

e-NEWSLETTER

iam
RoadSmart

WESSEX ADVANCED MOTORISTS



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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



It's official. We're heading into summer (at least this newsletter is!). Time to make sure your car is in tiptop condition to face the endless queues of traffic on UK's road network this summer.

I've got my Jaguar XJ-SC (coming up to 33 years old this year) out of mothballs and started to do those little jobs I keep meaning to get around to but never have; she's already had a visit to Swallows Jaguar to have some new parts fitted to the front anti-roll bar because a component on the offside had



By Andrew Griffiths





failed... but it's always sensible to replace both sides to keep things balanced out there on the road. The service and MoT are booked in for next month which gives me a bit of time to save up!

My Jaguar XJ8 4.0 litre Sovereign (coming up to 19 years old this year) has likewise been stripped of her soft fleece covers and had her first run of the year a fortnight ago. I drove her at a comfortable and relaxing pace up to Hampshire on a relatively quiet A303; now this car's fuel consumption specification is 24 mpg on a combined urban/extra-urban journey so you can appreciate how surprised I was to see 27(!) mpg at a constant 60 mph. However, once I got back into Bridgwater the instantaneous consumption nosedived... which is why I don't use it every day!

One of the contributing factors for this remarkable mpg was good observation, anticipation, planning and use of acceleration

sense making for a smooth drive; approaching red traffic lights and roundabouts on the A303 was carried out using the principle "**don't arrive** - at traffic lights, roundabouts and other hazards - **before your departure**". This demands accurate assessments of speed and distance so you arrive at the time you can go (often with loss of speed just sufficient to navigate the hazard safely). If anyone would like a short advanced driving refresher to hone techniques like acceleration sense, all you need do is to contact our Coordinator, Pauline, and she will make arrangements.

And then there's my Jaguar XJR, the "girl-with-serious-attitude". Three weeks ago the cabin heater/AC fan developed an intermittent fault meaning that the fan would stop unpredictably. And just might restart sometime later (like the next day!). Of course, the cabin heater/AC system isn't just a luxury item to keep us warm in the cold weather and cool in the hot weather, although that's nice of course. What the





system is actually doing is extracting moisture from the cabin which prevents the windows misting up and in the extreme, having water running down the insides. The effect of car windows misting up is rather obvious; our vision of what's around us is seriously impaired! Before the advent of climate control systems in cars, we would use a cloth in a poor attempt to keep windows clear of moisture build-up; sometimes windows would have to be partly open too sometimes making the car like a freezer on wheels. Who remembers those days?

And so the girl went to car hospital (Swallows Jaguar) last week to be mended. But you can guess what happened; when I arrived, the fan was working **absolutely perfectly** and try as he did, Rich, the mechanic, just couldn't make it fail to allow him to source the problem. So I drove away from the workshop and turned out of the gates onto the A39... **and it failed immediately!** I turned around and took it back.

Now all Rich had to do was find the fault while I sat in the office. Thirty minutes later, he came into the office and told me that, while looking for the fault, he noticed steam coming from the engine bay - one of the coolant hoses had split and coolant was pouring/spraying everywhere including onto the exhaust manifold. "You won't be driving that anywhere today" Rich announced with genuine remorse.

And so some days later, I had the phone call from Swallows I had been waiting for; the hose had been replaced and the fan fault had been diagnosed to a faulty fan control module (nothing so simple - and cheap - as a switch these days, just lots of complicated sensors/modules)... all now sorted and fully functional. It was a joy to have the girl-with-serious-attitude back home.

But, I hear you ask, surely a POWDER check would have highlighted a failing coolant hose? No, not necessarily. As Rich explained, the rubber hoses have reinforcing webbing inside





the rubber to hold the hose together; without this webbing, the hose would expand (like a balloon) because of the heat and pressure in the coolant system. So when the webbing fails (age/environment/heat/pressure etc.), it can fail quickly and the hose bulges where webbing failed and starts to split. I had this happen last year too, same car. Well all the hoses on my car are 16 years old but it would be a major job and hugely expensive (mainly labour) to replace them all at the same time. So I will have to wait for the next occurrence and in the meantime I'll keep a watchful eye on the instrument panel for the "low coolant level" warning.

And while on the subject of the POWDER check, I'd like to remind you that our meeting in June is a skills evening competition. It will

comprise a series of activities with your car - which will be graded for presentation - and is designed to combine knowledge and skill with **fun**. The WAM member with the highest score will be presented with the coveted **Camelot Cup** to proudly display at home for a year. So come along and join the fun. In the event of torrential rain, we will have a light-hearted motoring quiz in the hall.

So finally, for the summer and for the Skills Evening, get the vacuum cleaner out, get your car out, valet the interior (including boot space), wash/wax the exterior, pay attention to detail and ensure you have the Wessex/IAM windscreen sticker proudly displayed.

Andrew



THE COMMITTEE



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

Chairman	Andrew Griffiths	chair@wessexam.uk
Vice Chairman/Events Coordinator	Barry Keenan	events@wessexam.uk
Secretary/Membership Secretary	David Walton	secretary@wessexam.uk
Treasurer	Isobel Jennings	treasurer@wessexam.uk
Associate Coordinator	Pauline Wills	coordinator@wessexam.uk
Support Officer	Michael Wotton	cmmw@wessexam.uk
Chief Observer/Masters Mentor	Andrew Griffiths	chair@wessexam.uk
Newsletter Editor/Webmaster	David Walton	ed@wessexam.uk
Archivist	Anne Bull	cmab@wessexam.uk
Committee Member	Brian Howe (President)	president@wessexam.uk



GROUP OBSERVERS



Chief Observer, Masters Mentor & LOA	Andrew Griffiths
National Observer & LOA	Barry Keenan
National Observer	Delphine West-King
Local Observer	Paul Crowe
Local Observer	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
Trainee Observer	Andrew Hepworth
Trainee Observer	Ted Parks

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



MAY

15	W	7:30 pm	Members' Evening – The Samaritans; Geoff Rickson will talk about the history and role of the Samaritans in 21 st century Britain
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JUNE

19	W	7:30 pm	Members' Skills Evening – A driving skills challenge for the Camelot Cup
22 & 23		10 am to 4 pm	Somerset Moto Fest

JULY

3	W	11:00 am	Visit to the Avon & Somerset Constabulary's Mounted Section Facilities (fully booked)
3	W	7:30 pm	WAM Committee Meeting
17	W	7:30 pm	Classic Car Show

AUGUST

3 & 4		10 am to 5 pm	West Somerset Railway Steam Fayre and Vintage Rally
			No members' evening in August



PRESIDENT'S PONDERINGS



Are You a Good Samaritan?

Our Vice-President of Wessex Advanced Motorists, Miss Julia Steer, has had a recent fall. After one week in Musgrove Park Hospital, Julia is now recovering at home. Julia was on her way from home to a meeting of the Hospital League of friends at Musgrove. Crossing the road with her three-wheeled walker, Julia fell off the kerb and went over the walker, breaking her nose and fracturing her left kneecap. As Julia lay in the road, in broad daylight and full view, bleeding profusely from her nose and in agony with her knee, at least three cars passed her by without even slowing. Eventually, kind nearby residents saw her plight and came to her assistance, stemmed the flow of blood and called the emergency services for her.

Alice and I visited Julia while she was still in hospital, and we went to see her at home on 15th April. She is in good spirits and recovering well. Most of the horrendous facial bruising has faded and Julia is looking forward to being able to apply her make-up as soon as she possibly can. She had an appointment at Musgrove on 16th April



by Brian Howe





for X-ray and to change the fixed leg brace for a hinged brace. This should help her currently very restricted mobility. I will try to remember to keep you informed of her progress at future meetings.

It was this incident and the timely appearance of a story on social media that prompted me to highlight the apparent apathy of people in modern day life.

The Good Samaritan. I am sure that most of us have heard the story of The Good Samaritan. A man was travelling along a road when he was set upon by robbers, who then stripped him, beat him up and left him for dead. As the man was lying there, a person saw him and passed by on the other side of the road. A little later another man saw him, and he too passed by on the other side of the road.

Eventually, a man of different race and religion found the beaten man and his heart was filled with pity and compassion. He went over to the victim, treated and bandaged his wounds, put the man on his own animal and took him to an inn where he took care of him. The next day, he gave the innkeeper some money and said, "Take care of him and when I return I will pay you whatever else you spend on him".

