

Ferrari at Middlewick House



Forward

**Newsletter of
Somerset & Wiltshire Advanced
Motorists**

www.swam-iam.org.uk

Registered Charity No 1050592

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Somerset & Wiltshire Advanced Motorists

(Registered Charity No. 1050592)

MAY—JULY 2022

Forward

Issue 9

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EVENTS THIS SUMMER

Somerset & Wiltshire Advanced Motorists will be attending two big events in our area this summer.

The first is the **Bath Festival of Motoring** which is being held at Walcot Rugby in Bath on 18 and 19 June, for the first time since 2019. We will have our gazebo there and a car on display each day. Please come along to help on the stand, or just to say hello if you are attending the Festival.

The second is the **Middlewick House Open Garden** event on 30 and 31 July where we will again have our gazebo and we hope to have rather smaller vehicles to display as it is not possible to take a car on to the site. See the back page for information on what we hope to exhibit, and let us know if you are able to help us. We would love to see you there.

EDITORIAL

Welcome to the latest edition of *Forward*. You will see on page 6 a report of the AGM which was held in Beckington Memorial Hall. It was disappointing how few members were present at the meeting, though rising cases of covid may have had something to do with that. However, as a committee we have to consider whether it is worth the expense of hiring the hall if members aren't interested in attending events there. In the autumn we will be reassessing our meetings so, if you want them to continue in person, please attend those arranged for the next few months. Details of meetings arranged for the rest of the year are on page 18.

We have a good number of test passes, including four F1RSTs, to report on page 19, and would like to draw your attention especially to Jess Young who has achieved a distinction in her Masters test at the age of only 20. She passed her Advanced test at the age of 17 with a F1RST but covid delayed her Masters until this year. We are very proud to have Jess as a member of the group.

There are two big events this year which we are planning to attend. The first is the Bath Festival of Motoring to be held at Walcot Rugby in June and the second is Middlewick House Open Garden in July. Details of both events

are on page 18, and there is an appeal for help for the Middlewick event so please take a look at the last page to see how you can help us draw attention to our stand there.

A new feature in this issue is a profile of our Chairman, John Morley. We are proposing to continue this with other members of the committee in future issues so that SWAM members have a better understanding of the committee and what drew us to advanced driving in the first place.

Finally, you will notice a different sort of picture on the front cover this time. In the past all our scenes have been of places within our catchment area, and this is no exception as it is at Middlewick, but, instead of a scene, it is a Ferrari 250 GTO belonging to Nick Mason of Pink Floyd who is hosting the Middlewick House Open Garden event we shall be attending in July. If we have enough pictures of cars, in places local to our area, we will continue with this theme in future issues. Please send any pictures you may have, which you think might interest members, to the editors.

Clare Hogg

John Morley

Sue Phillips

The next edition of *Forward* will be published in August 2022. Please submit motoring-related articles and / or digital photographs to the Editors (*who reserve the right to edit them*) by Friday 1 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.

A MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIRMAN

Hello and welcome to the latest edition of *Forward*. In this edition we have included a copy of the minutes of SWAM's Annual General Meeting, which was held at the Beckington Memorial Hall on 17 March. The group currently has a membership in excess of 200, so it was very disappointing that the meeting was attended by only 15 members and Associates, plus eight committee members. The group has a program of meetings over the coming months, as detailed in this newsletter, so please make the effort to come along and join in, either by Zoom, or in person. You will meet other like-minded members who care about their driving.

During this quarter the group will be represented at the Bath Festival of Motoring in June, and at Middlewick House Open Garden in July. We are looking for volunteers to help out, so if you are willing to help, let our Events Co-ordinator Dave Edwards, or one of the committee members, know. As an alternative come to one of the shows and say hello.

On 8 June there will be an Observers' meeting at Beckington, when Shaun Cronin, our Area Service Delivery Manager, will be giving a talk on important issues associated with changes to Observer qualifications. If you are an Observer, please make sure you attend.

If it was a long time since you qualified as an advanced driver, and you suspect you are a little rusty, please get in touch with David Major our Chief Observer, and he will arrange for you to be given a Refresher Course. There will be a voluntary donation to cover expenses, and the course will be based around the advanced driving course but compressed into four sessions. It may be appropriate to have more sessions if the Observer and participant feel that additional time would be productive. On completion you will be assessed by a National Observer and issued a certificate. There is no requirement to retake the IAM RoadSmart test, but if you want to you can. Or, you can choose to upgrade your IAM Roadsmart membership to become a Fellow Member which automatically gives you a retest every three years.

As stated at the AGM, we have among our membership a young lady named Jess Young. At the age of 17 Jess passed the advanced test with a F1RST, then after a delay caused by the lockdown went on to pass the Masters with distinction at the age of 20. Well done Jess!

A polite reminder – Please don't forget to renew your membership if you have not done so already.

I hope you read and enjoy this edition of *Forward*. Clare Hogg is always looking for articles to include in the newsletter, so please contact her if you have any ideas for future editions.

John Morley

Chairman, SWAM

Somerset and Wiltshire Advanced Motorists

Minutes of 2nd Annual General Meeting

Thursday 17th March 2022 at 19.30

Present: Chair – John Morley; Deputy Chair – Lindsay Flower; Group Secretary – Rosemary Tandy; Chief Observer / Associates Co-ordinator – David Major; Treasurer/ Newsletter Editor – Clare Hogg; Public Relations Officer – Robin Clark; Membership Secretary – Peter Huntington; Minutes Secretary – Sue Phillips; Vice President – Judith Pepler; Vice President and Guest Speaker – David Gallagher; plus 13 members and guests

1. Welcome

John Morley welcomed David Gallagher, Vice President, the guest speaker, and those attending the meeting.

