edition). We had over 60 cars the youngest being a 2017 Mercedes CLK and the oldest being a 1926 Model 'T' Ford.

At the end of the month Andrew and I will again be flying the flag at the Watchet Carnival Fete at the Memorial Ground in Watchet. Last year it was a gloriously hot and balmy day.

This year I'm hoping for just a little more cloud cover. No rain, y'understand, just some of nature's shade.

The 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> August will see a bunch of us at the West Somerset Steam Railway Association annual get together at Norton Fitzwarren. This is a two day event where there will be crowds from all over the county. It's a real feast of vintage and classic steam engines, trucks, lorries, cars and vans. I hope to see some of you there.

And as an aside, if any of you fancy joining us in the WAM tent, then please feel free to contact either me or any of the committee members. We'll be really glad of the help... and you'll be able to get into the show for free!

On the 9<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> September we'll be attending the Somerset Moto Fest at the Fleet Air Arm Museum, RNAS Yeovilton. There's going to be something for everyone at this fandango. It's right on the doorstep for those of you living over that side of the county, so I hope to see as many of you there as possible. Look us up at the WAM Trade Stand on the main arena.





And Finally.

As I mentioned in the last article, I'm now working on the 2019 events and calendar so if you've an idea of something or someone that you'd like to see included on our Member's Evenings, then get in touch (details below) and I'll see what I can organise.

Well, that's it for another quarter. Thanks for taking the time to read my scribblings and I look forward to seeing you at our regular Members' Evenings over the coming year.

In the meantime, here's to your continued happy, safe and enjoyable motoring.

Barry

Events Co-ordinator,

T : 01823 254621

M : 07776 124001

E : [events@wessexam.uk](mailto:events@wessexam.uk)

## **September Members' Evening**

### **Regional Groups Quiz**

**We are the hosts of this year's annual inter-group quiz where our team will be pitted against the best from neighbouring groups; Weston, Bath, Bristol and maybe more.**

**The quiz is open to more than one team from each group, so why not come along and join one of our teams.**

**The questions will be on all things motoring, political, historical and any other screwball question Barry can come up with!**

**Wednesday 20<sup>th</sup> September 7:30pm  
Hatch Beauchamp Village Hall**



# I'm just trying being cool

By Samson Ruwangu, IAM RoadSmart digital content executive

I was told when I was little that your face should be seen as a statement piece. Now I don't want to expose the little birdy that told me this, so I'll end this here but I can't help but believe that this affects many people even subconsciously as this is becoming more and more reflective of how we operate in society.

One of the world's largest image focused apps, Instagram has over 600 million active users, we now have amazing YouTube tutorials, make-up orientated focusing on how to obtain the perfect arch in your eyebrow and Kim Kardashian, who's fame has been amplified by the use of selfies (photograph terminology), that has been made so popular that it is now in the Oxford dictionary.

Whilst image focus is becoming stronger it is important to give yourself enough time to perfect or enhance your look in a suitable place and not on the road.

During the morning commute if you look left or right in your vehicle at traffic lights you often see some sort of make-up applying, hair fiddling and even shaving. In a poll of 1,000 women by semi-permanent make-up specialist Debra Robson in 2013 it was found that 43% of women drivers admitted to putting on their make-up whilst driving on the daily commute.

It's important to leave enough time to get ready for work but many of us still try to ride a fine line and handle the beautifying process whilst on the road. The light-hearted view of this socially accepted distraction makes it seem less harmful than it really is.

Perhaps this is due to the fact that over time the focus has been on more prominent distractions such as mobile phones, but I am of the belief that cosmetic applying and grooming issues will rise. For instance recently a woman was shaving her bikini area while driving and





crashed into the rear of an SUV. This is complete madness and recklessness.

Insurers estimated that as many as 450,000 accidents a year are caused by women drivers being distracted while applying cosmetics. Whilst this application of make-up does fall under the remit of driving with distractions, I definitely feel that this is one of many distractions that needs to be addressed sooner than later.

Ruth Peters from Olliers Motor Law said: "Applying make-up at the wheel could lead to being prosecuted for driving without due care and attention or 'careless driving' amongst other offences. To prove such an offence the prosecution would need to prove that your driving has fallen below the standard expected of a reasonable, prudent and competent driver. If convicted you are at risk of between 3 and 9 penalty points on your licence or in some cases a discretionary disqualification. There would also be a fine together with court and prosecution costs. Furthermore the offence would need to be reported to your insurance company and undoubtedly would lead to an increase in insurance premiums."

## Wessex Advanced Motorists AGM in October

### Chairman's position

You will perhaps recall that I said at the 2016 AGM (via our President as I was on hols in Wales at the time!) that, for a number of reasons, this would be my last year as Chairman.

Because of the significant changes the group has gone through this year I feel we are in need of some stability rather than invoke even more change. I have therefore decided to offer myself for re-election as Chairman, a post I consider to be a privilege, not a chore.

I do this on the basis that I have a first-class Committee and without them I would have an impossible task. I value all members of the Committee, every single one. Much of what the Committee does will understandably be transparent to you but not to me. So I'd like you to consider me for re-election when the time comes.

All that said, if there are others who have thought of standing for Chairman, please don't let me stop you! I'd encourage you to go for it!

Andrew





# The First Wessex Advanced Motorists Annual Classic Car Show 2017

By Barry Keenan

I remember it well. T'was the April committee meeting of 2016 when Brian Howe, Honorary President of our august group and all round stalwart of what was then called the TGAM Classic Car Show, announced to a stunned audience that he was giving up organising the annual old cars for old blokes night. Officially known as the TGAM Classic Car Show.

You could hear a pin drop in the silence that followed this announcement.

Now don't get me wrong, it's not that we all felt full of sympathy for Brian and understood why, after all these years of being worn down by the yolk of servitude, that he felt enough was enough.

No. The thoughts of everyone around the table was more along the lines of "What daft idiot's going to take that on now?" I know, I was thinking exactly the same thing.

But what bothered me in the eerie silence that followed, was that as I looked around my fellow Committee Members wondering which one would take up this poisoned chalice... er, mantle of honour, I saw 7 pairs of dead eyes bore into mine.

"Oh no! No! No, no, no. NO! Definitely not me. I'm too young for all of this! It needs an older, wiser head than mine, to take this on" I whined.

