

e-NEWSLETTER



WESSEX ADVANCED MOTORISTS



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WESSEX ADVANCED MOTORISTS

e-NEWSLETTER

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Chairman's Corner



Chairman's Report from 2017 AGM

Good evening ladies and gentlemen and welcome to the first AGM under our new name of Wessex Advanced Motorists.

We are joined this evening by Sarah Sillars, Chief Executive of IAM RoadSmart. We'll be hearing from Sarah later but you have to endure me first – I'm the "warm-up act"!

It's been an interesting and challenging year full of change and progression. I won't go through the detail but I will mention two major changes that we, as an IAM RoadSmart Group, have seen through. Firstly, all of our Observers qualified as IAM RoadSmart Local Observers - the Institute of the Motor Industry Observer Qualification. We achieved this ahead of the deadline thanks to the hard work of our Assessors (Barry, David and myself) and the Observers themselves.



By Andrew Griffiths





Secondly, and perhaps of most significance for our Group, is our rebranding to Wessex Advanced Motorists, which resulted from a 50% geographical increase in the area our Group covers. We now have responsibility for North Devon following the demise of the RoadSmart Group in Barnstaple in March this year. We have carried the name of Taunton Group of Advanced Motorists for 20 years and before that we were a part of the Exeter group. So a rebrand is a significant event in the Group's history. It is fantastic that Sarah herself is the first IAM RoadSmart official to address Wessex Advanced Motorists.

Our Group has moved from strength to strength and I thank all who have made it so. I am very fortunate to have such a proactive Committee and despite losing a couple of people, we have worked very hard to keep things moving along. We now stand at six... but this is from a membership of 150.

With such a busy year for our modest size Group, we haven't been able to achieve all we set out to achieve. Disappointingly, little progress has been made to develop the young driver strategy I made a Group objective 12

months ago. Additionally we were forced to withdraw last minute from a public event in Watchet due to ill-health and urgent family matters; we have no resilience in numbers at all due to lack of volunteers so without that resilience we had to forfeit our pitch fee of £50 which came out of Group funds. These events are very important in raising public awareness in higher driving standards for road safety, and we arrange free assessments drives through our Group Coordinator which can lead to new Associate members. It is important that we maintain a presence in public events and to do that we need more members to muck in.

It cannot and should not continue to fall to the same handful of volunteers (mainly Committee members and some of the Observers) all the time. And unless more of you "muck in", there are likely to be more casualties this coming year. All events we arrange or participate in are posted on our new website; take a look and see which ones you can help with and let Barry, our events coordinator, know.

You will sense my frustration. I make no apology whatsoever in airing the facts but I must say it as it is.





Committee

And so, moving on. I would like to thank members of the Committee who have yet again done a sterling job. What you see is the tip of the iceberg; the outputs... what you don't see are the inputs; here is some detail for you.

- David Walton, our Group Secretary, Membership Secretary, Newsletter Editor and (new) Website Manager seems to have the ability to change hats between these roles seamlessly; he puts an enormous amount of time and energy into his work with no expectation of praise or acknowledgment; and we on the Committee respect this by giving him none! Please take a look at our new website, www.wessexam.uk and tell us what you think.
 - Isobel Jennings, our Group Treasurer, despite being the only Committee member in full full-time employment, manages to find time to improve the way our Group funds are managed, how bills are paid quickly and efficiently and has to correct every expense claim I send her way, which she does with such eloquence... yeah right, it usually is a
- phone call from her beginning with "Andrew, you've done it again, you amaze me!".
- John Gilbert, our Group Associate Coordinator, is responsible for managing the journey each of our Associates takes from being assigned an Observer to registering them for test on completion of their training. He is becoming increasingly busy as our Associate numbers increase and is now standing at 21 currently going through their courses.
 - Mike Wotton, our Observer Resources Officer who ensures all Observers are equipped with the tools of the trade from training material to official branded clothing. He is the only person in the Group to know our vital statistics.
 - Barry Keenan, our Events Coordinator who seems to have an inexhaustible amount of enthusiasm and energy. He has 12 months of events already booked for you and, of course, arranges outside events which play a crucial part in promoting better driving standards for road safety across our geographical area of responsibility. His wit is





only exceeded by his ruthless sarcasm and this makes our committee meetings memorable - especially for his victims.

- And of course, Brian Howe, our Group Honorary President who casts words of wisdom to anyone who will listen... and even to those who won't.
- And to complete the committee, there's me of course who has the unenviable task of keeping this motley bunch in order. They all do a great job and I thank them all for everything they do for our Group.

Observers

In addition to the huge commitment they each give to the Group, Barry, David, Isobel and Mike are also IMI qualified Observers and join another group of hard working volunteers, our Observers. Bear in mind that without Observers, the Group wouldn't exist as an IAM RoadSmart Group. We'd be a car club! They do a great job that many do not see but for the excellent results we achieve which has been a steady 100% pass rate for almost the entire year.

Our Observer cadre has grown to 3 Nationals with me as Chief Observer, and 10 locals; Delphine King, a National Observer, joined us in March when the Barnstaple Group closed and she covers 5 postcode areas from Lynton across to Barnstaple and Torrington. Paul Green, Guy Tucker and Paul Crowe all qualified as Local Observer very recently following extensive training with Barry and myself. They are already taking their own Associates forward on the Advanced Driver Course, putting something back into the Group. On behalf of our members, welcome aboard Paul, Guy and Paul and thank you.

Sadly we said goodbye to David Perkins, our N.O. in Yeovil. David and his wife Jo relocated to Solihull in August to be nearer family there. I visited them just before they moved and presented David with a tyre (yes a tyre... turned from Ash by my fair hand and with a clock in the centre) and Jo with some flowers. David hopes to continue to offer his observing skills in Solihull and on behalf of Wessex I wish him and Jo all the very best for their future "up't'north".





With my Chief Observer hat on, I want to say how much I value what our Observers do for Wessex and for IAM RoadSmart. Between them, they achieve excellent results. Thank you all very much.

And so to Janet Loader. What can I say? Janet is standing down as our raffle organiser. We have all been victims of her stealth-like approach in separating us from our money. One flutter of her eyelids at the men and a smile for the ladies and she's got you! Thank you Janet for all you've done to support our Group not just with the raffle but in previous roles on the Committee; you've done your bit and now you can relax... after tonight! I will now ask our President Brian Howe to present Janet with a bouquet of flowers on behalf of us all.

This means we need a volunteer to take over the raffle from Janet. PLEASE don't think the committee will absorb this task... it can't! The raffle helps Group funds so it would be a real pity to lose it. So before we leave tonight I want a volunteer please, or even 2 to share... come and speak to any Committee member.

Re-election

My Chairman's report at the 2016 AGM stated that I wouldn't be standing for re-election this year. With so much happening in the Group since then, I feel we need some stability which I can help with by offering myself for re-election. I do this because I care about our Group and its sustainability for a solid future.

Chairman's Award

And so to the Chairman's Award. I reminded myself what it says on the award "outstanding service". Please don't think that this is awarded by rotation. It has to be deserved and my decision is final. And I'm awarding it this year to a person who has not only pulled out all the stops to deliver success in their own area of responsibility but who has supported others to achieve theirs, including me. The recipient of this award does this of their own free will and with no hidden agenda, offering help in best interests. They have played what I would call "a blinder". They have seemingly endless enthusiasm, energy and determination. So this year in what is, I believe, unprecedented, I am the delighted to give this award to Barry Keenan for the second year running.





We've all benefitted from Barry's efforts in producing an interesting events agenda throughout the year. One example is our annual classic car show in July which saw a record 65 vehicles on display; this took a huge amount of organising by Barry and I will also pay tribute here to Maggie, Barry's long suffering wife, who helped him make the event a resounding success. As an aside, our PA system failed on the night and an American squad car on display came to the rescue as it had its own PA system on board... innovative huh? The Mayor of Taunton Deane, Hazel Prior-Sankey, officiated and genuinely took great pleasure in presenting IAM RoadSmart test Certificates to our recent successful candidates. Barry already has plans to make it an even better next year and this includes the catering (oh and the PA system!).

...and he's already booked guest speakers for our members' evenings up to December (December 2018 that is!). He's now arranging our participation at public events in 2018 and

these include the West Somerset Steam Rally and the Somerset Road Safety Motofest at Haynes; his biggest challenge is to penetrate North Devon and increase our presence there. He will be asking for volunteers and I remind you of my frustration I mentioned earlier...

And please please, please can someone rise to the challenge and take this award from him next year otherwise it will go to his head and he'll be even more unbearable than usual!

