



Newsletter ~ April 2023

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



Welcome

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

A special welcome to to Craig Lyon, Alex Herrmann and Charlie Plant who have joined the Group and will join our Spring course.

With better weather on its way and the Group busy with both Associate and Observer training I'm feeling even more certain that the Group has put the dreaded Covid years behind it. Thank you to the current Associates who have shown excellent commitment to their advanced driver training.

We strive for high driving standards for our Associates but also high driving and observing standards for our Observers. You will know there are two Insti-

tute of the Motor Industry qualifications for Observers - the Local and National Observer qualifications. The same standard for both but the former via a Group assessment and the latter by assessment by an IAM Examiner. Recently, the IAM has given notice that they are going to phase out the Local Observer qualification so that means some of our Observers need to take the National Observer (NO) assessment. I'm delighted to inform you that Observers Garry Maddocks, Andrew Farrimond and Mark Hemans have recently passed the NO assessment. Well done to you all.

A reminder that Group annual subscriptions are due. Please support the Group by paying annual

subs. As we all know costs are rising and for the Group that means higher costs for room hire, insurance and general admin expenses e.g. stamps and envelopes for the newsletters. If you receive a paper copy of the newsletter but now have an email address please consider getting your newsletter by email. Donations to the Group of any amount are always welcome and much appreciated. Lets remember why we do what we do. .. to do our bit to improve driving standards and reduce death and injury on our roads.

That's it from me. Safe driving and good observing.

Mark Farnworth
Group Chairman

St. Helens Group website
www.shgam.org.uk

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07849 674393 (after 6pm)

editorshgam@gmail.com

More Information (click links)

[SHGAM News](#)

[IAM News Releases](#)

[SHGAM Driving Tips](#)

[IAM RoadSmart Advice](#)

[Our Courses](#)

[Course dates](#)

Is your car driving you to distraction? - IAMRS Blog 28/02/23

Technology in cars is not a new thing. Assisted breaking, cruise control and mobile connectivity has been making our car journeys easier, but when does it become too much?

Is the modern touchscreen a huge step backwards in terms of safety and distracted driving compared with the buttons and switches of years gone by? While many have argued that touchscreens encourage drivers to put down their phones, they require a driver's attention in a way that old-fashioned but-

tons don't. Trying to strike the perfect balance between car and driver interaction has IAM RoadSmart's Chief Examiner Richard Gladman concerned.

"The tech that keeps me in touch with my office and work is fantastic when I'm parked up in Sainsbury's car park, but when I'm driving down the motorway, I shouldn't really care whether I can get an email or a teams call. If I'm working out in my brain who I need to reply to or speak to that is a distraction when I should be con-

centrating on the road. "Swedish car manufacturer, Lynk & Co recently announced the inclusion of Microsoft Teams in its vehicles, meaning you can now take your meeting on the road.

So, is it time for the car companies to take responsibility? Richard thinks so but worries it is more about the competition between car manufacturers than safety. "What they are doing now is integrating all the systems in the car within that entertainment module. So instead of having

a button which turns everything on and off if you want to change your setting, you must go into a menu and then a sub menu. If you are doing it while driving, then it takes a massive amount of concentration, and you should not be doing it."

Richard believes our vehicles technology should also be able to warn us of upcoming distractions on major routes, like smart motorways. A smart motorway is a section of a motorway that uses traffic management methods to increase capacity and reduce congestion in particularly busy areas.



Owning an electric car by Stephen Dumont

Owning an electric car like the Nissan Leaf 40kWh Tenka can be a game-changing experience for both the driver and the environment. The Leaf is a fully electric vehicle that is designed to deliver impressive performance while also being eco-friendly.

As an owner of the Leaf since January 2020, I can attest to its long-term reliability and enjoyability. After putting 58,000 miles on the vehicle, I can say that it still handles great. The electric motor delivers quick acceleration, and the car is easy to manoeuvre in tight spaces.

However, it is important to note that the realistic range of the Leaf 40kWh Tenka is around 140 miles. This range may dip to around 110-120 miles in the winter months, which can be a limitation for some drivers. As an owner of the Leaf, I find that I mostly get 3.5 miles to a kWh. However, this efficiency may vary for other drivers who have a lighter foot or who drive in different conditions.

The Tenka 40kWh model comes with a 40 kWh battery that provides a range of up to 168 miles

on a single charge. While this range is not as long as the top-spec Tenka model, it is still sufficient for most drivers' needs.

The Nissan Leaf 40kWh Tenka is also packed with advanced safety features that help ensure your peace of mind while driving. These include lane departure warning, blind-spot warning, and automatic emergency braking. The vehicle also comes with a 360-degree camera system that provides a bird's-eye view of the car, making it easier to park and manoeuvre in tight spaces.

