

e-NEWSLETTER

iAM
RoadSmart

WESSEX ADVANCED MOTORISTS



www.wessexam.uk

Number 146

Spring 2018





WESSEX ADVANCED MOTORISTS

e-NEWSLETTER

Published Quarterly
Editor: David Walton

IAM Group No. 1005
Registered Charity No. 1062207
www.wessexam.uk

Any comments or opinions expressed in this e-Newsletter are those of the contributors and not necessarily of the Institute of Advanced Motorists Ltd., Editor or Committee. Please send any items for consideration to be included in the next e-Newsletter to David Walton, our Editor (details on the back page). Items will be published ASAP.

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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



A warm welcome to you all and to our first newsletter of 2018! With Christmas and New Year festivities now well and truly over, we have an opportunity to catch our breath and recharge our batteries in time for **Easter!**

Let me begin by congratulating everyone who passed the IAM RoadSmart Advanced Driver Test in 2017. It is an achievement to be proud of and you should display your Certificate with a huge sense of satisfaction and reward. Your success comes from your hard work and the high quality of mentoring from Observers in Wessex Advanced Motorists. It is a team effort.



By Andrew Griffiths





And to those of you who have recently joined IAM RoadSmart by registering on the Advanced Driver Course, a big welcome from me and my colleagues on our Committee. Enjoy the challenge ahead of you, work hard but have fun along the way. You will only get out of it what you put in and as the saying goes “aim for perfection and achieve excellence”.

Keep fit. Keep Legal.

I guess that many private gyms are bursting at the seams with new joiners keen to lose those extra pounds they acquired in December from over-indulging. It is usually a short lived New Year's resolution in my view. My fitness regime involves washing my cars and giving them a good valet inside too.

It may seem pointless washing a car only for it to be dirty again in a day or two. But I get satisfaction from seeing my cars clean; washing them ensures all lights are as clean as they can be and that the number plates are clearly visible. How many vehicles do you see with the rear number plate covered in muck and totally illegible? It is of course, as we all

know, an offence under the Vehicle Excise and Registration Act 1994 section 43 (you really don't want to get cornered by me at a party!). Failure to comply can result in fines; these can be “on-the-spot” as well as through the courts.

Being advanced motorists and full members of IAM RoadSmart is not just about our high driving standards... it is also about our positive attitude towards our vehicle(s). Keeping our car legal, roadworthy, clean and tidy goes hand-in-hand with our high level of driving skills... and think of the exercise you'd be getting and with NO gym membership required!

If you can't keep your vehicle bodywork clean due to our inclement weather particularly at this time of year, at the very least keep all lights clean (including the rear number plate lights), keep number plates clean and legible, keep ALL windows clear (outside **and** inside) and spread the good word to family and friends; in so doing, you'd be helping the Police direct their valuable time to where it is really needed.





Woe is me!

So there I was driving my Jaguar XJR to Taunton to carry out a pre-test assessment when I slowed down to stop at traffic lights in Bridgwater and noticed steam coming from the engine bay. A warning light appeared immediately stating "low engine coolant level". I pulled over and switched off the engine in the hope of avoiding catastrophic damage. On opening the bonnet there was an impressive escape of steam into the air which caused a few heads to turn... including two Police officers in a marked car that had pulled up next to me; the driver said "that doesn't look good. Are you okay? Have you got recovery?" Yes I had and it was on its way. I phoned my local garage to forewarn them of the impending delivery.

What was the problem? There was a small hole - not really visible to the naked eye - in a hose connected to the expansion tank. Dave, the garage mechanic, found it by pressurising the cooling system and he quickly detected a fine spray of coolant which was landing on the exhaust manifold... hence the steam! I had done a POWDER check just the day before and all was okay with no damp spots on those

hoses in view, no puddles under the car. It was just one of those things that happened without warning; a bit like a puncture. The replacement hose was ordered but unfortunately the breakdown happened on Thursday 22nd December and this thing called Christmas got right in the way so my car was laid up in my local garage for a week over the holiday.

It's a Girl!

It was great to have her back (yes my XJR is a girl... with serious attitude!) and I treated her to a full valet including blacking the tyre walls and conditioning the leather interior (you REALLY don't want to get cornered by me at a party!). Result = STUNNING.

A change to WAM's Calendar

And so into 2018 and time for our first committee meeting of 2018. On 4th January! Now that's dedication, would you agree?! It was decided at this meeting to NOT have a members evening in December any more, in favour of having one every January instead. The reasoning was quite simple. Attendance at our December meetings has been dwindling year on year and 20th December 2017 saw the





lowest turnout ever. I guess that because it was butting right up against Christmas, minds were on festive preparations and not on a Group quiz night. While it was a fun quiz evening for the few who came along, it was decided that the time, effort and cost (for hire of the hall) could no longer be justified. So starting this year, there will be no December meeting and starting 2019, we will have January meetings instead.

I hope you enjoy this newsletter. And please remember, if you have a subject you would like to share with fellow members, please let David Walton, our newsletter editor, know. Here are some ideas for topics.

- Share a good/bad driving experience with fellow members and Associates.
- You may have returned from a holiday abroad where you drove a rental car on the right hand side of the road. How did it go? How did you adapt? Did you do cockpit and POWDER checks, frequent mirror and shoulder checks?
- If you are an experienced caravanner, share with us your experiences of towing.
- If you are a keen horse rider, what advice/tips and personal experiences can you offer those

of us who may not know how best to respond when encountering a horse with rider?

- If you cycle on busy roads, share your experiences of courteous (and not-so-courteous) drivers.
- Have you bought a new car recently? How did the cockpit drill help you familiarise with the vehicle and prepare for the test drive?
- Is there a particular road you like driving on? Perhaps one you find particularly exhilarating, one with lots of challenges, lots of bends, straight sections for overtaking?
- Is there a picturesque route you would recommend to others for an enjoyable afternoon drive?
- Do you have a classic or vintage car/motorbike? Tell us about it, and its history. Why do you like it? Include a photo (of you with your car).
- Share your thoughts of your journey through the Advanced Driving Course.

Be safe out there!

Best,

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 Secretary	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, 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 member is a Driving Standards Agency/Approved Driving Instructors:

Nick Tapp 07900 900678

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



FEBRUARY

21	W	7:30pm	Members' Evening – Deaf Awareness and deaf related topics, Penny Gibbons, a volunteer for Action on Hearing Loss.
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MARCH

7	W	7:30pm	WAM Committee Meeting
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21	W	7:30pm	Members' Evening – The safety of horse & rider on the county's roads, Julie Garbutt, Regional Manager, the British Horse Society
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APRIL

18	W	7:30pm	Members' Evening – The Lord-Lieutenant of Somerset, Mrs Anne Maw, Her role as the Queens' representative for Somerset
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MAY

2	W	7:30pm	WAM Committee Meeting
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4-7	F-M	8:00am	Abbey Hill Steam Rally
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5	Sa	9:00am	IAM RoadSmart Area 1 Spring Forum
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16	W	7:30pm	Members' Evening – The history of Cross Manufacturing Company
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PRESIDENT'S PONDERINGS



A History of the Renault 750/4CV

The 4CV was originally conceived and designed covertly by Renault engineers during the World War II German occupation of France, when the manufacturer was under strict orders to design and produce only commercial and military vehicles. Between 1941 and 1944 Renault was placed under the Technical Directorship of a Francophile engineer, Wilhelm von Urach (between 1927 and 1940 employed by Daimler Benz) who failed to notice the small car project emerging on his watch. A design team led by the company's Technical Director Fernand Picard, recently returned from Renault's aero-engine division to the auto business and Charles-Edmond Serre, who had been with Renault for longer than virtually anyone else, envisioned a small, economical car suitable for the period of austerity expected after the war. This was in contrast to Louis Renault himself who in 1940 believed that after the war Renault would need to concentrate on its traditional mid-range cars. Jean-Auguste Riolfo, head of the test department, was made aware of the project from an early stage as were several other heads of department.



by Brian Howe





In May 1941 Louis Renault himself burst into an office to find Serre and Picard studying a mock-up for the car's engine. By the end of an uncomfortable ad hoc meeting Renault's approval for the project, now accorded the code "106E", was provided. However, because the Germans had forbidden work on any new passenger car models, the 4CV development was defined, if at all, as a low priority spin-off from a project to develop a new engine for a post-war return of the company's 1930s small car, the Juvaquatre: departmental bosses installed by the Germans were definitely not to be trusted in respect of "Project 106E", while

von Urach, their overlord, always managed to turn a blind eye to the whole business.

Volkswagen Influence

In November 1945 the French government invited Ferdinand Porsche to France to explore the possibility of relocating the Volkswagen project to France as part of the reparations package then under discussion. On 15th December 1945, Porsche found himself invited to provide Renault with advice concerning their forthcoming Renault 4CV. Earlier that year, newly nationalised Renault had officially acquired a new boss, (after the death in suspicious circumstances of Louis Renault), the former resistance hero Pierre Lefauchaux. (he had been acting administrator since September 1944). Lefauchaux was enraged that anyone should think the by now almost production-ready Renault 4CV was in any way inspired by the Volkswagen, and even more enraged that the politicians should presume to send Porsche to provide advice on it. The government insisted on nine meetings involving Porsche which took place in rapid succession. Lefauchaux insisted that the meetings would have absolutely no influence



on the design of the Renault 4CV, and Porsche cautiously went on record with the view that the car would be ready for large scale production in a year.

Lefauchaux was a man with contacts. As soon as the 4CV project meetings mandated by the politicians had taken place, Porsche was arrested relating to war crimes allegations involving the use of forced labour, including French, in the Volkswagen plant in Germany. Porsche was accompanied on his visit to the Renault plant by his son Ferry, and the two were offered release in return for a substantial cash payment. Porsche was able to provide only half of the amount demanded, with the result that Ferry Porsche was sent back to Germany, while Ferdinand Porsche, despite never facing any sort of trial, spent the next twenty months in a Dijon jail.

Ready for Release

Until the arrangement was simplified in 1945, the 4CV featured a 'dummy' grille comprising six thin horizontal chrome strips, intended to distract attention from the similarity of the car's

overall architecture to that of the German Volkswagen, while recalling the modern designs of the fashionable front-engine passenger cars produced in Detroit during the earlier 1940s.

