

# e-NEWSLETTER

**iAM**  
RoadSmart

## WESSEX ADVANCED MOTORISTS



[www.wessexam.uk](http://www.wessexam.uk)  
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Winter 2019





# WESSEX ADVANCED MOTORISTS

# e-NEWSLETTER

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Any comments or opinions expressed in this e-Newsletter are those of the contributors and not necessarily of the Institute of Advanced Motorists Ltd., Editor or Committee. Please send any items for consideration to be included in the next e-Newsletter to David Walton, our Editor (details on the back page). Items will be published ASAP.

#### **GENERAL DATA PROTECTION REGULATION**

Members' details, i.e. names, addresses and telephone numbers, are kept on computer to assist group administration. This information will not be passed outside the IAM. WAM may from time to time publish photographs taken at group events in this newsletter and on the website or display them at publicity events. If you do not wish to have your photo taken or published by WAM, please contact the Editor in writing (contact details on the back page).

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# Chairman's Corner



## Chairman's Report 2019 presented recently at the AGM

Good evening and welcome to you all for coming here tonight.

In contrast to previous years, my report this year will be succinct. This is not because I've been told to "get on with it!" by a certain member of the committee who shall remain nameless Barry...

...It will be succinct because tonight we are very fortunate to be joined by Paddy Hopkirk MBE who along with David Gallagher will talk about their roles of IAM RoadSmart Mature and Young Driver



By Andrew Griffiths





Ambassadors respectively; I speak for us all when I say that I very much hope Paddy can be persuaded to share some tales later about his extensive rallying career which includes that famous win at the 1964 Monte Carlo Rally in his Mini Cooper S, car number 37.

For those of you unable to attend this evening and who will be reading this in our newsletter, I wish you could have joined us; you have missed a good'un!

II

WAM has achieved excellent results in the last 12 months. We've had a steady influx of Associate Members throughout the year. Sadly we have lost some Observers this year and currently some are inactive due to other commitments, but while the amount of training we can deliver has reduced, the quality definitely hasn't. I recall one of my first Line Managers in the Civil Service saying to me many years ago, "it's not about the quantity of results achieved, it's about the quality of the results... and in your case Android, it's neither". He was a character and that nickname he gave me stuck with my peers for 30 years and at biannual reunions in Whitehall, one or two of

his secretaries of the day still call me by that nickname - sometimes shortened to "Droid". And to Barry who has managed to elbow his way to the top table this year I say... "don't even think of it!"

II

The reduction in the number of Observers I mentioned is causing me some concern because our Group is, for the first-time, in a situation whereby new Associates are unable to start their courses for a while; to them I say "please bear with me, we'll get you started as soon as possible, enjoy your course, put lots into it and you'll get lots out of it". To those who have completed their training and have passed the advanced driving test in the last 12 months, we congratulate each and every one of you on your achievement.

II

As outgoing Chairman, I would like to thank a great committee for the work they do. Our committee meetings have been productive and enjoyable with many a laugh along the way; usually at my expense. And now, potentially as the incoming Chairman, I would like to offer





some words of caution to the committee... 2020 is payback time so watch out!

Thanks too, go to our volunteers who organise refreshments at these members' evenings. Without you we'd be gasping, you make a big difference and be assured that you are greatly appreciated by all!

Also thank to those volunteers – Barry's Brigade – who have come along to public events to help support WAM and IAM RoadSmart. Your presence is appreciated and so are the home made cakes.

II

Thank you again for coming along tonight and for listening. And thank you to those unable to be here, who will be reading this in the Newsletter before switching off the bedside light... it beats sleeping pills.

### **Chairman's Award 2019**

From this year onwards, I've decided to rebrand the award to include Committee, Observers and Volunteers. Rebranding meant a newly engraved plate on its base; it didn't occur to me that this particular plate was not a stock holding in Timpson's and therefore this would not be a normal turn-around.

So while tonight I have no tangible trophy to present to its winner for 2019, it's at Timpsons, I can at least announce who the deserving recipient is: **Pauline Wills**.

Pauline is our Associates Coordinator. Please join me Pauline.

The role of Associates Coordinator is key to managing every Associate's journey from that first introductory phone call, to appointing an Observer, to monitoring their progress with the Observer, to reporting status to our committee and right through to booking the test.

Pauline has embraced her role with energy and enthusiasm. She has not only hit the ground running, she has put her own marque on the role. She ensures Associates know that they can phone or email her should they wish, so I think she's extending the role to include "agony aunt".

So Auntie Pauline, my sincere thanks for all you do as our Associates Coordinator and congratulations on winning the Chairman's Award for 2019.

I'll present you with the award itself at our meeting in November.



# THE COMMITTEE



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

|                                  |                  |  |
|----------------------------------|------------------|--|
| Chairman                         | Andrew Griffiths | <a href="mailto:chair@wessexam.uk">chair@wessexam.uk</a>             |
| Vice Chairman/Events Coordinator | Barry Keenan     | <a href="mailto:events@wessexam.uk">events@wessexam.uk</a>           |
| Secretary/Membership Secretary   | David Walton     | <a href="mailto:secretary@wessexam.uk">secretary@wessexam.uk</a>     |
| Treasurer                        | Isobel Jennings  | <a href="mailto:treasurer@wessexam.uk">treasurer@wessexam.uk</a>     |
| Associate Coordinator            | Pauline Wills    | <a href="mailto:coordinator@wessexam.uk">coordinator@wessexam.uk</a> |
| Support Officer                  | Michael Wotton   | <a href="mailto:cmmw@wessexam.uk">cmmw@wessexam.uk</a>               |
| Chief Observer/Masters Mentor    | Andrew Griffiths | <a href="mailto:chair@wessexam.uk">chair@wessexam.uk</a>             |
| Newsletter Editor/Webmaster      | David Walton     | <a href="mailto:ed@wessexam.uk">ed@wessexam.uk</a>                   |
| Archivist                        | Anne Bull        | <a href="mailto:cmab@wessexam.uk">cmab@wessexam.uk</a>               |



# GROUP OBSERVERS



|                                      |                    |
|--------------------------------------|--------------------|
| Chief Observer, Masters Mentor & LOA | Andrew Griffiths   |
| National Observer & LOA              | Barry Keenan       |
| National Observer                    | Delphine West-King |
| Local Observer                       | Brian Dodd         |
| Local Observer                       | Andrew Hepworth    |
| Local Observer                       | Isobel Jennings    |
| Local Observer                       | Ted Parks          |
| Local Observer                       | Hugh Todd          |
| Local Observer                       | Guy Tucker         |
| Local Observer                       | David Walton       |
| Local Observer                       | Michael Wotton     |

Group observers must be fully paid up Wessex Group AND National IAM members at ALL times to carry out your vital observer roles.

Always check that your associate has an up to date membership card before departing on any observed drives. Please try to make and maintain contact with your new associates and listen to any concerns or fears they may have. When associates pass their Advanced Driving Test, PLEASE inform the associate coordinator as soon as possible as we have a duty to keep accurate and up to date records. All new associate members are normally teamed up with a conveniently placed observer. If you have any problems please contact our chief observer, Andrew Griffiths.

The following IAM and WAM member is a Driving Standards Agency Approved Driving Instructor:  
Nick Tapp 07900 900678

Members and/or enquirers must establish their own facts and details when contacting a Driving Instructor. If any other IAM and WAM full member driving instructors wish to be on the above list, contact the newsletter editor. (NB: You MUST remain *full* IAM and WAM members at all times.)



