

iam
RoadSmart

FORWARD

Issue 13



The Newsletter for
Somerset & Wiltshire
Advanced Motorists

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FORWARD

Newsletter of Somerset & Wiltshire Advanced Motorists

www.swam-iam.org.uk

Registered Charity No 1050592

May — July 2023

Issue 13

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Bath Festival of Motoring—17-18 June

We will be attending the Bath Festival of Motoring again this year. It will be held on Saturday and Sunday, 17 and 18 June, at the Walcot Rugby Club (directly opposite the Lansdown *Park & Ride* terminus at the top of Bath's Lansdown Hill).

The Festival will feature an extensive programme of parades, exhibitions, demonstrations and supercar rides, alongside competitions, live music and family activities.

Please come and join us at this event and if you would like to volunteer to help man our gazebo, please let us know as soon as possible. Dave Edwards and Robin Clark are organising the event so please contact Robin (details on page 2) if you would like to help. We welcome support and there will be plenty of time to have a look round the Festival.

We hope you enjoy this latest issue of *Forward*. It contains a report on the AGM (see page 5) so if you weren't able to attend that, please read it so that you know what the group has been doing in the past year, and something about our plans for the future. The formal part of the meeting was followed by an amusing talk by Martyn Buckland who is now an IAM Examiner and is a member of SWAM.

We have some excellent news to bring you about a young SWAM member, Callum Chamberlain, who recently passed his test with a F1RST and is now training to be an Observer. Robin Clark interviewed him and his Observer and you can read the interview on page 14.

We are attending two outside events this year, the Bath Festival of Motoring in June and the Westbury White Horse Classic and Vintage Vehicle Show in September. Whilst we have attended the Bath show in the past, the Westbury show is a new one for us and we are looking forward to the experience and seeing what is on offer.

We have another quiz in this issue, one with a difference as it takes us back in time to the days when we had our pre-decimal currency. Many thanks to Don Escott for giving us this interesting quiz.

Finally, there is a short guide to the meaning of some abbreviations of modern in-car technology. We hope you find this helpful and we may continue with this feature in future editions of *Forward*.

Clare Hogg, Sue Phillips

The next edition of *Forward* will be published in August 2023. Please submit motoring-related articles and/or digital photographs to the Editors (*who reserve the right to edit them*) by Friday 8 July at the latest. Names of authors and their home addresses should be disclosed to the Editors who will withhold them from publication on request.

Somerset and Wiltshire Advanced Motorists

Minutes of 3rd Annual General Meeting

Wednesday 15th March 2023 at 19.30

Present

Lindsay Flower, Acting Chair; Rosemary Tandy, Secretary; Clare Hogg, Treasurer; David Major, Chief Observer; Peter Huntington, Membership Secretary; Robin Clark, Publicity Officer; Judith Pepler, Vice Chair; and 18 Members

1 Introduction and Apologies for Absence

Judith Pepler, Vice President, opened the proceedings and welcomed the group.

Apologies for absence were received from Sue Phillips, Nigel Carter, John Fitzgerald, Robert Norburn, Helen Schofield, Derek Fisher, Jim Sherry, Tony Chambers, John Loescher, Sue Poole.

2 Minutes of AGM March 2022

The Minutes were approved.

3 Matters Arising

There were no Matters Arising.

4 Report from Acting Chair, Lindsay Flower

As the first year after the pandemic, this year has been challenging. The Committee had thought that the Membership would be keen to return to face-to-face meetings, but this has not proved to be the case. The Group Meetings continue to be poorly attended whether they are online or face-to-face. I suspect that information, being readily available off the internet, is not now the main reason for group membership. In addition, the more businesslike model which has been adopted by IAM RoadSmart has meant that Associates are more likely to complete the Advanced course and not remain Members. As such, I forecast that our main income, which is

Membership fees, will continue to fall and this will clearly be a challenge for both the Groups and IAM RS in the future. As such the Committee has decided to abandon the monthly Group Meetings. In their place we will have 'Events' which may include training, updates, updating specific new skills. Meetings will not continue on the same day each month. We also plan to emphasise our presence at external events to raise our public profile – volunteers to help out at these events would be welcome.