And as I appealed to each and every one of my fellow Committee-ites around the table, with a show of support that would have done Judas Iscariot proud, each and every one of them silently turned their chair and sat with their back to me.

I was alone! Cast adrift in a sea of uncertainty and organisational nightmare. And what's more, they've abandoned me to it again next year, too. The fiends!





And so, in order to spread the pain as much as I could, for the 2017 show I conned:

- Brian Howe to escort the Mayor (Ha! If he thought he'd got away with anything in this riot of dis-organisation, he was in for a shock!)
- Andrew Griffiths to MC
- John Gilbert to work the gates
- Mike Wotton to pressgang new members
- Matt Murray into taking the photos. Good, aren't they?
- Janet Loader into mugging everybody with the raffle
- and David Walton to find last year's cup winner. (Well, we wanted it back for this year's winner, after all).
- I even managed to get the Sea Cadets to come along and lend a hand herding all of the visitors and exhibitors into the right place at the right time. And my heartfelt thanks to them for a sterling job well done, too! I can honestly say that without them the night wouldn't have gone as smoothly as I'd hoped. I will definitely be asking them for help again next year.



Special thanks go to our Guest of Honour, Cllr. Hazel Prior-Sankey, the Mayor of Taunton Deane, who was completely unfazed by the breakdown of our PA system and happily used the alternate that was supplied. (See the photo). Despite not being a car nut herself, she still managed to thoroughly enjoy herself despite the occasional chaos that ensued. To see all of Matt's photos, please log onto <https://drive.google.com/folderview?id=0B4Dht eWM1XeVak8tX0d1TzNMenM>

Alternatively, you could have a look at next week's Somerset County Gazette. That's because we had a roving photographer/reporter from that eminent publication and





although she wasn't in time to get her copy in for the print run on Wednesday evening, her report and photographs should appear in next weeks' issue.

And talking of copy; in his article of last years' event, Brian noted that the show seems to grow year on year. Well I'm happy to report that this year was no different. We had about 60 cars, one motorbike and over 150 people grace us with their presence. And because it went off pretty much without a hitch, I'm very pleased to report that the evening was a roaring success, and for that I owe a debt of thanks to all those who helped and to all who attended. I hope you enjoyed it as much as I did.

But back to this year. As you can see from the photos, a small selection of which I've included below, we had a really eclectic display of cars and vehicles ranging from a 1957 Austin A35 (we also had a 1959 one too) to a 1965 VW Beetle. And as you can see from the photo of the Mayor, above, we even had a fully spec'd out Chicago Police Department Cruiser, without which we'd have struggled because our own PA system went down so we used the one from the cruiser! See? No problems, just solutions!

The oldest car we had on show was a pristine looking 1926 Model 'T' Ford. The youngest was a 2017 Morgan. As I said, a real eclectic mix. We even had a Mini Moke on site!

Originally it was planned to hold the event, as usual, on the car park of the Village Hall, but by the time Monday 17<sup>th</sup> rolled round I'd had so many people phone or email me wishing to register that I knew the car park wouldn't be big enough. With that thought in mind I contacted Steve Williams and Maureen James, Chairman and Booking Secretary respectively of the Village Hall committee and sought permission (readily granted) to use the sports field as our exhibition arena instead. I really am most grateful to them for allowing us to use it because without that extra space, the night would have been a chaotic nightmare instead of the success it was.

Judging was carried out by Tony Vaughan-Read, gentleman and connoisseur of all cars over a certain vintage. Throughout the event he could be seen quietly going about his business, pad in hand until eventually he revealed the winner of the show to be Mark Deacon's wonderful 1960 Vauxhall Cresta. A really superb example of its type.





Mark was so astonished about his car winning that he had to be brought back from the burger bar to collect his cup! But, here he is, receiving his award from the Mayor.



Although this was really quite hard work to organise, (I can see why Brian stopped doing it) it was a really fun evening and from the feedback that I've received, an evening that was enjoyed by everybody who attended. We even had one lady, staying at the hotel across the road wander over and ask if she can join us next year. And she lives in Yorkshire!

To my mind there was only one fly in the ointment and that was the rather long delay for people at the burger bar. For that I can only apologise. It won't happen again next year. We're already looking at different ways of organising the catering and one (different) outside caterer is already provisionally booked. We also have it in mind to book one, maybe two others as well. Watch this space!

And, talking of next year, our Guest of Honour will be Paul Woosley, IAM RoadSmart's Head of Membership. (See things are being organised already!) As usual the day will be the 3<sup>rd</sup> Wednesday of the month which means that the 2018 Classic Car Show will be held on **Wednesday 18<sup>th</sup> July 2018**. I hope you can be there.





Aside from presenting the winner's cup and raffle prizes, The Mayor was also good enough to present pass certificates to those Associates who had passed their advanced driving course in the last month or so.



Here's **Richard Garratt** getting his certificate. He passed his course with a very respectable mark on 23<sup>rd</sup> May. So very well done, Richard. And although he's waited a little while to receive it, I hope he found the wait well worth while.

His Observer for the course was Brian Dodd.

**Paul Green** has the distinction of being the first to pass his course under the new banner of Wessex.

Not only that but he scored a full set of 1's giving him a clear and well deserved F1RST.

Not to let such talent go to waste, he's been press-ganged by Andrew, who was his Observer, into training to be an Observer.





Our third certificate of the night went to Andrew Harrison. Andrew also scored a F1RST on his test, so very well done to him, too.

Andrew's Observer for his course was Isobel Jennings.



So that you're able to have a quick glance at some of the cars on show, below is a selection of just some of the cars (and the bike) that came along.



John Gilbert's Morgan Plus 4



John Slocombe in his Morris 8





Margaret Yarde's Austin A35



Mike & Betty Amor's beautiful little 'bug'



Robin, actually looks as if he's been pulled over by the police!



Chris Baker's immaculate Model 'T'





Steve Morris in his pristine Buick Skylark



Andy McPhail's gorgeous Mini-Moke

If you'd like to register a car for next year's show, then please feel free to contact me on either 01823 254621 or 07776 124001 or email me at [events@wessexam.uk](mailto:events@wessexam.uk) Barry



David Healey in his lovely little Morris Minor



Nick Jones' 1933 Rover Sports Tourer

As I said, an eclectic mix and to view or download all of the photos that Matt took on the night, please visit <https://drive.google.com/folderview?id=0B4DhteWM1XeVak8tX0d1TzNMenM>

Happy viewing!





