

# e-NEWSLETTER

**iAM**  
*RoadSmart*

## WESSEX ADVANCED MOTORISTS



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Spring 2019



# **WESSEX ADVANCED MOTORISTS**

# **e-NEWSLETTER**

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**Editor: David Walton**

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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



It seems extremely belated to wish you all a happy and prosperous New Year but it's the first opportunity to do this other than at our January meeting. So a Happy and prosperous 2019!

It was great to be back at the helm again in January following an unexpected absence in November and December; more on that later. The January meeting was our quiz night and we saw a good turn out – although friends and family exceeded the number of members attending. It was good fun and while I had opted not to participate in favour of being a spare pair



**By Andrew Griffiths**





of hands to help run it, I found myself on Catherine Herbert's (Mayor of Taunton Deane) team. At the end, it was a tie between us and another team and so to the tie-break question; "where was the Delorean factory based?" I astounded myself (and a few of my WAM colleagues!) by saying the first thing that came into my head – Belfast. That made us the winners but when this was announced I was still in a state of shock from getting an answer correct.

Now we usually have some kind of prize for the winning team and I'd brought along 4 IAM baseball caps to give one to each member of the winning team. Irony! It was the first time in 6 years I'd ever been on the winning team but winning an IAM baseball cap just didn't do anything for me... well I've already got 3! But my 3 team colleagues seemed to love theirs.

Why don't you come along and enjoy the fun next year? You could be the proud recipient of an IAM baseball cap and if that doesn't tempt you, well... what can I say?

## 2-stroke or 4-stroke?

For me it was one stroke. I won't bore you with the medical details other than to say that it happened in my sleep and I knew nothing about it until I woke up in the morning and I tried to say something to my wife (the word "coffee" was in there somewhere); I was slurring my words uncontrollably. I got out of bed and I found it difficult to walk in a straight line or stand still without wobbling over. All very surreal!

My wife called 999 and a paramedic arrived, did some tests and decided to take me immediately to the Musgrove in Taunton.

The journey over the Quantocks was interesting – somewhat of a casual drive rather than "blues and twos". I was trying to talk to the paramedic but he probably understood just 50% of what I was trying to say. So, not one to miss an opportunity of observing someone's driving, I found myself watching his driving style and picked up on his steering (right arm on the door, right hand on the steering wheel,





left hand on the gear stick). Hmmm. I decided it was best not to say anything because I wanted to get to the hospital rather than be left at the roadside! And when we arrived, it was right outside A&E... no queuing for the car park which was what I had been accustomed to. In no time at all, I found myself in bed in the Dunkery stroke ward with probes, pipes drips and other paraphernalia attached to me.

It seemed to me that while the general opinion of the NHS is not great, the efficiency and expertise in rapid response is what they really excel in, be it heart, stroke or other life-threatening stuff.

It came as a huge blow when I was told by a consultant that I was now medically barred from driving for a month after which time my GP would need to assess my fitness to drive. Three days later I was back home with strict

instructions to get plenty of rest. The month's ban seemed to drag on and on. My wife and I live in the countryside where there is no bus route and the only way to get anywhere is by car. And so it was that I was chauffeured everywhere... and it is strictly forbidden for me to offer any comments on my wife's driving while she is in the driving seat... I tried it once and I still bear the scars!

And so following a rigid routine of exercises (such as balancing on one leg... now how often we do ever do that eh?) the month was up and it was time for the dreaded assessment by my GP. But actually all went well and I was certified fit to drive again.

After 2-3 weeks, the "Y" part of "POWDERY" still wasn't 100% because the stroke left me with temporary exhaustion and I reached a point in the afternoons where it would not have





been sensible to drive on public roads. So initially I limited my journeys to local roads for an hour maximum.

I wanted to share this with you because I found being an advanced motorist really helped with my return to driving. Commentary was a powerful technique for staying focussed. The system of car control was so embedded in me that I was able to return to the level of driving I have enjoyed for many years, confidentially and safely... providing I acknowledged and dealt with the temporary limitations.

I've returned to my roles as Chairman and Chief Observer although I limit myself on the amount of time and effort I give. I'm very pleased to report that during my "downtime", WAM carried on – business as usual; that is how it should be and what made it work was how members of the committee just carried on with what they do (but without me nagging and pestering them!) and with Barry Keenan standing in for me and "the boy did well".

### So on to other things

**Swallows Jaguar** are holding their first open day in March at its workshops in Rooksbridge. It's a family business and I have my cars serviced there. I always come away feeling what a great job they've done. They've passed on an invitation to whoever wishes to go to the open day. They'll have their 3 track-racing jaguar XJs and a rather special JP1 on display. Incidentally, they attend track days (eg Castle Combe and Brands Hatch) where they offer members of the public a ride in any of them for £10 which goes to charity). If you come along to their open day, you can talk to the team and find out more. You can see the specialist wheel alignment they do (on any make car, not just Jaguars) and you'll see some classic Jaguars for sale too, particularly from the 1990s into 2000.

It's a short one from me this month! Please enjoy your newsletter and please write an article for publication.

Best,

Andrew





# THE COMMITTEE



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

Chairman	Andrew Griffiths	<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>
Associate Coordinator	Pauline Wills	<a href="mailto:coordinator@wessexam.uk">coordinator@wessexam.uk</a>
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Chief Observer/Masters Mentor	Andrew Griffiths	<a href="mailto:chair@wessexam.uk">chair@wessexam.uk</a>
Newsletter Editor/Webmaster	David Walton	<a href="mailto:ed@wessexam.uk">ed@wessexam.uk</a>
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Committee Member	Brian Howe (President)	<a href="mailto:president@wessexam.uk">president@wessexam.uk</a>





# 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	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



## FEBRUARY

20	W	7:30 pm	<b>Members' Evening</b> – Police Mounted Section in today's society; PC Tristan Smith of Avon & Somerset Police
28	Th	9 am to 1 pm	Somerset Road Safety 'Older Driver Event' at the Yeovil Community Church, Addlewell Lane, Yeovil

## MARCH

6	W	7:30 pm	WAM Committee Meeting
20	W	7:30 pm	<b>Members' Evening</b> – Hinkley Point 'C' Project; a talk by Ross Edwards, their Community Relations Manager

## APRIL

17	W	7:30 pm	<b>Members' Evening</b> – Diabetes and you; Matt Roberts of Diabetes UK will talk about the latest developments and innovations in the treatment and care
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## MAY

1	W	7:30 pm	WAM Committee Meeting
15	W	7:30 pm	<b>Members' Evening</b> – The Samaritans; Geoff Rickson will talk about the history and role of the Samaritans in 21 <sup>st</sup> century Britain



# PRESIDENT'S PONDERINGS



## Escargot Noir Decision Time

### June 1989 Nissan S Cargo Van. Type G20

My little Nissan S Cargo van has thankfully passed his latest MoT. But I have serious decisions to make regarding his very poor fuel economy, which is typically around 25mpg or below. I have been advised that the automatic choke is staying on for too long, causing a very rich air/fuel mixture. Apparently, the auto choke can be removed and a manual one fitted. I have also considered whether to remove the air conditioning system to further improve economy, save weight and hopefully improve performance a little more. This will also create some much-needed space in the engine bay.



by Brian Howe





Another decision to make is regarding Escargot Noir's paintwork. Although the sides of the van are incredibly shiny and have an exceptional finish, there are other areas where the pre-paint preparation was not what it should have been. This oversight is causing the black paint to peel off, revealing the original blue paint on the bonnet, roof and tailgate, and white paint on the front and rear bumpers. There are also areas on the bonnet and tailgate where previous Japanese decals have been removed, damaging the black paint during the removal process. The first option is to send the van away to a paint shop to have all the paintwork done professionally, but the cost of that could prove horrendously expensive as the engine, gearbox and ancillaries would have to be removed to properly paint the rest of the engine bay. The alternative option is to do it myself piecemeal. The disadvantage of this method though is that I do not possess a garage and I would have to wait for warmer, dryer weather conditions and the longer days.