# CALENDAR



## NOVEMBER

|    |   |               |   |
|----|---|---------------|---|
| 20 | W | 7:30 pm       | <b>Members' Evening</b> – Annie's Ride, a talk by Pearl Jeans and Annie Suddaby |
| 27 | W | 8:30am-1:30pm | SRS Event 60+ Charlton Mackrell   |

## DECEMBER

|  |    |               |                         |
|--|----|---------------|-------------------------|
| 3                                      | Tu | 8:30am-1:30pm | SRS Event 60+ Dulverton |
| 7                                      | Sa | 12:30pm       | WAM Christmas Lunch     |
| <b>No members' evening in December</b> |    |               |                         |

## JANUARY

|    |    |               |  |
|----|----|---------------|--|
| 8  | W  | 7:30 pm       | WAM Committee Meeting  |
| 15 | W  | 7:30 pm       | <b>Members' Evening</b> – Quiz: That was the year that was; 2019 |
| 16 | Th | 8:30am-1:30pm | SRS Event 60+ Wooton Courtney                                    |

## FEBRUARY

|    |   |         |  |
|----|---|---------|--|
| 19 | W | 7:30 pm | <b>Members' Evening</b> – The work & history of St. Margaret's Hospice |
|----|---|---------|--|



# PRESIDENT'S PONDERINGS



## AGM 16<sup>th</sup> October 2019

It was a great pleasure to welcome our guest speakers for the evening. Well done Barry Keenan, Events Coordinator, for securing the services of the rallying legend, Paddy Hopkirk MBE, and David Gallagher. Paddy is the Mature Driver Ambassador for IAM RoadSmart and David is the Young Driver Ambassador. A truly entertaining evening followed the AGM business, which thankfully saw the re-election of all the Group's Committee Officers.



by Brian Howe

## President's AGM Address

*New Observers to help spread the load are always welcome, and the same can be said for Group Committee members. Too few people are taking on too much of the work. If you can offer just a few hours a month we would be very grateful indeed. On that subject I would like to offer my special thanks to our Chairman, Andrew Griffiths and our Events Coordinator, Barry Keenan for the extraordinary amount of effort and hard work that they put into this Group, despite their own lack of fitness sometimes. On behalf of the Committee, I would like to thank those members who have unstintingly helped at events and especially to Alice and Renee for looking after the refreshments. Please don't forget our WAM Christmas Lunch. Only £16.95 for 3 courses plus tea/coffee and a mince pie. Saturday 7<sup>th</sup> December 2019, 12:30pm for 1:00pm. At Oake Manor Golf Club, Oake, Nr Taunton, TA4 1BA. If you are interested in the Christmas Lunch please contact Barry Keenan.*





**Social Media. Fact, fiction or just somewhere to let off steam?** The following is a post that came up on my newsfeed earlier this month. Written exactly as seen.

*“I was already parked and when I came back to the car I saw this Ford (green car) park right up to my bumper luckily I had space behind me or I wouldn’t have been able to get out of the space black car is mine. This was in Yeovil town centre by natwest today at 13:15pm”.*

My comment was:

“With an IAM RoadSmart Advanced Driving qualification it would be quite easy to extricate yourself from this situation. Inch backwards turning the steering wheel as fast as possible to the left, guiding the rear of the car towards the kerb. Then inch forwards, turning the steering wheel quickly to the right. By repeating this process you will be surprised what situations you can escape from”.

**Pavement Parking.**

As a mobility scooter user, pavement parking is a pet hate of mine. Also, it is quite common to find cars, vans or lorries parked across lowered kerbs, where often, coloured ‘Tac tiles’

are placed on the pavement edge to aid visually impaired users.



Rules 243 and 244 of the HIGHWAY CODE apply.





### **Rule 243.** DO NOT stop or park

- Near a school entrance
- Anywhere you would prevent access for Emergency Services
- At or near a bus or tram stop or taxi rank
- On the approach to a level crossing/tramway crossing
- Opposite or within 10 metres (32 feet) of a junction, except in an authorized parking space
- Near the brow of a hill or hump bridge
- Opposite a traffic island or (if this would cause an obstruction) another parked vehicle
- Where you would force other traffic to enter a tram lane
- Where the kerb has been lowered to help wheelchair users and powered mobility vehicles
- In front of an entrance to a property
- On a bend
- Where you would obstruct cyclists' use of cycle facilities *except* when forced to do so by stationary traffic

**Rule 244.** You **MUST NOT** park partially or wholly on the pavement in London, and should not do so elsewhere unless signs permit it. Parking on the pavement can obstruct and seriously inconvenience pedestrians, people in wheelchairs or with visual impairments and people with prams or pushchairs.

### **Law GL(GP)A sect 15**

Information taken from The HIGHWAY CODE New 2015 Edition.

It is almost impossible to drop a mobility scooter off a four inch kerb safely and then to get it to climb back up onto the pavement afterwards.

Even with a rollator (wheeled walking frame), it is quite dangerous to step off the pavement and onto the road, as the front wheels tend to turn at right angles, the rollator stops dead and over goes the vulnerable pedestrian.

This happened to a friend of mine who broke her leg having fallen over the top of her rollator at a kerb.



## Bucket list item ticked

In August I reached a milestone birthday. I now consider myself an elderly gentleman. Part of the birthday celebrations was a midweek coach holiday up North. Travelling with Majestic Holidays, Alice and I stayed at the Jury's Inn Hotel, Newcastle. Included in the holiday were trips to the Royal Navy Maritime Museum in Hartlepool, and



Durham, where we had a good look round the beautiful cathedral. But the main reason for choosing that particular holiday was a whole day at Beamish, the Living Museum of the North, located off the A693, South of Newcastle-upon-Tyne and North of Durham. This is a place that I have wanted to visit for many years, but never had the chance before. It tells the story of life in North East England during the 1820's, 1900's and 1940's. They are currently developing another large area of the site to represent 1950's



Welfare Britain. What better way for a chap interested in all early transport and machinery, to celebrate his 70<sup>th</sup> birthday? This blue 'Thorneycroft' style bus is actually a 1960 reproduction, using a Bedford TK engine and crash gearbox and it has no power steering. There was so much to see, buses, trams, cars and vans. Every shop and every house is an historic time capsule, and all the 'locals' and workers were in period dress for the era that



was being represented. There was even a parade of Suffragettes in period dress followed by a parade of men shouting, “No votes for women”. There is also a mining village complete with a school and a church, and a 1940’s farm with all period correct machinery, a couple of cars in a garage and Land Girls working. I couldn’t take my mobility scooter on the coach, so I had to manage with my rollator. Thankfully there was a frequent service of buses and trams to get you from one area to the next. Even so, it was a lot of walking and thankfully plenty of stops to look at different exhibits and consume copious amounts of tea. It was a bit of a struggle and I was glad of the free day that followed to give myself time to recover. **Brian L. Howe**







Photo stop at The Angel of the North



# COORDINATOR'S REPORT



Welcome to the six new Associates who have joined us since our last newsletter. Currently nine Associates are on the Advanced Driving Course, three of whom are very nearly test ready. We also have six Associates who are keen to start the course, due to circumstances and geography not the same six that I mentioned earlier.

Congratulations to three members who passed their Advanced Driving Test recently, in particular Tony Brunt who achieved a F1RST with all 1's. Tony was lucky to have his certificate presented by Paddy Hopkirk and David Gallagher at our AGM.

Following a conversation with Andrew Griffiths, Barry Keenan and Steve Greenhalgh from Somerset Road Safety at the West Somerset Steam Rally in August, we have received twenty-two requests for Free Tasters during the last ten days. This is the result of the very successful Route 60+ Training Programme run by Somerset Road Safety, aimed to help senior drivers drive safely for longer. Whilst we trust that the drives themselves will be beneficial to all who signed up, we also hope it will lead to some new Associates joining our Group.



**by Pauline Wills**





## Advanced Driving Test Passes

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

### OBSERVED BY

|                       |                    |
|-----------------------|--------------------|
| Nigel Short           | Mike Wotton        |
| Anthony Brunt (F1RST) | Brian Dodd         |
| Roger Newton          | Delphine West-King |

## The Membership Register

This quarter we have six new group members. We hope you enjoy your association with Wessex and we look forward to welcoming you to our meetings, events and activities.

|                   | <u>TOWN</u>        | <u>CLASS</u> |
|-------------------|--------------------|--------------|
| Sam Westmacott    | Watchet            | associate    |
| Alistair Thompson | Bridgwater         | associate    |
| Samuel Leitch     | Taunton            | associate    |
| Chris Hooper      | Watchet            | associate    |
| Caz Killer        | Monkton Heathfield | associate    |
| Keith Hayman      | Lyme Regis         | full         |

## Statistics for year to end of October

|                  |     |
|------------------|-----|
| Pass rate %      | 100 |
| F1RSTS           | 4   |
| Passes           | 11  |
| New Associates   | 21  |
| No. of observers | 11  |

We have 122 members and 8 Friends/Volunteers. We have 8 Fellows. *David Walton*



# Events Corner



Picture the scene. It's early evening rush hour traffic on a wet and windy October day. The sky is leaden, the rain is lashing down in thick heavy raindrops and, where there are trees, leaves lie in clumps on the roads and pavements. In other words, it's very wet and slippery underfoot. Pedestrians, heads bent against the weather, scurry about trying to get home before they either get blown off their feet or drown in the process.

On this awful day I was driving through Taunton. For the purposes of this tale my journey starts at the traffic lights at the Corner House Hotel; that was where I first joined the queue of traffic trying to get through the town centre. In front of me is a bright yellow VW Beetle. One lady occupant.

