

**Anglo Trading Estate
Shepton Mallet**



Forward

**Newsletter of
Somerset & Wiltshire Advanced
Motorists**

www.swam-iam.org.uk

Registered Charity No 1050592

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[Please pass this on to potential new members to join SWAM.]

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Somerset & Wiltshire Advanced Motorists
(Registered Charity No. 1050592)

FEBRUARY—APRIL 2021

Forward

Issue 4

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NOTICE OF ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

The AGM of Somerset and Wiltshire Advanced Motorists will be held on Thursday 18th March 2021 on Zoom beginning at 19.30.

Nominations for the vacant positions on the Committee (see page 5), which must be proposed, seconded and bear the signature of the nominee signifying his or her consent to the nomination, plus items for the Agenda, need to be sent to the Group Secretary to reach her by Friday 12th March **at the latest**. Note that the new committee, to serve for the year 2021-22, plus any approved changes to the Supplementary Items to the Group's Rules of Affiliation, will not be effective until Thursday 25th March 2021.

After the formal AGM our Young Driver Representative and Vice-President, David Gallagher, will be speaking to us about road safety.

An invitation to the Zoom meeting will be sent to all members on email, and will be posted on the website.

EDITORIAL

Welcome to *Forward* 4. We are sorry to have to confirm that, yet again, observed runs with Associates have had to be put on hold because of coronavirus restrictions. We hope very much that they will be able to restart in the fairly near future, but that depends on so many factors outside our control. In the meantime, we are planning events to keep our Associates active and help them make a start on their training, even without being able to go out with an Observer. To this end, an event on Zoom is planned for Associates to take part in a quiz which will be both informative and fun. Details are on page 17 and, if you are an Associate, please make sure you attend this quiz.

We are holding our AGM, via Zoom, on Thursday, 18th March, at 7.30pm. Full details of the elections to be held are on page 5, and those unable to attend the meeting will have a chance to vote in advance. After the formal business of the AGM, our Young Driver Ambassador and Vice-President, David Gallagher, will be talking to us about road safety, which is, of course, the prime purpose of our organisation. Please join us on

that evening.

On page 16 you will find some corrections and clarifications to the report in *Forward* 3 on the September meeting at which our member Leigh Woodham, who is a solicitor, spoke to us about road traffic collisions and the law. He has asked us to clarify a few points which we hope will clear up any misunderstandings which may have arisen.

We have had some very interesting meetings on Zoom and the reports of the October to December meetings start on page 7. We publish these reports in detail so that those who are unable to attend the meetings, for whatever reason, can still benefit from their content.

We are publishing some articles from Graham Feest's 'Traffic Safety Roads', on the subjects of parking and speeding. His newsletter contains a lot of interesting information and details of how to access it are on page 22.

*Clare Hogg
John Morley
Sue Phillips*

The next edition of *Forward* will be published in May 2021.
Please submit motoring-related articles and / or digital photographs
to the Editors (*who reserve the right to edit them*) by
Friday 9th April at the latest. Names of authors and their home
addresses should be disclosed to the Editors who will withhold
them from publication on request.

A MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIRMAN

Firstly may I say that I hope you had a merry Christmas and a happy New Year, given the constraints of the present crisis. For me it marked the end of a year of sadness following the loss of my dear wife in October.

The year of 2020 will be one that we are not likely to forget. The coronavirus has had an impact on all of our lives to some extent. It has meant that we have had to conduct our group business within the restrictions quite rightly placed upon us by the government and IAM RoadSmart. And as a result, our main task of improving the standards of driving on our roads has been constrained due to the suspension of observed runs. However, the committee has endeavoured to compensate for these restrictions by continuing to meet each month, via video conference (Zoom), and we have also used this facility to hold monthly group social evenings and training sessions, with a growing number of attendees. The speakers so far have presented interesting topics on motoring, which have all been well received. So, the next time that you are notified of a group meeting, please join in. Also, if you are aware of anyone, including yourself, who may be in a position to provide an interesting talk, please contact a member of the committee.

So, we now move into 2021, with the hope that the situation will improve. The rollout of the anti-virus vaccines and current restrictions will hopefully see the start of an end to this dreadful period in our history. Maybe, sometime later this year, we shall be able to get back to normal business. I personally look forward to meeting group members, some of them for the first time, and restarting observed runs.

In the meantime, please stay safe.

John Morley
Chairman, SWAM

NOTICE OF ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING—18th March 2021

The Annual General Meeting of Somerset and Wiltshire Advanced Motorists will take place on Zoom on Thursday 18th March 2021, beginning at 19.30.

In 2020, because we could not hold our first AGM in person, the Committee members were approved by email and phone call voting. All these Committee positions will be elected at this AGM with voting on Zoom. Any member unable to attend the AGM may vote by contacting the Group Secretary before the meeting.

These positions, and the members currently holding them are:

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|------------------|----------------|
| Group Chair: | John Morley |
| Deputy Chair: | Lindsay Flower |
| Group Secretary: | Rosemary Tandy |

| | |
|--------------------------|------------------|
| Group Treasurer: | Clare Hogg |
| Chief Observer: | David Major |
| Associates Co-ordinator: | David Major |
| Membership Secretary: | Peter Huntington |
| Minutes Secretary: | Sue Phillips |
| Newsletter Editor: | Clare Hogg |
| Webmaster: | Colin Nunn |

Nominations for these positions on the Committee, which must be proposed, seconded and bear the signature of the nominee signifying his or her consent to the nominations, plus items for the Agenda, must be sent to the Group Secretary to reach her by Friday 12th March **at the latest**. The full list of nominations for the Committee positions will be posted on the group website prior to the meeting. Members unable to access the website (www.swam-iam.org.uk) are asked to contact the Group Secretary for this information.