An important part of the 4CV's success was due to the new methodologies used in its manufacture, pioneered by Pierre Bézier. He had begun his 42-year tenure at Renault as a tool setter, moving up to tool designer and then becoming head of the Tool Design Office. As Director of Production Engineering in 1949, he designed the transfer lines (or transfer machines) producing most of the mechanical parts for the 4CV. The transfer machines were high-performance work tools designed to machine engine blocks. While imprisoned during World War II, Bézier developed and improved on the automatic machine principle, introduced before the war by General Motors (GM). The new transfer station with multiple workstations and electromagnetic heads (antecedents to robots), enabled different operations on a single part to be consecutively performed by transferring the part from one station to another.





Launch

The 4CV was ultimately presented to the public and media at the 1946 Paris Motor Show and went on sale a year later. Volume production was said to have commenced at the company's Billancourt plant a few weeks before the Paris Motor Show of October 1947, although the cars were in very short supply for the next year or so. Renault's advertising highlighted the hundreds of machine-tools installed and processes adopted for the assembly of the first high volume car to be produced since the war, boasting that the little car was now no longer a prototype but a reality.

On the 4CV's launch, it was nicknamed "La motte de beurre" (the lump of butter); this was due to the combination of its shape and the fact that early deliveries all used surplus paint from the German Army vehicles of Rommel's Afrika Korps, which were a sand-yellow colour.

Later it was known affectionately as the "quatre pattes", "four paws". The 4CV was initially powered by a 760cc rear-mounted four-cylinder engine coupled to a three-speed

manual transmission. In 1950, the 760cc unit was replaced by a 747cc version of the "Billancourt" engine producing 17hp (13kW).

Despite an initial period of uncertainty and poor sales due to the ravaged state of the French economy, the 4CV had sold 37,000 units by mid-1949 and was the most popular car in France. Across the Rhine 1,760 4CVs were sold in West Germany in 1950, accounting for 23% of that country's imported cars, and ranking second only to the Fiat 500 on the list.

The car remained in production for more than another decade. Claimed power output increased subsequently to 21hp (16kW) as increased fuel octanes allowed for higher compression ratios, which along with the relatively low weight of the car (620kg (1,370 lb)) enabled the manufacturers to report a 0-56 mph time of 38 seconds and a top speed barely under 62 mph. The engine was notable also for its elasticity, the second and top gear both being usable for speeds between 3 and 62 mph; the absence of synchromesh on first gear would presumably have discouraged use of the bottom gear except when starting from rest.





Handling. The rear mounting of the engine meant that the steering could be highly geared while remaining relatively light; in the early cars, only $2\frac{1}{4}$ turns were needed from lock to lock. The unusually direct steering no doubt delighted some keen drivers, but road tests of the time nonetheless included warnings to take great care with the car's handling on wet roads. Eventually, the manufacturer switched from one extreme to the other and on later cars $4\frac{1}{2}$ turns were needed to turn the steering wheel from lock to lock.

Around the world

Although most of the cars were assembled at Renault's Île Seguin plant located on an island in the river opposite Billancourt, the 4CV was also assembled in seven other countries. These were Australia, Belgium, England, Ireland, Japan (where the Hino-assembled cars gained a reputation for superior quality), Spain and South Africa.

Across the world 1,105,543 cars were produced; the 4CV became the first French car to sell over a million units.

Adapted and edited from Wikipedia.



I owned my 1953 Renault 750 LHD in the first half of 1969, costing me £25. I ended up scrapping it when the head gasket blew as the cost of repair was far more than the car was worth. From personal experience, I can tell you that the car had a vicious self-centring steering mechanism. The “filler cap” under the rear window, is in fact, the water coolant filler and the petrol filler cap was on the right-hand side of the engine bay above the exposed battery. You had to be very careful not to overfill the fuel tank. In Classic Trader, these cars are now selling for £13,000 to £15,000. How many of us can regret selling or scrapping cars that are now worth a small fortune? **Brian L. Howe**



MEMBERS' PAGE



Advanced Driving Test Passes

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

	OBSERVED BY
Christian Roberts (F1RST)	Mike Wotton
Patricia Kennedy	Barry Keenan

We currently have 128 members of whom 26 are active associates

2017 statistics:

		group region avg.
Pass rate %	95	88
No. of F1RSTS	9	6.8
No. of observers	13	26.1
New Associates	34	36.7

The Membership Register

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

	<u>TOWN</u>	<u>CLASS</u>
Helen Pinckney	Taunton	Associate
Natalie Jagger	Taunton	Associate
Gemma Charles	Yeovil	Associate
Dr Gina Herridge	Yeovil	Full
Rosie Benson	Taunton	Associate
Pat Godwin	Taunton	Associate
Anthony Longbourne	Tiverton	Full
Catherine Bellew	Bideford	Associate
Chantelle Brett	Bideford	Associate
Maggie Jenkins	Yeovil	Full
Sarah Archer	Lynton	Associate
Richard Paviour-coward	Barnstable	Associate
Alistair Gee	Westonzoyland	Full
Sharon Blake	South Petherton	Full
Carolyn Edwards	Martock	Associate

COORDINATOR'S REPORT

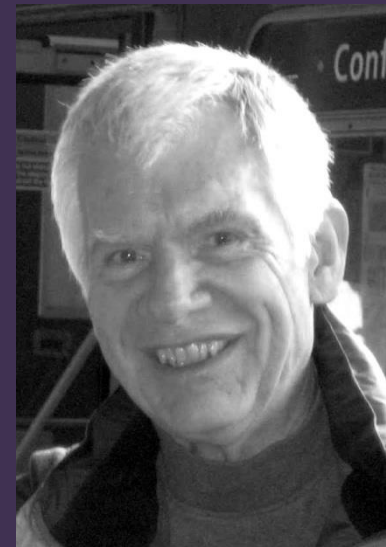


As can be seen from the Member's Page, only two Advanced Driving Tests have been carried out since our last newsletter, resulting in a F1RST class pass with all 'ones', many congratulations to Christian Roberts, and a very good pass by Patricia Kennedy; this is testament to the very high standard of instruction in the Wessex Group. However this does not mean that our Observer corps have been skiving off and spending their winters in the Bahamas. Indeed they have been busier than ever.

As of now we have a total of 26 Associates at various points in their courses, from just about to start, to having been allocated a test date although, admittedly, some Associates are currently inactive. But this is a significant workload on our 11 Observers who can currently take on new Associates.

Although the Advanced Driving Course is our main bread and butter, our Observers do also get involved in several other activities. The free Taster Sessions are proving increasingly popular, our Associates completing seven of them in the last three months. Three of the "tasters" have since signed up to do the full Advanced Driving Course, a very encouraging trend.

Since the introduction by the IAM of the Fellowship grade we have been asked to do refresher drives by two members in preparation for their Fellowship tests, one of whom was, notably Dr Gina Bromage, an IAM Trustee. Both of these ladies have now successfully become Fellows of the IAM. It is also gratifying to see two of our members taking refresher drives, well done Chris Marshall and "President" Howe, it is hoped that others who passed their tests some time ago will follow your good example.



By John Gilbert



Events Corner



Hello one and all. First off, although a bit belatedly, let me wish all members, volunteers and supporters of WAM a

VERY HAPPY & PEACEFUL 2018!

In our last ¼ I sent out an email plea to each and every Wessex Member asking you to consider donating some of your valuable time to joining a 'Volunteer Register'. This was so that I could call on you to ask if you're available to help man whatever event we're staging at any one particular time. My many, many thanks to those of you who took the time to answer my email and to the special 19 who have joined our new Volunteer's Register and have already offered their time to some of our forthcoming events of the year. I really am most grateful. Thank you.



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





WAM's last event for the year was our Christmas Quiz and for those of us there, I think it's fair to say that a great time was had by all. Although I was sorry to see so many empty seats, I appreciated that as it was just 5 days before Christmas, many of you were probably up to your eye balls in last minute wrapping and preparations. I hope it all went well for you and that you had a very happy and rewarding Christmas Day.

I know that Maggie and I did. We spent the day with our son and his family at their place. Absolutely brilliant because it meant no food prep, no cooking and most importantly, no washing up! And what's more we could leave just as soon as our young grandson became fractious. And, as any sensible grand-parents would do, with the first 'wah!' of discontent, we scarpered and left them to it! As I say, an absolutely brilliant time!

Anyway, just what have we got planned for the coming year?

January

As you all know, historically we don't hold a Member's Evening in January, but the understandably poor turn out for the Christmas

Quiz got the Committee thinking. (We try and do that every now and again). So, we've come up with a cunning plan. We've cancelled the December Member's Evening from this year. This makes our Christmas Lunch (Saturday 8th December at the Oake Manor Golf Club) the last event for 2018. What we've done to make up for this 'lost' day, is to re-introduce the Member's Evening for January, instead. That means that we'll still get our 10 evening's entertainments in and you won't have to worry about juggling the Group with your Christmas preparations. Genius!

February

Most of us will know a friend or family member who has a hearing loss problem and will appreciate how isolating hearing loss can be for an individual. You may even wonder if you've being as inclusive of them as you could be or perhaps have sought out information on how you can best help. Well, our Guest Speaker for this month is Penny Gibbons. Penny is a volunteer for Action on Hearing Loss and is coming along to talk to us about 'Deaf Awareness and deaf related topics' and will, I'm sure, prove to be enlightening.





Hopefully at the end of the evening we'll all have a greater understanding of the various ways in which we can help hearing impaired people to be more involved in general life and conversations.

March

On 7th March we'll be holding our 2nd Committee Meeting of the year. (The 1st was in January). As you know, these meetings are closed to Members but if you have an issue that you'd like raised, then please send details to David Walton (secretary@wessexam.uk) for inclusion on the Agenda. He, or the respective portfolio holder will get back to you as soon as we can with an answer to your query/issue.

On 21st March I'm looking forward to welcoming Julie Garbutt, the Regional Manager of the British Horse Society (South West) who is going to come along and talk to us about the 'Safety of the horse and rider on the County's roads'. As we cover such rural counties, this is a very important topic for all car drivers and one that I would encourage you to attend.

April

I'm really excited to welcome Mrs Anne Maw the Lord Lieutenant of Somerset to come and

talk to us about her role as the Queen's Representative of Somerset. She has many duties on the Queen's behalf one of which is to "*promote a spirit of co-operation and good atmosphere through the time they give to voluntary and benevolent organisations*" (that's us, then!) and whilst another is to chair "*the local Advisory Committee for the Appointment of the General Commissioners of Income Tax*" just bear in mind that this isn't an invite for you to bring your tax forms and problems to her on the night. Keep those for your Accountant!

May

WAM Committee meeting will be held on Wednesday 2nd May. Any enquiries/items for the agenda to David Walton, as above, please.

