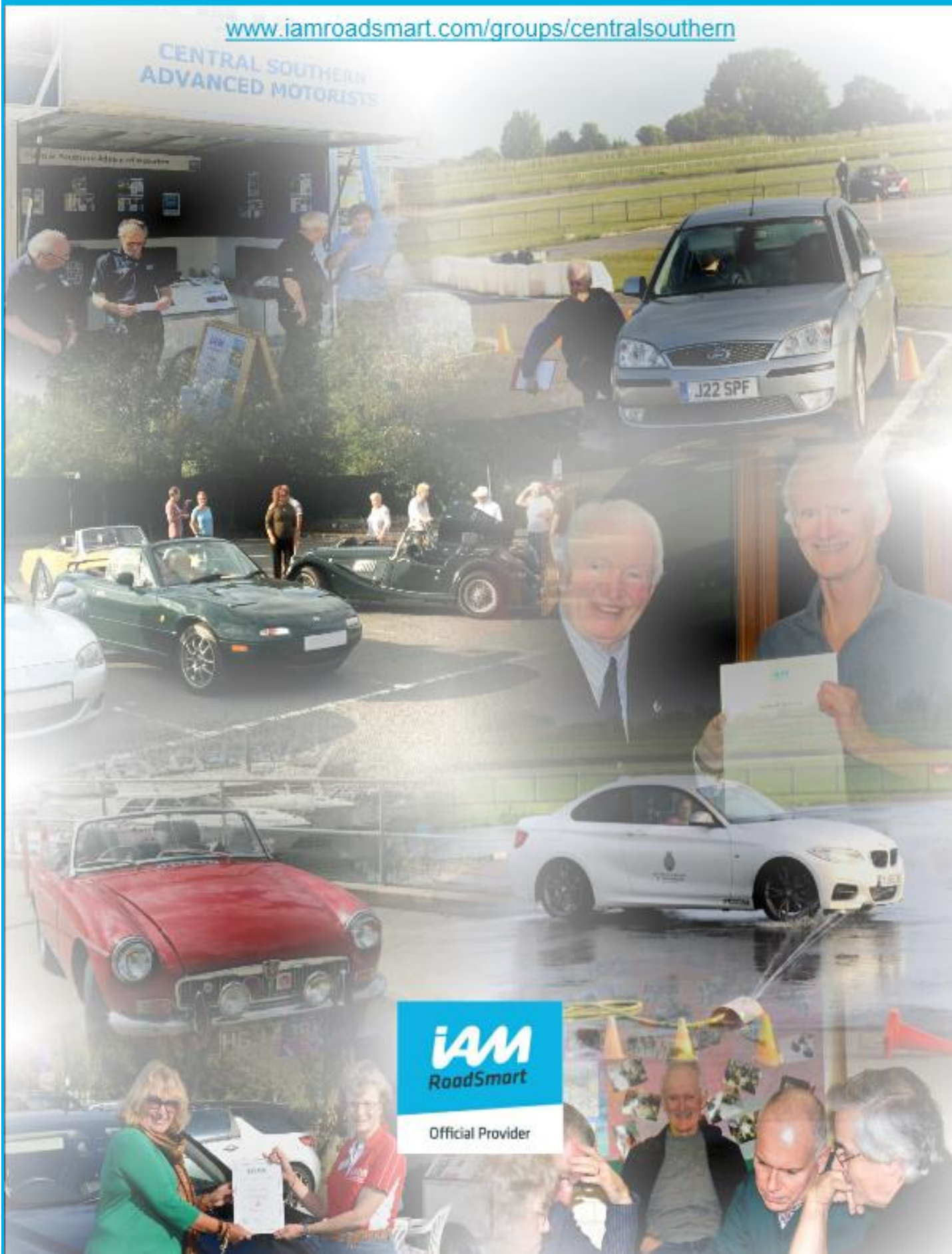


Summer Newsletter

CENTRAL SOUTHERN ADVANCED MOTORISTS

www.iamroadsmart.com/groups/centralsouthern



PRESIDENT

Dennis Clement

CSAM COMMITTEE

Chairman	David Mesquita-Morris
07483 233740 (evenings & weekends only)	chair@csam.org.uk
Vice Chairman	Tom Stringer
07786 266541	vice.chair@csam.org.uk
Secretary	Sheila Girling
01403 250293	secretary@csam.org.uk
Treasurer	Duncan Ford OBE
07920 534475	treasurer@csam.org.uk
Chief Observer	Phil Coleman
01243 376569	chief.observer@csam.org.uk
Membership	Matthew Pitt
02392 595817	membership@csam.org.uk
Associate Liaison	John France
01798 815750	associate.liaison@csam.org.uk
Social Media	Tom Stringer
07786 266541	vice.chair@csam.org.uk
Newsletter & Website Editor	Andy Wilson
01329 483661	editor@csam.org.uk

Please note the new email addresses above.



Registered address 65 Worcester Road, Chichester, PO19 5EB

From the Editor



Welcome to our Summer Newsletter of 2020.

In this issue you will find an article from our President, Dennis Clemment and a series of articles from our Chairman David Mesquita-Morris which had previously been published in the News section of our group website.