# Autonomous cars: will we let them be autonomous?

By Tim Shallcross, IAM RoadSmart's, head of technical policy and advice

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

I'm not sure this will be the greatest concern. As head of technical policy, I do love a gadget and my latest car (three years old, but new to me) has them in spades. I simply tell it what maximum speed I want stick to and it does the rest; it keeps a safe distance behind the car in front, slows down with the traffic, brakes on hills to control speed, stops if the car in front does, starts again when it moves off, follows the white lines above 30mph, or follows the car in front below 30mph. It makes traffic queues quite entertaining, and that's apart from the

self-parking magic and some very clever headlights. It uses radar, cameras and ultrasound sensors to explore its surroundings and "sees" easily through fog, rain and darkness.

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

However, when it came to ploughing through the vast array of settings, it became clear that the previous owner hadn't really used any of this functionality. The settings for the stereo, sat-nav and so on had been altered, but all the driving assistance systems were still at the factory defaults.

It seems likely the first owner drove it as a standard car and did it all himself. It gets me





wondering how many drivers actually use the functionality to the full - and how many will as they become more standard.

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

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

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

## **October Members' Evening**

# **ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING**

**The Group AGM will be taking place and all members, associates and friends are invited to attend.**



**Sarah Sillars OBE**

**After the AGM Sarah Sillars, IAM RoadSmart CEO, will be our VIP guest speaker.**

**Wednesday 18<sup>th</sup> October 7:30pm**  
**Hatch Beauchamp Village Hall**





# Uphill and Downhill with GPS

By Andrew Griffiths

There is lots of debate out there as to whether GPS speedometers are accurate on gradients. You'll find lots of "experts" on the Internet offering views, often contradicting one another. The argument appears to stem from the fact that GPS - Global Positioning System - works uses only latitude and longitude (not elevation) to calculate where in the world you are.

I'm not getting into the debate or offering you an expert opinion. What I will attempt to do is explain the facts about GPS and how the debate manifests itself.

GPS is the basis of satnav and other forms of navigation GPS. Many satnavs have a speed display included with the plethora of other information displayed (too much clutter!). Whilst the intelligence is up there in space the speed is calculated by clever software in the device itself using timing information from signals it receives from a number of satellites simultaneously as the device moves across latitude and longitude coordinates. Got that?

GPS speedometers also come as stand-alone units. I have both and of course the satnav

gives the same reading of speed as the stand-alone unit for a given speed of the vehicle they are in. They don't however agree with the car speedometer which has inherent inaccuracies; manufacturers make them read high to ensure you as a driver don't fall foul of the law due to these inaccuracies. To give you an example, when my car speedo is reading 70 mph, both GPS speedos read 68mph and are said to be dead-on accurate. But are they?

Because GPS uses latitude and longitude, the GPS speedometer is extremely accurate on flat, level roads. If you take a GPS speedo into a lift (okay it won't actually work as it can't receive satellites signals when in a lift, but just suppose for a moment) the GPS will give a reading of zero mph regardless of the speed of the lift up or down because the Lat/Long coordinates aren't changing... the device thinks it's stationary, same as at traffic lights.

Because of this, there are those that argue that it is not accurate on hills. The signals transmitted from satellites can be processed by the GPS speedometer to take into account

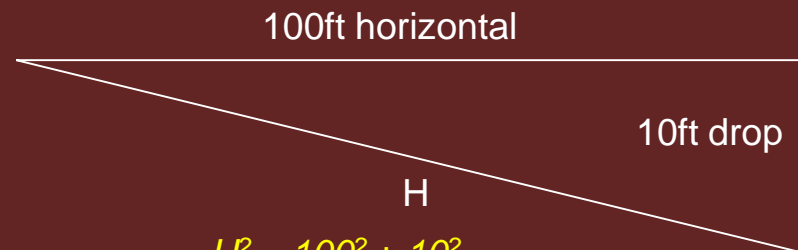




elevation thereby giving a reading of speed on hills that is accurate but there are geometric dependencies and the measurement of elevation isn't as accurate as the measurement of lat/long; For the purposes of practicality, the inaccuracy on hills can be considered to be insignificant. I will show you why;

Take your mind back to when your maths teacher explained Pythagoras' Theorem, which states that "The square of the hypotenuse is equal to the sum of the squares of the other two sides"). If you remember this, you'll follow this;

If you are approaching a hill with a 10% gradient (1 in 10) up or down (it doesn't matter for this purpose), for every 100ft you travel you drop or climb 10ft. Agreed? The distance you actually travel down or up the slope is slightly longer and is calculated using Pythagoras' theorem.



$$H^2 = 100^2 + 10^2$$

$$\text{So } H = 100.5\text{ft}$$

Change distance for speed (the theorem still works). And so, on a 10% gradient;

GPS says horizontal speed is 40mnph... your downhill (or uphill) speed is 40.2mph so a discrepancy of 0.5% (not worth worrying about!)

Here is a table showing GPS inaccuracies on gradients of 10% and 20%. As illustrated, the inaccuracy on 10% hill is half of one percent and on a 20% gradient is 2%

GPS Speed (horizontal)	Actual Speed on 10% gradient (hypotenuse)	% inaccuracy (rounded up)	Actual speed on 20% gradient	% inaccuracy (rounded up)
20	20.10	0.5%	20.4	2%
30	30.19	0.5%	30.59	2%
40	40.19	0.5%	40.79	2%
50	50.25	0.5%	50.99	2%
60	60.23	0.5%	61.20	2%
70	70.35	0.5%	71.40	2%





So I'd say you can forget about the inaccuracy on hills. And if you're doing 70mph down a 20% hill, you should be more concerned about whether the brakes will work rather than the accuracy of your GPS!

There's a 30% gradient in the Lake District (Hardknott Pass). I'll do just one calculation for that for amusement; GPS speed = 30mph actual speed is 31.32 giving an inaccuracy of 5%... but I wonder if anyone has got anywhere near 30mph there (whether intentional or not) and survived! And NO... it is not the "Chairman's Challenge"!

So you can conclude that the difference a hill makes to a GPS speedometer is insignificant unless you are hitting the figures shown in red as these fall within the new zero tolerance speed enforcement (1-9mph over the posted speed limit is points/fine territory!) but let's face it if you are doing these speeds on a 20% gradient you probably have problems far more serious than speed infringement don't you think?