Note that the election of the new committee, to serve for the year 2021-22, plus any proposed changes to the Supplementary items to the Group's Rules of Affiliation, will be effective from Thursday 25th March 2021.

Anyone intending to stand for election to the Committee must be aware that all the Committee members act as Trustees for the charity which is Somerset and Wiltshire Advanced Motorists and are thus liable to follow the legal requirements of HM Charity Commissioners.

All the existing Committee members are willing to stand again for their current positions on the Committee.

Under the terms of the Rules of Affiliation for Somerset and Wiltshire Advanced Motorists, the 'Officers' of the Group (Chairman, Secretary and Treasurer) serve for only one year.

Other Committee members normally serve for three years. In order to maintain continuity within the Committee of our new group, two of the remaining members will serve for one year, two for two years, and two for three years, as follows:

Minutes Secretary and Newsletter Editor: members will serve for one year, and will be eligible for re-election in 2022.

Deputy Chair and Chief Observer/Associates Co-ordinator: members will serve for two years, and will be eligible for re-election in 2023.

Membership Secretary and Webmaster: members will serve for three years, and will be eligible for re-election in 2024.

It is proposed, as a change to the Rules of Affiliation for Somerset and Wiltshire Advanced Motorists, that in future the roles of Chief Observer and Associates Co-ordinator, whilst remaining two distinct roles, will normally be held by the same person.

GROUP NEWS

The October meeting of Somerset and Wiltshire Advanced Motorists was again held via Zoom rather than at Beckington Memorial Hall because of Covid-19.

Apologies were received from our Chairman, John Morley, and Deputy Chair Lindsay Flower and in their absence David Major acted as Chair.

David introduced Shaun Cronin, Area Service Delivery Manager, to the meeting to give the presentation.

Shaun said he needed no introduction, most people know who he is and he has met a lot of the new SWAM members on different occasions in the past. He said he didn't have a presentation, just a talk.

He was a member of the Dorset Police Force and retired five years ago. For 20 years he was a traffic policeman, riding motorbikes. He had been a biker and car driver in the Bournemouth, Poole and Christchurch areas. The more senior he became, the more he became responsible for investigating serious, complex road traffic collisions – and even now he is still talking about road safety. He said he didn't enjoy the gory bits, but he did enjoy making a difference in the way people were treated and doing his best.

Lockdown has prevented day to day driving and riding and he wondered what he was going to do with himself so he volunteered, after five years of retirement, to return to Dorset Police, as he still feels he is able to do the things that police officers need to do. However, there were so many volunteers that he wasn't needed.

What else could he do? He likes riding bikes, so he volunteered with Blood Bikes.

When you see Blood Bikes out on the road you might think they are just a bunch of volunteers doing the right thing. However, the NHS has not always got the capability to move blood from place to place so Blood Bikes were set up to help.

Every volunteer has to be an Advanced Rider and they have to be trained in some medical procedures. Because of the lockdown, he couldn't have the medical training, so he moved equipment instead. Riding through Bristol on a Saturday afternoon with no traffic is an eerie experience! Blood Bikers also move Covid samples.

Volunteers have to wait for the phone to ring – which often happens at night. They do a great job for which they receive no pay, just expenses. Shaun assisted in the training of bikers – but didn't go on the rota for night rides!

Shaun moved on to talk about the Under 17 Car Club, which was started in 1976 by Sandy Barrie, a children's author and Barry Williams, a racing driver.

If you're under 17 and can't drive on a public road, where can you go? The club gives an opportunity for young people to drive a variety of vehicles, including the family car, at venues including Bovington Camp and Castle Combe racing circuit which is filled with cones and roundabouts! It is not open to young people over 17 but to children from

the age of 11.

Children learn to drive the family car with their parents alongside them, in a nurturing, safe, non-judgemental environment, with different areas for practising different manoeuvres. Young children's minds and capabilities are suited to this form of learning and they have not had time to develop bad habits. They are taught to drive using Roadcraft and IPSGA from the outset.

They are given the opportunity to drive a wide range of vehicles, including articulated trucks, buses, caravans, police cars and fire engines. But when the young people took to the roads, although they could drive cars well, they were not prepared for other drivers' different behaviour on the roads.

The Car Club makes everything fun and teaches the core skills and Shaun was Chief Instructor for about five years.

At 17, the young people have to move on. He encouraged them to stay in touch by offering advanced drive control and advanced driving. More experienced members are taught how to handle vehicles at speed before venturing onto public roads.

Shaun said that the Car Club is a Charitable Trust going from strength to strength. He feels that there is a need to get more young children involved.

Shaun was asked about the minimum age – children can join from the age of 11, providing they can reach the pedals, with the help of a cushion if necessary.

He was asked about the cost of joining. The annual fee is about

£300 because the cost of hiring the venues is high. But he said that if you went to all the meetings it would work out at £7 or £8 per session.

Shaun went on to talk about Insurance Scams – Crash for Cash. He said that dash cams are now cost effective and easy to fit and they can provide very useful video evidence.

Res ipsa loquitur – facts speak for themselves!

At any incident take lots of pictures from a variety of angles, even if it is only a minor bump and the other driver admits liability because a story can be mutated many times. Also, take driver details and registration numbers.

If you feel that someone is driving in an erratic manner, exercise discretion and restraint – let them go and, hopefully, disappear.

But remember – whilst a dash cam captures other peoples' driving behaviour, it also captures your own!

Check regularly that it is recording too.