My voluntary driving for Hampshire County Council is suspended at present because of the Covid-19 restrictions. I am over 70, although most of the time I do not feel it. Many of the people I transport are vulnerable people, some with significant health issues so I would imagine that they will be having difficulties with self-isolation whilst the various centres and venues that I would have driven them to or from are closed. These thoughts make me count my blessings at times like this.

Solo journeys are strongly advised at the moment. If you do need to share a car, you should only do so with members of your household. You should not share a vehicle with someone from another household. This latest Government news about getting out more is welcome but with ongoing social distancing it will be some time before I will be able to take anyone on an observed run again.

I had one lady who I had emailed to ask when would be a good time to call her when lockdown came in so it must have seemed that I was just teasing her because when I had her answer and I managed to call her I had to say that all runs were suspended due to the virus.

Because of the vastly reduced time spent driving at present I am plugging in solar car battery chargers in both my car and my wife's. I originally purchased these to ensure that our cars would be able to start when we returned from an extended holiday a couple of years back. Modern cars have so many systems in them that continue to drain the battery whilst standing that the trickle charge from a solar panel, sitting on the dashboard and plugged into the OBDII diagnostic port under the dashboard, is able to compensate for and keep the battery fully charged ready for when you return.

Contributors, both old and new, would you please forward your work to my new newsletter email address, editor@csam.org.uk.

Andy Wilson, Newsletter and Website Editor

From Our Chairman



So much has changed since I wrote my last newsletter article; I could not imagine that over half the population of the planet would be in some form or lock-down. Truly unprecedented times. The global effort that we see in an attempt to control this outbreak is truly amazing.

All on-the-road activity has now ceased for IAM RoadSmart and a large number of their staff have been furloughed, my thoughts go out to them and their families. It's unfortunately understandable, as charities are come under scrutiny if they hold too large cash reserves, so balancing the books

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in times like these when revenues will be drying up can be particularly challenging when there is no war-chest to rely on.

At CSAM, we too have ceased all on-the-road activity, but you'll be pleased to hear that the behind-the-scenes work continues thank to the dedication of your committee members. Once the restrictions lift, we're revved up and raring to go!

From my own personal perspective, work goes on and is as busy as it ever was; instead of running from meeting room to meeting room in Canary Wharf, it's now video conference to video conference from our dining room. Back at the start of the crisis, I signed up as a NHS Transport Volunteer, with my registration coming through just before the Easter weekend; I am still looking forward to receiving my first assignment... in addition to doing helping the NHS, I had rather hoped that it would give me one or two more legitimate driving opportunities.

It was always my intention since joining the committee to write a regular blog post for the website and social media. I feel that in today's world, communication needs to happen via a variety of delivery channels in order to reach our members of all ages. Those of you who do visit the website on a regular basis should have seen an article or three, and by the time of publication I hope that will have increased. If you have views to share please do get involved by putting fingers to keyboard and sending articles to Andy, our newsletter and website editor; he can be reached at editor@csam.org.uk. I would love to see a more vibrant community emerge around our website and social media. This way we have a stronger chance to engage with our younger membership (who will of course form the backbone of the group in decades to come).

Also, you don't need to be an Observer or committee member to get involved – we are looking for local events, such as village fetes and shows to attend once life gets back to normal. I am told that our attendance at these events does wonders for recruiting new Associate members, which in turn keeps our Observers busy. So if there's a fete or show near you that you think would benefit from a CSAM presence, don't hesitate to get in touch.

Later in this newsletter, you should see two further articles from me, on the topics of speed management and the limit point of vision. I hope you enjoy them and if there's any other topics you wish us to discuss, just let us know (if it's a toughie I may have to delegate to Phil!).

Finally, a small cautionary note, as we are driving less often we can be a little rusty when we do go out for the weekly shopping – when you do go out, try to emulate the level of concentration you had with the Examiner sat beside you when you took your advanced driving test.

Stay safe and healthy,

David Mesquita-Morris

Acting Chairman

Central Southern Advanced Motorists

[Chief Observer's Corner](#)



In these very different times writing something meaningful has been very challenging, I hope that you will excuse my lack of recent news, the truth is that since the lock-down all observed runs with Associates have been put on hold and no tests have taken place.

Associates

This reporting year from 1st September 2019 we have had 15 Associates pass their tests, congratulations to our new members and their Observers. We have also helped 2 existing members to prepare, take and pass their tests.

We have 53 active Associates assigned to Observers who are working their way through the course. There are 3 Associates currently on our waiting list, we will be assigning these Associates when suitable Observers become available after the lock-down. I would like to remind all Associates that IAM RoadSmart has committed to extending their course by three months so that they can complete their courses.

Our only Northgate Sunday sessions was held on 8 March, we will be resuming the sessions after the lock-down. We welcome all Associates, Members and members of the public to take advantage of a free run with one of the Observing team. I hope that all members will encourage their friends and families to take advantage of this excellent service, we love to see new faces and to say hello to old friends. If you would like to book a place please contact me at my new e-mail address chief.observer@csam.org.uk.

Observers

We have a team of 35 Observers.

- There are 18 National Observers.
- 14 Local Observers. Two more Local Observers have started their journey to become National Observers. Dave Stribling has decided to retire, thanks Dave for all your help over the years and I look forward to seeing you after the lock-down when hopefully you can attend some of our events.
- 3 Trainee Observers are working to become qualified.

