

e-NEWSLETTER

iAM
RoadSmart

WESSEX ADVANCED MOTORISTS



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WESSEX ADVANCED MOTORISTS

e-NEWSLETTER

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Chairman's Corner



Chairman's Report from 2018 AGM

Thank you all for coming along tonight to this, the 2nd AGM of Wessex Advanced Motorists... and many more under our previous name of TGAM.

Tonight we were to have been joined by Robbie Downing, Area Service Delivery Manager for manager for West Central England and Wales. Unfortunately Robbie can't join us tonight but we'll try to reschedule him for another time. So I'm very pleased to welcome Andy Ware, our local Examiner, who has kindly stepped into the fold. So more from Andy later.

As one of 200 Groups in IAM RoadSmart, we've continued to promote road safety here in our "patch". We've done this by;



By Andrew Griffiths





1. Taking Associates through their Advanced Driver Courses with a 100% pass rate which includes 7 F1RST's.
2. Participating in public events including the annual West Somerset Railway Steam Rally where we have firmly established our presence.
3. Participating in MotoFest, a new annual event organised by Somerset Road Safety and supported by Police (inc. mounted section and Camera vans/bikes), Freewheelers (blood bikers), DHL, Fire & Rescue, IAM RoadSmart motorbike groups and the local RoadSmart car Group... WAM!
4. Giving the mayor of Taunton Deane, Catherine Herbert, an advanced driving taster session! As I'm sworn to the Official Secrets Act I am unable to give you **any** feedback on her performance!

Picking up on a couple of the points I've just mentioned, WAM has achieved a 100% pass rate over the last 12 months. This compares extremely favourably with the average pass rate of 88% here in the South West. The

quality of Observing in our Group is commendable and with my Chief Observer hat on at this moment, it would be only right and proper to acknowledge the work of all of our Observers with a round of applause. In no particular order... thanks Barry Keenan, David Walton, Mike Wotton, Delphine King, Isobel Jennings, Hugh Todd, Guy Tucker, Paul Crowe, Godfrey Davey, Brian Dodd... and me of course. Paul Green has been unable to observe this year due to ill-health; let's wish him a speedy recovery and hope that he's back in the observing seat in the near future.

I met with my Observers on 3rd October to discuss the finer aspects of the course we deliver to our Associates. It was an opportunity to bring everyone up to date.

The second point I'd pick up on is our participation at public events. It's been a mixed bag this year - and with the fantastic weather, some events weren't as well attended as others and perhaps a day or two on the beach was more appealing! Nevertheless we stuck with it and we engaged with a lot of visitors who stopped to say hello, taking every opportunity to talk to them about RoadSmart;





for some, we arranged free 1-2 hour taster drives and this alone helped promote safer and better driving.

I was so pleased to welcome some new volunteers who came along to help out because hitherto, it has always fallen to the same 3 stalwarts - me, David, Barry - to set up our gazebo, arrange the impressive display of literature we give out, be present to engage and promote and, after the event, to pack everything away ready for next time. Mr Events himself (aka Barry) recruited our new volunteers and has even procured WAM Events polo shirts for them so that we all project a most professional and corporate image. I have decided to give our new volunteers a collective title; Barry's Brigade.

And we now have a new addition to our display; a **very, very** high flagpole bearing the flag of Wessex (the Wyvern) which flies high over each event we attend and it certainly pinpoints our pitch from afar. The next thing we need is a red light on the top of it to warn low-flying aircraft.

There are more public events out there that we could attend but even with our 3 stalwarts and Barry's Brigade, we are pushing the limits of what we can realistically achieve. We have a membership of 120+ and it is somewhat disappointing that the same 5% helps publically promote road safety and better driving standards. The events have proved to be a recruiting ground for new Associates; more Associates means higher numbers of safer, better drivers in Somerset and North Devon.

Now, moving on to our Committee. I have admiration for them... well most of them. They make a Chairman's job enjoyable... well most of them do. They each provide valuable input at our committee meetings... well most of them do. They stick to the timings on my agenda so that we can finish at a respectable time... well most of them do... without springing that last minute surprise item under AOB which could add another 30mins; they don't do that now because I've removed AOB from the agenda!





I am pleased that our Honorary President, Brian Howe, has now regained his full membership of IAM RoadSmart and will continue to join us at committee meetings.

Our Treasurer, Isobel Jennings continues to teach me how to add up when she receives my expenses claim. She does a great job in looking after WAM's finances... and she finds time to do this in her very busy life and we can all be assured that our charitable fund is in safe and capable hands.

Our Secretary, David Walton, keeps me on the straight and narrow when it comes to IAM RoadSmart policies and Group Handbook rules, usually when he thinks I have gone off my rocker and I'm in desperate need of sound advice.

Mike Wotton manages our Observer resources and as I said last year, is still the only committee member to know our vital statistics. This is maybe why he smiles a lot at committee meeting.

And then there's Barry Keenan.

....Mr Events, National Observer and Assessor and now Vice Chairman. Barry has become something of a right-hand man to me - a good all-rounder. He and I occasionally meet up for coffee - his email invitation usually ends with "PS you're paying".

Sadly, we are losing one committee member this evening but hopefully gaining another. John Gilbert has decided to retire from his role as Associate Coordinator after a good innings. However, we are extremely fortunate that Pauline Wills has "volunteered" (or has been volunteered) to succeed John and you'll be hearing Pauline's name later when it comes to voting.

CAWL

A new initiative for 2018 was the introduction of the Chairman's Annual Working Lunch. This brought together all committee members in an informal and convivial environment. I set just one agenda item; "where would each of you like to see Wessex Advanced Motorists in 5 years time?"





In summary, the answers carried a similar theme; “still in existence!” This sparked a discussion about succession planning for members of the committee. Let’s face facts; some of the 7 committee members have served for a long time and they don’t want to be doing it forever more. As one made an astute observation, we’re not getting any younger and the Committee needed newer and younger blood if WAM is to survive. RoadSmart closes down groups that haven’t got a Chair, Secretary, Treasurer. There has been one in the South East this year and one in the South West seems to be heading that way.

So having brought that thought away from the lunch, we now need to work together (and that involves **ALL** WAM members who want a Group to belong to) to develop some good, solid succession planning before it is simply just too late. So watch this space!

On that theme, two years ago I said that I would not be standing for the post of Chairman. So I set my own objective and yet I failed to meet it! I must eventually, however, stand by that statement.

Hon Vice President

Julia Steer was a **founder member** of TGAM when it formally detached itself from the Exeter group in 1981. She became its newsletter editor - for 25 years! with 100 publications to her name. In recognition of her contribution to our Group, the Committee unanimously voted to invite Julia to become the Group’s very first Vice President. She was presented with a certificate at our September meeting by our President. Julia was, I sensed, delighted to know that the role of Vice President didn’t come with any work, after all, Julia has done her bit many times over!!





Chairman's Award

Awarded for “exceptional service”, this is awarded by the Chairman to a Committee member or an Observer who has, in my view, stood out –for the right reasons of course!

- The person I am awarding it to this year has been with us for a long time initially as a member of TGAM and latterly of course, WAM.
- This person was one of the first I heard from in TGAM when I relocated from Surrey almost 7 years ago and I think in some way - which I have yet to fathom out - “encouraged” me to put myself forward to fill the vacancy of Chairman after discovering that my relocation had forced me to resign as Chairman of the South of London Group.

- This person has held a variety of crucial roles and has fulfilled each of them in the most unassuming way.
- This person came to my rescue 3 years ago when I was sinking under my own IAM/TGAM workload.

It gives me great personal pleasure to make the award for 2018 to John Gilbert.

Thank you to all our members for being a part of Wessex Advanced Motorists and congratulations to our newest full members who have done us proud by passing the ADC. Welcome to our new Associates who are currently going through their courses or are about to start; enjoy the experience!

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	Pauline Wills	coordinator@wessexam.uk
Support Officer	Michael Wotton	cmmw@wessexam.uk
Chief Observer/Masters Mentor	Andrew Griffiths	chair@wessexam.uk
Newsletter Editor/Webmaster	David Walton	ed@wessexam.uk
Committee Members	Anne Bull	cmab@wessexam.uk
	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	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 Instructor:

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 newsletter editor. (NB: You MUST remain *full* IAM and WAM members at all times.)



CALENDAR



NOVEMBER

7	W	7:30pm	WAM Committee Meeting
21	W	7:30pm	Members' Evening – A talk by Rod Page, one of our members, titled "Sailing Experiences '72 – '96"

DECEMBER

8	Sa	12:30pm	WAM Christmas Lunch at Oake Manor Golf Club
			No Members' Evening in December

JANUARY

9	W	7:30pm	WAM Committee Meeting
16	W	7:30pm	Members' Evening – Quiz - That was the year that was 2018

FEBRUARY

20	W	7:30pm	Members' Evening – Think Horse, think 15; PC Vicki Ephgrave from Avon & Somerset Police Road Safety Campaign
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PRESIDENT'S PONDERINGS



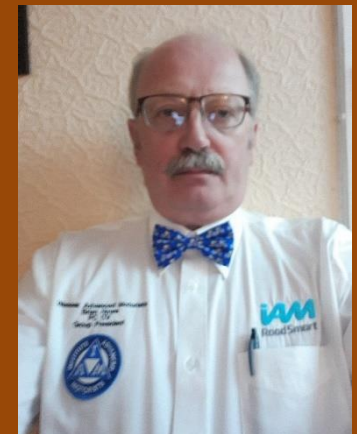
Royal Enfield Also Made Bicycles

1950 Lady's Tourist Model WLB (Serial Number: 542807)

Brazed 21" frame. 26" x 1³/₈" wheels with single speed rear hub. Finished in gloss black with gold lining and blue head stock with brass Royal Enfield name plate.