And as I close my Chairman's report, I'd like to thank all of our members for being a part of Wessex Advanced Motorists, I'd like to congratulate all who successfully completed their Advanced Driver Course to become full members of IAM RoadSmart and welcome to those starting or are about to start their training; enjoy the course and become one of the most skilled drivers on Britain's roads.

Thank you all for listening,

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



GROUP OBSERVERS



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

Group observers must be fully paid up Wessex 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



NOVEMBER

14	T	9:30am till 7:00pm	Somerset Social Services Choices for Life
15	W	7:30pm	Members' Evening – A talk by Mark Evans, Waterway Manager Bridgwater & Taunton Canal, about the history & future of the Taunton Canal.

DECEMBER

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

FEBRUARY

	W	7:30pm	Members' Evening – Deaf Awareness
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MARCH

	W	7:30pm	Members' Evening – The safety of horse & rider on the county's roads
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PRESIDENT'S PONDERINGS



President's Profile

For those members who don't know me very well or who have more recently joined WAM having passed the IAM RoadSmart Advanced Driving Test, and those experienced members who have joined us through the geographical changes to the area we now cover under our new name - I particularly welcome Delphine and any other members who have joined WAM from our previously neighbouring, Barnstaple and North Devon Group of Advanced Motorists - here is a (hopefully) brief profile of WAM's Hon. President.

I am 68 years old and I have lived in or near Taunton for nearly 30 years, having previously hailed from Dorking, Surrey. I have been married to Alice for 49 years and we have two grown children, five grown up grandchildren and three great grandchildren ranging from 1 year to 4½ years. I passed the standard car test at my first attempt in January 1967 at the age of 17 yrs. And here, I must give thanks to my now sadly departed driving instructor, Mr McKinley, who was a retired Police Driving Examiner at Hendon Police College.



by Brian Howe





I started doing school runs in an 8-seat mini-bus for Brendon Motors of Bishops Lydeard in early 1989. In 1991 I passed the old PSV4 (mini-bus) test at the second attempt having had no formal training. I did however, have formal training for the PSV1 (coach/double decker) test in 1995, graciously paid for by my then employer, Mr Ian Cook of Cook's Coaches at Whiteball, Wellington. It was while I was driving for Mr Cook, that I happened across the IAM stand at the International Motor Show, NEC, Birmingham in 1996. I signed up straight away and passed the IAM Advanced Driving Test (private car) in January 1997. I also trained and passed as a Group Qualified Observer in 1997, and joined the TGAM Group Committee in October of the same year.

It was at about this time that I diversified and started chauffeuring Lincoln Town Car, American stretch limousines. The longest being 27 feet 6 inches in length, powered by a 5.3 litre V8 engine. This was followed by a period of taxi driving, both Private Hire saloon cars and London Taxis in and around the Taunton area. I finally found my way back to mini-bus/coach driving, with Mr Ian Stanford of

Hatch Green Coaches, Hatch Beauchamp in 2001. It was while I was driving for Mr Stanford that I observed myself, to pass the IAM Advanced Commercial Driving test in February 2004 (hence the blue badge as well as the red).



I have now been a member of the IAM for 21 years and I have served on the TGAM Committee for the biggest part of 20 years, barring two breaks for ill health including heart by-pass surgery in 2007 and surgery for an arthritic shoulder in 2008. Six of those years were served as Group Chairman. I was asked





back to the Committee in 2012 as a caretaker Chairman, following the unexpected departure of the serving Chairman of the time. I continued in this role until the 2012 AGM despite voluntarily sending my driving licence back to DVLA following a combined Angina/Vertigo attack whilst driving and was succeeded by our current Chairman, Mr Andrew Griffiths. Shortly after that I was invited to take up the vacant role of Group Honorary President. I still attend all committee meetings and have previously attended a great number of RLF's (Regional Liaison Forums), AGM's of most, if not all, our neighbouring Groups, and many, many other meetings, events and quizzes of our Group and others. I have worked with 2 very fine and very knowledgeable past Presidents, both now sadly deceased, and 2 excellent Chairmen. Perhaps that's where the *wise words* (alluded to by the Chairman at our recent AGM) come from. But I think I was, and still am, more than a few *wise words*.

It was my interest in classic cars that started the Annual Classic Car meeting in the car park of Monkton Heathfield village hall, ably assisted

by Kevin Gould-Grose, and my interest in working steam and heritage transport that inspired us to regularly have a stand at the West Somerset Railway Steam Rally. I had also organised the Annual Christmas Lunch at Oake Manor for the last few years. It was only in the last year or so that I handed the reigns of these events to our extremely efficient Events Coordinator, Mr Barry Keenan.

I felt that the time was right to slow down a bit and reluctantly give in just a little to my health. Each condition is individually manageable and fairly well managed with medication, but, put all three together, (Angina, Vertigo/poor balance and general Osteoarthritis) and this does something to the psyche causing a mild sense of lethargy. I know 68 is not OLD, but it certainly isn't YOUNG either, I just felt the time was right.

The Group, now called Wessex Advanced Motorists, is ticking like a very expensive Swiss watch. And I take this opportunity to publicly give my thanks and gratitude for the hard work of the National and Local Observers, the Group Committee Members and our Chairman, Andrew Griffiths.

Brian Howe



MEMBERS' PAGE



Advanced Driving Test Passes

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

OBSERVED BY	
Guy Tucker	Hugh Todd
Robin Russell	Barry Keenan
Kenneth Priest (F1RST)	Godfrey Davey
Simon Waldron	Barry Keenan/Paul Green
Jane Lawrence	Brian Dodd
Richard Earthy (F1RST)	Hugh Todd

We currently have 150 members, though some have yet to renew so far this year. We have 27 active associates.

Year to date stats:	group	region avg.
Pass rate %	95	85
No. of F1RSTS	7	5.1
No. of observers	13	27.3
New Associates	38	39

The Membership Register

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

	TOWN
Mark Rhodes	Bridgwater
Jason Pratt	Westward Ho!
Keri-Anne Pentecost-Haslam	Bude
Tina Ham	Bridgwater
Karl Williams	Bridgwater
Malcolm Champion	Chard
Helen Pinckney	Bicknoller
Natalie Jagger	Taunton
Evan Dyer	Wincanton
Irvine Hall	Taunton
Pauline Wills	Bridgwater
Valerie Burt	Huish Episcopi
Morag Owen-Burke	Ilchester
Patricia Kennedy	Taunton
Anne Bull	Taunton
Catherine Spencer	Warminster

Events Corner



Well would you believe it? Another quarter has flown by and here we are fast approaching the end of the year! I tell you, I seriously can't believe how fast this year has flown by, I really can't. It seems like it was only a few weeks ago that it all started.

Much has been happening over the last few months. But the first and major thing to mention is that (as if you didn't already know) our re-branding from the Taunton Group of Advanced Motorists to Wessex Advanced Motorists is now complete.

You'd think that a simple re-branding exercise would be just that, wouldn't you? Simple. But it really wasn't and took a lot of effort by everybody involved. However, despite all the behind the scenes work that was done, the most tangible thing that we, the members, will have noticed, is our really great, fresh looking website. If you haven't seen it yet follow this link and have a gander. You'll be impressed. www.wessexam.uk

All of this is down to our very own David Walton. Secretary, Newsletter Editor and all round good egg.



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





What a trouper he is. For example, I know how tirelessly he worked to get the Wessex website up and running. And I know that, as uncomplaining as he is, he often felt that pulling his own teeth with a pair of rusty pliers would be more preferable to slaving away on the transition from the old TGAM site to the new Wessex site!

And yet! He persevered and the result is that we, the members, have a brand, spanking new website fit for the 21st century whilst he (poor old love) has a bad case of physical fatigue and emotional exhaustion.

And all of this on top of his other Secretarial & Newslettering duties as well as his own general living requirements. He's a star, I tells you. A star!

I tell you what, though; I bet he won't want to see another website rebuild for as long as he lives. No stamina. That's his trouble!

II

So aside from the completion of the re-branding, what else has been happening?

On the 5th & 6th August we attended the annual West Somerset Steam Fayre at Norton

Fitzwarren. As ever this was a cracking event and very well organised. They had a really great display of vintage and classic cars, bikes, commercials and steam engines etc. and it was a real pleasure to see them all.

Certainly, as I stood at the arena watching all of the classic cars drive by, it was like stepping back into any High Street of the 60s and 70s; there were just that many cars from my youth. (I'm older than my youthful good looks betray). I have to say that I was quite weak with nostalgia. And just having some time to wander around and speak to some of the owners was a real treat.