We are always looking for more volunteers to become Observers, if you are interested please get in touch, you can contact me at chief.observer@csam.org.uk.

Initiatives

Representatives from Guildford, South London and Worthing groups were invited to our Observer Training day which was due to take place on Saturday 4th April, it was hoped that this would keep the momentum going from the area group meeting we had in December, unfortunately the training day had to be postponed.

I'd like to remind you about the Fellowship program. If you have ever thought that your skills aren't as sharp as they used to be, why not become a Fellow, after the initial retest (if your last test was more than 3 years ago) and then for the meagre of £13 per year you can get retested every 3 years. The CSAM Observer team are always happy to give you a couple of free runs and guidance to make sure you are still up to test requirements. The other advantage is that the IAM Surety car insurance recognises you as a Fellow and passes on improved rates.

Phil Coleman

Chief Observer

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Membership Mumbblings!



Hello, how are you all? I hope you are all keeping safe and well through this time. Those of you that are self-isolating I hope you have been able to keep in touch with family and friends via video communication and are able to get the supplies you need safely to your house. Those working I hope you are keeping safe too and those not in work I hope you are also getting the financial support you need. Who could have predicted how much the world could change over the last few months. On one-side values, beliefs and resilience have been tested with the country in lockdown, but on the other it feels like everyone else's kitchen cupboards are full of toilet roll, pasta and self-raising flour. Welcome to Summer 2020 a year we will never forget and quite rightly from the devastation but I think it has changed a lot of peoples view on the world and have had time to reflect on the things that really matter.

The impact on the environment has been tremendous and the return of wildlife to places has been a reminder of our own impact on the world we live in. The connect with people, the respect of all peoples roles in society and the unity we have shown I hope remains as we return to whatever the new normal will look like.

Many people have taken advantage of daily exercise and in that continue to do some of the hobbies they enjoy like jogging and cycling. There is one hobby we all have in common that may have not been possible I am sure some of you may have had the difficult decision to put your cars away and unable to go out and enjoy a drive. I was reading the other day that 1 in 10 people have stopped using them completely. This got me thinking about what the state of many cars will be like after lockdown. Batteries will be flat and calls to breakdown services for cars not starting have already doubled for this reason. Tyre pressures may not have been checked leading to flat spots. Handbrakes may be stuck. It will be important to check oil, coolant levels, windscreen wash and that all your lights are working. I found a good article on the IAM RoadSmart website if you would like to know more about the management of your car during lockdown. You will be able to read this article by clicking the following link: [How to keep your car healthy during lockdown](#)

Lockdown has changed the roads completely. Perhaps I should be grateful that I was able to continue to work and therefore drive throughout these last few months. The first few weeks the roads were eerily quiet. I hardly met any traffic travelling along the A27, no queues on the Chichester bypass, Arundel or the A24 into Worthing. It easily shaved 20 minutes off my morning journey. Everyone on the road was courteous, forgiving and initially everyone was driving sensibly. As the weeks went on the conditions on the road changed. What I will call the "ego" came back onto the roads. Cars, motorbikes were hurtling down the dual carriageways, there were times you had the sensation of being in the way. This decreased as the traffic increased which started a few weeks ago and slowly ramping up every few days. It started with a lot of construction vehicles and lorries followed by vans and then a lot more cars. It is still nowhere near the level of normality but an indication that the country is trying to restart.

From experiences at work a lot of changes were made to protect staff and patients. I feel privileged to have been part in this planning. I found the initial few weeks quite daunting, while we learnt more about how it spread and who was at risk. I was coming home each night wondering whether I should be staying in a hotel while disinfecting my car shoes and articles I had taken out the house. In amongst all the serious negative aspects of all of this

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we have found that some changes have made a real positive impact on the services provided with planning in place to maintain these aspects in the new norm.

Looking at our membership figures, Central Southern Advanced Motorist currently have 290 Full Members, 67 Associate Members and 1 'Friends' Member giving a total membership of 358. While on the subject of membership, you will no longer be able to renew your membership fees via Direct Debit. The best way, therefore, to collect your £10 CSAM subscription is for you to set up a Standing Order payable annually, on your usual renewal date, to CSAM. If you do not wish to use a standing order please make a note in your diary of your renewal date and pay your subscription through a BACS transfer or by sending me a cheque. I will be in contact nearer your renewal dates to help you with the process.

Finally, members, or drivers wishing to become members, or anyone requiring more information can reach me by my new e-mail address at membership@csam.org.uk or by 'phone' on 02392595817. If you are transferred to voicemail, please leave a message and I will pick them up out of my working hours. With the limited phone signal at work I am usually faster at replying to emails. I will try and answer them as soon as I can during this time.

I hope will not be too long before we will all get to meet up but until they please stay safe.

Safe Driving

Matt

Membership Secretary



There's a Motorway and a Dual Carriageway in a really rough pub enjoying a burly pint of cloudy scrumpy to demonstrate just how HARD they are.

The Dual Carriageway is impressing these pretty little A-roads with his central reservation and the Motorway is showing off about his hard shoulder and they're getting on really well.

They are just about to take the A-Roads "back to their place" when a green piece of tarmac walks in through the door. The Motorway and the Dual Carriageway turn white with fear and they dive for cover beneath the table.

Well, the A-Roads are not impressed at all as you may imagine. The green tarmac downs a triple vodka and walks out of the bar. The Motorway and Dual Carriageway get out from under the table realising that they've blown it with the A-Roads.