Putting the above in context, when driving through a long tunnel, GPS devices cannot "see" any satellites so they're beyond inaccurate in such circumstances... they just won't work at all! Happy motoring! Andrew

## **November Members' Evening**

### **Bridgwater and Taunton Canal - its history and future**

**A talk by Mark Evans, Waterway Manager, who will tell us all about the history and future of the Taunton Canal.**



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**Wednesday 15<sup>th</sup> November 7:30pm**  
**Hatch Beauchamp Village Hall**



# **WESSEX ADVANCED MOTORISTS**

# **Annual Christmas Lunch**

to be held at

**OAKE MANOR GOLF CLUB**  
**Oake, Nr. Taunton, TA4 1BA**

**on Saturday 9<sup>th</sup> December 2017**  
**12:30 for 1:00pm**

**Please contact Barry on *events@wessexam.uk***  
**or 01823 254621 to book your place**





## A high - tech brain for a high tech car?

By Nigel Mansell CBE, IAM RoadSmart President and 1992 Formula 1 World Champion

With the Formula 1 season having just started, all eyes were focussed on all the technological changes that have been brought in for the 2017 season. Many were worried in case the changes reduced the quality of the racing or made running a Formula 1 team too expensive.

The other concern people have had is whether driving a Formula 1 car has become too easy; has the technology made it as much of a challenge as it used to be? Some say if a teenager like Max Verstappen can win a Formula 1 race age 18, how hard can it be?

Yes Formula 1 has changed a great deal since I raced in the 80's and 90's. But Formula 1 always demands the very best from a driver; you have to find the skill, stamina, concentration and commitment - and realise the best is never enough. It is something technology can never replace.

And the same goes for road cars and the drivers out there each day. We see terrific technological advances designed to help us:

parking sensors, reversing cameras, lane avoidance warnings, autonomous emergency breaking, and even more to come in the future.

Some are worried it's making drivers lazy; that they don't have to be as skilled as before. I would say that technology can work hand-in-hand with driver skill and dovetail very nicely.

As IAM RoadSmart President for 10 years, I have seen first-hand just how much becoming an advanced driver can not only just make driving more enjoyable, but could potentially save lives.

Technology will take us part of the way - and improving driving skills will complete the jigsaw.

Why not take advantage of everything technology can offer to assist us? But also realise that the human eye, brain and perception is the best supercomputer money can't buy! Put the two together and we have a real force to be reckoned with.

So embrace the change, but realise the man or woman behind the wheel can also become improved for a modern era.







# Times change and so do some practices

By Peter Rodger, IAM RoadSmart's spokesman

Sometimes when things change they do so loudly and with a great deal of publicity, with government announcements about policy change, or new laws. We've changed all sorts of things, that way – introducing seat belt wearing would be an excellent (if old) example.

Technology can be a change-driver as well – when did you last give a hand signal to turn at a junction? But sometimes things don't change loudly but subtly because we, the people doing things in our everyday lives as individuals, change how we do them.

We can be encouraged to do things differently because of things we have seen done elsewhere – on foreign holidays for example –

or just because circumstances feel different, usually because they are different.

Over the years it has gradually become more acceptable for motorcyclists and cyclists to filter through traffic, making their way to the front of the queue using the gaps between lanes of traffic that are stationary or slow moving.

In the late 1960s bus lanes were introduced to Britain, allowing buses to effectively do the same thing and work through the traffic without having to queue in the same way.

The motorway system has faced a similar difficulty in needing to allow traffic that is leaving it to have separated lanes, partly to improve safety and avoid large amounts of





criss-cross traffic near the junction. In some cases this was to allow traffic to queue safely whilst other traffic passes, and in others probably to allow it to leave without queueing along the carriageway with the traffic.

All these things have a common factor I deliberately have not mentioned – they effectively legitimise some traffic travelling more quickly on the left, relative to traffic on the right. In other words they permit overtaking on the nearside.

In the mid 1990s the introduction of variable speed limits on the motorways, starting along the western side of London's M25, added a complicating factor by using "stay in lane" (or something very similar) as an instruction to drivers on the overhead gantries, and legitimising driving faster than traffic on your right at higher speeds than previously thought about.

So, gradually, we have been encouraged by a series of unconnected measures, no doubt unintendedly, to accept overtaking other traffic on the left. The practice is increasing, quietly, slowly and not without argument (just like so many other things in life change). There are those who are passionately against the practice. There are those who are passionately for it. There are those who would say it is illegal (there is no specific law banning it, but it can be seen as careless or inconsiderate driving if the evidence supports that), and those who challenge that.

But the change is visible on our roads – more overtaking on the left is happening on motorways than was ever the case in years gone by, as traffic levels rise. Will we come to regard it as normal, or will it for ever be something that is against "the rule of the road"?





## Here's a little poem that I came across recently.

*Smiling is infectious; you catch it like the flu,  
When someone smiled at me today, I started smiling too.  
I passed around the corner and someone saw my grin  
When he smiled I realised I'd passed it on to him.*

*I thought about that smile, then realised its worth,  
A single smile, just like mine, could travel round the earth.  
So, if you feel a smile begin, don't leave it undetected,  
Let's start an epidemic, quick, and get the world infected.*

Giving everyone you pass a big grin, and you are liable to get your face slapped, or at best, a frown. But you can smile with your eyes and facial expression, and it is those that trigger the response.

Carry this further to your driving. The roads are more crowded now and the times we have to give way to oncoming traffic are frequent. From the other driver, do you get:

- a thank-you wave
- just a finger, managing to lift itself off the top of the steering wheel
- or, nothing?

Just think about your reactions to those three.

NOW, reverse the role.

To give a “thank-you”, use your left hand. Your right is hidden by the door column and cannot always be seen. Your palm is white and can be seen, so with your palm facing forward and close to the windscreen, give one quick brush, right to left, along with that smile and a nod of the head.

Now, watch the reaction of the other driver.

Back to the poem. It really is contagious!

Although you have given way, you feel good about it. If you did get a blank face from the other driver, you now feel superior as well!

Andrew Mayes





## Messages from Grateful Associates

After having had a desire, for several years, to take an IAM driving test but never getting around to it, I finally got my opportunity when I was made redundant. All of a sudden I found I had quite a bit of time on my hands (in between looking for new employment) and realised what better time to take this test.