Story from Spotted: Sussex & Surrey. Original author unknown.

Twice this week I have watched an elderly individual fade into the busy life in which we all live. One man just needed Panadol for his wife, but the shop assistant simply told him to go to aisle 6. He struggled to navigate the supermarket and as I watched him go in the wrong direction, I left my groceries and took him to where he needed to go.

Today, I watched an elderly man struggle in the heat. He had obviously had a fall with a huge scrape and blood on his leg. He walked past people in the café while he slowly made his way to his car. Not one person stopped, or looked, or acknowledged him. I took him to his car and checked he was OK. He told me he had a fall and that he wasn't sure how the air-con worked in his car, so he just didn't use it. I sat with him until his air-con kicked in and heard him talk about the old, frail body that he is in and that fails him now and every single day.

When you see an elderly person walking down the street, searching in the supermarket, or struggling in the car, take a minute out of your busy schedule and ask if they need a hand. Think about your grandparents and parents, how annoyed you would be if someone didn't stop to help them. But more, think of them as you. Once





they were like you. They were busy, they had work, they had children, they were able. Today they are just in an older body that is not going as fast as it used to and this busy life is confusing.

They deserve our utmost respect and consideration. One day it will be you, it will be us. I wish more people gave a thought about them and acknowledged them for their admirable existence and I hope someday, that someone does it for me.

Nissan S Cargo (Escargot) Update



Unfortunately Escargot Noir is off the road again, with yet more problems with the automatic gearbox. The auto box was rebuilt in August 2018 following the loss of 2nd gear. This was attributed to the

gearbox containing one and a half pints of water, probably coolant from the cooling system. In April this year it suffered the loss of reverse gear. This was blamed on rust damage to the pump which was not replaced in the previous rebuild. Following that repair, gear oil was leaking out through the gearbox air breather. Go figure that one! Having been told by the garage, which

shall remain nameless, that they had checked and cleaned the box and it was no longer leaking. Guess what? It carried on chucking gear oil out of the breather. I would wipe it all off when I got home and it wouldn't leak overnight. But, take it out again the next day and there was oil all over the gearbox again. I decided enough was enough and that I had lost faith in the original repairers. So, on Friday, 12th April I was on my way to Highbridge Autotech, luckily driving up the A38 through Bridgwater, when all of a sudden, I lost top gear. I immediately slowed and pulled in to a convenient bus stop. I checked the oil level in the box and it was still indicating FULL on HOT mark, so I decided to continue my journey at less than 20 mph, pulling in to laybys and bust stops to allow faster traffic to pass. As this sad report goes to press, I am awaiting news from Highbridge Autotech as to when the box will be sent to TAZ, a company that specializes in Japanese Import auto gearboxes. The van could be VOR (Vehicle Off Road) for six weeks or more. Oh, the joys (and woes) of owning a rare classic, grey import, Japanese vehicle.

Live long and prosper. And I would add to that, "And help people in need". No-one will mind you being a few minutes late if you have been a Good Samaritan.

Brian Howe



COORDINATOR'S REPORT



Currently there are nine Associates at various stages of the Advanced Driving Course with Wessex Advanced Motorists, four of whom have signed up since the spring edition of the newsletter.

Three Advanced Driving Test passes have been achieved during this time and congratulations to Naomi Pullen who demonstrated outstanding driving skills to attain a well-deserved F1RST.

There have also been three Fellow requalifications. Alan Webber and Ted Parks both achieved a F1RST with all 1's so congratulations to them both.

At the end of February the Group attended an Older Driver's Event organised by Somerset Road Safety where five people signed up for a free assessment drive. There have also been a number of other requests for taster sessions to keep our Observers busy. Two of these have already led to new



by Pauline Wills





Associates signing up but, whether or not this is the case, these free drives certainly deliver a very valuable experience.

Pauline



Advanced Driving Test Passes

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

	OBSERVED BY
Marcus Blackburn	Hugh Todd
Naomi Pullin (F1RST)	Andrew Griffiths
Di Singleton	Andrew Griffiths

The Membership Register

This quarter we have seven 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>
Roger Wilcox	Ilminster	Associate
Peter Dobbie	Taunton	Associate
Rachel Kingsmill	Yeovil	Full
Roger Newton	Torrington	Associate
Anthony Brunt	Yeovil	Associate
Graham Tuffey	Ilminster	Full
Mark Blackburn	Ilminster	Full

Statistics for year to end of April

	<u>group</u>	<u>region avg.</u>
Pass rate %	100	88
F1RSTS	4	8.0
Passes	5	18.6
No. of observers	11	28.5
New Associates	13	42.0

We have 111 members and 8 Friends/Volunteers. We now have 7 Fellows.

David Walton



Events Corner



Hello one and all. As I sit in my study, scribbling away for the Summer Newsletter, outside the weather's fantastic and people are in the park behind my house enjoying the early afternoon sun.

Dog walkers are walking their dogs and the children's play park is in full swing. A complete contrast to just a few days ago when it was blowing a gale and very, very cold. Then the dog walkers were huddled in warm winter coats and the children's play park was totally abandoned. Oh! and more to the point, just about all of the blossom on my trees was blown off meaning that I'll be short of home grown fruit again this year, then!

Anyway, enough of the weather forecast and my gardening woes, let's just hope that current batch of glorious weather continues long into August and that all the outdoor events we've got planned for the coming 'events season' go without a hitch.



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





But! Before I talk about those to come, let me just apologise to those who attended and explain what happened at our last Member's Evening on the 17th (April).

Our guest speaker was scheduled to be Matthew Robert of Diabetes UK who was to talk to us about living and driving with diabetes. Those of you who attended on the night know well enough it didn't go ahead as planned. My apologies for that, but the reason for this failure to deliver was down to a simple confusion of dates between Matt and his replacement speaker, Roger. (Think of the old military adage "Send three and fourpence, we're going to a dance!")

As I say, my booked speaker was Matt. Unfortunately at the last minute he had to withdraw, but he very kindly made the effort to get one of his chums, Roger Weeks, to step into the breach. Unfortunately, Roger was given the date of Thursday 18th, rather than Wednesday 17th.

This confusion only came to light because on the night in question I was feeling under the

weather and at 5:15pm I emailed Roger to apologise for my absence and to tell him that his host would instead be David Walton. It's at that point that I received an email (well four, actually) to say that:

(5:39 pm). "It's **tomorrow** night isn't it??!"
(Even then I detected a mild hint of panic and incredulity)

"No mate, it's tonight at ½ past 7"(6:35 pm).
"I'm just leaving Andover".

"No, seriously, you can do without the stress of a mad rush drive. Don't even try it, we'll organise something else for the night."

(7:06 pm). "I think you're right, the traffic's awful and I'm not going to make it".

"There's a surprise! Just go home and be safe"
(7:19 pm). "... can we rearrange"?

So that's what we've done; rearranged. Unfortunately, because of the current scheduling that's already in place, you'll have to wait until 2020 to hear him now, but he promises me that it's well worth it, and!... He's guaranteed not to get the next date wrong!





So again, my sincere apologies, I haven't spoken to anybody who was there on Wednesday yet, so I don't know what you did to fill the time. I suspect there was a lot of tea drunk and biscuits dunked. Whatever it was, I just hope you enjoyed it.

Hopefully the rest of this quarters events will go without such a hitch.

On Wednesday 1st May we'll be holding our 3rd Committee meeting of the year. 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 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.

Our guest speaker on 15th is Geoff Rickson from Taunton Samaritans. He'll be along to talk to us about the history and role of the Samaritans in 21st 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 what promises to be a truly interesting talk.

In the meantime if you or somebody you know, are struggling to cope with any issue and would like to talk it through with someone then please call the Samaritan's National Helpline on 116123 to speak with a compassionate, non-judgmental and unbiased councillor for that extra support. Remember, they're there for you.

]]

We aren't having a speaker in June. Instead we've re-introduced our previously abandoned Car Skills Night. This is where you come along in your old jalopy and demonstrate your skill at some simple driving techniques and knowledge about your car.

Parking for the night will be on the grass at the front of the hall and will be supervised by a squad of our finest Volunteers. The actual 'events' on offer will be supervised... and graded (!!) by WAM's brilliant and very talented





Observer Corps. (Not to be confused with the Royal Observer Corps, y'understand).