The bicycle as it was given to me.



by Brian Howe



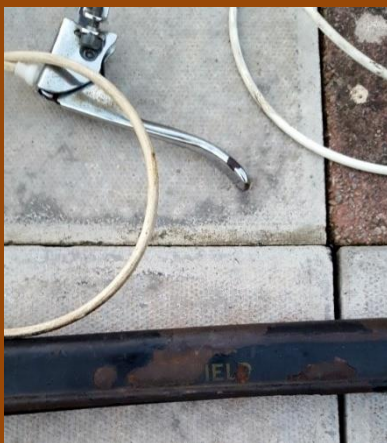


A young Welsh lady received this bicycle on her 16th birthday in 1950 (1 year after I was born) and stopped cycling in 2012 at the age of 78, having ridden it for 62 years.



While riding home from choir practice one day, the front brake calliper fell off and tangled in the front wheel. The lady spent 2 days in hospital and the Royal Enfield required major repairs. New front forks, front wheel, front mudguard and new brake callipers and levers were fitted. At some point in its history, the

bicycle was fitted with a new rear wheel containing 3 speed Sturmey Archer hub gears for easier riding. In 2016 the lady's husband offered me the bicycle to restore it to its former glory, knowing that I was a keen cyclist.



In November 2016, I completely stripped it right down to its component parts, including all 62

1/8" ball bearings in the head set. All the chrome parts were cleaned and polished with Solvol Autosol chrome cleaner. The frame, chain-guard and front forks were stripped and resprayed at a local car body repair shop. Unfortunately, the forks were later to be rejected





due to a stripped head thread. Various parts were beyond economical repair or were too modern for the age of the bike and these were donated to the 'On Your Bike' charity in Taunton, Somerset. After many hours searching various internet shopping sites, the required parts (or very close reproduction items) were found. In May 2018 I had surgery on my left hand for osteoarthritis and was subsequently unable to



reassemble the Royal Enfield, so I chose the On Your Bike Charity at Trinity Business Park, Taunton, to do the job for me.

The final replacement parts list was as follows:

New vintage style Front forks, complete head bearing set, 1950's Royal Enfield headstock lamp bracket, 1 pair Handlebar grips (from France), 2 genuine Royal Enfield 1950's brake levers, front and rear inner and outer brake cables and new brake blocks, (the original callipers were used), 1 pair reproduction, original style rubber block pedals (from India), 1 new chain, 1950's period Brooks saddle, new Brooks vintage style leather tool pouch, new single gear rear wheel c/w tyre and inner tube, front wheel c/w tyre and inner tube, 1 pair of reproduction vintage style black mudguards, 1 aerosol of blue paint for head stock, 1 set of Royal Enfield transfers, 1 aerosol of clearcoat lacquer, (to protect transfers) and 1 roll of gold pin striping. (My hands are not steady enough to paint straight pin lines). Finally, due to the rarity of genuine 1950's bicycle lights, I elected to go with the slightly later plastic cased Ever Ready front and rear lights.





I know this bicycle will not win any Concours events, but I believe it is a very close representation of the Royal Enfield Ladies Tourist WLB model, just as the young Welsh lady bought it 68 years ago.

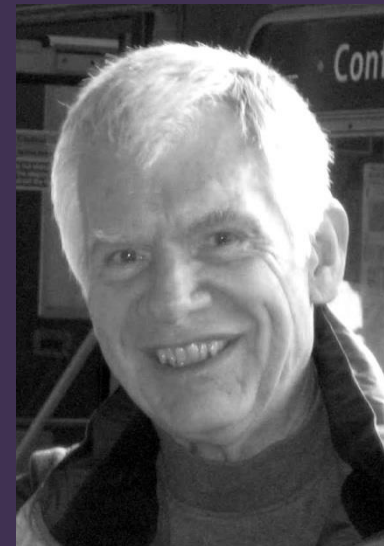
I hope you all enjoyed the wonderful summer and your summer hols. **Brian L. Howe**



COORDINATOR'S REPORT



The last three months have been relatively quiet but we did manage to put two Associates through their Advanced Driving Test, both of them resulting in passes so very well done to Rosie Benson and Richard Paviour-Coward and to their Observers. However we have managed to process rather more "Free Tasters" than usual, a total of seven, most of them resulting from our participation in the West Somerset Steam Rally in August. One of those "Tasters" has now started on her Advanced Driving Course. In addition two more new Associates have joined us and have started their Advanced Driving Courses. One Members Assessment has also been completed.



By John Gilbert

You may be pleased to hear that this is the last time you will see my ugly mug at the top of this report. I have enjoyed working as the Associate Coordinator but I feel that I have developed the position as far as I can, and it is now time for me to move on to new challenges. It is time for some fresh thinking to develop the Group's Coordination systems even further and I'm pleased to report that we have found the perfect person to do so. Pauline Wills was voted in as the new Associate Coordinator at our AGM on 17th October. I hope that all of the Observers will fully cooperate with Pauline to help ease her into her new role.

Lastly I would like to thank all of the Observers for their cooperation in the past, (well, most of the time!), so that my job was not too ominous.





Advanced Driving Test Passes

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

OBSERVED BY

Andrew Hepworth (F1RST)	David Walton
Rosie Benson	Isobel Jennings
Richard Paviour-coward	Delphine West-King

The Membership Register

This quarter we have four 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>
Naomi Pullin	North Petherton	Associate
Anita Towlson	Wellington	Associate
Peter Oates	Bridgwater	Associate
Diana Singleton	Ilminster	Associate

So far, only 85 of our 140+ members have renewed this year; if you are one of those who haven't got around to it yet, please do so or this will be your last newsletter. We really do want as many members as possible to remain with the group after they have passed their test; it makes for more lively members' evenings, helps to finance our road safety work and, from a personal point of view, makes all the hard work of producing this newsletter worthwhile.

Statistics for year to end of July

	group	region avg.
Pass rate %	100	88
No. of F1RSTS	7	7.7
No. of observers	12	27.8
New Associates	16	44.4



Events Corner



Well hello there! With autumn well under way, now is probably the time to start thinking about preparing your car for winter ... but what do I know? I send mine back to the dealer for everything mechanical so probably not the best person to talk about 'winter prep', then. Best leave that sort of discussion for people who are far more qualified than me to talk about! No, I'm more interested in telling you what's been happening on the 'Events' front this last quarter.

Well first off, as we do every year, we put in an appearance at the West Somerset Steam Rally held at Norton Fitzwarren. I know I keep saying it, but this really is a treat for all of the family and appears to have something for everyone. (Honestly, I'm not getting any commission for advertising!)

From a Road Safety/Recruitment point of view, we had a really good couple of days with lots of interest shown and several Free Assessment Drives booked, some of which resulted in people going forward for the Advanced Driving Course.



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





We also had a visit from the current Mayor of Taunton Deane, Cllr. Catherine Herbert who accepted the challenge from Andrew to take an assessment drive herself. Hopefully, having been out and had some instruction with him she'll have some incentive to include road safety as an issue during her tenure as Mayor.

Our final 'event' of the year was the 'Somerset Motofest' organised by Somerset Road Safety and held, as usual, at the Fleet Air Arm Museum, Yeovilton. For those of you who braved the storms of 2017, unlike last year this time the sun shone and the rain held off. But by golly was it blustery! So much so that we, and a couple of other stands, had to take down our flags and pop up safety signs because of the danger of them flying away!

Aside from us as the resident car group, there were four IAM motorcycle groups on site too, they were

- Somerset Advanced Motorcyclists
www.somersetadvancedmotorcyclists.org.uk
- Cheddar Valley Advanced Motorcyclists
www.cvam.info

- Dorchester & West Dorset Advanced Motorcyclists www.dwdam.org.uk
- Bristol Advanced Motorcyclists
www.bamo.org.uk

Having learned lessons from last year, this time all 5 groups were placed together, liaised together and worked together. And a good time was had by all, I think. As on previous occasions, this was a two day event. Our stall being staffed by Andrew Griffiths, David Walton and myself, but wonderfully supported by Kate Mair and Grahame Lynam-Carter (WAM Volunteers). Thank you very much, people, you did some sterling work!

I'd also like to say thanks to Joe Caruso another WAM Volunteer who was going to come along and help but unfortunately just before the weekend arrived, injured himself and was told by his Doctor not to go out to play. Joe, old chum, even though you couldn't join us, thanks very much for offering, it was greatly appreciated, I hope you're now fully recovered.