Also, as well as trying to match the existing colour, I have no idea what type of paint was used in the Japanese respray. Is it cellulose, enamel or less likely, two pack? I'm inclined to think that it is cellulose.

The final decision to make is, do I order a set of original 13 inch x 4 ½ J steel wheels plus new tyres from Japan? These would replace the after-market multi-fit 14 inch alloys, which had a full set of four new tyres just a few short months ago. The shipping cost would probably exceed the purchase price. Then if I do that, what colour should the new steel rims be? County cream, Old English white or black?

Oh, the joys (and woes), of owning a rare classic, grey import, Japanese vehicle.

I hope you all had a wonderful Christmas and New Year.

Brian L. Howe



# COORDINATOR'S REPORT



Since the autumn edition of the newsletter, three new Associates have signed up for the Advanced Driving Course. One of them is now ready for his pre-test, another will be starting his course within the next few weeks and the third is on hold until February or March due to work commitments. Although there are no Advanced Driving Test results to report, two more Associates are currently on the course and another will be taking his pre-test soon. There are others on hold for a variety of reasons and unfortunately two Associates have decided to withdraw from the course prior to taking their tests.

Our Observers have also been kept busy over the last three months with Free Advanced Driving Introductions. There have been no less than eight requests.



**by Pauline Wills**





As well as the above activity there are also two members preparing to become Fellows. This tier of membership exists for IAM members who passed their most recent Advanced Driver Test over three years ago to commit to a regular review to ensure that their skills remain current.

Well this is my first report and I can say that despite feeling a little nervous at the outset I have enjoyed working as Associate Coordinator over the last three months... that's lucky as I shall be staying for a while!

*Pauline Wills*

### The Membership Register

This quarter we have three 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>
Edmond Jones	Sparkford	Associate
Marcus Blackburn	Taunton	Associate
Simon Scotting	Stogursey	Associate



### Statistics for year to end of January

	<u>group</u>	<u>region avg.</u>
Pass rate %	100	88
No. of F1RSTS	4	8.3
No. of observers	11	27.8
New Associates	10	44.3

100 members have now renewed this year. Of those not renewing, only one is a long standing member; all the others have either decided to discontinue their training before test or, having passed their test, decided not to remain members; on the other hand 60% of our membership joined in the last 5 years. We now have 7 Fellows. *David Walton*





# Events Corner



I appreciate that it's almost February, but for those I missed, Happy New Year!

Last year was very busy for WAM and to help ease the burden during our events season, you'll recall that I put out a plea for people to join the Wessex Volunteer Cadre?

Well, I'm happy to report that we had a healthy response to that request and a total of 19 people volunteered their services throughout the year. Their help at our outdoor events made life much easier and allowed the group far more success than we perhaps had a right to expect.

Sadly, not everyone from the 2018 Cadre was able to offer their help for 2019, but having made a similar appeal a few weeks ago, I'm pleased to report that once again we have a healthy cadre of volunteers for the 2019 season.

So to all of you who volunteered your time during 2018 and to those of you who have taken up the mantle for 2019, may I take this opportunity of saying a very, very big thank you to each and every one of you!



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





You'll all be aware that over the last couple of years, I've published the forthcoming events in the Spring Newsletter (i.e. this one) and again at the beginning of each quarter throughout the year. I intend to follow the same pattern during 2019 so you'll always have access to what's planned at least 3 months in advance.

So what have we got happening over the year?

Well, the first event of the year was our annual Group Quiz which we held on Wednesday 16<sup>th</sup> January at Hatch Beauchamp Village Hall. We had 9 teams of 4 who produced some very respectable scores indeed.

Looking forward to next year's quiz, you can rest assured that as quiz master I'll be certain to keep a weathered eye over the next 12 months for local, national and international snippets of news and gossip to test your general knowledge again in January 2020. As ever there's no plans to award any prizes for the winners, just bragging rights!

So, with January already over(!), what's happening for the rest of the year?

## February

Now, you may be aware that several police forces around the country have disbanded their Mounted Sections in an effort to save money and divert resources to other 'more important' areas of policing. In choosing to buck the trend and keep theirs, what makes the Avon & Somerset force believe that keeping a Mounted Section is of value?

To try to answer that question and more besides, our guest speaker for February is PC Tristan Smith of the Avon & Somerset Police Mounted Section, who will be talking to us about the relevance of the Police Mounted Section in today's society.

..... And before any of you ask, no, he's not bringing PH Dobbin with him!

February is also the start of the Wessex 'Events Season' and kicks off with us attending the Somerset Road Safety 'Older Driver Event' at the Yeovil Community Church, Addlewell Lane, Yeovil on Thursday 28<sup>th</sup> between 9 am & 1 pm.





SRS and Wessex work quite closely together when we can, so if you know of any older driver (60+) who you feel may benefit from some general road safety advice, then please direct them to this event. It's free and refreshments will be supplied. Who knows, they may even get one of the Somerset Road Safety goody bags!

### March

The second WAM Committee Meeting of the year will be held on Wednesday 6<sup>th</sup> March. As always, please be advised that these meetings are closed to Ordinary Members of the Group. However, if you have an issue or query that you'd like raised with the Committee then please send details to David Walton ([secretary@wessexam.uk](mailto:secretary@wessexam.uk)) for inclusion on the Agenda. He, or the respective portfolio holder will get back to you as soon as we can with an answer to your query/issue.

Our Guest Speaker on 20<sup>th</sup> March is Ross Edwards. Ross is the Community Relations

Manager for the Hinkley Point 'C' Project and will be coming along to give us the absolute latest scoop on the current state of play (shortened version) and the impact that the finished project will have on the lives of Somerset residents.

Please note that although Ross will happily answer your questions as best he's able, for those people who are against nuclear power (and I'm one of them) this is not the venue for banners, protests and egg throwing.

### April

It's estimated that more than currently 17 million people in the UK have Diabetes Mellitus.

Matt Roberts of Diabetes UK, our guest speaker for this month, will try to give us a brief understanding of the latest developments and innovations in the treatment and care of people with this most common of diseases. It promises to be an interesting and informative talk, so do please come along.





## May

The 3<sup>rd</sup> WAM Committee meeting of the year will be held on Wednesday 1<sup>st</sup> May. Any enquiries/items for the agenda to David Walton, as above, please.

Our guest speaker on the 15<sup>th</sup> is Geoff Rickson from Taunton Samaritans. He will be along to talk to us about the history and role of the Samaritans in 21<sup>st</sup> century Britain. This promises to be another fascinating (and totally un-car related) subject of which most of us are probably ignorant. So again, I'd urge you to come along and hear this truly interesting talk.

## June

There's no Guest Speaker this month but instead we're resurrecting an old TGAM favourite which we hope will become an annual event.

We're holding a Members' Skills Evening which will be supervised by the Wessex Observers. This will entail drivers following a laid out circuit in and around the Village Hall car park and grounds and will involve such

basic manoeuvres as reverse & parallel parking; a slow driving challenge; a slalom drive and an Observed drive around the local roads.

Each area will be marked, with the overall winner receiving the newly introduced presentation trophy 'The Camelot Cup'. I confess, the details are still a bit sketchy at the moment, but they will, I assure you, be worked out in the next couple of months at which time I'll let you all know how it's to run.

Also in June we'll be attending Somerset Road Safety's 3<sup>rd</sup> annual Somerset Motofest at the Fleet Air Arm Museum, Yeovilton. By moving the show from September to June, the organisers hope that the pretty awful weather they suffered during the last 2 years will be a thing of the past.