Now, for a bunch of highly qualified and gifted Advanced Driver's like you, these tests will be an absolute breeze and clearly you're all already winners. Obviously. But for the judged and attested winner of the night, you'll be presented with the newly inaugurated 'The Camelot Cup' which will be awarded annually, starting this year.

So will you be the first to win it?! Come along on Wednesday 19th June to test your skill to find out.

Wednesday 3rd July will be a busy day for some.

At 11 am a group of us will be visiting the Avon & Somerset Police WFVC Operational Training Centre, Mounted Section, Davies Lane, Clevedon BS21 6TG for a guided tour of the facilities. Oddly enough, this wasn't as well supported as I thought it might have been, but

for those of us who do attend, I'm certain that we'll come away both enthralled and enlightened. I'll let you know my thoughts in the next newsletter.

Having come back from a busy day in Clevedon, I and my fellow Committee Members will be attending the 4th Committee meeting of the year. Again, if you have any queries, issues or items you'd like the Committee to review, then please send it to David Walton at secretary@wessexam.uk as above.

That's it for the scheduled events for this quarter. For those 40+ of you who put your names down for the Morrison's visit, please be advised that there has, at long last, been a little movement there and it's all thanks to our Treasurer, Isobel Jennings.

Isobel, who you know is going to be one of our guides around the Morrison's Facility, has rather short circuited the system I was locked into in trying to move this visit forward by





ignoring the chain of command and has gone directly to somebody who's supplied her (and by default, me) with the person who can really move this along.

Unfortunately I won't be able to contact this new person until after the Easter Bank Holiday, but rest assured, as soon as I know anything more about dates and times, I'll get in touch and let you know.

So, on behalf of all of us; thank you, Isobel, you're a star!!

And on behalf of me, thank you everybody for not badgering me about 'when's it going to happen?!'

Oh, before I forget, our most important date of the year is the July Classic Car Show. For those of you who haven't been before; why ever not?! For those of you who *have*, this

year's extravaganza is on Wednesday 17th July at our HQ at Hatch Beauchamp. It starts at 5:00pm and finishes at 9:30. I'll see you there.

II

Well that's it for now. As always, thanks for taking the time to read my scribbling's and I look forward to events to come 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





Messages from Grateful Associates

I wanted to thank Wessex IAM and Hugh Todd for all the help and support which enabled me to pass my advanced driving test. I had a richly rewarding experience and the improvement to my driving skills has been appreciated by my wife as much as by me.

Marcus Blackburn

As a stall holder, I am a regular visitor to the Steam Fair at Norton Fitzwarren and here I had a chance meeting with a rep from IAM. I was looking for info on getting my driving ability assessed.

The company who lease my husband's car were a bit reluctant to add me to the insurance as I was over 70 (he's not) so I was preparing for further difficulty at renewal of the lease, I thought I could prevent any problems. I do not often drive his car but have had to drive my husband on occasion!

In due course, I had a taster drive with Andrew Griffiths. He seemed positive about my ability to give him a safe, comfortable drive and suggested I





could do the full course. To my surprise, and after some deliberation, I went the whole hog and signed up for the Advanced Driver course.

In the past few years, I have abseiled off Table Mt, done a loop-the-loop in a Tiger Moth and sky wired, but the prospect of having to take a 'test' after 50+ years of driving seemed even more daunting! My only consolation was that I couldn't have my driving licence taken away.

But I do like a challenge!

I did not find it easy. It is a whole new way of driving practice (to me). I thought I could reverse until I added the observation and then I started 'overthinking'. Block changing was another eye opener after years of going up and down the gears. Brakes to

Slow and Gears to Go' was my new mantra. My bedtime ritual now included a mental Cockpit Check!

I read the log book again and again and kept adding road signs to my repertoire! BTW - The only Toad Crossing I found is between Drimpton and Broadwindsor, if you want to see one in situ.

Regular drives with Andrew and Barry Keenan gave me the opportunity to hone my technique. They were so patient with my 'wobbles' and their vast experience was just the grounding I needed. It was not a straight road. I got frustrated when I took a backward step but their support got me through.

The good people of a nearby village must have thought I had lost the plot, spending hours reversing round their





array of corners. The surgery was useful too - weekends only! The plate glass doors were great for visible bay parking.

When Test Day came, my nerves were calmed by my examiner and I made a reasonable account of myself and passed muster!

I must admit I doubted myself on occasions and experienced every emotion from misery to elation but I did it. As a bonus, I have found the joy of driving again. The journey is no longer just the way to get to my destination!

Thank you IAM! ... if I feel nostalgic for my 'drives', I can always find a corner to reverse round!

Di Singleton

May Members' Evening



THE ROLE OF THE SAMARITANS

Our guest speaker is Geoff Rickson from Taunton Samaritans. He will be along to talk to us about the history and role of the Samaritans in 21st century Britain. This promises to be another fascinating (and totally un-car related) subject of which most of us are probably ignorant.

**Wednesday 15th May 7:30pm
Hatch Beauchamp Village Hall**





IAM RoadSmart Skills Day at Thruxton Circuit

By Ralph Coulson

Monday 8th April 2019, 05:40 hours. Headlights appeared on my drive announcing the arrival of my close friend Keith who was to be my 'guest' for today's 'boys day out' at Thruxton.

I enrolled for today's course way back in October last year, opting for the AM session. This, of course, necessitated an early start to allow 1.5 to 2.0 hours travel to Thruxton in time for registration from 08:00 to 08:30 and more importantly, the compulsory driver briefing at 08:45.

I had prepared the car over the weekend, following the advice from the Skills Day team, plus adjusting the tyre pressures by an extra 3psi.

With a full tank, coffee and snacks; we set off in good time excited at the day's prospect. It had been 3 years since I last experienced a skills day, so knew a little of what to expect.

Registration and disclaimer completed without a problem, rewarded with a free (?) bottle of water, 'to maintain hydration'. At just before 08:45 we were ushered into the conference room for the compulsory safety briefing.

Understandably we were immediately advised, if we did not attend the safety briefing, we would not be allowed onto the circuit. Afterwards we were paired-up with another driver and allocated an instructor. Thus I found myself paired with Roger (Jaguar) and Dennis our instructor.

After a detailed discussion regarding our cars, the circuit, best line, overtaking protocol, the schedule for the morning; I found myself first in the driving seat, to be followed later by Roger.

Before settling himself in the passenger seat of my car, Dennis gave the car a 'casual' inspection, casting his eye over the car and most importantly inspecting my tyres for tread and any obvious damage.

As we were split into two, there would only be upwards of 15 cars on the circuit at any one time. All eager and slightly nervous to get going, we were about to learn new skills and how to get the best out of our cars at much higher speeds than that allowed on public roads.





Cones had been placed on the circuit indicating braking and turn-in points plus others at faster sections to provide chicanes, thus slowing us down at critical parts of the circuit. Their purpose was to mark where we were to start braking, to turn in, to align for the next cone/corner. We proceeded at a reasonable pace, guided by Dennis who 'took over' the rear view mirror so he could keep an eye on following traffic, and advise me when to allow faster cars to overtake.

After a few 'sighting' laps, I began to settle in and following Dennis's advice, increased my speed and used heavier braking (my poor tyres). At higher speeds, you quickly find how the car will follow the chosen fast line around the circuit, how it handles and can become 'unsettled' if you get it wrong. Given the right inputs, the car picks up speed and drifts towards the outer edge of the track – without me 'oversteering'! We were advised not to exceed 90 mph; who's got time to look at the speedometer? I received no comments from my instructor, so either I was behaving or he was enjoying himself, I shall never know.

The routine was for each driver to complete 5 laps before coming in to hand over to your partner, anxiously awaiting his 5 laps.

The morning session lasted from 09:30 to 12:30. By the time the final sessions were completed, 12:30 came around all too early, I believe we had all enjoyed ourselves and learned a great deal about the cars limitations, personal discipline and new awareness skills.

Many thanks to the IAM Skills Day team and instructor Dennis for his advice, confidence and most of all his bravery, he was to repeat all this with new and unknown drivers in the PM session. Brave man indeed!