On 4th - 7th May we'll be attending (for the 1st time) the Abbey Hill Steam Rally on the A37 at Yeovil. This 4 day extravaganza is a welcome addition to our annual events calendar and will hopefully help us to have more of a presence in the South Somerset area.

Whilst I already have a few people who've kindly volunteered their time to help man the event, if any of you would like to come along and help us out, I'd be more than happy to see





you there. Please feel free to email me at events@wessexam.uk to let me know what days/times you're available.

On 16th Cyril James will be popping along to give us an "Illustrated Talk on the history of Cross Manufacturing Company and the internal combustion engine developments of Roland Claude Cross (1895 - 1970)". For those of you with a particular interest in social history or the internal combustion engine, this really is the talk for you.

June

I'm really looking forward to meeting Alan Billinghamurst. Alan is a retired Civil Engineer and was deeply involved in the construction of the M5 through our neck of the woods. He will be talking to us about what he calls "The trials and tribulations of the M5 construction". As I say, I'm really looking forward to it.

July

WAM Committee meeting will be held on Wednesday 4th July. Any enquiries/items for the agenda to David Walton, as above, please.

The 18th is the night of our very own Classic Car Show. As much as it was hard work, I'm

happy to say that last year's show was a great success which I hope we can repeat this year. We'll be supported this year by the Somerset Army Cadets and the show will be opened and presided over by IAM RoadSmart's very own Paul Woosley, Head of Membership Services.

If you have a classic or vintage vehicle that you'd like to show, then please remember to email me at events@wessexam.uk so that I can send you registration details and other information closer to the date. If you've got any chums out there who'd like to join you on the field exhibiting their cars, then do, please feel free to pass my details over to them.

August

Whilst there's no member's events scheduled for this month, we will be out in force at the 31st annual West Somerset Steam Show at Norton Fitzwarren. For those of you living in the vicinity of the West Somerset Steam Railway, in addition to their regular service between Minehead and Bishops Lydeard, they'll also be running a shuttle train service between their depot at Bishops Lydeard and Norton Platform which is adjacent to the Rally site. Please contact WSRA for full details.





Again, all offers of help will be gratefully received (and you get free entry into the show) so please contact me on the usual email address.

September

WAM Committee meeting will be held on Wednesday 5th September. As always, any enquiries/items for the agenda to David Walton, as above, please.

This year's Regional Quiz will be hosted by the Weston & Mendip Group on Tuesday 18th September. We are in need of three intelligent quiz experts to lift us out of the doldrums. (I can't remember the last time we won. In fact, I'm not even sure we ever have!) So, if any of you have a particular area of 'pub quiz' expertise, don't be shy, get in touch!

Also in September, the 15th and 16th, to be exact, we'll be at the 2nd annual Somerset Motofest which again is being held at the Fleet Air Arm Museum at RNAS Yeovilton. Last year the weather was terrible, but I'm pleased to say that the Wessex Tent stood up to the onslaught and came out a bit wetter but just as intact as when it was put up. Hopefully this year the weather will be a lot, lot kinder. So again, for

the Camaloteers amongst you this is right on your doorstep, so do wander along and enjoy the day.

Always liking to mix things up a bit, I've asked Adrian White to pop along to chat to us on the 19th. Adrian is a 3rd generation Funeral Director with the family firm of E. White & Co. of Taunton. Started in 1905 by his grand-father, Adrian joined the business in 1971 and so has 47 years of history and anecdotes to brighten up our evening. Come along, I'm sure you'll be most entertained and enlightened.

October

The 17th is the date for our AGM this year. This important date in our calendar is your chance to influence the group and the direction that we take going forward. As always your support and input is vital for the long-term wellbeing of the Group so please make this a definite date in your calendar and come along and have your say.

After the formalities of Group business, Shaun Cronin, IAM RoadSmart's Regional Service Delivery Manager (and the Group's direct line manager) will be our Guest Speaker. I've given him free reign to chat to us about whatever is current in the IAM at the time, so haven't got a clue just what that will be.





November

There's two things planned for this month. The first is our bi-monthly Committee meeting on the 7th, which is also the last time the committee meets in 2018. As usual, any questions, enquiries or items for the agenda to David Walton secretary@wessexam.uk, please.

The second is our Guest Speaker for the 21st. This time it's our very own Andy Ware who'll be doing a 'Meet the Examiner' spot. A lot of you will know Andy as your Examiner from your own Advanced Driving Test, so will appreciate what an easy going chap he is. As expected with a lifetime of police and IAM service behind him he's got plenty of stories and anecdotes to keep us all amused. So again, make this a firm date in your calendar and be prepared to be tickled pink!

December

As I said earlier, the last event of the year will be our annual Christmas meal at the Oake Manor Golf Club on the 8th. This is always a treat and the food is always top notch and very reasonably priced. If you haven't been before don't let that stop you from coming now. If you are a regular, then I look forward to seeing you there again.

Well, as you can see, there's quite a lot planned for this year and yes, I do already have some things planned for 2019 as well, but if you've got something in mind that you'd like to see included on the calendar or someone that you'd like to hear talk to us, then let me know and I'll do my best to get it organized.

For those quiz aficionados amongst you, though we won't be having a Christmas Quiz this year, my plan is that our new Member's Evening in January 2019 will be a review quiz of 2018, with a working title of 'That was the year that was 2018' (Not to be confused with the far more professional '*That Was The Week That Was!*')

So that's it for this quarter, thanks for taking the time to read my scribbling's and I look forward to seeing you at our various Members' Evenings throughout the year. In the meantime, here's to your continued happy, safe and enjoyable motoring.

Barry

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Avon and Somerset Police Ride-Along Scheme

By Andrew Griffiths

For the benefit of our new Associate Members recently joined, I'd like to make you aware of a scheme operated by Avon and Somerset Police, called Ride Along. It is a great opportunity to join a Traffic Police Officer on his/her 8 hour shift and see how they use the System (IPSGA) in rapidly changing situations such as high speed emergency response.

You can find more information on the Avon and Somerset Police website (see link below).

www.avonandsomerset.police.uk/services/ride-along-scheme

If you'd like some help with wording an application form to ensure you get out on the road with a Traffic Police Officer (Response), please let me know as there are a number of other options available (below).

- Communications Centre
- Neighbourhood Policing Team
- Operational Support Unit
- Response
- Training School
- Tri Force Roads Policing

Unfortunately an individual is allowed just one Ride-Along due to demand.

Andrew, Chief Observer





Beat the Freeze

By Nigel Mansell

Winter driving tips: F1 legend Nigel Mansell's eight lessons to keep YOU alive on wet and icy roads. Former F1 world champion Nigel Mansell takes us back to school to teach us the art of car control to deal with deadly winter roads.

RAIN, wind, snow and ice combine in the winter to make it a deadly cocktail on British roads. Frozen windscreens, icy puddles and misty mornings all mean you need to take extra care in the next few months; and who better to give you some lessons on how to stay safe this Christmas than a former F1 world champion?

The Sun Online enlisted the help of 1992 champ Nigel Mansell to give us eight vital driving tips to ensure we stay on the straight and narrow and Mansell, 64, is now more focused on safe driving than lap times as president of road safety charity IAM RoadSmart.

Staying safe is never more important in wintry conditions when Brits have to deal with a combination of wet roads, ice and, in some areas, heavy snow. At a windswept and drizzly test track which sums up British road conditions perfectly, Mansell said: "Nobody is bulletproof."

1. Use second gear

If it's rained heavily, is icy or you're on snow, pulling away in second gear can make it easier and reduce the chance of spinning up the wheels.

You need to make sure you give the car enough revs to avoid stalling it but most modern cars have enough grunt to get you moving.

It'll stop you losing control and means you don't have to grab for the gears as much. In some extra cases you might need to try third gear, advises Nigel.





2. Concentration is king

For Mansell, keeping concentration comes second nature having spent hours lapping a track without losing focus. But for a regular driver it can be much harder not to go into “autopilot” mode - especially on roads close to home. Nigel said: “You have to programme your mind to the conditions. If you’re not prepared you might get away with it but it will bite you eventually.”

3. Assume you will have to stop

Approaching traffic lights, T-junctions or roundabouts Mansell says you should be expecting to stop to avoid a last minute stamp on the brakes; and don’t tailgate the car in front either because if they stop suddenly you’ll have less time to react. This’ll create a chain reaction down the line leaving some poor driver further back with no choice but to end up in the back of another car.

Mansell said: “The smoother you drive the better. Gradually slow as you see lights even if they’re green and then if you arrive and it’s still green then speed back up. If you brake too quickly and drive badly, the bloke at the back has no chance.”

4. Understand ABS and ESC

Modern cars are packed with gadgets to keep you on the straight and narrow and even your 10-year-old motor is likely to have ABS - but you need to understand how it works and what it does. ABS - or anti-lock braking system - doesn’t mean you can brake later and you’ll be fine.

Electronic Stability Control (ESC) will flash up on the dash if you’re at risk of losing grip showing you it’s working overtime to help keep you in a straight line and you need to slow down. The F1 world champion said: “Know the car’s limits - it is there to support you. ABS does not mean a shorter stopping distance but that wheels will always retain traction and you can still steer away from danger. It takes the bad driver out of the equation and makes it a level playing field for everyone.”

5. Read the behaviour of those around you

Despite being a former world champion and race ace, Mansell has been in his fair share of shunts on the track - and it’s not something he wants to repeat on the road. But even if he’s driving properly, he says he’s still aware of those around him - just like he would be on the starting grid.





That includes lane discipline on motorways - like someone jumping into a tiny gap and causing you to slow down - as well as being aware if someone can't stop and might rear-end you at the lights. He added: "If you're in lane two of a motorway, anticipate what's in lane one and who might pull out in front of you to overtake. If you see it coming you can anticipate it - and not get angry - but just smile to yourself and say 'here we go again'."

6. Adjust your braking distances - and when you brake

In low grip situations like puddles, wet leaves or ice, braking earlier and smoother is vital to avoid your car spinning out into a ditch, tree or another car. Leave yourself plenty of space ahead to do your braking in good time. A four second gap in winter conditions is advised on motorways.

But the brakes aren't always the answer - and here's why. Mansell explains: "The biggest risk of greasy roads is aquaplaning - and the last thing you want to do is hit the brakes. Keep hold of the steering wheel, and ease off the

accelerator, change down a gear, steer away from any skid, and don't panic."

