

e-NEWSLETTER



WESSEX ADVANCED MOTORISTS

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WESSEX ADVANCED MOTORISTS

e-NEWSLETTER

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

GENERAL DATA PROTECTION REGULATION

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

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Chairman's Corner



Wessex Advanced Motorists has been inactive for a long time and there is very little I can offer in Chairman's Corner this time that I haven't already mentioned in the monthly bulletins and the summer newsletter.

As you read this, England will be in a 4-week lockdown. Consequently, IAM RoadSmart has suspended all driver and rider training again for the duration of the lockdown - "Lockdown 2.0" as it is called (beyond me why it is not just Lockdown 2. Maybe there could be micro Lockdowns 2.1, 2.2, 2.3 etc. already in the planning!).



By Andrew Griffiths





Groups affected by Lockdown 2.0 will be the ones who had restarted training in recent weeks. Some of our neighbour Groups in Devon and Cornwall remained inactive like WAM has done. While IAM RoadSmart decides when to resume training (based on UK Government advice/rules), it leaves it to its 190 local Groups to decide at local level (based on local COVID19 conditions).

So life goes on or for any Star Trek fans out there “it’s life Jim, but not as we know it”. And that holds true because our lives have had to change and we hear people say that they’ll be glad when everything gets back to normal”... but it might be a “new normal” by then.

I always wear a face mask when shopping but I thought it's time to use a face shield to give my eyes protection from airborne aerosol germs/virus; an increasing number of people are having the same idea. I have a number of visors in my workshop to protect against woodchips but they are cumbersome (and covered in sap!) so I bought a multipack from Amazon. I removed the protective film on the rear of the mask and off I went shopping. I found it very difficult to focus through and had to keep raising it above my eyes to read food

labels. What a waste of money, I thought. I discovered when I got home that there was a protective film **on the front too!**

At the end of last month, Brian Howe stood down from the role of President and you can read a bit more about that in this newsletter.

Please remember my many, many pleas to provide some articles for the newsletter. It is not the Committee newsletter (they are the only regular contributors!). It is the **Group newsletter** and I would like material coming from members. Articles don't need to be all about motoring; you'll see examples of the diverse range of material in the monthly bulletins. So there's nothing to stop you writing one.

I had to draw a line under the monthly bulletins because there were no contributions other than from the Committee and a couple of others who actually aren't even all members of our Group! Please don't let the quarterly newsletter be a victim.

Stay safe, stay well.

Andrew

[Thanks to a couple of members who have heeded Andrew's requests in the past and sent in contributions to this newsletter; come on the rest of you, if they can do it, so can you! ED.J]



Wessex Advanced Motorists President Stands Down

By Andrew Griffiths

I want to inform you that last month, Brian Howe stood down from the role of President of Wessex Advanced Motorists.

Brian has been with the Group for many years. He passed his advanced driver course in 1997 and very quickly joined the committee of what was then TGAM (Taunton Group of Advanced Motorists) and continued as a committee member of what we all now know as Wessex Advanced Motorists. This means that Brian has clocked up TWENTY-THREE YEARS on the committee! That is a huge achievement I think you will agree.

Over those 23 years, he has been an Observer, Group Chairman and Acting Chairman (prior to my arrival!) and running the AGM with such professionalism and precision. He also took on the organising of our annual Group Christmas lunch and associated raffle and running the monthly raffle at members evenings.

In a nutshell, Brian has done an incredible job over the years and we owe him a debt of gratitude.

Andrew

THE COMMITTEE



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

Chairman	Andrew Griffiths	<i>chair@wessexam.uk</i>
Vice Chairman/Events Coordinator	Barry Keenan	<i>events@wessexam.uk</i>
Secretary/Membership Secretary	David Walton	<i>secretary@wessexam.uk</i>
Treasurer	Isobel Jennings	<i>treasurer@wessexam.uk</i>
Associate Coordinator	Pauline Wills	<i>coordinator@wessexam.uk</i>
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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 members are Driving Standards Agency Approved Driving Instructors:

Nick Tapp 07900 900678 niktapp@hotmail.co.uk

Graham Tuffey 07916 137915 www.passwithgraham.co.uk

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.)



COORDINATOR'S REPORT



Well, we have now entered a four-week period of new national restrictions. IAM RoadSmart has temporarily suspended all car and motorcycle on-road training, testing and observing across the UK.

As you know, earlier in the year Wessex Advanced Motorists made the decision not to resume observed drives for the remainder of 2020. The next review is due in January.

Welcome to Andy Bourne who joined our group in September. Our list of associates is growing. I have also received a number of enquiries about free tasters which, of course, will not take place before the January review.

In the last newsletter I mentioned three classroom sessions for new associates designed to provide essential groundwork prior to starting the practical course. It has been decided that it will be more beneficial to deliver these when the start is in sight rather than during such uncertain times.



by Pauline Wills



Events Corner



As I've mentioned in all previous Newsletters since the start of this pandemic, all training and social events are on hold and all of our guest speakers have kindly agreed to postpone their visits until next year. Effectively, WAM is closed for business; but as you'd expect, this situation remains under constant review by the Committee and hopefully it won't be too long before we have some better news to impart.

For those of you who are hoping that the annual Christmas meal will be able to go ahead, sadly no. I'm sorry to say that there be no Christmas Meal for WAM this year.

So aside from doom and gloom, I'm sorry to say that there's nothing of worth from 'Events'. I did find these little gems though that I thought would be interesting to share:



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



Well I didn't know that!

1. In the 1400s a law was set forth in England that a man was allowed to beat his wife with a stick no thicker than his thumb. Hence the term 'the rule of thumb.'
2. Many years ago in Scotland, a new game was invented. It was ruled 'Gentlemen Only... Ladies Forbidden' and thus the word GOLF entered into the English language.
3. Each king in a deck of playing cards represents a great 'King' from history:
Spades - King David,
Hearts - Charlemagne,
Clubs -Alexander the Great,
Diamonds - Julius Caesar
4. In Shakespeare's time, mattresses were secured on bed frames by ropes. When you pulled on the ropes the mattress tightened, making the bed firmer to sleep on. Hence the phrase 'goodnight, sleep tight.'
5. It was the accepted practice in Babylon 4,000 years ago that for a month after the wedding, the bride's father would supply his son-in-law with all the mead he could drink. Mead is a honey beer and because their calendar was lunar based, this period was called the honey month, which we know today as the honeymoon.
6. In English pubs, ale is ordered by pints and quarts so in old England, when customers got unruly, the bartender would yell at them 'Mind your pints and quarts, and settle down.' It's where we get the phrase 'mind your P's and Q's'
7. Many years ago in England, pub frequenters had a whistle baked into the rim or handle of their ceramic cups. When they needed a refill, they used the whistle to get some service. 'Wet your whistle' is the phrase inspired by this practice.



8. In 1696, William III introduced a property tax that required those living in houses with more than six windows to pay a levy. In order to avoid the tax, house owners would brick up all windows except six. (The Window Tax lasted until 1851, and older houses with bricked-up windows are still a common sight in the U.K.) As the bricked-up windows prevented some rooms from receiving any sunlight, the tax was referred to as “daylight robbery”!