In terms of performance, the Leaf Tenka 40kWh does not disappoint. It has a powerful electric motor that delivers instant torque, making it an excellent choice for city driving. The car is also very quiet and smooth, providing a relaxing driving experience. The regenerative braking system helps to maximize the car's range by capturing energy that is normally lost during braking.

Another benefit of owning an electric car like the Nissan Leaf 40kWh Tenka is the ease of maintenance. Electric cars have

fewer moving parts than traditional internal combustion engine vehicles, which means there are fewer components that can break down or require regular maintenance. This can lead to lower repair costs and less time spent at the mechanic, making the Leaf a smart choice for those looking to save money and reduce their environmental impact.

While the Leaf's older CHAdeMO charging technology may be a drawback, I have found that the low running costs and advanced safety features make it a worthwhile investment for anyone considering making the switch to an electric vehicle. Despite its limitations, the Nissan Leaf 40kWh Tenka is still a reliable and eco-friendly car that is sure to provide years of enjoyable driving. Buyers should consider their individual driving needs and habits when making a purchase decision. (I cant recommend a new leaf for the current price! I would advise people look a the new MG4 over the Nissan leaf)

Notice Board

Welcome

Welcome to [Craig Lyon](#) and [Alex Herrmann](#) and [Charlie Plant](#) who have joined as Associate members and will join our Spring Advanced Driver Course.

Anita Clift, Membership Secretary

Congratulations

Congratulations to [Will Heyes](#) and [Harry Nixon](#) who have passed the Advanced Driving Test. Well done to you both.

All your hard work has paid off.

Mark Farnworth, Group Chairman

Sad News

It is with sadness that we report the death of Associate Peter Wareing. Our condolences to his wife Jill and family.

Mark Farnworth, Group Chairman

Congratulations

Congratulations to Observers Mark Hemans, Garry Maddocks and Andrew Farrimond (left to right) who have all passed the Institute of the Motor Industry (IMI) IAM National Observer Assessment.



Next Advanced Driver Course

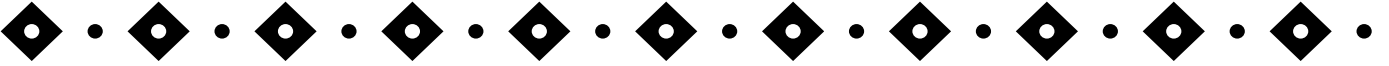
Thursday
4th May
Course Introduction

8pm Mercure Hotel
Linkway East
St. Helens Town Centre

Group Annual Subscriptions now due

Please renew your membership of the St. Helens Group. This is our main source of income to pay for room hire and other expenses to run the Group.

**Stephen Dumont,
Group Treasurer**



**You are cordially invited to the
St Helens Group of Advanced Motorists
Annual General Meeting**

**to be held at 8pm on Wednesday 7th June 2023
St. Helens Town Hall, Victoria Square. Prompt start**

**Guest Speaker: Constable Mark Hemans, MCSFS
Forensic Collision Investigator, Merseyside Police**

Constable Hemans will talk about how forensic investigations are structured, who gets involved, and how his work links with that of other Police investigators. We hope that the new Mayor or Deputy Mayor of St. Helens will be able to attend. Our President Lady Kirsty Pilkington will also be attending. Due to these special guests we are looking for a good turnout and encourage you to make every effort to attend.

Wives, husbands, partners etc are welcome.

NOMINATION FOR 2023/2024 ST HELENS GROUP COMMITTEE

I _____ (full name in capitals)
_____ (signature)

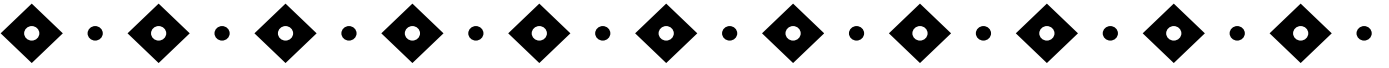
wish to be elected to the following position:-

- *Chairman *Vice-Chairman *Secretary
- *Treasurer *General Committee. Member *Other (specify)

**delete as appropriate*

Proposer (full name in capitals) **Seconder** (full name in capitals)

_____ (signature) _____



St. Helens Group Annual General Meeting
Town Hall, Victoria Square, St. Helens, WA10 1HP



NOMINATION FOR 2023/2024 ST HELENS GROUP COMMITTEE

N.B. The Nominee, Proposer and Secunder must be **full** members of the St Helens Group.
Nominations **must** be **submitted** to the Group Secretary, Mr Chris Bradley
by **Wednesday 24th May 2023**

Please send an email to register your Nomination via the
following email address
editorshgam@gmail.com

Guest Speaker

Constable Mark Hemans MCSFS has over 29 years experience of operational policing in Merseyside Police, and during that time has served within the Response, CID, Roads Policing and Forensics departments. For the last 8 years he has been a qualified Forensic Collision Investigator, attending the scenes of fatal road traffic collisions and producing expert witness reports of his investigations for the Criminal, Civil and Coronial Courts.