7. Take your time

For Mansell, the most crucial element of staying safe is timings - don't put yourself in a position where you have to rush. He advises that if you see it's wet outside, there are leaves on the road or your car is showing the frost indicator (normally around 3°C), then drop your speed and add time to your journey planning.

The champ said: "Don't put yourself in a difficult situation and drive outside the limits because you will have an accident."

8. Get new tyres

"People say to me, 'I'll see myself through the winter with these tyres and get new ones next year' - that to me is crazy", says Mansell. Getting fresh rubber for the winter season is one of the biggest factors to avoiding a crash as old tyres have less tread meaning you're more likely to skid or aquaplane. Mansell added: "Check your tyre pressures and your tread depths - and make sure they're not anywhere close to the minimum legal level."





February Members' Evening

Deaf Awareness and deaf related topics

Penny Gibbon will be our guest speaker for Wednesday 21st February. She will be giving us a talk on Deaf Awareness and how we can all be more inclusive of the deaf community.

**Wednesday 21st February 7:30pm
at Hatch Beauchamp Village Hall**

March Members' Evening



The safety of horse & rider on the county's roads

Julie Garbutt, Regional Manager, the British Horse Society, South West is coming to talk to us about "The safety of horse & rider on the county's roads".

**Wednesday 21st March 7:30pm
Hatch Beauchamp Village Hall**





Top Tips for Driving in Foggy Conditions

By Andrew Griffiths

- Give your car windows a good clean (outside **and** inside), including the section beneath the windscreen wipers. Dust, tar, tree sap and grime build up fast, particularly at this time of year.
- Keep your windscreen washer topped up with screen wash to rinse off any debris while you are driving - dirty windows tend to mist up quickly, making it more difficult to see.
- To see **and to be seen**, keep all exterior lights clean; dirty lights aren't as effective as clean lights. Don't forget the rear number plate lights.
- Remember to switch on your dipped headlights and don't rely on them switching on automatically. Override "day running lights" as they are at the front of the car only and not at the rear. Drivers behind need to see you!
- If visibility is less than 100 metres, switch on fog lights, but turn them off once visibility improves. And don't forget to switch off rear fog lights too because when visibility improves, these can dazzle drivers behind and also mask braking lights meaning that those behind you won't be able to readily see when you are using your brakes to slow down.
- Always drive so you can stop on your own side of the road **safely and without drama** within the distance you can see to be clear (ie of uninterrupted tarmac). Patches of fog will not always be of the same density and may get thicker again - be prepared to slow down.
- At junctions, stop and **listen** to get as much extra information as possible about oncoming vehicles, but remember that thick fog can deaden sound and make





judging speed even more difficult. Winding down windows will help.

- A combination of fog and darkness can make it extremely difficult to see. Keep an eye out for vulnerable road users including pedestrians and cyclists, particularly on side roads and other areas of poor visibility. Give them plenty of space when passing them and remember that until you've passed them they are **still a hazard**¹ so don't be tempted to accelerate until you are sure it's safe.

¹ The definition of a hazard is "something which contains an element of actual or potential danger".

Andrew

Chief Observer

Should Have Gone...



They DID go to Specsavers! Mobile optician crashes company car into a lamppost in Liverpool

I just couldn't resist sharing this with you!

Andrew



2018: A year of action for IAM RoadSmart

By Sarah Sillars OBE, IAM RoadSmart CEO – reprinted from Insight January 2018



Although there will be no ignoring 'Brexit' in road safety this year, it will still be a key issue and IAM RoadSmart is already planning its policy and research activities for the year ahead. Following our record breaking year in the media in 2017 it is more important than ever that we keep up the momentum and ensure that our brand is well to the fore as we launch our suite of new products.

This year we will still be targeting the most influential committees by cementing our position on the Motorists' Forum and working with PACTS, Highways England and Transport Focus to name but three. We also plan to commission new research to evaluate the effectiveness of IAM RoadSmart motorcycling, by comparing our members' performance with those bikers who have not had the benefit of taking one of our courses. The Safety Culture Report will also be repeated again as our annual in depth study into driver's attitudes and behaviours with the results shaping our campaigning. This will be its fourth year of proven value insight.

Planning is already underway to present high profile IAM RoadSmart campaigns backed up by new market research and using the many skills of our Communications and Marketing and Policy and Research Departments.





Topics such as motorway safety will be top of mind in 2018 as learners are allowed on our busiest roads for the first time and the spread of smart motorways continues. This will create many opportunities for us to help drivers cope with the changes safely.

The biggest challenge this year will be to identify partnerships and new funding sources to help us extend the reach and impact of our own programmes. Our success in obtaining sponsorship for our driverless cars conference show in October 2017 proves that the IAM RoadSmart logo is seen as an attractive partner for top brands. With such funding we aim to publish new reports on distraction caused by hands free smartphones and commission more PhD studentships.

Last but by no means least, we will also continue our work with partners to ensure the IAM RoadSmart led Road Safety Industry Consortium delivers regular stories and research findings and provides information, statistics and analysis from a range of experts to influence central government. That work kicks off on the terrace of the House of Commons on 29th January.

Sarah





Are baby boomers the safest on the road?

By Peter Rodger, IAM RoadSmart head of driving advice

The media enjoy talking about age - everybody's age matters, except our own of course. We're always hearing things like "younger drivers are dangerous," or "older drivers should be taken off the road."

Of course it isn't the young who say the first one, or the old who say the second. Sometimes it's the older drivers who are the bad guys in the spotlight, being discussed, analysed and criticised.

So what's going on? Well, interest seems to have been generated by the discovery last summer that there are now over 100,000 people over the age of 90 with a valid driving licence, who are entitled to pop out the front door, leap into their cars and head off into the wild blue yonder, all without a carer or someone younger to drive them.

After World War Two there was a "baby boom" which resulted in a bulge of the population born in the late 1940's and 1950's. That bulge is now heading into the years traditionally regarded as "retirement time". (We have been warned about this for some time by the politicians, who worry about NHS spending, the pensions industry and some other elements of our complex world it affects).

There are other complications too; the generation involved are living both longer and healthier lives than their predecessors. They are also the generation that embraced car ownership, that saw the independence it brought to everyday life, and that have seen supermarkets replace rows of butchers, bakers and greengrocers (amongst others), partly as a result of the additional mobility that the car brought.





So we have an increased number of older drivers in a world where driving has become necessary to get around, and many of them expect to carry on driving simply because they always have.

The IAM did some analysis a few years back focussing on the age of drivers involved in crashes that caused injury. The older age group (over 70) are fragile so the same injury is far more serious to them than it is to a 25 year old. But as drivers, the over 70's came in as the safest age group on the road.

We did some more research a few years later and established that they had problems with complex junctions, and dealing with fast moving traffic in circumstances like turning right from a side road onto a high speed dual carriageway.

Of course older drivers tend to manage when and where they drive a lot more than younger drivers, like when to avoid rush hour and late night driving - the obvious high-risk aspects that other drivers have less, or often no choice

about. But the fact that they exercise that choice responsibly is a factor to be remembered.

There are always calls for older drivers to be re-tested at set periods. But we know - from government statistics - that they are the safest age group of drivers on the road. So it doesn't make sense to ask the safest group to go through extra tests, which will result in spending effort and scarce public resource on testing them and chasing them up for appointments. We all know that our faculties and health generally decline with age. We all see the items on the news about a tragedy involving an older driver who should have given up but didn't. The thing we forget is what makes news. The old saying "dog bites man" is not newsworthy, but "man bites dog" is out of the ordinary and is therefore likely to be splattered across the media. Road death has become, thankfully, more unusual, with a fraction of the figures it was a few decades ago. As a result, there's been a bit more news attention to the individual cases that have an unusual twist.





As an organisation we have seen great, lively and sharp individuals pass the advanced driving test at the age of 90+. We know it's wise to have sensible plans to deal with those less fortunate in their health and capability, and that's why we have the mature driver review in place to help individuals make informed decisions. We have called, along with others, for the government to address the issues there are around older drivers with some strategic focus. So that as a generation who are the most car-based, and have a far higher proportion of drivers than any before them head into older age, are prepared sensibly. We wait patiently for that to emerge.

In the meantime, let's remember that older drivers are exactly like younger ones - they are individuals, most of whom are being responsible and doing their best to be sensible, but get castigated because of the faults of a minority amongst them.

April Members' Evening

The Lord-Lieutenant of Somerset

Mrs Anne Maw, the Lord Lieutenant of Somerset, is coming to talk to us about her role as the Queen's Representative of Somerset and the many duties she carries out on the Queen's behalf.

**Wednesday 18th April 7:30pm
at Hatch Beauchamp Village Hall**



Understanding System

By Nigel Albright

It is said that when Lord Cottenham first looked at police drivers in the 1930s he found that those who approached the subject methodically were safer than those who did not. That may be so. But if nothing else it will have confirmed Cottenham's existing views that driving safely on the roads was best done in a methodical and systematic way. His book, 'Motoring Without Fears', written in 1928, already had the essence of System in it.

The first police driving school, Hendon, was started in 1935 but it was some two years before Lord Cottenham was invited by the then Commissioner of the Metropolitan Police, Lord Trenchard, to be what was euphemistically called, 'civilian advisor' to, in effect, take over at the school and offer his ideas. The long and short of it was that within 18 months Cottenham's systematic approach had taken

the safety level in the Met. from 1 in 8,000 miles to 1 in 38,000; a staggering improvement by any standards and so the Cottenham system, as it became known, became the fundamental basis of police driver training in the UK and, ultimately, what we still see in Roadcraft today.

I believe it is important to understand System rather than just apply it mechanically because that is the way it is, which is the way I started. I also feel that is particularly pertinent for tutors because they have to answer questions from associates and, if they don't have the answers to 'why?' it just becomes pedantry and the whole thing falls apart. So there has to be a valid reason behind why we do this or that. And whatever it is, it has to be related to safety because that is where this all started back in Cottenham's day.





WHY HAVE A SYSTEM?

The first questions to ask are why have a system? Why be methodical and what are the advantages? The answers are very simple. Firstly, there is the apparent experience of Cottenham himself when initially looking at police drivers. But actually where ever you go, whether business or pleasure, you will generally find a systematic way of doing things. That is perfectly normal. In fact, for most things, when the basics are firmly understood they generally form a natural or logical sequence of their own, mainly because it has been found that if you do this before that it doesn't work so well. Also, having a method makes a lot of sense because it removes uncertainty and therefore reduces stress. Here we have a method or system which is run through, a bit like a check list, on the approach to any 'hazard' on the road. I use the word 'hazard' very deliberately. In the early Roadcrafts a hazard was anything which might cause a driver to change direction (therefore position) and/or speed. The key word is obviously, might. And that goes back to what Derek Van Petegem, a former Hendon Advanced Wing and skid pan instructor said,

that the key word is 'consider'. Consider how relevant each part of the System is to that particular hazard. You don't actually need to apply all features in all circumstances, but you do need to check them off just in case.

