

# e-NEWSLETTER

**iam**  
*RoadSmart*

## WESSEX ADVANCED MOTORISTS



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

Number 152

Autumn 2019



# WESSEX ADVANCED MOTORISTS

# e-NEWSLETTER

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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.

#### **GENERAL DATA PROTECTION REGULATION**

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



Welcome to this edition of our Group newsletter, and an especially warm welcome to our new Associate members. Also hearty congratulation to our Associates who, as recently as last week, have recently passed the advance driver course test thereby qualifying as full members of the Institute of Advanced Motorists (IAM RoadSmart).

And welcome to the lady with attitude! You may have noticed that my "signature photo" has changed. My Jaguar XJR – the girl with attitude – has been traded in against a Daimler Super Eight – the lady with attitude.



**By Andrew Griffiths**





I was collecting my XJR after being serviced and MoT'd at Swallows Jaguar when I spied this gorgeous Daimler which was being sold on behalf of another customer. Pity I didn't spot it before I put my XJR in for service, because after a test drive of the Daimler there and then, I was smitten.

What appealed to me about the Daimler, apart from the refinements for which the brand is reputed, is that at its core it is a Jaguar XJR. Its high specification includes

- top quality hides
- top quality burr walnut trim
- a full entertainment system including DVD, TV for rear and front
- all seats recline, have lumbar supports and are heated
- long wheel base for more rear legroom

...and I discover more goodies every day. All of this and the same powerful 400bhp engine giving the same performance as my XJR.

I do wonder how many of the features I will actually use; it was clear that its previous owner had not used the entertainment system or driving aids such as cruise control. One thing I won't be using for sure is the DVD/TV monitor in the front; how distracting would that be? Of course, Daimler/Jaguar put it there on the basis the driver/chauffeur would only watch films when parked up while waiting for his clients.

I just know that my grandchildren will love watching DVDs in the rear seats! But despite the lovely burr walnut drop-down tables on this £80,000 car - its original price, not what I paid for it 13 year later - they will not be allowed popcorn, sandwiches, drinks, etc. Harsh I know but they'll have to wait for a comfort break and get out of my car!

### **What's happening?**

It is that time of year when activities ramp up for WAM. We had a fun members evening in June when we held a skills evening at Hatch Beauchamp Village Hall. The winner of our Camelot Cup with a perfect score was our





President, Brian Howe. Hats off to Brian, he did well. However, the other participants were just 1 or 2 points behind him making it a very close competition. The skills evening will be an annual event so come on, start practicing parallel parking, reversing around a corner, bay parking, chicanes and of course Cockpit checks and POWDER checks.

We've just held our annual classic car show where we saw 129 fantastic cars on display. Amanda Smith, a Senior Manager at IAM, was our guest of honour. Amanda is Head of Field Service Delivery (responsible for all Examiners and volunteers in delivering the courses offered by RoadSmart). Amanda and I have known each other for 15 years or so, when I was with the South of London Group and she regularly visited us as an Examiner. I had the pleasure of escorting her around the show and she had a great time seeing the cars close up and talking to their owners. The winner even handed her the keys of his 1969 Morris Mini Cooper S (seen here in the photo) which she drove around the field with a grin of delight on

her face; "it brought back many memories" Amanda explained.



*Amanda and Andrew posing!*

We also had our annual pitch at the Watchet Fair where we attracted some interest which will lead to free tasters and hopefully to new Associate members.







And the weekend just gone we attended the annual West Somerset Steam Rally. It was a good opportunity to use our new display board and WAM banners, with our Wessex and IAM flags flying high over the gazebo. Barry and I were on our own on the Saturday and it was hard work setting up the gazebo and other equipment - we're not getting any younger and we both have health issues; I wonder how much longer just the two of us can do such events without any help. On Sunday we were

joined by our reliable stalwart volunteers, Ralph, Renee, Pauline and Richard and what a difference it made, having help... and much fun along the way. It meant that with a number of us staffing the WAM pitch, each of us could take time out to enjoy the programme of events in the arena throughout the day.

I hope you all enjoy what's left of the summer and that the lovely weather will continue.

Andrew



# THE COMMITTEE



Committee meetings (for committee members ONLY) are held bimonthly at 7:30pm on the first Wednesday of the month at Hatch Beauchamp Village Hall. If, as a group member, you need to raise any issue at committee level, then please feel free to contact any committee member to put your views to the next committee meeting.

Chairman	Andrew Griffiths	<a href="mailto:chair@wessexam.uk">chair@wessexam.uk</a>
Vice Chairman/Events Coordinator	Barry Keenan	<a href="mailto:events@wessexam.uk">events@wessexam.uk</a>
Secretary/Membership Secretary	David Walton	<a href="mailto:secretary@wessexam.uk">secretary@wessexam.uk</a>
Treasurer	Isobel Jennings	<a href="mailto:treasurer@wessexam.uk">treasurer@wessexam.uk</a>
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# GROUP OBSERVERS



Chief Observer, Masters Mentor & LOA	Andrew Griffiths
National Observer & LOA	Barry Keenan
National Observer	Delphine West-King
Local Observer	Brian Dodd
Local Observer	Andrew Hepworth
Local Observer	Isobel Jennings
Local Observer	Ted Parks
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



## SEPTEMBER

4	W	7:30 pm	WAM Committee Meeting
10	Tu		Tour of Morrisons Bridgwater Depot (fully booked)
18	W	7:30 pm	Members' Evening - A miscellany of items of interest
21 & 22			Somerset County Show

## OCTOBER

16	W	7:30 pm	Annual General Meeting – guest speakers, Paddy Hopkirk and David Gallagher
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## NOVEMBER

6	W	7:30 pm	WAM Committee Meeting
20	W	7:30 pm	Members' Evening – Annie's Ride, a talk by Pearl Jeans and Annie Suddaby

## DECEMBER

7	Sa	12:30pm	WAM Christmas Lunch
			No members' evening in December



# PRESIDENT'S PONDERINGS



## Autonomous Cars

A couple of weeks ago IAMRS posed a question on their Facebook page. "Should a driverless car be allowed to mount the pavement to avoid an incident?"

The following statement is my own view and not necessarily the view of either Wessex Advanced Motorists or IAM RoadSmart. I believe that all motor cars, whatever propulsion method they use, are made to run on roads. They have no business to ever be on the pavement due to the unpredictable nature of human beings. Can you imagine a silent, electric, autonomous vehicle mounting the pavement to avoid an incident or collision with a pedestrian who just stepped into the road? The wrong place at the wrong time. Young children are all too often not holding a parent's hand, that makes them entirely unpredictable. Let's keep our cars on the roads where they are meant to be. And finally, please do not park on the pavements, there are a lot of mobility scooters about now, including mine, and we cannot just turn and drop off of a four inch high kerb.



**by Brian Howe**





## Escargot Noir

My little black Nissan S Cargo van can no longer be known as “Escargot Noir” as he is now sans noir. Without black. Although the main bodywork was very shiny, there were many places where the black paint was peeling off due to poor preparation when resprayed in Japan. The worst area being just behind the rear of the canvas sunroof where quite a large patch of the original blue was clearly on show. There was also quite a lot of blue showing on the door edges and door frames and around the tailgate. As I wanted

the van to look more like a delivery van, I had to decide whether to wrap in vinyl or respray. Knowing that my son-in-law has a business in Cheddar, Somerset, I asked if he would mind if I used his company livery. At the second vehicle wrappers I met Kyle who owns and runs Ace Wraps in Taunton. As all peeling paint would have to be removed and panels put in primer, a complete respray with vinyl signwriting offered the best and most economical solution. With Kyle’s help I chose brown and cream as the nearest colours to the Cheddar Chocolate Company livery. Kyle wanted to paint the main body in cream with brown bumpers, wheel arches etc. but following lengthy yet friendly discussions, I held out for the reverse. Brown body with cream accents and wheels. All the signwriting was to be done in cream vinyl as these can be relatively easily removed if I ever decided to sell the van on. The next decision was what to do with the dark glass side portal windows? Kyle had a great idea to enhance the VAN look. He would cover the glass in cream vinyl and replicate the Nissan Snail logo to be placed centrally on the windows. I also insisted that the band running from the windscreen ‘A’ pillar, across the roof and down either side of the







rear tailgate. This was to accentuate the original look of the van as it was designed in 1988. To echo the lines of the old Citroen 2CV Fourgonette vans, much like Fiat did with the 500, Volkswagen with the Beetle and BMW with the Mini.