From a Wessex point of view, the footfall was quite good (even though the weather wasn't; especially on the Saturday) and we got quite a few people into the tent to talk to us. Unfortunately for us, not all of them were from our region but for those who weren't, at least we were able to direct them to their own nearby groups. So, a loss for us, but still an overall gain for the IAM.

Sadly the same couldn't be said for the Somerset Road Safety event at The Fleet Air Arm Museum at Yeovilton on 9th and 10th of





September. The weekend was a complete washout. There were intermittent heavy downpours on Saturday but on Sunday the heavens just opened! (Post Hurricane Irma). Although the Wessex tent withstood the deluge, (I'm told) other exhibitors did not. I have to say that I was away in Kent at the time so I missed all of the trauma and disappointment of the days, but my sincere thanks to all those Yeovil and Taunton chaps who rallied round and manned the tent in my absence.

I've since spoken with Neil Sedgwick, the organiser for Somerset Road Safety and despite all of his efforts being washed away, he's remarkably sanguine about it all and is already looking forward to trying again next year. Once again, we're invited so let's hope for better weather and a really good weekend.

Our Member's Evening of 20th September saw us hosting the Regional Quiz. Aside from us, obviously, we had teams from three of our neighbouring groups. Weston & Mendip, Bath and Bristol. A really good night was had by all and the winners were Bath who scored 70 out of a possible 100.

Our esteemed President, Brian Howe, was away on his annual hols during this most august of regional events, so here's Andrew presenting the winning team with their trophy. And very well deserved it was too!



Aside from the 4 'official' teams, we also had 5 un-official teams from the various regions. For our part, we fielded 3 teams one of them being the Mayoral Team of Hazel & Adrian Prior-Sankey and Sam Smalldon their official driver, who all attended as ordinary guests and clearly had a whale of a time!





As you can see, not in the least camera-shy, Andrew also took the opportunity to present Ken Priest with his pass certificate.



Ken scored a very respectable F1RST, on his test with a clear list of all 1's on his score sheet. His Observer was our man in Yeovil, Godfrey Davey, so all congratulations to the both of them for a job very well done. Absolutely brilliant!

October was a busy 'behind the scenes' month starting our bi-monthly Committee Meeting on the 4th. We've got a really good committee at the moment, but sadly during the year, two of

our stalwarts, Matt Murray and Andy Mayes were forced to say goodbye to the committee simply to have the time to meet their responsibilities outside of the WAM family. (There's life outside of WAM?!) A shame for both the committee and the membership in general because they brought a whole new dynamic to the running of the group. (If you'd like to come back, fellas, we could certainly do with you!)

As an aside, remember that whilst our committee meetings are closed affairs, if you would like to raise an issue for discussion by the committee, then please contact David Walton (secretary@wessexam.uk) and he'll make sure that your item is put on the agenda for debate.

Our AGM was held on the 18th and what a great turnout we had for that!

Andrew, David and Isobel were re-elected as our Chairman, Secretary and Treasurer respectively and guess what? I was nominated (thanks, Serena Lonton. What on earth have I ever done to you?) and subsequently elected as the new Vice-Chairman. I even got to bang the gavel to call people to order! Oh, the power!





Sadly it was at the AGM that Janet Loader retired as organiser of the raffle. She initially started the raffle some years ago as a means of funding our annual Classic Car Show supper, and over the years has raised hundreds, if not thousands of pounds for the group. As she says, the duties are not onerous but it does need someone prepared to buy a couple of bottles of wine (or whatever) per month and run the raffle at the monthly meetings.

So here's the thing. I'm currently looking for a volunteer to take on this very important task for us. As I said, the raffle raises much needed funds for the group and will be a loss to us if someone doesn't step forward to take over the running in Janet's stead.

So please help us to keep the raffle alive and the money rolling in. It's not a difficult job and will only take a very small amount of your time, and who knows? You might find you enjoy it to! If you're up for continuing this role, then please contact me at the usual address/phone numbers.

Our Guest Speaker was Sarah Sillars, IAM RoadSmart's very own CEO. Sarah gave us a cracking insight into the aims and direction of IAM RoadSmart as a whole and by definition, how that would affect those of us at group

level. One of her main threads is the way that the organisation is trying to interact with prospective new members. This is being done through a series of media drives, online and modular learning and by being *"the recognised authority for driving and riding standards and the 'go-to place' for standards and expertise by government, industry organisations and employers"*.

In other words making sure that the organisation stays relevant to motoring and road safety in the 21st century.

There's some really good stuff (if you're interested) in the IAM RoadSmart annual report 2016-17 which you can download at:- www.iamroadsmart.com/docs/default-source/about/financial/iam-annual-report-and-accounts-2017.pdf

But aside from Sarah who else turned up? Well David Gough and Gary James (respectively Chief Observer and Chairman) of Weston & Mendip Advanced Motorists turned up to say hello, as did Gina and Peter Herridge of Somerset Advanced Motorcyclists (Gina is SAM's Chief Observer and Recruitment Lead. She is also an IAM RoadSmart trustee and council member. Peter is an IAM RoadSmart





Motorcycle Examiner; they are also both members of the IAM RS Strategy Group).

Also joining us for the night were three guests from the IAM Hong Kong; William Ho (Chief Training Officer) and his friends, Simon Wong and Steven Tai who are on holiday here having come over with the specific purpose of doing the IAM tests. (Sadly though, not with our Group).

II

Wednesday 11th October saw Andrew Griffiths, David Walton and Paul Green setting out the WAM stall at the 'Choices for Life' event at 'The Venue @Junction 24' in North Petherton. Organised by Somerset Social Services, this was a jobs and advice fair aimed at 14 – 25 year olds with additional support needs. Our role, as ever, was to explain about general road safety and the benefits that IAM and group membership may give to this group of young drivers.

Running from 9:00am to 7:00pm (not including setup and take down time at both ends of the day) this proved to be a very long day indeed. David told me afterwards that the morning was

all 14 – 16 year olds which meant that whilst the Under 17 Car Club leaflets flew out, as there wasn't a full driving licence holder to be seen, Wessex didn't get any takers for ourselves.

Happily the afternoon crowd had more parents with older offspring so we did get quite a lot of interest from them. David suggested that we may pick up ½ dozen or so free assessment drives which hopefully will lead to some new, younger members.

With a bit of luck we'll have the same sort of result from the second 'Choices for Life' day at the Fleet Air Arm Museum on Tuesday 14th November. So if you happen to be in the area, pop along and say 'hello!' we'd love to see you.

The 24th October saw us again flying the flag for Wessex, the IAM and for road safety in general. This time we were at the Diabetes Transition Fayre at the Holiday Inn, Taunton. My thanks to Tony Drew and Barry Farmer, two of Wessex's finest, who came along to help me out for the evening. Because Andrew and David, our usual stalwarts at these things couldn't come, I'd have been Billy No Mates without them!





This event has been arranged by staff of the Diabetic Department, Musgrove Park Hospital to assist young people living with diabetes to move away from their childhood problems of living with Diabetes, to learning to deal with their condition as an adult. We were there to signpost them to relevant agencies and to give practical advice on driving with Diabetes. For an evening event I have to say that I was quite pleased with the turnout, although there weren't as many as their last Transition Fayre. And considering the average age of those who attended this time, I think we did more for the Under 17 Car Club than we did for ourselves! But, hey ho, it's all about driving road safety, so we're all winners in the end!

Having mentioned Tony and Barry, I'd like to reiterate that without the help of volunteers like them to assist in running these events, being able to take part and get the Wessex brand out to the greater public will become more and more difficult and though we do enjoy going to these events, it's unfair that the same handful of people should carry the weight of the group all of the time.

Seriously, without some offers of help we'll be able to attend fewer and fewer events and that will be to the detriment of all of us.

And with that thought in mind, by now you'll have

received my general explanation to the background of why we attend these events together with a short questionnaire. If you haven't already done so, I'd be very grateful if you could take the time to read through, consider and then answer my questions (there're only 8, after all) and send your responses back to me at the usual address. (Below). Please help us where you can. After all, we're only asking for a couple of hours of your time at any one event and who knows, you might even enjoy it!

]]

The 15th November will be given over to Mark Evans the Waterways Manager for the Bridgwater & Taunton Canal. There's been many changes to the canal and it's management and use over the years and Mark wants to tell us all about its working history and decline right through to its re-birth as a leisure resource and its planned future use. This promises to be a very interesting talk indeed.

Wednesday 1st November is our final scheduled committee meeting of 2017. Again, if you have any issues you'd like to raise, then please notify David Walton (secretary@wessexam.uk) so that he can bring them to the attention of the committee.