No matter what the weather is like, this year's show is promised to be bigger and better than before with more stalls and exhibits and more for all of the family. So, watch this space as they say and again I'll publish more details in future Newsletters as I have them.





It's about this time that I'm hoping that we'll have the advertised trip to the Morrisons Distribution Depot in Bridgwater.

As you will have seen from my emails, this is a trip offered by Morrisons to see how their drivers carry out their POWDER drills and cockpit drills and to give you, the car driver a chance to see from a trucker's view point the blind spots and danger areas on these large lorries. After the period of instruction with Morrisons Training staff and drivers, we've been invited to take a tour of the main distribution depot.

This trip is already well subscribed, but if you haven't yet registered, but would like to, please contact me on [events@wessexam.uk](mailto:events@wessexam.uk) so I can add you to the list.

As you'll appreciate, the Morrisons Team still have this trip in the planning stage, and I'm waiting for them to get back to me with a confirmed date. When I've been given a firm date, I'll let all registered parties know by email. What I can tell you at the moment is that they're planning it for sometime in the summer-

time and that our very own Isobel Jennings (WAM Treasurer and Local Observer) will be one of our guides for the day.

## July

The 4<sup>th</sup> WAM Committee meeting will be held on Wednesday 3<sup>rd</sup> July. Any enquiries, queries or items for the agenda, please contact David Walton, as above.

I'm pleased to announce that once again we're holding our Annual Classic Car Show at Hatch Beauchamp Village Hall Grounds. This year's extravaganza is on Wednesday 17<sup>th</sup> between 5:00pm and 9:30pm and our Guest of Honour will be Amanda Smith, IAM's Head of Field Service Delivery.

Those who exhibited last year will be aware that I have all of your contact details on file. Using those details, I will email you in the next couple of months with further details of the show's plan. Once again we're expecting to have the field divided into different classes with a certificate award for the best in each class. As before there will be presentation cups for the overall 1<sup>st</sup> & 2<sup>nd</sup> placed exhibits.





For those of you who haven't previously 'shown' at our show, but would like to this year, please email me at [events@wessexam.uk](mailto:events@wessexam.uk) to register your interest and I'll add you to my list.

For all members, whether classic car owners or not, if you have any chums who own a classic and you think would like to join in the fun, please feel free to give them my email address so they can get in touch.

II

Sunday 28<sup>th</sup> once again sees us flying the Wessex flag at the annual Watchet Carnival Fete. This one day event is always a great day out and collects in much needed resources for the Watchet Carnival Club in their support for local charities. As always, if you're in the area, please do drop into the WAM Tent and say "Hello!"

## August

As usual there's no Members' Evening events scheduled for this month. We will however be out in force with our Trade Stand at the 32<sup>nd</sup> annual West Somerset Steam Show at Norton Fitzwarren on 3<sup>rd</sup> & 4<sup>th</sup> August.

Once again the West Somerset Railway Association will be operating a shuttle service

with trains running between Bishops Lydeard and the Norton Platform. (Adjacent to the rally site). In addition to the shuttle service, they're also planning on running additional train services between Minehead and Bishops Lydeard on both days of the show.

For those of you with a valid Disabled Person's 'Blue Badge', you'll find a reserved parking area just off Allerford Lane.

For details of the opening hours, shuttle services and parking etc. please contact WSRA for full details.

## September

The 5<sup>th</sup> WAM Committee meeting will be held on Wednesday 4<sup>th</sup> September. As always, any enquiries, queries or items for the agenda, please contact David Walton, as above.

Oddly enough, at this time I haven't yet got anything confirmed for our Member's Evening on the 18<sup>th</sup>... I know; I've failed the Group. All I can do is apologise and say "Watch this space, I'll get back to you!" In the meantime, if any of you have an idea for who you'd like to hear talk to the group, please let me have their details and I'll see if they can fill the slot.







## October and the AGM

Perhaps the most important date of the WAM year; Wednesday 16<sup>th</sup> is the date our AGM.

As I've mentioned before, this is your chance to influence the group and the direction that we take going forward. As always, your support and input is vital for the long-term wellbeing of Wessex Advanced Motorists, so please make this a definite date in your diary and come along and have your say.

Having dispensed with the formalities of the group, do I have a treat in store for you!

**Paddy Hopkirk**, rally driver of renown, raconteur par excellence and all round good egg is our Guest Speaker for the night.

I've heard him before and I can guarantee that his understated, self-effacing story telling will have you in tears of laughter so this is night definitely not to miss. I don't know whether he's going to talk about his role as the IAM's Mature Driver Ambassador; his time as a rally driver; or just about his life and times, but whatever his chosen subject I can guarantee that he'll

have you laughing at his stories. As I said, I've heard him talk before and I really can't wait to hear him talk again!

## November

The 6<sup>th</sup> and final WAM Committee meeting of the year will be held on Wednesday 6<sup>th</sup> November. Once again, any enquiries, queries or items for the agenda, please contact David Walton, as above. Thank you.

We have a real treat for this month and have two speakers for the price of one. 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.

Both of these ladies are engaging presenters and if you're interested in the history of Taunton through the preservation of the ancient bells, then this is the talk for you. Campanology, horse riding and intrigue. What more could you want?!







## December

As always the last event of the year will be our annual Christmas meal at the Oake Manor Golf Club on the 7<sup>th</sup>.

Year on year this always proves to be a huge success. The food is always the best, and the company always very convivial. David, our illustrious Secretary, will send you the booking forms and menu choices along with the paperwork for the AGM etc. in September so please book your place(s) as soon as the forms arrive to avoid disappointment.

II

Well there you have it. As you can see, there's quite a lot planned for this year and yes, I really do have some thing planned for 2020 as well. But as I said in 'September' above, if you've got something in mind that you'd like to see included on the calendar or someone that you'd like to hear talk to us, then let me know and I'll do my best to get it organized.

As always, thanks for taking the time to read my scribbblings. Please take a note of the events we have planned for this year and do try to come to as many as you can, as you can see, it's not all motoring related no matter what some people may think.

For those of you on the Volunteer Cadre, thanks again for volunteering your time, I will be in touch at the start of each quarter with an update on forthcoming events and a request for help during them.

As always I look forward to seeing you at our various Members' Evenings throughout the year but in the meantime, here's to your continued happy, safe and enjoyable motoring.

*Barry*

Events Co-ordinator

T : 01823 – 254621

M : 07776 – 124001

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





# **An event being run by Swallows Jaguar in conjunction with Jaguar Enthusiasts Club**

## **30<sup>th</sup> March 2019**

Some of you may be interested in attending whether you own a Jag or not. It is free and open to all although numbers will be limited. Lots of classic jags expected on display.

The Guide Programme for the event is as follows:

- 10:00am Arrive and enjoy breakfast and coffee on arrival.
- 10:30am Introduction to Swallows followed by question & answers and talk on their involvement in the JEC racing
- 11:15am Tour of the workshop with discussion on the three vehicles up on the ramps.
- 12:15am Discussion on development projects and vehicle upgrades.
- 12:30-1:00pm Talk on Detailing by Jon with Q&A from Exquisite car care.

Details are on their Facebook page, link as follows: <https://www.facebook.com/events/224387551843580/?ti=as>





# Double your group's membership!

**By Gina Herridge, recruitment team lead, Somerset Advanced Motorcyclists and member of Wessex Advanced Motorists**

Somerset Advanced Motorcyclists has succeeded in increasing its membership numbers from around 130 to 215 over the course of 18 months following the formation of a dedicated recruitment team.

Gina Herridge, whose initiative it was, reports: "At one committee meeting early in 2017 we were having the usual head-scratching about how to get our message across, so I offered to take the first step and appeal to the membership for volunteers to form a dedicated Recruitment Team, rather than try to squeeze recruitment into the rest of the committee's activities.