The driver in question had thick dark hair which was clearly giving her problems. I say that because for the next mile or so that I followed her, all she did was



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





comb it, brush it, style it and generally check herself in the vanity mirror in the driver's sun visor. In order to attend to her wayward hair she seemed to have a variety of different poses and holds of her hair. She brushed it this way and she brushed it that way. She held it up, she pulled it down, she drew it backwards and, at one stage, even let it fall across her face! And don't forget the awful weather conditions, because all the while she was preening herself, her car was in motion. On a public road.

And during this whole time, not once did she appear to have her hands on the steering wheel. This was clearly the most shocking, disgraceful, selfish driving I've seen for many a long a while. And yes, her details were passed to the police.

But enough of that particular road safety nightmare, let's get on with the main event, the Winter Events Report.

We've had a busy time of it over the last couple of months. The group tour of Morrisons Depot in Bridgwater went very, very well and everybody who attended had a really great time. There's even been some talk of visiting

other supermarket distribution depots just to compare and contrast! Before the idea catches on, let me just say that no, I won't be organising those, but if somebody else would like to, I'll happily attend.

We didn't have a guest speaker organised for September, but between them Andrew Griffiths followed by Nigel Albright did a sterling job of keeping the audience thrilled and engaged. My thanks to both of you chaps. Well done indeed! The trouble is, success breeds a repeat performance, so watch this space, you may be called upon again. You have been warned!

September saw the Somerset County show. Now, as you may have been aware, we had a pitch booked to attend this to fly the flag and recruit potential new members. Unfortunately on the day, injury struck and neither I nor Andrew were able to attend. As we both hold various pieces of the WAM events equipment; gazebo, tables, recruitment paperwork etc. any of our events volunteers attending would have been stood in an empty pitch with no shelter to be had, nothing to sit upon and no documents etc. with which to recruit or explain. In that case I thought it best to cancel our attendance





and so very reluctantly called it off. Hopefully we'll be able to make a better fist of it next year.

The 16<sup>th</sup> October was our AGM and quite a good turnout we had too, so thanks to all of you who made the effort. For those of you who couldn't attend, you missed a rare old treat. Our Guest Speakers for the evening were the double act of Paddy Hopkirk OBE & David Gallagher. Paddy is the IAM's Mature Driver Ambassador whilst David was the Young Driver's Ambassador. I say was because ours was one of his last engagements for the IAM and he has now moved on to other and brighter things.

Theirs was a very funny, engaging and enlightening talk with each feeding off the other. Although they were well used to working and talking together, clearly some of their reactions to things that either said were very much of the moment and completely unrehearsed.

For those of you who haven't heard Paddy talk before, if you get the chance, then you really should go along, I guarantee you won't be disappointed. For those of you who haven't

heard David talk before, I'm just sorry that you missed your chance. His knowledge, enthusiasm and delivery of his subject made for a great evening's entertainment.

Wednesday 6<sup>th</sup> November was our bi-monthly Committee Meeting. As I've mentioned in the past and will do again in the future, whilst these meetings are closed to ordinary members, if you do have any burning issues, queries or items you'd like the Committee to review, then please send all the information and details to David Walton at [secretary@wessexam.uk](mailto:secretary@wessexam.uk) for inclusion in the agenda. Once debated either David or the portfolio holder for that particular area, will get back to you with the results.

Our next Committee Meeting will be on Wednesday 8<sup>th</sup> January 2020. (Doesn't time fly!) so if you need anything raised, please email David Walton.

Due to the ongoing Hatch Beauchamp Christmas Panto rehearsals in the main hall of the Village Hall, our monthly meeting this month (November) will be held in the small room (The billiard room) at the far end of the corridor.





Our guests this month are Pearl Jeanes & Annie Suddaby who will be telling us all about 'Annie's Ride'. This was a one week charity ride around the parishes of Taunton collecting support and money for the repair to the bells of Taunton's St. Mary Magdalene church. Annie did the riding, Pearl was the admin support and organiser.

As always this promises to be a very good night and, for those of you who've complained about everything I organise is 'car based', let me reassure you that Annie's talk has absolutely nothing whatsoever to do with cars, motoring or the IAM. So, no excuses, do come along and support these two stalwarts of the campanology circuit, it promises to be a very good and enjoyable evening. As always, tea, coffee and biscuits etc. will be available as usual.

As last year, again there will be no Member's Evening this December. However, we will be meeting at the Oake Manor Golf Club for our annual Christmas Meal on Saturday 7<sup>th</sup> December at 12:30 pm. The price per person is just £16.95 for a 3 course meal. If you'd like to come, but haven't already booked your

place, please forward your menu choices and a cheque made out to Wessex Advanced Motorists for £16.95 per person to me and I'll add it to the list. If you've lost or forgotten my address, please email me and I'll email it back. (You'll understand that I don't want my home address published in the newsletter which in turn becomes freely available on the web!)

Well that's it for now. Considerably shorter than normal, but as always, thanks for taking the time to read my scribbles. I'll publish a full list of the 2020 events in the first newsletter of the year in February. In the meantime if you have any idea of speakers and or events you'd like me to try and organise, then please feel free to drop me a line at [events@wessexam.uk](mailto:events@wessexam.uk) and I'll do my very best to accommodate you.

I look forward to seeing you at the many events that we have planned for next year. As always, here's to you and yours and to your continued happy, safe and enjoyable motoring.

*Barry*

Events Co-ordinator,

T : 01823 – 254621

M : 07776 – 124001

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





# Communication is the key

By Peter Herridge, IAM RoadSmart strategy group member and bike examiner



Members of both car and motorcycle groups in Region One attended a morning of training in two key subjects. Social media was the thorny subject tackled in the first presentation, by Introtweet Ltd. The attendees learned how deep and powerful the reach of social media is, as well as some advice on its use and how it is likely to develop. Next up, the challenges of coaching advanced driving and riding to those

affected by dyslexia. This was given by Denis McCann of Brindle Consulting. Denis is a national observer and he also runs his own company advising on dyslexia awareness and training. The event was funded by the groups attending and garnered some excellent positive feedback. Pictured above are Geoff Abraham and Steve Godfrey from Bristol Advanced Motorcyclists.





# IPSGA, POWDER, TUG, what had I let myself in for!

By Tony Brunt

An item from my to do list, festering for 40 years had finally prompted me to send off an application and cheque to join WAM and attempt the Advanced Driving Test. In my later years I have come to regard the expression, "You Don't Know What You Don't Know" as quite profound and helpful.

After many years as a 'commercial traveller' thrashing a succession of Cortina's and Granada's, later silly cars including Lotus Esprit Turbo's, had I developed poor habits, even dangerous practice, would I know if I had?

So with some trepidation I met my assigned observer Brian Dodd for my first run. After some preliminaries during which Brian was able to calm some of my doubts and, to my surprise, nerves ( I am not a nervous person) we set of for my inaugural observed drive. Brian's calm and professional approach helped me to understand what is required from an advanced driver. My first Run Sheet duly arrived next day, I had achieved one 1 for Fitness/Eyesight, a smattering of 2's and 3's and Brian's comments that it had been an encouraging start. With Brian's prompting, I read the books, practiced commentary and studied the

highway code; even the obscure signs. Over the next six drives things improved and finally I was considered up to standard and ready for a test assessment with Barry Keenan.

Barry emphasised the fact that during the test proper you have only a short time to demonstrate all your driving skills, which included making good progress, within the speed limit of course. Pre-Test completed, Barry confirmed he was happy to put me forward for the TEST.

I met my examiner Andy Ware in Morrisons carpark who explained very clearly the test procedure and warned me that I was not to worry about his copious note taking. Cockpit Drill completed we duly set of, on a interesting circuit covering a whole range of road conditions and challenges. Back at Morrisons Andy explained his notes which covered just about everything that happened on the drive.

I was delighted to be told that I had passed and that I had scored all 1's and therefore a F1rst pass.

I am very grateful to Brian, Barry and all at WAM and know that I have benefitted from the course and am a better driver for it.





## Warning Triangles



**For sale at members' evenings  
and events or from Mike at  
[cmmw@wessexam.uk](mailto:cmmw@wessexam.uk)**

**£1.50**

## November Members' Evening **Annie's Ride**



Pearl Jeanes & Annie Suddaby will be talking to us about 'Annie's Ride'. This was the 2014 fund raiser for the restoration of the bells at Taunton's St. Mary Magdalene church. Due to their efforts the successful replacing of the entire ring of bells for St Mary's was managed in treble quick time.

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





# Grateful thanks from another successful associate

By Roger Newton

After 52 years of accident-free driving, I had always considered myself to be a 'good' driver. So whenever the media highlighted an accident involving an elderly driver and members of the public stridently voiced their 'considered' opinions to ban anyone of a certain age from driving or tarred all elderly drivers with the same large brush, I felt annoyed - they were talking about me!