If you have ever considered a Skills Day, I strongly recommend it. It will be challenging, enlightening and exciting and it's another step towards being a better driver. Enrol early as places go very quickly. One thing to remember – your normal road insurance is null and void directly you pass through the gates. However, specialist companies will cover you.

As I said to Keith as we drove from one traffic hold-up to the next, on the A303 home:- You're never too old to learn. No personal photographs, I'm afraid – forgot to charge the camera batteries, it's an age thing.

For proof photographs of the day, go to kellydowlingphotography.com/proofing/pages.php?gid=425 Look for S200 & for Roger, AY18-Roger.





WMAM thank Gary

by Dawn Crane



Gary James (left) stepped down as chairman of Weston and Mendip Advanced Motorists after 10 years and is now taking the role of associate coordinator. He was presented with a gift from new chairman, John Teasdale (right) - possibly one of the youngest chairs in the country - and IAM RoadSmart Chief Executive Officer, Mike Quinton. The group wishes both Gary and John all the best in their new roles.

June Members' Evening **Car Skills Evening**



We're holding a Member's Skills Evening which will be supervised by the Wessex Observers. Members can demonstrate their skill at some simple driving techniques and knowledge about their car.

Each area will be marked with the overall winner receiving the newly introduced Camelot Cup.

**Wednesday 19th June 7:30pm
at Hatch Beauchamp Village Hall**



IAM RoadSmart has a new Chairman



In his new role as Chairman of IAM RoadSmart, the largest independent road safety organisation in the UK, Managing Director of Ford of Britain, Andy Barratt has pledged to focus on driver and rider behaviour in the road safety debate.

In his new position, which started on 1st April, he will launch a revamped IAM RoadSmart

Manifesto. The Manifesto highlights the seven areas where IAM RoadSmart believe they can make the most impact in reducing the number of people killed and injured on UK roads.

With an emphasis on the potential that improved driver and rider behaviour could have on the safety of our roads, the Manifesto acknowledges the importance of driving to the economy and business. It should be seen as a core skill for business and a health and safety responsibility for all organisations in the public and private sector.

The Manifesto will form the basis of a submission from IAM RoadSmart to the House of Commons Transport Committee Inquiry into Road Safety.

Andy has taken on the prestigious role of IAM RoadSmart Chairman from Ken Kier OBE, who steps down this month having been in the role for three years.





Andy has almost four decades of experience at the Ford Motor Company where he started as an apprentice. Since 2015 he has been Managing Director of Ford of Britain.

Speaking of his appointment, Andy said: "To be appointed chairman of IAM RoadSmart is an honour. I wholeheartedly support IAM RoadSmart's Manifesto pledge that post-test training is vital for safer roads. I'm delighted to be taking a leading role for a charity whose principal purpose is to make better drivers and riders.

"In my roles at Ford, developing safe vehicles is the number one priority. In taking the Chair of IAM RoadSmart, my focus will be to ensure that human factors are high on the road safety agenda in order to reduce the number of people killed and seriously injured on roads in the UK.

"As a cyclist, driver and pedestrian I've been pleased to lead Ford's 'Share the Road' initiatives, encouraging cooperation and understanding between road users. As a motor industry representative chairing IAM RoadSmart, I believe that we can continue to find common ground, cooperation and practical

ways forward to make sure that real change happens - with vehicle makers, politicians, the media, and with all road users."

IAM RoadSmart's Manifesto focuses on the importance of boosting the confidence of drivers and making it an enjoyable activity, while keeping everyone safe at the same time.

Embracing all stages of a driving and riding career from immediate post-test into older age, the Manifesto underlines the importance of periodic refresher courses. It also includes extending driver rehabilitation after a conviction for a wider variety of motoring offences.

It also highlights the changing world of new technology as the switch to autonomous and connected vehicles continues to gather pace.

Mike Quinton, IAM RoadSmart Chief Executive Officer, said: "I am delighted that we have attracted someone of the calibre, standing and seniority in the UK automotive industry as Andy to the role of Chairman.

"I am confident his knowledge and contacts will be invaluable in driving us forward and I look forward to drawing on his skills and leadership experience."





The Disney dilemma

By Rodney Kumar, IAM RoadSmart senior communications executive

It seemed a good idea at the time; a road trip to Disneyland Paris, and why not offer to take the 12-year-old nephew with me? A boys' road trip, what could be more fun!

I booked everything in good time - hotel just a 10-minute monorail from the park, ferry tickets from Dover to Calais and a sat-nav that would (apparently) take me all the way to Disneyland.



Easy? Well not quite!

Researching the requirements of driving in France found that the authorities insist on much more equipment to be carried in the car than we do. For a start you must have a red warning triangle, first-aid kit, spare bulb kit and an NF approved breathalyser kit to be carried in the car at all times. And of course a GB sticker on your car's rump.

Having collected all the various things I thought I needed from a well-known motoring spares store, the very knowledgeable sales assistant said I should put them all back, as they have a ready-made kit for European driving that is cheaper than the individual items! But the spare bulbs and the breathalyser kit (the kit must contain two breathalysers) needed to be bought separately. Also in the kit was a reflective yellow tabard and headlight deflectors... and don't forget





you need a tabard for each occupant of the vehicle, and the tabard needs to be easily reached by all those occupants.



It makes you wonder why in the UK we are not required to carry such items? Very often UK motorists do not carry any items of emergency equipment, nor does the law make us do so. A first-aid kit should be a no-brainer, a reflective tabard too if you happen to break down after dark or in poor weather.

So far so good. But with the confusion around Brexit what did I need around driving permits and the like? With the situation and the way it's reported changing by the day, and my trip starting mid-April I decided I would obtain everything I could get my hands on, even if it turned out I didn't actually need it in the end.

My car insurer wrote to me twice to say in the event of a no-deal Brexit I would need a Green Card – which they would provide free of charge. But don't leave obtaining one until the last minute, as it takes 3-5 working days to arrive, and my insurer asked for 14 days' notice.

There may also be the requirement to obtain an International Driving Permit – and there are different types depending on where you are going. This can be obtained from your local Post Office for £5.50; don't forget to take one passport-size photo and a photo ID too.

You should also take your car insurance documents with you, as well as your car's V5 form (commonly known as the logbook).





If all of this sounds confusing, well it is. With the terms of the UK's exit from the EU yet to be finalised, the official government website itself says: "Some of these requirements may change depending on the terms that the UK leaves the EU" and travellers need to keep checking for the latest information.

The best place to look is here: www.gov.uk

Other useful tips I found are that using a headset device for any reason whilst driving is now illegal, as is the use of a sat-nav system that detects speed cameras. If your sat-nav has such a system, you would be advised to switch off the 'points of interest' feature so you don't fall foul of the rules.

And if you wear glasses, you must keep a spare pair in the glovebox.

So the best advice is to keep checking all well-known travel websites as well as the government one, and don't leave anything to the last minute.

Now all I need to know is how to manage a moody/hyper (delete as applicable!) 12-year-old in the car on the way to Disneyland... not sure if there is a set of tips for that one!

July Members' Evening



Classic Car Show

If you haven't been before, you don't know what you're missing! Over 150 cars and bikes entered last year, from a 1926 Model T to modern classics; free entry for spectators.

**Wednesday 17th July 5:00pm – 9:30
Hatch Beauchamp Village Hall**





WHAT'S IT ALL ABOUT? (Part 2)

By Nigel Albright

An interesting pre WW2 note is that the first driving test examiners were trained by Hendon instructors but, very quickly demand outstripped supply, as it were, and consequently Hendon withdrew from the operation and the eleven examiners went on to train another 250.

When the police driving schools resumed after WW2 there was a massive expansion across the country; all were using Cottenham's system and ideas. Most were force driving schools that also served adjacent constabularies which did not have their own driving schools. The exception was Devizes which was the only Regional Police Driving School, designed to serve several constabularies from the outset.

The driving schools and the standards in police driving evolved largely under the radar as far as the general public were concerned. Some constabularies did produce their own material

and films promoting better, meaning safer, driving standards but that was largely localised.

Nothing much happened until a former Senior Instructor at Hendon, Ex-Chief Superintendent Jock Taylor in 1954 produced the book 'Attention All Drivers' sub-titled, 'The Hendon Technique of Driving', published by The Order of The Road, of which Lord Cottenham had been a member of the Executive Council. The Order of the Road can probably be called the first advanced driving organisation, although the term was not in use at that time. Taylor started at Hendon in 1937, therefore directly under the influence of Cottenham and the ideas he was then introducing. For the very first time Attention All Drivers put the notes used at the driving school into published form for the general public.