"To be honest, I didn't expect much of a response, but to my surprise and delight seven or eight members who had not before been active as volunteers, stepped forward to help, each with ideas or specific expertise, or both."

One of the team was an observer, and all the others all had contributions to make. One development from there was the appointment of a Publicity Officer, who has been an absolute powerhouse of social media communication, joining all the local biker Facebook pages and regularly posting on those and on our own dedicated public page.





We also listed a number of events at which we planned a club presence, from our regular attendance at the Bristol Classic Bike Show to a Bike Night at a local aerodrome, local shows, dealer open days, slow riding skills events and the monthly Breakfast Ride In at Haynes Motor Museum.

Some things worked much better than others; for the second year we focussed on those, saving some effort. I'd have to say that the real key to driving numbers has been social media activity - our own website is quite helpful, but you have to catch people's attention before they will go there.

The other thing which really helps is that we are a very friendly club, so in addition to making new members welcome we also appreciate the efforts of our volunteers.

Having said all that, we are still trying to figure out how to play a part in community road safety, especially in trying to reach out to schools and help foster the culture in the young. If anyone out there has any ideas for that, please let us know!

*Food for thought for all IAM groups! ED*

## **February Members' Evening**

### **Police Mounted Section**



Sharon Loxton ([https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Wells\\_High\\_Street\\_-\\_geograph.org.uk\\_-\\_1430741.jpg](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Wells_High_Street_-_geograph.org.uk_-_1430741.jpg)), „Wells High Street - geograph.org.uk - 1430741“, <https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-sa/2.0/legalcode>

**PC Tristan Smith of the Avon & Somerset Police Mounted Section will be talking to us about the relevance of the Police Mounted Section in today's society**

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





# Be a nosy parker

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

With the dark mornings and evenings still hanging around, it means our cars are still at risk of being a victim of theft. IAM RoadSmart's head of driving and riding standards, Richard Gladman, suggests a few top tips.

See how you can protect your vehicle on a day to day basis, whether you're out and about or in the comfort of your home.

- As we exit the supermarket with a trolley full of shopping, we're eager to unlock the car as soon as possible to avoid the hassle of finding our keys when we get to the car. But unlocking your car before you reach it gives thieves a longer period of time to access valuables and make a run for it, especially if your boot opens automatically. Be sure to only unlock your car when you get to it to prevent any risk of theft.
- Don't leave your keys lying around. This can apply to any situation, whether you're out for dinner and leave your keys on the table or if you're at a friend's house, as you may not know everyone around you. Making your keys visible can mean a greater risk of them being taken. Be security conscious about code grabbing from your keyless entry, are you being watched?
- Hide any valuables. Before you leave your car, make sure you secure any valuables and keep them out of sight. Putting them in your glove compartment or in the boot of your car will avoid them being seen
- Don't fall into the habit of hanging up your keys next to doors or windows. Thieves use a 'fishing' method where they insert a hook





through a letter box or window and search for keys. This can even be done when you're at home and you may not even notice until you look for your keys and find that you've "lost" them. Make sure you put your keys somewhere safe and secure, and far away from windows and doors.

- Choose your parking neighbours wisely. In a busy car park, we normally go for the first space we can find. But have you thought about your neighbours beside you? For example, parking next to a flatbed truck filled with rubbish may not be as good a choice as parking next to a pristine, well-kept vehicle. The potential of damage is greater if the vehicle you park beside is already full of dents and scrapes.

Is your parking space secluded? If you will be returning to the car late or alone make sure you stay alert and park it in an area which is well lit.

Richard said: "We often just pop in somewhere and then get distracted, so it's crucial you never leave your car running whilst going back indoors to pick something up. It will only take an opportunist a few seconds to drive away.

"Try to park your pride and joy away from shopping trolleys and flying doors, although we all know the empty part of a car park will fill up as soon as you leave your pristine motor in a space. And remember to always consider your safety, as a car park looks different in the night than it does during the day."







## March Members' Evening

# NUCLEAR POWER



Hydrock ([https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Hinkley\\_Point\\_C.jpg](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Hinkley_Point_C.jpg)),  
<https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-sa/4.0/legalcode>

Our guest speaker will be Ross Edwards.  
Ross is the community relations manager for the Hinkley Point 'C' project and will be coming along to tell us about progress and the impact that the finished project will have on the lives of Somerset residents.

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

## April Members' Evening

# DIABETES AND YOU



Matt Roberts of Diabetes UK, our guest speaker for this month, will try to give us a brief understanding of the latest developments and innovations in the treatment and care of people with this most common of diseases. It promises to be an interesting and informative talk, so do please come along.

Wednesday 17<sup>th</sup> April 7:30pm  
Hatch Beauchamp Village Hall





# Following in my grandfather's footsteps

By Peter Rodger, IAM RoadSmart head of driver advice

It is 100 years since the end of World War I. This month is also 100 years since my grandfather died of his wounds, at home in Scotland. He was a steam vehicle driver in the Army Service Corps (now the Royal Logistics Corps). In 2015, I was approached by the London Transport Museum and asked if I would drive a 1914 London Bus which had been restored, then converted into a troop carrier as it had been in 1914. I took several fractions of a second to think very carefully before saying yes. The bus was new in January 1914 and was requisitioned by the Army that year. Nearly 1,000 of London's buses were taken over like this – they were standardised and for their day very reliable transport and an important part of the enormous task of logistics that the war became. The museum also owns another B-type London bus still preserved in its classic red livery. This year they were asked to provide both of these as the backdrop on The Mall in central London for A Nation's Thank You – the



People's Procession, which marked the centenary of Armistice Day on 11<sup>th</sup> November. There was a possibility that the buses might be used on the day - but they needed drivers to get to the event. Given the personal connection, how could I say no when asked to help?

When the buses were taken to war each one was accompanied by two volunteer drivers.





The efforts and contribution of those drivers were recognised after the end of the war.

London's bus drivers were the only civilian body represented in the annual parade at the Cenotaph until World War II – a remarkable honour. And a privilege to be able to drive the old buses they used and tell their tale.

After a lengthy day of preparations and transporting, the late afternoon and evening in central London on Saturday was incredibly wet. I met the low-loader driver carrying one of the buses in The Mall, and when the second bus had also arrived we unloaded and positioned them under some trees.

Sunday was a busy day, talking to hundreds of people who came to see the buses, and thankfully by the time the crowds were assembling the rain had stopped and the sun was out.

Eventually it was time to load them back for the journeys to their respective homes. The Mall, leading directly up to the front of Buckingham Palace, is usually closed to commercial vehicles, so it was a rare chance to drive the bus up a stretch of it and turn round to be able to drive on to the back of the low loader.



Loading a bus on a lorry is always an interesting challenge anyway - you have to drive up a metal ramp, only a few inches wider than your own vehicle, with an increasing height in the drop each side if you get it wrong.

Doing it with solid tyres (which also means no tyre tread in wet weather), a need to watch that the rear doesn't scape on the ground as the overhang gets tipped backwards by the slope, and the low levels of performance of a 100 year old vehicle meaning that going too slowly means you may not manage to get all the way up the slope all just add to the challenge.





Trusting the people who help by watching the rear overhang and looking at your wheels to make sure you are lined-up correctly certainly helps!



Driving these old buses is interesting. In some ways it is very simple – in the cab there is a steering wheel, a gear lever, a handbrake lever and three pedals. There is one switch – it turns the magneto (ignition) on. There is no adjustment to the solid wood seat. There are no windows to worry about demisting!

The pedals can take a while to get used to. The accelerator is the middle one, and the brake is on the right. At this age the footbrake only works on the rear of the bus, so by modern standards it is a bit weak.