Saturday 9th December is the day of the first annual Wessex Christmas Meal. As in all previous (TGAM) years, this will be held at Oake Manor Golf Club, TA4 – 1BA. Sit down is slightly later this year at 12:30pm for a 1:00pm serving. The price though, is still a very reasonable £14.95 per person. Remember that if you book in advance you'll get a choice of menus, but if you don't and simply order on the day, then you'll be served Roast Turkey. There's still plenty of seat availability, so if you haven't booked your place yet, then please make sure that you do. The closing date for booking is Monday 20th November.

Wednesday 13th December will again see us flying the Wessex / Road safety flag, but this time in conjunction with Somerset Road Safety who are organising an 'Up To Speed' event (aimed at new, young drivers) at the Victoria Park Community Centre, Bridgwater. I know I'll be there and I'm rather hoping that I'll be joined by an Observer or two, as well.

Our final gathering of the year will be on Wednesday 20th December for our Christmas Quiz. The prizes are bragging rights for the winner and a 'didn't we do well' for everyone else.

As with the Regional Quiz, I'm looking to have 10 sections covering everything from the Arts to Politics and everything in between, with each section having about 10 questions so as you can see, there should be something there for everybody.

And Finally.

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

As usual, thanks for taking the time to read my scribbling's and I look forward to seeing you at our regular Member's 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





Is this to be the demise of our members evening raffle?

By Andrew Griffiths

At our AGM on 18th October, Janet Loader retired her position as raffle coordinator. I asked at the time for a volunteer of two to take over the baton from Janet but no-one stood forward.

I am indebted to our President Brian and his good wife Alice who have since decided to keep the raffle going until the end of December; for information, they also organise refreshments at every members evening! After December, if no-one volunteers to run the raffle we will be forced to have to give this up. It would be our first casualty of 2018 simply due to lack of support among our 150 members. You can change this!!

I have decreed that running the raffle won't be absorbed by any of the 6 members of the Committee as each already puts in considerable time and effort to keep Wessex Advanced Motorists "on the road".

What's involved in running the raffle;

- Buying a couple of prizes once a month from the raffle funds;
- Spending a few minutes selling tickets at members evenings 10 times a year and at the Christmas lunch each December;
- Managing the raffle funds;

That's it! It's not onerous and it's not demanding. I'm hopeful that one or two of you will step forward and ensure that it doesn't become a casualty and a loss to our Group. Please don't assume that someone else is bound to do it.

Advantages of a raffle;

- A raffle brings funds into our Group (it helps fund the BBQ at our classic car show in July);
- It is a bit of fun!

And so it's over to you. Please contact me on 01278 671659.

Andrew





Dr. Bernard Stacey, Obituary

I'm sorry to announce to those who knew him, that Dr. Bernard Stacey of Taunton passed away suddenly on Friday 8th August 2017, aged 88 years.

Bernard was my first Associate when I became an Observer and went on to pass his test with flying colours in November 2015. And boy, wasn't he pleased! Both during his time as an Associate and later as a full member, he remained a most avid supporter of our Group.

He'd been active up until late 2016 when, after a serious fall (he never did tell me where) he fell and broke his hip, but even though his mobility was greatly restricted, I never once heard him complain.

Bernard was a real gentleman in the truest sense of the word with a real soft spot for Maggie, my wife. In fact, the two of them got on like a house on fire and always chose to sit together at the monthly meetings, often freezing me out!

His funeral service took place at Taunton crematorium on Thursday 24th August and it is to our great sadness that first off we didn't know that he'd died until after his funeral and second that we didn't get the chance to pay our final respects.

Bernard, my friend, you'll be missed by all who had the pleasure to know you.

Rest in Peace,

Barry & Maggie



A Nostalgic Excursion

By Brian Howe

As a child, my mother used to take my two brothers, two sisters and me on holiday to North Devon to stay with an aunt for a couple of weeks, every 2 years or so. Usually it was by Royal Blue coach, but occasionally we would travel by steam train from Paddington to Exeter Central and then on the Exeter to Barnstaple line to Lapford. I had also travelled to two scout summer camps by steam train. In the school holidays, at lunchtime, we used to run up to the railway bridge at the top of Meadowbank Recreation Ground in Dorking, to watch the Birkenhead Express go through on the Reading line. More recently, Alice and I have travelled several times on the West Somerset Railway between Bishops Lydeard and Minehead; we have been taking our Great Grandson Caleb, who is now 4½ years old, to Minehead station on a very regular basis for the last three years.

On the 6th September this year, I was lucky enough to obtain a ticket to ride on the iconic Flying Scotsman steam train. I couldn't pass up this opportunity because, although I am not

a 'Steam Anorak', I do love everything about steam trains and other steam transport. The noise, the smell and the clouds of steam and smoke are so evocative.





I left home before 08:20 to make sure I caught the 08:34 number 1 bus from Wellsprings to the Parade. This in turn allowed me plenty of time to walk through to the bus station in plenty of time to catch the 09:15 number 28 to Bishops Lydeard where I had to alight at the Lethbridge Arms, it being impossible for the 28s to gain access to the station. After a brief rest against the subway wall, I eventually made it to the station. It's at times like this that I miss my driving licence.

I normally shy away from places where there are large crowds as I feel vulnerable due to my poor balance, but here in Bishops Lydeard, the whole event was so well marshalled that there was no 'milling about' of the crowd. There were plenty of seats available both inside and outside of the very large marquee set up in the station coach park. There was even a food stall where you could purchase a breakfast pasty, (sausage, bacon, egg and beans) and a cup of tea. "When in Rome" as they say. Before it was time to load our train to Minehead, we were marshalled into the marquee where we could buy souvenirs. I bought the fridge a new magnet for his ever growing collection and

myself a tie and baseball cap. Well, you need something to remind you of the day.

As we all had allocated seats, we were called from the marquee by our Coach Letter, although all disabled and mobility impaired passengers were called to board first. This did wonders for my fear of being caught in a crush on the platform. Safely ensconced in seat 31 of Coach C I was able to watch everyone else scurry around the carriage to find their seats. As you can see from the photo of my ticket, we were behind a named locomotive, which turned out to be Dinmore Manor. We departed Bishops Lydeard at 10:41, almost on time. Leaving Bishops Lydeard Station and passing through the Quantock sandstone bridge, is like passing through a time-warp. You leave all the modern day stuff behind and become engrossed in the nostalgia. The service was supposed to be non-stop all the way to Minehead, except for slowing down to exchange Keys for safe entry to the single track sections of the line. However, we did have to spend a little time at Williton to wait for another named locomotive, I think it was Raveningham Hall, to pass us by on its return





to Bishops Lydeard. We eventually arrived at 11:48, the journey having taken us 1 hour and 7 minutes. On a normal run, the journey would take 1 hour and 23 minutes.

We only had 30 minutes on Minehead platform, and the press of passengers vying for the best photo shots, persuaded me to stay on the train and purchase a cup of tea from the Buffet Car, which I then took to my seat to wait for our return departure. Dinmore Manor was uncoupled and shunted onto the turntable ready for her return journey, while the Flying Scotsman was shunted and coupled up to our string of coaches.

We departed at our published time of 12:18, absolutely on the button. Steaming along the north Somerset coastline through Dunster Halt, Blue Anchor and Watchet, F.S. followed the line inland passing through very pretty farmland and showing us glimpses of the majestic Quantock Hills, blasting her rather odd, high-pitched whistle at every opportunity as she went. Bystanders of all shapes, sizes and ages, stood waiting for us at every accessible place on the line that they could get





to, frantically waving to us as we passed by, and some looking for that perfect photo. I am not too keen on travelling backwards on trains due to the Vertigo effect of thinking that I am going round in big circles, but I managed to offset this somewhat by buying lunch and another cup of tea from the Buffet Car. (Yes it was another pasty, but there wasn't a lot of choice left). After a short delay we arrived at Bishops Lydeard station at 13:25 having taken exactly the same time as the outward journey. From here I retraced my steps and waited ½ an hour for the 28 bus journey back to Taunton and back to modern day life.

This turned out to be a truly marvellous day out. I was greatly impressed by the organisation of the whole event, and I applaud all the volunteer marshals and railway staff, who couldn't do enough to help wherever they could, and even taking into account how busy their day must have been, literally every one of them had a ready smile and time to chat. Even the passengers were chatting to each other. Where else in this country of ours would you see that on a normal train service?

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 15th 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 9th December 2017
12:30 for 1:00pm

Please contact Barry on *events@wessexam.uk* or 01823 254621
to book your place; closing date for bookings is 20th November





The direct approach

By Sarah Sillars, IAM RoadSmart chief executive officer

What is the point of being an advocate for change if it is being done behind closed doors? Sometimes you have to be direct and send your message out far and wide to make it succeed. And since our aim is so critical - to help drive down the number of people killed or serious injured on UK roads - this is exactly what IAM RoadSmart is aiming to achieve with our recently published manifesto.

