



# Newsletter ~ April 2020

**St Helens Group of Advanced Motorists**  
*Working to make our roads safer every day...*

## Chair's Remarks

Hello everyone and welcome to the April edition of the Newsletter.

I know that this is a time of great uncertainty as everyone in society adjusts to the Covid-19 pandemic. I hope that you are all doing whatever is necessary to keep yourselves safe.

As is prudent at this time, the committee have made a decision to suspend all Group activities until we receive guidance from the Government and IAM RoadSmart HQ that says otherwise. Accordingly, the current course has been suspended with no further runs being conducted for the foreseeable future. Also, there are no tests taking place; these will be rescheduled at a later

date. We are also, unfortunately, going to have to curtail our social calendar and we shall be postponing our AGM until further notice.

However, it is not all doom and gloom. This quiet time has allowed the committee to focus and consider our future marketing plans. Accordingly, if you have any suggestions of any charities or groups you know of that would like to receive a presentation from SHGAM then please get in touch. These presentations can be tailored to suit various topics such as road safety, better driving or even more detailed aspects of the System of Car Control. Any suggestions should be emailed to editor@shgam.org.uk.

That's all from me for the time being but do keep an eye out for updates from the Group as the situation develops and above all, please stay safe!

Here's to your (not?) continued safe, systematic driving.

**Tom Field,**  
*Group Chairman*



St. Helens Group website  
[www.shgam.org.uk](http://www.shgam.org.uk)

### Contacts:

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### **More Information** (click links)

[Spring Course Dates](#)

[Up and coming events](#)

[SHGAM News](#)

[IAM News Releases](#)

[SHGAM Driving Tips](#)

[IAM RoadSmart Advice](#)

## Coronavirus: what does it mean for motorists, IAMRS blog

### **Will I be able to get my car serviced and repaired?**

Sue Robinson, National Franchised Dealers Association (NFDA) director said: "Ensuring that essential vehicles remain in a roadworthy condition will reduce the likelihood of mechanical failures and other incidents, ensuring that vital journeys can be made and services fulfilled."

### **Will coronavirus cause fuel shortages?**

According to Brian

Madderson, chairman of the Petrol Retailers Association, motorists have nothing to worry about here. He said his organisation has been in contact with its equivalent in Italy, where the virus is some weeks ahead. It reports Italian fuel sales are down around 60 per cent due to the travel restrictions. "It is the reverse of panic buying", he said.

In the UK, Brian says the picture is "mixed". Fuel sales in urban areas are remaining steady due to reduced journey numbers being counteracted by the

number of travellers switching from public transport to cars.

### **How hygienic are petrol stations?**

Motorists are being urged to use gloves when filling up with petrol or diesel. The Petrol Retailers Association says all its members are offering gloves for motorists to use at the pumps.

Brian Madderson said that while petrol pump nozzles are cleaned every day they can't be cleaned after every use, so pump

handles could pose a real risk of transferring the virus. He added that hand sanitiser is being offered to customers and staff, where available, but he warned petrol retailers are struggling to deep clean forecourts because cleaning companies are prioritising front-line services such as the NHS and care homes. He said some fuel retailers are taking further steps, with a small number refusing to accept cash due to concerns over contaminated notes.

**Simon Bolingbroke from Chelmsford Advanced Motorists**



## Associate Coordinator's Corner

As this is the first Newsletter after the end of the IAM Year, 1<sup>st</sup> April 2019 to March 31<sup>st</sup> 2020, I will give you the statistics for that year.

During the year, we generated 15 Tests with 9 passes and 5 test candidate fails. Two of the fails subsequently went onto pass. Four of the Passes were 'First's'. Since the Group began in 1985, we have had 644 Passes and 70 Fails. This equates to a Pass rate of about 90% which is testimony to the excellent work done by Observers over many years. As I write this, I am aware that we have a Test pending before April 1<sup>st</sup>, so there may be a slight adjustment to the figures.

Those of you who will be taking the Test after the 1<sup>st</sup> April may well have noted that in the last twelve months we did have more Fails than we would have liked. You may be wondering what the problem was. The problem was breaking the Speed Limit. Breaking the Law will always entail Test failure, no matter how good the rest of the drive was. You must always be aware of the limit and keep to it. Every time you go on to a new road ask yourself "Is there a new limit?" You have worked very hard to get this far and you will be capable of a Pass if we put you in for Test. Keep those Speed Limits in mind, and you will be fine.

After you have passed the Test,

you may find yourself wondering what to do next. If you want to learn more about Observing, then speak to Ken Nevitt. If you want to learn about the Training Support Team, then see Kay Heppenstall. If you want to learn about Tests such as the IAM Masters, then speak to Mark Farnworth.

It is inevitable that some of you will leave us. I wish you the very best but by all means come to any social functions advertised in the Newsletter or on the website.

**Alan Prescott**  
**Associate Co-ordinator**

## Notice Board

### Congratulations to:

Kathy Higgins

on passing the Advanced Driving Test and achieving a F1rst

### Forever remembered

It is with deep regret and sadness that we report the death of Observer Martin Brady and recently retired Observer Alan Phillips.

Martin joined our Observer team in March 2017. Alan decided to hang-up his clip-board and retire from observing in March 2019. He had been a stalwart Observer for several years and had passed his National Observer Test in January 2017.

Both Martin and Alan were fantastic Observers and they will be sorely missed.



Martin Brady



Alan Phillips

### Offer of support

In response to the way that the Coronavirus epidemic is having on us all, Observer Val Cunningham kindly sends the following message to all Group members.



Following recent news that we shall not be meeting for some-time, I'd like to send my wish that you and your families all remain well. Some of you may need to self isolate during the coming months which will be a difficult time. If you would like to call me for a short chat, you are welcome to do so. Please contact me by email first at [valcunningham12@gmail.com](mailto:valcunningham12@gmail.com)

**Val Cunningham**  
*Wellbeing Consultancy & Public Speaker. MSc MA*

(naturally, there is no cost involved, only supportive and comforting words)

### Membership subscriptions

Please note that Group subscriptions are due on the 1st April 2020. You may not have appreciated that even though you may be a member of 'national' IAM RoadSmart you may not actually be a member of the St. Helens Group.

Annual membership subscriptions are a vital source of income for the Group and allow it to cover its running costs (e.g. room hire, printing costs) as well as covering the costs of promoting its road safety message to the general public. We can provide to others the same benefits to their driving that you received.

If you are a member of national IAM RoadSmart then I invite you to become a member of the St. Helens Group as well. Annual Group Membership is £8.50 and runs from the 1st of April. You can pay membership fees by cheque or standing order. For further details please complete the Contact Us form on our website.

**Anita Clift, Membership Secretary**