The first A-road asks the Motorway "Why did you go white and dive for cover when that green piece of tarmac walked in -- you're supposed to be the king of the roads?".

The Motorway replies, "WHY? That guy's a b***** Cycle Path!!"

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Associates' News



In preparing the Summer Newsletter report, I am reminded of a brass plaque I once saw that read "On this spot in 1754 nothing happened".

Since the last Newsletter and prior to Lockdown we had eight new Associates, seven of which I am pleased to report were allocated to Observers. We still had two Associates waiting to be allocated one of whom was living abroad and planning to return in March 2020.

Therefore, once we are allowed to re-start there will be three Associates to be allocated.

I am also pleased to report that the result of the last ADT to take place before Lockdown was a First.

Associate	Location	Test Date	Examiner	Result	Observer
Nigel Moore	Havant	16/03/2020	Colin Thaxter	First	Phil Coleman

Many congratulations to both Nigel and Phil on this excellent result.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank all those Observers I contacted before Lockdown looking to place new Associates.

Hopefully, in the coming weeks we will see some light at the end of the tunnel and a "New Normal" will evolve to help us continue doing what we all enjoy.

Keep safe and keep well.

Thank you one and all.

John France

Associate Liaison



I am now under House Arrest

Joey and I went to Australia and New Zealand in February which may well be the last long-haul trip we do because we are both "of an age" and are now under house arrest but without tags around our ankles. I have idly wondered in the past what house arrest was like and now I know, awful isn't it? The trip was wonderful but the restrictions on our return are certainly not normal. What will the new normal be and when will the world be open again for travellers?

There was very little traffic on the open road in both countries a bit like we are seeing now in the UK. However, just south of Perth, Western Australia, on Highway 2, travelling at the limit of 100kph, we were passed by an articulated lorry who had joined from the slip road just behind us. He had two very long enclosed trailers, unlike UK lorries who are only allowed to have one. He then proceeded to move to lane three, yes lane three, where he stayed for many, many kilometres until the Highway reverted to two lanes when, you guessed it, he stayed in lane two (!). I haven't looked up the Australian regulations, an exercise for you in

these quiet times, but it appears to be de rigueur over there. Inevitably undertaking took place.

With two trailers on a single carriageway it makes interesting overtaking situations as they are very long indeed but I didn't try that, I was on holiday and not on a Masters assessment. The real test would have been with a three traileered set up and, yes, one did appear on Highway 2. I always thought they were restricted to the outback but we saw one. The one good thing about them, so you don't underestimate their length, is that three trailer lorries have a sign on the back saying "Road Train". In fairness, I didn't see it go into lane three but a road train does take a long, long time to overtake. New Zealand is better because it limits their lorries to two trailers and there are many of these combinations.

In New Zealand we travelled to some beautiful places from Northland to Southland the most northerly and southerly regions of the islands. Volume-wise traffic was very light so tailgating, a national pastime in the UK, is not often seen except in major towns. As some of you will know Maurice Upton and I have undertaken many presentations to outside groups locally and in my slot I always raised the subject of tailgating. If I asked the question "what is the worst aspect of driving?" everybody would immediately say tailgating but if I asked the question the other way round "are there any tailgaters in the room?" nobody would ever put their hand up. So, I have only ever done presentations to non-tailgaters, hmmm! World-wide, tailgating is a problem but finding a driver who admits to it is impossible as, it would appear, they always know how to avoid a crash; so why are 60% of crashes to the rear of the car? Why do we only look in our mirrors occasionally?

We had a stop-over in Dubai on the way back and as we were taxiing towards our arrival gate it fleetingly passed through my mind that there appeared to be a lot of planes at the terminal's gates, very few spaces. Having disembarked, passed through security and customs and collected our cases we realised we had only taken 20 minutes to go from the plane to our pre-booked taxi for the hotel, a record by a long way. We asked the driver why everything was so quiet and he told us that two days before they had stopped all flights inwards from a variety of Covid-19 countries, we were extremely lucky. Our onward flight the next day to Gatwick was from an unusually quiet Dubai airport, we were fortunate to be just ahead of the situation developing rapidly across the world.

In lockdown I am doing an early morning 45 minutes of walking exercise, not missed a day but, at the time of writing this, it hasn't rained yet. It is quite noticeable how driving has changed over recent weeks where drivers have collectively, and probably unwittingly, changed their habits on approaching a notoriously tight, blind roundabout on my walking route. Liberties are now being taken in the knowledge that there is less traffic about but this could result in a major situation developing at this particular junction. We are now reading in the press that whilst crashes are fewer nationally, thank goodness, there is evidence of some motorists far exceeding the limits as they feel they have a greater sense of freedom. If you have the urge to blow away the cobwebs then may I suggest that you consider booking up for a RoadSmart Skills Day at Thruxton when they return to the calendar. There you will not only will you be allowed to drive somewhat quicker than normal and you are in a very safe environment with one-to-one instruction. You will learn a lot about your car and yourself as a driver; sessions are individually tailored and it will be a day you won't forget.

How life has changed over the last few weeks but will it ever return to normal, I don't think so? Depending on one's age there may be very significant changes ahead in a variety of ways

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that we had never ever thought of. Will Joey and I be having a long-haul holiday in the future, who knows?