Unfortunately, Taylor had overstepped the mark because the Home Office said that the





material was copyrighted to the Hendon Driving School and within 3 months sales stopped. However, clearly Taylor had triggered a thought and an almost exact replica appeared a year later produced by the Stationary Office, then purely a government organisation and therefore non-commercial. The publication was called Road Craft (notice it was two separate words) with the strap line, '*A Manual of driving instruction for Students of the Motor Car Wings at the Metropolitan Police Driving School*'. It was only with the revised 1960 edition that it became the Police Drivers' Manual.

The first version of Road Craft also had a sleeve inside the back cover for a copy of the 'new' Highway Code.

In 1954 John Boyd-Carpenter was the Minister of Transport and Civil Aviation and his idea was that there should be a testing and certifying organisation to encourage the improvement in driving standards with the consequent heightening in safety on the roads. This was possibly triggered by Jock Taylor's good intentions, obviously reflecting that since Cottenham's ideas had done so much for safe police driving standards it could also be of

benefit to the general public, so Boyd-Carpenter insisted that any such organisation had to use what he called the Hendon system.

Let me introduce Miss Denise McCann. In the 1930s McCann was an interior designer of note who, it transpired, was going to be capable of much more than that. Stanley Roberts had set up the British School of Motoring in 1910. Part of the function of driving schools in those days was, 'to encourage those who had bought motorcars to learn how to handle them and, of course, to convert their carriage drivers and footmen into chauffeurs.' By the 1930s BSM had become the largest driving school in the world. McCann did some work for Roberts and there was an instant rapport. Soon she was invited onto the board of BSM. By the 1950s McCann was Robert's special assistant and one assumes was both astute and a person of considerable connection and influence.

Somewhere along the way McCann met the motoring correspondent of the Daily Herald, Tommy Wisdom. Wisdom, in his turn, was much more than just a journalist. He had a long history of driving in the 24 hour Le Mans and competed in many motoring endurance





events; altogether some 46 up to that time from 1931 onwards, driving some very exotic and potent machinery of the day. He had also broken 12 speed records at Bonneville Salt Flats. Wisdom was also another who could properly distinguish between road and competition driving. Ronald Priestley, previously the Chief Instructor of the Advanced Wing at Essex Police Driving School, was then the BSM's Chief Instructor and together with Wisdom wrote the highly successful book, *Good Driving the BSM Way* which was reprinted at least 12 times.

It is very likely that McCann and Wisdom together with Priestley were the driving force in setting up such an organisation as Boyd-Carpenter wanted, to encourage higher standards of safe driving in the everyday motorist. They would have been the ideal combination for the introduction of what became the Institute of Advanced Motorists in 1955, accepted that Denise McCann was acknowledged as the prime mover. The first Chief Examiner of IAM was George Eyles who came directly from serving over 25 years in the Met's Traffic Division.

It's important to remember that the National Speed Limits of 60 on two-way traffic and 70 on dual-carriage ways and motorways were introduced in 1975, so in 1955 there was no top limit on open roads and showing an ability to make good progress safely would have been an expected part of the test. Implicit in that would have been the ability to demonstrate overtaking safely in its various forms. Very different from today when, by comparison, it is largely follow my leader.

More or less simultaneously with formation of IAM in 1955 the Finchley Road Safety Council formed The Finchley League of Safe Drivers which, in 1960, became The League of Safe Drivers. Due to growth it outstripped its administrative ability and RoSPA stepped in and took it over in 1980, ultimately becoming the RoSPA Advanced Drivers Association. Unlike IAM its test was graded into three levels, Bronze (about the level of the standard driving test and needing annual re-testing), Silver and Gold (both of these required re-testing every three years).

Roberts died in 1957 and McCann became the owner and Managing Director of BSM. Both





McCann and Wisdom, probably with Priestley, agreed that since there were an increasing number of cars being produced which could top 100mph that there was a need for a higher level course to teach owners how to drive powerful vehicles safely on the roads at the higher speeds. This led to the BSM High Performance Course being introduced in 1962 with the backing of the then Minister of Transport, Ernest Marples. The Course had a fleet of some ten vehicles, which included a Jaguar E-Type, Aston Martin DB5, Sunbeam Tiger, Lotus Elan, Jensen CV8, Austin-Healy 3000 and a Ferrari Daytona, all purchased personally by Denise McCann and registered in her name. The first Course Manager was John Miles a former Hendon Advanced Wing Instructor and eminently suited to the part. At the time it was the only course of its type in the world and it has spawned a host of copycat courses but, unfortunately, many of them with track orientated instructors.

Meanwhile the police driving schools continued their work apace. The news spread far and wide and by the middle 60s instructors from some 60 police forces around the world had

been to Hendon to study its teachings.

Periodically there was a Police Driving Schools Conference where techniques were reviewed and refined as necessary to ensure the highest possible standards of safety in all areas of police driving. Any changes were reflected in subsequent editions of Roadcraft up to what I call the last driving schools driven (sic!) version of 1977. To give an indication of standards, when I last visited Hendon in 1982 the accident rate in the Met was 1:60,000. At driving school it was 1:230,000. Bear in mind that included advanced wing courses going out daily to a maximum of around 120mph and simulated emergency runs in built up areas. Add to that some instructors were at the school for over twenty years, so to do that continuously over that period and come back safely every time was, to say the least, proof of the pudding as the saying goes.

After this we come to significant changes and an unfortunate combination of circumstances. Whilst a review of Roadcraft had been initiated in 1990, the Stationery Office became financially independent in time for the publication of the 1994 Roadcraft. I believe that





under the legitimate guise of making the publication more up to date and readable there may have been some pressure to make it more saleable on the bookshelves.

There had been strong criticism by Sir John Whitmore of 1960s racing driver fame. He had waved a copy of the 1960 Roadcraft in the air shouting regimentation and inflexibility. The problem was that Whitmore never had the humility to study it all from the inside. He was certainly not, in my view, in the same league as Cottenham, Tom Wisdom and Joh Miles, for example.

Whitmore's book 'Super Driver' published in 1988 had a bit about Information Gathering and this appeared in the 1994 edition but, integrally with System. Later editions had it running parallel with System which is quite different.

The 1994 edition made great play about flexibility but, unfortunately, the flexibility thing got completely out of hand in its interpretation by many. True that inflexibility and regimentation were a possible impression from previous editions of Roadcraft because it

needed to be unpacked at driving school via a series of class room sessions. As one advanced wing instructor commented, 'Flexibility comes later' and another said, 'The key word is 'consider' – that is, consider each part of the System in sequence and decide whether it is applicable. In practise it certainly was not as regimented as it sounded.

It was felt by at least some on the RWP that Whitmore was an egotist. From conversations with members of the RWP, I gleaned that he had lived in the West Indies and was now back with the intention of re-creating himself in the public awareness and that he had chosen criticising Roadcraft as part means of achieving this, relying on his previous fame as a racing driver to give credence to whatever he said. Within that, Whitmore also criticised the system of steering suggesting a 'natural way' as an alternative. He apparently went to Hendon, drove on the skidpan to demonstrate this and, for want of a better term, promptly cocked it up. Never the less, the RWP felt intimidated because if they did not concede to his ideas they felt Whitmore's ability to generate negative press could seriously



compromise the sale of the new Roadcraft and that, unfortunately and at least in part, is how the introduction of so called rotational steering came into being. I know that at least one driving school promptly threw out rotational steering as well as other notable changes.

I could go on and there is much more which could be written but, it is time to summarise. If there is one thread running through all of this is the singular word, safety. Now, the main problem with the word safety is that it is difficult to quantify. Ask the average driver if they think they are safe and their likely response is that since they haven't had a crash they are safe.

OK, let's look at it another way. On a scale of 1-10 how would you grade a driver's vulnerability through this or that situation? Now that is different because you can grade vulnerability but, it is almost impossible to grade safety in the same way. So there is a sort of reverse logic here. Ultimately it is all about improving safety but, the measure of that is actually how much you reduce vulnerability.

This led to the sort of mission statement: -

'To the average driver safe means not having had an accident

To the advanced driver safe means not being vulnerable to an accident'.