RIGID OR FLEXIBLE SYSTEM?

This leads naturally to the point that the important thing is not to consider System as a rigid and inflexible way of dealing with situations on the road. Yes, in its learnt form and to get the basics into a student, it was done very much in rote form. But how else? The 1994 Roadcraft made a great thing about flexibility, but I feel that was largely a device to make it more acceptable on the bookshelves. Certainly previous editions of Roadcraft did tend to give the impression of being regimented. However, flexibility needs a firm foundation or, in the words of another former Hendon Advanced Wing Instructor, Sgt. Pat Forbes, 'Flexibility comes later'.

Obviously once one understands the basics well then there is also a better understanding of when and how they can be flexed whilst still staying within the parameters of applying them soundly.





It took me a long while to get to that point so perhaps I can shorten the agony trail just a little bit for those coming after. I have to say that this is my evolved understanding of System, not one which was taught to me. However, it is based on time spent studying with police driving instructors back in the hey-day of police driving standards which was the middle 1970s.

THE KEY BUILDING BLOCKS

We know that in the original Roadcrafts the recommendation was that System was applied when approaching any hazard and a hazard was anything which might cause a change in position or speed. And we also know the key word here is MIGHT; the possibility of.

That gives us our first clue about understanding System and it is that there are only two things which a moving vehicle can do for the driver to either enhance or degrade his (or her) safety; that is change position (laterally) and/or speed. That is all. There is nothing else you can do with a moving vehicle. That being so then position and speed have to be the basic building blocks of a methodical or systematic approach.

The next question to ask is why put position before speed? The answer again is simple enough. It is that you can very often resolve a situation by changing position without subsequently changing speed, but generally it doesn't work the other way around.

Once this is understood then, in essence, the rest falls fairly naturally into place.

Having put the basic building blocks into place the next point to consider is when putting them into practise what other considerations have to be made? Well, if you knew that on your route there was guaranteed to be no other people or drivers around, then you could just do it regardless; you could go at any speed you wished and, providing you didn't leave the road, you would be safe. However, because that is not the case it is necessary to check that what you wish to do is safe or, at least is not going to cause inconvenience to other road users, whether to the front, the sides or behind. So this is obviously where using the mirrors comes in and why they need to be used before changing position or speed, whence the original Mirrors and Course Selected (with appropriate signals if necessary) followed by Mirror, Signal, Speed.





INFORMATION

At this point it is worth briefly mentioning where the INFORMATION bit comes into this. In my view where the '94 Roadcraft went badly wrong is that the Information Phase became an integral part of System and that messed the whole thing up. In the 2007 version the information part ran parallel with the System, which is quite different. The idea of receiving and giving information on a rolling basis is simple and effective, but don't let it get out of hand; still use it in conjunction with the sequence of the System, or else the whole thing falls apart.

SIGNALS

Having decided on the course needed and checked what the conditions are all round. It may be necessary to tell others what you intend to do which brings us neatly to signals. Now there are one or two points to make about using signals.

To apply a signal well we need to understand what it is intended to do. Firstly, let's look at being on the receiving end of signals. Question; What does a flashing indicator tell

you? Now put that into a workshop and see what answers come back. The right answer is that the only thing it tells you is that the bulb is working. That's all. What it also says is, don't assume. Assumptions can be dangerous if acted upon too readily. Keep assumptions as possibilities until you are quite sure they are valid. You are at a T-Junction, waiting to turn right into the main road. From your right approaches a vehicle (or motorcycle if you wish) which has its left hand indicator on. What action do you take? The answer, of course, is that you wait until you actually see the vehicle being steered into the curve, then you know it is safe to go. But not until then. Even some professional driving instructors make this fairly basic mistake.

Now to the application of signals. What purpose do they fulfil? Stupid question, I know. But it's what I call a Stupid Important Question. Obviously, in the first instance they inform of intentions. To do so, the signal must obviously be on for a suitable period of time before executing the action, to allow others to see and understand its (probable!) intention, otherwise it performs no function.





When I took The BSM High Performance Course, the Course Manager wanted the signals 'on' approximately three to four seconds before the action that goes with them. That is generally considered enough time for the average motorist to see and react (if necessary) to the signal. I still use that general guideline. Not always practicable, I know. Mini-roundabouts are but one example, but the 3-4 seconds is good to aim for.

The other thing it makes you do is think and plan which in itself can be an aid to safety. It means, in order to do this properly, you have to be very aware of all that is going on around you.

Now, some may say that, 4 seconds or so may be a bit long but what it also does is clearly separate signal from the action. I did an exercise with associates in which they needed to move from a nearside lane to an offside one, to prepare for a right turn at a roundabout. I told them I wanted them put the signal on approximately three to four seconds before starting to move to the adjacent lane. And what happened? Almost in every case there was a

steering input simultaneously with the signal being put on. For most people there is a definite and almost automatic link between the two; the signal and the action. So that is an important exercise which makes the point. What it also demonstrates is the general tendency to signal AS the manoeuvre is being performed which is a useless exercise since the driver is merely telling others what they are already doing. It's what I call a Reflex Signal and one to keep well away from. On motorways, for example, you can very often see the vehicles closing the lane separator before the signal is applied and it's not uncommon to see a vehicle lane changing with other vehicles all around it, without any signal being applied!

Signals can also be used to ask, which is often overlooked, 'Please may I have the space to move from this outside lane to a position in front of you in the nearside lane?' It may not work 100% of the time but then there is no 100% rule for anything. If it works 51% of the time, it works. But the other thing is getting the cooperation of another driver is far more empathetic and gives you an opportunity to





give a really good courtesy signal in response. Then everyone works happily together; a much better way of going about things.

The other thing about signals is their planning. I like the old Roadcraft saying that, 'driving plans are based on what you can see, what you can not see and, what you may reasonably expect to develop in the circumstances'. And that applies equally well to signals.

SIGNAL BEFORE BRAKES?

The next question to ask is why put the signal on before starting to reduce speed, aka using the brakes. The answer to that one is also quite simple. If you see brake lights it can mean more than one thing, so there is ambiguity; there could be a hazard ahead or, the car in front might be slowing down to do a turn. However, when you see a signal come on you can anticipate that a reduction in speed will often follow, and you can plan more definitely on that basis. There are those who advocate showing braking lights to indicate that the vehicle is actually slowing down, and then following that with a signal, for example. But I don't feel that is a sound way of going

about it and it sets up the wrong mind-set in the pupil. So, for a number of reasons, and as a guideline, let us have the signal on approximately three to four seconds before the reduction in speed starts.

THE SPEED BIT

When doing workshops I often asked what the stages are in reducing speed because for many the first inclination is to say, 'use the brakes'. Well yes and no.

The first stage happens when one relaxes the throttle and that means that we are using what I call 'engine compression braking'. The amount of effect will obviously depend on the gear already engaged. Now saying this could lead to some interpreting it to mean 'grab a gear before starting to reduce speed'. No, that's not what is meant. What it means is that the amount of braking effect will depend on the gear already engaged. And observation and planning are integral with this. In any case, if you have the right gear for the conditions then so much more can be done by just flexing the throttle and actually using the brakes is just an extension of this.





That's the first stage. There are three. So what's the second? The second is cover the brake. Don't touch it, cover it, just in case. If you don't actually need it then fine, just move the foot back to the throttle. But, by covering the brake you are being ahead of the game and greatly reducing the thinking time, which normally also involves the movement of the foot from the throttle pedal to the brake pedal, which is time consuming.

The signal therefore, should be 'on', around 3-4 seconds before starting to reduce speed, not necessarily the braking.

PLAN-BACK

At this stage it is worth making the point about positioning early to allow time for the rest of the system to be applied. That obviously needs early observation and planning.

It's generally at this stage that we start to consider plan-back. But, also bear in mind that whilst it is taking a whole article to explain the system in action, in reality it all happens much more quickly.

Plan-back is not mentioned in Roadcraft but it is, I believe, a very important part of

understanding and applying System. In fact, I don't really see how System can be applied without it. Plan-back is also more or less self-explanatory; it's simplest form is really found on the approach to a bend. You see the bend and instantly assess its apparent degree of severity, even approximately will do for now. You decide on a suitable approach position and, in this instance, recognise the need to reduce speed. Remember that you might not always need to adjust the speed, but, if so this is the point at which to plan for it. A reduction in speed will also mean that the current gear will not take your vehicle through the bend properly, so that means a space (or time) for a gear change.

This means you think back from your turn-in point to where you need to take the position and plan 'slots' for the speed reduction and gear-change. For most people this may happen almost without conscious thought, but each part needs to have its own allocated space and to be planned on that basis. Now let's apply it to System as a whole on the classic approach to a right turn from a main road to a minor road.





Firstly the position has been taken. As mentioned this can happen well in advance of the next part, Speed. Given this is a right turn from a major road then without doubt speed will need to be reduced. Now we come to an interesting bit because what is really happening is that the speed is reduced to that decided upon in the initial assessment and then the right working gear is taken to match that speed. Notice the basis on which the gear is selected. It is to match a suitable working gear to the speed chosen to negotiate the hazard safely. That is very important. You choose the speed and THEN match the gear to the chosen speed when it has been achieved. Remember you look and then plan-back, notionally allocating each part which you are going to use to its own slot. Then you know where to start applying the System.

GEAR

The right choice of gear also needs to be understood, and it can vary in relation to the style of driving. If you are following another vehicle and planning the possibility of an overtake immediately after the bend, then the gear chosen will be for maximum acceleration.

If this is not the case and you are just taking granny out for the day then the gear might be one which will give just enough pulling power through the bend. However, whichever way it runs, what you need is the right 'working gear' for that hazard. I use the word 'working' because that implies more than just having enough torque to keep the vehicle moving.

To illustrate this let's change the context for a moment. Let us imagine we are in a built up area, which means 30mph zone. At the moment things are fairly quiet. There are no parked vehicles so no reduction in road width. The view is open and there is nothing to cause on-coming traffic to over-step the centre-line. So all you need to do is keep the vehicle moving. Fourth gear, for example, might do the job quite nicely giving minimal stress on the engine and minimising fuel consumption.