My father had always been a keen driver; he had been a driving instructor for cars and later became an instructor for London Transport, and in fact was my instructor when I applied to become a bus driver, quite a few years ago now. He had also passed his IAM driving test, longer ago than I can remember, and it was his influence that encouraged me to take an active interest in developing my own driving skills.

After my application was submitted I was soon contacted and referred to Andrew Griffiths who was to become my observer. Andrew gave me the guidance to 'polish' my driving ability and develop it further to enable me to take my IAM RoadSmart driving test. Before this, Barry Keenan

took me out for a pre-test drive in which all I had learnt had practically fallen by the wayside, I put much of this down to nerves, however, to my surprise, Barry said I would have passed but without the FIRST. I was determined that it was to be a FIRST, or I would die trying, so learning from this experience I knew what I had to do, getting over my anxiety to start with.

Test day came and my examiner was David Adams; I was certainly ready, as long my nerves didn't get the better of me. The route was quite challenging and when it was over, David said, congratulations, you've passed... and with a FIRST. I was pleased, very pleased, when I saw the test report with every competency marked with a 1, I could not believe what I had just done. Thank you so much to Andrew Griffiths for your time being my observer and ensuring I got to this level. If my Dad was still around today, he would have been massively proud, I dedicate this pass to him, if only I had done it a lot sooner.

Paul Green





*On 10<sup>th</sup> May, which happened to be the day after my 65<sup>th</sup> birthday, I passed my IAM Advanced Driving Test and was lucky enough to scrape in with a First. This was a tremendous feeling, an equal mix of elation and relief, not least because I had learned at the previous monthly meeting that TGAM had maintained a 100% pass rate over the last twelve months and I desperately wanted not to be the unfortunate soul who broke this magnificent winning streak!*

*I suspect that many people regard themselves as being better drivers than they truly are and I was, and maybe still am no exception to that. However, despite feeling that I was pretty good on the whole, I had never quite got around to entering myself for the IAM car exam to test that assumption. As a child, I remember my father taking his test in the 1960's and being very impressed and proud of him when he passed. He is now 95 and only stopped driving last year with many decades of accident-free driving behind him.*

*I spent a lot of my twenties on motorcycles and, although I did pass the IAM bike test in 1978, when it came to the thought of repeating this on four wheels, I always found some reason for putting it off for another day. Then, last spring, when browsing the*

*bookshelves at my parents' home I came across a yellow "Pass Your Advanced Driving Test" manual. This was published in 1996 and so my father had acquired it a long time after he took his own. As I scanned through its pages my interest was rekindled and eventually I stopped procrastinating and filled in an application form for the Advanced Driving Course.*

*My designated observer was Isobel Jennings and when I arrived at her farmhouse for my first drive, I was looking forward to impressing her with my skill behind the wheel. It did not take very long, however, for me to realise that I had a whole string of bad habits and lack of quite a few good ones! Under Isobel's patient and attentive instruction I had a series of drives, during which she fought tirelessly to change me from the clearly average driver I was into one good enough to pass the test. It often seemed like a very uphill struggle as I repeatedly slipped back into bad old ways. Isobel must have called "Mirror!" several hundred times over the course of our sessions together!*

*Despite her own very busy workload and my slow rate of progress, Isobel never hesitated in offering me further runs until eventually the penny began to drop and the driving system I*







was being taught started to work as a whole. What a revelation that was! One key factor in this change was that I was now putting in much more practice than I had been at the start. Somewhat belatedly I began to treat every drive between our sessions as if it were the test itself and by continuous repetitions the bits of the jigsaw slowly started to fit together. Two pre-test drives with Barry Keenan made a tremendous contribution to this improvement and, at his suggestion I began to study some of the many excellent YouTube videos on advanced and commentary driving.

Finally I was passed fit for the test and the days, and then the hours counted down until finally there I was in Taunton's B&Q car park, by now a complete bundle of nerves. There I met my examiner Andy Ware who radiated friendliness and calm so, despite myself, I soon settled down somewhat and he eased me into the test. By no means was it perfect but Andy was kind enough to award a pass and then talk me through all aspects of the drive and how further improvements could be made. During my homeward journey I had to work very hard to maintain full concentration on my driving as it dawned that I really had achieved the goal I had rashly set

myself all those months ago. To cause a collision now would not be the way to start my new life as a full member of the IAM! Looking back to where my driving standard was at the start of my sessions, I am somewhat shocked to realise how inadequate it was, despite the high opinion I had of it then. There is still much more work to do, more stuff to learn and I must constantly guard against relapses but I can at last justifiably think of myself as being an advanced driver, something I feel immensely proud of. In addition to being safer on the road I am now getting far more enjoyment out of driving, even in busy town situations which previously I found quite stressful.

For this transformation I am hugely indebted to Isobel, Barry and all the dedicated volunteers in the organization who so generously give their precious time, skill and knowledge to help people like myself become better drivers. I could not hope to meet nicer people and very much look forward to spending more time with them in the future, with the added bonus that this will now be as a colleague rather than a trainee!"

Best Regards

Andrew Harrison





## **“Why this car is automatic, it’s systematic, it’s hydromatic, why it’s grease lightning”**

**By Shaun Cronin, IAM RoadSmart’s Regional service delivery team manager (Southern)**

John Travolta couldn’t have sung it any better way back in the late 70’s, there he was talking about driving an automatic car in a systematic way. That’s what I think now I know about a little book called Roadcraft. Are you singing the tune in your head now? Yes, me too.

Driving a car fitted with an automatic gearbox should be straightforward; I mean how hard can it be? The gearbox practically does it all for you, ‘no need to touch it after putting it in drive sir’ said the Ford salesman way back in 1973 to my father as he parted with his hard earned for a Ford Consul L 2.5 litre V6 with an automatic gearbox. The venerable BorgWarner three speed auto was my first introduction to the world of driving with an automatic gearbox.

Automatics, so often sneered at by advanced driving traditionalists years ago, have come a long way. Technology has moved on dramatically in recent years but has the human factor?

I remember people being told you could not pass your advanced test in an automatic, then later ‘only if you drive it in manual mode’ as that is what the examiner wants! What rubbish. Most modern automatic gearboxes are now so clever with their multiple modes you rarely need to touch them, just select the right mode for the job.

The IAM RoadSmart Associate Logbook is very clear where it refers to the use of an automatic gearbox.