Mark is delighted to have been invited to give an insight into his work as a Forensic Collision Investigator, and his interactive and educational presentation will highlight the work of police FCI's by leading the audience through the activities that took place and the evidence that was uncovered during one of his recent investigations. **Please note** that this presentation will contain details of a fatal road traffic collision, including photographs of damaged vehicles, clothing and street furniture. This presentation does not contain graphic images, however some people may find the topic distressing.



My Story by Will Heyes

It was a series of events that inexorably led me to taking the Advanced Test. In August 2016, an oncoming motorist jumped a red light and wrote off the best car that I ever had. I hadn't even finished paying for it!

In the months of wrangling that followed, the other party admitted liability and settled my claim, but I was still out of pocket.

Being non-liable was not much consolation to me. I was annoyed at myself rather than the other driver. I should have been able to avoid this collision.

I began to realise that my standard of driving had fallen, but what could I do about it? I had heard of the IAM, "what can these people teach me that I don't already know?". It was here where my story begins.

In January 2017, I joined the group with the intention of passing the test. The group were friendly, as well as helpful. They had observers, with a wealth of experience, garnered over many years.

It only took a few drives to make me realise what advanced driving was all about. A whole new mindset, a different way of thinking as well newly acquired skills. After a couple of months, I did the test and failed! Ah well, better luck next time. July 2017, I had another go, only to fail again.

After this my bubble was well and truly burst and my ego totally deflated. I took a time-out, with a view to coming back at a later date.

Fast forward to the Spring of 2020, when I was ready to rejoin the group, then Covid 19 and the pandemic forced the group to curtail their activities. It was not until early 2022 that the group resumed and I picked up where I left off from last time.

Over the next few months, I once again did more hard work and miles to prepare for another test.

Last December, I went for a third time, only to fail once again!

However, this only made me even more determined to pass. There was no turning back on this voyage. I had set myself a goal and would achieve it no matter what, or how long it took.

I went for my fourth test on February 11th this year and passed! The group were obviously pleased for me as much as I was. My success was their success.

I knew it never going to be easy to pass the Advanced Test. I did not realise just how hard it was going to be. It is not enough to be a good driver, you must drive and think like an advanced driver.

Examiners don't like failing people, the test standard has to be that much higher. They want you to pass, but they won't give out passes like confetti. When you do pass, you will have earned it!

Nearly six years and four tests is quite a journey. An unwanted record? However, I could not bring myself to throw the towel in. Sometimes you have to work twice as hard, just to be half as good as others. How much do want it? What are you prepared to do to get it? Don't give up! It will be worth it in the end.

You will only get out of it what your are prepared to put in. I found it difficult and had to work hard, but in the end I got my reward for persistence, or maybe it was just dogged stubbornness not to quit where others may well have done so? Failure is success turned inside out.

If my experiences can serve as an example to help others, not to give up when it does not go your way, but to keep going, then maybe in my own small way, I will have helped someone else?

So why did I put myself through all this? Because there is something in me which responds to the challenge of this test and goes out to meet it:

Thanks Will, your story is unique in that Associates don't normally need four attempts to pass the Test but for those who do fail but really want to pass then your story will be very inspirational. Never give up! Thank you for sharing your story and giving permission to put it into the Newsletter.

Mark Farnworth (Group Chairman)



St. Helens Group Membership

Dear Group Friend,

You may have passed your advanced test through the Group some time ago or more recently or may have become aware of us through a family member or friend. 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, by setting up a standing order or by bank transfer (bank details available from the Treasurer upon request).

Benefits of membership include the opportunity to attend our monthly trips and events. As you know, lockdowns and restrictions on movement made it impossible for us to continue a regular calendar of events and gatherings but we are pleased to inform you that social activities have re-started.

Any ideas or suggestions for future trips or events can be submitted to the Group via the [Contact Us](#) page on the website and any forthcoming events can be viewed on our website at <https://www.iamroadsmart.com/groups/sthelensam/events>.

I hope you will consider joining us, to support us financially and participate in our events. Please note that if you are a current Associate who joined us for our Autumn 2022 or Winter 2023 Courses there is no need to pay a subscription to the St. Helens Group until April 2024. If you are not a member of national IAM RoadSmart but would like to support us in other ways then please get in touch.

Kind Regards,

Anita Clift

Membership Secretary, St. Helens Group of Advanced Motorists

All membership renewal documents are sent to members by email. If you are not a current member of the Group and do not have an email address but would like to support the Group by becoming a member then please call Kay Heppenstall on 07849 674939. We will post the documents to you.