Shaun then spoke about SMART Motorways. He remembered driving on the M42 in the early days when the hard shoulder was changed to "hard shoulder running" to relieve congestion at busy times. The problem with them is the nature of human behaviour. A car may be forced to stop on the hard shoulder when it is a running lane, but the following cars and lorries do not notice and there is a collision.

Motorways are generally the safest roads to drive on but a crash is more catastrophic because of the high speeds. Shaun remarked that SUDDENLY is a word that shouldn't exist in a motorway context.

He said that SMART Motorways are a better alternative to widening motorways but require compliance from drivers. He said that when a stretch of the M3 had a 50mph limit because of roadworks, lanes often kept running and there was less congestion.

There have been lots of calls for hard shoulders to be reinstated but, if you break down, get into a refuge, get out of the car and go over the barrier.



Image from www.gov.uk

SMART motorways do work, if run effectively, supervised properly and used by alert drivers.

Shaun then answered questions from the audience.

The first was about middle lane hogging, which is now a specific offence subject to a fixed penalty fine. But people still do it, how can it be stopped and how do you deal with it?

Shaun advised against nipping past on their left hand side. Overtaking should be done on the right. Although undertaking is not a specific offence, if the car decided to return to lane 1 you would be at fault should there be a collision.

Instead, move out into lane 2 and flash your lights briefly to tell them you are behind them. If they don't move in, overtake in lane 3 and return to lane 1.

The next question concerned motorways where three lanes are merging into one. If you keep going in the empty lane to the head of the queue and then try to merge, other drivers become resentful. On the other hand, it is recommended that you do so. Shaun advised using the empty lane, but not at high speed and merging before you get to the head of the queue.

He said that at Weymouth there are signs that say "Use both lanes, merge in turn". This has helped to reduce congestion. Shaun was the police officer who suggested it to the highway authority.

Another member mentioned the Waze app for smart phones, which warns you of broken down vehicles and their position. Waze works with Google and the system is updated.

Finally Shaun spoke about a chart which he had drawn up showing the different Covid alert levels and the activities allowed in each level. In tier 1 (where our region was in October) car observing can continue, if Observers and Associates are happy to do so, but it is not permitted in tiers 2 and 3. In tiers 1 and 2, motorcycle observing is permitted but not in tier 3.

Peter Huntington thanked Shaun for all the help he gave to Observers. David Major invited Shaun to meet the Observers once we are able to hold training sessions. Shaun said he looked forward to meeting members and said Things will get better!

David thanked Shaun for his interesting talk.

Lindsay Flower welcomed members to the Zoom November meeting and said that it would be a Question and Answer session with National Observers answering questions sent in by Associates and members. First, she asked David Major, Chief Observer, to recap on IPSGA. He went through the different aspects of the System of advanced driving explaining each part.

The *Information* phase overlaps the others and includes TUG: *Take* in information using sight, hearing and smell, but the most important is the eyes which should alternate between main beam, near, mirrors and sides. *Use* information to plan your approach to hazards, and *Give* information by the position of the car and use of indicators. *Position* yourself to negotiate the hazard, and then adjust your *Speed* by decelerating or braking. Choose the appropriate *Gear* for that speed using block changing, eg. 5 to 3, and then *Accelerate* away from the hazard. Make progress but maintain stability and take note of the conditions.

He then touched on the question of brake overlapping, changing gear while braking, which should only be done in certain circumstances such as going down hills with a junction, or approaching a sharp junction on a busy road when to slow down using acceleration sense would take too long and hold up other traffic. If you do it on test, then you should tell the examiner what you are doing and why.

Question 1 was to do with coasting:

1) When you depress the clutch when going over a traffic calmer, isn't this

the same as letting the car coast in neutral? Aren't you sacrificing car control over comfort?

2) Same goes for putting the clutch in rather than changing down gears as we approach a hazard. Sometimes the clutch is in for a long time and the car is coasting. Surely this can't be right?

Ray Robbett answered this question and pointed out that depressing the clutch, and so putting the car into neutral, actually uses more fuel than being in a low gear, so that, contrary to what many think, it is not an economical measure. If your car tells you your fuel consumption in miles per gallon, you will see that it takes more fuel when the clutch is down than when you are in a low gear.

The secret to not coasting is knowing your 'idling speed'. This is the speed at which the car can still travel without stalling and it is when the revs are at 800-900. In his car that is about 7mph in first gear and 10-12mph in second. This is a suitable speed to go over humps. Occasionally, when the revs get down to 1,000, you may need to depress the clutch to avoid stalling but not normally. It takes practice to know your idling speed, but it means that you don't have to use the clutch and lose control, so try it out in your car.

A member pointed out that it actually causes more damage to the car to go over a hump too slowly than at a faster speed. Gentle acceleration will take you over the hump without bumping and affecting the suspension.

Ray then answered the second half of the question about approaching roundabouts without coasting. When

you approach a roundabout, or a red traffic light, you slow down but remain in the gear you were in. Brake until the revs are down to 1,000 and then depress the clutch and brake to reach the hazard. This is not coasting, it is a controlled roll from about 20mph to a stop, and you are in control. When the hazard clears, select a gear to proceed.

Mark Ellis answered **Question 2:**

When proceeding carefully along a single-track road, a driver passes a marked 'Passing Place' immediately before a sharp, blind bend and encounters a vehicle coming the other way, now around 250 yards from the next 'Passing Place' and with more cars to be seen approaching in the distance. Both stop, but who should reverse to make way for the other?

What if one or both of the 'opposing' vehicles are towing caravans?