2. Apologies for Absence:

Paul Pywell, Harry Lawrence, Jeffrey Vincent, Andrew Clark, Penny Lewis, Derek Fisher, Luke Pickett, Andy Poulton, David Moreman, Alistair Andrews, Caroline and John Marsden, Jess Young

3. Annual Reports

Chair – John Morley

This is the first time the group has held its AGM at Beckington, as the previous AGM was held via Zoom. Firstly, I would like to thank all members of the committee for their energetic efforts to keep the group running during the past year.

My Deputy, Lindsay Flower, never ceases to come up with new ideas, and is constantly in the background raising the profile of SWAM, liaising with IAMRS and other groups and helping to find guest speakers.

Rosemary Tandy, our Secretary, keeps busy providing support for committee meetings and other general meetings and provides advice on IAMRS issues.

Clare Hogg, our Treasurer and Newsletter Editor, works very hard keeping our accounts up to date and producing the newsletter, *Forward*, which involves a great deal of input. Clare would particularly like to thank Andy Poulton for his contributions to the newsletter. She is always looking for interesting articles on motoring, so if you have any ideas, please let her know.

David Major, our Chief Observer and Associates Co-ordinator, has had to cope with the aftermath of the virus and its effects on training, with a small number of Associates still reluctant to continue with their training programmes.

Peter Huntington, our Membership Secretary, has been busy maintaining membership issues and has been involved in quiz nights held via Zoom. If you haven't taken part in the past, I can recommend them; they are good fun and you can win a prize if you come first.

Robin Clark, our Public Relations Officer, is fairly new to the committee. He has been involved in a number of opportunities associated with media exposure, as well as helping to focus the group on its aims and objectives.

Sue Phillips, our Minutes Secretary, has been busy throughout the year capturing and recording the outcome of committee meetings. A difficult

task with all the dialogue that occurs. A special thank you must go to Penny Walker and Rosemary for their assistance with refreshments.

Moving on, this last year has again been hampered by the continuation of the coronavirus, but we have managed to keep the business running. Thankfully, due to the NHS, the impact of the virus is gradually diminishing. During the year we have had 15 Associates pass their Advanced Test, four of them with a F1RST, two Members qualifying as Local Observers, with no Local Observers qualifying as National Observers. We have also had four Members pass their Masters, all with a distinction. A good year's work by all involved, especially David Major, our Chief Observer, who has co-ordinated our activity.

The group currently has 212 Members, including Associates. This figure is slightly down on last year's number of 231, but it continually fluctuates. We currently have 18 active Associates, with 12 on hold for various reasons. We have 24 Observers, three Masters Mentors and one trainee Masters.

The majority of our group evenings have been held via Zoom. This has been for various reasons including the virus and winter conditions. The attendance at these meetings has been generally poor, which has been disappointing, especially when presenters have carried out a lot of work to provide interesting talks and quizzes on motoring and associated subjects. So the message is: please attend if possible. You will hopefully find the evenings interesting and you will have the chance to meet other members of the group. As restrictions

caused by the virus are now lifting and we are moving into Spring, we should be moving away from Zoom meetings and meeting up in person at Beckington more often.

In September, as a result of the efforts of our Events Secretary, Dave Edwards, the group was represented at the Frome Cheese Show, where we showed off our new gazebo. With one exception, Paul Pywell, the stand was manned by members of the committee and we had a Ford Mustang on show as part of the display, which seemed to attract a lot more interest towards our stand. It was a long, hard day and the objective was to offer the public the opportunity of experiencing advanced driving by taking a taster session, or by becoming a member of IAMRS and taking the test. It was unfortunate that we were not on the main thoroughfare, but that didn't deter us from engaging with the public. Peter Huntington was the star of the show, continually trying to entice people to take up the offer of a free taster session. It was unfortunate that, just as we had packed our gazebo away, a member of the public asked if he could join IAMRS. In conclusion, we decided that in future we should attend events focussed on motoring and, where possible, we should find a pitch that would provide maximum visibility. During September, we also represented IAMRS and our group, at MOD Lyneham, where in blustery conditions we attempted to promote our cause to 1,000 troops.

Secretary – Rosemary Tandy

Hello. This last year has been a difficult one for everyone but we hope we are slowly returning to normal. We are one of the few groups that

have kept going over the last couple of years thanks to Zoom, and we have been able to have some very interesting talks without the need for anyone to get in the car. We feel fortunate to have found this hall for our group meetings – plenty of parking together with excellent places to eat nearby should you arrive early.

We had a very well attended group meeting in September where all the committee introduced themselves as this was the first time we had met as our new group. Andy Poulton entertained us with a very amusing talk leaving us all wanting to hear more. During the year, we have had talks on Towing, Eyesight, Blood Bikes and Reg Local, who I am sure you are all familiar with, to name but a few. We have Shaun Cronin, our IAMRS Area Manager speaking in April about his plug-in Hybrid car, and some Three-in-a-Car events planned for early summer.