Our number of Associates passing through our club has proved to be encouraging, as has the number of people willing to train to be Observers. We could do with more women and some younger people, and I say this as the only woman Observer. The number of Associates attaining F1RSTs is also very pleasing – we are clearly training to a high standard and I would like to thank David, our Chief Observer for his input.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank all of my colleagues on the Committee: without their hard work and ongoing commitment, there would be no Group. If you think that you have anything to offer, I would be delighted to hear from you.

I would like to thank two very important people: Penny, who does the teas and Sue Phillips, our Minutes Secretary who is leaving the Committee. If you think you could commit to doing this for the Committee, please get in contact with me.

Lastly, I would like to thank those people who support us and volunteer to help out at our external events. We need you to continue to volunteer and we are counting on you.

Thank you.

Report from Secretary, Rosemary Tandy

Can I start by saying how sorry I am to the members who Zoomed in to Reg Local's talk last month. Due to unfortunate circumstances, he did not appear. This has never happened before and hopefully will never happen again.

We have again had a mixed year; although Covid seems to be on the

wane many members still do not want to mix and consequently our face-to-face meetings have low attendance. This is a shame as your committee go to great lengths to find speakers and to book the hall. It is very embarrassing when a speaker takes the time to either Zoom or to visit us, and so few people turn up. However, having said that, we have had an amazing number of new Associates this year, all with excellent results. So many thanks to David and his team.

We plan more practical meetings this year with Three-in-a-Car, which seems popular, and possibly a visit to a car showroom or museum.

We plan to attend some car related events this year and always welcome any help. These events are always enjoyable and you could help spread the word of the IAM. The standard of driving these days is not great so we must do all we can to improve it by making people aware of the IAM and SWAM.

We also welcome any members who would like to come on to the committee. We are particularly seeking a Minutes Secretary and deputies for all the committee members. So please come forward if you can help.

Finally thank you to my fellow committee members who put in hours of work to make SWAM such a success, not forgetting Tea Lady Penny.

Report from Treasurer, Clare Hogg

The annual accounts for 2021 have been available to view on the website and a few copies are available to view here.

In addition to our usual expenses of the hire of the Hall and Zoom costs for meetings, Observer training and attending events, we subsidised a successful visit to Castle Combe Skid Pan.

If anybody has any questions about the accounts, please feel free to ask them now. I would like to thank Ken Fryer for auditing the accounts for us once again.

The accounts were accepted by a unanimous vote of those present.

5 To Elect Nominees to form SWAM Committee 2023/2024

The committee was re-elected en bloc by a unanimous vote.

6 Any other business

There was no other business.

Following the AGM, Martyn Buckland gave a talk on his life as **'Poacher turned Gamekeeper'**.

Lindsay introduced Martyn by saying that he was one of three IAM Examiners who had not had a career in the police prior to becoming an Examiner. His experiences with the police were of a different kind. She said his was a story about a young man who did everything on two, three and four wheels badly, yet turned his habits round in middle-age to become a well-known member of the IAM and in his latter years, an IAM Examiner for both drivers and motorcyclists.

Martyn got his first licence at age 16 in 1970 to ride a motorcycle. However, before that he had been learning to ride a motorbike offroad on a friend's bike. Unfortunately, he didn't stick to offroad and was stopped by a policeman when he was carrying his friend pillion on the bike, but the bike had L plates and that was not allowed. This was his first brush with the law and he got off lightly because he didn't yet have a licence. His solution to the problem was to take the L plates off to ride home!



Triumph Tiger Cub

When he did buy a motorbike and could ride it legally he had one that could go at 85-90mph, and he did that speed in a 60mph area. When he was stopped he was breathalysed (the test having come in in 1967). This happened regularly over the next ten years as he was often

stopped for speeding, but he was never over the limit.