The Highway Code says that if you see an approaching vehicle, you should wait in a passing place on the left, or wait opposite one on the right, to allow the other vehicle to pass. You should give way to vehicles going uphill. Think ahead and be prepared, and notice when you pass a space in case you need to reverse



to it. So far as caravans are concerned, give way to them. The

chat facility on Zoom was used by several members to point out that this applies equally to farm vehicles or vehicles towing horse trailers.

A discussion arose about the use of gears and braking on hills. The advice was to change to a low gear on the approach to a steep hill, to avoid changing on the hill, and then use the brake to control the speed. It is cheaper to replace brake pads than a gearbox and brake failure is much less common nowadays than formerly.

David Major answered **Question 3** on use of the hard shoulder of a motorway:

The Highway Code states that one must not stop on the hard shoulder of a motorway except in an emergency. What constitutes an emergency - for example, would atrocious weather which made driving very difficult?

You are driving alone with two young children and are forced to stop on the hard shoulder. It is recommended that you should get out of the car and wait behind the barrier. What if you don't think you can control the two young children on your own? Is it safer to stay in the car, rather than risk the children running into the road? In general, what if there is no barrier, for example, on a bridge.

100 people are killed or injured on the hard shoulder of a motorway each year, so it is not a safe place to be. The occasions when you are allowed to stop on the hard shoulder are: if you break down or if you are directed to do so by the police or Highways patrol. You should **not** stop on the hard shoulder in bad weather, but adjust your driving to

the conditions. If you do stop, put on your hazard lights and get out on the passenger side. You will get a £100 fine and three penalty points on your licence for stopping without good reason.

If you have to stop and have young children you cannot safely look after out of the car, then stay in the car with them. If you have a dog with you, then leave the dog in the car when you get out. Use the markers by the road to find the nearest phone and use that, rather than a mobile, to notify the authorities as the phone will tell them exactly where you are. Then return to your car. If there is no barrier, then you should stay in the car.

On a smart motorway, with no hard shoulder, there are designated places to stop. If you can't reach one, stay in the first lane, if you can reach it, and the cameras will pick up your position and close that lane.

Question 4 was about bus lanes and cycle lanes:

You are allowed to drive in a bus lane outside its hours of operation. Can you cross the solid white line to do so or must you join it at the start where the line is dotted? What if a car is parked in the bus lane?

Sometimes having a cycle lane makes the lane for motor vehicles quite narrow (I can think of an example in Bristol). Is it permitted to move into the cycle lane, if there is no cyclist in it, in order to keep a safe distance from oncoming traffic?

Martyn Buckland answered this question and said that a bus lane, outside its hours of operation, does not exist, and therefore the solid

white line also 'does not exist' and so you can cross it.

With cycle lanes, if there is a dashed white line, then you can cross it if necessary and there are no cyclists in it. If it is a solid white line, then you must not cross it.

Peter Huntington answered **Question 5** about speed limits:

Can you please give advice on how best to stick to 20mph in a 20 zone, a) in a manual car and b) in an automatic?

If you have one, then use your satnav to tell you the speed limit, and your speed, and there will be an audible warning if you exceed it. This may come on when you are still at the speed limit according to your speedometer as satnavs tend to give a slightly higher speed. If you have cruise control or a speed limiter, then using it at 20mph can be very useful.

To help keep at the correct speed, in a manual car use 2nd gear for 20mph, and 3rd gear for 30mph. In an automatic, it depends on the type and what drive system you are using. If you are going to be at 20mph for a long time, then it is worth selecting 2nd gear.

Question 6 was answered by Paul Pywell:

Please can you give some tips for Eco driving? Is it better to change into a higher gear at a slower speed than I would have done in the past, even if that means the engine labouring slightly on a gentle uphill incline?

The main tips for Eco driving are to plan and prepare and keep the car well maintained, most importantly

the tyre pressures as low pressures mean using more fuel. Reduce the weight as much as possible and remove roof racks or topboxes as they cause aerodynamic drag. Park so that you won't have to reverse when the engine is cold as this uses more fuel.

Try to keep the car moving as smoothly as possible and Paul used the acronym OAP: Observation, Anticipation and Planning. Use acceleration sense rather than braking where possible. Change to a higher gear earlier than you might have done in the past, as with modern cars you can do this and retain flexibility, but don't let the engine labour. The higher your speed, the more fuel you will use so it is important to stick to the speed limit.

If you don't need the heaters, lights etc, don't use them. So rather than use air conditioning, open the windows. If you have autostop, where the engine cuts out when you aren't using it, don't disable it as that will use more fuel.

Peter Huntington answered **Question 7** on signalling on mini-roundabouts:

When approaching a double mini-roundabout, irrespective of whether the roundabouts are offset to the right or left, and you intend to go straight on, what signals do you give on approach to the first one, and what signals do you give to negotiate the second roundabout, if any?

What action should an advanced driver take at a mini-roundabout when all four vehicles arrive and stop at the same time?

If you are going straight ahead, don't indicate and try not to mislead other

drivers by going too wide round the white circle, even if that means one wheel going on it.

If you are approaching a roundabout, you will be going slowly, looking for your opportunity to go and ideally won't need to stop. If four drivers reach the roundabout at the same time, the advanced driver will be the one who goes first.

Question 8 was about insurance when driving during lockdown:

During lockdown, we are supposed to make only essential journeys: work, if not able to work from home; shopping and medical appointments and some other examples, eg to visit your bubble or exercise. If you are caught driving for any other reason deemed non-essential, would you invalidate your insurance, especially if you have an accident? Bearing in mind insurance companies will find any excuse not to pay out, this should be brought to all motorists' attention if it does invalidate the insurance.