Sadly, covid again put a stop to face to face meetings so we went back to Zoom. In September, we asked members to fill in questionnaires asking ‘How are we doing?’ The general consensus seems to be that you are happy at the way the committee is running the group. We are always open to suggestions for group meetings and talks, and indeed any negative comments, in order that we can improve. Please speak to any committee member of any concerns you may have, or ideas. Regarding Zoom, we will continue to have Zoom meetings in the winter months so that you do not need to leave the comfort of your home. We have sometimes been disappointed at the attendance at some meetings as we do our best to find people to

give interesting talks. They give these talks for no fee so it is a little embarrassing when the committee outnumber the members. If you can, please support these online meetings. We are attending the Nick Mason (of Pink Floyd fame) Open Garden event on 30 and 31 July, to raise our profile and hopefully attract some young drivers as they are our future. Last year we attended the Frome Cheese Show.

We are a growing group of over 200 members but in order to improve the standard of driving we need to gain more young people to spread the word of Advanced Driving. We also offer Taster Sessions which have proved very popular and we are happy to give talks to any group or organisation.

The committee has worked hard to ensure the smooth running of the group continues and that our limited resources are utilised in the most effective manner. We owe a vote of thanks to David Major and his Observers who have a record number of passes and more F1RSTs than ever before.

I would like to say thank you to all my committee members for their support and to our tea lady Penny for serving tea, coffee and biscuits with a welcoming smile.

Finally, I hope the coming year will be covid free and we will be able to continue to meet again in this lovely location.

Treasurer – Clare Hogg

The Annual Accounts for 2021 have been available to view on the website and have been printed for you to see them here.

Our main expenses for the year have

been attending the Frome Cheese Show in September, and the Zoom costs and hire of Beckington Memorial Hall for our meetings. Another expense has been buying IAMRS shirts for members of the committee, a scheme which is being extended to National Observers in 2022. This enables us to be recognisable at meetings and to stand out as members of a group when we attend events.

If anyone has any questions about the accounts, please feel free to ask them now. The accounts for both 2021 and 2022 have been audited by Ken Fryer and I am very grateful to him for his support in doing this for us.

Roland Hindmarsh asked a question about the cost of Observer Training as no manuals were printed and Clare replied that this item will be removed.

Acceptance of the Accounts was proposed by Graham Jamieson and seconded by Roland Hindmarsh. The Accounts were approved unanimously by all those present and able to vote.

4. Election of the Committee

The Chairman handed the meeting over to David Gallagher at this point. David proposed that, as all the Committee Members were standing again, voting should be carried out en bloc. This was accepted by all those present and able to vote.

He read out the names of the Committee and their positions.

There were no Objections and the Committee were voted in by all those present and able to vote. David then handed the meeting back to the Chairman.

5. Vision for SWAM – John Morley

The main business of IAMRS and our group is to promote road safety by improving the standards of drivers. Since the merger between Melksham and Bath, the re-formed group has become bigger, better and stronger. In fact people from other areas have expressed an interest in joining our group, possibly due to our reputation. We are financially secure, and have a dedicated and hardworking committee, who worked tirelessly after lockdown to get the group back up and running while other groups put business on hold.

Our Observers will have a Three-in-a-Car update of their skills annually to ensure they maintain their standards. We are also planning to participate in Observer training with the Swindon group, and the first session is due to take place in June, so I hope that we shall have a good representation. David Major is also planning a series of training sessions for our Observers throughout the next year; these will be held at Beckington or via Zoom.

We also intend to build on our strengths to plan and raise the profile of the group. I have already mentioned two events that we attended last year. We are now planning to promote our cause in June by attending the Bath Festival of Motoring, and in July by having the group represented at Middlewick House Open Garden, which normally has a large motoring contingent attending. In this way we are taking control of our recruitment, some of it through Taster Sessions that lead to membership. We are also working on our website and currently have a committee members' rota to produce articles of interest to be placed on

the web. So, if we are to improve and develop further, please don't leave it all to the committee members, let us have your input for the web, come along and help us at external events, turn up at group meetings and quizzes. You will enjoy it. We need your input.

John then handed back to David Gallagher, our guest speaker.

6. Vice President – David Gallagher

David said that this was the first talk he had given in person to the group since visiting BADAM in 2019 and he apologised that his new laptop wouldn't link to the projector!

David had been the Young Driver Ambassador for IAMRS, one of a team comprising Paddy Hopkirk, Katie Mannings and Maria Costello. His role had been to represent IAMRS in schools, colleges and universities to engage young people and to encourage them to drive safely. His role with the organisation ended in 2019 and he set up his own company, Young Driver Ambassador Limited to continue his work independently, but alongside IAMRS. He continued to work with Paddy, but also worked with road safety partners around the UK, worked on the e-scooter trial in the West Midlands and set up a road safety project in Greece with the police to promote road safety awareness in Greek schools and for visiting tourists.

David works closely with Paddy Hopkirk and considers the link between young and mature drivers works well, in spite of the fact that Paddy wonders whether he has much relevance any more. David disagrees, as does the Mini company. Paddy first won the Monte Carlo Rally in a Mini in 1964 and recently Mini

brought out a new version of the car, one emblazoned with the number 37 especially for Paddy. Paddy is a representative of McGard, the locking wheel nut manufacturer, and together they do corporate presentations and encourage people to take taster sessions.

David went on to speak about the British Racing Drivers Club and their Rising Stars. In 2018, IAMRS set up an initiative to put 20 young racing drivers through the Advanced course at Silverstone. The drivers were taught to translate their handling skills at high speeds on the track into safe driving on the roads. Through IPSPA they learnt how to take it easy on public roads. All the drivers passed the Advanced test and all except two achieved a F1RST.