However ahead you now see a change in conditions. You are approaching what I will call a mini shopping zone. The road is still straight but there is more activity going on, both from vehicles and pedestrians. At this moment there is no need to reduce speed but you might need to do so. You consider POSITION and SPEED





but decide that, for the moment, these are OK. However, you decide you want more flexibility on the throttle, so you take third GEAR and that gives you that greater flexibility and control. Having the right working gear for any situation is important. It will give both the option to accelerate or, equally important, de-accelerate. In essence you have it all 'on the throttle'. That doesn't, of course, mean that you don't use brakes, it just means that you use them a good deal less than you would otherwise do so.

GEAR CHANGE EXERCISE

I remember very clearly when I was very fortunate to have time with some of the Hendon instructors that they were very keen to have what they called 'level speed' before the gear change, and that that speed should then remain the same right up to the point of the turn, for example. Gear changes should be seamless and if they are not it, often comes down to not being confident about the speed acquired. To help with all of this it was an integral part of my training programme with associates to do a gear changing exercise. This entailed keeping a steady 30mph

(normally in a 30 zone without much, if any other, traffic around). Then getting the associate to change, say from 4th to 3rd seamlessly and back to 4th. From that to do 4th to 2nd and 2nd back to 4th and all combinations in between, bearing in mind that there should only ever be one gear change for each application of System where a gear change might be needed, because it may not always be necessary. Once they can do all of that they have much more confidence with their gear changes and they will be much smoother into the bargain. An old Devizes (police driving school) technique was to count 1000-2000 to ensure that time was taken over the gear change and that the gear lever was moved in a calm and deliberate fashion. With proper planning it is seldom necessary to rush a gear change, nor should it be.

Just a further point about gear changes, or lack of them per se in automatic vehicles. There are those who maintain that in these you just put it into drive and leave it there. You can often tell when a person is driving an automatic vehicle because they use their brakes far more than should be necessary. The reason for this is





That just left in drive there is often little or no engine compression braking, particularly at lower speeds. So, yes, I use intermediate gears in automatics in order to have more control.

HORN!

The next part on the current Roadcraft is ACCELERATION, but there were originally two other features of the System after the gear feature. The first, interestingly enough, was a further consideration for Signals and the other, but also in real terms falling into the sector on signals was consideration for the HORN or, audible signal of approach. It was removed from System, as such, in order to keep it the sequence simpler. However, at police driving schools Roadcraft is 'unpacked' via a two hour lecture and in this the consideration for horn/or headlights is brought in at this point. The reason for its position here in the System was as a final option when all others had been considered, or taken. So, for example, the Position, Speed and Gear have all been sorted but you are uncertain about whether that person will step out from between the parked vehicles on the left. Are they aware of your presence? Do they need to be made aware

that you are there, both from their own safety and also yours? The first option is to cover the horn, just in case. You then decide whether you are going to use it. Is it going to be a quick, short note or, if approaching blind bend in a country road, for example, is it going to be a longer note. Whichever way it goes the original guidelines were to use it once.

The other consideration when using horn or lights is what is going to be the other person's emotional reaction. Whatever, your concern for safety comes first and in my book if there is a perceivable threat to my safety and using the horn or lights sorts it out, then it is valid. If the other party is upset I'm sorry, but my safety comes first. The only thing one can (and indeed should) do afterwards is give a very clear and decisive courtesy signal - with the left hand because that can be seen from a greater number of angles than one done with the right hand - and smile - genuinely!

That briefly brings us to using headlamps instead of horn in a final check before overtaking. Again, position speed and gear have been sorted but, how stable is the target vehicle? Is the driver aware of your presence





and intentions? For example, he or she might be close up behind another vehicle in lane one on a dual-carriageway. The threat is that they might pop out in-front of you. Here you might use either the horn or, more commonly, the headlamps which are still, in this context, a warning of approach. They should be used when you are well back so that the driver in front will get the maximum impact from their use. The other thing is to have the headlamps on for approximately two seconds. Again, a single application; and don't forget the decisive courtesy signal afterwards.

ACCELERATION

Finally, we come to the 'bit on the curve'. A point of interest here is that there are essentially two speeds for a vehicle to travel through a curved path. One is up to the maximum limit of adhesion, such as you would find on a race track and the other is having a speed whereby you can stop in the distance you can see to be clear, and indeed stay on your side of the road. The two are not the same. Only the latter is pertinent in road driving, or riding.

I still like the A1 and A2 acceleration points found up to the 1977 Roadcraft. The current version does go into managing a bend more thoughtfully though. Which ever way you run it the important thing is that you enter the curved path at the right speed. Generally you only start to increase the power after the apex of the bend taking the amount of view into consideration. The power is brought in as the steering is being reduced, otherwise you are likely to induce understeer. There is a completely separate article on setting up, travelling through and exiting bends. The A1/A2 points took account of whether the conditions were dry or, say, icy. If it was icy you only brought in any power when the vehicle was straight again which was at A2.

APPLICATION

There is one point about the application of System which seems generally overlooked and that is where you have a collection of hazards together, such as driving through town where you may have vehicle movement, vehicles parking or, more particularly moving out from a parking place and the obvious pedestrian





movement all bundled together then adjust the position and speed (and therefore, of course, the 'working' gear) to the general tone of the conditions. However, if there are any particular instances which are different from the average, then the System can again kick-in in its own right. What this means is that there are essentially two triggers for System. One is the tone of the conditions which can be non-specific and the other is specific instances. That actually makes things much easier for understanding how and when to apply it. Although in real terms as you travel along the road there are always lateral movements of the vehicle as you try to optimally position it for the conditions, be it for safety, view or stability because one thing about the so called advanced driver is that he or she is seldom stuck in a groove, as it were, just going along in the middle of the road.

SUMMARY

The interesting thing is that with the attempt to make Roadcraft more user friendly in the 1994 edition they missed the point that in 1962 John

Miles, again a former Hendon Advanced Wing Instructor, and, incidentally, the first Course Manager of HPC, was probably the first to simplify System in his BBC2 series, Master Driving. He made it just Position, Speed and Gear. Familiar? Because in those days IAM, for example, were still thinking CMSBGA. The mnemonic for Course, Mirror, Signal, Brake, Gear and Acceleration and Roadcraft continued with its six point system for cars and seven for bikes right up to 1994.

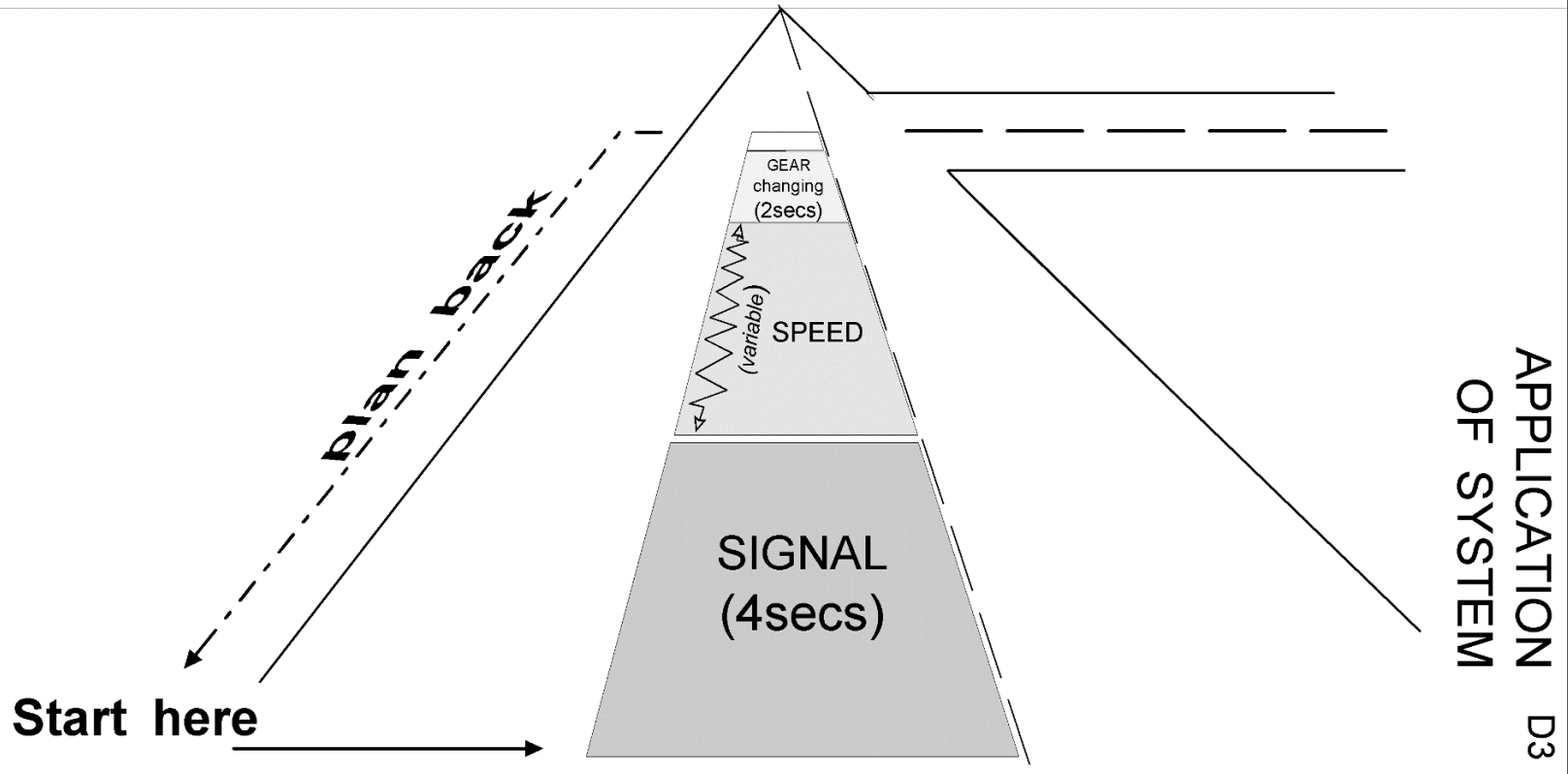
The DSA, some years ago took the six part System, as it was then, and broke it down into two simple parts, MSM for Mirror, Signal, Manoeuvre and then Position, Speed and Look. The Look bit being the only variable from System as a whole, but suitably applicable to learner drivers.

I hope this article has helped understand just a little better the System, why it is structured the way it is and how best to apply it. Also that although it was created some sixty years ago it is still as relevant today as it was in the 1930s. Cottenham really did get it right.