And finally:

The lowest form of accommodation in Victorian England was access to bend over a rope for the night for the price of a penny. Usually used by drunken sailors who had spent all of their money drinking. It's said to be the origin of the term "hungover".

I hope you found them interesting and amusing; if you know of any other little snippets of lost information like this then please drop David a line (ed@wessexam.uk) so he can add them to the next bulletin. I have to say that things like this fascinate me so do please feel free to add to my list.



Hopefully we'll be able to meet up again shortly but until then, stay safe and as always (if you can get out and about, that is) here's to your continued happy, safe and enjoyable motoring.

Barry

Events Co-ordinator

01823 – 254621

events@wessexam.uk

Editor's Notes:

1. *The above to be taken with large helpings of salt!*
2. *This article was written before the current lockdown was announced.*



ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

The Group AGM will be taking place on Zoom and all members, associates and friends are encouraged to “attend”

Wednesday 18th November
7:25 for 7:30pm

Join Zoom Meeting

<https://zoom.us/j/6643633589?pwd=cTExTIVNWGVZOGVIUUNuUUhnYVZBZz09>

Meeting ID: 664 363 3589

Passcode: 4iXW8Z

Quiz Time

September 2020 Bulletin Quiz Answers

1	Downton Abbey	11	PDSA's The Dickin Medal
2	Billy Joel	12	Ludo
3	Gun Room - no longer a room in the game	13	1358
4	Soaking it in a flavoured liquid	14	Deep Blue
5	One billion	15	8
6	Brasenose	16	China
7	Kenny Everett	17	£50
8	Marc Bolan	18	Giacomo Puccini
9	Italy	19	Angelina Jolie
10	Air Hostess	20	Dream Girls

As the monthly bulletins have now ended I thought I'd continue with setting you quizzes. So for the last $\frac{1}{4}$ of 2020, here it is below in all its glory "**Barry's Quiz**". Answers in the 1st quarter newsletter, February 2021. Though, if you're desperate for the answers beforehand, drop me a line at events@weesex.am and I'll send you the answers.





1	In which decade was the Channel Tunnel opened to traffic?
2	For which war was the first Victoria Cross awarded retrospectively?
3	The actress Archie Panjabi played the character of Kalinda Sharma for 139 episodes of which TV drama?
4	In chess what title is given to someone who has achieved the highest level of skill?
5	In what month is 'Australia Day' celebrated?
6	In paper quantities how many Reams make a Bundle? a) 2. b) 20. or c) 50.
7	The highest points value letters in Scrabble are Q and Z. Each have a value of what?
8	Metaxa, the brandy based liqueur, comes from which country?
9	Which opera by Verdi takes its title from the name of the hunch-backed court jester?
10	Fred Perry, eight times tennis Grand Slam winner, also won a world championship in 1929 in which other sport?
11	Which trio of brothers released the song 'Mmm Bop' in 1997?
12	'Floreat Etona' is the motto of which British public school?
13	Catatonia had a 1998 hit with 'Mulder And Scully'. From which TV series did the song take its name?
14	Blathers, Charlotte and Fagin are characters from which Charles Dickens tale?
15	The Battle of Killiecrankie of 1689 during the Jacobite Rising took place in which country?
16	Named after the German neurologist who discovered the disease of the brain that causes premature senility?
17	In Chemistry, which 'P' are long-chained molecules repeated in which group of atoms?
18	Which British athlete won Gold in both the 5,000m and 10,000m in the 2016 Olympic Games?
19	In 1800, the capital of the USA was transferred to Washington DC from which city?
20	The Officer Training School for which branch of the British military is located at Sandhurst?



Mercedes-Benz SLK 250

By Ralph Coulson

Well, it all started for me whilst waiting for the Brittany Ferries car ferry ‘Pont Aven’ at Santander on our way home from a very enjoyable tour of northern Spain and the Picos Mountains.

Our car at the time, summer of 2015, was a Honda S2000. A fine car offering plenty of excitement, especially on the superb smooth roads in Spain. However the luggage carrying capacity is somewhat limited especially for touring holidays.

We were parked up behind a beautiful white Mercedes-Benz R171, very similar in size to the Honda. During the course of the next 30 minutes the owner and his wife returned from a shopping trip into Santander, loaded with several bags. I commented to Rene, ‘they will never get that lot into that car’. But, of course it all went into the boot, (with the roof up). To add

insult to injury, they proceeded to the café-shop and returned sometime later with a few ‘duty free’ goodies, most of which the boot consumed, however, 1 item was located behind the passenger seat.

On our return home, a budget was set and the search was on. First I joined the Mercedes-Benz Club and spoke to many enthusiastic and very helpful people, all of whom were pleased to offer advice.

After viewing cars as far afield as Ivybridge and Wakefield, in August 2016 we found the ‘perfect’ car in Melksham, an SLK 250 AMG Line petrol in white, and agreed a deal.

We collected the car a week later after the minor snags had been rectified, a full service completed, fresh MOT issued and a tank of fuel. The ‘we’ in this case was myself and a friend of many years – Rene agreeing this was





Back to Santander. With the roof up!





a good excuse for a good ‘boys’ day out’. Anyway, she correctly reasoned, she would have plenty of opportunities in the future.

The run home to Taunton was blessed with warm sunny weather. Roof down, we enjoyed the car as it was designed to be.

In the four years of ownership the car has not disappointed, taking us on several trips to Yorkshire, where our son and his family live. Three successful holidays to France and two further trips to Spain courtesy of Brittany Ferries – Plymouth to Santander.

Our last visit to Spain included further exploration of the Picos Mountains, we then ventured to Viveiro some 200 miles to the West and on the way visited Fernando Alonso’s museum. We are both admirers of this mature and talented sportsman.

Travelling the E70/A8 coast road with light traffic and super smooth surface was a real joy and just what the Mercedes was made for. Sunshine, tunnels, viaducts, sensational views of mountains and sea and my lovely wife as company; who was able to arrange the packing of our luggage to enable us to travel with the roof down. Which was accomplished for most of our holiday.

Two further trips were completed in the Mercedes, to Northern Ireland via Yorkshire and then France. As for everyone, the dreaded Covid 19 has ‘clipped’ our wings and the beautiful Mercedes has spent most of her time in the garage!

Next year, Spain again? Millau Bridge? Yorkshire for sure. Wherever we venture, it’s sure to be exceptional with the car that puts a smile on our faces every time.



WAM Joins AmazonSmile

What is AmazonSmile?

AmazonSmile is a website operated by Amazon that lets customers enjoy the same wide selection of products, low prices, and convenient shopping features as on amazon.co.uk. The difference is that when customers shop through the URL smile.amazon.co.uk Amazon will donate 0.5% of the net purchase price (excluding VAT, returns and shipping fees) of eligible purchases to the charitable organisations selected by customers.

How does AmazonSmile work?

In order to browse or shop through AmazonSmile, customers must first select a charitable organisation. Once they have chosen their charity they can shop the site as they normally would. Only purchases made through smile.amazon.co.uk are eligible to generate donations.

Is there any cost to charitable organisations or to customers?

No. There is no cost to charitable organisations or to AmazonSmile customers. The shopping

experience is identical to amazon.co.uk with the added benefit that Amazon will donate to the charitable organisations selected by customers.

How do I start?