The steering is quite light, although later old vehicles which have been converted to pneumatic tyres can be very heavy. Starting a big engine on the starting handle is physical stuff. There is a knack to it, but it still saves a visit to the gym!

The engines do sometimes “kick back” – they actually run backwards briefly, which is unpleasant as well as unhelpful when you are on the other end of the process, in contact with that handle. You can control this with vehicles that have a lever for Advance and Retard – but not all (including these buses) have that.

In 1910 the designed speed limit for a bus in London was 12mph, so they are not fast, and double-de-clutching gear changes are also quite slow in them. But it is huge fun, a mental as well as a physical challenge, and the reactions from people you drive past are a pleasure in themselves – in some cases the double-takes and open mouthed reactions would look at home in a comedy sketch.

While the buses did not travel in the procession, it was a great day talking to so many people about the role of transport in that war of 100 years ago, and in the peace that followed it, and about the importance of those drivers to it all.







# WHAT'S IT ALL ABOUT? (Part 1)

By Nigel Albright

You are an advance driver, right? But what does that mean? It means you are a better driver. Ok, but what does that mean? If you remove the term advanced driver what are you left with? To answer that question we need to go back to the beginning and that can be one of two points; either the dawn of the motor car or even back to the times of horse-drawn mail coaches. To go to the latter would probably make things too long so, basically, let's go to the former.

At the dawn of the motorcar we tend to think that it was more or less a straight change over from horse to engine power but, for example in 1940 my aunt travelled to her new property in a pony and trap and the first police driving school at Hendon, opened in 1935, was titled The Metropolitan Police Motor Driving School, to distinguish it from horse driving.

Similarly, skill sets prevalent in safe horse driving migrated to motorised vehicles. In 1906 Lord Montague of Beaulieu wrote the book,

The Art of Driving the Motor Car. Probably the most important part was:

## ALWAYS ASSUME

1. That the other road user may do the wrong thing, i.e. a driver may pull the wrong rein, or a pedestrian hesitate and try several courses.
2. That it is your business, not the other man's to avoid danger.

The really important point is (2) because it places the responsibility for our safety on ourselves, which means that we have to take ownership of it. It's a principle which is still as relevant today as it was then and it is one which underpins an individual's development in advanced driving. And the moment the road safety industry generally starts to understand this fundamental principle will be the moment there will be a quantum change in safety on our roads, in my view. However, this is not helped by manufacturers increasingly finding





so called safety gizmos to add to vehicles which equally increasingly induce drivers to believe that their safety is in the machine rather than in themselves, with a consequent equal lack of attention and sense of responsibility for their actions. This leads to an increased potential for crashes, rather than the other way around.

In 1909 Dorothy Levitt wrote the book, *The Woman and the Car*. This, at a time when the suffragette movement was gaining ground but, it was still very brave for a lady to take to the roads because driving was a very physical activity and also because vehicles regularly broke down a motorist (or motoriste) had also to be capable of doing repairs en-route. Interestingly she recommended that a woman, "carry a little hand-mirror in a convenient place when driving" so they may "hold the mirror aloft from time to time in order to see behind while driving in traffic", Rear view mirrors were not in manufactured vehicles until 1914.

The most significant part of Levitt's book was the chapter on Motor Manners where she wrote, "It is, of course, quite unnecessary to teach the well-bred woman manners. The well-bred woman, with her innate courtesy and unselfishness,

should she take up motoring, no doubt would act as all motorists should act when at the wheel of their car or, out on the road".

That's probably considered stuffy by today's standards but, there are two key words there, 'courtesy and unselfishness', qualities which if added to many drivers' attitudes today would add to their safety on the road and make it more pleasant for all. But there is another factor; back then drivers were open to the elements – there was no physical barrier between themselves and, for example, another driver or pedestrian and so there was little, or no anonymity. This meant people felt more accountable for their actions, which tended to mollify potential reactions. It was Graham Hill, a former Formula One World Champion who said that if you want to make the roads safer then all vehicles should be topless.

The problem is the greater the anonymity the greater the potential lack of accountability. Today the sense of anonymity is increased with higher sill lines and darkened glass windows. This, in a society of increased self-orientation unfortunately does not bode well for outward thinking and consideration for others. How much more accountable many drivers





might feel if their telephone number was written large on the sides of their vehicle.

But Levitt also recommended driving slowly through towns and villages, and past school houses, as well as not squeezing through doubtful openings in traffic – what today we would call preserving safety zones.

Remember, that all of this was a product of their attitude, the application of common sense and their desire to reduce conflict and vulnerability to crashes. The first Highway Code did not appear until some 22 years later. Fair to mention that if many drivers applied common sense and consideration for others much of what is written in the Highway Code might not be necessary. A bit idealistic perhaps, but I think you get the point.

There is another interesting point; both Lord Montague and Dorothy Levitt promoted against the inherent danger of cutting corners, thereby being the first to introduce the idea of positioning for both safety and view as we think of it today.

In the 1920s Lord Cottenham was a member of the Alvis racing team and then the Sunbeam team. But there was a significant difference about him. Simultaneously he was writing articles in The Autocar magazine about road

driving, and not from a racing driver's perspective, which is where many competition drivers talking about road driving go so very wrong. There are very, very, few people who come from the competition side who clearly differentiate and properly understand the differences between the two. Another was John Miles who, although an advanced wing instructor at Hendon in the 70s, was also renowned for his expertise in rally driving, and then in the big 3 litre Austin-Healeys.

Cottenham was also a forward thinker in other ways. He served on the Roads and Transport Committee to the House of Lords. Even in 1926 he was promoting that rear-view mirrors should be compulsory and that there should be an offence of 'Driving to the Common Danger' which could still be a very useful 'catch-all' piece of legislation for today's roads. He also suggested that 'anti-dazzle devices', i.e. dipping head-lamps, should be compulsory as opposed to the prevalent practice of turning off head-lamps at night when approaching another vehicle; that, 'A standardised limit should be in force through any dangerous street in towns and villages', which came into being some eight years later as the 30mph limit. He also wanted compulsory insurance of motor vehicles.



Cottenham was also instrumental in having the General Speed Limit of 20mph removed 'without amendment'. This was included in the Road Traffic Act 1930 which also included: the first driving tests (albeit for disabled drivers) and the issue of a Highway Code which was some 18 pages of 'advice' and cost the princely sum of 1p. In parallel, police traffic patrols came into being, the first version being the Courtesy Cops who were to 'advise' motorists as appropriate.

However, the ensuing accident rate of over 7,300 fatalities and over 231,600 injuries quickly led to the in the Road Traffic Act 1934, introduced in March 1935. This introduced driving offenses of dangerous, reckless and careless driving as well as the 30mph in built up areas, Belisha beacons, commonly called Zebra crossing and, of course, the driving test for all. The Courtesy Cops evolved into full blown Traffic Police whose task was then to 'monitor and supervise' but also to enforce the new laws as necessary.

At the same time there was also concern about the general standard of police driving. In the early 1930s the accident rate in the Met. was 1 in 8000 miles. As already mentioned, the Met's

driving school started in 1935 and police officers were tested by famous drivers such as world speed champions Sir Henry Seagrave and Sir John Cobb, who thought the driving was satisfactory. Simultaneously with Hendon two other 'Government Sponsored' Police Driving Schools were set up, at Chelmsford in Essex and Hutton, otherwise called the Preston Driving School, in Lancashire.