On Tuesday 30th May we launched our 12 point manifesto calling on all road safety professionals and policy makers with one simple message: Let's work together to reduce the number of people killed and seriously injured on UK roads.

And while our communication was issued in the run up to the General Election it is an apolitical agenda that is independent of any party political stance. It is a simple, public plea

to all leaders and officials – current or future – to keep road safety as a key area of focus and to do all that they can, with our and other stakeholders' help, to make UK roads safer.

To bring this point home, remember that in 2015 no fewer than 1,732 people lost their lives on UK roads. With another 22,137 suffering serious injury.

These are shockingly and tragically high figures which urgently need to be lowered. And while there was a slight decrease of 2% on the previous year's fatalities, this small percentage is in no way sufficient. There is still so much more to be done if we are, collectively, to have any real positive impact.

All of us at IAM RoadSmart will therefore continue to do all we can to work with fellow road safety organisations, government, manufacturers and other influential bodies to





ensure that we keep our core message at the forefront of their thinking – that the safety of drivers, passengers and other road users is paramount and should be central to every decision made.

One practical, positive step we have taken as an organisation to help towards this is to roll forward with the development and delivery of our driver training programmes aimed at ensuring UK drivers and riders stay confident and capable on the roads. With a blend of new and old, modules and skills days, and through the recently launched offer of free driver taster sessions to match the already popular riding package, we are spreading the message of effective driving and riding as far and wide as we can.

But we cannot realistically bring about the full change on our own. So we continue to call on our road safety colleagues, on motoring and riding enthusiasts across the country, on the media and policy makers to actively work together to secure a step change in road safety and reduce the number of fatalities and injuries on UK roads.

December Members' Evening



A CHRISTMAS QUIZ

This will be a light hearted quiz with sections covering everything from the Arts to Politics and everything in between.

Come and have an entertaining evening and support your Group.



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



The blame game

By Rodney Kumar, IAM RoadSmart senior communications executive

It certainly seems when it comes to car crashes, if there are no injuries the next most important thing to be decided is; who was to blame?

In pretty much every walk of life, people don't want to be seen as making mistakes and even more so when it comes to a car crash. After all, most people think themselves as brilliant drivers, don't they?

It seems amazing that there are such diverse views of a car crash between two (or more) parties, which can lead to blame being shifted from one person to the other and back again. And certainly if you get to see the same crashes from different angles, sometimes there are 'shades of grey' rather than 'black and white.'

But by and large, a crash can usually be attributed to one trigger point that leads to a chain reaction, or simply a crash caused by one person's defining action.

In my 27 years of driving, I have been involved in three crashes – twice while stationary, and a car each time ploughed into the back of me. In

each case most definitely not my fault.

The final time I changed lanes without checking properly in front of a truck. Definitely my fault, as it was me that made the manoeuvre, and I told the truck driver as such.

Many insurers advise you to not admit liability unless you are asked to. In my case, I had no interest in pretending I was the innocent party when clearly I wasn't. I just wanted to get it processed and move on, instead of fighting something I knew was my fault.

This goes onto my main point. Most people know in their heart of hearts whether or not a crash is their fault. So why is it so hard to admit it? Is it really that masculine (in the case of man!) pride that sees him as less of a male for admitting he's not as good a driver as Nigel Mansell?

Why pretend? Like all humans, it's time to just admit one's shortcomings, learn from them and move on.





With a Little Help From Our Friends

By Sarah Sillars OBE, IAM RoadSmart CEO – reprinted from Insight Aug 17



As you have got to know my Insight columns over the months, you will know that I am very much an advocate of all areas of the organisation working closer to each other.

Not always an easy task with such a wide network of members, group officials and head office staff. We hope that Inform has kept you in the loop better than before, as well as our other forms of communication.

Away from IAM RoadSmart structure, we are also making great efforts to work with other experts in our field – all towards the joint aim of reducing the numbers of those killed or seriously injured on our roads. Thatcham Research has shared some of its modelling work to show we can all benefit by all working together on common themes.

These include RAC Motoring Services, RoadSafe, EuroRAP, Thatcham Research, Nick Ross, MCIA, FTA, EuroNCAP, RHA, BVLRA, RoSPA, RAC Foundation, Transport Focus, Caravan and Motorhome Club and the Sean Edwards Foundation. Offers of support and encouragement have also been received from the NPCC, SMMT and the FIA.





The members have agreed the following aims:

- To assist the UK Government in delivering its 2015 Road Safety Statement commitment to reduce the number of cyclists and other road users killed or injured on our roads every year
- To support the UK Government's objective of working together to build a safer road system
- To bring together key stakeholders in road safety to promote agreed themes
- To develop consistent messaging on the three priority areas for consortium members to use in communicating with their own stakeholders, the media and opinion formers
- To develop key performance indicators on the three priority areas and report on progress

Between the groups named they have agreed that its first themes will be promoting the

uptake of Autonomous Emergency Braking, which Thatcham Research estimate will cut the numbers killed by 308 in one fell swoop.

The second theme will be safety on rural 'A' roads and the last to promise best practice in driver risk management.

You will start to see more and more of this in the media as we go along.

So you know this isn't just all talk, we will be publishing an annual report to keep IAM RoadSmart members up to date on progress.

I really believe we have entered into an exciting new age in the field of road safety, and we are in the cusp of seeing amazing results in the work we all do. I really hope you will be on board with us for this new chapter for IAM RoadSmart.

Sarah





I never take drugs and drive – really?

By Rebecca Ashton, IAM RoadSmart head of driver behaviour

What does having your driving licence mean to you? For me it represents freedom and independence; making it easy to get to the places I want or need to go to without having to deal with the restraints of public transport.

I did not realise how much I take having a driving licence for granted until a friend of mine had started a period of not driving on medical grounds. This led me to think about all of the possible medicines available over the counter and prescriptions, the medicine we might need to help us get better.

Summer is often difficult for hay fever sufferers, the symptoms of which can be quite debilitating without medication, that quick trip to the

chemist to buy an off-the-shelf product could land you in trouble behind the wheel of a car.

It is not just hay fever medication you can buy over-the-counter. Having recently recovered from a summer bug, I am reminded about the cold and 'flu medicine which can make you drowsy, or even cough medicine.

Did you know that some bottles of liquid all-in-one medicines contain up to three units of alcohol in them?

We all know we should always read the label/advice sheet before taking any medicine but in reality we don't all look. Whatever our reasons for not reading it we could be missing out on some important information.





Many of us will say: “I have never taken drugs and driven – I don’t take drugs.” Is this because we don’t think of medicine as drugs? I would like to think everyone reading this will trust me when I say I have never taken illegal drugs, but during my life I have taken either over-the-counter medicines and those prescribed to me by a doctor and driven without questioning the effects they may have. I now always take a couple of minutes to ask the doctor or pharmacist and read the information sheet before I drive.

With the changes in law recently regarding drug-driving, we all need to be more diligent when it comes to what we medicine we take and the amount we take if we intend to drive.

Failing a field impairment test and being found guilty of drug-driving would be horrendous experience, not just selfishly because of the consequences it would have for me and my family but also because of what could have happened if my actions had hurt someone.

If you are not aware of the changes you can find the information here www.gov.uk/drug-driving-law Now I cannot advise you – I am not a doctor and do not have any type of medical training other than a first aid certificate which thankfully I have not had to put to use recently, so please check with your doctor or pharmacist if you are taking any medicine. You never know it might be compromising your ability to be safe behind the wheel of a car.





Advice about VAG group DSG gearboxes

By Richard Gladman, head of driving standards

For many years now our advice in relation to 'automatic' gearboxes has remained the same when waiting at traffic lights – it has always been 'apply the handbrake and keep drive engaged.' This was regarded as best practice on a generation of gearboxes where more wear was caused during the gear selection than would be caused by allowing the torque converter to idle with mild load on it.

Things have moved on in the area of automatic gear selection and some systems we regard as 'automatic' are actually more akin to a manual gearbox with assisted selection. We have recently had some communication regarding the issue of what to do during a prolonged stop with the DSG or S Tronic boxes as fitted to VAG group cars (VW, Audi, SEAT, Skoda). Conventional advice may well result in premature clutch wear (the engaged gear system will be slipping a clutch to prevent movement) and the advice given by VW is to apply the handbrake and select neutral if

stationary for some time. This is to minimise wear to the system.