1. Use smile.amazon.co.uk next time you log into Amazon.
2. You will see the page below

Experience feel-good shopping

Shop at smile.amazon.co.uk and we'll donate to your favourite charitable organisation, at **no cost to you**.

[Get started](#)

Same products, same prices, same service.

Amazon donates 0.5% of the price of eligible purchases.

3. Click 'Get started'

Start by picking your charity

Search from thousands of local and national charities, like animal shelters, scout troops and religious organisations.

Wessex Advanced Motorists

[Search](#)

4. Enter 'Wessex Advanced Motorists' and search
5. Hit 'Select' and you are done.

I'm on your side you stupid mutt!

Subtitle: The bugger's eaten my trousers

By Barry Keenan

During the 1980/81 football season, Chesterfield Town played Glasgow Rangers in the very last season of the Anglo-Scottish Cup. (The competition was wound up in 1981). As I later read, Chesterfield won both the match, and for the first and only time, the cup too.

The match was played at Chesterfield's home ground which at the time was The Recreation Ground at Saltergate.

I and other members of my section were chosen to sacrifice our day off to police this 'important match'. However, as an avid disliker of all things football, I can't really say that I thought it was an important match; after all it was on my day off for crying out loud. I had much better things I could have been doing rather than escorting a bunch of drunken fans to and from the ground! To my mind the only good thing about it was the Saturday overtime.

We paraded at Chesterfield nick at 12 noon to be given our orders. I was allocated to the 'away' fans and had to make my way to Chesterfield railway station in time to greet the visitors as they were harried off the train by a hugely relieved section from British Transport Police. Fancy being caught up in a small long box on wheels with several hundred football



fans all gearing up for the match at the other end of the track. My job was much easier than theirs, I can tell you!

The train duly arrived and the fans were herded into the 'walking crocodile' ready for the off. Every six feet or so on either side of this weaving mass were stationed those volunteers who'd willingly given up their day in the hope of getting in to see the match ... and me. I as near the head of the line on the right hand side. Remember that, it's important.



At strategic and regular points along the route were stationed small groups of officers, all ready at a moments' notice to quell any disturbance either from the Scots lads in our 'crocodile' or from any local scallywag with mayhem on their minds.

Now the quickest way from the station to the ground would have been directly through the town centre, but that would have been operational suicide. So, in order to avoid running into the home team fans, the route of the crocodile was across the town using the various back alleys and 'B' roads arriving at the visitors' entrance at the south end of the ground.

It worked too. The only Chesterfield fans we saw was a young fella and his two young sons who decided to walk with us so *they* wouldn't get caught up in any random Chesterfield thuggery!

Aside from a lot of good-natured noise from the visitors, the walk from the station to the ground had been uneventful. The mood of the Scots was happy and fun filled. As we approached



the final $\frac{1}{4}$ of a mile the walk, the police presence became more obvious. We all knew from our briefing and local knowledge that if there was going to be any pre-match ambush by the home fans, this is where it would be.



The Scots had by this time been marching good naturedly for about 15 minute, but seeing the extra police clearly indicated that they were

now closer to the ground. Time then to ramp up the vocal challenges. (At this point the Chesterfield father & his two sons peeled off and headed towards the Home Team end).

Still, we were on Saltergate now and in sight of the ground and to my mind everything was going well. As you can imagine, scattered amongst the various 'platoons' of police were a couple of 'Dog Men' too. For some reason all the dog men had decided to position themselves on the right of the crocodile. And therein lay the trouble.

As my part of the line snaked its way along Saltergate on the final approaches to the south gate turnstiles the dogs were getting as excited as the Scots.

The fans sang and the dogs barked. The fans shouted their challenges and the dogs barked louder, pulling at their leads to let the crowd know who was boss.



Unfortunately as I got closer to the nearest pair, Mike, the handler, (and my next-door neighbour) didn't have such a firm a grip on his dog's lead as I could have hoped. As his dog lunged he was taken unawares (Huh!) and being the nearest target the damn pooch sank his teeth into my right thigh. By golly it hurt!



Ever seen a copper dancing sideways with a German Sheppard firmly clasped to his flank? It caused great amusement for the crowd, but as you can appreciate, not so much to me. And all the while the dog's chomping and snarling, I'm flapping uselessly against his ears yelling "I'm on your side you stupid mutt!"



As you can imagine, I walked (well limped is more like it) away from that encounter with quite a bruise and a fair bit of blood loss... and; you've guessed it, torn trousers. You remember that I had to visit the 'stores' just weeks earlier to get a replacement helmet? ("And let that be a lesson to you!" October Bulletin 2020). Well guess what? I had to go and see the same miserable storeman to get a pair of replacement trousers too. He didn't believe me that time, either!

Oh happy days!





Wise Words on Wood

By Andy Mayes

With the onset of winter and the probability that we will be spending more and more time indoors, if you have a wood-burning fire, here's a little rhyme that I came across a few years ago, that will help to guide you in your choice of which logs to burn:-

Stay warm and stay safe,

Andrew Mayes

*Beech-wood fires burn bright and clear,
if the logs are kept a year;*

*Store your Beech for Christmastide
with new cut Holly laid beside.*

*Chestnut's only good, they say,
If for years it's stored away;*

*Birch and fir wood burn too fast,
blaze too bright and do not last.*

*Flames from larch will shoot up high,
dangerously the sparks will fly;*

*But ashwood green, and ashwood brown
are fit for a queen with a golden crown.*

*Oaken logs, if dry and old,
keep away the winter's cold;*

*Poplar gives a bitter smoke,
fills your eyes, and makes you choke.*

*Elm wood burns like churchyard mould
e'en the very flames are cold;*

*Hawthorn bakes the sweetest bread-
so it is, in Ireland, said.*

*Apple wood will scent the room,
Pear wood smells like flowers in bloom.*

*But ash wood wet, and ashwood dry
a king may warm his slippers by.*

Spoken Thoughts

By Andy Poulton

Don't talk yourself into trouble!

TALK YOURSELF OUT OF IT!

The hazard or situation ahead that is.

Spoken thoughts can be defined as the bringing foremost into your mind and then putting into words and phrases what was in the back of your mind. [Other definitions are available!]

So, observe, plan ahead, anticipate, & react.

Subconsciously you already think about your driving, [we hope] which makes you more aware of the situation ahead, systematically deal with it, and improve the level of concentration.

In earlier ROADCRAFTs it was defined as: -

The complete application of mind and body to an endeavour to the complete exclusion of everything not relevant to that endeavour.

There are various levels one could apply to driving: -

- Unconscious incompetence.
- Conscious incompetence.
- Conscious competence.

Finally: -

- Unconscious competence.

[Don't ask? yes jury is still out on that one. However, I have seen many drivers position, inch perfectly, through a long series of corners and bends hardly turning the wheel whilst concentrating on the drive and hazards ahead seemingly giving it no thought at all, 'unconscious of their skill/actions'.]

The ability to concentrate exists in everyone but few can concentrate sufficiently to drive a vehicle with complete mastery for very long.



The driver must therefore adjust the speed of his vehicle to the degree of concentration they are able to apply at the time. Without self-discipline attention is inclined to wander from essential points of observation. A conscious effort must be made to prevent this.

Talk about it then

It is helpful to an examiner observer or trainer to hear your spoken thoughts. It is through this that they can assess: -

WHERE your observations are.