Now, two quick grumbles. Which bit of social distancing do many cyclists not understand? They creep up behind you whilst you are on the pavement walking and pass within inches of your right shoulder, where is the two metres? I have, perhaps foolishly, shouted at a number recently, three this morning, but I don't think their responses were agreeing with me! The second grumble is why is diesel now 10p per litre cheaper than when I last filled up and am now rarely using the car?

Finally, there is one real positive about the pandemic, we are no longer talking about Brexit! Are we still doing that?

In these extremely difficult times, please take care.

Dennis Clement
CSAM President.

Vehicle Maintenance Whilst In Lockdown

The following is from Landrover and was sent to Duncan at the start of lockdown, similar advice is available from most motor manufactures.

The UK faces a period of isolation due to the Coronavirus outbreak, many of us will be spending a lot more time at home and less time driving our vehicles.

The government advises that we should only travel by car when absolutely necessary, including travelling to and from your place of work if you are a key worker, for essential food supplies for yourself or vulnerable people who rely on you, or to attend medical appointments.

To ensure your vehicle operates at peak efficiency for essential travel, there are a number of steps you can follow. These require little effort and will maintain the best operating conditions for your vehicle.



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Since 2009, all Land Rover diesel vehicles have been fitted with a Diesel Particulate Filter. This important device captures 99% of soot and particulates from the engine to help significantly reduce emissions. It is essential that to prevent the particulates from building up in the filter, and to avoid any impact to the performance of your vehicle, that this soot is 'burned off' through a process called regeneration.

If your Diesel Particulate Filter warning light shows as amber on the dashboard, this indicates your filter is filling up and needs to be regenerated. To do this, it's recommended you drive the vehicle at speeds between 40 and 70mph on roads designated for these speed limits, for 25-35 minutes. A red warning light on the dashboard indicates that your Diesel Particulate Filter is full. In this scenario, we recommend contacting Land Rover Assistance as soon as possible to resolve the issue.

For more advice on regenerating the Diesel Particulate Filter in your Land Rover, please refer to your vehicle handbook.



To ensure the optimum performance of your Land Rover, it is important to keep your Diesel Exhaust Fluid – also known as AdBlue – topped up. The fluid is essential for neutralising harmful gases generated in the engine and helps to reduce the emissions from the exhaust by up to 90%.

If your Diesel Exhaust Fluid drops to zero, then you will not be able to restart your vehicle. Topping up your Diesel Exhaust Fluid is a simple process, and the fluid is available to purchase at most local garages. To determine the grade of fluid your vehicle requires, please refer to your vehicle handbook.

Warning lights on the dashboard and messages to your InControl message centre will remind you when your levels are running low and instructions on how to fill the tank are included in your vehicle handbook.

To ensure your Land Rover operates efficiently when returning to more usual travel patterns, there are a few simple steps you can follow.

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To build up sufficient charge in the battery, it is recommended that you turn on your vehicle once every seven days. In the first instance, start your car for a 30-minute period, with the heat in the cabin set to 22 degrees. Repeat this process for 15 minutes, once every seven days in the weeks thereafter, to ensure the battery is maintained.

To avoid flat spots developing and ensure your tyres remain sufficiently inflated, check the tyre pressure against those listed in your vehicle manual. In addition, we advise adjusting the parking position of your Land Rover by a ¼ of a wheel turn once every 14 days, to change the point of pressure. Repeat as required.

After extended periods of no use, we'd recommend gently applying the brakes when first driving your vehicle again, at a low speed. This will help to remove any surface corrosion on the brake discs.

(Having this as general advice is a good start but also check out your own manufacturer's website for vehicle specific advice.)

WELL, THAT'S NOT A PROBLEM, THEN

(Another informative and entertaining article from one of our members, Douglas Wragg)

One of the real joys of my work is that you have the opportunity of meeting some really interesting and lovely people. If you like people, that is a bonus; if you do not, well, then you are in for a bad time.

This case is, in some respects quite bizarre - as are quite a lot of the things I undertake.

It concerns a fatal accident involving a tractor and a motor bike, and the essence of the incident hinged around whether the tractor driver could have seen the motor bike when he was turning right into the entrance to the field, or whether the motor bike was travelling too fast to stop when he became aware of the presence of the tractor.

As with a lot of these types of cases, huge sums of money are involved, acres of paper are used up in reports, supplementary reports, opinions and all manner of conceivable arguments.

My instructions were to recreate the scene, and to measure the time the tractor took to turn right.

Simplicity itself, I can hear you say.

Well not quite.

I could not use the original location for various reasons, and I had to find an identical tractor, as the original was no longer available.

You could be forgiven for thinking that this was still a simple matter.

Yes, except the tractor was a rare model that had only been in production for a short period, as it was not popular with the farming fraternity.

It did not come with air conditioning, stereo system, satellite navigation or a drinks cabinet.

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The insurance company had tried unsuccessfully for six months to find an identical tractor. My first port of call was with an editor of a magazine group for whom I had carried out a lot of work in the past.

I knew that they had some specialised publications on things like stationary engines and the like, and on the off-chance I telephoned him and asked if, amongst their publications they had anything on tractors (Tractor Owners Gazette, incorporating World of Tractors?). Or something like that.