## Let the work commence

The van was delivered to Kyle at Ace Wraps on Monday morning of 24<sup>th</sup> June 2019 and placed on a lift where the doors, bonnet, tailgate, bumpers, wheel arches, etc. were removed. When the scuttle panel at the base of the



Stripped ready for action

windscreen was removed, a small rodent's nest was found in the fresh air intake.

Thankfully this had long since been abandoned, presumably because the former resident preferred to stay in Japan and not emigrate to the UK. I had often wondered why random grass stalks would appear in the fresh air and heater grilles. As work progressed, Kyle would send me pictures of how things were going in the workshop. Obviously, limited space in this article prevents the inclusion of too many photographs which is why I have only added the ones that tell the story.



Deserted nest in fresh air intake







**Nearly finished at County Gazette Show 14 July 2019**

I finally received the van back and drove it home at 9:00pm Tuesday 16<sup>th</sup> July, less than 24 hours before the start of our own WAM Classic Car Show at Hatch Beauchamp. Due to the rush for return, Kyle and his crew had not had time to fully clean the van's interior. So it was a mad dash for Alice and me to do it at home. I hoovered and dusted inside the back of the van while Alice was dusting and polishing the dash and cleaning the windows. Then it was indoors for a much-needed cup of tea.



**Finished and ready to leave the paint-shop**

At 6:30am the next morning we were on the road to my daughter's house so that we could accompany her to her MSc Graduation in Advanced Practice (Nursing) at Bristol Cathedral. The early start was deemed necessary in case the Extinction Rebellion protest caused traffic delays. As it happened, they were nowhere to be seen and we arrived early enough to go for a cup of tea. We eventually arrived home at 4:30pm, parked Alice's Skoda Yeti, picked up my keys for the



van and just made it in time for the start of the WAM Classic Car Show. I don't like cutting my timing that close because it causes stress and stress causes me health problems. Fortunately, I

got away with it that day, but boy, was I tired when I finally fell into bed.

Brian L. Howe.







# Regional Groups Quiz

**Volunteers required** for the WAM team in this year's annual inter-group quiz where our team will be pitted against the best from neighbouring groups; Weston, Bath, Bristol and maybe more.

This year's quiz is being run by Bath & District Advanced Motorists and will be held on Tuesday 10<sup>th</sup> September.

If you would like to be a member of our team, please let me know as soon as possible so that I can accept the challenge from BADAM.

David [sec@wessexam.uk](mailto:sec@wessexam.uk)



# COORDINATOR'S REPORT



Since writing for the summer edition of the newsletter 10 new Associates have signed up to take the Advanced Driver Course.

Two drivers have also passed their Advanced Driving Test so congratulations to Simon Scotting and Peter Dobbie as well as their Observers, Barry Keenan and Hugh Todd.

We have also received 8 requests for free tasters and 3 more for assessment drives. By the time you read this our volunteers will have attended a number of local events with the intention of encouraging more people to take the course and make our roads safer places to be.

It is good to welcome Ted Parks and Andrew Hepworth to our team of Observers. Their hard-earned skills will be in constant demand with this steady flow of interest in what we offer.



**by Pauline Wills**





I must finally mention one very positive outcome this quarter; Simon's 13 year-old son, Bill, is really impressed with his Dad's new way of driving and has decided to join the Under 17 Car Club. If you have teenage children or young grandchildren why not have a look at [www.under17-carclub.co.uk](http://www.under17-carclub.co.uk)

Pauline



### Advanced Driving Test Passes

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

#### OBSERVED BY

Simon Scotting

Barry Keenan

Peter Dobbie

Hugh Todd

### Statistics for year to end of July

	group	region avg.
Pass rate %	100	89
F1RSTS	1	8.6
Passes	6	19.3
No. of observers	11	28.5
New Associates	18	41.2

### The Membership Register

This quarter we have ten 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>
Nigel Short	Martock	Associate
Stephen Harvey	Ilminster	Associate
Teresa Hill	Bridgwater	Associate
Robert Boyle	Warminster	Associate
Robert Hayes	Taunton	Associate
Taylor Stote	Bridgwater	Associate
Will James	Bridgwater	Associate
Mark Brooks	Bridgwater	Associate
Nicholas Brooker	Yeovil	Associate
Felix Underwood	Barnstable	Associate

We have 121 members and 8 Friends/Volunteers. We now have 8 Fellows.  
*David Walton*





# Events Corner



I'm sitting here writing what is euphemistically headed 'Autumn Newsletter'. Autumn?! I think not! Outside the sun is shining and today, the weather forecasters reliably tell me, is the UK's hottest July day on record.

So, a bit of a record breaker, then? All of that is well and good but to be honest I lose interest when the weather forecaster speaks. If I look out of the window and it's raining I now I'm going to get wet. If it's sunny I know I'm going to be warm. I don't need some bloke on the television to tell me. What I do know about today is that it's just too hot for me to potter about in the garden. So here I am, inside and still sweltering! Come to think of it, I started off wittering on about the weather in my last article, too. So, that being said, that's enough about the weather from me, then.



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





So what have we been up to this last few months, and what have we got planned for the next few?

Our guest speaker in May was Geoff Rickson of Taunton Samaritans. He gave a very interesting and heartfelt history of the Samaritans and their role. The question that I had in mind when I booked him as a speaker was “are they still relevant today” Well, having listened to his talk, yes is the answer.

With so many people in crisis it's good that we've got an organisation of dedicated people willing to give their time and expertise to help out. I hope I never need their services, but I'm pleased to think that they're there if I do. (National Freephone Helpline 116123)

We didn't have a guest speaker in June. Instead we re-introduced our long forgotten 'Car Skills Night'. This consisted of 6 challenges all of which were supervised by our Observers and Volunteers. (Thanks everybody!)

I'm pleased to say that everybody enjoyed themselves and there was much laughter and

derision, amongst both competitors and Observers. A really fun night that was enjoyed by everybody.

The overall winner with the maximum score was Brian Howe, our President. No shenanigans or back handers, just a straight forward clear round completed in a very timely manner. For his sterling efforts behind the wheel Brian was presented with the newly inaugurated Camelot Cup which had been presented by the late Camelot group when they ran their car Skills Night. So, not only a good re-use of an inherited cup, but also a very well deserved win by our President. Well done you, sir!

The weekend of 22<sup>nd</sup> & 23<sup>rd</sup> June a group of us out flying the IAM / WAM flag at the Somerset MotoFest 2019. This is an annual event organised and run by Somerset Road Safety and was held once again, at the Fleet Air Arm Museum, RNAS Yeovilton. Aside from the 4 Committee Members on duty, we had some sterling support from 7 of our Volunteer Cadre. A wonderful turnout, thank you very much, everybody.





As a group we did very well in recruiting, too, having picked up 6 new members as well as directing several 'out of area' visitors to their own local groups. A truly successful weekend which would have been impossible without the help and dedication of the Committee Members and Volunteers there on the day. A big thank you to everybody concerned.

As expected, Wednesday 3rd July proved to be a very busy day for some of us.

In the morning a small group of us visited the Avon & Somerset Police Mounted Section HQ in Clevedon for a demonstration of how the police train both horses and riders as well as manage crowd control. It wasn't a long talk and was all over in 90 minutes, but it was a very interesting and insightful peek behind the scenes. One of the riders involved in the demonstration was PC Tristan Smith who was our Guest Speaker in March.

For those of you who missed it, you missed a treat. If you'd like me to arrange a second visit to the stables, please let me know. If I get sufficient numbers, I'll go ahead and organise it. If any of you are interested in organising

your own visit to the place, please drop me a line and I'll pass on the relevant contact details.

Having spent the morning in Clevedon, the evening was spent at Hatch Beauchamp Village Hall at the bi-monthly committee meeting. So as I said, a busy day for some of us.