How ADVANCED they are.

a] How far ahead

b] How much better and relevant over and above an average driver.

How SOUND are your driving plans.

Driving Plans are based on: -

What you can see

What you can't see

What you might reasonably expect to develop

Which hazard represents the greatest threat

What to do if things turn out differently from expected

[Contingency plan, my weak area as some drivers are acting so bizarrely]

A poor example would be if a driver was talking about a situation approaching a junction when they should be starting or started the SYSTEM and talking their way through that. Worse still would be for a driver talking about something irrelevant and continued to do so at the approach to more serious hazards.

[Should be Prioritising, all common faults]

SOUND?

A common example of UNSOUND driving plans is when you tell yourself what the car in front or behind [or you] are not going to do.

"The car in front is not going to turn off/out/in/stop".

[IT WILL]

"I am not going to overtake along here"
[sometimes adding I do not know the road]

[WE SHOULD HAVE DONE OR WE ARE FOLLOWING A TRACTOR ON A DUAL CARRIAGEWAY]



The car behind will not overtake me along here now as it is too dangerous/narrow/speed limited.

[IT WILL]

So at least try not to make NEGATIVE statements, be positive about the negative actions being predicted.

Better still adopt a PESSIMISTIC attitude to driving plans. [Easy for me as I am a glass nearly empty person] [Or, it is all coming over BLACK]

[The trouble with that is I am always being proved right [or wrong] and predict all that WILL go wrong.]

Driving plans and decisions can rarely be based solely on what can be seen because there are many stretches of road where the layout and traffic conditions do not permit unobstructed views. The greatest difficulties arise from areas into which the driver cannot see such as around corners, bends, behind trees, buildings, blind brows or beyond. In these circumstances we are driving to be able to stop safely, comfortably, and on our own side of the road in the distance we can be seen to be clear.

Allowances should always be made for the mistakes of others. It is unsafe to assume another driver will react correctly in any given situation. They may have only just passed the driving test that hour [my favourite]. Or be driving a strange, unusual or defective vehicle.

They may be naturally aggressive, thoughtless, driving way beyond their [or their vehicles] capabilities or late for an urgent appointment.

Driving to the system then will prevent a driver from being involved in a road traffic collision for which they may be directly responsible.

By concentration, early recognition of potential hazards and a defensive attitude of mind, they will avoid collisions resulting from the mistakes of others.

Driving plans, therefore must be based on what is actually observed, the assumption that there may be danger in every obscured section of road and hazard, and that others may do something foolish at any moment. [Again, my weak area only because it does not include VERY, VERY FOOLISH, UTTERLY BIZARRE or as usual STUPID]



This all equals to using O.A.R. in your Spoken Thoughts: -

1. Observations
2. Actions
3. Reasons

Better explained by

1. What you can see.
2. What you are going to do about it.
3. Why

So truthfully there are three levels of spoken thoughts. As above numbered 1-3

- 1] Basic
- 2] Advanced
- 3] Observer

Basically, when not actually dealing with hazards or in the middle of applying the system you should be playing PREDICTIONS. Or using OBSERVATION LINKS.

That is 'what are ALL the things that are going to go wrong next'?

[NO not with the car, relationships, work, etc. BUT in the ever-changing road scene ahead, or where it is going, or going to do next.]

An accurate forecast can be made by observing

quite small details. It is frequently possible to notice something and to link what is seen to the possibility of something else happening.

Two obvious examples are: -

Following a bus and passengers are seen moving or getting up means possibility of stopping at the next stop.

Cyclist looks over their shoulder, they are going to turn.

What is your own favourite?

Mine is: -

Vehicle pulls out in front of you.

Where is his mate?

[who will try and pull out in front of you as well AT SPEED]

Then vehicle will turn off or stop shortly after.

[90% do]

FINALLY. [at last, I am exhausted]

Remember that SPOKEN THOUGHTS are not part of the test. [You could still be asked to do some though.] It should have formed part of your associate training, as it is an essential technique for improvement, aid to better driving, and Observers use to judge the overall skill of driver/driving.





You will NOT FAIL the test if you cannot use spoken thoughts, and some struggle. It could form part of a FIRST pass though.

The BASICS are looking to the Horizon then talking back to the front of the car. It is okay to repeat.

Just mentioning ROAD SIGNS as SOON as they can be seen is good.

It is more likely, perhaps, you will be better able/equipped to pass the test. At one point in my Testing career of over 30 years those that did spoken thoughts [then called Commentary.] NEVER failed the test!

Three reasons.

- It is unlikely your spoken thoughts will include doing ALL the wrong things.
[I am going too fast. I will have to brake hard, overlap the gear-change, not bother to signal and forget to look in the mirrors.
[YEAH RIGHT !]
- You come to test much more confident and better equipped.
- I am totally overawed and cannot get a word in edgeways!

You could of course inject some humour to relax us! [unwittingly or otherwise]

Examples, all true.

Date 7th December; weather bitterly cold, icy winds, light rain; location coast road at Sandy Bay.

"I am travelling in a 30-mph speed limit. Watching out for holiday makers coming from the BEACH". [Eh! You are joking]

"There is a left hand turning ahead on the left!"

"There was absolutely no noise when I drove through that Icy puddle. Did you hear it?"

"You will notice that as I drive along that at no times do my hands leave my arms"

"Looking ahead I can see a lady crossing the road. That is a M&S dress she is wearing. I know this as my wife has one. [She wears it better tho' oops!]"

"I am switching off the indicators now that it has stopped raining."

So go on now TALK AMONGST YOURSELVES
Safe Driving

Andy
RoadSmart Examiner South West area

Drink Drive Interlocks

A recent YouGov survey has revealed that 82% of respondents support the mandatory fitment of interlock devices to buses and coaches. The technology is designed to tackle the growing problem of drink driving in the UK by preventing a driver who is under the influence from taking control of a vehicle.

Although drink driving had been in steady decline until 2015 still around 240 people died in road crashes in Great Britain where at least one of the drivers/riders is above the legal limit.

A PACTS (Parliamentary Advisory Council for Transport Safety) report is expected later this year, which assesses the viability of utilising interlock technology in association with drink drive rehabilitation programmes. 83% of survey respondents supported the use of such devices by repeat drink drive offenders.

Quote from a teenager at a recent ceremony “Old people at weddings always poke me and say ‘You’re next’, so I started doing the same thing at funerals.”

Garden Seasons

By Pauline Wills

When reading gardening magazines, books, plant labels or the back of seed packets, it's sometimes difficult to decide when a garden season starts and finishes. Below is a guide to which calendar month relates to which season.

Month	Garden season	Season
March	Early spring	Spring
April	Mid-spring	
May	Late spring	
June	Early summer	
July	Mid-summer	Summer
August	Late summer	
September	Early autumn	
October	Mid-autumn	Autumn
November	Late autumn	
December	Early winter	
January	Mid-winter	Winter
February	Late winter	

Gizmos whey hey!