Max Coates, another Racing driver, set up a local education initiative alongside IAMRS and the local police. He was concerned that so many drivers on the road drive too fast. It gives young people the chance, through taster sessions, to enjoy driving and become better drivers. On the track, they can compare the safety features of race driving with those of road driving.

David went on to speak about how Motorsport UK has helped to make grassroots motorsport more accessible to young people. Their clubs offer simple car control courses. They stress the importance of knowing how to drive properly, how to understand the workings of a car and how it performs, and how to drive systematically. The scheme was initially launched at Silverstone, but it is hoped it will extend to all parts of the country. As David remarked 'Why let mistakes happen

on the road when how to overcome them can be learned off road?'

David is still involved in Educational visits about Road Safety. These are usually multi-agency visits in targeted locations and use the crash data of those locations to highlight the dangers to young people.

Another area of involvement for David has been in e-scooter trials in the West Midlands. Young people need to be educated about e-scooters but this is not happening. The only legal e-scooters are those which are hired and are thus insured. Users of e-scooters must have a provisional licence – many young people (and their parents) are unaware of this, and of the fact that points could be added retrospectively when a licence is applied for. The VIAS institute is involved in research into e-scooter trials in many countries. They have found many problems such as riding while drunk, weaving about on roads and pavements and problems for the visually impaired when scooters are abandoned.

David then discussed the three main aims of IAMRS:

to improve the standard of driving or riding in the UK;

to reduce the number of those killed/injured on our roads;

to administer the Advanced test.

He feels that the first two points are of most importance and if they are fulfilled we should feel proud because not everyone will want to take the test.

He asked which of three groups of drivers are safest, those between 17-25, those between 25-55 or those between 55-85. The answer is the first group – when they are learning

and accompanied by an experienced driver, but once they have passed the test they become the worst. He feels we must reach that age group because they learn faster than any other age group. He thinks we should be looking at what is hurting young people – crash hotspots etc – and tailor the education to help in those areas. David feels that use of the P plate, perhaps for a specific time, should be encouraged. If the driver did an advanced course the plate could be removed earlier.

David asked if there were any questions or comments. There was some discussion about the use of e-scooters as an alternative to cars but it was thought they had become an alternative to walking! Discounts on the cost were suggested for those who replaced them safely.

David thanked SWAM for inviting him to speak at the AGM.

John Morley thanked David for his interesting talk.

7. Closing Remarks – John Morley

Before I close the meeting, I would like to inform you all that we are very privileged to have Jess Young among our membership. Not only did she pass her Advanced test with a FIRST in June 2019 at the age of 17, she also went on to prepare for her Masters, which she was due to take in April 2020. This was put on hold due to the virus. However, she persevered and took the Masters test at the age of 20, passing with a distinction – a remarkable achievement for someone who was only 20 years old. Unfortunately, she could not be with us this evening so, on behalf of the Group I would like to offer our congratulations to Jess and to her Mentor, Alistair Andrews.

GROUP NEWS

The January meeting was held on Zoom and John Morley, Chairman, welcomed members and introduced the speaker, John Gregory, also known as Reg Local. Reg was a police traffic officer until 1999 and now he produces videos on YouTube, and has written two books about safe driving.

Reg's police career started in Skelmersdale where he spent some time in traffic cars which sparked his interest in safe driving and he proceeded to do the police driving course and spent two years in police cars. During this time he was called to a Road Traffic Accident which turned out to involve his own sister. This could have put him off traffic policing completely but for him it made him more concerned with preventing such incidents.

He went on to do the police advanced driving course and spent five years as a traffic officer, specialising in drink and drug drivers where he felt he could make a significant difference. He was a family liaison officer dealing with serious and fatal accidents and he feels that his personal experience helped in the role.

After doing the police driving instructors course he taught advanced courses until leaving the police in 2009 to work at Tameside where he is Head of Community Safety and Homelessness. He has written two books, *Advanced and Performance Driving* and *How not to Crash* and has made a wide range of YouTube videos on driving. He is an IAM examiner and an Instructor on Skills Days.

He then went on to talk about a drive he did in India driving what he regards as the most dangerous road in the world – Manali to Leh. He had researched the statistics in the UK and other countries for his book about crashing, which led him to the conclusion that India was the most dangerous country for driving in the world. Normally visitors to India hire a car with a driver so it was a surprise for Indians to see Europeans driving a hire car.

Reg showed some pictures to illustrate what roads in India were like. There was a picture of a motorbike with two adults, two children and a baby, and this is normal family transport in India.

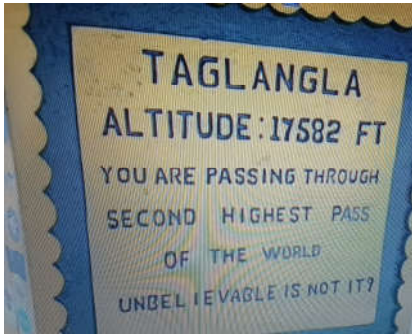


Then there was a picture of a rickshaw and these are used as taxis, school buses, in fact for everything.

The rules of the road appear to be different in India. For example, in the UK at a Give Way sign we wait for a gap. In India, you look where you want to go and don't wait for a gap, but just go. When overtaking in this country the overtaking driver takes responsibility for overtaking safely, but in India there is collective responsibility to allow an overtake to

happen and he showed a video of this practice to illustrate the point.