The next committee meeting will be held at the Hall on Wednesday 4<sup>th</sup> September. As I've mentioned in the past and will do again in the future, these meetings are closed to ordinary members, but if you have any burning issues, queries or items you'd like the Committee to review, then please send all the information and details to David Walton at [secretary@wessexam.uk](mailto:secretary@wessexam.uk) for inclusion in the agenda. Once debated either David or the portfolio holder for that particular area, will get back to you with the results.

In early July IAM RoadSmart contacted the various groups around the country asking for nominations of local schools to receive a donation of the IAM Publication 'How To Be A Better Cyclist'. These donations would be made on a first come, first served basis.





I was pleased to nominated St. James Church School, an infants / junior school local to me, as one I thought would benefit from such a donation. I'm also pleased to say that they were lucky enough to receive a donation of 10 books which I hope will benefit the children as they progress through their cycling proficiency tests and continue to be of interest and use to them as they continue with their cycling career.

The 17<sup>th</sup> July saw our very own annual Classic Car Show which was again held on the field at Hatch Beauchamp Village Hall. Although a lot of work goes into the planning and running of this event, I'm very pleased to report that once again it was an enormous success.

Our Guest of Honour this year was Amanda Smith, IAM RoadSmart Head of Field Service Delivery. Amanda arrived with us after a very full day at work at IAM's Welwyn Garden HQ and, with Andrew Griffiths as her escort, breezed around the field meeting and greeting both group members and exhibitors.

Amanda appeared to thoroughly enjoy herself and was very impressed (as was I!) with the fact that we had 132 exhibitors register their cars.

This was the first year that we charged for registration / entry. In total we raised over £600 in entry, raffle and other income for the night. A staggering amount! This will be divided between WAM; Hatch Beauchamp Village Hall and The Dorset & Somerset Air Ambulance, who was our 'supported' charity of the year.

As an aside the chap manning the D & S Air Ambulance Tent told me afterwards that they had taken a really good collection from the exhibitors and visitors to the show and that it was well worth their attending. Brilliant news, and a really good night for the Air Ambulance all round!

As it happens, our show was also the host for the Somerset Stag Owners Club as they took over the care and control from the Devon Stag Owners Club, of 'Socrates'. Socrates is the mascot of the Stag Owners of Great Britain club and is making his way around the various Stag Owners Clubs in celebration of their 50 years anniversary.

I'm sure you'll hear more about this from our very own Stag Owner, Mike Wotton who will be pleased to tell you how their night went.





Amanda meanwhile took centre stage when she made the presentation of the cups and certificates to our winners. Pete Britton took 1<sup>st</sup> place with his 1969 Morris Mini Cooper and received the '006 Cup' and Wynford Jones was presented with the 'Timpson Cup' for 2<sup>nd</sup> place with his very impressive 1959 Messerschmitt TG500.

Both Pete and Wyn have agreed to come back next year as Honorary Judges.

The winners of the Class Certificates were:

- Class 1 James Hickman in his 1935 Singer Le Mans four seater.
- Class 2 Will Edwards in his 1953 Austin Healy 100 / 4.
- Class 3 Mike & Bet Amor in their 1965 VW 1300 Sallon.
- Class 4 Tudor James in his 1995 Jaguar XJS
- Class 5 Clive Wembridge in his 1992 Ford Escort Cosworth.

Again this show could not have happened without the work and support of the WAM

Committee and the 6 volunteers who helped set up, run and take down the show. My very, very grateful thanks to each and every one of you. You were brilliant! See you again next year?!

]]

Not content to finish just yet, the 'Wessex Events Season' season continues apace.

On Sunday 28<sup>th</sup> July we'll be out again at the Watchet Carnival Fete which is being held at the Memorial Ground, Watchet. If you're visiting the area, feel free to pop into our tent to say "hello". It'll be nice to see you.

[www.watchetcarnival.co.uk/](http://www.watchetcarnival.co.uk/)

On the weekend of the 3<sup>rd</sup> & 4<sup>th</sup> August we'll again be out in strength at the West Somerset Steam Fair, Norton Fitzwarren. This annual event is always good value for money for the whole family so if you're lost for something to keep the children occupied, or yourself for that matter, then do wander along. There really is so much to see and it's always so very well organised. [www.wsra.org.uk/the-steam-rally/](http://www.wsra.org.uk/the-steam-rally/)







You'll be aware that there's no Member's Evening scheduled for August. This is simply due to the numbers of people away on holiday during the month. Enjoy yourselves, because I'm certain that I will!

### **Onto September now**

Don't forget the group tour of Morrison's Bridgwater Depot on the 10<sup>th</sup>. We had a really good uptake for this visit, but unfortunately the list is now closed. For those of you going, do keep an eye on your emails because I'll be emailing you in the next few weeks with updates and confirmations. In the meantime, if you've got any questions for me, please get in touch and I'll do my best to answer them.

Just two final things to mention; the first is the Somerset County Show at Taunton Racecourse on the weekend of the 21<sup>st</sup> and 22<sup>nd</sup> September. Our stand will be located on the car park just below the main stands. There promises to be lots of things on offer for all ages and should be a really fun day so come along and enjoy yourselves. While you're at it, don't forget to pop in and have a chat with us as well. [www.somersetcountyshow.co.uk/](http://www.somersetcountyshow.co.uk/)

Finally for this quarter, is the October AGM. As usual this will be held at Hatch Beauchamp Village Hall on Wednesday 16<sup>th</sup> October. Having concluded the business of the night, our joint guest speakers will be Paddy Hopkirk, legendary Racing Driver, and IAM's Mature Driver Ambassador. He'll be accompanied by David Gallagher, the IAM's Young Driver Ambassador.

Together they will lay out the IAM's strategy for recruiting and maintaining a membership of both young and mature drivers. For anybody interested in the direction that the IAM wants to go in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, this will be the must attend talk of the year. I look forward to seeing you there.

Well that's it for now. As always, thanks for taking the time to read my scribbling's and I look forward the events to come in the meantime, here's to your continued happy, safe and enjoyable motoring.

*Barry*

Events Co-ordinator,

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## First ever winner of the Camelot Cup



Brian Howe (right), honorary president of Wessex Advanced Motorists, was presented with the Camelot Cup by group chair Andrew Griffiths (left) recently for his driving skills. The cup is awarded to the winner of a series of driving challenges, consisting of six elements including a cockpit drill, powdery checks, reverse round corner, drive-through chicanes, parallel park, and reverse into parking bay. Points were awarded for observation, accuracy and time. Brian has been a member for nearly 23 years and scored the maximum 32 points.



DON'T FORGET THAT WE STILL HAVE A FEW OF THE IAM BASEBALL CAPS LEFT IN STOCK. IT MAY BE SOME TIME BEFORE WE HAVE A CHANCE TO BUY ANY MORE SO DON'T MISS OUT – GET YOURS NOW. AVAILABLE AT MEMBERS' MEETINGS AND FROM MIKE AT [CMMW@WESSEXAM.UK](mailto:CMMW@WESSEXAM.UK)





# Disc “warp”

By Andrew Griffiths

You have, I’m sure, heard me talk about poor driving habits and their impact on car sympathy. When you’ve been using the brakes for long and sustained periods of time, (a bad habit in itself?) such as long descents or exiting a motorway in the deceleration lane, the pads get extremely hot. When you arrive at a roundabout or traffic lights where you might encounter a wait of more than a few seconds, do you hold the car on the footbrake or apply the handbrake as soon as the vehicle has stopped and release the footbrake?

Holding the vehicle on the footbrake means that extremely hot brake pads are in pressured contact with the brake discs; this causes discs to heat up at the point of contact and the disc hardens in that area due to molecular change. Next time you stop and hold it on the foot brake, it is very likely that the pads will be in contact with *other* areas of the discs cause even more hard spots. Eventually the disc will have a mix of hard and soft areas covering it;

hard areas wear more slowly than the soft areas and this leads to uneven wear on the disc which in turn leads to an uneven thickness around the disc.