I had been thinking of taking an advanced driving course for a long time, but could not take the final step, until I decided that at the age of 78 it was now or never. I needed to find out if older drivers could be classed as advanced drivers and if I was one. When I applied to WAM, I was assigned an Observer - Delphine West-King. At the end of our first drive she told me that I was basically a good driver, but there were some areas that we

would have to work on. As time went on, I realised that she had thoughtfully decided not to burden me all at once with the scale of work needed to raise my driving to the level needed. So, with considerable patience - apart from the occasional rap on the knuckles to remind me to take my hand off the gear lever and put it back on the steering wheel - I was introduced to IPSGA, the limit point, the messages in road markings, acceleration sense etc etc etc - a task that took much knowledge, experience and many hours of unfailing encouragement. Eventually she considered I was ready to face The Test... and I passed!

Del - Please accept my very sincere thanks for guiding me to a Pass and, as a team, proving that older drivers should be treated in the same way as other drivers and riders - as individuals. Happy Driving!





**WESSEX ADVANCED MOTORISTS**

## **Annual Christmas Lunch**

to be held at

**OAKE MANOR GOLF CLUB**

Oake, Nr. Taunton, TA4 1BA

**on Saturday 7<sup>th</sup> December 2019**

**12:30 for 1:00pm**

Please contact Barry on [events@wessexam.uk](mailto:events@wessexam.uk)  
or 01823 254621 to book your place

Menus and booking forms were sent out with the  
AGM notice but if you have mislaid yours, contact  
Barry for another

**January Members' Evening**

**QUIZ**

**THAT WAS THE YEAR  
THAT WAS 2019**

**Wednesday 15<sup>th</sup> January 2020**

**7:30pm**

**Hatch Beauchamp Village Hall**



# The Black, The White and the Grey

By Nigel Albright

This is an item I have long felt the need to write. It's basically about the range of road driving skills, the scale of differences and why they are significant. But also, why most people never move from the bottom end of the scale.

## THE DIFFERENCE

As I look back on my driving experiences, which in this context really started in 1973, some ten years after passing my driving test, I reflect with a sense of pride how immensely fortunate I have been to meet, and often to know, people through what is really the complete range of road driving abilities in the UK. By chance that first experience was a group visit for a day to the Metropolitan Police Driving School at Hendon. This included a skid-pan demonstration and a high-speed demonstration drive under commentary, both from Advanced Wing Instructors. These were people at the absolute top end of the scale whose sole concern was to know and to teach

how drive safely in all circumstances and at the total range of speeds which could be done on the roads. There was no other agenda. There were none better anywhere in the world and the likes of which are, in my view and very unfortunately, already fading into the mists of time.

To understand what it took to be an instructor at that level one needs to know that there were three driving standards to go through before even getting to the instructor level. Those were the Standard, Intermediate and Advanced courses, each of three weeks residential at driving school with about a year on normal operational and patrol experience between each. An instructor's course was 9 weeks - a 3 weeks repeater advanced course but, with a pass rate of at least 90% instead of 86% for a Class 1 or, 75% for a Class 2, then 3 weeks instructor course and finally a 3 week course with first students and under supervision.





Now, just imagine being an advanced course instructor for more than 20 years, doing drives with three students at up to 120mph on open roads (as it was then) and covering around 300 miles per day and bringing all back safely over all that time. That is why they were the very best and their safety standard reflected that. When I last visited Hendon in 1982 the accident rate in the Met. force area was 1:60,000. At driving school it was 1:230,000 miles – including Advanced, Standard and Intermediate courses, which was an incredible standard. You can understand why police instructors from all over the world came to Hendon to study their way of doing things.

At the diametrical opposite end of the scale is the standard driving test which, by comparison, is an entry level; it's the lowest level of competence for driving on the UK roads, which also presumes a basic level of safety. Those qualified to teach people to pass the test are called ADIs or, Government Approved Driving Instructors. Qualifying as an ADI involves three parts. The first is theory and includes the Hazard Perception Test, the second is a driving test and the third is on an ability to teach. The really interesting thing is that ADIs are

periodically re-tested on their ability to teach, but never again on the quality of their driving. So, what does Part 2 involve? As I understand it that is more or less a tighter version of the standard driving test, and that's it, literally.

Between these two extremes sit all the other driving courses and advanced driving courses in the UK.

The other aspects to be aware of are the debrief in the case of advanced courses and the marking system in the case of the standard driving test. Broadly, the former will involve both positive and negative comments. It will cover a very broad spectrum, including the very important positioning skills – that is lateral positioning. The DVSA system is not designed to give positive feedback or encouragement; merely to decide whether an individual at a basic level has racked up sufficient major and/or minor faults to fail, otherwise they pass the entry level standard for driving on UK roads.

The important thing to understand is that the whole DVSA/ADI ethos is orientated purely to what's required for that basic driving test and nothing more. That is reflected in the whole





scale of their work and whatever they influence. For that main reason in my book any course or test which is DVSA/ADI orientated would not be in the frame as far as an advanced test or training goes. Proper advanced driving courses originated ultimately from the police driving schools and not from the DVSA/ADI route although, with the demise of the former, the latter - again most unfortunately - is becoming more prevalent.

### **THE SCALE**

Many will know that I grade drivers according to their vulnerability to crashes. It's ultimately about safety, but to quantify this it's about vulnerability. I use a scale of 1 to 100 where a low rating means a higher vulnerability. An advanced wing police driving instructor, such as I knew, would be in the upper nineties – there is no 100% rule, and therefore no 100% safety for anyone. By comparison, the standard driving test would be around 20. Given that most drivers, if spot tested today, would almost certainly fail the standard test and that most are unwittingly like the next crash waiting to happen, that would actually

place them below the 20 mark. The top of the normal civilian advanced driving courses (RoSPA Gold and IAM Masters), would be in the 50s range. You can see that there is still a massive gap between those and the standard of advanced course police driving instructors I knew. I accept that these are my subjective opinions but, apart from my own experiences, when talking amongst my peer group there seems to be a broad agreement, so these views are probably not too far off the mark.

### **THE GREY**

Jane Stewart-Smith was a remarkable lady. Born with one lung and one arm, that did not stop her achieving amazing things. But the other thing about her was her wonderful attitude. As one example she would drive sedately through built up areas at night time so that the vehicle noise would be a minimal intrusion to residents. But Jane also had a gentle way of bringing you down to earth, if necessary. On one occasion we had an exchange of views on some topic or another on driving, as we often did. Generally, we were in agreement but on this occasion, perhaps





because she felt I was being a bit pedantic she said, *'You know, Nigel, the interesting thing about driving is that there is black at one end, white at the other, and an awful lot of grey in the middle, and most of our decisions are made in the grey zone'*. Like myself Jane had also done the British School of Motoring's High Performance Course so we were normally talking from the same page. In those days being an IAM member allowed immediate access to the Course, and the Course itself was four intensive stages over three full days of driving. Jane had spent the additional two years or so working at it, with extra HPC drives, to progress through Honours and Silver to achieve the coveted Gold level. By comparison, I had merely achieved the Honours level. But, Jane's comment about the grey zone indicated a possible range of options to a situation rather than just this or that, so a fluidity of thinking. Indeed, the further up the scale of knowledge and ability you go the wider the grey scale becomes and the greater the options develop for the safe handling of situations on the road.

## THE BLACK AND THE WHITE

The introduction of the idea about the grey scale is interesting because at the entry level that does not really occur. At that end things are largely black and white. They have to be because it is dealing in basics and the UK national standard driving test for starting to drive on the roads, which has to be seen to be scrupulously fair across many thousands of people and also many different cultures, so, understandably, there is little or no room for flexibility. If you work with that on a day to day basis it is inevitable that it will become firmly imprinted on your psyche. My work with ADIs has shown just how difficult it is for most of them to move out of that black and white zone and be thinking in a more fluid way, which is important in proper advanced work. That one, plus the narrow marking system, are primary reasons why I have never gone down the ADI route.