I was very pleasantly surprised when he told me that, yes, indeed, they did publish such a magazine. Ah, the joy of networking!

He put me on to the editor of the particular magazine, and I explained what I needed. He told me that the particular model I was seeking was as rare as "rocking horse manure". At least, that was the gist of what he said.

He promised to make some enquiries and call me back, but told me not to hold my breath.

Eventually, he telephoned me and said, "You won't believe this, but I have found two of them". One was in Yorkshire, the other in Wiltshire.

Time to toss a coin as to which one to choose.

I now know that the coin came down on the right side, as I chose Wiltshire.

The man I telephoned was a farmer, whom we shall call Julian. He had a wonderful Wiltshire accent, which sadly I cannot reproduce on paper. You must use your imagination here.

I introduced myself, and explained what I needed to do, and asked whether he was prepared to help.

"That's not a problem, then" he replied. I asked whether he would be willing to drive the tractor during the timed runs – "That's not a problem, then" came the reply.

I have to admit to being knocked off-balance by the next bit of the conversation. I mentioned that the original tractor had been towing a muck spreader. "That's not a problem, then" said Julian "Full or empty do you want it?"

Trying not to sound too much like a gibbering idiot, I opted for "full" - if that is no trouble. Well, I will leave you to work out Julian's reply.

Three days later, off to sunny Wiltshire. The farm was not very far away from the motorway, and so quite easy to find. Having found the farm, I then met Julian.

He was one of those quiet, easy going country folk, whose whole life has been close to nature.

I needed to locate a quiet bit of road with the same dimensions as the original, so that we could recreate the scene. Julian pointed over to the middle distance, and said "How about that road, then?"

As luck would have it, when they built the motorway, they sliced through one of the county lanes, which had now become a no through road. They do not come much quieter than that.

When I measured it, the dimensions were almost exactly the same as the original - oh joy, oh rapture, I can work here without causing a nuisance to anybody.

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I had come armed with traffic cones - legitimately obtained, if you don't mind! - and a whole host of other equipment: cameras, video, kitchen sink, you name it, it was there.

When the scene had been recreated, I had a chat with Julian, and explained in detail what was required. Come down the road at about 25 miles/hour, slow for the turn, and then turn in between the cones which represented the width of the opening.

In the meantime, it was going to be filmed and timed with a digital stopwatch. "OK Julian?" I asked "That's not a problem, then" came the not unexpected answer.

Off we went, run number one. A signal to Julian was followed by a large cloud of diesel exhaust as the tractor moved off. I was positioned at the point at which the tractor would start to make its turn. As it touched the line, I set the stopwatch going, and watched the tractor make its turn. When the back of the muck spreader passed over the line marking the entrance, I stopped the watch. 2.5 seconds.

One run is not enough, as you need to have "repeatability" to prove that the time was valid.

I went over to Julian "How was that?" he asked. I told him that I was very glad that he was doing the driving, as I had visions of less experienced hands knocking over cones and becoming stuck on the turn.

His laugh was full of gentle humour, realising that although I was not a full-blown "Townie", neither was I as close to the farming world as he.

Six more runs produced the same time results, plus or minus the fiddly bits after the decimal point, and so I felt that we had a fairly convincing result to the investigation.

When everything was packed away, I went to thank Julian, who was in the process of emptying the contents of his muck spreader on the next field. I told him how grateful I was for his amazing help and co-operation. "Well," etc. etc. - you know the words - was his reply.

When the films had been developed, I sent a large colour photocopy to Julian as a reminder of the day he became a film star, with a little note of thanks attached.

I thought that would be the end of the matter. I wrote the report and sent it off.

The conclusion being that the motorbike would have been going too fast and been unable to stop, therefore, not the fault of the tractor driver.

I cannot now remember the exact amount of money involved in this case, although I do recall that it was well in to six figures. Happiness for the insurance company would be the order of the day.

Almost by return of post came back a letter saying that the "other side" did not accept the findings, and that they insisted on seeing it for themselves at first hand, and I was instructed to go through the whole process again!

With a certain amount of trepidation I telephoned Julian to explain the situation to him.

"You will not believe this, Julian" I said to him, "but we have to go through this all again." I explained the reasons for all of this - his reply was the usual one.

So, having ascertained that it was no problem then, we made our plans.

"Actually" said Julian "it is no bad thing, as the lads down the pub didn't really believe me when I told them what I had been doing."

"Well, this time you can sell tickets if you want to", was my reply.

Quite what this wonderfully sleepy part of Wiltshire made of the re-run I do not know. There could never have been so many people in bright yellow day-glo coats wandering around as there were that day.

Julian, like the star he now was, did an Oscar winning performance with the tractor, and the muck spreader, and, yes, it was once again full with a tonne of "oo, nasty".

Not surprisingly, we obtained the same figures as before, and the "other side" had to conclude, and perhaps concede, that we were correct in our calculations.

Julian did not in fact sell any tickets – perhaps as well, on reflection, although I imagine that the story must have been retold many times in the pub.

You can almost imagine one of the locals asking, "Did you get it sorted then, Julian?"

I can hear him saying "Well, that's not a problem, then."