By Nigel Albright

Many will know of the amazing deception campaign foisted on the Germans in the lead up to D-Day, part of which was the presence of the First United States Army Group (FUSAG) in SE England under the command of General Patton, implying the invasion might take place in the Pas-de-Calais area. It was a fictitious army, FUSAG's existence being supported purely by a host of subtle intelligence, subterfuge and radio traffic. On the face of it convincing the Germans that the Allies were going to attack one area rather than another was an incredible achievement. Perhaps lesser known is that this ploy was based on Hitler's belief that the Pas-de-Calais was the most likely point of attack which, in some ways, halved the Allied effort. In fact, Operation Quicksilver was so successful that Hitler retained important armoured units in the Calais area long after the Normandy invasion, believing that to be a feint. The reality of the situation was that the Allies did not really need to convince the German High Command

per se; they only needed to convince one man and he was unwittingly half on-side. The related and key point, is that – as in any sales – you blend your pitch with the expectancy of the intended buyer.

In our daily lives we are flooded with adverts, most purporting to have products or services for our benefit, which some undoubtedly are. But take, for example, the anti-aging industry, which some scientists say is fallacious. That is currently growing at around 7.8% per annum according to statista.com and was expected to reach a market value of over USD \$190 billion (£145bn) in 2019. Clearly it is possible to convince people that a product or service is beneficial, even when it might not be. So often we think we are taking in the facts to enable us to make the best buying choice but, in the other corner are a host of intelligent beings and software designed to flatter us into just that thought pattern. Banks, for example, lay it



On heavy giving you, the ‘valued customer’, the service you want but in the long run their design philosophy works just one way; you have money in your pocket which they want in theirs. The key is offering an exchange with something of value in your eyes, and possibly in a way that you feel you are special to them, so that, wittingly or unwittingly, your hard earned pennies leave your pocket for theirs. That’s it. Period. Don’t be deceived - in the long run that is what all businesses, product or service, are about.

Then we come to the chicken and egg scenario. If there is already a need, that’s great. It’s easy-peasy. However, the need might be helped by market conditions or, more significantly, it might have been conceived to flatter some part of the human psyche. For a period I worked in the insurance industry where the basic policy was that people bought for one of two reasons, either need or greed, and it was your job to subtly dwell on those areas to make sales. That was it. There was no money for either the company or me if no body bought. Now there are basically two types of product; those which have repeat sales value and those

which do not. If you have products in the former that is ideal. However, if in the latter then one option is to keep refreshing or changing them so that customers keep upgrading, preferably so that they feel they are having something new and different each time but, it could essentially be the same architecture just buttered up a bit. There is nothing quite like cosmetic surgery, even in the products business. I see the fashion industry as a classic example in this area; one year skirts, for example, are this length, now they are another and tomorrow yet another and then, well back to the beginning over again. Just keep it moving and if the interval between the beginning and end is long enough they won’t even notice. Vehicle manufacture is another such area; they have to keep bringing out new models, or adding new features, in the hope you will want to keep up to date because it is not a product area which naturally generates repeat sales and no continuum of sales means a defunct business.

Remember, it is one thing to have a product or service but, almost invariably there are others in the same marketplace. Now you don’t have



the tallest building in town by knocking down the opposition (Trumpists of the world please note) – you build higher. In sales this generally means you offer more value, which often means more features – the bells and whistles bit. And in car terms that mostly means more gizmos. Flashing lights and buttons to press can impress customers. However, it will obviously help if potential customers are pre-conditioned into a certain frame of mind. A classic example is soap, would you believe? We believe that the more froth the better the cleaning action. Sorry, not so. The froth bit has been very successfully cultivated by the soap industry but, apparently, it has nothing to do with effective cleaning agents. We cover our cars on Sunday mornings with masses of frothy soap and water thinking this is doing a good job. Well, goodie for the soap companies. But certainly, if you are in business and you want probably the best recession proof product, just go for soap – personal, domestic, or whatever. It might not be sexy, but it has high repeat sales value and these sales continue broadly regardless of market or economic conditions.

I think the really interesting bit is when all of this is applied to the motor industry. Probably the

most significant change came with Ralf Nader's 1965 book *Unsafe at Any Speed* which exposed '*the designed-in dangers of the American Automobile*' and which, in turn, had a major ripple effect throughout the global car manufacturing industry. Indeed, that ripple continues today and, understandably, manufacturers will milk it for all its worth. And if the Nader effect was starting to look a little jaded at the edges it has gained further impetus by the march of technology and the widely held (possibly induced) belief that when all vehicles are autonomous the world will be a safer place. This has me thinking of, for example, Charles Macintosh (1766-1843) who believed that the invention of the train would kill the market for waterproof clothing, which also says that experts do not always get it right. If ever we do get to a state of fully autonomous vehicles (FAVs) everywhere then for safety all variables would need to be taken into account which means a centralised proximity system, similar to that found in civil aviation, and that would ideally mean even pedestrians being in the frame, in other words 'tagged'. In this march towards an idealistic FAV world manufacturers will, no doubt, continue to add all sorts of so





called aids and devices to outdo their competitors and sold, wherever possible, with a safety tag on them, whilst willing customers will continue to be impressed and feel more secure accordingly.

In what might be called the Hitler Syndrome many drivers believe that beyond a certain point they have no control over whether or not a crash happens so they are nicely in the psychological mode of believing that the more so called safety features there are in a vehicle the better protected they and their family will be which, on the face of it, seems logical. That's the Pas-de-Calais bit. And manufacturers will subtly and intelligently re-enforce this mindset for their own benefit. If you want a loose comparison that's the equivalent of Operation Quicksilver. However, this overlooks two important points; the first is that very few drivers have explored just how far they could develop their skills sets to avoid being in crashes, which should be their first line of defence and also their best insurance policy. The second is an item featured on the BBC Radio 4 programme All in the Mind, when it was fronted by Dr Antony Claire, about research done by The University of Nottingham

Psychology Department. This showed that the more so called safety features which are added to vehicles the more drivers tend to rely on them with proportionately less concentration given to their driving. In my mind that potentially makes for a higher crash risk. I recall meeting an owner of his new jazzy sports saloon and asking him how he found it. 'Wonderful', he said, 'It doesn't matter what speed you go into a bend, it will always get you out of the other end'. There, I thought, goes the next crash waiting to happen, but it also shows that safety gizmos can be a fool's paradise.

So, the answer is don't be deluded into thinking that just because some feature has the word 'safety' tagged to it that is necessarily the case. Manufacturers are there to sell cars and they will, first and foremost, follow the money or, where it points. In other words, base line, those features are really only there as long as they help generate sales. 'Dear Mr or Mrs Customer, we have designed in these features so that you and your family can feel safer on our ever more dangerous roads...' Hmm. Personally, I would prefer just to have taken the driving course.

Nigel Albright

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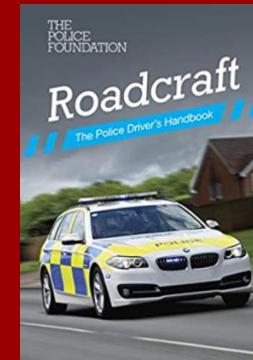
New Versions of Roadcraft and Motorcycle Roadcraft

From Traffic Safety Roads

TSO and the Police Foundation are pleased to announce that Roadcraft and Motorcycle Roadcraft have been updated and due to publish in late October 2020. The new editions of these well respected titles have been developed in consultation with expert representatives from the police and other emergency services. The updated versions will include:

- An updated 'modern' design
- A revised overtaking chapter with separate sections on passing stationary vehicles, single stage overtakes, and multi-stage overtakes
- New explanations of advanced concepts, such as limit points on left-hand bends

In addition and to ensure consistency Roadcraft Online has also been updated.