No, I don't have a downer on ADIs. I retain good relations with a number of them but, outside those involved in advanced driving





groups, which is the vast majority, I just wish many of them would take more pride, or even just pride, in the fact they are the only cadre of professional driving instructors in the country and also that they generally did not get defensive when anyone suggests there is more to life than Part 2. It's very much a head in the sand job, almost as though anything over and above Part 2 is an attack on its status. No, the world does not finish at Part 2; in real terms that's just about the starting point. Contrary to that, ADIs in general should be recognising where they are in the scale of things and be recommending their pupils to subsequently move to higher levels of competence; lowering their vulnerability to crashes and therefore increasing their safety level. This should be supported and re-enforced by the DVSA, but for proper advanced driving courses. Unfortunately, for most ADIs that will not happen because essentially they are running a business and it's primarily about income; beyond the standard driving test there may not be any real money in it for them. Their income, and professional credibility, is normally based purely on the number of people they can get through the standard driving test. To put the

situation into perspective there are some ADIs who, happily do not fit this criteria, for example former police officers who are on a pension and may not actually need the income per se and are keen to pass on to learners the keys of safe driving. There are also those who, first and foremost as keen drivers started in advanced groups and then moved on to a career in driving instruction. However, in my experience, those in these categories are remarkably few out of the 40,000 odd ADIs in the UK. For most the prime teaching motive is the test criteria. And for the DVSA everything seems to relate back to the standard driving test mind-set, so we are back where we started. It is therefore somewhat incongruous, and very worrying, that the DVSA has set themselves up as arbitrators of advanced tests. Therefore, also, having the epithet, 'DVSA Accredited' is certainly not one I would want attached to any advanced course I might organise. This is not to say that doing any DVSA/ADI orientated better driving course would not improve a person's driving to some extent but, in my view, it should not be confused with what, from my experience, would be a proper advanced driving course.





## WHY?

The answer lies in what might be best described as an unhealthy state of delusion.

Ask most drivers whether they are safe and the answer will almost inevitably be that since they haven't had a crash, they are safe. However, as you know, safety for me is on a scale of vulnerability which is quite different. So, most sit in their comfort zone at the bottom of the valley and have absolutely no motive to do anything more than that. Very unfortunately that also involves many people in the road safety industry. But, by inference, being in the bottom of the valley also means a potentially higher level of vulnerability. Now it only takes the wrong fraction of a second for generally at least two parties to be involved in a crash. That doesn't ignore the single vehicle crash; that is still going to be a moment of wrong judgement one way or another. But, that fraction of a second is normally all it needs; and a fraction of a second at precisely the wrong time for those two parties. That can result in fatality or serious injury and often being mentally scarred for life; not only for those directly involved but also for family and friends. That could happen

today, tomorrow, in a few years' time, or even never. Too many will pass very close to such a fraction of a second at some time or another and do not realise it, and that's the really worrying bit. But the main thing is that the vulnerability is there, and few will want to recognise and deal with it in advance so that if, in a sense, the wrong fraction of a second should ever occur, they are not going to be part of it. Remember, that around 98% of crashes involve human error and that 98% of those involved will almost certainly say, 'It wasn't my fault'. The unpredictable and/or unforeseeable crash is almost non-existent if a driver is properly trained and has his or her wits about them. That is exactly why moving up the scale and reducing vulnerability is so vitally important.

So, yes, do climb the hill; climb the mountain. Work up a sweat, start huffing and puffing. And, if you are part way up the hill, go further. Your family and friends, as your passengers, may never know what you have done to help keep them as safe as possible and, quietly, satisfyingly, it will have been well worth it.

Nigel Albright  
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# An inconvenient question, should I have a car at all?

By Neil Greig, policy and research director

I read with great interest a report from a group of parliamentarians last month saying that technology alone cannot solve the problem of greenhouse gas emissions from transport. It echoes a report from an Oxford-based group of academics who warned that even electric cars produce pollution through their tyres and brakes. They also noted that it is older drivers who are using cars more. Trends in transport are changing.

It made me think that the biggest challenge ahead is not just to get drivers to choose electric or low emission vehicles, but to change the way they use them. If the MP's are to be believed, we will all have to drive less and get out of our cars whatever their means of propulsion. Have they given up on new car technology before we have started using it in numbers? At IAM RoadSmart we believe that promoting sustainable driving techniques is important, but it would seem that anything we do, may not be enough. If anyone thinks the shift to low emission vehicles will be a difficult message to get over, then it will be even tougher to change ingrained travel habits that are built around personal vehicle ownership. As things stand today new cars have never been cleaner or greener, but electric vehicles are still too expensive and don't have the charging infrastructure in place yet.

Public transport is already overcrowded and getting around on foot or by bike can be a real challenge. Change is coming, but it's the pace of change that will become the biggest talking point in transport in the years ahead. If we get this wrong the economy and the environment will suffer as congestion grows and public transport struggles to bear the extra burden. Any rush to reallocate road space from motor vehicles to cycling or buses, rather than building new infrastructure, could lead to real local problems.

For IAM RoadSmart and its members, these challenges are real and are coming fast. The question now is not just, can you live with a smaller car or an electric one, but can you live without one at all? For some, the answer may be yes, but for many, it will involve huge lifestyle changes based around where they live and work and how well connected they are.

Can you survive using car sharing, car hire and taxis? At IAM RoadSmart we believe the committee has underestimated the power of new technology to solve pollution in cars. It has, however, highlighted the key issues in the coming debate and whether we like it or not, it is up to all of us to answer these difficult questions, sooner rather than later.





# Drive safely in the rain

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

## Heavy rain:

- Heavy rain will affect your visibility, so take it slow. Rule 126 of the Highway Code states that the braking distance between yourself and the vehicle in front of you should be at least two seconds when driving on a dry road, and at least four seconds in the wet. It is even longer on icy surfaces. IAM RoadSmart recommends up to 10 times the braking distance when driving on ice.
- Your windscreen should be clean, wipers effective and the jets positioned correctly and aimed at the screen. It is sensible to clean the windscreen, make any necessary adjustments and remove anything from the main area before you start your journey.
- A good rule of thumb is that if you need windscreen wipers, then you need your headlights. Automatic light settings will not always activate in bad weather conditions, so it is up to you to make a sensible decision as to whether these need to be turned on.

## Aquaplaning:

- If the water is standing in puddles on the road surface, your car is at risk of aquaplaning. Aquaplaning is where a wedge of water forms in front of the tyre and lifts it up off the road surface. This is caused by the tread not being able to displace the amount of water present. To recover from aquaplaning, ease gently off your accelerator, have a firm grip of the steering wheel and be sure not to make any sudden steering actions. The car will eventually regain its grip as the water clears.

## Floods:

- First, ask yourself - can I take another route? If not, then you need to identify how deep the flood is. If the standing water is more than six inches deep, avoid driving through it. If you are familiar with the road, you can judge the flood in relation to the kerb.
- If heavy rain was not the cause of the flood, then what was? And what impact on the road





does it have? For example, if it is a burst water main, the standing water may look like a normal flood but the road surface beneath the water may be completely broken up. If you are unsure how the flood has formed, then avoid it altogether.

- Are there other vehicles similar to yours that are safely driving through? From this, make a judgement call as to whether it is safe to travel through or not.
- If the water is fast flowing, do not attempt to drive through it, as there is a real danger of your car being swept off the road.
- If you have taken everything into consideration and decide to drive through the flood, be sure to do so slowly. The best approach is to press lightly on your clutch and add gentle pressure on your accelerator to increase your engine revs. Do so without increasing your speed, in a similar way to how you would undertake a hill start. This will prevent water from entering your exhaust. If you are in an automatic car, accelerate slightly but control the speed with your brakes. When you have passed the flood, test your brakes to make sure they are dry and working properly.

- If you are in the slightest doubt, then turn around and don't go through the flood. Often modern saloon cars have the air intake in the wheel arch, which may be below the water level. If your engine should take in water, it will immediately hydro lock and the engine will stop.
- Remember to stay alert and avoid splashing pedestrians. If this is done accidentally - even when causing splashes when driving through puddles at the side of the road - you could receive a fixed penalty and three points on your license for driving without due care and attention or without reasonable consideration for other road users. If deliberately done, it could be a public order offence, a court appearance and a fine.

Richard Gladman said: "With the British weather the way it is, we should all be well practised at driving in the rain. Keeping your car maintained and the rubber (wipers and tyres) in good condition will help you stay safe. In the recent extremes, we have seen that standing water and floods are becoming more commonplace, so take extra care and if possible, avoid driving through standing water. If you're in any doubt about the depth or surface underneath a flood, then it's best not to take any chances."





# Forget VED, we could soon be paying per mile

By Jamie Rogers

Between Vehicle Excise Duty (VED) and fuel duty, the Treasury typically pockets around £40bn each year, a not insubstantial amount of money, but as the push for greener vehicles gets into its stride, there will very clearly be a hole in that revenue, and it's one that will need plugging.

The two important questions are: Where will that shortfall come from? And will there be an overlap between VED and whatever new plan is put in place?

## Per mile charging

The Chair of the Transport Committee, Lilian Greenwood, has proposed that a national debate take place to discuss the issue, claiming that a debate would be “An opportunity to discuss the nation's use of road space, cutting carbon emissions, tackling congestion and how we should prioritise active travel.”