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[Chairman's Blogs \(From our website\)](#)



Speed

For my first blog post, I'd like to talk about speed. It goes without saying that when we teach the Advanced Driving Course, we expect you to drive legally; one element of legality is driving within the prevailing speed limit. This is not without its challenges as it can lead to an obsession with the speedometer - if we are checking our speed too frequently, we are not looking at the road ahead of us adequately and will miss information (the cornerstone and constant element of IPSGA). A speedometer check can be costlier in terms of time than you may think as our eyes need to refocus from distance vision, to near vision, and back.

So, what can we as advanced drivers do? My advice to Associates for some time has been to try and develop their own sense of speed: to be able to judge their speed accurately without the need to look down at the speedometer too frequently.

How do we do this?

When in a 30mph zone, without looking at your speedometer drive at what you think is 30mph for a short time (presuming it's safe to do so), then check your actual speed; odds-on you'll be over or under by some small margin; keep repeating this exercise until you have calibrated your sense of speed. This takes different amounts of time and practice for different people and you can do it at any time.

We get all sorts of cues to help us with this calibration: the obvious one being visual, but also engine and road/tyre noise contribute greatly. Once you have mastered 30mph, repeat this

for other limits. With enough practice you will be surprised how your sense of speed and its accuracy can develop. This takes different amounts of time for different people and can vary from car to car.

I mentioned prevailing speed limits, this again can be a challenge to know. Please don't rely on your satnav, as the data can be out of date, and forward viewing camera systems can easily miss signs when they are hidden by vegetation, dirt and damage. As advanced drivers, we must be masters of our own destiny and as always, good observation is the key: the most obvious is the change of limit signs, but also repeater signs, and the other cues of street lights, the urban/rural situation and single/dual carriage ways all help tell us what the limit is. Another tip: when you cross a speed limit change, vocalise the new limit as a method of reinforcing it in your subconscious.

Finally, managing our speed is not just about slowing down, it can also be about speeding up as well. While we must not feel compelled to drive at the speed limit (it is after all a limit, not a target), we must not let our own vehicles become hazards by driving too slowly for the situation around us.

If there are any other driving topics you'd like to see discussed in this newsletter, do not hesitate to e-mail me at chair@csam.org.uk

Driving to the limit

Within the Advanced Driving Course, we teach a technique for reading the road called the *limit point of vision*. This is an invaluable tool which I'd like to talk about it in a little more detail. If you're new to advanced driving, I hope you find this interesting and useful; if you're a stalwart of the advanced driving community, a refresh never goes amiss.

In nineteen-eighty-something when my father taught me to drive, I remember him telling me: "imagine there's a skip out of sight around every corner". Whether he knew it or not, he was teaching me the limit point of vision.

The Advanced Driver course logbook states: "The limit point is the furthest point to which you have an uninterrupted view of the road surface as it disappears around a bend or over a brow. It is the point where the two edges of the road appear to meet. On a left hand bend you should treat this as where the left-hand verge appears to meet the centre line". Other Observers I have discussed this topic with describe the limit point as: "the furthest point you can see to be clear on your side of the road", which is far more succinct.

All of these definitions (I still think of the skip as it focuses the mind somewhat) are fairly static in nature, written as if we (the driver and the limit point) are two fixed points. However, nothing could be further from the truth when it comes to reading, interpreting and reacting to the limit point; our car is moving, and as our viewpoint changes, so does the appearance of the limit point.

The biggest visual cue we receive is the change in the gap between where we are and the limit point as we travel down the road; we can use the change we observe in the gap as a guide to how we should react:

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If the gap is reducing (the skip is getting nearer), then we need to be considering reducing speed, asking ourselves, "can I stop in the distance I can see to be clear on my side of the road?", if the answer to this is no, we are driving too fast and should have slowed earlier.

If the gap is staying constant, then we can keep going at our current speed (assuming we can stop in the distance we can see to be clear).

If the gap is increasing, then the bend is opening up (there is no skip!) then we can think about accelerating (assuming there are no other hazards to consider).

The golden rule is that you should always be able to **stop in the distance you can see to clear on your side of the road.**

Silent Commentary (Spoken Thoughts)

I took my Masters test a couple of years ago, and thanks to my Mentor, Dennis, and some last minute tips from Ryan (an Examiner and serving Policeman), I passed and was fortunate to do so with a distinction.

Taking the Masters course was a truly humbling experience and I cannot recommend it highly enough. While it is based on the same principles and theory as the Advanced Driving course, it holds you to a much higher standard of execution. One element in particular is the commentary, which must be both to a high standard and constant throughout the run.

This article is a story about my Masters assessment.

Despite my nerves, the assessment started well, and I was performing to the desired standard. Forty minutes into the test, my Examiner told me to have a ten-minute break from commentary; as I'm sure you can imagine, this was very welcome respite.

I very quickly realised that my standard of driving was deteriorating and that the commentary had been a major factor in keeping my driving at the Masters standard; it had been keeping me 100% focused on the driving task. As soon as I stopped commentating, my mind started to wander... how was I doing; what was he writing on his notepad, and why was he writing so much!?

Realising this causal link, I decided to turn the commentary back on again, but without vocalising it. Within moments I could feel my focus returning and my standard rising. I think this played a large part in my passing the test.

This was something of an epiphany for me. Like many, I struggled with commentary as an Associate on the Advanced Driving Course, finding it difficult to find the right words as quickly as required. But what I noticed in this brief period was that I had transformed from commentary being a hindrance to it being helpful.