A motorbike proved to be a handicap in attracting girls so he bought a three-wheeled car, a Reliant Robin, and his first attempt at driving it, on his motorcycle licence, proved interesting as he spent a lot of time on two wheels



Reliant Robin

instead of three. He then decided it would be better to take his car driving test and he bought a Ford Cortina. This could go at 100mph and he was frequently caught speeding in that, and clocking up fines which was a bit hard on his wallet.



Ford Cortina

He regularly changed his car and on one occasion in a Ford Zephyr he was followed by a police car with its lights and siren, but because the car was full of his friends he couldn't see out of the rear mirror, and because of the radio being on loud and his friends singing loudly he couldn't hear anything either, so he had no idea he was being followed. Another fine ensued.

In 1988 penalty points on one's licence were introduced and this made a big difference. Now, when caught speeding, there was not just a fine to consider but the points too and he realised something had to be done. His job involved driving and he couldn't afford to lose his licence and so he decided to join his local IAM group, the Melksham group. He had previously considered the idea when living in London and went to an Open Day, but didn't pursue it then. This time, however, was different. He suddenly went from serial offender to doing everything by the book. He stuck to speed limits and changed his ways.

From passing his car test he went on to become an Observer and decided to take his motorcycle advanced test too and having passed that test he went on to become a motorcycle Observer. He was one of the prime movers in forming Wilts & Bath Advanced Motorcyclists.

He said that the IAM changed his life. He never lost his licence but if it hadn't been for the IAM he would have lost it and not been able to support his family, so he considers he owes what he has today to the IAM. He is now an IAM Examiner for both cars and motorcycles.

He concluded by telling his audience to be proud of SWAM and of being a member.

Group News

The January meeting was held via Zoom and was opened by Lindsay Flower who welcomed John Beckford of the Under-17 Car Club to speak to us about the club. Chris Singer was also present to support John in talking about the Pathfinders programme.

In 2012 the Under-17 Car Club became a charitable trust to reflect the way in which it has changed its emphasis in recent years from being a racing club to supporting safe driving for young people. It now has a hashtag: #Safe at 17.



The Club was founded in 1976 to supply an opportunity for young people under the age of 17 who wanted to drive but who did not have the opportunity to do so. Over its 47 years it has had more than 5,000 members. Young people normally join between the ages of 11-13 and stay for 3-5 years.

On day one they are taken out in their parents' cars with the parents and are taught the rudiments of starting and stopping, reversing in a straight line, emergency stop, and on the course there are hazards such as there are on roads which they meet at a slow speed. Most master this in the first hour session and they are graded for future sessions.

About every three visits, they go out with one of the staff, as well as a parent, who will advise and help and regrade.

It usually takes three years to go through the grading system. Grade 2 is approximately equivalent to the DVLA test, and they do theory tests at every level.

When they have reached grade 2 they can drive on their own relatively unsupervised with the parent in the back seat.

It is not just being able to master the mechanics of driving but also

about their behaviour on the road and their attitude. They must have the right attitude to the way they are progressing.

They also do a First Aid course and the skid pan. They can even take part in rally driving or driving trucks and trailer driving.

To get a grade 1 they must pass three tests with three examiners on at least two separate occasions, plus a theory test.

Once they have reached grade 1, they are taken to somewhere like Castle Combe where they can drive at up to motorway speeds or even more. They are allowed to drive any car in the car park, including the instructors' cars. They are expected to be able to drive all of them. Consistency is key.

Grade X is equivalent to IAM Masters.

When they are 17 they can take their DVLA test and may go on to take the IAM test.

There are about 35 events a year in different locations for about 300 members. All the helpers are volunteers and there are about 80 who instruct, marshal, etc.

John and Chris went on to talk about the Pathfinders programme. Most young people join before the age of 15, but sometimes they were arriving at an older age so Pathfinders was set up to cater for them. It is a 5-day course for 16- and 17-year olds and the core message is safety, behaviour and attitude.

Last year 248 attended nine courses with 57 volunteers running them. Funding allows children from diverse backgrounds to attend, including from a care background. The aim is to make it not just a white, middle-class activity. There has been a 50/50 split between boys and girls which is pleasing, and gender- and neuro-diverse members are included.