The activation of stop start systems is also different from manufacturer to manufacturer and what will allow the operation in a BMW may not work in a Toyota. To promote safe effective operation of not only the ever developing gearboxes, but also the environmental aids it is essential that an associate reads the vehicle handbook and gets information about best practice for their particular vehicle specification.

It is not possible to offer a one size fits all piece of advice, it is as likely to vary from model to model and definitely will be different when you change manufacturer. If after reading the manual an associate is still unsure I would point them in the direction of the manufacturer's forums which have in depth discussions on such points readily available. Failing that I am happy to try to help with individual cases via e-mail if the answer appears unavailable elsewhere.





Michael's Drive for Improvement, Part 1

By Revd Michael Forster [Part 2 in spring newsletter - ED]

It was something I'd said I would never allow to happen. I'd passed my IAM test in 1971, full of enthusiasm and grand intentions never to let my standards slip. Then someone pushed the fast-forward button while I slept and, like a latter-day Rip Van Winkle, I woke in 2015 in a very different world where driving was not fun but a stressful chore.

I was losing my touch, and something had to be done. Quickly!

First, I needed to define my current level - so I booked an IAM RoadSmart Member's Assessment and started reading and practicing. Searching online I came across Chris Gilbert's website and booked a half-day with him. A few minutes in, he summed up: "I can tell you've had some advanced training - the signs are there. You sort of understand the limit point, but you've not got it quite spot on. Let's do some bends."

After five hours with Chris I had a little list of things to practice: vision scans, reading bends

and approaching roundabouts: 'timing of appointments'

Under Chris's tuition, I had learned how it should feel when the planning is done correctly, which opened the way for some fruitful practice.

The IAM Members' Assessment included some unknown roads with challenging bends - and by that time I was ready to love them! When I got a F1RST - straight 'ones' in every category - the bug really bit, and I was up for my next challenge.

But first, I knew I needed contact with other advanced drivers. 'Join our observer team,' Nottinghamshire group's chief observer, David Crooks, advised: "That'll keep you sharp."

Enthusiasm was growing further, and now the Masters was appearing on my radar. I wasn't sure, though; I'd read on the website that the examiner would expect a drive with 'sparkle' - an 'enjoyable' drive, 'rather than merely competent'. 'Merely competent?'





Overtaking

The criteria specifically mentioned overtaking as an assessed skill. I didn't like the sound of being pressured to overtake. In 1971, overtakes had been common for those with a suitable car but now, most people are already on or close to the limit and one can regularly drive for 90 minutes with no opportunities for safe, legal overtakes.

Regional Quality Manager Pete Doherty clarified: "What matters is evidence of good overtake planning; I often give more points for overtakes that are considered but declined than for those that are executed." He advised that I cover the process in commentary, and also added, 'It doesn't need to be moving cars – horses, cyclists, even parked cars, all evidence the process.'

'What – at my age?'

That was really helpful but another doubt remained: at 70 years of age could I produce the 'sparkle'? My thought processes were not so lightning-quick as in 1971. Would I be wasting my money? Again, Pete understood and put me in touch with Masters mentor Roger Hicks for a free taster session comprising a demo and assessment. Roger's advice: "Go for it."

Mentoring

Grahame Ottewell of the Lichfield IAM Group, a retired police traffic sergeant and long-time Class 1 ticket holder, was appointed my mentor. We arranged a rendezvous well outside my familiar area.

Early in my first drive, Grahame stopped me in a lay-by ahead of a sweeping right hand bend. "What can you tell me about that?" I mentioned the limit point, positioning, surface awareness, and Grahame added 'camber' setting me off on an exposition on superelevation. Those words "what can you tell me about" were to become very familiar.

Thus began an enjoyable and challenging process. After each session, we would share a genteel pot of tea for two and discuss the drive in detail, also covering some theory questions.

I was champing at the bit - and not just through impatience. I'd been experiencing serious medical issues and surgery was inevitable, followed by a prolonged (non-driving) recovery. I wanted to complete the Masters first, to avoid losing momentum, and Grahame was confident – so the test was arranged

But that's another story.





Messages from Grateful Associates

As a new member to the group I am very pleased to report that on 25th August I passed the IAM Advanced Driving Test.

I was particularly pleased that the examiner Andy Ware awarded me a First, with straight 1's and I would like to thank my Observer Godfrey Davey for his excellent tuition which enabled me to achieve this result. I am aware that Godfrey has an impressive record as an Observer, my biggest concern on the day was that I would not let him down by spoiling his record!

I would also like to thank Barry Kennan for an excellently conducted and challenging pre-test check drive which prepared me for the day itself and gave me some extra hints and tips which I was able to incorporate into my driving.

Yours Sincerely,
Ken Priest

Back in May this year after many years of thinking about it decided to take the plunge and join the Advanced motorist club in order to take my test. I took my driving test in March 1972, and have enjoyed driving ever since. I had been thinking for the last 10 years or so of taking this test but with one thing and another never got round to it.

Anyway I joined and received the course log book, and after a matter of days received notification that an observer would be assigned to me and that they would contact me shortly to start my driving. Well that was quick I though I did not expect to hear anything for a while. So needless to say I was a bit nervous in going out for my first drive. My tutor was Brian Dodd, It was strange having someone sitting next to me watching my driving and making





worthwhile comments, after a short time I was used to it. There were points that I knew I was doing wrong but due to my suborn brain it took a while to get them right. I even bought copies of the highway code, traffic signs and the police manual of road craft. I even had apps on my iPad, kindle, and phone. maybe I went a bit overboard but when I had a spare few minutes I would do a bit of studying.

Brian has a quiet calm attitude, and after a 5 or 6 drives he decided I was ready for a pre test drive, which I duly went on, but that did not go well, more my fault than anything else. So it was back to Brian for another drive. All went well again and I was put through for another pre test drive and this time I had my right head on and it went very well I was happy with my drive that day.

I finally had my test on Monday 30th October. This went better than I thought. I passed much to my delight. The first person I contacted when I got back home was Brian, If it had not been for his tutoring, being a calm person I may not have had the confidence to do the test so I owe a great deal to him.

I feel happier driving now, even in the poor road and weather conditions, I do not feel as stressed as I did a few months ago.

I would like to thank you all for the opportunity I have had to take my test, I will come down to the meeting on a Wednesday but at the moment my life is a bit busy, but I will be there.

Kind regards

Jane Lawrence





Emissions explained

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

On 1st September two important, and complementary, changes to car fuel economy and exhaust emission figures took effect. The Worldwide Harmonised Light Vehicle Test Procedure, or WLTP for short, and the Real Driving Emissions test, RDE, were both introduced.

WLTP deals with the “official” mpg and CO figures and is intended to make them more realistic. Motorists have complained for years that cars do not achieve the advertised fuel economy and that was largely because the old way of testing them (known as the NEDC) did not replicate modern driving. Using more fuel also means the cars produced more CO₂, making it harder to meet our national carbon reduction targets to reduce the danger of global warming.

Although the new test will give a figure closer to what can be achieved in normal driving, it should still be seen as a way of comparing different cars’ performance, rather than a guarantee of what fuel economy the car will return.

The new test applies to any new model of car launched from 1st September onwards. Existing models will still show the old mpg and CO₂ figures until September 2018 when all new cars on sale will have to show the new test results.

In general, the mpg will be lower and the CO₂ emitted will be higher than under the old test. However, somewhat confusingly, taxes based on CO such as the first year “showroom” tax and company car tax will still be based on the old, NEDC figure for at least a couple of years.





(The NEDC figure will continue to be calculated for all cars until about 2020)

The second change, introduction of RDE, addresses emissions such as NO₂ and soot, which are health hazards. These pollutants should have been limited by increasingly tough

mandatory standards known as Euro 1, Euro 2 and so on. We are now at Euro 6, but pollution levels in towns and cities have not fallen the way the standards should have achieved because, once again, vehicles do not perform in real driving conditions as well as they do in a laboratory under test conditions. The widely publicised case of VW also showed that some manufacturers were prepared to bend the rules to achieve the required figures.

From now on, cars will not only have to pass an emissions tests in the lab, but also on a 90 minute drive on real roads. Portable emissions testing equipment will be fitted to cars driven on town, country and motorway roads and the vehicles must not exceed strict pollution limits.

Ensuring the cars genuinely produce less pollution will help to clean up our towns and cities the way the Euro regulations were intended to. As with WLTP, the new test applies to brand new models from 1st September, but will only come into force for all new cars from September 2019.

So, WLTP will give a more realistic guide to fuel economy and help drive down the global warming CO₂ emissions from vehicles while RDE will reduce the health harming toxic pollutants.