How this shows up is very simple. When you brake, the foot pedal will “judder” and the steering wheel will vibrate due to the brake pads moving in sympathy with the uneven thickness of the brake discs; this effect is far more noticeable when touching the brakes at the higher speeds.

The solution is painfully expensive; it requires replacing the discs and pads!

During the test drive of my Daimler, the first thing I noticed was brake judder and a vibration on the steering. It was confirmed by Swallows Jaguar that the previous owner had clearly been holding the car on the footbrake when stationary rather than using the handbrake. Consequently all discs and pads had to be replaced before I bought the car. Expensive for the seller!





## Use of Handbrake

Roadcraft says that in general, use the handbrake when the vehicle is stationary. Depending on how long a stop is required e.g. a few seconds or a couple of minutes plus, use either the;

- **Short handbrake stop;** coming to a stop, selecting 1<sup>st</sup> gear and then applying handbrake (and releasing footbrake) keeping your hand on the handbrake ready to release it when ready to move off... you've already chosen the gear. OR.
- **Long handbrake stop;** coming to a stop, applying the handbrake, selecting neutral and release the footbrake.

Note that in both cases, the footbrake is released! The above generally refers to manual transmission cars. For automatics you should refer to the driver handbook and go by the manufacturers' recommendations for use of handbrake, use of P (transmission brake) and use of N (neutral) when stationary.

So here are some tips on braking; (in no particular order and the list is non-exhaustive);

1. Use "acceleration sense". This is a way of varying the speed of a vehicle by accurate use of the accelerator meaning *little or no use of brakes*. It requires a high level of observation, anticipation and planning ahead.
2. When coming to a halt for traffic lights which have just turned red (so they aren't likely to go green for a minute or more), apply the handbrake and release the footbrake.
3. ALWAYS apply the handbrake when pedestrians and other road users are crossing the road directly in front of your car; for example, at any type of pedestrian crossing (including Pegasus/Equestrian where ridden horses would be passing directly in front of you). This reduces the risk of being shunted from behind into vulnerable road users in your direct path.
4. Avoid hard braking as such a practice adds more instability to your vehicle as well as producing significant pollution from brake dust.





5. When applying the brakes, use the Feel/Firm/Feather technique. “Feel” the point at which the brakes engage; “Firm” up on the pressure to achieve the braking required; “Feather” off the pedal to ease the pressure in the braking hydraulics as the car comes to a halt. I call this “the Chauffeur Stop”...get it right and clients won’t spill their Champagne. It is a technique that is mentored on the advanced driver course (without the champagne though).
6. When negotiating a long descent, avoid “dragging the brakes as this will (1) get the pads extremely hot; (2) shorten the life of the brake pads and discs; (3) pump out lots of harmful brake dust ...it is a serious pollutant and not at all environmentally friendly! Instead, in a manual car, select a low gear to give a high degree of engine braking which will mean little or no use of brakes; in an automatic, lock it in a low gear to prevent the system changing up to higher gears which offer very little engine

braking – modern autos will do this without driver intervention as they have tilt sensors to select a retarding gear. Clever!

7. Avoid braking on bends; the car needs all of the tyre grip for steering. Brake on the straight sections in between them or if on “S” bends, brake if necessary on the switchover between right/left (or L/R) when the front (steerable) wheels are momentarily straight.
8. Braking distances at least double on wet roads at can be 10 times longer on snowy/icy road surfaces (Highway Code Rule 126; Stopping Distances)
9. At night, applying handbrake and releasing footbrake will prevent the driver behind you getting blinded by the intense red lights coming from your car!

If anyone would like coaching on any of the above points, please contact our Coordinator, Pauline ([coordinator@wessexam.uk](mailto:coordinator@wessexam.uk) or 01278 450358) and she will arrange for a coaching session with one of our Observers. It’s all free for members of course!







# About Gears

By Nigel Albright

We might tend to think that the way we use gears is not very important. But, in some ways, nothing could be further from the truth. Let's first just remind ourselves what gears actually do, so bear with me please.

Essentially gears change the ratio between the speed of the engine and that of the road wheels. If there were no gears the speed of the engine would be fixed in relation to the road wheels. If, for example, the engine was ticking over at 1,000 rpm and that was connected directly to the road wheels then one of two things would happen; either there would be massive wheel spin or, more likely the turning power of the engine (the torque) would not be great enough to get the vehicle moving and the engine would stall. So, we start with very low road wheel rotation speed in relation to the engine speed by using a high gear ratio, as in

1<sup>st</sup> gear, and this also gives us strong pulling power. However, as we know, although there is a lot of pulling power as we increase speed we will rapidly reach the maximum revs for the engine and that will be at a very low ground speed. It's also the gear which will generate the highest fuel consumption. Therefore, we change to the next gear which does not have quite so much pulling power but, since the vehicle is now moving that is not so important and we can reach a higher speed and it is slightly more economical. And so it goes on until we get to, say, fifth or sixth gear which has comparatively (to 1<sup>st</sup> gear) little pulling power, but where the vehicle can reach its top speed. In general, there is less stress on the engine and there is the best fuel consumption. Any choice of gear falls between these two extremes dependent mainly on whether we want economy or performance.





Now there is one other factor to build in and that is called the engine compression ratio. Higher compression ratios in the engine cylinders are normally related to performance vehicles and vice-versa of course. The reason I mention this is because it has a direct bearing, not only on acceleration but also on the braking ability of the engine.

There is a well-known saying that 'brakes are for slowing and gears are for going', well yes and no. In the article 'Understanding System', you will have seen that the first stage in reducing speed is to lift the foot off the throttle. The amount of braking effect will be dependent of (1) the gear engaged and (2) the engine compression ratio. A higher engine compression will give a higher rate of braking so, logically, it's what I call engine compression braking.

To explain this a bit more we need to go to the town of Radlett on the old Roman Watling Street, north of London. Students on Hendon advanced courses would be taken there and expected to drive from one end to the other

without using their brakes, except if they had to stop at a zebra crossing. That meant that apart from developing good forward observation and anticipation, it was essential to have the right working gear engaged so that the student could basically just flex the throttle as necessary. It is a very useful exercise and one which I used to practice with associates going through the centre of the Marsh Barton Trading Estate in Exeter which has mini-roundabouts.

I mentioned this some years ago to John Trafford, a former senior instructor at the Maidstone (Police) Driving School who went on to be head of fleet driver training at IAM. John said he used to have the reputation for not stopping at traffic lights. What he actually meant, of course, was that he tried to plan his approach so that the lights changed to green as he got there.

Another application of this principle is in a line of traffic which tends to stop and start. Selecting first gear and keeping well back will often enable you to keep moving when others





are repeatedly accelerating and then almost immediately hitting the brakes again.

Extending that idea means one needs to look ahead and decide if there might be a need to decelerate before moving up to the next gear, in which case one stays in the current gear for the time being. It could be that in town 2<sup>nd</sup> or 3<sup>rd</sup> gears might be the most suitable so that you can just play with the throttle and keep rolling. Again, it is important to know and understand how much engine braking you will get in each gear. *This will also tend to suggest how much space you need to leave to the front.* By the way, I am not suggesting you stay in a particular gear until the engine is at high revs. It's a matter of applying common sense and also having a feel for your particular vehicle.

This same principle can be applied to the open road where, with a suitable 'working' gear

engaged (and again depending on the engine compression effect), it will often enable you to have a nice flowing ride with the minimum use of brakes.

You will have anticipated that this is all good and well in a manual vehicle but, what about an automatic. The interesting thing about automatics is that most people just leave it in Drive and what that means is that generally there is little or no engine compression braking and therefore very much more use of brakes. Also, in principle a drive is not going to be nearly so smooth because if, for example, a driver is on a windy B road he or she is going to be on the accelerator, then on the brakes then on the accelerator etc. So my personal preference is to use the manual override so that I can limit the top gear in use, if necessary, and therefore have more engine braking at my disposal should I need it.