Parents learn a lot too and the volunteers will teach parents to parallel park, for example, if they can't do it. Most parents learn something from the week.

There are discussions about accidents and their consequences, including emotional consequences for young people and their families and

also for members of the police and fire services attending the accident. They teach the importance of observations and how to overtake, and many parents learn from that because they have never been taught to overtake. Parents sometimes don't know what ABS is and are alarmed when they feel the pedals vibrating under their feet.

The programme encourages the right approach to managing behaviour in a car, and the emotional dynamics.

Several organisations support the Pathfinder programme. DHL brings big trucks to the venues. The members can sit in the driving seat and see what the driver of a truck can see and what they can't, for example a Range Rover can be hidden in the blind spot.

University College London is another supporter and they have a simulator which sees how the young people are reacting and where they are looking etc. whilst driving. This is an ongoing relationship.

The Under-17 Car Club produces a unique population of under 17-year olds who have hundreds of hours of driving experience.

The most vulnerable group of drivers is novice drivers, 17-24 year olds. (The next most vulnerable group is older drivers.) They have a one in five chance of having a reportable accident (causing injury to people or damage to a building) in one year.

For most young people the tuition process is inadequate. They are taught to pass the DVLA test and that is all. The Under-17 Car Club and Pathfinders teaches them a Skill for Life.

They also do school visits taking what they do to schools and getting the message across.

There then followed a Q&A session. One member said his daughter did the five-day Pathfinder course. She could drive the car but had no road sense. She was over-confident driving, because of the range of vehicles driven, but it was scary being with her on the road. The courses can't recreate real world roads with traffic lights, for example.

John said that they encourage young people to get road experience before taking their DVLA test. They try to recreate road conditions for experience, but it is not practicable to hire traffic lights, for example, because that is prohibitively expensive.

David Major said that he thought it was a good organisation, and teaching high driving standards is very good.

John said that it can take time for young people to learn from their mistakes as they will often make the same mistake over and over again. The Club allows them to do this in a controlled environment. They talk about the reasons for the mistake, and the young people learn from that.

One point that he made was that the investment by parents is not to be underestimated.

Chris Singer spoke about Pathfinders. He said that parents as well as their children learn a lot, such as the difference between braking at 20 or 30 mph.

He read an email from a parent who said it had been one of the most important things in her daughter's life. She mentioned the friendliness and said that it was the best investment in time and money in her daughter's life. As a parent she felt more competent to help her.

The programme is about the ethos as well as driving skills. It is about awareness, and that works.

There was a question about driving electric cars and automatics, and the answer was yes, they do get the opportunity to drive those. Formerly, they had to have a manual car for the course but now they can drive any car. However, if they come in an automatic car, they make sure the young people get the opportunity to drive a manual car as well.

They are taught to take advantage of the assistance measures available in a modern car.

Finally, John pointed out that Under-17 Car Club events are only for members, for insurance reasons among others, and dates are not published to the public. Details about Pathfinders are on the website.

The February meeting was due to be held via Zoom but unfortunately the speaker was unable to be present so the meeting was abandoned. This is the first time this has ever happened, and we hope it will be the last.

F1RST Test Pass for Young SWAM Driver

by Robin Clark

Callum Chamberlain has passed his Advanced Driving Test with a F1RST – at just 20 years of age.

I recently met up with Callum and his Observer, Mark Ellis, over a coffee and we chatted about their experiences.

I asked Callum what his best memories of the course were.

Callum: I really enjoyed my Observer's company and good humour as well as all of the interesting elements of driving I just hadn't considered before. Everyone throughout the course was really helpful, friendly and supportive. I actually met an IAM member who was 91 years of age! It was fascinating sharing our varying motivations for wanting to be involved with IAM RoadSmart.

What do you think were the biggest challenges to you?

Callum: Originally it was hard to master the completely different style of driving from what I was used to, trying to master the skills needed to be an Advanced Driver at the same time as safely traversing Chippenham's streets and lanes was quite a challenge. Mark would probably say that his biggest challenge was stopping me ratcheting my handbrake!