David Major answered this question and agreed that some insurance companies will try to find a loophole not to pay out. Not being an insurance expert, he wasn't able to say more, except to point out that we shouldn't be making non-essential journeys during lockdown so the situation shouldn't arise.

Lindsay closed the meeting by thanking everybody for attending and all the National Observers for their helpful input.

The December meeting was again held via Zoom because of Covid-19 and was very well attended.

Our Chairman, John Morley, opened the meeting by welcoming everyone and then introduced Allan Kelenfoldi, who was giving the presentation..

Allan thanked Lindsay Flower for inviting him to talk to us about what he does with tyres and technology. He said there would be two ways to ask questions during his presentation, one would be to use the chat function, and second, he would periodically stop and ask for questions.

He began by introducing himself: he is the Business Development Manager for a premium tyre manufacturer; he is the Group Secretary for the Ayrshire branch of IAMA; he is a Local Observer – a position he loves because he can combine driving and tuition; he is the Editor of the IAMA Newsletter and he is the Group IT Specialist, which he hates, but someone has to do it!

He asked 'What are tyres?' Are they just black, round, rubbery things with squiggly lines, with one on each corner of the car? Or are they understated and undervalued, taking serious abuse day in and day out? We don't consider them to be an integral part of the car, but we do expect them to get us to our destination, on all road surfaces and under all weather conditions. He asserted that tyres are one of the most technically advanced pieces of equipment on the car.

Allan asked two members of the audience the make, model and year of their cars and what had attracted them to those models – colour, size, performance etc. He posed further questions about taking their cars for a service, which cost £180, and said that their cars required new brake pads and discs costing £245 and two tyres with worn tread that would cost £380 to replace. Due to their personal circumstances they could afford only one of these

items and asked which they would choose. Both members replied that they would choose to replace the tyres on legal grounds but were unhappy about having to leave the brakes.

Allan proceeded to explain OE Homologation (OE: Original Equipment; Homologation: official approval by statutory bodies). This requires collaboration between the vehicle manufacturer and the tyre manufacturer. The vehicle manufacturer approaches tyre manufacturers to ask them to develop a tyre for a particular vehicle. It can take between three and five years to research, develop and obtain homologation, involves over 100 tests, and allows approval markings to be put on the sidewalls of tyres and results in tyres being tuned specifically for each vehicle. Allan showed examples of the specific markings that can be put on tyres for certain models, e.g. MO for Mercedes Benz and a star mark for BMW, AO for Audi etc. While any old tyre might fit the vehicle, only the approved tyres will be specifically tuned. So, two different BMW models might have different tyres fitted, with perhaps differences in the rubber compounds used, or the type of sidewalls, but each will be specifically tuned and unique to each vehicle. Serious handling issues may occur if incorrect tyres are subsequently fitted. Many tyre suppliers will offer a cheaper tyre but they will not perform the same.

If you own a vehicle with specific OE marking you should always fit like-for-like tyres; if not, the car will not handle as well as it should; so always make sure you have the correct tyres fitted.

There were then questions, one of which was about winter tyres. Winter tyres do not always have OE homologation, they tend to have a lower speed rating. When using winter tyres on a car, the driver should inform their insurance company as a change in original

specification such as Speed Rating could invalidate the insurance.

Allan went on to consider Acronyms. He asked the two members about the technology in their vehicles which gave rise to a large number of acronyms. These include:

ABS Antilock Braking System
ACC Adaptive Cruise Control
AEB Autonomous Emergency Braking
CAS Collision Avoidance System
FCW Forward Collision Warning
HDC Hill Descent Control
ISA Intelligent Speed Adaptation
LKA Lane Keep Assist (which Allan turns off)
SDH Self-Dipping Headlamp
TCS Traction Control System
TPMS Tyre Pressure Monitoring System
and many more.

Allan asked what all these technologies have in common?

They all require information from the tyres and if the wrong tyres or potentially budget tyres are fitted then even mild adverse conditions can have a negative effect on most of these systems as the technology attempts to react to the information being received from the sensors.

Allan then looked at tyre tread and the link to the car's technology through what he called the 'Contact Patch'.

Each contact patch – the part of the tyre in touch with the road surface – is about the size of a postcard, each car having four postcards.

At rest, each contact patch has 100% contact with the road surface – but this is affected by the pattern of the tread, which reduces contact to 70%. Once the car starts moving, traction

causes block deformation and this reduces contact to 60%. Then there is the condition of the road surface – it may be in poor condition, there may be stones on the tarmac, there may be potholes and this macro roughness could reduce contact to 5%. But stones can have high points too, so that the micro roughness could further reduce contact to less than 1% whilst the tyre is in motion.

Then there is the speed of the car to consider as well as the tread depth and the weather conditions!

Tread depth is of particular importance, the lower the tread, the lower the braking performance. Braking efficiency reduces from 100% at 8 mm to 88% at 4 mm, 75% at 3mm and at 1.6mm, the legal minimum, braking can be reduced by as much as 55%. This means that in dry conditions at 50 miles an hour a car with tyres with 1.6 mm tread will need two extra car lengths to stop compared with a car with tyres with 3mm tread, and this is even worse in wet or slippery conditions.

Allan pointed out that the legal minimum for tyres is 1.6mm around the central three quarters of the tyre and around the full circumference. Having less than 1.6mm is a tyre offence with a possible £2,500 fine and three points on your licence, per tyre; however, most forces issue a CU30 which is a Constructions and Use offence which carries a £100 fine and three points on the licence per tyre offence.

The lower the tread the higher the possibility of aquaplaning because the tyres can't displace the water and incorrect signals are sent from the tyres to the car.