And talking of our Volunteers, I have to say that the help of our Volunteer Cadre this year has made attending these outside events much easier, so to each and every one of you, please accept my very grateful thanks for the time and effort that you gave to the group... You do realize that I'll be back in touch again next year, don't you?

II

Adrian Whyte was our guest speaker for September. Adrian is the Managing Director of E. White & Son, Funeral Directors of Taunton. The poor man admitted to being so nervous about coming to talk to the group that he pressed his son Charlie, also in the family business, to come along for moral support!

He needn't have worried. He went down a storm and caused much hilarity and laughter and proved so popular that I've been asked to invite him back again next year. For his sake, I think I'll give him a rest for a few more years yet. It's not good to fatigue the speakers, y'know.

As you know, Wednesday 17th October was the night of our AGM. What you may not know

yet is that at the AGM though one long standing member resigned from the Committee, happily for us another two willing volunteers stepped forward to offer their services to the group.

The retiree, John Gilbert our Associate Co-ordinator, intends to spend his new found free time concentrating on his other myriad hobbies and interests. (There's life outside of WAM?!) Our two newcomers are Pauline Wills, who will be taking over as Associate Co-ordinator, and my friend Anne Bull who prior to her Committee role has been a loyal WAM Volunteer. Here's a warm welcome to the both of you. Thank you for joining us.

Now, talking of the AGM, our guest speaker for the night was initially to have been our Area Service Delivery Manager (ASDM) Shaun Cronin. Unfortunately for me, he pulled out a couple of months ago when he found out his wife had booked a surprise holiday. (Sensible man; who argues with his wife when she's booked a holiday?)

To help me out of a jamb Robbie Downing, ASDM of West Central England and Wales, readily stepped in to take Shaun's place. (That





was a relief). Unfortunately less than a week before the AGM, Robbie also had to withdraw. As you can imagine, that left me with a flurry of phone calls as I tried to find a speaker to fill the void.

And what a speaker we had! Andy Ware, our very own local examiner, graciously stepped in for us just 2 days before the event. For those of you who know Andy or heard him speak before, you'll understand that this was a lively and interesting talk, very well received. Thank you Andy, I'm in your debt.

Unfortunately, that meant that I then had to find somebody to fill Andy's now vacant slot in November!

You can imagine my sheer relief and frankly, absolute surprise, when just before the AGM started I was approached by Rod Page offering to give a talk to the group on his chosen subject of sailing.

Talk about good timing! It's understandable that you'd believe that I received this very timely offer with due decorum and the reserved nature becoming an established Events Co-ordinator. Well you'd be wrong!

The poor man couldn't have known what hit him; to have his offer speak accepted with tears of such uncontrolled joy by some idiot grinning inanely, must have been quite a shock. I mean, somebody volunteering their services to talk? Unheard of! Normally I have to badger and press-gang any speakers we get with promises of riches and rewards (all duly retracted when they come to me afterwards for their payment, y'understand!) but a volunteer!

The title of Rod's talk is "Sailing Experiences 1972 to 1996" which sounds really interesting, especially for you ex-matelots out there, so make a note in your diary and come along on Wednesday 21st November to hear Rod give what I really expect to be an stimulating and rousing talk. (No pressure, Rod!)

Throughout the year I've had a couple of people tell me that they don't come to the monthly member's evening because it "all talk of cars". Well, looking back over this year alone we've had

- Penny Gibbons on 'Deaf Awareness';
- Julie Garbutt from the British Horse Society;
- The Lord Lieutenant of Somerset, Mrs. Anne Maw;





- Cyril James from the Cross Manufacturing Company;
- Andy Billinghamurst on the trials & tribulations of constructing the M5;
- Adrian White , Funeral Director;
- Andy Ware, IAM Examiner

and now Rod Page to talk about sailing. That's pretty diverse, wouldn't you say? And even those that were 'car orientated' the subject matter was much, much more than just 'cars'. So I say again for those of you who don't come to the Member's Evenings, come along to see and hear the range of speakers and topics we have. Who knows, you might even find you enjoy it, too. You'll certainly be welcome!

II

Our final event of the year is the annual Wessex Christmas Lunch on Saturday 8th December at 12:30pm. As usual this will be held at the Oake Manor Golf Club (TA4 - 1BA). You've already received your invite and menu choice with the end of year paperwork that David sent to us all in October, so dig it out, fill it in and send it, and your payment of £14.95

per person, to me so that I can add you to the list. The food is always good at the golf club and the company always convivial, so hurry up and get those menu choices back to me as soon as you can. If by chance you've lost your menu choice form, email me and I'll send you a replacement, but be quick, the closing date is the fast approaching.

As agreed at the start of the year, there will be no member's evening in December. Our next scheduled get together after the Christmas Meal is on Wednesday 16th January 2019. There may be a quiz!

Well, that's it for another quarter. Once again thanks for taking the time to read my scribbling's and I look forward to seeing you on Wednesday 21st November as we listen to tales of derring-do on the high seas. As always, here's to your continued happy, safe and enjoyable motoring.

Barry

Events Co-ordinator

T : 01823 – 254621

M : 07776 – 124001

E : events@wessexam.uk





A strange thing happened after the 2018 AGM

By Andrew Griffiths

After a good AGM followed by an excellent talk by IAM Examiner Andy Ware, I made my way home with my passengers John Gilbert and Pauline Wills. After dropping off Pauline outside her house, John and I made our way back along the unlit Durleigh Road towards Spaxton.

On negotiating a right-hand bend (Limit Point Analysis in full use!) we came across 2 cows on the roadway. We thought "That's strange... for a Wednesday". They were quickly joined by another which appeared from a gateway to a field - the gate was shut so we thought these cows had somehow got out and were looking for a way back in.

As we closed in on them they casually started walking in front of my car towards Spaxton stopping every few metres to eat grass on the verges. They didn't seem fazed one bit by our

close proximity.

So, do we try to pass them and carry on our way? No! And why not? Because they were a huge hazard and a huge road safety issue not least because Durleigh road is narrow, unlit and with some sharp bends; unsuspecting motorists oblivious to the IPSGA system of car control may find themselves in a dangerous situation very quickly. We had some cars squeeze passed my car and the three cows but clearly it would not have been in the best interests of road safety for us to just drive away and leave these animals on their own.

John phoned 999 and asked for the Police. He explained the situation (unsafe, dangerous etc.) over the rather poor mobile link in the area and was told that a unit would be despatched to the scene and with us shortly.





So we waited with hazard lights lighting up the road but the cows weren't being too cooperative and left the scene (naughty!) carrying on along the road with us crawling along behind them. Eventually two of them decided to press on ahead but the other held back, contently eating its way along the grassy verge.

It got to the stage where the leading two - now only just visible in my full-beam - took a left (no signal given!) into a farm driveway and the third decided to catch them up with us in slow pursuit. When they'd all reunited on the driveway, John managed to close the driveway gate to prevent them from getting back onto the road. I knew from local knowledge that this farm they had wandered into didn't keep cattle and so they didn't belong there.

The Police arrived and stopped by my car. They were very grateful to us for "calling it in" and for getting the cows off the carriageway

out of danger to themselves and to motorists - well the cows had done that themselves of course but we gladly took the credit.

As we left the scene, I could see in my mirrors (yes I practice what I preach!) that the Police car had pulled up in front of the driveway gate and the two officers were now making their way on foot to investigate.

John and I were impressed by the quick and positive response to our 999 call and by the gratitude shown by the two Police officers. Content that we'd absolutely done the right thing, we felt a sense of relief and satisfaction as we continued on our way.

So if you find yourself in such a situation, consider calling 999 because the ramifications of not doing so could be serious, even life-threatening to animals and/or motorists.

I wonder how the 2019 AGM can trump that!

Andrew





Not just a Wessex Observer!

By Andrew Griffiths

It's not very often someone in Wessex Advanced Motorists makes the press. Guy Tucker who is one of our newest Observers is **Managing Director of Evosite** which is a Taunton-based company specialising in website development, e-commerce and other aspects of information technology.

It was on my way to London on a Berry's coach on Saturday 20th when I came across an article in the Bridgwater Mercury (online) about the Somerset Business of the Year awards which took place in Taunton very recently. Evosite was awarded **Business of the Year 2018** (26-50 category) which is a big achievement.

You can find out more about Evosite at www.evosite.co.uk.

Congratulations Guy on this achievement!

Andrew





Last change to book:

WESSEX ADVANCED MOTORISTS

Annual Christmas Lunch

to be held at

OAKE MANOR GOLF CLUB

Oake, Nr. Taunton, TA4 1BA

on Saturday 8th December 2018

12:30 for 1:00pm

Please contact Barry on

events@wessexam.uk

or 01823 254621 by Friday 23rd

November to book your place

Another satisfied customer

Wessex Advanced Motorist Training at the hands of my Observer (David Walton) was a hugely rewarding experience from start to finish, and I'm not saying such simply from a F1ster's perspective. David's accomplished, highly professional and yet calm observational style made for a most relaxing drive out on every occasion, intervening with a comment only as required, ensuring as a driver you are always kept at ease and focused on the drive.