The eLearning package contains the same content as the hard copy, as well as the end of section quizzes and video resources that bring key concepts to life. With administrator features that enable managers to monitor their learners' progress, Roadcraft Online is a flexible, cost-effective alternative to book learning. The e-learning platform also contains exclusive videos which demonstrate key manoeuvres such as limit points and overtaking. The platform enables learning transparency and the ability for the course conductor to offer support where necessary. An administrator log-in, allocated to a company or person when multiple licences are purchased, allows the administrator to see a full audit trail of each student's progress.

Analysis of People Exceeding the Speed Limit

From Traffic Safety Roads

Latest Government statistics found half of cars and vans exceed the speed limit on motorways and more than one in 10 speed by more than 10mph. More than half rigid heavy goods vehicles (HGV) exceeded the speed limit on 30mph roads, with around one in 20 doing so by more than 10mph. In 2019, under free-flowing traffic conditions, 50% of cars exceeded the speed limit on motorways compared to 54% on 30mph roads and 9% on 60mph roads. 'Free flow' speeds are observed in locations without external factors that restrict speed such as junctions, hills, sharp bends and speed enforcement cameras. For all vehicle types, compliance tended to be highest on national speed limit single carriageways and lowest on 30mph roads. By their nature, 20mph routes are not likely to be free flow. Department for Transport guidance suggests the limit is most effective when supporting traffic calming measures are installed. As a result, free flow

20mph sites are not representative of most 20mph routes.

[REF to NSL = National Speed Limit]

CARS The proportion of cars exceeding the speed limit by more than 10 mph was 12% on motorways but just 6% on 30 mph roads and 1% on 60mph roads. More reassuringly, average car speeds under free flow conditions were close to the speed limit on motorways (69mph) and 30mph roads (31mph) and under the speed limit on 60mph roads (50mph). Under free flow conditions 86% of cars exceeded the speed limit at the 20mph sites with 20% exceeding the speed limit by more than 10mph. Under free flowing conditions, the proportions of cars complying with the speed limit were 50% on motorways, 91% on national speed limit (NSL) single carriageways and 46% on 30mph roads. On NSL single carriageway roads 9% of cars exceeded the limit, compared to 54% on 30mph roads and 50% on motorways.



VANS In free flow conditions, 51% of vans complied with the speed limit and 45% on 30mph road. On motorways 49% of vans exceeded the speed limit compared to 55% on 30mph roads. The proportion exceeding the limit by over 10mph on 30mph roads was 6%, while 13% exceeded the speed limit on single carriageways motorways by more than 10mph.

HGV In free flow conditions, 99% of articulated HGVs complied with the speed limit on motorways, 73% on NSL single carriageways and 56% on 30mph roads. The proportion of articulated HGVs exceeding the speed limit by over 10mph on 30mph roads was 3%, while less than 1% exceeded the speed limit by more than 10mph on motorways and NSL single carriageway roads.

RIGID HGV In free flow conditions, 66% of rigid HGVs complied with the speed limit on NSL single carriageways and 53% on 30mph roads. On NSL single carriageway roads 34% exceeded the speed limit, compared to 47% on 30mph roads. The proportion exceeding the speed limit by over 10mph on 30mph roads was 5%, and 3% on NSL single carriageways.



MOTORCYCLES In free flow conditions, 47% of motorcycles complied with the speed limit on motorways, 74% on NSL single carriageways and 37% on 30mph roads. The proportion of motorcycles exceeding the speed limit by over 10mph on motorways was 19%, higher than other vehicle types, compared to 16% of motorcycles on 30mph and 10% on NSL single carriageway roads. The information is based on speed data from a sample of DfT's Automatic Traffic counters (ATCs), chosen to exclude locations where external factors might restrict driver behaviour.



Progress

By Pauline Wills

I've been doing a lot of thinking recently. I suppose I have had the time to let my mind wander. It's not that I am looking for something to do – there are always plenty of jobs on my list – but it's rather comforting to reminisce. One thought leads to another... and another.

It all started at the end of September when my old computer just turned up its toes, completely out of the blue. With no warning whatsoever the display went blank. Well actually, not completely blank but grey with close vertical green lines... and it was these colours that stirred my memory.

Many years ago I became a computer programmer. My first programming job was with Honeywell Control Systems in Bracknell and later I returned to Somerset to Woodspring District Council. I worked on Honeywell computers, first the Level 64 which was replaced by the DPS7 and then the DPS7000. The operating system was GCOS (General

Comprehensive Operating System). Mainframe computers were located in an air-conditioned environment behind locked doors. Monitors displayed text back then. Grey background, white or green text and that was about it. During the time I worked for the Council gradually less and less programming was carried out in-house and buying packages became the new trend. I am sure that these packages were good for the users and on the whole did the job that each one was designed for, not that you would always think so when listening to issues at user group meetings. Of course authorities came in many sizes and packages were designed to be all things to all men. A big problem arose when data needed to pass between systems and, believe me, these systems were often incompatible. Interfacing became my new job. What a nightmare! Testing, testing and more testing was required before systems could go live.



I should explain that data was stored on magnetic tapes. The daily routine involved wheeling a large trolley piled high with tapes down the corridor to a fire proof safe and retrieving the stored tapes which were required for the day's processing. The number of tape drives available was finite and scheduling resources was often difficult for the operators. They had run sheets to follow and some of the jobs took hours to complete. The Housing Benefit system was my responsibility and that had to interface with the Rent system. I can't remember the exact circumstances of the next tale but I know I was anxious about the outcome. I was working with a relatively new and inexperienced operator on that particular day. So the run sheet was submitted and it was going to be a lengthy process. The first job would often be to prepare the tapes, in other words to delete all previous data leaving them clean. And that indeed was the way my sheet began. As I have explained, it was a time when resources had to be shared and jobs often aborted for one reason or another. One program could tie up a tape drive for hours on end and if data had to be restored then a tape drive would also be required. I would often ask

an operator to let me know when a long job finished. That was one way to monitor progress and it was the way I worked. So, on the day in question, the more time that passed the more confident I became; until the office door opened and I heard the words "There wasn't a free tape drive when I started so I prepped the tapes afterwards. Is that okay?" I can remember seeing my boss's face as he looked up from the work in which he had been engrossed. My heart sank. All of those hours of processing and absolutely no data to show for it!

Earlier this morning I did a little research to discover the place of mainframes in today's world and came across the IBM Knowledge Centre: Who uses mainframes and why do they do it? So I quote:

Until the mid-1990s, mainframes provided the only acceptable means of handling the data processing requirements of a large business.

The mainframe owes much of its popularity and longevity to its inherent reliability and stability... No other computer architecture can claim as much continuous, evolutionary improvement, while maintaining compatibility with previous releases.





Businesses today rely on the mainframe to:

- Perform large-scale transaction processing (thousands of transactions per second)
- Support thousands of users and application programs concurrently accessing numerous resources
- Manage terabytes of information in databases
- Handle large-bandwidth communication

Mainframe architecture: Secure, compatible, and still evolving.