Have a clear mind picture of the System; look at the junction or bend and then plan the 'slots' **back** from there so that you know where to start the System and give each feature its proper space. Here we assume the POSITION has already been taken up.





I don't need to tell the DVLA, do I?

By Rebecca Ashton, IAM RoadSmart's head of driver behaviour

On a recent visit to the medical section of the DVLA offices in Swansea, where I was taking part in a charity advisory day, I learnt that there are a lot of drivers who fail to disclose health problems such as anxiety, cancer, strokes and arthritis to the DVLA. The reasons for this could be anything from people being scared their licence would be taken away to simply not knowing that they needed to. Unfortunately this means that significant numbers of people could be putting themselves and other road users at risk on a daily basis.

This is obviously an extremely worrying situation. And while the dangers to others is clear, there are also personal risks for those involved. If drivers fail to declare a medical condition that affects their driving they could receive a hefty fine of up to £1000 and be at risk of prosecution. They are also required to

inform their insurance company, or face invalidating their policy and leaving them at serious financial risk in the event of an incident or claim.

But often, the health conditions that are listed as being important to notify to the DVLA - and there are over 100 of them - are minor and they do not necessarily prompt a driving restriction. They can sometimes be easily alleviated - wearing prescribed glasses to correct visual impairment, for example. Last year the DVLA received and assessed 700,000 medical notifications, with many of the drivers involved being able to retain their licence, even while their cases were being reviewed.

So, if you have a medical condition - or have a family member affected by one - and have so far not informed the DVLA and your insurance company, now might perhaps be a good time





to check if you should do. The DVLA have a really useful website which includes an A to Z of all the medical conditions that require a notification to be made. To see details of the list of conditions, click [here](#). The site also provides users the option to notify the DVLA of certain conditions online, or download the necessary paperwork for others.

The link is really easy to use. When exploring it, I looked at the listing for strokes, for example, and learnt that drivers need only inform the DVLA if their symptoms persist for more than a month after the stroke occurred. Otherwise, there is no need to. On all the conditions listed, the DVLA team try to make

the process of notifying them of a medical condition as easy as possible. In addition to giving information online they also offer support over the phone and by post (see details below) and look to provide a decision on any condition within 6 weeks.

If you are in any doubt about your own, or your family member's ability to drive when affected by a medical condition, a visit to your or their family doctor should definitely be your first port of call. From there, there are other sources of advice available both online and over the phone via the DVLA. Whichever route you take, do take action though. This is definitely one situation where safe is better than sorry.

DVLA drivers' medical enquiries

Telephone: 0300 790 6806 - Monday to Friday, 8:00am to 5:30pm, Saturday, 8:00am to 1:00pm

Post: Drivers' Medical Enquiries, DVLA. Swansea, SA99 1TU





A message from a founder member

By Jackie Serle

A few months ago I moved to Wales from Somerset. Having spotted a car in my village near Welshpool sporting an IAM badge, it transported me back to my early founding days of the Taunton group, of which I was a member for a few years, along with Frank, Julia etc.

I googled the Taunton IAM group to find that it is thriving and doing a sterling job still and my name mentioned in the 'History' pages.

Maybe one thing that I was very proud of when I passed my IAM test (Reg Dilly was the tester) was that I was 38 weeks pregnant! Reg Dilly was a bit surprised to say the least when he met me. He kept his fingers crossed that there would not be an accident of a different sort on the test route. However, an hour and a half later, through lanes and roads I had never travelled before (Wilveliscombe was out of my territory) he informed me that I had been successful and passed. He also commented that he knew before we left Taunton town that he had confidence in my driving to pass. I was very chuffed with this comment.

I am pleased to say the IAM driving skills, have served me well over the years, as I have never had an accident of my making. I had a car rear end me once, but not my 'fault'. I also drive daily and for work as a Highways Engineer covering more than average miles before retiring. I am still holding a clean licence.

I wish I could say the same for my second husband, who was a Police Traffic Officer, also retired. He continues to be a back seat driver, with a couple of accidents and keeping his speed down is hard. He still thinks he is chasing cars and robbers I'm sure. I ignore him when I am driving and dare not comment on his! It makes for a lively debate!

Wishing all your members safe driving and thank you for the memories from your web page.

Kind regards,

Jackie Serle (formerly Frankling)





Messages from Grateful Associates

Phew, I passed! I felt I really had to, for both Hugh Todd and then Andrew Griffiths had put in an awful lot of their time into sufficiently improving my driving technique. In the test itself my examiner made a point of ensuring I was as relaxed as possible and gave clear, concise, instructions throughout a solid 90 minutes of driving. In the end I achieved a First. Thank you gentlemen.

I'd been driving for 55 years and must easily have driven well in excess of half a million miles. Of course in that time many bad habits had

grown, just like Topsy, and needed to be carefully weeded out and better techniques instilled into their place.

What impressed me most about the course was the care with which I was tutored on every drive, even when I made the same errors time after time. That really was most commendable and meant that I can truly say that I enjoyed each and every drive. And "Oh, what value for money!"

Many thanks again.

Regards

Rikk Earthy





MY "ROADSMART" EXPERIENCE

It all started on 23rd September 2017 when Somerset W.I. held an IAM RoadSmart 'Improve your driving skills' day at Haynes Motor Museum near Yeovil. I decided to attend to improve my driving as I had become less confident behind the wheel. This led to me signing up for the advanced driving course, not knowing quite what would be required.

I was quickly contacted by Barry Keenan, my Observer, to arrange an assessment drive. That's when the journey along an unfamiliar road began. Barry is a brilliant, sympathetic teacher. His knowledge is endless, given with explanations and reasons so everything began to make sense. Of course, I had to do my homework too, both theory and practical. I confess more than I had expected. After twelve drives Barry informed me that I was 'test ready'. Eek! I knew my driving had

improved as I felt more confident and was enjoying driving but would I be able to pass the test? Next step was to be assessed by another Observer, Andrew Griffiths, to ascertain if Barry's judgement was correct. Andrew encouragingly said 'yes'! Within a week I had a test date. This was it! On the day of the test I was very nervous but quickly put at ease by my examiner, Malcolm Avery. The drive went well and I passed. Something I am very proud of.

The experience with IAM RoadSmart and all that it entailed has been challenging and rewarding. My Observers and examiner gave their time voluntarily because they believe in making the roads a safer place to travel on.

I cannot thank Barry enough for his encouragement, support and great sense of humour which enabled me to be, I hope, a better and safer driver.

Trish Kennedy





Can you see where to go and where you're going?

By Peter Rodger, IAM RoadSmart's head of driving advice

A police officer recently tweeted that the only legal place to mount a satnav is on the bottom right hand corner of the windscreen of a car. The tweet was taken down fairly quickly but had been seen by a journalist who has an interest in motoring and raised the question - was the police officer right?

There is a lot of information online that says you shouldn't mount a satnav in the swept area of the windscreen (that's the bit the wipers sweep). The explanation given is that the MoT test has a requirement for the swept area to be kept clear, and so it is illegal to obstruct it.

For many people of course, this is totally irrelevant as satnavs have moved on from being that little device on a sucker stuck somewhere on the screen, to being part of the dashboard. And the satnav mounting on a motorbike is another thing altogether...

But for those who still rely on their portable satnav, positioning it correctly can be a bit tricky. I know I still use my trusted little grey box to tell me how to reach my destination when travelling to a new place.

There is no offence that I have ever heard of that says that having something on your car that can result in an MoT failure is against the law. For example, having a spare tyre which is below pressure in the boot of your car may prompt an MOT fail, but the thought of it being a criminal offence to do so is total nonsense. You may have just changed it because it's got a puncture!

I place my satnav at the bottom of the screen, where the only thing it stops me seeing is the bonnet. I put it where it will not be sent into someone's face by an airbag deploying. I put it where I can see it easily at a glance if I need to





look at it, so it isn't a big distraction when checking a verbal instruction on the screen.

I also hate loose wires that are draped around the inside of the car, so it is centrally placed at the bottom of the screen and under the mirror - it must look awful from the outside. But my seating position is quite high, so the satnav is not an obstruction to me or my view of the road.

So, according to all the advice, including the police officer's original tweet, my satnav is in the wrong place. But I would argue that we all sit differently and have different cars. So where each driver decides to put their satnav should always be a matter of judgement. That's no excuse for sticking it in your eye line. But - to repeat the point above - there is no law I have heard of that automatically makes it an offence to be in contravention of the MoT test criteria. They can be more stringent than the criminal law. The key is to choose a safe and sensible location, where it is a help, and not an obstruction or distraction whilst driving.

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

**All contributions would be very
welcome.**

**All items should be sent to
ed@wessexam.uk**



The devil is in the local detail

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

Last night I felt a little like the proverbial Daniel entering the lion's den. I was taking part in a sustainable transport debate at the University of Plymouth at the invitation of the Plymouth Cycling Campaign. An audience of around 100, mainly active cyclists, had assembled to hear all sides of the road user debate. I learned three things very quickly. One, Plymouth is a long way from anywhere, but is a busy place with traffic and mobility problems similar to any city in the UK. Secondly, if you have the local MP on stage with you, a nice man called Gary Streeter, then he gets all the flak! Thirdly, no matter how you paint the broad national picture it is the local issues that raise the most interest and debate.

My input was mainly derived from the IAM RoadSmart Safety Culture Report for 2017 which shows concerns among drivers about

aggressive cyclists and also lack of support for a law putting the onus on the driver in collisions with cyclists or pedestrians. But, there are also more positive findings about speeding in urban areas and general support for road safety. I tried to accentuate the positive in my presentation and answers afterwards because there is a lot of common ground among road users. For example we are all worried about distraction - pedestrians and cyclists on phones are risking their lives every bit as much as drivers doing the same - perhaps even more!

I also feel that the new investment in trunk roads by Highways England plus new money for the most high risk local roads will benefit vulnerable road users. New roads tend to be designed with walkers, horse riders and cyclists in mind. Transport Focus are also





charged with measuring the satisfaction of all road users with our main roads and that includes vulnerable groups. If you add in a government walking and cycling strategy with a little new money behind it then things are starting to move in the right direction for us all. But, if drivers', cyclists' and pedestrians' everyday experience of the road network is one of hassles, diversions, potholes and downright dangerous road layouts then any good news at the national level seems very hard to believe. I am sure Plymouth is not alone in this, but the audience soon listed many examples of unusable cycling routes, cyclists' needs ignored during roadworks and a variety of other local problems.