Tyre pressure is also important and should be checked when the tyres are cold. Driving with incorrect pressures means damage may be caused to the

tyres as well as the wrong information being given to the car technology. If you have a Tyre Pressure Monitoring System (TPMS) it should be reset regularly. It works when driving and the pressure increases as the tyres warm up.

If the weather is very cold then it must be reset as the pressure will have dropped because of the cold. Andy Poulton mentioned that an active TPMS will give you the correct pressure but a passive one needs resetting. If you are not sure, then do a reset.

Allan summed up his talk by repeating that a tyre is a highly advanced piece of technology that has had up to five years of development and testing. Each is tuned specifically to the car and has OE approval. Less than 1% of the contact patch is in contact with

the road surface when the wheel is rotating.

Budget tyres have had no testing and in the main do not carry Vehicle Manufacturer's approval.

Tyres with less tread can lead to a significant reduction in braking performance, even with new brakes. All the technology will not save you if your tyres are incorrect or have little tread.

Allan showed a number of videos demonstrating the difference in car performance with budget tyres and tyres with low tread, compared with OE tyres with good tread. The differences were remarkable, and frightening.

John Morley thanked Allan and the Ayrshire Group for his interesting and informative talk and thanked the audience for attending via Zoom.

He wished everyone a Happy Christmas and a Happy New Year.

CORRECTIONS AND CLARIFICATIONS

In *Forward 3* there was a report of the September meeting with Leigh Woodham talking about the law and road traffic collisions (pages 9-13). Leigh has pointed out some things which need to be made clear in this article.

On page 9, it states that 'the solicitor's duty is to the court, not the person paying their fees'. This should have read 'the *medical expert's* duty is to the court, not the person paying their fees'. Solicitors owe duties to both their clients and to the court.

On page 10, it says that 'truth, not proof is important in civil cases'. This should read 'proof, not truth'. So, if you are involved in a crash, your verbal / written account of what happened will not carry as much weight as, say, some dash cam or CCTV footage would, or the testimony of an *independent* witness.

Examples were given on pages 10 and 11 about apportioning liability in crashes involving misleading signals and emergency vehicles. Leigh has asked us to make clear that the cases given were generalised examples, i.e. they would be a starting point for the court, but there might be unusual circumstances to a crash which mean the court believes it is reasonable to deviate from the usual percentages.

We Welcome New Associates

| | |
|--------------------------|-----------------------------|
| Paul Gamble | [Observer: Ben Rushgrove] |
| Adam Pamment | [Observer: Graham Bennett] |
| Michael Ransom | [Observer: Lindsay Flower] |
| Michael Twitchett | [Observer: Martyn Buckland] |

We Also Congratulate

IAM Test Pass

Robin Clark* observed by Lindsay Flower

*F1RST pass

IAM Masters Pass

Clive Merchant

ASSOCIATES' TRAINING QUIZ—15th February 2021

Because of the coronavirus pandemic, the committee have been investigating online resources to keep our Associates and Members actively engaged in road safety.

We are arranging a Zoom Quiz night for all Associates using AhaSlides on Monday 15th February at 7.30 pm. AhaSlides can be used in a fun way to learn and revise road safety information, and will be a valuable way to continue with Associates' training in the absence of observed runs. You will need to log in to the Zoom meeting on your computer or tablet and you will be given an access link to AhaSlides for your smartphone or tablet.

The Quiz will be questions with multiple choice answers. Each question has a timed response of between 20 to 40 seconds and you will be rewarded with a higher score the faster you answer. The winner may receive a prize, however you will not be in any way judged by your score as only the top three scores will be visible. The Quiz will be compulsory for all Associates, so please make a note of this important date in your diaries.

SKILL AT THE WHEEL — 4 by Andy Poulton

SLOBS, ARE YOU?

Many of you may be aware of my ‘apparent’ ‘obsession’ with scrupulously clean motor vehicles inside and out, particularly the inside. In my defence, may I say this is NOTHING new and has not evolved over the last 40 years or so of my motoring career, or with advanced driving. [I have always been, er, afflicted].

I used to wash/wax the ‘filler’ and Turtle Wax the rust spots on my first £20 sports car banger (a Turner Special now in Haynes Museum sprayed red). [Do not look at the ~~damaged~~, sorry, ‘ill-fitting’ passenger door.] The only car care sprays (tools) I had were a can of WD-40 and some primer. [Oh, and gaffer tape. WHY? See at the end of the article.] I used to relish a minor component or a bulb failure, day or night, near or far, so I could then have an excuse to repair or work on my car.

NO! It’s from my observation of thousands of drivers over the years and a Transport and Road Research Laboratory report that concluded:

TIDY CAR = TIDY MIND = TIDY DRIVER

Use your observations and put the theory to the test on other motorists.

Thus stems my comment when alighting from a car with a filthy interior: ‘I had to wipe my feet when I got out.’ Mmm, no wonder I am not offered many lifts!

Also there was a National Observer and Coach Driver who, when his children were younger and got into the back of his pristine car, used to bark ‘FOF & MPB’ which stood for ‘Feet On Floor’ and ‘Mats Pulled Back’ – in other words, ‘Do not put your shoes on the upholstery and keep the carpet protecting slip mats in place and do not kick them under the front seats’.

Besides, who are all these people queuing at Halfords, Carquip, and all the independent car accessory shops? What have they been buying, and what have they been doing with it all?

GO ON: SPLASH IT ON ALL OVER, AND DON’T FORGET THE INTERIOR.