A National Observer once told me: "*an advanced driver is a thinking driver, capable of self-development*" or words to that effect. Well, in that moment I knew exactly what he was talking about. I now perform, what I now call, a silent commentary while driving most of the time.

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I would encourage you all, Associates and Members to employ the use of silent commentary in your day-to-day driving; I hope it works as well for you as it does for me. The only downside is that passengers may find you a little less attentive than usual.

Well, that's enough of my *written thoughts* for now, until next time...

What to do when you see blue

Blue, red and green flashing lights are signals used by the emergency services, along with sirens, to alert us of their presence. The full list of the emergency services entitled to use them is too long to list here, but day-to-day we see police, ambulance and fire services on the road.

Now I don't know about you, but when I see blue lights behind me, there's a split-second moment of "what have I done?". So far I am pleased to report that's not been the case.

My next thought is then "what's the best way to react?". The Highway Code has a few comments to make on this topic and I hope that this article will expand on this advice.

The first thing to do is put yourself in the position of the driver of the emergency vehicle and ask yourself "what are they trying to achieve?"

The answer to this question is typically progress. They will be on a call and are trying to get from A to B as quickly and safely as possible. So the real question is: how can you best help them make progress?

Ask yourself, will they be able to keep their momentum passing? When slowing/stopping, are you positioning your vehicle such that they can smoothly and efficiently pass, or are you creating an obstacle, requiring them to slow down?

If the answer to the questions above are no, you may be better off keeping going with them behind you. They are highly trained so will be aware that in this circumstance that you're actually helping them rather than hindering.

It is also worth looking at any other signals they are giving, including their vehicle's body language, do you think they may be turning soon? In which case, just keeping on going may be the best help.

Also consider what oncoming traffic is doing? If two of you stop close together, you may block the carriageway altogether.

When you do decide to pull over and stop, do not forget to signal clearly in advance so the driver of the emergency vehicle knows your intent.

One last, and important, point to note is that the emergency services have certain exemptions to the traffic laws to help them respond quicker. As a civilian, we do not have any such exemptions to break any traffic laws in an attempt to help the driver of an emergency vehicle. Therefore, do not exceed the speed limit, do not cross red traffic lights, do not drive in a bus lane, the list goes on...

Stay safe and if you see blue, think: "am I helping or hindering the driver of the emergency vehicle?"

David digs into why we teach what we teach in the Advanced Driving course.

As advanced drivers we all know IPSGA and put into practice routinely.

We know that we constantly take, use and give information.

We know that we position for safety, then stability and finally view.

We know that we adjust our speed so is it appropriate for the hazard ahead.

We know that we change gear to match our speed.

We know that we accelerate through the hazard, gently at first, then building speed.

But why do we teach this?

I ask this question to Associates whenever I take them out and it seems to throw them a little. Most have learned the IPSGA acronym and can unpack it when called upon to do so, but why is a test of understanding rather than knowledge and a little harder. If I'm lucky I may hear something along the lines of:

"A systematic approach to any hazard"

But this is just recalling one of the first sentences within the Associate course logbook; I want to hear more. Here are the two major factors as I see it.

Where the rubber meets the road

I believe that tyres are the most important component of any car. Each tyre has finite grip which will eventually run out resulting in some form of skid.

A tyre's grip is used rotationally when accelerating or decelerating and laterally when cornering. The concept of tyre grip trade-off tells us that as we use more rotational grip, less is lateral grip is available and vice versa.

What we put into practice during the speed and acceleration phases of IPSGA ensures that we initially use rotational grip through deceleration, then go on to use lateral grip while cornering, and back to rotational grip through final acceleration. Correct use of IPSGA ensures that we are using either rotational grip or lateral grip at any time but not both together, thereby using the available grip optimally.

Balance

A moving car is most stable when travelling in a straight line, with power to driven wheels, neither accelerating or decelerating. This describes a perfectly balanced car, with the weight evenly distributed across all four wheels.

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When we corner, the car's weight transfers to the outside of the corner and works those tyres harder. When we accelerate, car's weight is transferred to the rear and when we brake, weight is at the front.

If we are both cornering and braking, then the car's weight shifts to the outside front wheel and therefore works that tyre harder (and recall the issues of tyre grip trade-off).

Finally, by ensuring we change gear prior to cornering we can maintain constant power to the driven wheels; interrupting this with a gear change can unsettle the car's balance.

Again, by using the separate phases of IPSGA, we ensure that we keep the car as balanced as possible while negotiating hazards.

David



I had an uncle who had the most bizarre fixation back in the day- he would drink brake fluid. Maybe back in those days, it was less toxic than it is today because he never died but we were always so worried about him doing it.

I remember one time my dad told him that he was addicted and needed to cut it out, that it was bad for him.

My uncle replied, "Nonsense, I can stop anytime."

A taxi passenger tapped the driver on the shoulder to ask him a question.

The driver screamed, lost control of the car, nearly hit a bus, went up on the footpath, and stopped centimetres from a shop window. For a second everything went quiet in the cab, then the driver said "Look mate, don't ever do that again. You scared the daylight out of me!"

The passenger apologised and said he didn't realise that a little tap could scare him so much. The driver replied "Sorry, it's not really your fault. Today's my first day as a cab driver - I've been driving 'hearses' for the last 25 years!"

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