



Newsletter ~ August 2020

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

Chair's update

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

I hope you've all been keeping yourselves safe and well through these last few months.

It's still a strange time but hopefully the majority of

you are starting to now see the resumption of some sort of normality. With that, we should also start to see a return to driving. If you are feeling unsure about your driving there are resources on the IAM Roadsmart website to help you.

As a group we're still working out how best to embrace this new

"normal". One idea we have had is to give presentations to groups (as this can be done virtually). If you know of any groups who may like to see our presentation, please let us know.

That's all from me. Please keep yourselves safe!

Tom Field, Group Chair

Building your confidence post-lockdown

If you reduced your car or motorbike use to essential journeys only in recent months, to help in the collective effort to stop the spread of COVID-19, regardless of when you passed your test, many people will feel they need to build on their confidence post-lockdown.

Driving and riding is a combination of confidence, skills and knowledge – so we've collected a simple and effective guide to help even the most-experienced driver or rider harness these three qualities and get back on the road with confidence.

Director of Research and Development at DriverMetrics, Dr Lisa Dorn, has published the following strategies in the new IAM RoadSmart ['Driving Business Back to Work' guide](#). To help improve road safety as you come out of lockdown she recommends:

1) If possible ask an experienced driver or rider from your household to accompany you on your first journey to build up your confidence.

2) Set yourself achievable targets. This might include taking shorter journeys before setting your sights on long distance travelling.

3) Take breaks when under pressure, especially on long journeys.

4) Plan your route to avoid roadworks and heavy traffic when possible.

5) Plan extra time for possible delays into the schedule when possible.

6) Call ahead to let others know you are running late as this reduces stress.

Dr Lisa Dorn, Director of Research and Development at DriverMetrics, said:

"When humans are subjected to stressors such as time pressure, they tend to show a variety of physiological responses," she says. "Pupil dilation, increased heart rate, slowed digestion and a constriction of blood vessels are physiological mechanisms

collectively known as the 'fight-or-flight' response. "Time pressure is known to lead to higher speeds and the direct consequence of driving and riding faster is that a higher amount of information has to be processed per unit of time," says Dr Dorn.

"Driving or riding too fast has a direct influence on the amount of information available for the senses to process as well as indirect psychological influences. For example, having to complete a journey in a shorter amount of time leads to high mental workload, anxiety, frustration, and anger, which in turn reduces information processing efficiency while driving."

Rebecca Ashton, Head of Policy & Research at IAM RoadSmart, said:

"Because people are under an amount of stress this can impact on sleeping patterns, eating patterns and give them difficulty concentrating.



St. Helens Group website

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More Information (click links)

[Autumn Course Dates](#)

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Perhaps they're having an extra drink at night which they perhaps shouldn't be doing. Other people might be on prescription drugs because of stress; there's a lot of fear and anxiety which can be overwhelming."





Associate Coordinator's Corner

."Due to the Pandemic it is likely to be quite a while before everything at the Group is back to normal. However, we are trying to deal with the Associates who were with us when the Pandemic struck.

I would, therefore, like to thank Andrew Appleton and Mark Farnworth who are doing great work in this respect. Although the IAM Test, itself, will be the same as before, it is highly likely that the Examiner will wear a face covering and equally likely to require the candidate to do the same. If this is likely to cause a problem then dis-

cuss it with him before the Test day, preferably when you are arranging the Test.

The Test ,itself, has not changed . If your Test Drive can be described as safe, legal, smooth, and progressive then you will pass. The biggest cause of Test Failure is still, as always, breaking the speed limit. The Examiner is certain to take you on roads that you have not been on before. Always ask yourself if there has been a change of speed limit or not. Do not worry about achieving the First. Just focus on the task in hand and leave the marking to the

Examiner. He will explain why he has marked it the way he has at the end of the Test. If you have only just missed the First then by all means have another try at the Test if that is what you wish to do. There will be no pressure from the Group either way.

These are, of course, very difficult times for everyone an I would like to thank you all for your patience. This seems likely to be needed for some time yet.

Alan Prescott
Associate Co-ordinator

Recently upgraded smart motorways report 'concerning' rise in serious collisions

Safety evaluations of recently completed smart motorways highlight a "concerning" rise in serious collisions after upgrade work was finished, according to motorists' body the RAC. Highways England recently published post opening project evaluation (Pope) reports for eight smart motorway schemes, following the stock take of smart motorway safety in March.

In half of the cases, a rise in serious collisions was recorded in the first year after a motorway was upgraded. Highways England defines a serious collision as "one in which at least one person is seriously injured but no person (other than a confirmed suicide) is killed".

A Highways England spokesperson said: "The Pope findings were part of the considerable amount of evidence considered as part of the stock take. While one accident is one too many on any motorway, the stock take concluded that smart motorways in most ways are as safe as, or safer than, conventional motorways they replace. "We are taking forward the measures set out in the stock take and are determined to do all we can to make our roads as safe as possible."

From the New Civil Engineer website. Article submitted by Fred Fitter

Group events

There are no Group events until further Notice

IAM RoadSmart presentation

IAMRS has put together an excellent 40 minute PowerPoint presentation for those seeking to learn more about the organisation and about the Advanced Driver Course. I'd like to delivery this presentation online, using Zoom or Skype, to community groups in St. Helens and the surrounding area and as Tom says on page 1 we would like our members to suggest suitable groups and, if possible, provide us with points of contact.

For you to know the content of this presentation I'd like to show it online to interested members / group friends in the first instance. So, if you would like to join this online meeting to see the presentation and comment on it then let me know by emailing

editor@shgam.org.uk

Your family members and friends are more than welcome to join this meeting. When I know who is interested to join the meeting I'll be in contact to suggest some possible dates/times. I look forward to hearing from you

Mark Farnworth, Group Vice-Chair/Lead National Observer

New Observer Chris Bradley



The Chairman and Committee would like to extend a warm welcome to Chris Bradley who joins our observer team.

Chris has very recently moved 'up north' to St. Helens from Guildford where he was a qualified Institute of the Motor Industry (IMI) Local Observer for the Guildford Group.

Last year Chris passed the IAM Master Driver Test and achieved a distinction - a fantastic achievement.

Best wishes Chris as you settle into your new home and get to know the area. Face-to-face meetings are difficult at the moment due to Covid-19 but over time you'll be able to meet all the observer team and Committee as well as Group members at our social events.

Ken Nevitt - Training Officer