To quote from the Highway Code, Rules 89 and 97:

Vehicle Condition: You MUST ensure your vehicle and trailer comply with the full requirements of the Road Vehicles (Construction and Use) Regulations and Road Vehicles Lighting Regulations.

Before Setting off: Among other things (check them out) you should

ensure that:

your mirrors and seat are adjusted correctly to ensure comfort, full control and maximum vision;

To quote from Roadcraft

A vital point of knowing your own limitations as a driver is knowing exactly what the vehicle you are driving can or cannot do. This means in depth familiarisation and refers to POWDER checklists.

Previous Highway Code and Roadcraft publications / iterations all referred to: Cleanliness of glass (windscreen, windows, mirrors), wipers and washers (removal of grit, dirt, flies etc.) plus number plates and lights.

Accessory manufacturers now do wet wipes of all types and sorts to cover these eventualities.

A recent Turtle Wax survey showed that some men were complete 'SLOBS' at the wheel and were content to drive around 'in cars resembling dustbins on wheels'. It further reported that women spend an hour each week cleaning the car. They visit car washes more regularly and generally maintain the inside of the vehicle far better than men do. They buy all their requisites at the supermarket.

[SO – there you have it. Personally I think there is an equal divide. I have seen just as many 'scruffy' cars being driven by women. OKAY – go on say it: it was their Husband's, Boyfriend's, Partner's car they were using/borrowing!]

Lastly some anecdotal evidence

Moving on to a stop check I did in the Police whilst on traffic in Bath. The old Ford Escort was being driven with three passengers. It was a SHED (slang terminology for an obviously poorly maintained car). The driver had been breathalyzer tested and failed. Apart from the car's more obvious defects, faulty brakes (pulled violently to the left), no handbrake, no petrol cap, smashed headlamp(s) to name but a few, the car's front AND rear footwells were full of tons of rubbish (cans, bottles, 'Music Lover' magazines [er, we'll leave that one], car components, engine parts, maps, petrol coupons and freebies, etc, etc, etc). It was all slowly rotting away to a depth of six to ten inches (150 to 250mm) and being compressed.

The rear seat must have been very uncomfortable as, yes you guessed, it acted as a lidded rubbish bin rotting away and falling through rusty holes in the floor.

Lastly, I made the ultimate discovery, a full size five-tray cantilever

toolbox hidden in the footwell!

FINALLY, the guy who presented for his Advanced test: TWO old banana skins on the dashboard and a large backpack in the passenger's footwell and one on the seat. He said 'Oh, just shove them over'. (He put them in the back in the end with all the old, full and empty carrier bags.) There was also a rattling bulging glove box lid.

As I got in it BURST open and disgorged its contents of 42 (oh yes, 42, I counted them all back) car light bulbs, of all types/sorts. You do not need to guess the test outcome!

PS. As mentioned at the start, essential tools:

The Motto is:

If it moves, and should not, GAFFER tape it;

If it does not move, and should, WD-40 it.

SAFE and CLEAN Driving.

Andy POULTON

Examiner, Region 1 South West

EXAMINER'S QUOTES—Andy Poulton

Motorway accidents will diminish when brain power matches horse-power.

It is strange that a car driver never remembers they were a pedestrian.

Maybe the reason we have traffic problems is because the traffic has become as dense as the drivers.

Be patient with the driving faults of others. They may have to be patient with yours.

When driving along everything is taxed – the car, the road, the fuel, the licence and our patience.

Drivers who weave in traffic end up in stitches.

The only reason some drivers slow down for pedestrians is because they are afraid they will damage their cars.

There are still a few drivers about who can remember when it cost more to maintain a car than to park it.

It sometimes seems that drivers were born ignorant of traffic laws and regulations – then had a relapse.

Drive with care, life has no spare.

TALE LIGHT—Andy Poulton

ALWAYS MAKE TIME FOR TEA

Police who stopped a lorry for going too slow found the driver brewing tea on a campus stove on his lap!

I SHOULD BE SO LUCKY

Lucky Kayla Chambers has won a £56,000 Jaguar in a raffle. Unfortunately, she is being made to wait before she drives it. She is only 3!

THAT WILL TEACH HER

The traffic warden slapped a ticket on a BMW parked outside a hospital, only to get a telling off when she got home from her furious husband – for not recognising the family car!

WHATS YOUR'S???

A Traffic Cop who issues 400 tickets a month has written and published a book called 'WHAT'S YOUR EXCUSE?' listing all the bizarre excuses from speeding drivers.

TIME IS MONEY

A local authority spent nearly £150 million on a new three lane highway and interchange but it only shaves off 30 seconds from the daily commute.

IMPROVE YOUR GOLF, GIVE UP THE CAR

A golf range is buying up old cars for customers to aim at as they practise their swings.

BUILDING NEW CARS A BIT OF A GAMBLE

A car factory suffering from absenteeism now gives all the workers a playing card at the start of every shift. At the end of the week the person holding the best hand wins a cash prize.

ITS ALL BEEN TOO MUCH FOR ME!!

A Policemen has been so depressed by issuing so many Parking Tickets he has had to retire early on a £250 a week pension.

JUST LOWER THE PRICES

Forecourt attendants at an ESSO petrol station are serenading customers with a song and dance routine to cheer them up. If it's a success it will be extended to other forecourts.

YEAH RIGHT. GOOD MOVE

A 93-year-old pensioner caught speeding was told to do community service by the judge. She had to work for Meals on Wheels BUT in charge of the meals rather than the wheels.

The following items come from Traffic Safety Roads, the newsletter of The Graham Feest Consultancy, incorporating the UK Road Safety Network. Graham spoke to us in July 2020 and a report of his very interesting talk can be found in Forward 3, available on the SWAM website. Graham has given us permission to publish items from his newsletter. If you would like to receive monthly copies of the newsletter, you can email Graham at graham@grahamfeest.com, and mention that you are a member of SWAM.