## **October Members' Evening**

# **ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING**

**The Group AGM will be taking place and all members, associates and friends are encouraged to attend; after the AGM:**

## **Paddy Hopkirk and David Gallagher**

**will be our guest speakers, talking about attracting more people to IAM RoadSmart. Then, after a refreshment break, Paddy on his own talking about his motorsport career.**

**Wednesday 16<sup>th</sup> October 7:30pm  
Hatch Beauchamp Village Hall**

## **November Members' Evening**

# **Annie's Ride**



**Pearl Jeanes & Annie Suddaby will be talking to us about 'Annie's Ride'. This was the 2014 fund raiser for the restoration of the bells at Taunton's St. Mary Magdalene church. Due to their efforts the successful replacing of the entire ring of bells for St Mary's was managed in treble quick time.**

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







## WAM member wins on IAM RoadSmart Facebook

Quoting from IAM RoadSmart Facebook page:

“And the winner of our Spot Prize competition is... Richard Board with his Triumph Vitesse! We will be in touch to arrange delivery of your prize!

Thank you to everyone that entered – your pictures are amazing and we will add them into our classic car finale collage in September.

We're currently offering a free classic vehicle sticker, to claim yours please visit:

[www.iamroadsmart.com/campaign-pages/end-customer-campaigns/classic](http://www.iamroadsmart.com/campaign-pages/end-customer-campaigns/classic)

Stay tuned for more spot prizes throughout August!”



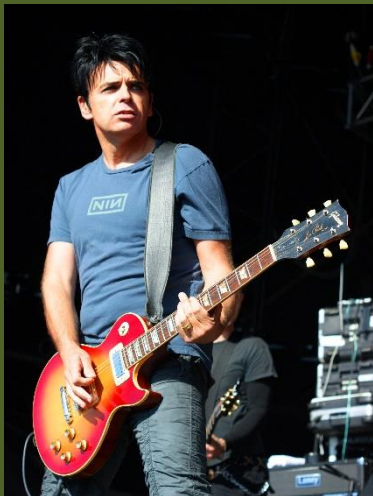


# Are 'Friends' Electric?

By Shaun Cronin, IAM RoadSmart Southern Area Service Delivery Manager

The year is 1979 and we are just about to enter the 80s, technology and innovation is running rampant.

Sir Clive Sinclair is leading a generation of young people into the world of computers with the ZX80, soon to be followed by the ZX81 with its massive 1K of built in memory. Gary Numan and Tubeway Army are number one in the charts with their now classic electro pop synth hit "[Are 'Friends' Electric?](#)" Those of a certain vintage are humming it now.



Speaking of Sir Clive Sinclair, his Sinclair C5 battery powered vehicle is still some five years away, launching to the world in 1985. How we all giggled at those first attempts with electric vehicles, but they were not entirely new as I had seen milk

delivered in a battery powered milk float, as a very young child obviously!

A question I am often asked is "Can you really be an advanced driver in an electric car?" I believe that some people think that a fully electric powered vehicle, or EV, is a strange blend of trickery and is not really a car at all.

The reality is actually covered by the word 'propulsion.' Way back when steam power gave way to the petrol engine people accepted this new method of propulsion as a step in the right direction.

Then came diesel power for cars, initially noisy and rather unrefined rather like the buses and lorries of the time - they became ultra-efficient and when Audi won at Le Mans with a diesel-powered sports prototype, they fully came of age.

We readily accepted hybrid vehicles with a combination of a conventional small petrol engine and electric motors. We initially sniggered at the Toyota Prius but look how far that has come now.





But then someone removed the conventional engine, fitted huge batteries, put a plug on it and the world went 'hang on, now I'm not so sure.' Progress is a funny thing, your audience or customer base must be on the journey with you.

I recently landed at Nice Airport and tried my first Uber experience. My Uber arrived, a Tesla Model X. I waved at the driver and he pressed a button thus opening the utterly sci-fi fantastic falcon wing doors, he took our bag and I hopped in. My wife tells me I was more excited about the Model X experience than arriving on the Cote D'Azur. It's a boy thing.

I have driven several full EVs and I have to say I'm impressed. However I did go rather premium with my first experience, a Tesla Model S. My current drive is a hybrid vehicle answering the big question of the moment with EVs – range. No plugs, no charging points and very good fuel economy; it seems hybrids are where it is at for now with the decline in diesel sales.

Returning to the questions, of course you can be an advanced driver in a hybrid or full EV, it

is still a car, simply the propulsion system is different. Observation, anticipation and planning are there just the same, and this is where you can really score with anticipation and the use of regenerative braking adding to the fuel economy figure and brake pads that last a very long time.



Real change is in the air in the automotive industry in the cars we will drive in the future, more EVs are coming to the market each quarter, but 35 years on from the Sinclair C5... Are 'Friends' Electric?





# Don't get the wet weather blues this summer

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

We're having a typical English summer, sun for a couple of weeks and then downpours for days on end. IAM RoadSmart's head of driving and riding standards Richard Gladman advises a few ways to keep safe in heavy rain and floods.

## Heavy rain

- Driving in heavy rain will affect your visibility, so take it slow. Rule 126 of the Highway Code states that the braking distance between yourself and another car on a dry road surface should be at least two seconds, and at least four seconds when driving in the rain
- Ensure your windscreen wipers are working correctly, and that the windscreen is clean – using your wipers when you have a dirty windscreen will just smear and make your visibility even worse
- Turn your headlights on. Many of us now have automated headlights, but often they

will not come on in adverse weather conditions; ensure they are on so you're visible to other road users. A good rule of thumb is that if you need your wipers on, then you need your headlights on too

## Aquaplaning

Is your car aquaplaning? Here are some signs that you could be:

- Your engine may become louder if the driving wheels have lost grip
- It will feel as though you've dropped down in the gears causing revs to increase
- The steering may become lighter and unresponsive

If you experience any of this, try not to panic. Follow these tips:

- Ease off the accelerator or cancel the cruise control
- Hold the steering wheel straight and firm
- Do not hit your brakes hard





When your car gains traction you can slowly begin to use the brake and slow down.

### How to avoid aquaplaning

If it's been raining and you're about to drive, there are things that you can do to help prevent your car from aquaplaning. Standing water as shallow as 2.5mm can cause an aquaplaning effect at speed so be sure to follow the steps below:

- Check your tyres – they can have a massive impact on how your car will handle in the wet. Watch this video by TyreSafe for more info:
- Reduce your speed; problems occur when the tyres can no longer clear the standing water as they rotate. Going slower will allow time for the tread to do its job
- Be alert for flood warnings on the road and if you can see any water in the distance, be sure to slow down and prepare to go around it
- Avoid using cruise control in extreme conditions

## Floods

- If there are floods you need to consider other routes to keep you safe. If the water is standing more than six inches deep, avoid driving through it. You can judge the depth in relation to the kerb
- If there are similar vehicles driving safely through, then you can make a judgement call on whether it's safe to do so yourself.
- If the water is fast flowing, do not attempt to drive through it. There is a real danger of your car being swept away

If you have decided to drive through a flood take the following precautions:

- Go slowly and take it easy
- Press lightly on the clutch and add gentle pressure to the accelerator to increase engine revs but do so without speed. Do this in a similar way to how you do hill starts, this will prevent water from entering your exhaust. If you're in an automatic, accelerate lightly but control the speed with your brakes







- If you have any doubt, turn back. Often modern saloon cars have an air intake in the wheel arch and could be below water level if going through a flood. If your engine takes in any water, it will immediately hydro lock and the engine will stop
- Remember to stay alert and avoid splashing pedestrians. If this is done accidentally you can still receive a fixed penalty and three points on your license for driving without due care and attention. If done deliberately it could be a public order offence, a court appearance, or a fine

Richard says "With the British weather the way it is, we should all be well practised at driving in the rain. Keeping your car maintained and the rubber (wipers and tyres) in good condition will help you stay safe. In the recent extreme weather, we have seen that standing water and floods are becoming more commonplace, so take extra care and if possible, avoid driving through standing water. If you're in any doubt about the depth or surface underneath a flood, then it's best not to take any chances."