Likewise the routes were always planned with what appeared to be meticulous attention to detail, ensuring the specific elements of Advanced Driving were fully explored and likewise skills developed were required. Wessex Advanced Motorists has some exceptional Observers and Mentors, to whom I'm enormously grateful, if for no other reason than for making me a more relaxed, anticipatory, and observational driver and therein I would offer, a much safer one. Thank you all at Wessex Advanced Motorists for your guidance and support – a great experience!

Andrew Hepworth



Driving with dementia

By Barry Keenan

Disclaimer:

The following article discusses the problems and pitfalls of driving with dementia.

All of the following information is freely available online or from the DVLA, all I've done here is to collect and collate it as it pertained to my particular circumstances at that particular time. It is not designed, should you think it was implied or intended, to provide you with any medical or legal guidance, I am simply not qualified to give either!

As you read through to the end (if you even get that far) you'll see that I've taken the liberty of quoting my source references. If you're assisting somebody with dementia or looking for information about driving with dementia, then please check current rules and regulations and speak to the relevant department at the DVLA (number below) to make sure that you're getting the best, professional advice possible.

Neither I, nor Wessex Advanced Motorists, will accept any responsibility for errors or omissions that you make in finding the correct information as it pertains to your circumstances. This article is for information and interest only and is not designed to be definitive.

Scattered throughout the text and at the bottom of the article you'll find a series of references that may (or may not) be of help and interest.

II

Driving is a primary means of mobility for many older people, allowing them their continued independence and quality of life. For many people, myself included, driving also forms a central part of our identity.





About 2 years ago a person contacted the Group and asked for a Free Assessment Drive with a view to going on to do the Advanced Driving Course (ADC) and subsequent test. Being Taunton based, she was allocated to me to carry out the assessment.

The long and the short of it was that although she was safe to be on the road, over the years she'd let her standards slip dramatically. Consequently I advised her that before signing up for the ADC she should first go back to an Approved Driving Instructor to have some of her sloppy driving habits reviewed professionally. And that, as far as I was concerned, was that. Neither I, nor Wessex, heard anything further from her until...

In early March she rang me at home and out of the blue and asked for a further driving assessment. This time though, she said that she wasn't looking to try for the Advanced Driving Test, but had recently been diagnosed with dementia and was aiming to make sure that she was still fit to drive. (A very good idea, I thought, but the purpose of our free assessment drive is to assess a person's

potential for reaching the advanced standard and to give would-be Associates a taste of what's involved in the course. As her stated aim was an assessment of her driving skills for the purposes of persuading the Driver & Vehicle Licensing Authority (DVLA) of her driving ability, she fell far outside of our remit to the public).

But this got me to thinking. What are the requirements of a person with Dementia to hold a drivers' license? As advanced motorists we're all acutely aware that high level cognitive function is essential in being able to drive safely. We know for example, that we need visual and spatial processing skills to see and understand the relationships between two objects moving at speed. We need flexibility of thought to quickly switch between the fast flowing streams of information that we take in as we drive. We need to be able to quickly break down complex actions into manageable chunks and prioritise them in the right order so that we can drive our cars safely and at speed. And we need, very quickly, to be able to anticipate and problem solve in a fast and ever changing environment.





Without this high level cognitive function we're unable to see and understand the relationships between two objects, which means that we *won't* have the mental agility to be able to anticipate problems and then reach an instantaneous solution. Breaking down complex problems into manageable chunks and then prioritising needs will be beyond our reach. In other words, our judgment will be so severely affected that we're no longer safe behind the wheel of a car.

Sadly dementia is a progressive and degenerative neurological condition that adversely impacts the very cognitive processes that we all require for safe driving. Neurologists and other specialist professionals have long agreed that driving ability is very difficult to assess in someone with any degree of memory impairment or dementia. But generally, unless you're really unlucky, dementia isn't diagnosed today and you've lost all higher cognitive function by tomorrow.

Now although this isn't in any way meant to be a 'professional' treatise, having spent a great deal of my career working in the field of Neurology & Dementia Care, I know that

'dementia' is a very scary diagnosis for somebody to have. (And believe me, in its own way it affects family and friends as much as the patient).

I understand the fear, shock and disbelief that someone feels when they're told they have dementia. I know the seemingly never-ending and often confusing, levels of investigation and advice they face from such diverse agencies as health professionals, social care professionals, patient advocacy teams and other voluntary groups as well as the lay advice of friends and family as they seek answers regarding their fitness to drive following such a diagnosis. But as it's only the DVLA who holds the statutory power for making decisions on licence-holding, it's their rules and regulations that you must follow. Nobody else's. (Although you must, clearly, follow the advice of your Doctor if he advises you to stop driving!)

So what are the responsibilities of a driver with Dementia?

For the purposes of this exercise, let's assume that it's you who's been diagnosed as having dementia. What do you need to know and what do you need to do?





Well first off, all drivers have a legal obligation to inform the DVLA if they suffer from one of a specified list of conditions, including dementia, which may affect their ability to drive. To that end the DVLA states that *“Those who have poor short-term memory, disorientation, a lack of insight and judgment are almost certainly not fit to drive”*.

In other words having been given a diagnosis of dementia, *you* now have a legal duty to inform the DVLA of your condition, as soon as possible after receiving your diagnosis. (Currently this can be done using either form CG1 or B1 (dependent on your type of Dementia) both of which are available online from the DVLA). At this point it's also worth noting that:

- a) you can be fined up to £1,000 if you don't tell them.
- b) It's not up to your Doctor to tell the DVLA, it's ***your*** job.
- c) You can be prosecuted if you're involved in an accident as the result of your dementia.

But a diagnosis of dementia is not in itself a reason to stop driving. According to the Alzheimer's Society, www.alzheimers.org.uk/info/20030/staying_independent/27/driving one in every three people with dementia still drive. So, a diagnosis of dementia is not necessarily then, the end of your driving career.

The Drivers Medical Group of the DVLA, has a legal responsibility of ensuring that all licence holders are either medically fit to drive or for deciding that a person is medically unfit to drive. This means they need to know if a person holding a driving licence has a condition, or is undergoing any treatment that may now, or in the future, affect their safety as a driver.

If, having been given a diagnosis of dementia, you're still able to function on a day to day level, dealing with complex split-second decisions and are still able to maintain your attention and concentration on a task, (i.e. you still have good cognitive function) then your Doctor may advise you that, at this time and dependant on the DVLA's approval, you're still safe to drive.





On the other hand your Doctor may advise you that, sadly, your dementia has already progressed to the stage where you should *stop* driving.

But remember, safe or not, you're still **legally required** to notify the DVLA of your diagnosis.

Alzheimer's UK consider that it normally takes a maximum of three years from initial diagnosis until a person's dementia has progressed to the stage as to render them unfit to drive. Unfortunately, with certain types of dementia, for example Dementia with Lewy Bodies or Frontotemporal Dementia that time scale is considerably reduced.

At this point you should also notify your insurance company of your diagnosis. This is to keep them fully aware of your change in circumstances and to make sure that you're still compliant with all of the conditions of your insurance policy. *Remember, it's a criminal offence to drive without at least third-party cover.*

What happens when you notify the DVLA?

The first thing you should know is that normally you could expect to keep driving whilst the DVLA investigates your case. (Remember, all cases are different and each person should carefully follow the advice of their Doctor).

So, having told the DVLA of your diagnosis they'll write back to ask for your Doctors' contact details together with any clinics that you attend. They'll also ask you to sign a 'Consent Form' authorising your Doctor to release any relevant medical information about you deemed necessary.

Aside from your 'Consent Form', they'll ask you 4 specific questions:

1. The name of any medications you're taking, the dosage you're on and the reason you're taking it?
2. Does the medication make you feel drowsy, especially when you're driving?
3. Do you suffer from any memory problems?
4. Does another person help you with your daily living needs?





When they've received this information from you, together with any information they've asked of your Doctor, they'll then assess your fitness to drive. At this point they may ask you to undergo a medical examination or some form of practical assessment, (like a driving assessment) which they, the DVLA will pay for. During this time you may be advised by your Doctor to stop driving until the assessments have been carried out and reviewed, which could take several weeks. Without any doubt whatsoever, you should heed the advice of your Doctor and stop driving.

What are the Doctor's Responsibilities?

As discussed, on being notified of your diagnosis, the DVLA automatically writes to you for permission to contact your Doctor to discuss what type of dementia you have, the extent of it, and how it affects you.

Because of this protocol, having given you your diagnosis, the Doctor now waits for the DVLA to contact him to discuss your prognosis. If he doesn't hear anything from the DVLA and therefore suspects you haven't told

them of your diagnosis, then he, the Doctor, must.

In considering the very strict rules governing doctor / patient confidentiality, what right, you may ask, does the Doctor have to breach your confidentiality and inform the DVLA of your diagnosis?

Quite simply, in deciding whether or not to breach the rules of confidentiality, the Doctor has to consider the potential risk of serious harm or perhaps even death, to others.