Reg then went on to describe his drive on the Manali to Leh road into the Himalayas. The road is over 250 miles long and has two or three of the highest motorable passes in the world, with the highest being over 5,000 metres.



He showed a picture of part of the route with 23 hairpin bends. The road is well-maintained because it is near the Pakistan and Chinese borders and is maintained by the military.

One of the things to be taken into account is that at over 3,000 metres the oxygen level is significantly lower than at sea level. This is especially difficult for visitors who can suffer from altitude sickness, and breathlessness which is really exhausting. The lack of oxygen also affects cars and their ability to burn fuel, so you can never drive in a higher gear than second.

Rock falls happen every day and during the months when the road is open (April to October) groups of workers live alongside the road in tents ready to clear the road when needed.

Although the road is well maintained there are places where the road is washed away so often that there is no proper road there. Other drivers help by pointing to the best way to go, and what to avoid. There is a community amongst the drivers on this road – they all look out for each other. If you stop for any reason, passing cars will stop to check that you are all right. If you are in trouble, you are reliant on them for help as there are no towns or garages on the route, and probably no phone signal either. On their return journey to Manali they stopped to help a Belgian motorcyclist who was in trouble. They were able to sort out his problem and a very happy Belgian waved them goodbye.

One of the legacies of British rule in India is that they drive on the left (which makes life easier) and road signs are in English. There are no road signs to warn of hazards, but there are motivational messages at intervals along the way such as:

Heaven, Hell or Mother Earth, the choice is yours

Speed thrills but kills

On the bend, go slow friend

Remember you don't own the road.

When Reg had finished his talk there were questions and comments. Ray Robbetts commented that he had seen Reg's Manali – Leh video on YouTube and noted that he had omitted the most dangerous part in showing us his clips! He also asked how Reg managed to have clear roads to film his advanced driving videos. Reg said that most were filmed in the Yorkshire Dales and Scotland where the roads are often quiet.

Robin Clark said that he wasn't going to complain about roads in Devon and Cornwall after seeing the roads in India. He then went on to ask what Reg thought about the Hierarchy of Road Users being emphasised in the new Highway Code. Reg said that it is not new legislation but has a realigned idea of priorities. It is reinforcing and clarifying things we should be doing anyway. It is emphasising the idea that the bigger your vehicle, the more responsibility you should take. As a motorcyclist and a cyclist, he appreciates that. The question was raised that it might make pedestrians and cyclists more over-confident and less cautious. Reg didn't think it would make a difference to how they behaved because he said that no one is more dangerous than a pedestrian because you can never tell what they are going to do.

Robin commented that with the increasing number of driving aids, and more to come, he feared that driving standards will go down because drivers feel more protected. Reg said that he felt that looked at from the perspective of IAMRS, anything which keeps people safe on the roads is a good thing. There have been some really good innovations, such as ABS which can help prevent rear-end shunts, although he doesn't like Lane Assist. On one occasion when he was overtaking a cyclist (without indicating, which would have overridden Lane Assist, because it was unnecessary) Lane Assist nearly pushed him into the cyclist. However, it can be overridden. On the whole, he supports new innovations so long as they can be switched off, but there should be

a good reason for doing so. For the majority of drivers, the more systems there are, the better and safer for all of us.

The meeting concluded with John thanking Reg for his presentation, and hoping we might be able to invite him back sometime.

The February meeting was again held via Zoom.

The Chairman, John Morley opened the meeting and welcomed the 19 people who were present. He introduced SWAM Member Paul Pywell who was to give a talk about Freewheelers.

Paul said he was both an Advanced Driver and an Advanced Rider with IAMRS and with ROSPA as well as a National Observer. He moved from Norfolk three years ago and started with the charity in 2020, which proved to be an interesting time.

Paul explained that Freewheelers is a charity set up in 1990, part of the National Association of Blood Bike Groups, to cover the South West area from Swindon, through parts of Wiltshire and west past Taunton to the coast at Minehead, north towards Gloucester, encompassing Bristol and Bath. As part of its remit, Freewheelers encourages safe riding and promotes a positive image of motorcycling. Its 150 volunteers work to deliver medical samples, blood, medication, notes and medical records and breast milk to and from the hospitals in the area to patients' homes, or to hubs like Swindon for onward transmission to other parts of the country. Paul considers the most satisfying and important cargo is breast milk, knowing that you

could be supplying a new-born baby with the chance of life. Freewheelers also provides services to the air ambulances.

The area is divided into three patches, North with Bristol Royal Infirmary and Southmead Hospitals as its hub, East with the Royal United Hospital in Bath as its hub, and West, around Taunton Hospital, the smallest area with the smallest number of jobs but entailing the longest mileage on poor roads. Paul is based in Warminster so covers the east patch although when a relief biker he covers all patches.

Freewheelers operates 365 days a year with two shift patterns:
from 7pm to 7am Mondays to Thursdays;
from 7pm Friday to 7am Monday – extended at Bank Holidays.

Each shift has an allocated Rider and a relief Rider.

Riders fit into the two shift patterns, either a day shift or a weekend shift.

All Riders are advanced riders with either IAMRS or ROSPA and must renew their qualification every three years. There is an induction process covering the rules on the handling of consignments and the main locations.

The Duty Co-ordinator is the single point of contact. Hospitals contact him and he assigns the job to the Riders. He has a duty of care to the Riders regarding the weather, shifts and break times. He also co-ordinates with other regions. Jobs come in three categories:

1. Non Urgent – deliver by 7am;
2. Urgent – delivery in 2 hour window;
3. Emergency – where there is a risk

to life, but fortunately rare.