“Tackling the climate emergency is essential, but this is about more than what we must do to meet that challenge, it's also about our health, and the sort of towns and cities we want to live in.”

A cynic may say that with such focus on health, air pollution and congestion, rather than encouraging or incentivising other forms of transport or motive power, it's pretty much guaranteed that “this isn't about pricing drivers off the road” will pretty much exactly equate to that.

## Paying more?

Research by the RAC has shown that 75% of motorists are worried that any change in how we pay for the roads will result in them paying more, and with sales of new Battery Electric Vehicles rising by 122% in the first nine months of 2019 (despite there being an overall 2.5% downturn in new car sales), we can





clearly see that the government will need to implement a new pricing strategy sooner rather than later.

It's long been argued that whatever form of taxation (such as the current VED) is added to the price of fuel; motorists who use the roads, will pay for the roads, but it's quite possible that adding a surcharge to fuel will price hundreds of thousands of families off the road, and that still wouldn't be a solution to the whole electricity debate.

Further still, it's not quite as simple as adding tariffs to our domestic energy supply either – what of those motorists that haven't been able to afford, or want, to make that switch over to 'green' motoring? It's pretty clear that there must be some overlap between the systems.

### **Previous attempts**

Back in 2005, an attempt was made to introduce, or at least, discuss, a new way to charge to motorists for using the roads. The idea being that small cars on small or uncongested roads would pay less than large cars using large or congested roads.





The examples used at the time were £0.02 per mile on uncongested roads, and as much as £1.34 where traffic was a problem. Each car would be fitted with satellite technology, which could track and calculate charges as the car was driven.

Unsurprisingly, 1.8 million motorists (around 6% of all drivers at the time) signed a petition against the scheme in 2007, and it was duly dropped. Fears of extra stealth surveillance and taxation were the main concerns.

### **Modern day**

Worryingly, we've become so used to in-car technology, and the interference with our driving, that it will soon be mandatory to allow it to limit our speed, which of course means tracking our movements. As Lilian Greenwood points out – we're much more aware of issues such as climate change, pollution and congestion now. So could this be part of the next attempt to monitor driving and apply charges?

There has been talk of 'charge neutral' and 'congestion neutral' pricing, but reading between the lines of the earlier statement by

Greenwood, it would seem that congestion and air pollution are two of the hottest topics to be covered, so it's doubtful that congestion neutral pricing will happen.

Given that any pricing structure would need to cover congestion, air pollution, emissions, road usage & maintenance, fuel duty and electric charging, it would seem doubtful that we'd be looking at the lower end of per mile charging.

### **National debate**

The Transport Committee have proposed a national debate take place in 2020, in which these issues can be discussed, and put forward to the public for their input: "This isn't about pricing drivers off the road, it's about making sure that as many people as possible have a say in future plans so that we can manage the changes to come. The Transport Committee want to kick-start that conversation."

Rarely have charges been introduced that favour the motorist, we often hear about stealth taxes and how it's the motorist that's being made to make up any shortfalls of revenue, we'd suspect this won't be much different.



# Breaking down is not for the faint hearted

By Rebecca Ashton, IAM RoadSmart's head of policy and research



was hardly doing anything other than driving carefully.

There wasn't anything wrong with my driving, however, my car was simply alerting me to a possible problem. I assumed it was because of a lot of stopping and starting. Sadly for me this was not the case, and within a minute or so, my trusted car was asking me to stop as soon as possible.

Getting a message like this from your car can cause concern to even the most

It happened as most breakdowns do; as a very unexpected and unwelcome event. I was on my way home from a meeting in Bristol, when my car alerted me to say that it was getting a little warm and requested for me to drive moderately. I initially took affront to this as I

experienced drivers. Initially I thought "where am I going to stop safely and where won't I be a bother to other road users". Luckily, along that particular stretch of the A4 there was a wide pavement, which is also used as a cycle path. As it was so wide, I thought it was the





safest place for me to be: there was enough room for my car and enough space for pedestrians and cyclists to pass.

So, there I was, parked up on the pavement thinking about what I should do next. My hazard lights were on and there was little point in me lifting the bonnet at this stage with a hot engine, as I didn't want to run the risk of getting hurt.

Luckily, I have breakdown cover included with my bank account so at least I knew help was at hand. Breakdown cover is one of those things you hope you never need but are so glad you have if the worst happens.

I called the AA but having never broken down before I was unsure of what the process was. The call was answered quickly by a lovely woman in the call centre who upon asking if I was in a dangerous situation, immediately tried to give me safety advice. I assured her I was



as safe as I could be on a pavement next to two lanes of fast-moving traffic. She took down all the details and once we had established my location, she said I would get a text message with a link where I could find updated information.

Indeed, I did get a message saying that help was coming, and I could get an estimated arrival time by using the link, which I did. All very high-tech these days!





It was only 10 minutes later when I received another message to say someone would be with me within 25 minutes and to look out for them. In the meantime, a different breakdown organisation had stopped to check if I was ok; something I thought was very kind and unexpected in this day and age.

Sure enough, the AA arrived at the exact time they had said he would and got to work looking at my car to find the problem. Unfortunately, it was not going to be a simple fix as the coolant temperature gauge housing unit had sprung a leak. It would be best to recover my vehicle to the garage I use. Then came another blow, he could not tow the car as it's a 4x4. So, he would need to arrange for a truck to collect me and the car and take us back to Wales.

While waiting for the recovery truck I was alerted to a cyclist thumping on my window, telling me this was not a good place to stop to use my phone. Before I had been able to say I was broken down he was cursing at me. I was eventually able to tell him my situation and he rode off – but not before hitting my wing mirror in anger.

This obviously worried me, and I rang our head of driving and riding standards, Richard Gladman, to make sure that I had indeed done the right thing by putting the car up on the pavement. He put my mind at rest but also suggested that now the car was cool, to lift the bonnet as another visual clue to alert others that I had broken down. It's often the little things like this that could have prevented any altercation happening in the first place (wish I'd thought of it earlier). Feeling a little sorry for myself, I waited for the recovery vehicle.

Half an hour later I received my last and most welcome text message from the AA, telling me that a recovery vehicle would be with me in 20 minutes. A lovely man called Graham arrived, and within minutes my car and I were on our way back to Wales. I live about 25 minutes' drive from the garage, so asked if it would be possible to drop me at the nearest train station to the garage, but Graham said no. He told me he'd take me home, as he didn't think leaving me at the train station was a suitable outcome. Such a kind thing to do as he didn't have to.





My message to everyone is to make sure you have breakdown cover. Breaking down is never nice so make sure you keep safe by following IAM RoadSmart's tips written by head of driving and riding standards, Richard Gladman, which are found [here](#).

Of course, the best way of limiting your chances of breaking down is to make sure your vehicle is fully maintained and to carry out your vehicle checks on a regular basis. For me it was just unfortunate that something unexpected went wrong. I am very grateful no one was hurt and the whole ordeal ended with a positive experience.





# Driver Distractions – what to watch out for

## From The AA

Stay sharp while you're behind the wheel. It doesn't matter if you've just passed your test or if you're an experienced driver - everyone can find themselves losing concentration on the road from time to time. In fact, our research shows:

49% of drivers report regularly thinking about arriving on time while driving

34% think about work

25% think about the future

Only 30% of people said they only think about driving or navigation while driving.

Distracted driving might not seem as dangerous as falling asleep at the wheel or drink driving - but it can be just as deadly.

According to .Gov research official accident data, in 2017, there were 4,573 injury accidents where driver distraction was recorded as a contributory factor - 774 were serious, and 125 were fatal.

### Different types of driving distractions

There are three different types of distractions which drivers have to tackle:

- Physical distractions, such as texting or making a phone call, setting a sat nav, or eating. Remember it's illegal to use a hand-held phone while driving - as well as being potentially dangerous, if you're caught you face a £200 fine and six points on your licence.
- Mental distractions, such as worries, a conversation in the car or on a hands-free phone, or not paying attention to familiar roads.
- Visual and audio distractions, such as loud music, looking at things happening outside your car, or trying to read a sat nav.

There are some simple things you can do to make sure there's nothing to distract you and that your full attention is on the road.





## Prepare yourself and your car before starting your journey

- Clear out clutter - cans and soft drink bottles rolling around under your seat are clearly a distraction and could even roll under the pedals and stop you from being able to use them properly.
- If you need to use your sat nav, make sure it's fully charged up (or plugged into your car's charging port), and that you've already programmed the correct postcode and address.
- Pre-set the radio to your favourite stations, and if you want to listen to playlists, make sure they're set up on your device before you leave.
- Send any texts or make calls, then pop your phone in the glove box.