Do you think your age helped or hampered you?

Callum: I think my relative inexperience assisted me in learning the skills and changing my style as I wasn't 'stuck in my ways' so to speak. I think it was really important to do the course so young, considering 26% of RTAs are caused by people under 24. Drivers in my demographic cause a serious threat behind the wheel. Having been in a crash myself, albeit minor, allowed me to realise the dangers as well as recognise my own weaknesses in my driving. That crash was a key motivating factor for me to do the course and become an Advanced Driver. I can only recommend it.

I was also interested to learn more about Mark's approach to coaching Associates to become advanced drivers. Mark has been an Observer

now for over thirty years, so has pretty much seen it all before.

Mark: From Callum's first assessment drive I realised he had great potential which cast aside my initial concerns as to how young he was. I always make a point of asking my Associates why they want to take the Advanced Driving test and Callum's response indicated he was a little 'heavy on the right foot'! This is very common for drivers who have recently passed their driving test and one of the main concerns to them is that they are only allowed a maximum of six penalty points within the first two years of driving, otherwise they face their licence being revoked and having to retake the theory and practical test again!

I asked Mark what advantages there are to teaching advanced driving skills to individuals at a younger age.

Mark: The great thing about taking out a new driver like Callum is just how few bad driving habits they have picked up. Initially we discussed IPSGA and how the System is a natural way to maintain lower speeds. It became very clear to me that Callum was a quick learner and we were off to a flying start. Callum absorbed the course material like a sponge and it was a joy taking him out. He is a credit to our local group in achieving a F1RST and better still he has indicated that he would like to consider becoming an Observer, which is great news.

Congratulations Guys.



Callum in his car with Observer, Mark



Callum with his Observer, Mark, and Chief Observer, David Major

SWAM Events Programme—Summer 2023

We have events planned during the summer at Beckington Memorial Hall, and we also plan to attend two outside events: the Bath Festival of Motoring on 17 and 18 June, and the Westbury White Horse Classic & Vintage Vehicle Show, which is being held on 3 September. We have attended the Bath Festival before but this is a first time for the Westbury show and we are looking forward to it. Further details will be in the next issue of *Forward*, out in August.

Our summer events at the Hall are 3-in-a-car rides as follows:

Monday, 22 May at 19.00: **Associates' Event**, but all members are very welcome. There will be a short talk for Associates in the Hall followed by going out on the road, with at least one Observer in each car. Refreshments will be available.

Tuesday, 20 June at 19.15: There will be a short talk in the Hall on eco-driving followed by going out on the road, with at least one Observer in each car. Refreshments will be available.

Thursday, 20 July at 19.00: There will be a short talk in the Hall on slow manoeuvring followed by going out on the road, with at least one Observer in each car, when there will be an opportunity to practise slow manoeuvres. Refreshments will be available.

There are no events planned for August. Details of September and October events will be in the next issue of *Forward*.

Competition Corner—Quiz set by Don Escott

Don Escott has set us an interesting quiz which is nostalgic for some of us and will be incomprehensible to others who are less than 55 years old. It is based on the old currency used in the UK before decimalisation in 1971. If you can't yourself remember our old system, ask your parents or grandparents if they would like to do the quiz as it will take them back to their youth.

The old system was based on pounds, shillings and pence and was known as *lsd*. It dated from Roman times, the *lsd* being from the Latin

names for the different coins. There were 12 pence in a shilling and 20 shillings in a pound, and there were florins, half crowns, guineas and other coins. The answers to this quiz require knowledge of some of these names, and the slang words used to describe some of them. Have fun! The answers are on page 18.

There are no prizes, but we hope you enjoy it.

Put your answers to each question in the form of £ s d, and add up the total.