These changes are intended to make driving less damaging to people and our planet and IAM Roadsmart, through our work with the Low Carbon Vehicle Partnership, have been closely involved with their introduction. For more detailed information on the new mpg tests, follow this link:

<http://www.lowcvp.org.uk/initiatives/fuel-economy/wltp.htm>





Patrick Hopkirk proves the equal of rally legend dad Paddy – and passes IAM RoadSmart advanced test again!

Proving he is a chip off the old block, Patrick Hopkirk, son of rally legend Paddy Hopkirk, has followed in his father's footsteps and recently passed his IAM RoadSmart advanced driving test more than once.

Patrick, 46, has passed his advanced driving test twice before – the first time age 19 in a Citroen 2CV, and again age 35. He decided he wanted to update his skills yet again some 11 years later. Paddy, winner of the 1964 Monte Carlo and 1967 Acropolis rallies, is also IAM RoadSmart mature driver ambassador.

Patrick said: "This is really a revision of what I had already learnt – it really is important to keep updating your driving skills."



From left are Paddy Hopkirk, Patrick Hopkirk and John Dowell.





I rediscovered how important mirrors are, of reading the road ahead, assessing what I had and then acting on it.”

Patrick, who is a sales representative and drives more than 18,000 miles a year, added: “Really people should take the advanced test every five years.”

He was assessed by John Dowell from the South of London Advanced Motorists. John said: “Patrick has achieved a lot and is well up to the standard needed to be an advanced driver.” Added Patrick: “John is a very professional teacher. He has helped me enjoy driving again.”

Paddy, who is a household name having taken part in races all over the world including the gruelling London-Sydney Marathon, Le Mans 24 Hours and Daytona, has taken the IAM RoadSmart advanced test twice, most recently in June 2016.

Just recently Paddy has been appointed President of the BRDC (British Racing Drivers' Club) taking over from former Formula 1 driver Derek Warwick.

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

I also have lots of information on my Website www.juliabeerdrivinginstructor.com so do have a look.



Hitting the big 3-7

By Gary Bates, IAM RoadSmart marketing manager

There's something extremely bland about turning 37. With the much-celebrated big 4-0 still well beyond the horizon, 37 is a beige age, possessing only the dubious honour of being 'the beginning of your late 30's.'

I passed this faintly ignominious non-milestone earlier this year and, in typical 30-something male fashion I barely realised it was happening until someone reminded me, and only stopped to reflect on the actual implications (and concluded that there are none) a few days later.

It eventually dawned on me that my 37th birthday, as must be the case for many, was actually the anniversary of something a little bit special. It's been an astonishing 20 years since I learned to drive. The memories of my first lesson are somewhat hazy, but I can recall being far too excited about a Nissan Sunny,

and equally as bizarrely excited about my slow and ungainly progress around a drab industrial estate.

I have much more vivid memories of my driving test: an angst-ridden comedy of errors punctuated by a cameo appearance by a suicidal magpie (I might tell you about it some other time).

I joined IAM RoadSmart as marketing manager earlier this year, and the significance of my 20-year driving career has come into sharper focus. I've always loved cars and driving, and have been aware of the IAM and of the general concept of advanced driving for many years, but had never really considered their impact on road safety. I like to think I'm a decent driver: a belief which, these days, I tend to justify by reference to a supposed accumulation of experience.





'You only start learning to drive once you've passed your test' is the usual platitude you hear, but no one ever follows this with an explanation of what form this learning should take, and who or what should be the teacher. It is clear that experience alone won't keep you safe out on the roads, especially if allowed to breed bad habits or complacency, but I do feel quite lucky to have done my learning (to date) during an interesting time in the history of driving.

The world of motoring has changed a great deal over the last 20 years, arguably much more rapidly than it did during the preceding 40 years since the IAM's inception, particularly in terms of vehicle technology and the type of distractions faced by drivers.

The only appreciable improvements in the standard spec of a mainstream family car of 1997 over its 1957 equivalent amounted to little more than seat belts and a cassette player. Active safety systems such as ABS and traction control were still the preserve of premium and performance cars in the late

1990s, sat-nav was almost unheard of and catalytic converters had only recently arrived on the scene, but these marked the first steps towards the world of electronic driver aids, sophisticated infotainment and ever-tightening emissions standards that we know today.

Here's a sobering thought: the year I bought my first car was the same year I got my first mobile phone. The car was an old Austin Metro; the phone a then-new Nokia 3210. Both were blue. Both were semi-useful novelties at the time. Both quickly became indispensable to me. Over the ensuing years, the worlds of motors and of mobiles have become increasingly intertwined, for better and for worse. Mobile phones give us so much convenience on our travels but as a source of in-car distraction their effects can be devastating. Young people learning to drive today have never known a world without this technology being part of daily life. Does that make them better equipped to deal with such distractions than the older generation? Does it make their experience, though limited, somehow more relevant to modern times?





Shortly before I joined, in its 60th year the IAM underwent a major rebrand, but this was a representation of something deeper. IAM RoadSmart's core mission, of improving road safety by making better drivers and riders, remains the same in a changing landscape but there are multiple avenues toward success.

Supporting the community of Advanced Drivers and Riders is still the main one, but another will be to find ways to make their knowledge and skills relevant and appealing to a new generation of drivers and riders. Another is to ensure that we remain at the leading edge of

thinking and research, setting the agenda for discussions on the future of driving, as in our recent Driver Ahead? conference on autonomous vehicles. In parallel with these activities, IAM RoadSmart continues to offer driver training as an essential part of risk management strategies for business fleets, benefitting the safety of some of the highest-mileage, highest-risk drivers on our roads.

My role in marketing will involve supporting all of these efforts, but perhaps I won't really know what I'm talking about until I've done my Advanced Test. Must book myself in.



Old Curiosities

I saw this on the wall of Vision Express on the narrow, pedestrian 'High Street' in Canterbury.

How times have changed!

Barry



Learners on motorways – instant success or slow burner

By Neil Greig, IAM RoadSmart's director of policy and research

Government announcements - don't you just love them? Well, yes and no. Yes, in that they bring IAM RoadSmart loads of media coverage, and no, because the latest came out at 10:30 on a Saturday evening - not easy to plan for! The latest was an important announcement about the long touted idea of allowing learners on motorways. We had already supported the concept in a consultation reply many months ago and it was good to see the government adopting all the recommendations we liked.

The subsequent media coverage was universally positive. Vox pops and interviewers all seeming to agree that their own

memories of the first time on a motorway had been very traumatic and lessons would have helped.

The research is clear - the more experience you have as a learner the safer you will in your future driving career. I have no doubt this will be reinforced for those who can get motorway lessons when they become available in 2018.

This did get me thinking once again about the reality of road safety and the real impact that a change such as this can make. Don't get me wrong, I think it's a great idea and learners should never have been banned in the first place.





Whichever civil servant in the dim and distant past came up with that one should get a medal for lack of common sense - how can it possibly be right that we learn how to master our fastest and most unique roads on our own!

That decade's long delay simply means it will be even longer before the full accident and congestion savings from allowing learners to deal with motorways properly will be felt. The extra lessons will cost money so they may become the preserve of those who can afford them, and you will need to live pretty close to a motorway to make it viable.

For drivers in Birmingham, Manchester, Glasgow, Liverpool, Bristol or around the M25, where motorways are part of most driver's

everyday commute, it will be a godsend. For the rest of us it may take some time before we notice that the drivers around us on the M-whatever actually look like they know what they are doing.

With new smart motorways coming on stream now is a really good time to be getting professional help in negotiating complex new systems. Motorways are our key economic arteries but to work efficiently they do require us all to know how to use them safely - it is incidents not roadworks that lead to the longest delays!

If anyone is worried that learners in the fast lane might make things worse then an IAM RoadSmart motorway module might be ideal solution.





How would you know if you were fit to drive the morning after drinking alcohol

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

The drink-driving conviction of television presenter Kirsty Gallacher has brought this issue into the spotlight, sadly at great cost to her, even though it appears that she did everything right the night before, taking a taxi home and planning to collect her car the next day. However, well into the following day, she was still found to be significantly over the alcohol limit.

People think they are not a drink-driver or that they won't get caught. But what makes a drink-driver? Anyone who has drunk alcohol and then driven? And how long should you leave it until getting back behind the wheel? It is common for people to have several drinks at home or to get a taxi home following a night out, have some sleep, wake up and then just jump in the car as is their normal routine and not consider whether they are fit to drive. Your body can only process

about one unit of alcohol an hour – that's if you know what a unit of alcohol is – and it can be complicated depending on the strength of alcohol.