Riding standards must always be kept up – road rules must not be broken. All bikes have trackers, which also allows the Co-ordinator to know where Riders are should there be an accident.

Freewheelers has a varied fleet of bikes, the top models being four BMW R1250RT, nine Yamaha FRJ1300, and one BMW R1200RT. These are the bikes assigned to the Riders. There are other bikes which are used for fundraising. The Yamaha bikes are being phased out as they are no longer made in Europe and there is a preference for BMW.

Paul went on to describe a normal shift – although there is no normal! He works the east area, based out of Trowbridge. He works one shift every two months.



Paul ready for a shift

He takes over the bike from the previous Rider and does a thorough POWDER check before going on duty, including ensuring brake pads etc. are ok. He fills in an online form and waits for the first call. This is often around 7.30pm, but maybe not till 9.30pm. It could be an easy task, ferrying supplies between hospitals

or it could be more challenging. One late job entailed taking medication to Warminster, then two pickups from Paulton and then Glastonbury. At the end of his shift, he cleans the bike, ensures the kit is complete and takes it to the next volunteer. He has completed 3,300 duty miles.

He has also carried out the Co-ordinator role. All Riders have to contact the Co-ordinator when they leave home, when they pick up a delivery and when they return home. The Co-ordinator has to check maps and street views to ensure locations are clearly marked – and where they should be!

Paul went on to explain the national set up of Blood Bikes. There are 30 groups around the country with 2,700 volunteers, carrying out some 56,000 consignments over the year. Sometimes riders meet and provide a relay service between areas, for example, taking breast milk from a hospital in Cirencester to another in Bristol. He said that Blood Bikes are the unseen emergency 999 service. He showed two videos, one high-

lighting the work of Margaret Ryerson who set up the service in 1962 and another showing how things have moved on in those 60 years. The National Association of Blood Bikes and all the associated groups are entirely voluntary and rely solely on donations.

Paul said that Freewheelers alone saves the NHS more than £360,000 a year and charges nothing for any of its services. He said that it costs £30,000 a week to run its services on top of which there is the cost of new bikes. Riders travel 220,000 miles a year, about 600 miles a day. During lockdown BP provided free fuel, although they now offer reduced rates. All bikes are fitted with satnav and the what3words app has also been adopted. This connects to Bluetooth on the Riders' helmets.

Paul ended his talk with the reminder that Freewheelers is 100% voluntary, 100% free to the NHS and 100% dependent on charitable donations.

John thanked Paul for his talk and members for attending.

EVENTS AND MEETINGS

Events

This summer we are attending two big events at which we hope to attract interest in advanced driving. The first is the **Bath Festival of Motoring** on 18 and 19 June at Walcot Rugby. We will have our gazebo there with a car alongside it to attract interest. This is an event which the Bath group used to attend regularly and as it is the first time it is being held at Walcot Rugby since the pandemic began, we hope that there will be lots of people there with an interest in cars and driving. Let us know if you would like to help on either day, or, if you are visiting the Festival, please pay us a visit.

The second event is the **Middlewick House Open Garden** event on 30 and 31 July. Nick Mason who owns the house, has a great collection of classic cars which will be on display. The car on the front cover of this issue of *Forward* is typical of the type of vehicle which will be on show. There are also

stalls to browse including plants for sale, and there are farm animals to visit. There will be tea, coffee, cakes and Nick's famous barbecue will be available throughout the day. The proceedings are in aid of the Wiltshire Bobby Van Trust and Wiltshire Air Ambulance and are held by kind permission of Nick and Annette Mason. Nick is of course famous for being the drummer for Pink Floyd and is currently touring with his current project *Saucerful of Secrets*.

Meetings

Our May, June and July meetings will take the form of driving meetings, probably 3-in-a-car (TiC) drives, though if you wanted to practise manoeuvres, for example, or anything that you would particularly like advice on, you would have the opportunity to do so. The purpose of these TiC meetings is to give members, and Associates, a chance to drive with an Observer to assist you in maintaining your high standards. We are, after all, a driving organisation and we want to develop this aspect of our meetings. The aim is to have a fun evening and help you enjoy your driving more.

We shall meet near Beckington Memorial Hall but we have not booked the Hall so parking must be on the road alongside it. The meetings start at 19.30 but you are welcome to arrive at any time after 19.00, and preferably before 19.30 so that drives can be sorted out. We will not be able to use the facilities at the Hall but there is a garage at the end of the road with facilities and we will adjourn to the Woolpack, a short walk from the Hall, afterwards for a (non-alcoholic) drink and chat for those who want to come.

For those who have not experienced TiC drives before, they are your opportunity to catch up on a few tips from some of the Region's top Observers. If this is your first time you'll be in for a real treat because they are an ideal way of keeping in touch with advanced driving.

When you arrive you will be assigned into car size groups. One of you elects to drive first for 30 minutes or so on a course of your choice or, if you are not sure of the area, a course described to you en route.

There is usually a good deal of helpful banter during TiC sessions so most points will be covered as you go round, but at the end of each drive there will be an opportunity for you all to enjoy a short and sometimes entertaining debrief! Someone else then elects to go next in their own car, and so on until you've all had a turn. If you prefer, you can be a passenger in somebody else's car to watch what goes on and enjoy the benefits of the debrief.