The key, therefore, is whatever you teach or, whatever you learn, if it can't in some way be related to safety it is not in the frame, period. Because, if it can't be related to safety it just becomes pedantry and then the credibility of the whole thing falls apart. So, what's it all about? Well, being an advanced driver or even a better driver therefore means absolutely nothing until you quantify it. It's really about reducing vulnerability more than anything else because, in the manner of a see-saw, as you reduce vulnerability the safety level goes up and vice-versa, of course. So the key is, keep working on it, all the time.

Nigel Albright

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February 2019



70% of drivers misinterpret this sign

By Jamie Rogers



We're sure that most of our readers have heard the legend of Hackney Carriages having to carry a bale of hay and some oats for their horse (and contrary to popular belief, it was dropped from law in 1976), but traffic laws and road legislation in the UK

are some of the most comprehensive in Europe, so it's no surprise that many drivers can't quite recall every one of our numerous road signs.

A survey of 22,000 motorists by Halfords Autocentres has revealed that 70% of drivers can't correctly identify the meaning of this sign.

Zip merging

The sign is used on motorways and dual carriageways, it shows that one lane ahead is blocked by an obstruction, but the confusion comes from understanding the next action.

Pulling over into the next lane as soon as it's possible is the majority choice, but one that is technically wrong.

What the sign is actually telling you to do is to continue driving in the lane until you've almost reached the merge point, then slowly 'zip merge' into the clear lane, where it's safe and clear to do so. Just 27% of drivers knew the correct meaning in the survey, the last three percent believed that 'straddling both lanes, blocking vehicles from reaching the head of the queue' was acceptable.

Another survey by a national tyre chain also found that one in five road signs are a mystery to the average driver.

Avoidable breakdowns

The survey by Halfords was carried out as part of a roadworthiness campaign, but the fact that there are typically 85,000 breakdowns each year, with an estimated 40% being preventable isn't what's of interest here, this is more about driver education and habits.





36% of motorists admit to never reading the Highway Code once they've passed their driving test, and 20% of drivers haven't read it within the last decade, is it a wonder that identifying signs isn't at the forefront of their thoughts?

It seems easy to understand a great many road signs, the ones we see daily are perhaps even ignored, only ever taking notice of ones that are clearly warning of danger, but while we may have a basic understanding of what they mean, could we 100% positively identify the sign and the textbook meaning? It's doubtful.

Some years ago, AutoExpress polled 1,000 readers, 90% thought that driving standards were falling, but only 15% of respondents felt their driving standard had dropped, perhaps a brush-up on the Highway Code could help to change that thinking?

Highway code

While it's easy to think that the Highway Code hasn't changed significantly, you may be surprised to hear that in the last three years alone, there have been 48 updates to it, including changes to the MOT regulations,

learner driver laws and penalties for using a handheld device.

With some organisations calling for more regular eye tests as part of an ongoing campaign to increase road safety, perhaps part of the test should include a brush-up on the Highway Code, or at least the changing road signs to help with awareness of what they all mean and how to respond correctly.

While it could be argued that the sign in question and the lack of knowledge regarding it is purely a case of semantics, the fact is that swapping lanes prematurely could actually increase congestion in the build-up to the blockage, and that's before we get to the highly inconsiderate act of blocking the road so other drivers can't 'queue jump'.

It's frustrating to see other motorists policing the roads themselves, the Police always advise against such actions, and yet drivers continue to act in such a manner. Maybe it's those drivers that should be labelled as unthinking or selfish, rather than the drivers happily going about their business, in full compliance of the law?



The boys done good... and feeling like a parent on exam day?

By Jo Ellis, national observer, South Essex Group of Advanced Motorists

It was a pleasant surprise to receive an email from my area manager not long ago asking if I would be free to help with an IAM RoadSmart event at Silverstone for a couple of days. Being an out and out petrol head, of course I said yes.

When I received the details, it turned out to be #FormulaDriveSmart... a busy schedule to put the most talented young racing drivers in the country through the IAM RoadSmart advanced driver course - in two days.

The drivers are part of the British Racing Drivers Club's Rising Stars and SuperStars programmes, designed to help the future stars of motorsport reach their potential.

Paddy Hopkirk, race and rally legend, BRDC Vice President and IAM RoadSmart mature driver ambassador, realised that there could be potential for both organisations to dispel some

myths and benefit from an event incorporating advanced driving and the racing stars of the future.

Having received the briefing for the two days, I started thinking about the drivers that I would be working with. Looking at the media pack, they racked up some pretty impressive credentials on the track.





Could we observers really teach them anything about advanced driving in two days and get them to test standard? The IAM RoadSmart standards team made it very clear, there would be no compromising on test standards.

Were they a load of boy racers? Would they want to learn? How did they perceive us? Did they think we were a load of old fuddy-duddies with leather-soled shoes and open-backed driving gloves?

We assembled at the BRDC Clubhouse, in the middle of Silverstone circuit on a cold Monday morning. After the initial briefings, introductions and customary press calls, it was down to business.

Being assigned drivers/observers was a bit like being picked for sports at school – a bit of awkward foot shuffling and looking hopeful from both the drivers and the observers. I chatted to two guys near to me and we agreed to go out together – my drivers were Stuart Middleton, 2017 European GT4 Vice Champion and Jordan Albert, British GT Driver. We had been provided with BMW 1 series and Minis to use for the event – two drivers and an



observer to a car. It very quickly became apparent that the drivers certainly had car control skills, but what struck me immediately was their attitude. Definitely not boy racers – neither were they arrogant; they were passionate, knowledgeable and keen to learn.

These guys showed a degree of maturity that I hadn't expected to see. They realise their sponsors invest heavily in them, they are a package; their careers depend on having a driving licence and they get their kicks on the track – they don't need to prove anything on the road.





Getting them to test standard involved teaching limit points and slowing down some processes. Their knowledge of car handling characteristics meant they tended to enter particularly left-hand bends more quickly than we would – so the mantra of ‘stop in the distance you can see to be clear on your own side of the road’ was really helpful for them.



Road cars don't have ‘crash gearboxes,’ and block changes can afford to be a bit slower for comfort and economy but they soon adapted to this. Close proximity racing also means they are quite comfortable around other road users – giving ordinary drivers room for error and reading body language was invaluable for creating a safety bubble.

On the second day the assessments began. We observers sat around like expectant parents, waiting for our drivers to come back.

I felt really chuffed that my guys both passed with a F1RST, but in their typical, understated ways, I had to drag the results out of them!

I really enjoyed my two days with Stuart and Jordan – I think we dispelled some myths on both sides and I am sure that the skills they learnt will stay with them on the road. It really was a pleasure and I look forward to following their careers on the track.





The “nervous middle” – an update

By Mike Quinton, IAM RoadSmart Chief Executive Officer



You may recall that I wrote a blog in December reflecting on my step-daughter's crash late at night on the M1 which resulted in her Mini being written off. Not a pleasant phone call to take, I can assure you!

The good news is that physically she is now pretty much mended (the finger I swore

couldn't be broken is now mended, as are her ribs) but mentally the experience had made an already apprehensive driver even more cautious. I am delighted to report that our very own head of driving and riding standards, Richard Gladman, volunteered to spend some time with her passing on the benefits of his skills and experience. So off he trotted to Leicester and spent 4 hours as co-pilot in her replacement Mini. Thankfully he reported back that she is as safe as houses - however there were a few important lessons to be taken on board.

1. Drive with eyes on full beam, looking further up the road. All of us who have undergone advanced training will recognise this but so many drivers simply stare at the tail lights right in front of them and don't see the emerging situation.





2. Motorway driving (my step-daughter's Achilles' heel) – whilst safe, driving at 55 mph in the left lane constantly is a recipe for monotony, stuck behind truck after truck. Richard's advice is to change lanes when safe and clear and vary your speed. Make the drive more engaging and interactive... and in that way reduce the chance of loss of concentration.
3. Learn to keep focussed on the road. My step-daughter likes to talk and it was noticeable that when deep in conversation, her driving attention decreased. This echoes the findings expressed in our recent white paper on Distracted Driving – talking on a hands-free mobile is not noticeably safer than talking on a hands-held device. It's less of a physical issue but more the ability to keep the mind focussed. Richard taught her some techniques to help maintain concentration

on the road – and I've made a mental note not to call her if I think she is driving!