- Be aware how to correctly select gears using either paddles or gear selector
- Be aware of additional functions and modes

But how will you know what to do? Try something that so many of us just don’t do – read the owner’s manual. I checked the Mercedes manual for the new C Class, there are nine very detailed pages dedicated to the use of the automatic transmission.





If drivers just did that simple thing they would get so much more out of their car. Roadcraft (page 100-103) echoes the same advice as in red text it says 'Always consult the vehicle handbook to understand the features of a particular automatic system.'

However, there are occasions where a manual intervention is desirable, for example when descending a hill. Roadcraft tells us 'A lower gear also restrains the vehicle's speed when descending a slope.'

I remember once being told by someone: "I don't like automatics as they run away on hills." I didn't feel it appropriate at that point to suggest a more likely cause was a driver input error!

Another automatic classic is what to do when stopped in traffic? Constantly moving it to park every time the vehicle is paused in traffic is a common error, Roadcraft, in red again, offers 'Check the advice in the vehicle manual as systems vary.' In truth most automatic gearbox systems advise you not to change to 'park' unless actually stopping to park.

The system of car control does not change when driving an automatic. Bad habits can creep in like losing speed late, entering bends

on the brakes etc. It is still 'brakes to slow and gears to go' so get the speed on approach right, this gives the car time to select the gear for the circumstances, then drive. Many modern automatic gearboxes are adaptive, they learn as you drive and get used to your driver inputs. With that in mind don't fall into another classic trap. As Roadcraft also says 'don't fiddle with the gearbox repeatedly. As automatic systems become more sophisticated they need less driver input.'

I'm told that the Volkswagen dual clutch transmission is one of the quickest automatics out there swapping cogs in around eight milliseconds. Yet I know people who say they personally can still do it quicker in a manual, ahem, I think not.

In closing and returning to Mr Travolta once again, I wondered what hydromatic meant in the song. It just so happens that the hydromatic was the first mass-produced automatic gearbox manufactured by General Motors in 1939. See the song really was about gearboxes all along. So sing along now, 'we'll get some overhead lifters and some four barrel quads, oh yeah, keep talking whoa keep talking...' Enjoy the drive.





# The offside rule

By Shaun Cronin IAM RoadSmart's Regional service delivery team manager

I'm more of a rugby man than football in truth but my true interests are in motorsport and motorcycling in all its various guises. In field sport the offside rule is often discussed and is the subject of numerous video replays each weekend at sporting fixtures.

You get the chance in slow-motion and high definition to replay the event over and over and often the worst that happens is the referee blows their whistle and declares that the attempt or goal is disallowed. However, on the public road, getting the offside rule wrong can have catastrophic consequences.

Straight lining, apexing, taking the racing line and offsidings are some of the names used to describe being on the 'wrong side of the road'. But exactly what is the wrong side of the road? We pay a lot of vehicle excise duty and all of that glorious tarmac is available to us, isn't it? I mean as an advanced driver or rider we all know we can use it in certain circumstances and it just depends doesn't it?

Ask your average road user what they think about seeing a vehicle or motorcycle on the opposite carriageway to their norm and they will cry 'dangerous'. Ah, and here is the first lesson - perception.

We must be careful of the perception our actions have on other road users. At best they may wave at us in a rather less than encouraging way, at worst they may take avoiding action such that bent metal and twisted bodies are the result.

With the help of my colleague, Richard Gladman, IAM RoadSmart's head of driving and riding standards, here is your definitive guide to this subject. But first of all, just what is offsidings? It is the practice of moving to the offside of the road across either centre line markings or hazard line markings on the approach to a left hand bend where you do not have a view around the bend.

Generally when practised it is in an attempt to encourage the limit point of vision to match/





open quicker and allow a greater speed of approach. Issues often arise when a vehicle comes into view and your movement required to adopt a position of safety is sudden and often coarse. The oncoming vehicle could react to your presence and this may cause a chain reaction behind it.

At speeds within the posted limit the benefit of this extreme offside positioning is all but negated, even in Roadcraft, whose focus is on progress for emergency service drivers, the practice of offsidings is not mentioned or encouraged.

It advocates positioning towards the centre line and they encourage you to consider approaching traffic, your effect on others and whether there is any advantage at all very much in sync with the IAM RoadSmart advanced course material. They finish by saying 'don't position yourself in a way that causes concern to other road users'.

What is not offsidings?

- Adopting a straight line through a series of bends where you have a clear view of the road and the road surface (road markings

permitting) i.e. 'The road is mine until the loss of vision in 400yds, my mirrors are clear so I am adopting a straight and stable course.'

- Opening up the radius of a bend where vision is available of any potential oncoming traffic or other hazards on a generally open road.
- Moving out to make a planned safe overtake and then finding yourself with a fantastic view which allows you to maintain your progress before returning to your own side of the road.

There is a phrase that will help you decide when you can apply the offside rule in safety but I reiterate we never simply 'offside' on the approach to a left hand bend.

Picture the scene; I'm on a National observer driver assessment with an observer take for instance Alex from the Basingstoke Car Group. I see the road ahead is weaving like a snake on a mission, the road surface is visible for about half a mile and nothing else is in sight, so I ask – 'can I straighten this out?' Alex said you need to SLAP. Clearly I slightly misheard him and thought, this type of punishment is rarely handed out on test to an examiner!







He went on to explain that when you are considering straightening out a corner, but never 'offsiding' and using the other side of the road you need to consider the acronym SLAP.

**S**afe – is it safe to do so? (Considering the view available and any hazards)

**L**egal – Is it legal to do it? (Road markings)

**A**chieve – Does it actually achieve something? (Or are you just showboating)

**P**erception – What is the perception of another road user of your actions?

Taking Richard's clear and unambiguous guidance on when you can cross the paint, then considering 'SLAP' as your guiding principle, you should be able to master the offside rule in complete safety remembering the quote in Roadcraft - Quiet efficiency is the hallmark of the expert.

Enjoy the drive.

## Drive with Julia

I am a female driving instructor based in Langport, Somerset, supporting tests at the Yeovil and Taunton test centres. I am proud to be a member of the IAM and passed with a F1RST.



I provide high quality driving lessons in a diesel Peugeot 208, using resources and teaching styles designed to meet each learners needs, as I understand we all learn differently.