**WESSEX ADVANCED MOTORISTS**

## **Annual Christmas Lunch**

**to be held at**

**OAKE MANOR GOLF CLUB**

**Oake, Nr. Taunton, TA4 1BA**

**on Saturday 7<sup>th</sup> December 2019**

**12:30 for 1:00pm**

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

**Menus and booking forms will be sent out with  
the AGM notice and membership renewal  
invitation in early September**

# Driving under pressure

By Mike Quinton, IAM RoadSmart Chief Executive Officer



We all know that new cars these days are bristling with new technologies aimed at keeping us, and other road users, safe.

But what are you supposed to do if, driving along the M25, your tyre pressure sensor (who

knew they had one?) tells you that the pressure in one of your “corners” has dropped?

Well this happened to me the other day. We are frequently told that hard shoulders are dangerous, and the days of stopping to change the wheel are behind us. Especially if, like me, you don’t have a spare wheel.

Luckily for me, the next safe exit was home. So I soldiered on, with five miles until I reached my destination. I slowed down to 40/50 mph and kept an eye on the on the warning gauge as it gradually dropped from 28 towards 20. Was this the correct approach? I have a compressor in the car – but I didn’t dare stop.





Had I been 50 miles from home, I'd have turned off at the nearest service station or emergency refuge area and dealt with the situation there and then.

It's important to note that if you have no other option other than stopping on the hard shoulder, you should call Highways England. At the very least, they will get warning signs placed on the motorway for you and if possible, they'll get a traffic officer patrol to assist keeping you safe whilst the faults are rectified.

However, I reasoned that I had taken the precaution of inserting Tyreseal in the two rear tyres (the front pair were newer) so a blow-out was unlikely, but I didn't want to shed the tyre!

But all was well. And two trips, tiptoeing to Kwikfit the next morning saw me shell out £200



for a new "boot" and thank my lucky stars that I hadn't had a blow out at 70 mph on the M40 two days earlier.

Keep safe.







## Government's Road Safety Action Plan 'a disappointing mixed bag' which doesn't go far enough, say IAM RoadSmart

IAM RoadSmart has called the government's Road Safety Statement announced today (19 July) 'a mixed bag' with welcome news on road policing, pedestrian distraction and seatbelts, but a worrying lack of detail on younger and older drivers or motorcyclists.

Today the government, as part of the statement, also confirmed a review of roads policing and traffic enforcement will be launched later this year.

The two-year review will involve looking at how roads policing currently works and its effectiveness, where improvements could be made or any gaps that could be filled, plus how the police and different agencies work together and share information.

IAM RoadSmart welcomes the focus on road policing. Mike Quinton, IAM RoadSmart Chief Executive Officer, said: "This is fantastic news

as the lack of traffic officers is our members' most common complaint. Creating new road safety laws and increasing penalties has little impact on safety unless they can be fully and rigorously implemented."

The commitment to some form of Graduated Driving Licence is welcome (with extra restrictions on young drivers and a lower blood alcohol limit) but the lack of any timetable for implementation is worrying.

Mike said: "With young men under 25 being the biggest at-risk group when it comes to serious and fatal crashes and drink-driving, the promise of 'more research' is simply not enough."

One-fifth of new drivers are involved in a crash during their first year behind the wheel. Older drivers were also largely ignored in the review, with no concrete new proposals for the UK's mature drivers. DVLA figures state that





over 1 million drivers in the UK over 80 now hold a valid driving licence, and the number of drivers over 90 with a driving licence has now topped 100,000.

Mike added: “There is a policy and action vacuum here while the demographic time bomb ticks away. There really needs to be a consultation on raising the license renewal age to 75 and adding an eye test – these are absolute essentials.

“There also has to be a national debate on how we keep older drivers safe and independently mobile. For example, we would like to see voluntary assessments being promoted and prescribed by GPs.”

IAM RoadSmart is pleased to see that a Rural Road Users’ Advisory Panel is to be set up. This must make improving driver and rider behaviour on rural roads a top priority. IAM RoadSmart has called for the inclusion of rural roads as part of the driving test, along with support for refreshing rural driving and riding skills. The continuation of THINK! education campaigns is also potentially good news for drivers and riders, but this promise must come with the funding to ensure these top-quality campaigns can be delivered effectively to the

right audience.

Mike said: “What is totally missing is any reference to motorcycling despite this being one of the four key areas that the statement was supposed to address. As a minimum we had hoped that the unique road design needs of bikers, access to all bus lanes for motorbikes and encouragement of skill refresher schemes such as those produced by IAM RoadSmart and BikeSafe, would have been announced.”

He added with the rise in popularity of e-scooters, in spite of their use being illegal on UK roads, there needs to be early action on regulation for training, and clarification and enforcement of the law.

Mike said: “While this review is very welcome and has at least tackled the need for a visible police presence to deter bad road behaviour, there are many areas that have not been fully addressed. It really is a disappointingly mixed bag that will struggle to put our crash statistics back on a downward track.”

He concluded: “We will keep pushing hard to make a difference for road safety in the UK and will not give up campaigning for the initiatives that we believe will save lives on the road.”







# MPs propose to ban all hands-free devices in cars

By Kitty Bates

Someone using a mobile phone behind the wheel is four more times more likely to crash yet statistics show mobile phone use being a factor in collisions has actually risen every year since 2017. MPs warn that the current regulations make it seem like hands-free driving is safe, whereas they say it has the same risk as actually holding the phone.

Now, MPs from a cross-party group are calling for all hands-free use to be banned and for the current legislation to be reviewed, taking into account new technologies and it being socially acceptable in some circles to decrease use and increase the social stigma around it to try and deter more people.

## What's the case?

Ever since the increase in technology and the percentage of the population that own a mobile phone (94% in 2017, up from 82% in 2005) has also risen drastically.

Alongside that 25% of motorists admit to making a call or texting behind the wheel, with that rising to 39% when doing so while the engine is idling.

The annual RAC report on motoring showed no decline from 2017 to 2018, even though a stricter penalty of £200 and six points was introduced.

For someone in their first two years of driving, this would mean an immediate licence removal and they would have to retake their test.

## Toughen up

The penalty for using a phone was doubled back in March 2017 but Road Traffic Officer (RTO) numbers have decreased leading to fewer people going to the High Court over such matters. In the cross-party government report, the RAC cited a study that said in the 10 years to 2017, the number of full-time road traffic officers in England and Wales fell by almost a third from 3,766 to 2,643. The number of offences for using a hand-held mobile phone while driving that resulted in a Fixed Penalty Notice (FPN), driver retraining or court action fell by over 30% between 2016 and 2017 and has been falling steadily for the past six years - by more than two thirds since 2011.

In order for a law to be effective, it must be





enforced and the above stats show it isn't at the minute. The previous minister for Road Safety, MP Michael Ellis requested a review into RTOs and how technology may be able to increase their effectiveness.

Near our offices in Aldershot, we have what has been affectionately nicknamed "vulture cameras" along the A3 which can detect eating, mobile phone use and the driver and passenger not wearing seat belts behind the wheel. These could potentially be used across the country to automatically detect such offences.

### **Industry implications**

But what would an outright ban on hands-free use behind the wheel mean for mobile workers such as mobile repair technicians, taxi drivers and others who rely on their cars as their job.

The BBC spoke to Kelvin Hardy who repairs, inspects and maintains incinerators across the country. He said "I use a hands-free phone with voice recognition and I have to have one. I could get a call out to a job and then get another call telling me I'm not needed. Being able to take that call can save a wasted journey. I'm not a big business, it's only me involved. If you have a secretary taking calls it might be fine, but I don't have that. [If the ban happened] I'd have to stop every hour on the motorway."

"For me it's all about responsibility. You don't have to take a call. I don't pick up calls if I'm surrounded by lorries or there's heavy rain. It's about not being distracted. I see some horrendous driving on the roads that no one seems to bother about."

This also comes into play with in-car entertainment systems. Where is the line drawn here as some could argue this is a form of handsfree and therefore should be banned, effectively rendering millions of cars illegal. Does this then also mean all other distractions should be banned? Noisy children, arguing over directions with the passenger, music of any kind, other noises, in fact, could we not ban roads near historical monuments in order to prevent driver distraction?