The other events we have planned this year are a meeting at Beckington Memorial Hall in September which will be to welcome us all back after the summer break as we are not holding a meeting in August. In October we will be holding another driving meeting at Beckington to practise night driving and in November we are back to a Zoom meeting where we will have a speaker from Avon & Somerset Constabulary's Road Safety Unit. There will be more details of these meetings in the next issue of *Forward*, and there will be no meeting in December.

To summarise:

FUTURE EVENTS

Thursday, 19 May. Driving event at Beckington next to the Hall

Thursday, 16 June. Driving event at Beckington next to the Hall

Thursday, 21 July. Driving event at Beckington next to the Hall

August – no meeting

Thursday, 15 September. Welcome back party at Beckington Memorial Hall

Thursday, 20 October. Night driving evening at Beckington

Thursday, 17 November. Representative of Avon & Somerset Constabulary's Road Safety Unit

December – no meeting

LETTER TO THE EDITORS

Dear Team,

I walk the dog three or four times a day round the trading estate end of Calne and I am often standing at road junctions waiting to cross.

Since the new Highway Code came in, no one has stopped and waved me across! If I have been in the road, I often get a horn blasted at me by the person speeding round the corner; wrong!.

As for giving way to cyclists, or passing them with a six-foot clearance, forget it. There are parked cars on both sides of the road and they try to squeeze past the cyclist nearly touching them. The only person I have seen let a cyclist negotiate a roundabout was a man with an IAM sticker in his window.

I ride a bicycle, I drive a campervan and I walk. I have always stopped and waved a cyclist on, even before the Highway Code changed, or stopped and let them pass me in narrow lanes, as I know what it is like on a bicycle when a motorist tries to squeeze past, and the campervan has long ears that stick out (mirrors).

No one appears to have read the new Highway Code, or if they did it didn't sink in, or they are too lazy to slow down, or they don't care about cyclists or pedestrians.

It would not happen in Austria, and many other foreign countries; the pedestrians would report them before they got to the end of the road. I have seen the police sitting in a deckchair with the speed trap pointing through the hedge and radio to the police further down the road; not a group of people in high viz jackets standing at the side of the road.

I think since the Council took over responsibility for parking you have cars parked blocking pavements, the wrong way round at night, and on bends and road junctions. If you complain to the police they say report it to the council, and have the council got a parking warden, and do they work at night? I took the dog for a long walk round Calne one night and there were over 500 cars that needed a fine for parking wrongly which is over £30,000 in £60 fines, and that was just in the

north of the town. So much for the council controlling things; that would be £30,000 pounds towards caring for people!

Regards

Jack Iason

[Editors' note: Have you had any good or bad experiences with the new Hierarchy of Road Users? Please let us know. It would be good to have a debate in *Forward* about the subject.]

We Welcome New Associates

| | |
|--------------------------|------------------------------|
| Emily Austin | [Observer: Andy Lee] |
| Stephanie Pippett | [Observer: Lindsay Flower] |
| Steve Pratt | [Observer: Lindsay Flower] |
| Jean Reynolds | [Observer: Roland Hindmarsh] |

We Congratulate

IAMRS Test Pass

| | |
|-------------------------|--|
| Nigel Barlow* | observed by John Morley |
| Gemma Geoghegan* | observed by Martyn Buckland |
| Anthea Kemp | observed by Lindsay Flower and Ray Robbetts |
| Michael Ransom* | observed by Martyn Buckland |
| Philip Stunell* | observed by Jeffrey Vincent |

*FIRST pass

IAM Masters Pass

| | |
|--------------------------|------------------------------|
| Martyn Buckland** | mentored by David Major |
| Jess Young** | mentored by Alistair Andrews |

** with distinction

SOMERSET AND WILTSHIRE ADVANCED MOTORISTS
INCOME & EXPENDITURE ACCOUNT
FOR THE YEAR ENDING 31ST DECEMBER 2021

| | 31/12/2021 | 31/12/2020 |
|---------------------------------|-----------------|-----------------|
| INCOME | £ | |
| Full Membership Fees | 2,268.00 | 2,319.50 |
| Gift aid | 459.93 | 421.51 |
| Associate Membership Fees | 682.00 | 682.00 |
| Door takings | 0.00 | 0.00 |
| Canteen takings | 0.00 | 0.00 |
| Sundry income | 0.00 | 65.00 |
| Donations | 0.00 | 0.00 |
| Refund of room hire | 0.00 | 118.75 |
| Interest Received | 0.96 | 0.57 |
| Total: | <u>3,410.89</u> | <u>3,607.33</u> |
| EXPENDITURE | | |
| Newsletter expenses | 216.92 | 167.91 |
| Stationery | 152.62 | 25.20 |
| Telephone | 0.00 | 49.79 |
| Advertising & Events | 690.31 | 80.00 |
| Room Hire & Speaker Expenses | 504.62 | 100.73 |
| Canteen | 90.44 | 0.00 |
| Group Insurance | 156.00 | 145.00 |
| Observer Training | 142.15 | 131.16 |
| Conferences | 0.00 | 0.00 |
| Quiz prizes | 31.80 | 0.00 |
| Shirts | 221.56 | 0.00 |
| Website | 0.00 | 0.00 |
| Sundries | 35.00 | 35.00 |
| Total: | <u>2,241.42</u> | <u>734.79</u> |
| SURPLUS/(DEFICIT) FOR THE YEAR | <u>1,169.47</u> | <u>2,872.54</u> |
| General Reserves (Unrestricted) | | |
| Brought Forward | 6,818.22 | 3,945.68 |
| Carried Forward | <u>7,987.69</u> | <u>6,818.22</u> |