If you are interested in learning to drive, please contact me by phone: 07738573482 or by email: [drivewithjulia@gmail.com](mailto:drivewithjulia@gmail.com)

I also have lots of information on my Website [www.juliabeerdrivinginstructor.com](http://www.juliabeerdrivinginstructor.com) so do have a look.



# The Practical Driving test is changing

By Sarah Fisk, IAM RoadSmart's DDR training and driver education manager

If you didn't know the Practical Driving test is changing on December 4th 2017.

The intention is to make the driving test similar to "real life". I am sure most of you have heard people say: "you learn to drive after passing your test". These changes will make the test more realistic to the candidate demonstrating that they are ready to face driving in today's modern driving conditions.

## So what's changing?

In comes...

- 20 minutes of independent driving following a Sat Nav
- Driving in and reversing out of a parking bay
- Parking on the right
- Candidates will need to show the examiner that they can perform certain "show me" questions while driving i.e. using the windscreen wipers, opening the windows

Increasing the independent driving element will allow examiners to assess the candidate's

ability to manage distractions and drive safely on higher-risk roads where statistically, new drivers have the most crashes.

Out goes...

- Reversing around the corner
- Turn in the road (three point turn to some of you)

Sat Navs are now used by the majority of drivers and whilst useful. If you have used one I am sure you agree that they can be a massive distraction – "turn left now" I have sometimes thought do you really mean now? And "In 300 yards turn..." some people would struggle to judge this.

Introducing using these in the driving test all helps the examiner to assess if the candidate has the ability to manage this distraction safely.

The ability to use certain controls while driving can potentially take your eyes off the road – so all a positive step to ensure drivers can manage distractions i.e. fumbling for fog lights or opening the window whilst driving.





Parking on the right on a busy road can have some challenges with oncoming traffic including then moving away.

The new driving test means there will be less time driving around the back streets during driving tests looking for a suitable place to carry out a manoeuvre.

I can only speak for the Cardiff area, but currently many driving tests in Cardiff do not allow the candidate to go above 30 mph. The new test will allow time to get onto open and rural roads meaning that examiners can test a more realistic drive in situations where new drivers are more likely to crash.

As an experienced driving instructor, I have spent several hours with some learner drivers practicing reversing around a corner, all taking time away from developing the forward drive. If people are going to drive into the supermarket bay frontwards so they can get their shopping in the boot and reverse out, it makes sense that people are taught this skill, so that they are aware of how to carry out the manoeuvre safely.

The new driving test will encourage driving instructors to teach certain skills, rather than

just practice certain manoeuvres and test routes, all helping to better prepare the new driver to manage distractions and drive independently.

These changes will help to make the driving test more realistic to the challenges of modern driving. This all assists to better prepare the learner driver to be able to drive on their own in that critical period after passing their test. This is all in a concerted effort to help reduce the number of people killed or injured on our roads making our roads even safer.

Some residents should be delighted as examiners won't be using residential areas for reversing around a corner and the turn in the road, so consequently I am sure Driving Instructors will not be on these roads as much.

If you are a qualified driver or rider reading this – look out – as I am sure you will notice an increase in learner drivers in car parks and driving on faster roads.

I believe these changes are a positive move to raise standards and improve the chances of newly qualified drivers remaining safe once they pass their driving test.





## Recent Releases from the IAM Press Office

### Give a hoot, don't pollute

The planet will survive... the question is, whether we will be here to live and enjoy it?

Littering and packing unnecessary weight in our cars are factors that are heavily impacting the environment. This week's tips give advice on riding and driving for the benefit of the earth, from IAM RoadSmart's head of driving and riding standards Richard Gladman.

Always place rubbish in a bin or bag it for later. Nobody likes a litterbug; drivers who litter face automatic fines of around £75 but this is set to increase to £150 under current government plans. The fines apply to drivers and they will also be held personally responsible for any litter thrown out by their passengers.

For multiple car owners in one household, why not car share? If you are doing the morning commute it is better to have fewer cars on the road and also can save money on fuel consumption. Park and ride can also be a green option with new services being added all the time. If you must drive only carry what is needed. Declutter the boot as the extra weight makes your engine work harder, leading to increased fuel consumption.

Let's not be idle. Leaving your engine running when you are not moving or parked wastes a lot of fuel and is illegal. Start your engine when you are about to move, and if your vehicle is fitted with stop-start make sure you know how to properly use it.

Plan your journey; getting lost or stuck in traffic wastes fuel.

Check your tyre pressures as underinflated tyres waste valuable fuel. And while you are at it remove any unused roof racks or roof boxes. Keeping windows closed at high speeds reduces drag but go gentle on the air conditioning and other electrical extras as they are well known to be more demanding on the engine. Do you really need the heated seats on in summer?

Richard said: "A small amount of planning and preparation will go a long way in minimising your carbon footprint; an added bonus is the money you save on fuel. Keeping your car in tip-top condition with regular servicing is essential but at the end of the day your driving style will have the biggest impact. Remember if you stop on route don't leave your litter for others to clear up."







## Hold your horses: tips from IAM RoadSmart

Horses are powerful animals and have extremely heightened senses. They are 'flight' animals, so many revert to their natural instincts at any time. The outcome of this can be extremely challenging for the rider and other road users. There have been 2,570 road incidents reported to the British Horse Society in the last six years. Some 38 riders have been killed and 222 horses have died as a result of their injuries. Of these incidents 80% are because vehicle passed too fast or too close to the horse. This week's tips give advice on riding and driving around horses from IAM RoadSmart's head of driving and riding standards, Richard Gladman.

If you are approaching a horse from behind, hold back whilst getting enough information to pass safely. Do not get any closer than three car lengths and be careful not to creep into this space. Be prepared to slow down further or even stop to protect this space. Avoid sudden movements as horses may react. They can move incredibly quickly

Don't spook them. Actions such as sounding your horn, revving your engine and playing loud music can spook the horse. Always drive gently and predictably. Remember there are three brains working, the driver's, the rider's and the horse's

Make sure you give the rider enough space when passing them. We recommend at least a car's width and make sure this is done slowly – remember always pass "slow and wide," good advice is no more than 15mph. Often when riding two abreast it is for safety reasons, an inexperienced rider or a nervous animal being coached along by a more experienced companion.

Keep an eye out for the rider. They will often give you signals asking you to stop or slow down. Riders will often acknowledge a safe pass but remember their top priority is to keep their hands on the reins and maintain control of the horse.