This does open a can of worms on distracted driving. We as a society have a decreased attention span and are becoming more and more distracted. Could this be the start of an automation switch into cars that are intelligent and reduce the risk of human accident? Or could this be the start of an anti-mobile revolution where people start going back to smaller more basic phones? Facebook's user base has declined 15 million since 2017, and people are turning against the ever-connected world. But how far will this go?



# History of the UK Driving Licence

By Andy Boardman from a PassMeFast Blog



Ever since 1903, anyone driving a car in the UK has needed a driving licence. Over the course of more than a century, this humble document has undergone some remarkable changes to reflect the way we use the road. Ready to dive into the history of the driving licence? Buckle up and enjoy the ride!

## The early years of motoring

Motor vehicles were an increasingly common sight on Britain's roads towards the end of the nineteenth century, but they were subject to

some incredibly strict rules. Each vehicle needed three crew members on board, and the speed limit was set at just 2 mph in towns. These rules were finally relaxed in 1896, helping to increase adoption of cars as a convenient mode of transport and a comparatively speedy one, with a new speed limit of 14 mph.

In 1903, the government responded to the car's newfound popularity by bringing in the Motor Car Act. As well as introducing vehicle registration and increasing the speed limit, the act was most notable for introducing the first British driving licences. There was no need to take a test (at 8am or otherwise)—anyone over the age of 17 could get a licence just by applying to their local council. The first driving licence was available for just five shillings (or 25p—equivalent to roughly £28 today). Unlike today's licences, you had to renew every year.

Though subsequent acts introduced regulations such as road tax, compulsory insurance, and the Highway Code, licences





themselves remained largely unchanged for over three decades. This all changed when, in 1934, driving tests were introduced for the first time. Existing drivers were allowed to carry on driving without needing to take the new test, but anyone who started driving from 1<sup>st</sup> April, 1934 had to pass by June 1935. Whilst testing was temporarily suspended during the Second World War and the Suez Crisis, it's been with us ever since - unfortunately for nervous learners!

### A nation of drivers

When the first stretch of motorway was built in the late 50s, it paved the way for modern driving. Driving licences were changing too: from 1957, they were valid for three years rather than one. During the 1960s, car ownership boomed, and major changes were afoot. The first approved driving instructor register was set up in 1964, and a centralised licensing system came in 1965. The new central office was based in Swansea, where it remains to this day.

1969 saw some changes which will be familiar to today's learners and drivers. The first change was that learners had to bring their

licence to their test. If they didn't, examiners could refuse to conduct the test - a rule which remains in force. Meanwhile, separate licences for automatic and manual cars were introduced. This meant that drivers who'd learned in an automatic could no longer legally drive manual cars. Manual and automatic pass rates differ to this day.

The changes in the 1970s were even more radical. By 1973, there were more than 20 million drivers on Britain's roads. The old manual system was, therefore, increasingly unfit for purpose. So, in 1973, licensing was computerised. Out were the old red booklets - in were new green paper licences. Then, in 1976, full driving licences became valid until a driver's 70<sup>th</sup> birthday, ending the need to renew every three years. The extension also applied to provisional licences from 1982.



## The licence today

Today, we're so used to carrying around our pink photocard licences that it seems like they've been around forever. In actual fact, they didn't exist until 1997. Before this time, drivers in Great Britain only had their green paper licence, which didn't include a photo.

The paper and photocard licences existed side-by-side until June 2015, when paper licences were abolished. The following month, the Union Jack was added to all photocard licences for the first time.



As licences themselves have changed, so too has the process of getting one. A written theory test was introduced in 1996. In 2000, it became a touch-screen test, and a hazard perception section was added in 2002. Some learners still find this change a bit off-putting - if you're one of them, take a look at our guide to passing the theory test.

Meanwhile, the practical has changed too: “show me, tell me” questions were introduced in 2003, followed by independent driving in

2010. The most recent test changes came in December 2017, as we covered in our guide to the new practical driving test. Major changes included new “show me, tell me” questions, one of which is now while driving, as well as a new manoeuvre involving pulling up on the right. Meanwhile, another key difference is that most driving tests now include sat navs, to reflect the widespread popularity of these handy devices. If you’re thinking of buying your own, visit our article on different types of sat nav.

## Facts and figures

The first person ever to pass a UK driving test was Mr R. E. L. Beere. He got his licence on 16<sup>th</sup> March, 1935, and his test cost seven shillings and sixpence. It's not quite as cheap as it sounds -- equivalent to around £25 in 2017 - but it's still much cheaper than today's tests!

(Hint: want to keep costs down when learning to drive? Block-booking lessons through an intensive course could save you money in the long run.)

In the 1970s, the driving licence gender gap was huge. In 1975/76, only 29% of women had





a licence, compared to 69% of men. There are still more men on the road today, but the gap is much narrower now. In 2010, 66% of women had a licence, whereas 80% of men did.

Amongst most age groups, the percentage of licence holders has remained fairly steady since the 1970s. However, numbers have dropped somewhat amongst 17-30 year olds since the highs of the 1990s. Meanwhile, the percentage of licence holders over 70 has skyrocketed from 38% to 57% since the 1990s. In fact, it was revealed in July 2017 that, for the first time, there are now over 100,000 drivers over 90 years old. It goes to show that you're never too old to get on the road!

In 1935, the test pass rate was 63%. In recent years, however, it's dropped: current driving test pass rates stand at around 47%.

As we mentioned above, the first driving licences in 1903 cost five shillings. When taking into account the changing value of the pound, that's worth around £28 in 2017. Interestingly, the price isn't much higher now: it

costs £34 to apply for your first licence. Prices were dramatically reduced in 2014 from a previous high of £50.

The only person who doesn't need a driving licence is the Queen. For most public events, of course, she's driven around by a chauffeur. However, she's certainly not shy about getting behind the wheel, having trained as a driver and mechanic as a teenager during the Second World War. She's even believed to have taught her own children to drive, and loves getting back in the driver's seat whenever she can.





# It's true, the 'nervous middle' can become advanced drivers

By Junique Aujla, IAM RoadSmart Digital Content Executive



Before I started at IAM RoadSmart, I hadn't heard of the charity and I'd never given advanced driving a second thought.

I reluctantly took up driving lessons after university to help broaden my job search so I could find a role further afield from home, if needed.

My driving instructor was great but I hated taking the lessons. I was nervous and had a total lack of confidence, so once I passed I was over the moon at the thought of never having to do it again.

Then I started my role at IAM RoadSmart and it made sense for me to do the Advanced Driver Course. I wanted to understand the product a little better, boost my confidence behind the wheel and become a better driver.

Sitting opposite Richard Gladman, our head of driving and riding standards, meant I had daily chats about the advanced courses so I already knew how to advance my driving skills - I just had to put these into practice.

Unfortunately for the Marketing and Communications team, they had to listen to me going on about how nervous I was for the four weeks running up to my first session. Although I wanted to do this, my anxiety was telling me something different.

And then the big day came. And actually ... it wasn't that bad. As one of those drivers who fits into the 'nervous middle' category, I expected my experience to be a lot more nerve-wrecking and uncomfortable than it was.

I realised pretty quickly that the course was different from the driving lessons I had four years ago. Instead of being told what I'm doing right and wrong, I was guided through the techniques of advanced driving and IPSCA was applied to improve my driving.





My observer had mentioned that my driving was of a good standard and it just needed a little more work to push it to an advance standard. This definitely boosted my confidence and wanted to achieve a F1RST.

It was clear from my sessions that simple things could improve my awareness of the road, such as looking in my mirrors more frequently and using the limit point as a guide on my vehicle's positioning and to help determine when to accelerate and decelerate.

There were a few things in particular that I really appreciated from completing the course:

My observer knew I was nervous and made me feel as comfortable as possible – our conversations weren't just about driving. We chatted about other topics; from our jobs to our family. This put me at ease as I didn't feel like someone was just sat there judging the way I drive and it made the drives quite enjoyable.

I was in control. I was never made to do anything I wasn't confident doing. On my third session, I asked my observer if we could practice roundabouts as I felt nervous when approaching the larger ones which have more than two lanes. So on my next drive, we spent

over one hour focussing on this. Since then, I've become a lot more confident and am able to approach them slowly, take in all the signs around me and calmly get into the correct lane without panicking.