Planners and engineers need to know about this detail if they are to really address the problems and get people to consider other modes of transport that help the environment and reduce congestion. Plymouth Cycling

Campaign is an excellent example of a well organised local group that gets involved in the nitty gritty of local transport problems and one of their active members is also an IAM RoadSmart member. Whilst those of us with a national role can help with the bigger picture, our local groups really can offer valuable insights on their local roads. Poor junctions, uncoordinated roadworks and of course potholes are just three examples where they can get involved plus commenting on local transport plans as they come up for consultation.

We will continue to fight the corner for safer roads for drivers and riders but until everyone in every corner of the UK feels safer on their local roads, progress is not really being made. I was also reassured that at the event there was recognition that ultimately it is changing road user behaviour that ensures that all the well meaning strategies and investment plans get delivered.





Michael's Drive for Improvement, Part 2

By Revd Michael Forster

My last blog entry described my journey since passing my IAM test in 1971. In 2015 I'd had a wake-up call, realising my driving skills had slipped badly, and the subsequent few months had been devoted to recovering and improving - all leading to one thing.

The Masters

Examiner Andy Giddings emailed to arrange our Northamptonshire rendezvous. I'd travelled through the county some decades ago, but it would all be unfamiliar by now. The test went well - until I threw it all away with a text-book error. At the debrief, Andy sounded disappointed. "I think you know what I'm going to say; do you know what speed you reached, overtaking on the A605?"

I didn't; "73 in a 60 limit."

Doh! I'd become so fixated on the overtake I had lost track of all else. "It was a good overtake," Andy smiled, wryly: "Safe, decisive, but completely illegal."

Seeing the mark sheet, I really kicked myself. The scores were all well above the base-line - except for a sore thumb of a '4' for legality. I'd failed by just two points, for one silly error.

"Apply for a retest quickly," Andy advised. "No more mentoring - just drive as you did today but keep it legal."

Complications

Within the week I was in hospital - the first of four emergency admissions, culminating in surgery and the long road to recovery. IAM RoadSmart and the examiner accepted the repeated cancellations patiently, and after recovery I concentrated on practising overtakes: bicycles, horses, parked cars, pedestrians in the carriageway - even imaginary cars on empty roads!

Second chance

The first half of my re-test was blighted by the memory of failure. I noted every trivial error, magnified it and rapidly compiled a mental list





of reasons to fail! By the time we came to the pre-agreed 'convenience' stop, I was feeling as twitchy as a bucket of frogs. I said so to Andy, who replied, "Well, you haven't thrown it away - yet - but it's touch and go. You feel twitchy and you're making the car feel that way, too!"

After a few minutes' conversation, he summed up: "Concentrate on smoothness and let the progress happen naturally. I'm sure now you've got that off your chest you'll feel better and that will transmit to the car. Just drive as you did last time, but keep it legal."

From there on, things settled down. After a few miles, Andy commented, warmly, "If I were deaf and blind, I wouldn't know when you're changing gear." I relaxed enough to be able to hold a conversation about theory as I settled into my normal style of driving, using commentary to show its application.

Back at the rendezvous, Andy grunted approval of my reversing and stopping drill, smiled and held out his hand. It had been a drive of two halves - the first up to standard (just) and the second very much better. That had been when I'd stopped trying to act the part of a Master and had just driven!

After a short debrief, Andy totted up the score: 77% - a good, clear pass. "You should enjoy your driving even more now," he commented, "you've got nothing to prove."

I learnt a lot from this process - mostly about myself. During my mentoring, Grahame had commented on my tendency to beat myself up over trivial errors and allow that to affect my driving. It's far from unusual in test candidates, but I can do it for England! "We all make mistakes on every drive," Grahame had repeated. "The examiner makes mistakes! Put it behind you, focus on the drive and move on."

It was a couple of days later I really felt the benefit: I was enjoying my driving as never before. Everything came together in smooth, flowing actions, and things I'd been fiercely concentrating on happened intuitively.

I look back now on an amazing roller-coaster of a journey, full of highs and lows, achievements, setbacks, disappointment and elation. If you ask me whether it was worth it there's only one answer: a resounding "Yes."

The challenge now: to maintain the standard.

No more wake-up calls!





Recent Releases from the IAM Press Office

Too tired to drive? Tips from IAM RoadSmart



Richard Gladman, head of driving and riding standards, shares some tips on how to avoid the dangers of falling asleep at the wheel.

- Extreme tiredness can lead to micro-sleeps. This is a short episode of drowsiness or sleep that could last a
- fraction of a second or up to 30 seconds. A car driving at 70 mph will travel 31 meters per second, giving plenty of time to cause a serious crash during a micro sleep.
- The effects of losing one or two hours of sleep a night on a regular basis can lead to chronic sleepiness over time. So ensure you are well rested and feeling fit and healthy before you set off.
- Make sure you take regular rest breaks to split up the journey when driving on a long, boring stretch of a motorway. It's good practise to stop at least every two hours and it's essential to take a break before the drowsiness sets in.
- If necessary, plan an overnight stop. If you feel too fatigued to carry on driving, then book yourself into a hotel at the next





service station and sleep it off. Wake up fresh with a good breakfast, and carry on your journey. It's good to note that a caffeine high may be a quick fix, but it is not a long term solution and certainly no substitute for proper sleep.

- You're bound to be tired after a full day at work, so avoid setting out on a long drive after you have finished for the day. It's best to start your journey earlier on, and when you're more alert.
- If possible, avoid driving between the two peak times for sleepiness. These are between 3:00am and 5:00am and also between 2:00pm and 4:00pm.

- If you have taken prescribed medication, then seek advice from your GP as to whether you should be driving or not. If bought over the counter, then read the instructions on the pack or speak to a pharmacist.

Richard says: "Even the fittest of us need regular sleep to perform at our highest standards. Driving requires full concentration at all times and if you are tired, your ability to concentrate is reduced. Our internal body clock (circadian rhythm) is usually set to deal with our normal lifestyle, extra care needs to be taken when driving during a time we would normally be at rest. Stop, rehydrate and rest if you need to."





Wider use of mobile safety cameras is good news for road safety says IAM RoadSmart

An investigation by IAM RoadSmart, the UK's biggest independent road safety charity, has found that more than a third of police forces are using their mobile safety camera vans to prosecute drivers not wearing seatbelts or using a handheld mobile phone.



The information comes from a Freedom of Information request submitted to 44 police forces which found that 16 of them use the pictures from the cameras in their vans to pursue these offences as a matter of routine, and a further four do so occasionally.

With 80% of drivers telling us that driver distraction from phones has got worse in the last three years this can only be good news for road safety. IAM RoadSmart surveys also show that drivers put enforcing mobile phone laws in second place behind drink and drug driving as a road traffic policing priority. Seatbelt use is in sixth place but it is well established that those not wearing a seatbelt are much more likely to die or be seriously injured in a crash.

IAM RoadSmart's Freedom of Information research found that the 16 police forces that routinely use their safety cameras to seek out





other offences recorded more than 8,000 unbelted drivers between them and around 1,000 with a mobile in their hand in 2016 (three police forces provided a category called “other offences” which totalled about 500 in 2016).

Some police forces had reservations about using safety cameras or camera vans to record non-speeding offences. Questions still need to be resolved completely around Home Office Type and image quality for successful prosecution.

Sarah Sillars, IAM RoadSmart Chief Executive Officer, said: “Drivers should be reassured that the police are using all the tools in their road safety toolkit to address their top worries. For too many drivers it is only the fear of being caught that will stop them putting themselves and others at risk from smartphone distraction.

Not wearing a seatbelt also puts an unfair burden on our emergency services who have to deal with the aftermath of such selfish behaviour. If drivers don’t know about this added enforcement technique then its impact will be reduced so the police should have no hesitation in publicising its use.”

She added: “Our research shows that the use of mobile safety camera vans to pursue phone users and seatbelt offenders varies from one force to another. What we need are clear and consistent guidelines on what the cameras are being used for, what training staff are being given and how the images are being used as evidence. The last thing we want to see are resources being wasted or the road safety message being diluted by careless drivers being acquitted.”





Sharing the road with an HGV

Driving in front of, or even behind, an HGV can be a bit daunting. But there's no need to panic as Richard Gladman, IAM RoadSmart's head of riding and driving standards, is here to help with seven top driving behaviour tips to keep you at ease on the road.

If you have friends and family who are unaware of advanced driving techniques, please share these tips with them to help them stay safe on the road.

- When you're driving along the motorway, you'll notice a lot of foreign HGV number plates. Bear in mind that the driver will be sitting on the left hand side rather than the right, so you may be difficult to see and the driver may be acclimatising his lane position in the UK. Take extra care when passing and allow more space if you can.
- We've all heard the saying "if you can see their mirrors, then they can see you." But an HGV can have up to five mirrors, and the driver is only limited to looking at one at a time so they may not see you. Hold back and you will eventually be visible in their mirrors.
- Identify when there is a likelihood of the HGV changing lanes. Is there a slip road coming up which will be joining traffic and may force a lane change? Or if there is an HGV in lane two, are they likely to change back into lane one? Be accommodating by hanging back and allowing them to pull into the lane they are looking to move into.
- At one point in time, we've all experienced heavy spray from an HGV in front of us, you can control this by extending the distance between yourself and the lorry. The Highway Code suggests four seconds in the rain but if





needed, make it more. Not only will it prevent your wipers working overtime, it will also improve your vision beyond the HGV.

- An articulated lorry will track sideways in a right hand bend on the motorway and on a roundabout so avoid being beside it. A good rule of thumb is to be safely in front of or safely behind, but never beside an HGV when entering a roundabout.
- If you see a queue of traffic in front of you and have an HGV behind you, introduce your brake lights early to pre-warn the driver behind and slow down gradually. This will let the HGV driver extend their braking distance and stop in plenty of time. On a motorway or dual carriageway, hazard lights can be used to show drivers behind you of any issues further in front (Highway Code rule 116).

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- Despite being legally limited to 60mph, an HGV can only physically go a maximum of 56mph on the motorway. So if you do see a HGV on the right hand lane, give them a helping hand by slowing down and letting them into the left lane. Facilitate the pass if you can.

Richard says: "As any HGV driver will tell you, they sometimes need a bit of extra space to move down the road. Visibility can be restricted, and no amount of mirrors will allow all of the blind spots to be monitored all of the time. By applying some simple rules and sharing the road space, we can make life easier for all of us. On a roundabout they will need more than one lane so let them have it, a few seconds delay will be worth it if you prevent an accident. Walk that mile in the other man's shoes and understand what we may need."