Always accelerate gently once you have passed the horse. A rider and the horse may both be inexperienced and nervous in traffic

Richard said: "Dealing safely with horses is a classic example of where applying the rules of good driving helps us to share space safely. Use the information around you; road signs, horses in fields, horse muck on the road or signs to an equestrian centre are all clues to help you anticipate meeting riders on the road. Controlling your speed so that you can deal with the unexpected is very important in rural areas. After that be sensible, don't get too close and 'wide and slow' is the mantra.





## Is parking the bigger picture? Tips from IAM RoadSmart

Many of us can find parking and looking for the right spot quite challenging but sometimes we also forget about checking our surroundings when we leave the car. A few simple checks can avoid costly and irritating car park mistakes and make your trip a lot less stressful. This week's tips give advice on parking from IAM RoadSmart's head of driving and riding standards, Richard Gladman.

- Pick the right spot. If you are out with friends or off to watch a movie alone, be conscious of the area in which you choose to park. The far end of a dark car park may not be the safest choice for a lone traveller returning late at night
- Costs of parking. Always carry change, a mobile phone or a bank card. If you are not a change carrier leave a few coins in your coin compartment and close the lid
- Timing is everything. Try not to choose a location you know will be busy at peak times or wait for the key time when the parking regulations change. Always check the local sign posts and markings as ignorance is no defence. Definitions of days such as bank holidays can also vary between places. If in doubt ask a parking attendant. Technically you should have a few minutes grace to get back to

your car but it's not worth the risk as fines are always much more than the parking charge

- Take your time. Don't succumb to the pressure of time or people around you. Rushing could lead to costly mistakes
- Be on the lookout. Always check whether a parking permit is required and take note of where you parked. In a strange city or a huge car park it can be easy to lose your car. There are several parking apps available that you can use. If you are really worried about finding your car, a sticker in the windscreen may help
- Spot the danger signs – for example parking next to the trolley bay on a Saturday afternoon, broken glass in the darkest corners or parking next to a scruffy vehicle or people carrier. Young children don't tend to think about other cars when they fling the doors open

Richard said: "The competition for parking spaces can be really fierce in some towns and cities. By staying calm and giving yourself time, flexibility and a good grounding in local knowledge you will stand a much better chance of bagging that perfect space. If you want to stay healthy and save money then parking a little further away and walking can be a win – win."





## Tony Greenidge becomes IAM RoadSmart Business Development Director

IAM RoadSmart has appointed Tony Greenidge as its new Business Development Director.

Tony brings with him more than two decades of experience in the fleet and sales sectors and fills a newly created role for the charity.

He will be responsible for the Sales and Driver Retraining Academy operations (which offers drink-drive rehabilitation courses), as well as the charity's commercial arm, Driving for Work.

Most recently Tony has spent nearly three years as Sales and Marketing Director for Fleet Operations, a company which has grown by 40% during his time there to become the UK's largest independent provider of outsourced fleet management services.

Tony has a wealth of fleet industry experience that includes two separate spells at car leasing company Arval; a highly successful spell at automotive retail and services giant Inchcape, where he broke all records for business sales in a one year period; and three years as Head of Sales at Hitachi Capital Vehicle Solutions, during which time the company secured the Centrica fleet contract and delivered record turnover and profit figures.

Tony has also successfully run his own consulting business offering sales related services that



included 1-2-1 and group sales training and general business development solutions.

Father-of-three Tony said: "What appealed to me about the role here at IAM RoadSmart was the fact that my success will fund a range of initiatives that have the potential to make a real and positive impact to the numbers of people killed and seriously injured (KSI) on our roads.

"For me, the opportunity to make a small difference to those KSI figures gives me a very different but rewarding desire to be successful and if we as a business can achieve our goals it will create an immense sense of job satisfaction."

In his spare time Tony, who lives in Wiltshire with his wife, is a keen sportsman; enjoying football, squash and badminton.





## David becomes the new face of young drivers at IAM RoadSmart as he takes on ambassador role

After the completion of its 'Get Into The Driving Seat' recruitment competition, IAM RoadSmart has announced that David Gallagher will be its next Younger Driver Ambassador for 2017/18.

David, 23, from Sedgley near Wolverhampton, triumphed in the closely fought contest, which saw him and a number of other finalists get a grilling from a team of judges that included the 1992 Formula 1 World Champion Nigel Mansell, IAM RoadSmart Chief Executive Officer Sarah Sillars, and founder of First Car magazine James Evans.

David follows in the footsteps of Eloise Peabody-Rolf, who has successfully held the position of Younger Driver Ambassador from last September to August 2017. The following month she goes to university.







The role, which is a one year internship, was widely promoted through IAM RoadSmart's communication channels and via a nationwide media campaign.

The Younger Driver Ambassador is a high-profile position with the successful candidate becoming the voice of younger drivers nationwide. In his new role David will take on a variety of responsibilities including lobbying for change within the organisation, travelling up and down the country visiting schools and colleges, and working with the charity's 200+ groups throughout the UK as they look to attract younger drivers to the IAM RoadSmart community.

David's car credentials go back a long way. He learnt to drive unofficially age 11 on private land and confesses to being into 'anything with an engine' including ride-on lawnmowers!

Passing his driving test first time age 17, David

became involved in his local IAM RoadSmart group in Wolverhampton, rapidly becoming their young driver representative. He also took the Advanced Driving Test and achieved a F1RST standard.

Since leaving school David has held a variety of jobs including assistant to club photographer and groundsman at West Bromwich Albion and swimming coach at Bilston Swimming Club. Now with six years of driving experience without a single incident, David now drives a Skoda Superb.

"I am delighted to have landed the job and can't wait to get started. I feel it's really important to get younger drivers interested in what IAM RoadSmart can offer while they are still in the learning mind-set. I really hope I can make a difference, even in a small way."

David starts his new role with IAM RoadSmart at the beginning of September.





**Closing date for the winter 2017 edition  
of the Wessex Advanced Motorists e-  
Newsletter is 20<sup>th</sup> October.**

**All contributions would be very  
welcome.**

**All items should be sent to  
[ed@wessexam.uk](mailto:ed@wessexam.uk) or  
by mail to David Walton at  
Little Paddocks, White Street,  
North Curry,  
Taunton TA3 6HL**