## Staying clear-headed while you're on the road

- It's not easy to put all of your worries and thoughts to one side, but you need to be as calm and focused as possible.
- If you have something on your mind, try to deal with it - as much as possible - before getting behind the wheel.
- Try not to drive if you're feeling overwhelmed, stressed, or you think you won't be able to give driving your full attention.
- If you need to make a call or send a text, wait until you've pulled over safely to use your phone.
- Even if you're feeling stressed, resist the urge to smoke, vape or eat while you're driving.





## Staying focused while you have passengers in the car

Passengers of all ages can be a distraction - from teething toddlers to overexcited friends.

- Make sure children are securely strapped into car seats and booster seats.
- If you're driving with one young child, it can be less distracting for the child to ride in the front seat (in a suitable restraint) because casual eye contact is easier.
- If there are two adults in the car, one can look after any children while the other concentrates on driving.
- Ask passengers to keep the music at a level where you can hear the sat nav and other drivers around you.
- If you're finding the drive difficult, ask your passengers to keep conversations to a minimum.

- Keep political discussions and any other heated topics strictly off-limits.

## Driving safely with pets in the car

There are ways of keeping your pet safe in the car, but if your pet is playing up during the drive, how can you stay calm and collected?

- Secure your pet properly - never let your pet travel loose in the car, even if you're worried the drive is stressing it out. Besides being a serious distraction, if they're free to jump about inside the car, they're more likely to be injured or injure you if you are involved in a collision.
- Don't attempt to reach out and calm your pet until you've pulled over and parked safely.
- Ensure there's plenty of fresh air and make regular stops for walks and toilet breaks - they'll benefit both of you.





## Stop demonising older drivers says IAM RoadSmart, driving into old age is good for staying independent and active

IAM RoadSmart is calling for an urgent debate on the best way to keep drivers safely behind the wheel into old age, in light of government figures that predict a four-fold increase in the number of drivers over 75 in the next 25 years.

The UK's leading road safety charity has been warning about the 'demographic time bomb' and challenging the demonising of older drivers by the media and public for a number of years.

And with latest figures showing there are now 2.5 million licence holders over 75 driving on UK roads, IAM RoadSmart is calling for clear and practical actions to help older people stay safe behind the wheel for as long as possible.

The charity believes encouraging more older people to stay driving safely on the road makes

a vital contribution towards keeping them healthy, active and independent.

A Swansea University study in 2016, alongside the DVLA's own statistics, highlighted that drivers over 70 are four times less likely to be involved in a road traffic incident than those aged 17 to 24.

Neil Greig, IAM RoadSmart Director of Policy and Research, said: "Contrary to popular opinion the evidence is clear: older drivers remain one of the safest groups behind the wheel.

"So as the number of older people continues to expand at a significant rate, it's crucial that we face up to this growing issue and develop solutions that will enable older people to stay driving for as long as they are safe to do so."





The charity goes on to state that older drivers are safe for several reasons:

- They have many years of driving experience, which can compensate for less rapid reflexes
- They are much more cautious drivers, and so less prone to taking risks
- Most self-regulate by not driving at times and in places they do not feel comfortable, for example, when the weather is bad, when traffic is heavy, or in areas that are unfamiliar
- Few older drivers drink and drive or take illegal drugs, and most don't speed

Neil added: “Compulsory medicals and driving retests are an unnecessary action to take against a group who present no greater risk to themselves and others than other drivers. Today’s 70-year-old is healthier and fitter than ever before. And there are now hundreds of thousands more of them.

“So, as the population ages, we want to see the driving licence renewal age raised to 75, accompanied by an eye test to ensure the individual remains capable of identifying and reacting to any potential hazards.

“GPs should also be able to prescribe a driving assessment where they think it appropriate and these, in time, could become compulsory for drivers over 85.”

IAM RoadSmart also highlights a number of other policy improvements required to support the country’s increasing numbers of older drivers:

- Better information is needed to allow older drivers and their families to continue to drive safely and ultimately to make the informed decision to give up when the time is right
- New online assessment tools have a key role to play in providing information and as a first step in the assessment process





- Awareness and uptake of voluntary driving reviews should be encouraged to equip older drivers with an independent assessment of their continuing capability and support them in their decision as to whether they remain safe behind the wheel
- Training and awareness of the issues affecting older drivers must be improved among the medical profession
- Car makers and road designers should take more account of the needs of older drivers in the future
- The government should show clear leadership in implementing these changes through partnership and cross departmental working
- Increase acknowledgement of the key role that driving plays in promoting independent living, mental and physical health and in cost savings for society as a whole

Neil concluded: “As a nation we need to accept that older drivers are here to stay and stop making assumptions of the kind we often see in the media and public opinion, where older drivers are demonised and openly criticised.

“We need to develop meaningful and practical solutions that help them stay independent and driving, for as long as they are safe to do so. Many of the tools to do this are already in place – we just need to make sure people know about them and feel comfortable using them.”

IAM RoadSmart provides Mature Driver Reviews for any older driver who wants to ensure their confidence behind the wheel is well matched to their safety on the roads.

Details are available at

[www.iamroadsmart.com/mdr](http://www.iamroadsmart.com/mdr)

For further information and advice on issues related to older drivers visit

[www.iamroadsmart.com/olderdrivers](http://www.iamroadsmart.com/olderdrivers)



## Uncommonly good classics

By Tim Shallcross, IAM RoadSmart head of technical policy and advice

Some classic cars are classics because they look stunning and were popular right from the outset, whilst still holding a good price. Others never sold very well, they weren't popular and only achieved the classic status years later, because their unpopularity resulted in them becoming rare.

I find classic car owners fall into two categories; those who can afford the popular ones, such as E-Type Jaguars or Austin Healey's, and those who can't. I'm firmly in the latter category, so my compensation is to revel in the rarity of whatever I can afford to buy to tinker with.

As a result, one of my favourite websites is How Many Left, where it uses data from the DVLA to record how many examples of each make and model of car are currently registered in the UK, divided into taxed and untaxed (SORN) classes.

I have just managed to find all the bits of one of my old cars, bolt them back in the right places and get the car on the road after about three years of good intentions but lack of time. The car in question is a Jensen Healey, dating from 1974. It was somewhat an unpopular successor to the fabulous Austin Healey - the epitome of the 1960s sports car.





The US market had always loved the Austin Healey and urged Donald Healey to come up with a replacement. The Jensen Healey was cobbled together under his guidance using the brand new (and untested) Lotus engine ultimately destined for the Europa, with its Vauxhall Firenza suspension and steering, and a body put together by luxury sports supercar maker, Jensen.

Although quite advanced for its day, the car had significant reliability problems right from the launch, along with some questionable seventies styling. This meant that sales never really got going over here, although it did sell quite well in the US. The Jensen company then went out of business just four years later.

The initial unpopularity meant that prices have never been high, so compared with, say, an MGB, the Jensen Healey is a very affordable little soft top sports car – perfect for my kind of budget. It also gets quite a bit of interest because with the poor sales in the UK, it's quite a rare car.

I bought the Jensen Healey about seven years ago and according to How Many Left there were just 330 in existence throughout the UK. About half of them were shown as taxed, and the remainder presumably languishing in sheds, barns or under covers as “projects”.

The rarity compensates for it not having the sublime lines characterised by its predecessor – after all, there are over 5,000 Austin Healey's left and they look stunning (but are well beyond my wallet!). My own little bit of low budget satisfaction comes from knowing that they are relatively ten-a-penny.





The beautiful Jaguar E-Type is the same, with well over 4,000 out there. Beyond my reach but so common. As for the MGB, we're talking 20,000 plus on the road, and over 36,000 once the untaxed ones are included - it seems that every other household must have one tucked away somewhere. It's such a satisfying thing to own a car that makes people look to see what it is, rather than "Oh, it's another one of those".



Checking on my cheap-but-rare classic this week to see how much rarer it is getting, I was astonished to see that numbers have increased; there are now 217 on the road. Taking account of the cars that are taxed and untaxed, the total comes to 411! My cherished toy is becoming more common, and not less common. It seems that enthusiasts have been

importing cars from the US, where over 7,500 were initially sold (UK sales originally totalled around 2,000). Still uncommon, but I was rather hoping numbers were dwindling slowly, not going up. So, what other cars might have rarity value if the Jensen Healey becomes a bit too common?

Well, once you start searching there are some surprises. The Moggie Minor, of course, seems almost as common as it was in its heyday, with over 20,000 still chugging on. This is because the car has always been held in affection; many were given names and treated as a family friend rather than a functional machine. The Mini is just the same with thousands of the original version doing the rounds of the car shows and rallies every year.