4. Be prepared for the drive. If driving late at night, be aware that eating a large meal shortly before you drive could well impact your cognitive ability. Whilst the brain will not be starved of blood/oxygen whilst your stomach digests the pizza/curry, you may well experience a blood sugar crash which at best impacts your concentration and worse still could lead to a micro-sleep.

Having spoken to my step-daughter, I think that apart from some hints and tips, the most important factor in helping her become more confident was being told by an independent expert that her driving is ok. Nothing fundamental to worry about. No need to be intimidated.

Thanks again Richard – hopefully my step-daughter is set fair for many, many years of safe driving.





When would you hang up your keys?

By Kate Tonge, IAM RoadSmart director of marketing and communications

All the media furore and ensuing debate about older drivers following the Duke of Edinburgh's recent decision to voluntarily hand in his driving licence at the age of 97 - and the crash that preceded his decision - has struck a personal chord with me.

I've recently had to live without a car myself - just for a short while - and started to appreciate what the longer term implications might be. Regardless of age, it changes your life.

I'm relatively fit and capable of walking, running and using public transport to get about. I'm lucky to live in an area where public transport, while not brilliant, is significantly better than in some more rural areas. Even so, I've found myself more likely to put off going out, unless I could walk or until someone could give me a lift.

I've been frustrated at times that the little things I could jump in the car to get done have

needed more patience - never a strong point for me! I've had to admit I'm less independent than I prefer to be, swallow my pride and ask for help. I've been more dependent than I'm used to on fitting around the priorities in other people's lives, for getting the little things done which are important to me, but maybe less so to them.

I can see how, particularly for those living alone, this situation could lead to feelings of anxiety, frustration, social isolation and loneliness. Over time, we are becoming more and more aware of the implications these can have on our mental and physical health. They put a strain on us, which if prolonged can add to the strain on health and care providers, including family and friends.

We are a nation of car drivers. Our cars are a tangible representation of our ability to be independent, sociable, engaged and involved in our communities. I've heard this time and





time again in the recent media debates and phone-ins about age and driving ability.

But whatever we wish for ourselves as we grow older, fate can deal us surprises, in the short or longer term. Whether we live into our 90s or not, we will all at some point have to face the reality of a conversation about whether we should be driving, even if we think we're still capable and safe to do so.

At what is often a challenging and emotional time, we can all benefit from an objective, professional view. Sometimes that's relatively easy to find, from a medical professional, for example. But when that's not appropriate or sufficient to help with this important decision, it's good to know that there are driver reviews which can provide an important, objective evidence base to help with making a tough decision.

Regardless of status and perceptions about the extent to which driving is a necessity or not - and there's been a lot said about the extent to which Prince Phillip needs to drive himself around these days - the implications of agreeing to hang up your car keys is fraught

with emotion and not just for the driver themselves. Family, friends and carers are all affected by the situation and the decision.

Older drivers are not intrinsically less safe than other drivers. Combined with many years of driving experience, they often reduce the risk to them and other road users by restricting where and how far they drive, at what time of day or weather conditions.

But we do have an aging population. Today, over a million licence holders are over the age of 80. And in the next 20 years the number of drivers over 70 will double. Age is not the defining factor - I'm still some considerable way off 70, let alone 80!

I hope my eagerly-resumed relationship with my car and advanced driving continues with only minor interruptions for many years to come. And I hope that when someone wants or needs to have 'that conversation' with me, because I can't or am no longer safe to drive, I have the wisdom to seek - and listen to - an objective second opinion about whether or not the time has come to hang up my car keys for good.



Driving down memory lane for Comic Relief

By Peter Rodger, IAM RoadSmart head of driving advice



Preliminary discussions had settled the plan; along with two friends I would share the crewing of a 1960s Routemaster bus on London's number 25 bus route, the capital's busiest - collecting for Red Nose Day instead of taking fares.

Two of us would share the driving, with all three of us doing our bit on the rear of the bus, making sure we loaded and unloaded safely, and also seeking donations in our coin collection boxes.

TfL had agreed the plan (there were about nine buses across various areas of London doing the same thing) so off we went. Large amounts of starting and stopping, of course, and a lot of squeezing through small gaps was the order of the day.

Bus lanes are a great help at times, but when they become blocked with parked vehicles, or when people encroach onto them just a little, they can become space you just can't use.

Anyone who has ever driven a long vehicle will understand that sometimes a gap is wide enough, but the need to turn as you go through it can mean there simply isn't enough effective width - and dropping in and out of a bus lane in a queue of slow moving or stationery traffic can quickly demonstrate the problem, with the kerb forcing you to steer before the rear wheels have cleared the pinch point of the gap.





Routemasters are really quite nice things to drive. Like any bus they are big square boxes, so working out how much space you need is quite easy.

Whilst most were automatic when new (even back in the 1950s when they were designed, the technology was well enough developed), nearly all the survivors have been converted to semi-automatic gear operation.

That means you have a gear-lever but no clutch pedal, and with a little care it is possible to give a really smooth ride. The steering has some assistance, not as light as a modern vehicle, but not a workout for the upper body like some other old commercial vehicles.

Driving an old fashioned open platform bus is excellent for reminding you to use the nearside mirror. People will get on or off at traffic lights, or other stops in a queue of traffic, and the need to check there isn't someone with a foot

on the platform and a foot on the ground as you start to move is rapidly apparent.

Reactions to an old bus are highly varied. A few people don't know how to get on and look quizzically at you in the cab, expecting there to be a door. But very many more smile (not just the ones looking for a bus), give a thumbs up, or stop dead in their tracks, then turn and head for the platform at the back.

On board it became a bit like a party downstairs with conversations about memories of going to school, probably the most common.

Upstairs was almost silent. Routemasters are great things to drive and our share of the money raised across the capital (about £2,000 with some results still awaited) was £275 - so we had a great day and Comic Relief is a little better off.

Thanks to award winning bus operator Ensignbus for the bus and TfL for permission to run the route.





Recent Releases from the IAM Press Office

Driving with technology

Mobile communications and GPS systems used as sat-navs are becoming very common in cars. Whether you are connecting your Bluetooth to blast tunes or looking for the nearest Waitrose, these have become a fundamental part of the daily drive for many of us.

This week's tips give advice on using technology to complement your driving, from IAM RoadSmart's head of driving and riding standards Richard Gladman.

- Whilst a sat-nav aids in getting you from A to B try not to become reliant on it. It is important to pay attention to road signs and the road ahead, in case there's a diversion sign that the device may not have picked up.
- Get to know your sat-nav before you set off and always programme it when stationary. Many people trust their sat-navs not to get them lost but you also need to know about roadworks, diversions and places to stop. Keep an old fashioned map to ensure that you limit the chances of going completely off track.
- Create your playlist before you start your journey. Taking your eyes off the wheel to look or adjust your music can often prove to be

hazardous. It only takes a few seconds distraction to cause an accident. Remember to also keep your music down in some circumstances; your hearing can keep you safe, so be prepared to turn the music off.

- Don't make or take calls when driving and never text or engage with social media on your smartphone. Through extensive research, it has been shown that making calls, even hands-free, affects concentration and slows reactions when driving.
- Some vehicles have the ability to create a Wi-Fi zone allowing internet access. This should be used as a luxury for passengers whilst ensuring they do not distract you as the driver. For instance a computer screen reflecting in the dark is a dangerous distraction.

Richard said: "The latest driver assistance systems can be the perfect back-up to cover our occasional human failings but are no substitutes for concentration. The driver must always remain connected to what is going on around them. Multi-tasking is a myth and all too often that glance away can become a complete switch-off to an emerging risk. No text, tweet, check in or status update is worth crashing for."