Example:

Unwell sea creature: Answer: Sick Squid = Six quid = Six pounds

- | | |
|------------------------------------|-----------------------|
| 1. A stone | 6. A man's name |
| 2. Bicycle | 7. A kind of pig |
| 3. Singer | 8. A leather worker |
| 4. Policeman | 9. A royal headdress |
| 5. Part of a cockney gorilla's leg | 10. To hit repeatedly |

Answers on page 18

A Guide to some In-Car Technology

Modern cars have a wealth of new, and not so new, technology known by abbreviations which can baffle drivers. Here is a brief guide to a few of them.

ABS—Anti-lock braking system. ABS prevents all of the brake's pressure being applied at once. When the ABS is activated, the brakes will apply and release very quickly (as many as 20 times a second) to ensure the car slows quickly and safely while still giving the driver the ability to steer.

ACC—Adaptive Cruise Control. Regular cruise control keeps a car at a set speed but adaptive cruise control varies the speed to prevent the car becoming too close to the vehicle in front. It uses sensors

which detect other vehicles and can measure how far away they are.

TPMS—Tyre Pressure Monitoring System. TPMS keeps a check on the level of pressure in all four tyres, and warns if one or more tyres start to go flat.

Competition Corner, page 16—Answers

			£	s	d
1.	A stone	14 pounds	14	0	0
2.	Bicycle	Penny farthing	0	0	1¼
3.	Singer	Tenor = Tenner	10	0	0
4.	Policeman	Copper = Penny	0	0	1
5.	Part of a cockney gorilla's leg	Ape knee = ha'penny	0	0	½
6.	A man's name	Bob = shilling	0	1	0
7.	A kind of pig	Guinea pig	1	1	0
8.	A leather worker	Tanner = sixpence	0	0	6
9.	A royal headdress	Crown = five shillings	0	5	0
10.	To hit repeatedly	Pound	1	0	0
		Total	26	7	8¾

So the answer is £26 7s 8¾d, or twentysix pounds, seven shillings and eightpence three farthings.

Welcome and Congratulations

We Welcome New Associates

Jo Chambers-Grant	[<i>Observer:</i> Thomas Flynn]
Oliver Ganfield	[<i>Observer:</i> Ray Robbetts]
Leonne George	[<i>Observer:</i> Mark Ellis]
Les Greaves	[<i>Observer:</i> Michael Muncer]
Tom Humphreys	[<i>Observer:</i> John Morley]
Rick Johnstone	[<i>Observer:</i> David Major]
Charlotte Knight	[<i>Observer:</i> Dave Edwards]
Catherine McCoy	[<i>Observer:</i> John Cameron]
Christopher Tubey	[<i>Observer:</i> Dave Edwards]
Marc Young	[<i>Observer:</i> Jeffrey Vincent]

We Congratulate

IAMRS Test Pass

Jane Badger-Stevens	observed by Andy Lee
Mark Evans*	observed by Mark Ellis
Anthony Galley*	observed by Jeffrey Vincent
John Loescher*	observed by John Morley
Louise Piper	observed by John Blakeley
Fiona Williams	observed by John Morley

*F1RST pass

IMI Local Observer Qualification

John Cameron	mentored by Val Czerny
Michael Muncer	mentored by Peter Huntington

Editor's Corner

Editor's Corner is an opportunity for me to air issues which occur to me in relation to cars and driving, while I am out and about. If you have anything you would like to air in a similar way, please get in touch.

Headlights and lack of them

I have been struck recently when driving in bad weather by the number of drivers using only their parking lights/sidelights, call them what you will, when driving in bad weather. My rule has always been that if I have my windscreen wipers on, then I have my headlights on dipped beam. However, some people seem to think that parking lights are sufficient, and they are not. The rear lights come on but the lights at the front of the car are next to invisible, and it can be very hard to see oncoming traffic in bad conditions.

But this brings me to another group of drivers who think that it is all right to drive without putting their headlights on because they have riding lights on their car. The point here is that the riding lights are only at the front of the car and the rear lights are not on. In bad weather this is also dangerous as it makes cars in front of you very difficult to see.

So, please remember to put your headlights on dipped beam when driving in bad weather.

Clare Hogg

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.

SWAM keeps names and addresses of members on computer to assist in group administration. This information will not be passed outside IAM RoadSmart.

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