Considering the accident rate in the Met was not significantly reducing the then Commissioner of the Metropolitan Police, Lord Trenchard (he of RAF fame) invited Lord Cottenham to become what was euphemistically called, *civilian advisor* to the driving school at Hendon. Cottenham's ideas on a methodical approach can first be seen in his book, 'Motoring Without Fears, published in 1928. The long and short of it is that he also introduced the Advanced Wing and, within the 18months he was at Hendon reduced the accident rate in the Met dramatically from 1 in 8000 to 1 in 38,000. And the rest, as they say, is more or less history. (Part 2 to follow)

Nigel Albright

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# Essential bedtime reading

By Rodney Kumar, IAM RoadSmart senior communications executive

What was your bedtime reading as a child? Depending on your era, was it the Famous Five, Winnie the Pooh, Ben 10, Spongebob, or something off an iPad?

For me as a motoring obsessed youngster in the 80s, it was the latest issue of What Car?

Back in 1980/81, What Car? cost about 75p an issue and was my essential reading! So much so, my mum banned me from reading it in the run up to my 12+ exams, thinking it would be a distraction. Oh the horror!

I still have the very first issue from November 1973, which was part of a package of car brochures given to me by my mum's driving instructor in the early 80s – and remains a prized possession.

In the 2000s I worked for Hyundai UK as press officer, and it was a thrill to attend the What Car? awards each year – even more so to win for the Getz supermini in their small car category in 2004; the first time a Hyundai had ever won a What Car? award. The trophy was very heavy I recall.

Fast forward 10 years, and I've been able to attend the What Car? awards again in my PR role for IAM RoadSmart. This comes from the fact that all What Car? road testers and journalists take our advanced test when they join the magazine – to ensure their driving standards have an official seal of approval. The fact What Car? come to us for this training, is a real source of pride for us.

The awards themselves are always fun to be at. In spite of it happening on the first snowy day of the winter this year, the networking opportunities at the awards are huge – it is essential in this industry to be seen at events like these and to promote your organisation's aims and goals.

This year saw a real sea change in the category winners and the overall What Car? Car of the Year.

The increasing importance of safety, and how technology can assist in making cars as safe as possible, was very apparent – all great news for IAM RoadSmart and how we lobby





manufacturers to put safety at the forefront of their plans when developing new product. Something we have accused them in the past of not doing.

For instance the best small car of the year, the Volkswagen Polo, achieves a five star Euro NCAP rating - and even the low level 1.0 TSI 95 SE model at just over £15,000 has forward collision warning with front assist and autonomous emergency braking, and pedestrian monitoring as standard.

Also standard for this model is electronic stability control with anti-lock brakes, hydraulic brake assist, and ASR (traction control to you and me).

This is staggering for a small car and shows that car makers have been forced to raise their game as consumers and road safety bodies become more demanding of features that will protect occupants and other road users in the event of a crash.

It is also good to see a safety award as a What Car? category. That winner this year was the Mercedes-Benz A-Class; gaining high praise for adult and child protection, and a 92% score in Euro NCAP for protecting vulnerable road users.

It also performed well in impacts involving pedestrians' upper and lower legs, and its autonomous emergency braking system effective in spotting pedestrians and cyclists.

So the winds of change are blowing.

But the biggest surprise was seeing a Kia as the overall winner. I have got used to seeing cars from the Volkswagen group or prestige brands like Volvo as winners of these awards – but at last badge snobbery has faded, and the abilities of a perceived 'value' brand like Kia are now impressing the likes of What Car? magazine.

All this is good news for road safety bodies like us. But all these features will never get away from the need of drivers and riders being better at the task in hand – 95% of crashes are down to the error of the person behind the wheel, and all drivers and riders must be mindful of pedestrians and road users who do not have 1.5 tonnes of metal and a safety cell around them.

Plus we can never forget that children on roads are unpredictable and we have to pre-empt what they could do.

It takes all of us to save lives – let's not rely on the car makers to do it all for us.





# Nostalgia: should it be a thing of the past?

By Gary Bates, IAM RoadSmart marketing manager

In his last blog, Shaun Cronin cast his mind back to a tragic incident he had attended, early in his career as a police traffic officer. In a recent staff presentation Shaun shared an image of the incident in question. Without describing it in detail here, it was obvious from the wreckage of the car, an Austin Allegro, that its driver had no chance of surviving the impact.

For all the wrong reasons, which I'll get to in a moment, the image reminded me of my first car: a 1983 Austin Metro, for which I had paid the bargain sum of £150 back in the summer of 2000.

As is often the case with first cars, to this day my memories of this humble banger usually evoke warm, fuzzy feelings of nostalgia. In fact, while browsing on a well-known online auction site recently, I happened upon a copy of Car Magazine from May 1980 - the very

month I was born - featuring the then-new Metro on the front cover! Clearly, Metros and I must have some kind of mysterious connection. Besides, the magazine promised a geek-tastic feast of cutaway images showing the inner workings of Austin's potentially world-beating technical marvel. Sold.

By the way, the mag was a good read, and also included an interesting group test of 'large saloons' (Ford Cortina vs Austin Princess vs Vauxhall Carlton) but enough about that.

Anyway, let's just say I remember that Metro fondly, but back to the reason why Shaun's photo reminded me of it.





Without bashing British Leyland products in particular, both the Allegro and Metro came from a period when car construction wasn't always especially robust or safety-led, and I consider myself fortunate to have never suffered a collision in the Metro. On seeing the way in which the Allegro had crumpled in Shaun's photo, I was reminded of the time I took the Metro in for its first MOT under my ownership.

I was informed by the mechanic that one of the front brake discs was dangerously thin, but that he could replace it for me that afternoon, so I agreed to leave it with him. I had left my jacket and bag on the passenger seat so I wandered into the garage to go and collect them.

My little Metro was still sat on a hydraulic lift; the kind that picks the car up on all four jacking points. The wheels were about two feet off the ground. I opened the passenger door, grabbed my stuff off the seat, and shut the door. Only it didn't shut. It just bounced back open. I gave it a



shove. Still it felt like something was stuck in the door; maybe the seat belt buckle? I checked. No, nothing there. I swung the door again, harder this time, but it still wouldn't slot home.

Then it dawned on me: simply by moving the weight off the wheels and onto the jacking points, the body shell flexed so much that the door aperture had twisted out of shape. It must have been seriously out of shape for the catch not to line up any more (especially considering







BL's 'generous' manufacturing tolerances!) One final slam, delivered with a bit more purpose, saw the door close, accompanied by the jarring sound of metal on metal. Lovely.

This was the first time I ever thought about what might happen to me if I were to crash. The passenger compartment would itself be a crumple zone, incorporating the driver and any



other unfortunate occupants. Even so, I was young, and the worry quickly subsided. I quickly returned to my favourite pastime of exploiting 101% of the little Metro's limited performance, with scant regard for its limited ability to protect me in the event of a collision.

A few years and a couple of vehicles later, I was in need of a new runabout, when a very nice low-mileage Rover 114 GTa popped up in the small ads. That pesky nostalgia, combined with my youthful abandon, saw me purchase the little pocket rocket and spend the next year or so tearing around the countryside, still (wilfully) forgetful of the lack of crash protection inherent in its ancestry.

Last year, Euro NCAP celebrated 20 years of crash testing by running some comparison tests between new cars and equivalent models from 20 years previous. A 1997 Rover similar to mine was subjected to their 40mph offset frontal impact test and the result confirmed my





worries about the strength of the Metro-based passenger cell: the footage is almost too horrendous for pre-watershed viewing. Even so, the car had received a 1-star rating under Euro NCAP's standards at the time.

To put into context how things have moved on in vehicle safety, the latest Fiat Panda recently made headlines when it received zero stars under 2018 Euro NCAP standards, but essentially the same car had received a 4-star rating when tested in 2011. It's worth noting that the top 5-star rating is now reserved for vehicles fitted with additional active safety systems, and the tests now involve specific components relating to the safety of child passengers and pedestrians too. Also, the

Panda's crash footage looks like a walk in the park compared to the old Rover's, with the passenger cell remaining completely intact.