PARKING AND/OR LEAVING YOUR CAR

The majority of motorists know not to park on double yellow lines or in disabled bays without a blue badge but what about some of the other things you need to note when parking or leaving your vehicle. LeaseCar.uk has identified a number of lesser-known parking rules which could land drivers in hot water if broken.

Using the horn while a car is stationary – including whilst parked – is against the law, unless it is intended to prevent a collision.

Parking in a cycle lane, or on zig-zags at zebra crossings or outside of a school, isn't allowed.

Parking to load or unload on double yellow lines is only permitted if the load is of sufficient volume, weight or difficulty – collecting a newspaper from a shop doesn't count.

The Highway Code says that you can't park anywhere that might restrict access for emergency services, such as leaving a residential road too narrow for a fire engine.

Cars parked on a road where the speed limit is more than 30mph, any road within 10m of the nearest

junction, facing away from the traffic or outside of a designated parking area, should technically have their sidelights on overnight.

Parking more than 50cm away from the kerb could lead to an on the spot fine being issued.

When using any designated space, a car is not considered 'in' the space if the wheels are over any lines and could be ticketed.

Parking on a dropped curb could see a fixed penalty notice applied.

Putting out cones, bins or other obstacles to reserve a parking space is not permitted, as it could be interpreted as causing an obstruction resulting in a fine.

All engines should be switched off if leaving a vehicle for some time on a public road – the law states you have to be 'in control' of your vehicle so don't leave it unattended and running.

Allowing a parked car to build up dirt could leave its registered owner open to prosecution, as having an unreadable number plate is illegal.

PRIORITY PARKING ANGER

Designated parking bays for blue badge holders is a contentious matter amongst many members of the driving public when they struggle

to find a parking space and then see row upon row of designated disabled bays and parent and child bays empty when the car park is full or any

available space is right at the other end of the car park, and so understandably get very angry when confronted with a fixed penalty ticket. In particular, parent and child bays especially provoke further fury. The argument is not about the provision of a space or the extra room provided but that the parking is generally located closest to a building or shop for generally fit and able parents at the expense of those not able to walk long distances, with or without a blue badge.



However, research from Churchill Motor Insurance reveals millions of drivers are parking in designated priority 'parent and child' spaces resulting in some 3.9 million parents (in 2019) wanting to take advantage of the convenience of these spaces being unable to do so and either having to park elsewhere or just giving up and going home.

Equally Blue Badge holders are also finding it increasingly difficult to find a parking space, with almost two million (77 per cent) unable to leave their car in a designated bay because it was filled by drivers who didn't have the entitlement to park there. A third (33 per cent) of people believe it is acceptable to park in a parent and child spot despite not having a young child with them at the time, and 23 per cent say a disabled bay is fair game even if they don't have a Blue Badge.

MOTORISTS' ATTITUDES TO SPEEDING

In a survey of 2,000 motorists conducted by IAM RoadSmart, 82 per cent of motorists are in favour of using speed cameras to automatically detect and prosecute drivers travelling more than ten miles per hour over the limit near schools.

The views however were very different when it comes to driving on the motorway with only 63 per cent of drivers supporting the use of cameras to detect those driving ten miles per hour above the limit on motorways, and furthermore 46 per cent think it is acceptable to drive at 80 miles per hour on the motorway, while as many as one in four believe it is acceptable to do so at speeds greater than 80 miles per hour. While acceptance of motorway speeding remained broadly

consistent among drivers aged 17 to 69, there was a noticeable increase among those who travel longer distances. A staggering 56 per cent of those who cover more than 10,000 miles on the road each year believed it acceptable to reach speeds of 80 miles per hour or more on the motorway.

Neil Greig, Policy and Research Director at IAM RoadSmart, said: 'Speeding causes more than 4,000 casualties each year on UK roads – that's an average of 11 people a day killed or seriously injured. So it is extremely disappointing to see such apparent acceptance of speeding on motorways, and we need to do more to create a fundamental shift in attitude and behaviour here.'

FUTURE EVENTS

All meetings are via Zoom for the next few months due to the current situation. We are aware that this disenfranchises some of our members who are not on the internet, and are sorry that this is the case, but as things are we ARE unable to hold meetings in person. By reporting all our meetings in detail in Forward we try to make sure that those who can't attend the meetings can still get the benefit of the content.

Thursday, 18 February 2021. The speaker will be the Deputy Police and Crime Commissioner for Wiltshire and Swindon, Jerry Herbert, talking about road and driving related crime.

Thursday, 18 March 2021. Group Annual General Meeting. Details of the AGM are on pages 3 and 5-6 and the speaker, after the formal business, will be David Gallagher, our Young Driver Ambassador and Vice-President, who will be speaking about road safety. Please join us for this important meeting if you can.

Thursday, 15 April 2021. Our speaker will be Ray Robbotts, one of our team of National Observers, who will be speaking on two topics: bends, and the 'S's of advanced driving. There will be plenty of opportunity to ask questions after each topic.

Thursday, 20 May 2021. The speaker will be Lewes Hambrey, an optometrist who has spoken to BADAM several times in the past. He is an entertaining speaker and will be talking about some aspects of eyesight related to driving.

PLEASE NOTE

The views expressed in this Newsletter are those of the authors and are not necessarily shared by the Committee of Somerset & Wiltshire Advanced Motorists, nor by IAM RoadSmart.

Due acknowledgement is made whenever material is taken from other sources.

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