2017 guidance from the General Medical Council www.gmc-uk.org/guidance/ethical_guidance/30653.asp states that if the Doctor considers that failure to disclose your diagnosis to the DVLA would leave individuals or society exposed to a risk so serious that it outweighs both yours and the public's interest in maintaining confidentiality, then without further ado he must disclose your diagnosis promptly to the DVLA. In other words, in the interest of public safety, the Doctor can legitimately waive the rules of Doctor/Patient confidentiality.





You've told the DVLA and had the assessment, so what now?

If the DVLA decides that you are eligible to drive, then it will issue you with a new driving licence for a fixed period, usually of around one to three years, depending on the current stage of your dementia. It's worth noting that your condition will normally be reviewed by your Doctor at least once a year.

It would also be a good idea for you to contact your insurance company again just to keep them updated of the results of your review and to make sure that they're still happy to keep your policy going.

What if your license is withdrawn but you keep driving?

Sometimes, perhaps due to their dementia, people may not understand that they no longer hold a valid drivers' license and may continue to drive despite every effort by their family to stop them.

The DVLA fully appreciates that this sometimes happens and in these

circumstances they refer the fact of this non-compliance to their Police Liaison Department. They, in turn contact the local Police to report the matter and discuss the best approach to take. Family members should be comforted to know that considerable efforts are made to ensure that this is a very sympathetic process, and usually the Police Officer concerned will make every effort to involve family members in resolving this very difficult & fraught matter with the least possible fuss. But remember, at the end of the day, you no longer have a drivers' license and have no legal entitlement to drive. In other words, you simply have to give up driving.

You're asked to undergo a driving assessment.

If you're asked by the DVLA to undergo a driving assessment to comply with their 'fitness to drive' investigations this can only be done by an authorised Approved Driving Instructor who has received specialist training (by the DVLA) to do such assessments and officially report on them.





Where to get further help

- | | | |
|--|-------------------------------------|--|
| 1 Drivers' Medical Enquiries
DVLA.
Swansea, SA99 1TU | National Helpline
0300 790 6806 | Monday -Friday, 8:00 am to 5:30 pm,
Saturday, 8:00 am to 1:00 pm |
| 2 DVLA
Swansea, SA99 1DF | Call-centre
0300 790 6802 | www.gov.uk/government/organisations/driver-and-vehicle-licensing-agency |
| 3 Gov.uk | (Website only) | www.gov.uk/dementia-and-driving |
| 4 The Alzheimer's
Association (UK) | (Website only) | www.alz.org/uk/dementia-alzheimers-uk.asp |
| 5 The Alzheimer's Society
South West | National Helpline
0300 222 11 22 | www.alzheimers.org.uk/homepage/94/south_west_area |
| 6 Alzheimer's Research UK | National Helpline
0300 111 5555 | www.alzheimersresearchuk.org/about-us/?gclid=EAlaIQobChMIsp_J6Pfd2QIVTZPtCh3i-gcCEAAYASAAEgJ7mfD_BwE |
| 7 Dementia UK. | National Helpline
0800 888 6678 | www.dementiauk.org/understanding-dementia/ |





It's a swan's life

By Anjuli Cooper, part of IAM RoadSmart's marketing team

As I drive around the corner, there it is. A bright orange beak, elongated curved neck and white feathered body are before me. Small dark beady eyes cautiously survey the growling monster which is my car as I come to a brisk stop on the road.

The large swan slowly waddles across in front of me, stopping to stand and stare. What now? I hadn't anticipated an encounter like this driving back to the office from my lunch break.

In the rear-view mirror, cars break to a halt behind me, impatient drivers tapping fingers on steering wheels as they anxiously wait for whatever delay it is to clear. But the swan's not concerned. It stands in the road, seemingly unsure what to do, before it waddles a little further into the other lane, where the oncoming traffic has also stopped and is watching it. Watching and waiting.

Just as I open my door to get out, a man in a van opposite beats me to it and, making



comical flapping movements with his arms, ushers the mildly alarmed swan off the road and onto a footpath. The man gets back into his van, engines start up again and traffic slowly starts to move off. I take a last look at the swan as I drive past it, ambling along the footpath, only a narrow grassy verge separating it from the dangers of the fast-moving road once again.





I start to worry about the swan. What will happen to it? Will it find its way back to its home, wherever that may be? Left in the middle of a housing estate, how will it know where to go? As anxiety rises up inside of me, I start to consider going back to look after the swan. All kinds of bad scenarios start to go through my mind where the swan ends up hurt, or worse.

As an animal lover, I find myself regularly worrying about the surrounding wildlife on my daily drives through the towns and countryside, and the potential for an incident to occur. Maybe the swan will be fine and stay away from the busy road. But just in case, who do I inform about it, and does anyone even care?

As it turns out, yes they do. Back at the office, I find there are several swan sanctuaries and rescue centres to choose from. My local one advises that swans - being oblivious to traffic - can often be seen walking down the road, and if one is spotted on a road to immediately call them, or the police on 101. I make a call to the rescue centre, giving the details and exact location of the bird, and am left feeling calmer and more reassured that I have done my best to help save an animal from danger and

prevent a possible further incident on the road. The experience is a good reminder of how important it is to know the best ways to deal with and look after the different wildlife we may encounter on our roads.

Offering some guidance for the future, one rescue and rehabilitation centre, Swan Support - which covers the Thames Valley and surrounding areas, tells me that many local police and Highways England officers will have been trained by Swan Support (or other rescue centres) on how to deal with swans on the road and therefore will have basic knowledge about how to restrain the bird safely. They warn me that it's very important to remember not to attempt to scare the swan into flying off, as this can cause a dangerous situation and potentially a serious incident on the road. Like many other rescue centres, Swan Support are on call on a 24-hour basis and can attend the scene or, if the location is far away, offer advice and verbal assistance.

The Swan Sanctuary, based in Shepperton, advises that if a swan is spotted on a motorway or major road then the only thing to do is report it, remembering not to use a





mobile phone whilst driving. If a swan is spotted on other roads and it is safe to stop and help then the first priority is to get the bird off the road, ideally into an enclosed space, a nearby field or garden, or back onto the water if close by. Swans are naturally wary of humans and will move away from us if approached - so we can use this instinct to herd them off the road and towards safety, trying to elicit help if possible as it's easier to herd them with two or more people. We are advised to approach slowly with no sudden movements so the swans are not frightened back onto the road, before holding out our arms to make ourselves as big as possible and guiding the swan slowly in the direction we wish them to go. We can then make a call for further assistance or advice if needed.

What if we encounter wildlife casualties on the road? www.helpwildlife.co.uk is one site that offers guidance on what to do, including calling for urgent assistance and minimising the animal's stress by approaching carefully (if safe to do so and without putting yourself or others in danger), and putting a blanket or coat



over its head if it's not moving. In some situations, an animal laying still with no attempt to get away can be mistaken for it being tame - or happy for people to sit close by or even stroke it when it is instead paralysed with fear. Therefore, the site advises that the best thing to do is to keep a safe distance away while waiting for help.

Even when driving safely and responsibly on the roads, at some point we may either have, or be witness to, an incident involving wildlife that we feel possibly needs reporting or assistance. If and when that happens let us act, knowing what to do while ensuring we are





not in danger, and not be guilty of the bystander effect assuming someone else will help or make the call. Our quick actions could prevent an animal's suffering or a potentially serious road situation, or both.

In an increasingly chaotic and crowded world where our population grows more every day, we continue to move in on animal habitats, with humans and animals now living closer together than ever before. By learning the best ways to look after our wildlife and being aware of it on our road journeys, we can take small steps towards living in harmony with nature and respecting the creatures that live alongside us.

November Members' Evening

Sailing Experiences '72 - '96

A talk by group member Rod Page

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

January Members' Evening

QUIZ

"THAT WAS THE YEAR THAT WAS 2018"

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





Life in the Shadows

By Nigel Albright

I remember years ago talking with the then Devon County Council road safety officer. He said, 'You look but do you see?' It was a very pertinent comment and, unfortunately, I believe so true of many who drive on the roads. Therein lies a major vulnerability for being safe. Crashes are avoidable and lack of attention is probably one of the major causes of crashes.

In my work as training officer for various advanced groups I used a see-saw illustration. On one side was Threat Perception and on the other, Risk Profile. When one goes up the other goes down and vice versa; the greater the threat perception the less the possibility of crashes but, always remembering that there is no 100% rule for anything. All we can do is reduce the possibility of conflict as much as possible. But with good observation and anticipation that possibility can be reduced to a minimal degree. In fact over time it can lead to having almost a sixth sense about situations.