However, what about the very nicely styled Austin and Morris 1100? These cars were everywhere in the 1960s, outselling Fords, Hillmans and Vauxhalls with only 864 that survived. Based on the numbers of many classic cars, I reckon anything with fewer than 1,000 examples left counts as pretty rare, so the 1100 is well into the rarity category.





What about its less loved offspring, the humble Marina? Supposedly Leyland's rival to the market dominating Cortina, this car was a best seller for several years. Now just 328 survive on the road augmented by 27 examples of its facelift version, the Morris Ital. About 350 survivors of more than 1.2 million cars made.



The once ubiquitous Ford Sierra, selling 175,000 a year at its peak, with just a few hundred of the everyday models still around today – although most of the 4X4 and Cosworth performance versions do remain, treasured and cosseted by their owners. The Sierra was often outsold by the Vauxhall Cavalier, but out of more than 1.8 million made



in three different generations over two decades, a mere 1,200 or so are still with us – far fewer Cavaliers than E-Types today.

The Rootes group rival to Marinas, Cavaliers and Cortinas was the Hillman Avenger – just 237 on the road today, almost as rare as my precious Jensen. Even the comparatively recent Maestro, once the stalwart of the company car fleet, has fewer than 500 representatives on the road.

So, it seems that if you want a rarity for the future, look at what's common today – so common it doesn't merit a second glance, isn't treasured or given a pet name and will pass unnoticed by all but a few, maybe discerning owners.

How much will you take for that bog-standard Focus?





## IAM RoadSmart's Manifesto aims to put post-test training and human behaviour at the heart of the road safety debate

With a General Election on its way and all the political parties finalising their manifestos, IAM RoadSmart is calling for politicians to put post-test training and human behaviour at the heart of the road safety debate in the next Parliament.

The UK's leading road safety charity has put together its own seven-point Manifesto to ensure road safety and saving lives returns to the top of the political agenda.

More than four people were killed on UK roads every day in 2018 (1,784 in total), a number that has barely changed for the last seven years.

Now IAM RoadSmart is calling for the road safety focus to be put onto young drivers (who remain the biggest at-risk group for serious and fatal crashes), a more comprehensive plan for managing an older population and the need to keep them mobile, refresher courses to ensure drivers' skills remain at a high standard, and a stronger commitment to rehabilitation courses

for driving offenders which have been shown to positively change behaviour.

It is calling for the Health and Safety Executive to bring the safety of those who drive for work higher up their priority list and for greater thought to be put into the legislation on driverless cars as we enter a whole new era of mobility, and a bigger push towards safer motorcycling as a solution to increasing vehicular congestion.

Mike Quinton, IAM RoadSmart's Chief Executive Officer, said: "The UK has one of the best road safety records in Europe, but still 1,784 people a year are killed. We believe by working together with government and the road safety 'industry' we can deliver a step change in road safety and significantly reduce the fatalities and injuries which occur daily on our roads.

"We will be writing to politicians to highlight our Manifesto priorities and urging them to be instrumental in the road safety debate when the new government is formed."





IAM RoadSmart's full Manifesto is as follows:

- Young/New Drivers - We support graduated driver licensing for new drivers based around a 12-month minimum learning period plus extra training interventions in the first year of solo driving
- Older Drivers – A demographic time bomb is ticking and IAM RoadSmart believe we need an open debate on the best way to maintain safe mobility in old age. Initially we want to see the driving licence renewal age raised to 75 with an eye test. GPs should be able to prescribe a driving assessment and in time this could become the basis for compulsory retesting for drivers over 85
- Driver retesting - IAM RoadSmart believe that periodic refresher courses have the potential to get road deaths back on a downward trend. Research and pilot schemes are needed to encourage a continuous personal development approach to enhancing driving and riding skills
- Driver Rehabilitation - IAM RoadSmart know that drink drive rehabilitation courses work and believe that all drivers convicted of drink driving should be sent on one unless they choose to opt out. There is also scope for the use of a wider range of tailored interventions to target specific negative driver and rider behaviours
- Driving for work - IAM RoadSmart believe road safety at work is a critical health and safety issue that requires much higher priority at the Health and Safety Executive. It should be at the core of good corporate governance and procurement practice in the private and public sector
- Driverless cars - Distraction from new technology and the training challenges from the switch to autonomous and connected vehicles, must be a top research and legislative priority area. This will help ensure the safe design and operation of future mobility solutions
- Motorcycling - IAM RoadSmart advanced riding courses must be more widely supported, particularly by public bodies, employers and through schemes such as 'BikeSafe'. Safer riding, and positive measures such as allowing motorcycles in all bus lanes, will allow powered two wheelers to fulfil their promise as a solution to our congestion and pollution problems.





# Un-clog our roads the Dutch way

By Gary Bates, IAM RoadSmart marketing manager



I've just got back from an excellent weekend away in Amsterdam, and the quirky mixture of transport solutions actually makes it a fascinating place from a road user's point of view, so I thought I'd share a few observations.

Near misses are part and parcel of getting around in Amsterdam, you have to prepare yourself to experience one roughly every four

seconds. Many major road junctions are bordered by cycle paths on all sides, meaning you have to give way to bicycles before giving way to road traffic.

Except that most drivers don't exactly give way as such. The accepted technique for dealing with a busy junction seems to be to keep rolling forwards until you're about to collide with something. This doesn't actually seem to bother anyone.

Life on the pavement is no different. Cyclists are everywhere, and generally do not acknowledge the arbitrary boundaries between pavements, roads and cycle paths as they meander casually along the path of least resistance.

Navigating a busy pedestrian precinct seems to involve riding until you arrive at a pedestrian or other obstacle, then swerve around it; no warning bell required. This doesn't actually seem to bother anyone either.





Dutch cyclists enjoy an extensive network of cycle paths, but these are also used by pedestrians, mopeds, and little two-seater microcars (which I happen to think are really cool, although my group of petrolhead friends weren't quite so enthusiastic). This tends to result in quite a lot of near misses owing to the different speeds and behaviours of the various groups, but it doesn't actually seem to bother anyone.

You'll have spotted a pattern. Without reinforcing national stereotypes, I think it's fair to say that the Dutch are pretty relaxed about the rules of the road, and about sharing their space with other road users. Despite the

apparent chaos, I didn't hear a single horn sounded in anger, or witness any animosity between road users, all weekend.

We are increasingly looking to the Dutch to inspire our road safety initiatives, particularly around cycling. An experimental Dutch-style roundabout, with segregated priority lanes for cyclists, is due to begin construction in Cambridge imminently. The campaign to promote the use of the 'Dutch Reach' – a technique that encourages better observation of cyclists when opening your car door – has gained some traction in the UK over the last year or so.

There may be some drawbacks to the Dutch approach. For example, hardly any Dutch cyclists wear helmets, and lots of moped riders are similarly relaxed about protecting their noggins. Few cyclists use lights, even at night. The diverse mixture of vehicle types sharing the road space is fine for the initiated, but rather scary for anyone else.

The Netherlands' road casualty statistics are slightly behind the UK's, and you might conclude from this that our existing setup is more advanced. However, our car-biased





system makes it difficult to find new ways of improving traffic flow, or to promote cycling and other environmentally friendly transport solutions.



Our urban road networks would need extensive rethinking to incorporate the same levels of segregation between cyclists and larger vehicles, and to incorporate more widespread use of trams and electric microcars. The biggest barrier may be our reluctance to embrace the Dutch attitude towards sharing pedestrian spaces with bicycles.

What's the answer? I wish I knew. What I do know is that it didn't take very long for me to get used to the hustle and bustle of Amsterdam's lively pedestrian areas, or to accept that the taxi drivers were not actually insane, and it seems a bit of a shame that we're not quite so willing to share our space in a relaxed fashion here in safety-conscious Britain. Perhaps the sweet spot is somewhere in between?

One other thing worth mentioning about Amsterdam is the parking. In the very old parts of the city, most parking spaces are right beside the canals, with no railings or even kerbs to warn you of your impending plunge into the drink. And yet, all drivers seemed able to parallel park exactly two inches from the edge of the wharf. Impressive, although it





doesn't allow the driver to get in and out without clambering over the passenger seat. But - you've guessed it - this doesn't actually seem to bother anyone.

Anyway, just to fill you in, I was in Amsterdam for a friend's birthday, which coincided with the annual Historic Grand Prix at Zandvoort race

circuit. It's a brilliant event for anyone into classic racing cars, where you can get up close and personal with some incredibly rare machines, and marvel at the fact that people are still prepared to maintain and race them. Highly recommended, and a great excuse for me to share some gratuitous pictures of motoring exotica.





**Closing date for the spring 2020 edition  
of the Wessex Advanced Motorists e-  
Newsletter is 20<sup>th</sup> January.**

**All contributions would be very  
welcome.**

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