As it goes the seat and driving position in the little Rover 114 were totally unsuitable for me and ironically, in view of my young age at the time, chronic back pain eventually forced me to part with it. Perhaps a blessing in disguise, although like so many people, I still love to see 'classic' cars on the road and I've had others since. Vehicle safety really has come on in leaps and bounds since I was born but thankfully, having survived into adulthood, calmed down a bit and improved my awareness, I feel better equipped to avoid the nasty business of crashing in the first place.





## E-modules free for a limited time

The advertisement for E-learning Modules is a collage of images related to driving. On the left, a dark blue background features the title 'E-learning Modules' in large white letters, followed by the text 'Improve your knowledge and learn to deal with common driving challenges with our e-learning modules'. Below this is a bulleted list of topics: Motorway driving, Parking and manoeuvring, Driving on country roads, Driving in towns, Managing distractions, Managing speed, and Managing overtaking. To the right of the text are three images: two red triangular warning signs (one for a car on a slope, one for a car on a bend), a yellow car driving on a road, and a map showing a route with a callout box that says 'Tailored packages available' and a large blue button that says 'Enquire now'.

As part of IAM RoadSmart's mission to improve driver skill and road safety in the UK, the charity's e-learning modules are designed to help non-advanced drivers refresh their knowledge of the rules of the road and boost their confidence behind the wheel. If you know

a non-advanced driver who you think could benefit from our e-learning modules, we are currently offering them free of charge. Please click on the picture for further information, and pass on our discount code 'Freemodule' to access the online course(s).



# Autonomous cars report drunk drivers to police

by Jamie Rogers



By [Dilly](#) - Own work, [CC-BY-SA 4.0](#), [Link](#)

Chinese tech giant, Huawei, has recently filed a patent with the European Patent Office for what could amount to some of the most intrusive technology to be fitted to a vehicle.

It's capable of detecting whether a driver is drunk, but also whether that driver is frustrated, drowsy or distracted. It can also recognise weapons, drugs and even a phone with text on the display.

Currently, the patent is for autonomous vehicles only, which in itself seems a moot point; the day that vehicles are truly 100% autonomous means there will be no driver 'in charge' of the vehicle, so why the technology?

The system will have the capability to decide for itself the best course of action, which ranges from warning the occupants, deactivating the controls or even calling the police.

## Self-driving cars

Autonomy and self-driving are closely linked, but not necessarily the same thing, although for many motorists it's the difference between branded or supermarket fuel - close enough that there's no real distinction.

Self-driving cars are very much in their infancy - they still have the ability to wow us with their capability, to make headlines when one does





something out of the ordinary, and yet they still need to have the human element, 'just in case'.

Some industry experts are predicting that the first truly-autonomous vehicles will on the road as early as 2021, and the question remains – who will be in charge of them? The operator? Occupant? Owner? With the argument that any occupant will effectively be using a service akin to a taxi or ride-share, surely it doesn't matter whether they're distracted or drunk?

The defining point here is the definition of 'Autonomous Vehicle'.

### Sci-Fi

Science-fiction would have us believe that true autonomy comes without a steering wheel, almost a lounge-style cabin, and nothing to do but hold high-powered business meetings, or play with the on-board technology.

So will we still have the human element, and if so, does that necessitate a law against being in one drunk?

The National Transport Commission of Australia (NTC) believes that drink-driving laws need a shake-up.

In a discussion paper, the NTC states that "there is a clear-cut" justification for changing the laws regarding drink or drug-driving because there is no possibility that a human could drive a dedicated autonomous vehicle. "The situation is analogous to a person instructing a taxi driver where to go," says the NTC.

### Data privacy

It would seem as though Huawei, who manufacture no autonomous vehicles of their own, may have found a back-door entrance to scrutinise, store and potentially use personal data. Just as the Amazon Alexa listens constantly to every conversation you have, logs your preferences and buying habits, so too could Huawei.

Imagine a system that's fitted to your car, that logs each journey, whether you have a penchant for a tippie, or even a cigarette, your mood when driving, the times you frequent the pub, supermarket or gym and then reports back to your insurance company (who for the sake of convenience, cover your life insurance as well).





Your insurance premium gets automatically adjusted, you have an accurate log of behaviour and movement, and anything remotely 'questionable' is all recorded, easily accessed by the police or insurance companies.

Perhaps this is what Motorola had in mind when they filed for a patent for a self-driving police car/courtroom, that placed the accused on trial via video link, with those found guilty being autonomously delivered to the nearest jail.

### **Road safety**

Of course we're in favour of road safety, and technology being used appropriately could make a big difference to accident rates and fatalities, but this kind of technology comes at the cost of privacy, some may even say infringing on our rights.

For those that disagree with this viewpoint, that believe a giant tech company would never abuse such exclusive and intimate detail of our lives, you've only got to look at the largest social-media platform (with over 1 billion users), and their understanding of privacy to see that this is a very real concern.

It's understandable that the authorities are investing in technology to help make roads safer - the 'yellow vultures' may not be the answer, just the same as the majority of safety cameras, but with ever-increasing budget cuts, manpower is dwindling and technology is taking over. We just need the right type of technology.

Whether there is any validity to the patents (both Huawei and Motorola), the technology exists to make it happen, but we're a short step away from an autonomous lifestyle, governed, measured and reported on.





# Rats who steal CATs

By Tim Shallcross, IAM RoadSmart head of technical policy

Catalytic converters have been in the news lately, prompted by videos of some outrageously brazen thefts posted online.

Catalytic converters have been fitted to petrol cars since the 1990s and to diesels since about 2001. They look a bit like an extra silencer fitted into the exhaust, where the catalysts instigate chemical reactions in the exhaust gas to get rid a lot of the harmful pollutants.

A catalyst is a substance which makes other chemical react without being affected itself and for cars, the substances are precious metals; platinum is the one most of us are familiar with, but rhodium and palladium are also used.

Like any commodity, precious metals rise and fall in price and at the moment the price is very high. The resulting potential rewards for scrap metals makes the scum on the fringes of society feel it's OK to steal the catalytic converter

(usually known as the CAT) from other people's cars and sell them to equally anti-social scrap metal dealers.

Unfortunately, stealing CATs is not hard, otherwise the imbeciles stealing them wouldn't figure out how to do it. They simply dive under the vehicle and use powered shears or a grinder to cut through the exhaust pipe either side of the CAT. The owner is then left with the inconvenience and cost of getting the car repaired.

There have been suggestions in the press that owners might not realize the CAT has been stolen, rendering them liable to a fine of up to £1,000, but this is not likely. A loud exhaust noise will be obvious as soon as the engine is started - like a large motorbike or an express train. Most owners will realise straight away that something is wrong. The engine warning light will also stay illuminated in the dashboard.







Typically, a replacement CAT will cost somewhere between £300 and £500, but there could be two if the engine is a V4 or V6. Then the damage to the exhaust pipe will have to be repaired and the new CAT fitted. If you have comprehensive insurance it should cover this theft, but there is always the excess to pay and weighing up whether making a claim will simply boost your premiums next year.

There are some things we can do to deter theft; park in a garage if possible, although I accept that's not an option for many city dwellers. Parking under a street light or in a busy road may help.

CAT protectors are available which clamp round the unit and attach it to the underside of the vehicle with a strong wire rope. They are a deterrent because at the very least they will take a lot longer to cut through, but they cost around £100 - £150.

Ask a garage to mark the CAT indelibly so it can be traced – engraving the car's number plate or VIN will help the police prove the CAT has been stolen if a scrap metal dealer is

raided; otherwise there are no distinguishing marks and thieves or scrap dealers can claim they come from scrapped cars.

Manufacturers could also give some thought to the design of the exhaust; some vehicles have the CAT fitted in the engine bay where they are very difficult to access from underneath whereas others are child's play to get at.