But, observation is not a stand-alone topic; it is intimately linked with other factors, the main one being attitude. I once asked Sgt. Pat Forbes, an Advanced Wing instructor at the Metropolitan Police Driving School, Hendon, 'What is the temperamental make up of a good driver'. His simple statement was, 'Self-discipline and restraint combined with a pinch of aggression'. He didn't mean interpersonal aggression. In those days it was his way of saying 'making progress'. The real point is in the self-discipline and restraint bit. This leads to understanding that one must have a mentally neutral state of mind. If there is any bias in the thinking that can affect the interpretation of what one sees and at higher speeds, particularly in overtaking, that can be critical. So it's a matter of being highly alert but, emotionally calm and detached; something many don't achieve in a lifetime of driving, yet it is crucial to the quality and style of driving which we aspire to. At higher levels





the calm exterior belies a brain working furiously, gathering information, interpreting it and planning in good time.

I remember talking with a civilian instructor who taught people who owned particularly sporting and powerful vehicles. He told me about an emergency evasion course which he ran. My reply was that if they are that bad I would not want to be there. That's more of the American approach to road safety. Over here it means you got it wrong – that you did not look, think and anticipate sufficiently.

In my view there are two ways of looking; one is seeing what happens to fall into the sight line, and the other is actively searching for information and clues.

There is the well-known story about John Miles, who was ex. Hendon and the first Course Manager of the BSM High Performance Course, as it was then. Travelling along the road he anticipated there was bus ahead and shortly one came into view. When asked how he knew he replied that he had seen a smoking cigarette in the gutter by the bus stop and presumed that someone had dumped it as they got onto the bus.

Most don't appear to go looking for clues because that takes much more effort and they only give the minimum effort to complete the job, thinking that because they haven't had a crash their driving is safe.

But, just because someone has not had a crash does not mean they are not vulnerable to a crash. That word, *vulnerability*, is probably one of the most important words in road safety yet, it seems so little understood and used. The vulnerability factor should be a heading in all driver review sheets. In commentary I use the phrase, 'Looking out for areas of potential conflict in order to avoid them'. Sometimes clues are in view but, in a sense, hidden. A common situation is at night where, in the shadows, there can be cyclists with no lights or high-viz. Many use what I call a 'culture of black', which is really unbelievable in this modern day. Similarly, in daytime cyclists in dull colours can merge with backgrounds. You often have to look hard into these areas to see what is there. There are all sorts of areas where seemingly hidden clues can jump out at you, hence the title of the article and one of my other favourite phrases, 'What you can't see can hurt you'.





The point is always interrogating what one sees or, sometimes more importantly, what might be there because the implication of what one does not see can sometimes be more important than the obvious.

Many clues revolve around people and their likely behaviour because without people it would be possible to drive as fast as you like, across junctions, through red traffic lights and know, subject to not leaving the road, that you would arrive safely at your destination. So apart from other things, a major effort is involved in assessing those around you, their likely behaviour, and what actions you might need to preserve your safety. It might be something about the vehicle or, it might be about the driver and his or her driving position, albeit head-rests and smoked windows don't help with this. If I can I like to see the driver; that can tell me a lot. This can either be directly or, through the mirrors. If I am behind a vehicle at traffic lights can I see the driver's eyes in their rear-view mirror? If I am passing can I see them in the off-side mirror? If there isn't eye-contact I am that much more cautious.

In my view a basic principle for self-preservation on the road is that you trust no

one until they prove they can be trusted. It is one of the best maxims I know for remaining safe. This might appear rather cynical, but it works and that's all that matters.

Another element related to view is obviously positioning, which has two forms, (1) longitudinal, as in following position and (2) lateral, the term generally applied to positioning.

Longitudinal positioning is obviously important because the further back you are from a vehicle the more you can see and plan. Police driving schools used to recommend a following position of 3-4 seconds, that also allows for pulling up undramatically should the need arise. Where approaching from behind closes off the view approaching in a parallel position is always better, if possible, because the view opens up as you get closer. As a general rule early positioning gives options.

The basic precepts of lateral positioning as taught at Devizes Police Driving School were Safety, View and Stability. Positioning for view, subject to safety, is often an important factor in being able to see and plan further ahead, but positioning for safety obviously take precedence





precedence if there is any doubt. I have an article on this for those who would like a copy.

Pat Forbes advised that as the view opens up down the road you look right to the end and then check off the threats on the way back to you. This moves us into a sort of multi-level thinking because whilst it is necessary to be aware of what's happening further ahead, it is also necessary simultaneously to bear in mind what is happening in the immediate vicinity. In fact, there are times when one might be thinking on several levels including what is happening behind. But, it is essentially by maximising the forward observation and planning that we can anticipate possibilities and adjust position and/or speed accordingly so that we can make that smooth safe flowing progress.

As a brief digression you will note that position is placed before speed, as it is in Roadcraft. My rationale for that is that we can often change position to resolve a situation without necessarily adjusting speed, but generally not the other way around, so position is always the first option.

Derek Van Petegem spent some eighteen years as a skid pan and Advanced Wing instructor at Hendon. When I first met him in 1973 I asked, 'What is the art of driving fast?' Derek's simple and succinct reply was, 'The art of driving fast is knowing when to go slowly'. I don't think I have ever heard another phrase in driving which encompasses so much in so little. And the art of knowing when to go slowly also involves long forward observation so that very often it can be just a matter of flexing the throttle early and that comes down to the useful phrase, 'speed for view'. The term seems to have gone out of use now-a-days but I have yet to find anything to better it.

Good observation is the fundamental on which all actions are based, but it takes constant practice to refine it almost to an art in itself, and can help give that all important sense of intuition which can, on occasions, be a life saver.

Nigel Albright

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What's a roundabout?

IAM RoadSmart reveals shocking lack of road knowledge by UK drivers



More than 50% admitted their road knowledge was so poor, they didn't recognise the roundabout sign.

More than two-thirds of drivers admitted they had no understanding of the two second rule.

Over 1,000 motorists participated in the survey for IAM RoadSmart to test their knowledge of the Highway Code.

Some 68% of drivers were unaware of the two-second following distance in dry weather, with 53% confusing this for two car lengths. This results in a gap of less than a third of a second when travelling at 60mph, for an average-sized family car.

A survey conducted by the UK's largest independent road safety charity, IAM RoadSmart, found that many drivers have a real lack of awareness of the rules of the road, putting themselves and others in danger.



Neil Greig, IAM RoadSmart director of policy and research, said: “This is truly shocking. The outcome of the survey brings to light some frightening statistics which demonstrates the need to constantly re-fresh on-road knowledge.”

The survey also found that only 43% correctly recognised the Highway Code ‘dual carriageway ends’ sign, with respondents aged between 17 and 39 being the largest group to answer this incorrectly.

When asked what to do when arriving at a scene of a serious crash, almost half (48%) were unaware that the first thing you need to do is to warn others of the danger by turning on hazard lights.

Of those who participated, over half were not able to identify that a circle shaped sign demonstrates traffic signs that give orders – a crucial piece of information when on the road.

Drivers aged 70 onwards statistically scored below average on this question.

Worryingly, two-thirds of those surveyed admitted they were unable to recognise the colour of the reflective studs between a motorway and its slip road, with only one in five (20%) of those aged 17 to 39 answering correctly that they are green.

Neil said: “With many young drivers showing high levels of traffic sign ignorance these results reinforce IAM RoadSmart’s view that road safety education should be taught as part of the National Curriculum in schools to prepare teenagers for their future driving career.

“Many drivers don’t look at the Highway Code regularly after they’ve passed their test, but no-one’s memory is perfect and it’s crucial to read and understand the most recent version of the Highway Code for the safety of all road users.”



Three into two will go!

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



Last week, two teenage would-be car thieves in Nashville, Tennessee, were thwarted by a manual gearbox. Having stolen a shopper's keys, they were confronted with a mysterious third pedal and a stick in the floor. With no idea how to make the car move, they ran away in confusion and were later arrested. The news item went on to mention that manual gearboxes are seen as something of a theft deterrent in the US these days.

America, of course, is well known for its love of automatic cars, with “stick shifters” reserved for enthusiasts, experts or general oddballs, but over here we’ve stubbornly hung on to our clutch pedals and gear levers. Automatics have a reputation for guzzling fuel, they’re only fitted to posh cars and anyway, gliding along with an auto box has never been seen as “proper” driving; you don’t even get a full driving licence if you haven’t wrestled a box of cogs and prayed for a forgiving clutch pedal in the driving test.

However, things are changing. There are now several different types of automatic, all of which are much more efficient than the old fashioned three speed boxes fitted to executive cars in the 70s and 80s. Car makers have been eager to convert us to the benefits of auto boxes for a decade or more and there are good reasons for that. Modern engines have good low speed torque, meaning that they pull





strongly from quite low engine speed. To get maximum fuel economy you need to keep the engine speed low to minimise losses from friction and various other factors.

The gearbox and engine computers work in partnership to make up-shifts as soon as the engine will be in the high torque range in the higher gear. Computers can do that sort of thing much more accurately and consistently than most of us, so they give the best economy. Far from being gas guzzlers, automatics help car makers get closer to the promised fuel economy figures than the average human with a gear lever – even if it's still not that close!