**SOMERSET AND WILTSHIRE ADVANCED MOTORISTS
BALANCE SHEET
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31ST DECEMBER 2021**

| | 31/12/2021 | 31/12/2020 |
|---|------------------------|------------------------|
| Brought forward from BADAM and MAM | | £ |
| Savings accounts – ex-BADAM | | 3,361.98 |
| – ex-MAM | | <u>604.56</u> |
| | | <u>3,966.54</u> |
| Current accounts – ex-BADAM | | 1,249.61 |
| – ex-MAM | | <u>933.53</u> |
| | | <u>2,183.14</u> |
| Total assets transferred to SWAM | | 6,149.68 |
| Less membership fees transferred to SWAM* | | <u>2,204.00</u> |
| Reserves transferred to SWAM | | <u>3,945.68</u> |
| CURRENT ASSETS | | |
| Bank Account – savings | 6,363.21 | 3,967.11 |
| Bank Account – current | 1,723.10 | 2,998.11 |
| Cash | 0.00 | 0.00 |
| | <u>8,086.31</u> | <u>6,965.22</u> |
| CURRENT LIABILITIES | | |
| Accruals (2021 fees paid in 2020) | 98.62 | 147.00 |
| Creditors | <u>0.00</u> | <u>0.00</u> |
| TOTAL CURRENT LIABILITIES | <u>98.62</u> | <u>147.00</u> |
| NET WORKING CAPITAL | 7,987.69 | 6,818.22 |
| NET ASSETS | 7,987.69 | 6,818.22 |
| UNRESTRICTED GENERAL RESERVES: | <u>7,987.69</u> | <u>6,818.22</u> |

The accounts were approved by the committee and signed on 10th March 2022

John Morley (Chairman)

Clare Hogg (Treasurer)

The accounts were independently examined on 11th March 2022 by

Ken Fryer (Chartered Accountant)

PROFILE OF JOHN MORLEY—Chairman of SWAM



Who am I?

I am a 79 year old widower and have three children and two grandchildren.

I am a retired marine engineer who during my latter MOD career specialised in the management of submarine nuclear reactor and propulsion plant upkeep and design intent. After retiring from the MOD, I joined Babcock Marine until I retired at the age of 65. My MOD career took me and my family to live in Plymouth, Bath, Scotland and Gibraltar, finally ending up working at Filton, in Bristol.

My Role as Chairman:

In summary, the Chair:

is part of the group committee and is a Trustee;

heads the group committee;

ensures that the group is run in accordance with the guidelines set out by the Charities Commission and the IAM RoadSmart Rules for groups.

Where am I based?

I live in Seend, Wiltshire. My house, which is set back off a farm lane, was built in the 1930s and has a large garden, which demands a high degree of maintenance.

How did I get involved with the IAM?

I was a keen club and competitive cyclist for most of my life, but in recent years have not been able to perform to the level that I would like (maybe an electric road bike next?). So, in 2005 I thought that I could get some enjoyment from motoring. In March that year I passed the advanced driving test and became a member of the IAM Melksham group. I was a committee member (Membership Secretary and Newsletter Editor) for the group, but when it merged with the Bath group, I was asked to take on the role of Chairman. I am also a National Observer, Local Observer Assessor, and last year passed the Masters with distinction.

What cars do I drive and why?

Following the recent loss of my dear wife, I inherited her silver 2 Series BMW Coupe. I also own a White G20 3 Series BMW 320d M Sport, which I bought just over a year ago. It is a fantastic car to drive and look at, it is beautifully built, and I am very careful where I park it. I use the 2 Series for general purposes, including towing a large trailer often filled with garden waste. The M Sport is used for pure driving enjoyment.

My hobbies and interests:

I still take an interest in cycling, and follow most of the major events on Eurosport. I also meet up with the elders of the Chippenham Cycling Club for a pub lunch on Thursdays.

I renovated and extended my house, and still have an interest in DIY and building.

I love to travel and have been to India on eight occasions. Up until the loss of my wife we travelled to many countries around the world and used to go back to Gibraltar and Andalucía every year to visit friends. I would like to continue with my travels when times are easier.

I enjoy experiencing the different cultures around the world, in particular the cuisines, of which my favourites are Indian, Spanish, Thai, and Moroccan.

What is top of my bucket list?

To travel to places on the planet that I have not yet seen.

To tour Europe by car.

To learn how to cook to a reasonable standard.

CAN ANYONE HELP?

You may already have read about the SWAM group's plans to attend the Middlewick House Open Garden fair in the grounds of Pink Floyd's drummer, Nick Mason's, house (see page 16).

As part of that, we would like to display a pedal car (old or new)



as well as a chopper bike (*yes one of those bicycles you owned as a child*) on our stand. Are any members able to lend us one or both of these items – or put us in touch with someone else who might be able to help? Items will be displayed on a plinth with clear signage 'not to touch'. We can also make arrangements for

collection as well as safe return.

Please contact Robin Clark (Public Relations Officer) on 07974 764 094, or email: pr@swam-iam.org.uk.

Thank you.

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.

SWAM may from time to time publish photographs taken at group events in *Forward* and on the website, or display them at publicity events.

If you have any concerns or wish to opt out of having your photograph taken or published by SWAM, please email or ring the Secretary (details on page 2) and request an acknowledgement in writing.