I can definitely say I'm a better driver. My spoken thoughts help me focus on the road. I'm more aware of my surroundings, constantly checking my mirrors, and understanding IPSGA and limit points has improved the way I drive on the road.

Would I recommend the course? Of course I would. You're probably thinking: "She has to say that, she works there." And yes... I probably do but that's not the case.

Before the course, I'd Google Map my journey two weeks ahead of time just to prepare myself for the type of roads and roundabouts I'd be driving on. Now, I'm confident driving on unfamiliar roads using advanced driving techniques.

Although I'm now a lot more confident on country roads, roundabouts and unfamiliar roads, I'm continuously practising the skills I've learnt to improve my driving and keep the F1RST status I achieved when passing.





## Recent Releases from the IAM Press Office

### **Introduction of Graduated Driving Licences must be accelerated as latest road casualty figures show no progress again**

IAM RoadSmart maintains that Graduated Driving Licences must spearhead a comprehensive series of changes to save the lives of young drivers, as another set of disappointing statistics emerge from today's (25 July) government road casualty announcement.

The Department for Transport says there were 1,782 reported road deaths in 2018 (reference 1). It says: "This is similar to the level seen since 2012, which followed a period of substantial reduction in fatalities from 2006 to 2010."

There were 1,770 road deaths in the year June 2017-June 2018 - a figure that has been largely static every year since 2012.

It adds there were 25,484 serious injuries in road traffic accidents reported to the police in 2018.

This compares to the 26,610 people killed or seriously injured (KSI) reported to the police in the year June 2017-June 2018, and 26,664 in the year June 2016- June 2017.

Today's figures show there were a total of 160,378 casualties of all severities in reported road traffic accidents in 2018. This is 6% lower than in 2017. It adds that accounting for change in traffic, the rate of fatalities per billion vehicle miles has fallen by 1% from 5.43 in 2017 to 5.38 in 2018.

In spite of some encouraging trends, IAM RoadSmart, the UK's biggest independent road safety charity, maintains that a succession of governments have chosen to brush the issue under the carpet.

Neil Greig, IAM RoadSmart director of policy and research, said: "These figures underline





the critical need to accelerate delivery of policies such as a Graduated Driving Licence. The government road safety statement issued last Friday highlights many of the issues but was very short on actions.”

IAM RoadSmart wishes to see the following:

- A 12-month minimum learning period with an online learning log for learner drivers to complete prior to taking the practical test. Low speed parking and turning manoeuvres could be assessed as part of this process. There is evidence that around 120 hours of driving experience in mixed conditions would produce safer new drivers but not all of this has to be with a paid-for instructor
- IAM RoadSmart strongly supports the development of a 'post' or 'second' phase test as part of a refreshed licensing system. After passing the practical test refresher

and eco driving lessons must be taken before full license status is granted. IAM RoadSmart wants to work with stakeholders to develop the best solution using the resources currently available in the UK

- Alongside these interventions IAM RoadSmart supports some graduated license controls in the first year/six months of driving, for example to limit the number of peer passengers (but no limit on older passengers) and a lower blood alcohol limit

However, the charity welcomes the new inquiry to explore road safety for young and novice drivers announced today (reference 2).

Young drivers age 17-24 account for seven percent of the UK's driving licence holders, but alarmingly are involved in 20% of fatal and serious collisions.







## **Toughening up seat-belt laws is the most obvious and direct way of saving lives, says IAM RoadSmart**

IAM RoadSmart has welcomed a possible toughening up of the laws on the use of seatbelts in cars, saying it's the most obvious and direct way of saving lives in road crashes.

Today (19 July) the Department of Transport announced this as one of 74 measures to tackle road safety in the UK.

Currently, those not wearing seatbelts are given a £100 on-the-spot fine – but now the government is considering issuing penalty points for this offence.

In 2017 27% of car deaths involved people who were not wearing a seatbelt, an increase of 7% on the previous year and a marked increase on the years before it.

IAM RoadSmart, the UK's biggest independent road safety charity, has consistently lobbied for these laws to be made tougher, while also noting that the fear of being caught must be greater to encourage car occupants to belt-up.

An investigation by IAM RoadSmart in February 2018 found that more than a third of police forces were using their mobile safety camera vans to prosecute drivers not wearing seatbelts

or using a handheld mobile phone.

The charity made a Freedom of Information request to 44 police forces and found that 16 of those that responded routinely used their safety cameras to identify other motoring offences. The 16 forces recorded more than 8,000 unbelted drivers between them.

Neil Greig, IAM RoadSmart director of policy and research, said: "This is very welcome news. The best way of tackling this ever-present issue is to make people believe there is a high chance of being caught. This could start tomorrow if consistent guidelines on using mobile speed camera vans to enforce seatbelt laws were issued.

"Currently there is no standard approach on using this high-profile resource across the UK. Making non-wearing of seatbelts an endorsable offence is also a quick win. Not only would it persuade more people to take the offence seriously, but it might benefit them to take a seatbelt awareness course. People avoid using seatbelts for a wide range of individual reasons and these views need to be challenged face-to-face."





## Hold your horses! How to pass horses safely on the road

You may see more horses on the road during the summer months, and more than likely they'll be on a country lane. Here are IAM RoadSmart's tips on how best to pass a horse safely on the roads.

Horses are powerful animals and have extremely heightened senses. They are also 'flight' animals so if they become scared, they will revert back to their natural instinct.

The British Horse Society has reported that nearly two horses are killed each week on UK roads. In last year alone, 87 horses and four people have been tragically killed.

### **If you're approaching a horse from behind:**

- Slow down and hold back. The rider will indicate whether it's safe to approach and overtake. If they don't, make sure you stay at least three car lengths behind and be careful to not move into this space. Be prepared to slow down further or even stop to protect yourself and the horse and rider. Avoid any sudden movements and loud noises such as revving the engine and playing your music loudly
- Most riders, and occasionally their horses will be in hi-vis so you should see them and able to slow down in good time. Remember in the countryside they could be around any corner
- When passing the horse and rider make sure you give plenty of space. We recommend at least a car's width and ensure it's done slowly. Remember to always pass "slow and wide" stick to 15mph or under. Take a look at this video explaining it from the British Horse Society: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VJfZM41oUOE>
- If you're on a country road and there's not much room to manoeuvre around the horse, the rider may decide to trot towards the nearest lay by or grass verge. Do not speed up to match their trot, stay back and allow the rider to get to safety before overtaking
- Often when you see two riders it is for safety reasons. This could be an inexperienced rider or nervous animal





being coached along by a more experienced companion. Give them some consideration

- Keep an eye out for the rider. They will often give you signals asking to slow down, stop or to overtake. They will acknowledge you and assist you to pass, but their main priority is keeping themselves and the horse safe, so they'll be trying to keep their hands on the reins at all times
- Always accelerate gently to pass the horse and when moving away. Both rider and horse may both be inexperienced and nervous in traffic; do your bit to keep them safe
- If there are grass verges, many riders will take the option to move themselves up onto them and allow you to pass. Please continue to pass slowly as the noise of your engine can still spook the horse

### **If a horse is approaching on the other side of the road:**

- Slow down completely and consider putting on your hazard warning lights for anyone that may be behind you. You may need to stop to allow the horse to pass you safely if it is safe to do so

Horse rider and IAM RoadSmart's digital content executive Jaimi McIlravey said: "Please continue to be careful when driving close to horses. From personal experience, it's not always a car that will spook a horse. You may be driving safely with enough gap between yourself and a horse and rider, however, something else may scare them, so be sure to stay alert."

If you see any incidents involving a horse and rider please contact the police with any information you have. You're also able to report an incident through this website: <https://www.bhs.org.uk/our-work/safety/report-an-incident>





**Closing date for the autumn 2019  
edition of the Wessex Advanced  
Motorists e-Newsletter is 20<sup>th</sup> October.**

**All contributions would be very  
welcome.**

**All items should be sent to  
[ed@wessexam.uk](mailto:ed@wessexam.uk) or  
by mail to David Walton at  
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