Looking to the future, all manufacturers are intending to phase out cars powered only by piston engines over the next decade or so to meet emissions regulations and the UK government's intention to ban petrol and diesel cars by 2040. The replacements will generally be electric cars or hybrids, and you don't get a manual gearbox on anything with a battery

involved in driving the wheels. However, while some are enthusiasts for new technology, lots more are deeply mistrustful and there's no point in making cars if people don't want to buy them. The car industry wants as many drivers as possible to get used to two pedals instead of three so that the new technology will feel just a little less strange when a "normal" engine is no longer an option.

So, curious about how quickly we are changing, I visited the Auto Trader web site, since it's the biggest UK used car sales forum. It turns out that out of 443,000 cars for sale, 153,000 are automatic - around 35%. So, it seems that we are moving quite rapidly to a future where a gear lever will be a distant memory, like a choke or an internal ashtray.

But, if you still feel that autos are not real driving and remain determined to keep skilfully swapping cogs in your manual car until it's achieved classic status, take heart. At least only thieves over a certain age will be able to steal it!



How far can you go?

By Richard Gladman, IAM RoadSmart's head of driving and riding standards

Miles per gallon or kilowatts per hour is all meaningless if your car can't get anywhere near the claimed figures for economy.

The new WLTP (Worldwide Harmonised Light vehicle Testing Procedure) testing standards that are being introduced are supposed to have closed the gap between manufacturers' claims and realistic aspirations for the end user. A visit to the Cotswolds to follow the Fleet World MPG Marathon gave Junique Aujla from the IAM RoadSmart Press Office and I an opportunity to put this to the test.

All of the vehicles that entered this two day event had the new figures available for them (except for the classic entrant Honda Insight) and we were interested to see if the

manufacturers' figures could be achieved without impacting the safety of the drivers – “eco-safe” driving being the catchphrase on the day.





Jonathan and Lloyd, employees at Fleet World, had both been run through an IAM RoadSmart Eco-Safe course a couple of weeks earlier and had both been able to make gains in their economy with better planning and anticipation, now all they had to do was carry that forward through two days of driving around the Peak District and the Cotswolds. To make things even more interesting, Jonathan was in an electric vehicle, with the anxiety that reducing range can bring.

We saw the cars off on their way and then made a dash to the lunch stop to see them arrive, navigation maladies aside, the team all enjoyed a light lunch (extra weight may affect the figures) and the updates we received seemed to show manufacturers figure were achievable with a little bit of planning and in many cases, were able to be exceeded.

The afternoon stint was clearly all downhill as most of the cars had made it to the finish

before us. The topping up of the fuel and adding up of the numbers was a tense time with mobile phones and calculators working overtime and a number of excited whispers of: "That can't be right. The computer said 200 and you are saying 27."

Well, maybe the numbers are wrong but the competitive edge was apparent.

We left with the full results still to be collated by Fleet World, but the overview was that the figures could be achieved with a bit of effort. The Hyundai EV entry was very impressive and was able to travel much further than Hyundai claimed in the hands of Jonathan.

With some still claiming a recount as we left the car park, the stickers were being pulled off and Lloyd was saying: "Wait till next year, I know I can do better."

I said to Junique: "It will be a steady drive home - we need to get 70mpg I know we can do it."





Technology and travel – friend or foe?

By Tim Shallcross

I always find a driving holiday in France a splendid way to unwind, but it's been a few years since we've managed to arrange a trip over the channel.

Technology makes life very easy these days - a couple of smartphone apps made light work of booking the ferry and a cottage in the Dordogne. It's a long drive, but more trusty apps mean we can find a hotel easily wherever we feel like stopping for the night. As head of technical policy for IAM RoadSmart, I love technology and it's certainly a help, but as I soon found, it can be something of a hindrance as well.

Sat-nav is obviously a boon, but the last time we drove across Europe I managed to leave the discs needed for anywhere but the UK on a table at home, so we reverted to a map book. This time I entered the address of our French

cottage before we left home and sure enough, my current car's navigation unit would take us all the way there.

We dug out the passports, bought two new breathalysers, put hi-viz jackets in the seat back pockets and set off to Poole for the crossing to Cherbourg. I sat smugly watching other people in the ferry queue trying to figure out where to put bits of sticky tape on the lights – my car has LED lights and a simple menu selection changes the setting for driving on the right.

However, my smugness vanished when we'd boarded. An efficient young lady gave us a card with our deck level and staircase, and reminded me to turn off the alarm. Turn off the alarm! How? On the car before last, I simply locked it with the key, not the remote.





his one only has an emergency key and frankly, I've no idea where it goes. On my last car you there was a button on the dash; this one has no button that looks remotely alarm connected. A frantic search through the handbook while under the Gallic glare of a deckhand, revealed two buttons in the ceiling. Who knew?

Still, lesson learned for the future – although why there can't be a standard way of disabling the alarm system, I really don't know.

We hop off the ferry and switch to driving on the right. I've spent lots of time driving abroad and never have much trouble adapting, but I always concentrate on my exit route at junctions for the first hour or so. Just identifying where you need to end up avoids that momentary blankness when the lights change.

After a pleasant amble along non-motorway roads down the Cherbourg peninsula we decided that Tours looked a nice place to aim for, so we booked a hotel via an app and set the sat-nav.

Then the next technology challenge began. My last car had an annoying habit of saying "There



is congestion. Do you want to change the route?" without saying where the congestion was. This one doesn't give me the option. "The route has been changed due to current traffic reports" is all it announces.

In this case, the route was changed to one about 60 miles longer. Why? Looking at the map display, there was congestion around Le Mans. Well, there would be, it was 5pm, the evening rush hour. But, Le Mans was still two hours away and surely the congestion would be gone by then.





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ne of the very frequent French rest areas was close at hand, so out came the map book (yes, I still like to have a fall-back). Pursuing the route via Le Mans almost led to sat-nav hysteria; it tried to turn me round at every junction until eventually my wife found the menu which let us turn off the “dynamic” mode. The sat-nav lady lapsed into a sulky silence, but we cruised around Le Mans with less traffic than you’d encounter on the 24 hour circuit. It took much self-restraint to avoid pointing that out to her.

Tours was fascinating, and the next day the sat-nav redeemed itself by delivering us to our cottage in a very remote village with pinpoint accuracy. Then we went to the local town and encountered a parking ticket machine.

As I approached it, I noticed a couple retreating to a car with UK plates and driving off in defeat. My French is passable, although far from fluent, but I had to summon all my



linguistic abilities to figure it out. It turned out that you didn’t need a ticket at all between noon and 4pm.

Outside that, the first hour was free, but you had to put a ticket on the car. For more time you could pay with cash, credit card or by phone. And you must enter the registration number of course. The machine was very efficient, fully electronic, but sadly lacked a button marked “English.”

Working all this out at the head of a growing queue of locals, tutting and looking pointedly at their watches is not one of the holiday memories I’ll treasure.





Another change since we were last in France is speed limits. Virtually every town and village has a 30kph zone, normally outside a school, but it can extend much further.

This caught me out a few times – I'd slow down to 30mph for a sign showing 50, but the next sign saying 30 would bypass my imperial thinking brain; my mental circuits are accustomed to a 30 sign for a built-up area and here was a 30 sign. After a couple of speed activated signs told me off, I remembered to look out for them and observe the 30kph limit – about 20mph.

There are also quite a few 20kph "Home Zones" in villages, accompanied by a sign with a car, pedestrian and cyclist. People, especially children, can and do wander into the road without looking and the bet's tactic is to treat them as you would a pedestrian precinct where you can drive to collect something from a shop. Drive at no more than walking pace,

assume you should give way to everyone and be prepared to stop instantly.

One thing that hasn't changed is the propensity for French white paint to wear away. On many occasions it's quite hard to figure out which is the priority road and which the side road, especially at a Y junction. And of course there are the roads that look like someone's drive, but are in fact roads, with a D number to prove it!

All in all, it was a very enjoyable couple of weeks. Just as we got home, the DfT published its contingency plans for a "No Deal" Brexit and there's a possibility that we'll need an International Driving Permit and green card for insurance for our next jaunt across the channel.

No doubt there will be other details we'll have to be aware of and, of course, the Euro symbol on our number plates won't be valid anymore, so expect a roaring trade in GB stickers. Still, at least I'll find out how to switch off the alarm before I reach the ferry.





Prepare to drive down apathy street

By Rodney Kumar, IAM RoadSmart senior communications executive

The term 'road rage' is sure to strike fear into the hearts of even the strongest driver. Have you ever been the victim of it?

It's easy to say what to do in the event of being on the receiving end of it, but until you have experienced it first hand, you have no idea how hard it is to extract yourself from the situation. In addition remaining calm and getting away from a situation when either you and your passengers are at risk.

I thought I'd tell you my experiences of it - and why I won't remonstrate with another driver again.

IAM RoadSmart's former offices were on the Chiswick High Road, and always on the M4 it would be a slow crawl along two lanes until I got to my junction.

And with most cars doing about 5-10 mph along that stretch, inevitably some drivers would take the opportunity to tap away at their smartphones or have a conversation - of course,

their conversation was highly important and had to be done on the move...

I would often hoot at a driver if I saw them do this, and point at their phone. Reactions would be many and varied: a few would drop their phones and put both hands on the wheel, many would just ignore me.