Beer could be anywhere from 3.5% to 6% ABV and wine 8% to 15% ABV, and was it a small or large glass of wine that you had? Furthermore, we all metabolise alcohol differently; our gender, weight, medication, general health, and whether we have eaten recently can all affect the rate at which we absorb and process the alcohol.

Do you count up how many drinks you have drunk, work out the units and then calculate how long it will take for all the alcohol to leave your body after that last drink before you get behind the wheel? If the answer is “no” you could easily be convicted of drink-driving the





morning after, resulting in a lengthy driving ban, and having a criminal conviction and the stigma that goes with it in addition to the inconvenience of losing your licence. Next time you have a few drinks, think of what you will be doing the next day: will you need to take the kids to football, take your partner shopping, go to work? Or should it be a no-car day altogether?

Commendably, Kirsty Gallacher has held her hand up and accepted responsibility for the offence, but has nevertheless been handed a 2-year driving ban, which she would have been able to reduce by 6 months by taking part in an optional Driver Rehabilitation course.

At IAM RoadSmart, we deliver such courses to convicted drink drivers. The courses are informal and completely non-judgemental, and are intended to provide real help based on facts rather than the many myths out there. Avoiding reoffending often involves lifestyle

changes for those who have previously seen a few glasses of wine or several pints as being the norm, and the courses are designed to help clients to put plans in place to have no alcohol in their system when they return to the road, to ensure that they are safe.

In the last 4 years we have helped over 9000 people who were convicted of drink-driving. In addition, we deliver courses to raise awareness of the dangers of drink-driving, which can of course be tragic.

Being convicted of drink-driving can be very stressful. There is much impact on the individual not being able to go where they want when they want, relying on public transport which can be frustrating, and puts a burden on friends and family. Often people lose jobs or relationships and face challenges with career progression.

So before you get behind the wheel, whatever the time of day, think: am I ok to drive?





Recent Releases from the IAM Press Office

Pedestrians in the dark - as the nights draw in

With summer well and truly over and the clocks now reverting to GMT, the nights will be well and truly drawing in. During the period of shorter daylight hours (October to March) we statistically see more incidents involving pedestrians and vulnerable road users than during other months. With the most incidents being between 3pm and 7pm we need to keep our eyes peeled for our vulnerable pedestrians in the dark. This week's tips for keeping pedestrians safe are from IAM RoadSmart's head of driving and riding standards, Richard Gladman.

- Keep an eye on your speed, remember you are twice as likely to kill a pedestrian driving at 35 as you are if driving at 30mph. Be especially aware near schools, the only

predictable thing about children is how unpredictable they can be. Remember 20 in these areas really is plenty

- Children can be harder to see and may run out between parked vehicles, remember to 'LOOK OUT' (over, under and through) vehicles, you might just spot someone before they step out
- Some pedestrians give a tell-tale sign of what they are about to do - look out for people who keep looking over their shoulder, they might be looking to cross the road. If you have a generous space in front of you and vehicles behind you they may well run across rather than wait for all the traffic to come past. You also need to watch for mobile phone 'zombies', if you





see someone concentrating on their phone they are not concentrating on the traffic, be ready for them to just step out

- When passing stationary vehicles keep at least a door's width whenever possible, not just for the car door that might open into your path; also for someone or something coming out into your path from between the vehicles
- Be considerate where you park, parking too close to a junction can obstruct someone's view and make it harder to see, also be aware of not obstructing pavements and dropped kerbs

When it's raining and blowing a gale pedestrians are more likely to dash about and road safety often falls lower on their list of priorities than trying to keep dry

- With the clocks just gone back it can take children on bikes a bit of time to get used to the fact they need lights and can often get caught out being out without lights - make sure your children are aware of the need for lights on their bikes



Richard said: "In a perfect world pedestrians would all be on the pavement and would never have to cross a road, in a near perfect one a pedestrian on a road would be wearing flashing high viz and your car would be shouting about their presence - in our real world it is up to us to share the road space, be aware and help where we can. An effort to be courteous will go a long way to making someone's day and will help keep us all safe."





Leave a positive vision behind

Over time our eyesight deteriorates and previously strong vision can become poor. If eyesight problems are left unaddressed they can often lead to poor reaction times to unexpected hazards or the behaviour of other road users. This week's tips give advice on eyesight. When riding and driving from IAM RoadSmart's head of driving and riding standards, Richard Gladman.

- Get regular checks. Eyesight can deteriorate over time without you noticing. If you are having to move closer to the television to read the titles clearly or have noticed even a slight deterioration with your eyes, we recommend a visit to the optician for a check-up; after all we should do this on a regular basis (every two years) anyway and its free for the over 60s
- Take a break, eyes get tired too. If you are travelling for long periods of time you should take a break every two hours or every 100 miles, whichever is sooner. This will refresh you and your eyes keeping you alert
- Driving at night can be the most problematic area as our eyes age. No matter how eagle-eyed we may think we are, it is a scientific fact that as we get older our eyes become less sensitive to light. Avoiding night time driving is a

wise precaution if you are starting to struggle to see clearly after dusk

- Keep a pair of sunglasses in the car in all seasons; low sun on a wet road will make you wish you hadn't packed them away after the summer
- Know the law. You must be able to read (with glasses or contact lenses, if necessary) a car number plate made after 1 September 2001 from 20 metres. To find out more information on this visit the government's driving eyesight rules page [here](#)
- Use this to test yourself, if you struggle to read it get checked out straight away
- Stay hydrated. Water is very good in keeping you hydrated and is also good for your eyes. With the added bonus of helping you maintain concentration while driving and riding

Richard said: "Deteriorating eyesight can often be a sign of other health problems so a check-up is a good idea. If you do have eye correction prescribed for driving make sure you use it, not having your glasses is a poor excuse when you have had the accident. As a little aside how often do you clean your glasses? Even a pristine windscreen will seem dirty if the lenses are covered in fingerprints."





I can see clearly now...

Inside job

Months of air conditioning and dust builds up a grimy layer on the inside of the windscreen, so spend a couple of minutes getting it really clean. Use a window cleaning fluid, newspaper or a microfibre cloth. A squeaky clean surface will eliminate glare from the low autumn sun and greatly reduce the likelihood of the screen misting up. Carefully clean the rear screen so that you don't damage the heater elements and you'll save having to put the heated rear window on so much, which can cost two or three mpg while it's on, says Tim Shallcross, IAM RoadSmart head of technical policy.

Wipers

If you get that horrible squeaking noise, it's time to change the wiper blades. When the new blades sweep the screen in efficient, rain clearing silence, you'll be grateful you did. On icy days always check that your wipers are not frozen to the glass. Attempting to get them moving can blow a fuse or damage the motors, just adding to your woes. The same problem can sometimes affect electric wing mirrors. If



really low temperatures are forecast don't fold them in the night before.

Washer bottle

Ready-mixed washer fluid can be an expensive convenience; it's typically £5 or so for five litres - more at motorway service areas - and most of it is just tap water. Many supermarkets sell concentrated fluid which will dilute to make at least 20 litres for less cost, even more when the weather's mild and there's no risk of the washers freezing. Alternatively shop online, but don't be tempted by hi-tech sounding premium priced products or the very expensive "specially developed for





X make of car.” On cold days, don’t use the washers until you feel warm air coming out of the heater, otherwise the spray may freeze on your windscreen leaving you driving blind.

Frost and ice

Many cars now have heated windscreens and don’t the rest of us envy them on frosty mornings! If there’s no magic windscreen defrost switch in your car, buy a custom made ice blanket or just cover the screen the night before with a sheet. Do not use newspapers for this as they tend to disintegrate into a soggy mush. Invest in a good quality ice scraper and a few tins of de-icing spray and,

most importantly give yourself that extra ten minutes to get the car ready to go. Clear the whole screen, not just a letter box area in front of the driver. A badly cleared screen is dangerous and is an offence. Three points and a hefty fine can be the reward for skimping.

While you scrape and spray you can have the engine running with the heater set to maximum demist. But cars are at their most polluting and wasteful when cold, so you won’t be doing the environment or your wallet any good. As soon as the windows are clear, drive off. It is illegal to leave a car running unattended as well as being a huge temptation for the casual thief. Most insurance companies may not pay out if you make it easy for someone to steal your vehicle.

Damp

Clear damp or snowy boots and coats out of the car when you get home – if you leave them in overnight the water will evaporate and condense on the inside of all the windows. It’ll take ages to clear and the car will feel damp and miserable for your morning commute. Even leaving them in the boot will make the windows wet and foggy, so get them indoors where they’ll dry out properly.





**Closing date for the spring 2018 edition
of the Wessex Advanced Motorists e-
Newsletter is 20th January.**

**All contributions would be very
welcome.**

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