An architecture is a set of defined terms and rules that are used as instructions to build products. Each generation of mainframe computers has included improvements in architecture, while remaining the most stable, secure, and compatible of all computing platforms.

Well, that's interesting stuff. In fact, it's not so easy to discover when something is published on the internet and on further investigation it appears that this information could date back to 2010. However, I have looked further and found an article dated September 2019 stating that

the mainframe business is alive and well. 'Companies like airlines and financial services companies continue to use mainframes, and while they need the power these massive machines provide, they need to do so in a more modern context.' I will be more careful with my research in future.

It is many years since I have recalled that day but on reflection the only real problem was the time that had been wasted. I knew exactly how to restore the data. It was all in a day's work. My new desktop is another matter completely!

I have an external hard drive and back up regularly so everything should be okay but ...

All of my data has been restored for me which is a great relief. I can access the files too – even better. But as for the format, that leaves a lot to be desired! So many things seem to have changed and my old machine was only three years old. It is so frustrating! There are preferences galore but I don't understand what they all mean, in fact first of all I have to discover that they even exist. Every single spreadsheet needs amending. Perhaps I will eventually find one setting which will put everything right as if by magic.



I am learning all the time and have solved a few of the initial problems but others just seem to appear one after another. I had a communications failure with my printer. I have re-set the printing system and re-added the printer but still can't send any data to it. I know we are aiming towards being a paperless society but I don't think I will ever play my part. My printer is old and I imagine it is incompatible with macOS Mojave. I have resorted to linking it to an old machine which still works perfectly for word processing and that will enable me to print. I know this action will cause me problems in the future so perhaps I should just buy a new printer but it's the principle. I don't like throwing



things away, particularly when they are not broken. I still have my father's old Lagomarsino-ElettroNumeria calculating machine which I can remember him using when I was young. These were manufactured in Italy in the 1950s and 1960s and provided semi-automatic multiplication and division but had no powered carriage shift or clearing mechanism. The sound of it in action is coming back to me as I type. Perhaps I will clean it and keep it out for a while.

It never ceases to amaze me how technology has progressed during my working life and beyond, and at an increasing rate over the last nine months. It is incredible to think that so many people throughout the country have been able to work from home, whether it be for employment or education, to order online and meet online. And I haven't even mentioned social media.

Technology is wonderful and I embrace it completely but I conclude that intuition mutates with each generation and just sometimes I wish things would stand still... now I'm off to the garden to relax.



Driver assisted technology

By Tim Shallcross

Last week a new grading system for assisted driving systems was launched by Thatcham Research and Euro NCAP which is designed to give consumers a clearer understanding of the driver assistance on new vehicles. Assisted driving systems require the driver to remain alert and in control of the car at all times. They are different from automated driving systems where the car drives itself. Automated driving systems are not available yet, although manufacturers claim that we could have them for motorway driving as early as 2021. The different systems have already given us a lexicon of abbreviations and it helps to understand what they are, what they are supposed to do and when they will come into action. Here, Tim Shallcross Head of Technical Policy and Advice for IAM RoadSmart shares

some tips with us about assisted driving technology.

- **AEB:** Automatic Emergency Braking. This uses radar and cameras to monitor the road ahead. If the technology detects a risk of running into stationary or slower moving vehicles it gives the driver a warning – usually a loud buzzer and a dashboard light. If the driver doesn't react, the brakes are applied hard to stop the car and avoid a collision or reduce the severity of it. However, sometimes the system will detect a collision risk when there isn't one. For example, if the car is on a bend the radar might identify a parked car as a risk. If you hear the collision warning and the road ahead is clear, you have time to react before the brakes are applied. You simply



need to let AEB know that you are alert and not asleep. More or less any driver input will do – a light touch of the brakes or indicating left or right will suffice and the system will go no further.

- **ACC:** Adaptive Cruise Control. This uses radar to maintain a safe distance between your car and the vehicle in front. If that vehicle slows down, it will slow you down. However, it's not an emergency braking system; if the car in front slows down very rapidly, a warning will sound, and you should brake. This will cancel cruise control and you will need to re-engage it. You should also stay aware of what's happening ahead. Trucks may pull into an overtaking lane at the last minute to pass a much slower moving vehicle. If this happens, your ACC will suddenly pick up the slower moving vehicle and brake hard. Keep monitoring the road ahead to avoid getting caught out like this.
- **High beam assist:** This clever system switches to headlight main beam at night when there is no vehicle ahead and dips

one or both lights when you are following a car or when one approaches in the opposite direction. However, it relies on detecting headlights or taillights. If you are approaching a side road with a car waiting to pull out, the lights will stay on main beam and you should manually dip them to avoid dazzling the driver.

- **Lane Keeping Assistance:** This monitors the lane markings and warns the driver if the car starts to drift over the line. This is usually haptic feedback through vibration in the steering wheel. However, if the lines are worn out or covered in snow or mud, the system can't detect them and will not operate. Make sure you stay alert and don't get over-tired, especially on long motorway journeys.

Tim says: "Assisted driving systems are becoming much more common and have the potential to improve safety, but they don't cope with all circumstances. It's important to understand what the systems are designed to do, always stay alert and know when to take control yourself."



Avoiding collisions with tips from IAM RoadSmart

By Neil Greig

With many people now spending more time at home due to COVID-19 restrictions, the volume of traffic on the road will likely decrease. But, for those still travelling to and from work, or making other essential trips, some key road safety dangers remain. It's a little-known fact that incidents involving deer don't just happen on country roads, for example. In fact, more than half (52%) of deer and vehicle collisions in the UK occur on motorways. Wherever you are travelling, a collision with wildlife of any species is something you'll want to avoid – not only to protect yourself, your passengers, your vehicle and the other road users around you, but also our lovely British animals.

Neil Greig, Policy & Research Director at IAM RoadSmart, has these useful tips to help you avoid colliding with wildlife when you are

driving or motorcycle riding, and to know what steps to take if you do.

Keep an eye out for road signs: If there's a high volume of animals in a particular area there will usually be road signs alerting motorists. These signs are there for a reason: animals tend to use the same tracks every year, so areas of high risk are known.

Take care as the seasons change: Autumn is the time of highest risk of animals venturing unexpectedly into roads, as for many of them it is the time of year when they have their minds on other things!

Beware the pack: Many larger animals move in herds so, if you see one, expect a few others to turn up behind it. Get to know your local wildlife patterns so you get fewer surprises.

Use your lights: If you're driving at night, make sure you are making full use of your



lights, particularly if you're travelling through the countryside. Using full beam when safe and legal to do so will increase visibility of any animals on the road; it can also warn animals that a vehicle is approaching.

Stick to the speed limits: With the majority of speed limits on rural roads set to 60mph it's important to remember that speed limits aren't a target. Winding and narrow single-carriageway country roads can challenge even confident drivers, so slow down when warned of animals to give yourself time to react. Also remember that travelling at a speed that you feel comfortable at – and at which you know you can stop safely in the distance you can see to be clear – is the safest way to travel.

What to do if you hit an animal: Just as you would in any collision involving another vehicle, if you hit an animal you should stop. Check that you, your passengers and your vehicle are all safe before approaching any animal. The Road Traffic Act states that legally you must report hitting dogs, horses, cattle, pigs, goats, sheep, donkeys and mules to the police within 24 hours.