Keep on trucking

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

- When you're driving along the motorway, you'll notice many lorries with foreign number plates. Bear in mind that the driver will be sitting on the left hand side rather than the right, so you may be difficult to see and the driver may be acclimatising his lane position in the UK. Take extra care when passing and allow more space if you can.
- We've all heard the saying "if you can see their mirrors, then they can see you." But an HGV can have up to five mirrors, and the driver is only limited to looking at one at a time so they may not see you. Hold back and you will eventually be visible in their mirrors.
- Identify when there is a likelihood of the HGV changing lanes. Is there a slip road coming up which will be joining traffic and may force a lane change? Or if there is an HGV in lane two, are they likely to change back into lane one? Be accommodating by hanging back and allowing them to pull into the lane they are looking to move into.
- At one point in time, we've all experienced heavy spray from an HGV in front of us. You can control this by extending the distance between yourself and the lorry. The Highway Code suggests at least four seconds in the rain but if needed, make it more. Not only will it prevent your wipers working overtime, it will also improve your vision beyond the HGV.
- An articulated lorry will track sideways in a right-hand bend on the motorway and on a roundabout, so avoid being beside it. A good rule of thumb is to be safely in front of or safely behind, but never beside an HGV when entering a roundabout.
- If you see a queue of traffic in front of you and have an HGV behind you, introduce your brake lights early to pre-warn the driver





behind and slow down gradually. This will let the HGV driver extend their braking distance and stop in plenty of time. On a motorway or dual carriageway, hazard lights can be used to show drivers behind you of any issues further in front (Highway Code rule 116).

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

Richard said: "As any HGV driver will tell you, they sometimes need a bit of extra space to move down the road. Visibility can be restricted and no amount of mirrors will allow all of the blind spots to be monitored all of the time.

"By applying some simple rules and sharing the road space, we can make life easier for all of us. On a roundabout they will need more than one lane so let them have it; a few seconds delay will be worth it if you prevent a crash. Walk that mile in the other man's shoes and understand what we may need."

A wheely big problem

Alloy wheel theft was a problem years ago, when a smart set of wheels made your mundane car stand out from the crowd.

Unfortunately, it was simple for the scumbags of the world to jack the car up and unbolt them - easier than actually earning some cash to buy them. Then anti-theft locking wheel nuts came out.

These are wheel securing nuts or bolts; they're usually referred to as locking wheel nuts, even though many are bolts, which can only be unscrewed with a special adaptor - the key supplied with them. Alloys also became common as standard equipment on anything but the most basic car models and the problem more or less went away.

However, wheel theft is creeping back. There are a few reasons. First, a very flash set of alloys these days might set you back anything up to £2,000 so the temptation is there. More importantly, lots of new cars are taken on a lease, which means they must be handed back more or less unblemished, or the owner pays for any damage to be put right.

The modern fashion is for big wheels and skinny tyres, but a thin tyre means the metal of the wheel is below kerb height and these





expensive wheels are easily scraped, even by careful parkers. Hence the market for stolen alloy wheels, even those fitted as standard.

They may be stolen to order from a relatively new, undamaged car simply by using the owner's key and looking for a car with the same locking nut profile - most manufacturers only make around 20 or so different types.

People also lose the wheel nut key or forget to pass it on when the car is sold, resulting in a garage being unable to remove the wheel for a service.

Locking wheel nut removal tools are therefore now commonplace and quite cheap. They bite into the metal of the nut or bolt, gripping it and allowing it to be unscrewed. Thieves use these as well, to steal the wheels, although they do take a few minutes for each wheel.

Upmarket cars up to four or five years old with large alloys are particularly vulnerable because the wheels are easily scraped, the cars are usually leased and the wheels are expensive to replace.

So, what can you do to guard against the morons who feel that theft is an acceptable form of income? Well, any locking wheel nut is at least a deterrent. Buying a set of after-market nuts to replace the maker's standard ones may be an advantage as well because the thief is

unlikely to have the right key and using a wheel nut remover takes time and attracts attention.

Turning the front wheels to a full lock towards the kerb is another deterrent – it makes them more difficult to remove and, since thieves want to get the wheels off as fast as possible, anything which makes life more difficult for them will help.

Some locking wheel nuts, such as McGard or EVO Mk5, are sold as high security. They are widely available in accessory shops and online and have a hardened outer section which spins, so a standard wheel nut remover won't work. They can be removed by someone determined, but it takes a more specialist tool and a lot longer, so they will be a good deterrent unless some very rare or expensive wheels are being stolen to order.

Unfortunately, no-one seems to offer an alloy wheel security marking service – but that would only help the police to identify wheels after they have been stolen, but even so, maybe there's a gap in the market if an entrepreneur is reading...

In the meantime, fitting high security locking wheel nuts, turning the front wheels to the kerb and parking in a well-lit, public place are about the only security measures you can take. Or of course, you can stick to the mundane steel wheels that no-one wants to steal; they revolve just the same after all!





Bank holiday getaway

If you're planning a bank holiday getaway then be sure to read our tips on how you can make your journey a safe and stress-free one. Here's IAM RoadSmart's head of driving and riding standards, Richard Gladman, to help you prepare for your trip. Because a little preparation goes a long way.

- Take some time to check your vehicle inside and out before you set off. Check the tyre pressure and fluid levels are right and make sure your car ancillaries are working properly.
- Secure your luggage in your boot so it's out of the way and doesn't obstruct your view.
- Give yourself plenty of time for the journey and check the news for any traffic updates and roadworks nearby.
- If you're travelling during the early hours of the day or late in the evening make sure you take some rest beforehand and eat

something light so you don't feel sluggish before you leave.

- If you plan on using a sat-nav don't forget to programme in the destination before you leave and check it. Leave plenty of time for the journey so you don't find yourself pushed for time.
- Make sure you take regular rest breaks to split up the journey when driving on a long, boring stretch of a motorway. It's good practise to stop at least every two hours.

Richard said: "With so much planning involved in a holiday, many of us forget about the first bit - how we get to our destination.

"If your journey is a long one, take some time to plan where and when you will be taking a break - just so you can get a little rest and have some water to stay hydrated. Enjoy the journey and more importantly, enjoy the getaway."





Eight essentials to keep in your car

Richard Gladman, IAM RoadSmart's head of driving and riding standards, provides the eight essentials that you should always keep in your vehicle.

- It's always best to keep an ice-scraper and can of de-icer in your vehicle as the British weather is so unpredictable, and can be sunny one day and frosty the next.
- Carry an empty fuel can with you. Don't carry a full or partially full one as this is a fire hazard and if it has recently had fuel in it, flammable vapour may still be present.
- You never know when you'll need a first aid kit, so keeping one in the boot of your car is always handy for either yourself, or another road user if you're first on scene at an accident.
- If you've broken down on the side of the road, the last thing you want is to be cold

and unable to see your way around the dark. That's why we advise drivers to always keep a torch and set of batteries in their vehicle, along with warm clothes, a blanket and a high visibility jacket. And don't forget food and drink to stop your energy levels from dropping - bottled water is a must.

- The battery on your car can go flat at any time, whether you're popping to your local fish and chip shop or picking your vehicle up from the airport carpark after a wonderful sunny holiday. Make sure you keep a set of jump leads in your car so you can start your engine with help from another driver's vehicle.
- Keep a spare pair of sturdy shoes with a good grip in your car. You'll need these to turn the wheel brace when changing a tyre, or to push your car if you've broken down, or even just to change shoes if there's a sudden weather change.





- An item that's often overlooked is the reflective warning triangle. This gives you extra security for a number of reasons such as breaking down in the dark. Put it out in accordance with the rule from the Highway code 274 which advises to "put a warning triangle on the road at least 45 metres (147 feet) behind your broken-down vehicle on the same side of the road, or use other permitted warning devices if you have them. Always take great care when placing or retrieving them, but never use them on motorways."
- A lot of us use our sat-navs to travel to unfamiliar places, but what if your battery dies and you can't find the charger? Or what if it takes you the wrong way? The best thing to do is to refer back to your trusty road atlas, so don't forget to purchase an up-to-date copy every year and keep it in your car. A

good rule of thumb is to take a look at your road map before you set off to get an idea of the direction you need to travel in. Find yourself a place to aim for or motorway signs to look out for.

- Last but not least your mobile phone. Switch it to silent and place it in the glove box to avoid any temptation to touch it, but it will be there ready to use when and if you need it.

Richard says: "A journey can be a pleasant experience with the right planning. But it can turn into a nightmare if circumstances change and you do not have the right tools for the job with you. Getting stranded either in suddenly changing weather conditions, breakdowns or road closures will be made more bearable if you can let people know where you are, and survive in relative comfort and safety until you can get safely where you're going."





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

**All contributions would be very
welcome.**

**All items should be sent to
ed@wessexam.uk or
by mail to David Walton at
Little Paddocks, White Street,
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