But a few would swear and get angry. Very angry.

One chap in a famous prestige brand of car put his window down and shouted at me - then slowed his car and waited for me to pull alongside him.

I chose to hang back so I never drew level with him. He eventually got bored and raced off ahead.

One driver pretended to jink into my lane and back out again, forcing me to brake suddenly.

Based on all of this, I have now decided not to bother any more. I won't risk myself for people





Based on all of this, I have now decided not to bother any more. I won't risk myself for people who are clearly too stupid to learn the right thing.

So what should you do? Getting yourself out of harm's way is the most important thing.

And of course don't hesitate to call the police if you are able to quickly and safely enough.

I don't pretend I am offering any answers here, just merely offering my thoughts. But it makes me both sad and angry that people won't admit being in the wrong, and have led me to the conclusion that it's more than my life's worth to stand up and be counted now.

Take a look at IAM RoadSmart's tips on how to avoid being a victim of road rage.

We have all come across road rage at some point in our driving lives. When it happens, it can leave you feeling intimidated and scared. But with a bit of planning you can prevent the situation altogether. Richard Gladman, head of driving and riding standards, provides a few top tips about how to avoid being a victim of road rage, and what to do if it escalates.

Note: If you have friends or family who drive, please share these tips with them to help them stay safe on the road.

If there's conflict between two parties, there's a likely chance you've both played a part. This doesn't mean you should react. Try to take yourself away from the problem – let the other driver go on ahead. Even if you feel wronged, letting the other party go will make no difference to the rest of your day

Is someone being confrontational or aggressive? If so, don't make eye contact and don't react visibly. Try not to think about them so that the incident doesn't affect you afterwards

If the other party is still being aggressive to you and you are in fear of your own safety, call the police

If the other party approaches you in your car, can you drive away safely? If you can, consider doing so. But don't rush off and drive like the getaway driver in a film, or if you think the other driver is going to chase you

Do you have a passengers who can film any





behaviour on a mobile phone? This will help in terms of evidence. Remember to include the registration number of the other vehicle involved

Don't open your door, don't open your windows fully and don't start or get provoked into an argument

If you were at fault, admit it and apologise. It may be enough to diffuse the situation quickly. And do not do anything that can be interpreted as retaliation. Even if you weren't at fault, is the argument really worth it?

Hopefully by now the matter is over and you are driving away. Do acknowledge that this incident will have affected your behaviour. If you feel upset or emotional pull over and get some fresh air or walk around if you need to before resuming your journey.

Find some distraction like listening to the radio - move your mind deliberately onto something else – deliberately driving well would be a good example – but don't dwell on the incident.

Richard said: "Road rage does not affect everyone every day. If you're finding it is happening very often, you might want to think about how you engage with other road users.

"Unlike pedestrians walking towards each other; who can easily get a feel of what the other person will do, where they might go or the mood they're in, you have no such opportunities cocooned in your car."

He concluded: "No-one need experience road rage, but it is up to each of us to ensure it stays that way.

"So it is important not to be antagonistic or obstructive, perhaps making a person already having a bad day boil over."



Tailgating causes one in eight casualties on British roads

By Jamie Rogers



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Tailgating is the most annoying habit among UK drivers, but analysis by Highways England (HE) has proven that it's so much more than an annoyance – more than 100 people are killed or seriously injured every year on Britain's motorways or major A roads; in fact, one-in-eight casualties are the direct result of tailgating.

Research has been carried out using dash cams, heart rate monitors and facial recognition systems that shows a typical response is anger, contempt, surprise and a sharp increase in heart rate, with drivers feeling 'victimised' or targeted.

Head of road safety at Highways England, Richard Leonard, states: "Tailgating distracts the motorist's attention from the road, making them more likely to make a mistake".

Space invader

Armed with this research, Highways England is launching a 'Don't Be A Space Invader' campaign, supported with the backing of former Formula 1 champion, Nigel Mansell, who is also the President of the Institute of Advanced Motorists (IAM RoadSmart), a road safety charity. Mansell himself describes the habit of tailgating as 'deplorable'.





Worryingly, Highways England(HE) believes that in most cases of tailgating, the driver is simply unaware that they're doing it (a passive tailgater), which when compared to another statistic they've released, gives you a clearer understanding of the size of the problem.

Earlier this year, HE surveyed just over 1,100 motorists, with 25% of them admitting to tailgating another driver in the last three months – and that's the people that are aware they were doing it – the majority (according to HEs own findings) don't – extrapolating that figure would tell us that the number of drivers guilty of tailgating must be over half.

The campaign

The Don't Be a Space Invader campaign has been designed to try and quash tailgating completely, through raising awareness, giving advice and trying to get inconsiderate drivers to understand the implications and effects of tailgating. It will be shown throughout the country and companies such as National Express will be using the campaign on their long-distance coaches.

Raising awareness for the passive tailgater is all well and good, they are perhaps the most dangerous kind of tailgater, but it's not going to stop the habitual bully from trying to push you along at an increased pace, and while powers do exist to tackle that problem, they rely on dwindling numbers of mobile traffic police – less than 10,000 tickets have been issued since the introduction of new legislation in August 2013, allowing the police to give on the spot fines.

'Stay Safe, Stay Back' is the strapline, and it's hoped that it's enough to prompt people in to thinking about their driving, rather than just semi-autonomously going about their daily commute.

Effects of tailgating

One insurance company has revealed that more than 25% of the claims between January and August of this year have involved a car being hit from the rear, and along with personal injury, there is the added increase to the insurance premium, loss of NCB and potential for legal proceedings.





Tailgating has also been linked to an increase in traffic jams thanks to the ripple effect of the brake lights, and should you be caught by the police, you'll be liable for a £100 fine and potentially three penalty points.

But there are things that you can do, either as someone that's inadvertently tailgating or as someone that is being tailgated:

- Always try to keep to the two-second rule as a minimum – leaving a gap of at least two seconds between you and the car in front (double that when it's wet)
- Be aware of your surroundings – familiarity breeds contempt, so pay extra attention on your regular journeys
- Never assume the driver in front is aware of you
- Check your speed – are you driving too slowly or too fast?

- Do not speed up to 'lose' a tailgater – there is a chance that they'll just follow you
- If it's safe to do so, pull over and let the tailgater pass – don't be tempted to police the roads yourself
- Never brake test a tailgater
- Check the official Highways England Space Invader site for further information

Tailgating has affected nearly 90% of motorists in one form or another, it seems to be happening on an epidemic proportion, and with modern life being lived at a pace, it's unlikely to end soon. It seems that driving standards, in general, are on the decline, but with more campaigns like this, that could be turned around, and surely, we need to make driving a more pleasurable experience again.





Amputee Ash Hall appointed IAM RoadSmart ambassador; set to inspire with drive and ambition in spite of huge setbacks

IAM RoadSmart has announced this week that Ash Hall, who lost both legs serving in Afghanistan but has started a new career as a racing driver, will become an ambassador for independent road safety charity IAM RoadSmart.

Ash, 27, from Colchester, starts his work with IAM RoadSmart with immediate effect.

He will be giving feedback to IAM RoadSmart on its courses and products and how they can be made better for disabled customers, visiting IAM RoadSmart local groups for talks, plus spokesman activity on behalf of the charity. He will also be taking IAM RoadSmart's advanced driving course.

Ash served in the Royal Engineers for 10 years; whilst serving in Afghanistan in 2010, he was hit by an improvised explosive device causing serious injuries - which led to the amputation of both legs above the knees and shattered his pelvis.





He spent many months receiving treatment at the Queen Elizabeth Hospital and at the military rehabilitation centre in Headley Court, and underwent countless operations to provide him with greater mobility.

Ash then became involved with Team BRIT, which is aiming to become the first ever all-disabled team to enter the Le Mans 24 Hour race by 2020.

Having taken part in the team's rookie day last October, he passed their assessment and took part in his first race with Team BRIT at Oulton Park later that month.

If that wasn't enough, Ash has continued to take part in sports at the highest level since sustaining his injuries and represented Great Britain in the Invictus Games in Canada in September where he won a silver medal for wheelchair rugby.

He also holds a Guinness world record for the longest distance travelled in 24 hours using a go-kart with hand controls - an incredible 1,888 km.

Ash said: "I consider myself lucky to have been given such great opportunities since my injuries to prove to people that life with a disability doesn't have to end. I want to be able to inspire others in a similar situation, and I am sure through IAM RoadSmart I will have the chance to do that."

Mike Quinton, IAM RoadSmart Chief Executive Officer, said: "We are delighted to have Ash on board – he has overcome massive adversity to become a success. He represents a different viewpoint for us and we will really value his advice and input now and in the future."

Dave Player, Team BRIT CEO and Founder, added: "We were very pleased to be approached by IAM RoadSmart about the possibility of offering Ash an ambassador role. We have a shared aim of making driving safe and accessible for disabled people and we look forward to seeing the impact that Ash will have on this important area of work."





**Closing date for the spring 2019 edition
of the Wessex Advanced Motorists e-
Newsletter is 20th January.**

**All contributions would be very
welcome.**

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