Helping injured animals on the road: If you are involved in a collision with an animal and it is

injured, or if you see an injured animal on the road, stop when it is safe to do so. Make sure your vehicle is parked up in a safe place. If the animal is still on the carriageway, try to warn and divert traffic around it and wait until the coast is clear to assess the situation. Try to assess how badly it is hurt. If the animal isn't too badly injured, wear gloves or use a cloth to touch it and try to move it to safety in the most pain-free way possible. It is important to keep the animal away from your face at all times, as the animal could try to attack or get away from you. If the animal is in a lot of distress, you may need to call the local vet or wildlife rehabilitator. With farm animals you should try to contact the local farmer if you can, as well as the police.

Neil said: "If you are travelling too fast or not paying attention, you may have to make that terrible decision between hitting a living animal or crashing off the road. So – to minimise any risk – be aware of nature's seasonal variations in your local area and consider them as you plan your trips. A little knowledge plus good observation means you should be able to anticipate most problems and avoid injury to innocent animals or damage to your vehicle."



UK drivers and motorcyclists unconvinced by proposed new Highway Code fearing more conflict with cyclists and pedestrians

A recent survey has discovered that the majority of road users aren't in favour of many of the Department for Transport's proposed changes to the Highway Code which have been designed to improve road safety for cyclists, pedestrians and horse riders, believing that the changes will instead increase conflict and potentially reduce the safety of the vulnerable road users they are intended to protect.

In the survey, conducted by the UK's largest road safety charity IAM RoadSmart, 71 per cent of drivers and motorcyclists believe the new proposal to give pedestrians priority when turning into and out of junctions, for example, will increase conflict rather than reducing it, with more than half (57 per cent) thinking this will be a significant issue.

Of the 3,600 web poll respondents, 74 per cent believe that children should be allowed to cycle on the pavement, but only 23 per cent feel that cyclists in general should have the same rights.

Almost three quarters (73 per cent) think that the new Highway Code should make it compulsory for cyclists to wear a helmet, in contrast to the proposed Code itself which, while restating the evidence that wearing a cycle helmet reduces the risk of sustaining a head injury in certain circumstances, stops short of making them compulsory.

Meanwhile, 71 per cent of people agree with the general concept that drivers and riders should give motorcyclists, cyclists, horse riders, horse drawn vehicles and pedestrians walking in the road at least as much room as they would when overtaking a car.

On the new Code's most controversial suggestions - to establish a hierarchy of road users, where those in charge of the vehicles that can cause the greatest harm should bear the greatest responsibility to take care – the majority (56 per cent) agree that this is the right way forward, but 26 per cent are against and almost one in five (19 per cent) are still to be convinced either way.



The new Code doesn't suggest any obligation on cyclists to use cycle lanes or tracks when they are present, and a resounding 80 per cent of IAM RoadSmart's poll respondents believe this is a mistake.

However, some of the proposed changes were met with widespread support, with 63 per cent of those surveyed agreeing with the new advice that when riding a bike on busy roads, when vehicles are moving faster than them, cyclists should move over and allow traffic to overtake them. There is also strong support for every proposal that contains clear guidelines on passing distances, with 78 per cent in favour of the one and a half-metre gap between cyclist and vehicle travelling below 30mph, with a two-metre gap when above 30mph.

And 90 per cent agree with the new Code's advice that drivers and motorcyclists should give horse riders at least two metres' space and pass at speeds under 15 mph.

Finally, just over half (57 per cent) agree with the new proposal to include the 'Dutch Reach'

in the Highway Code. This is a technique which advises motorists leaving their vehicles to do so by using their left hand to operate the door handle, allowing the driver to naturally twist their body, making it easier to look over their shoulder and check for cyclists or other road users approaching.

Neil Greig, Policy and Research Director at IAM RoadSmart, said: "Regardless of what changes are introduced, it is clear there will be a need for a huge education campaign to ensure any amendments to the Highway Code are understood and fully adopted by the millions of existing UK drivers, motorcyclists and road users. At IAM RoadSmart we believe an online resource to help with this re-education in an engaging way would be helpful."

"The simple truth is that most of us don't read the Highway Code unless we drive or ride professionally, or are about to take a test. The Department for Transport needs to be realistic about the impact simply changing a seldom read document will have on the behavior and safety of road users."





Motoring - was it better back in the day?

By Shaun Cronin

I'm sure like me during lockdown you spent some time tidying things up, recycling & repurposing. After sorting through some old photographic slides my mother sent me an envelope containing a print picture that just got me wondering, was motoring really better back in the day or are we simply looking through rose-tinted glasses?

You will have seen the picture, a very young Shaun aged around two or three years old sitting on the bonnet of a lovely red and white Triumph Herald, see I'm doing it already, the glasses are on! Apparently, we were travelling from the Midlands way up north and just stopped, turning just off the A1 to find a place to put down the picnic blanket, just imagine trying that now! I don't really remember the Triumph Herald, but I did like being in the car and helping my father to drive, operating any controls I could reach. This was the 1960's

and those things called seat belts were still very rare. I loved being in the car so much mum used to place a large cushion on the handbrake so I could sit on it and be close to them and of course see out more clearly. Much better than standing up in the rear seat waving at the other motorists. I mean, what could possibly go wrong?

Fast forward a few more years and we have the Ford Corsair 1500, column change gears and a front bench seat. Excellent no more large cushions for me as the handbrake is an umbrella type under the dashboard. I do remember helping my father fit the Britax 'static' seat belts to the Corsair. Luckily it was a 1965 model and by then the law made it mandatory to fit the mountings for seat belts, the actual seat belts were still optional extras! Of course, that was only in the front seats, no mountings or belts in the rear for a long time



yet. I mean we always carried our eggs carefully home from the shops but children... no let them wriggle, play and stand just where they like, better still sit on the knee of the front seat passenger, as they can hold on to you if there is a crash!

Fast forward again and as a father myself what a difference with my children in a modern car. Rear-facing baby carrier, mandatory rear seat belts, front facing child seat with a five-point harness, ISOFIX seat fixings of course, then booster cushions and an adult seat belt. Did anyone else teach your children that the car just will not start if the seat belts are not fastened correctly? The things we told our children eh.

So, is motoring better now that we have all the seats covered with inertia reel seat belts with pre-tensioners, head restraints, anti-submarine seats, cars with anti-lock braking systems, traction control, halogen or LED headlights,

side intrusion protection, airbags and a veritable host of other extras?

Motoring is certainly much safer for vehicle occupants than in the 1960's due to all the various safety features fitted to modern vehicles. The driving standards however, well that is another question! Modern drivers also don't need to master the art of double declutching as we have synchromesh, or using the gearbox to actually slow the car as the brakes were at best marginal, vacuum wipers anyone? Those rose-tinted glasses are getting all misty eyed remembering all these wonderful things that 1960's drivers had as standard!

Back in the day, roads were not congested, you could picnic just off the A1, cars were simple, children could do what they liked, and cushions could be placed on handbrakes to become a handy seat. Thankfully, some things have changed for the better.

Enjoy the drive!



**Closing date for the spring 2021 edition
of the Wessex Advanced Motorists e-
Newsletter is 20th January.**

**All contributions would be very
welcome.**

**All items should be sent to
ed@wessexam.uk**