Vehicles with a high ground clearance are the most susceptible, because they don't have to be jacked up to get underneath, so vans and 4x4 cars are more at risk, although one recent post showed a completely shameless criminal blocking the traffic while he jacked a car up, cut the CAT out of the exhaust and calmly walked back to his car. His number plate is clearly visible, so hopefully the police have paid a visit.

Finally, if you see someone working suspiciously under a car, don't get directly involved; the thief is a thug with no conscience and a heavy tool in his hand, but do call the police and report it as soon as you can. If you've got dashcam footage of the theft, so much the better.





# Suddenly, but it's OK... as I'm dead right

By Shaun Cronin, IAM RoadSmart regional service delivery team manager (southern)

My mind occasionally turns back to Christmas 1990, 14<sup>th</sup> December to be precise, on a very cold early turn.

An ordinary routine patrol day now etched forever on my memory. This was to become a defining career moment, attending my first fatal road crash. As a police officer I had achieved my dream job, I was now a traffic officer.

I had attended numerous sudden deaths in the preceding five years, but with that white cap and bright yellow coat came a big responsibility: the job of investigating why people had died on the road.

It is possible to train in all the aspects of the law, become proficient at dealing with collisions, but nothing in reality can train you for that first time you have to search someone,

now a lifeless body, who has been involved in a catastrophic collision, for something to confirm their identity.

Then once you find out who they are, you are making that dreaded trip to a front door and in an instant, your words will change a family's life forever.

Over the years I investigated numerous collisions from slight bumps to fatal crashes, and in the main people had those collisions for the following relatively simple reasons, sometimes for more than one of these reasons:

- Speed on approach – the big one, just arriving at situations too fast for the circumstances with no time to react to road or traffic conditions





- Cornering – see above and often with no idea how to assess them correctly
- Overtaking – most are never taught this skill so they learn by experience
- Distractions – once it was tuning the radio or changing the cassette – now mobile phones
- Intoxication – from both alcohol and drugs

Have you ever noticed when people talk about a driving or riding incident that happens on the road, they use that word – ‘suddenly.’ But was it?

Was it really suddenly, or was there something to be seen or anticipated? You listen now when people go to great lengths to tell you their personal story and you will hear what I mean.

‘Suddenly all the traffic stopped in front of me.’

‘Suddenly he just pulled out from the junction.’

‘I was overtaking and suddenly a car appeared.’

In advanced driving and riding we use the term TUG to refer to the information that is around us, i.e. we **T**ake, **U**se and **G**ive information at all times to make an informed driving and riding plan.

We use the information to plan what can be seen, what cannot be seen and what we can reasonably expect to develop. So ultimately we observe, anticipate, prioritise, decide and act accordingly for the prevailing circumstances.

So if we all did this much better would there be zero collisions? Well probably not quite, as to





err is human and humans are behind the wheel or the handlebars. Personally, I suspect there would be a hugely significant reduction in people being killed or seriously injured.

Another one to watch out for is those who are exercising their rights. 'But it's my right of way' I hear them cry and profess it wasn't their fault that the other vehicle 'suddenly just pulled out' into their path.

We don't actually have a right of way but we do have a priority over others depending on road signage and markings. But you know what... there is nothing worse than being 'dead right.'

It doesn't matter if you are in the right but dead - as you will still be dead.

Instead of thinking 'it's my right of way' we really should be thinking: 'What is my plan to mitigate the possibility of them pulling out in my path,'

'Can I do anything to help the situation' etc.

That is much better than being dead. As being dead is very final and someone has to come and deal with that.

In closing I want everyone to reflect on those two things, the 'suddenly' and being 'dead right.' Neither actually need to happen. A driving licence is a privilege earned not an absolute right and we all have a duty to equitably share the road space with each other.

No one wants to receive 'that' knock on the door at Christmas, or at any other time of the year for that matter. I speak for those police colleagues still serving, in saying that they actually don't want to have to knock on your door either.

Always enjoy the drive or ride, but remember – it's none for the road.





## Recent Releases from the IAM Press Office

**Fear of being caught must rise, say IAM RoadSmart as hundreds of thousands continue to flout mobile phone and seatbelt laws.**



The UK's biggest independent road safety charity IAM RoadSmart is concerned that too many drivers continue to ignore warnings about the dangers of hand-held mobile phones and not wearing a seatbelt, putting countless lives in danger.

This follows the results of a major Department for Transport survey (published 7<sup>th</sup> February) revealing hundreds of thousands of motorists

were still ignoring seatbelt and mobile phone usage laws in 2017.

The survey found that in 2017, 1.1% of all vehicle drivers were observed using a hand-held mobile phone while driving on weekdays in Great Britain, of which 0.4% were observed holding the phone to their ear, with twice as many spotted holding the phone in their hand.







The worst offenders were taxi/private hire drivers (3.3%), followed by van drivers (2.1%), then car drivers (1%).

While there is good news that seatbelt wearing rates remain high with 96.5% of all vehicle drivers observed using a seatbelt on weekdays in 2017, that means 3.5% of all vehicle drivers are choosing not to wear a seatbelt which can be a matter of life and death if you are involved in a collision.

Seatbelt used varied with 93.1% of front seat passengers and 90.7% of rear seat passengers buckling up in Great Britain. For car drivers, 98.6% were observed using a seatbelt in Great Britain in 2017.

Neil Greig, IAM RoadSmart director of policy and research, said: "In spite of these being small percentages, this still amounts to

hundreds of thousands of people who daily flout the law and put themselves and others at risk.

"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 and mobile phones 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 tempt 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."





## Be a nosy parker: tips from IAM RoadSmart



With the dark mornings and evenings still hanging around, it means our cars are still at risk of being a victim of theft. IAM RoadSmart's head of driving and riding standards, Richard Gladman, suggests a few top tips.

See how you can protect your vehicle on a day to day basis, whether you're out and about or in the comfort of your home.

- As we exit the supermarket with a trolley full of shopping, we're eager to unlock the car as soon as possible to avoid the hassle of finding our keys when we get to the car. But unlocking your car before you reach it gives thieves a longer period of time to access valuables and make a run for it, especially if your boot opens automatically. Be sure to only unlock your car when you get to it to prevent any risk of theft
- Don't leave your keys lying around. This can apply to any situation, whether you're out for dinner and leave your keys on the table or if you're at a friend's house, as you may not know everyone around you. Making your keys visible can mean a greater risk of them being taken. Be security conscious about code grabbing from your keyless entry, are you being watched?





- Hide any valuables. Before you leave your car, make sure you secure any valuables and keep them out of sight. Putting them in your glove compartment or in the boot of your car will avoid them being seen
- Don't fall into the habit of hanging up your keys next to doors or windows. Thieves use a 'fishing' method where they insert a hook through a letter box or window and search for keys. This can even be done when you're at home and you may not even notice until you look for your keys and find that you've "lost" them. Make sure you put your keys somewhere safe and secure, and far away from windows and doors
- Choose your parking neighbours wisely. In a busy car park, we normally go for the first space we can find. But have you thought about your neighbours beside you? For example, parking next to a flatbed truck filled with rubbish may not be as good a

choice as parking next to a pristine, well-kept vehicle. The potential of damage is greater if the vehicle you park beside is already full of dents and scrapes

- Is your parking space secluded? If you will be returning to the car late or alone make sure you stay alert and park it in an area which is well lit

Richard said: "We often just pop in somewhere and then get distracted, so it's crucial you never leave your car running whilst going back indoors to pick something up. It will only take an opportunist a few seconds to drive away.

"Try to park your pride and joy away from shopping trolleys and flying doors, although we all know the empty part of a car park will fill up as soon as you leave your pristine motor in a space. And remember to always consider your safety, as a car park looks different in the night than it does during the day."





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

**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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