



# Newsletter ~ August 2023

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



## Welcome

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

For those of you who didn't attend the AGM you missed a great evening. Some 25 people attended which was a reasonable turnout.

The Committee remains the same with the addition of Mark Hemans who is the Group's new Lead National Observer.

The highlight of the evening was a talk by Mark Hemans who has been a serving Police Officer for some 30 years. See page 4 of the newsletter for a summary of Mark's talk.

I was delighted to welcome back the Mayor Councillor Lynne Clarke. Councillor Clarke attended last year as Deputy Mayor.

As last year, she chaired the AGM.

Congratulations to Paul Fryer, Chris Bradley and Garry Maddocks for winning the Associate, Observer and Driver of the Year Trophies respectively.

Our next Advanced Driver Course starts with a course introduction on Thursday 31st August. We are still offering a 100% cashback to financially support would-be advanced drivers during the cost of living crisis. (T&Cs apply - see website). Please let your family and friends know about the course and cashback.

We want to do much more outreach in our community in St. Helens and more generally across Merseyside. We offer something

very unique in this day and age - a professionally delivered and administered driving course to help people to become more confident and skillful drivers. We are looking to provide 40 minute to 1 hour advanced driving awareness presentations to other charities or social groups. If you are a member of such an organisation then let the officials know that we'd love to talk to their members about advanced driving or provide more focussed talks such as defensive driving and the new Highway Code rules.

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

**Mark Farnworth**  
**Chairman**

St. Helens Group website

[www.shgam.org.uk](http://www.shgam.org.uk)

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### More Information (click links)

[SHGAM News](#)

[IAM News Releases](#)

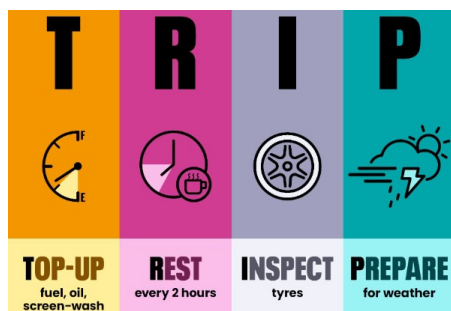
[SHGAM Driving Tips](#)

[IAM RoadSmart Advice](#)

[Our Courses](#)

[Course dates](#)

## Have a safe T.R.I.P this summer - IAMRS Blog 25th July



It's the start of summer holidays this week, and you may be thinking about going on holiday, having a day out, or visiting friends and family. But did you know that summer driving places unique strains on the

driver with longer unfamiliar journeys, distraction in the car, heat, and often lack of sleep?

As the government-owned organisation responsible for England's motorways and major A-roads,

National Highways has some tips on how to travel safely this summer.

**T** Top-up your fuel/ electricity charge, oil and screen-wash. Simple checks pre-journey could prevent a vehicle breakdown.

**R** Rest up the day before you start on your long journey. Plan and allow a few breaks every two hours get to your destination. You could stretch your legs at a motorway service area, or one of 500 places managed by National

Trust. Visit their website for more details.

**I** Inspect your tyres. It takes around 10 minutes to check tyre pressure and treads - a small amount of time to invest in your big trip.

**P** Prepare for severe weather. During periods of extreme hot weather, adjust your travel to avoid the hottest days and times of day if you can. Carry a kit of essential summer supplies just in case you need them, especially if there's a forecast for severe weather.



**France is fining tourists €1,500 for not learning its very specific traffic laws**

**Tourists are urged to buy the Crit'Air sticker to access the city's growing list of low-emission zones – and to turn off their speed detectors.**

Thanks to Europe's extensive network of scenic roads, the continent is perfectly primed for summer road trips. In fact, a third of British holidaymakers planning to go to Europe this year are bringing cars or renting a vehicle, according to Post Office Travel Money.

When it comes to traffic laws in Europe, it might feel like a no-brainer: just remember which side of the road to drive on, right? But there's a little more to it than that – and you could avoid burning a hole in your pocket by familiarising yourselves with local traffic laws, especially in low-emission zones.

Tourists travelling to France this summer have been urged to brush up on local driving laws and to comply with rules in its twelve permanent low-emission zones, or be prepared to be slapped with a fine. Fines begin at €68 and are set to rise as the country plans to clamp down on the number of polluting vehicles in its cities.

So, what are the rules drivers need to abide by? Motorists are required to buy and display a Crit'Air sticker (€4.61) on their windscreen that identifies the emission levels of the vehicle. Every vehicle is classified according to its polluting emissions of fine particles and nitrogen oxides. A number between 0 (electric cars) to 5 (most polluting vehicles) is given, with high-polluting vehicles restricted from entering specific areas.

The growing list of French cities with low emission zones includes Paris, Strasbourg, Lyon, Marseille,

Toulouse, Nice, Montpellier, Grenoble, Rouen and Reims. If you're travelling to France, you can purchase the sticker on the official Crit'Air website prior to your trip, to have them ready before you head off.

That's not the only thing you should take note of before crossing the border. If your car has a built-in speed detector, you'll need to make sure it's turned off before entering France. Using one of these detectors could reportedly rake up a fine of up to €1,500. Other things that could land you a fine include wearing headphones while driving and not wearing a hi-vis vest when at the side of the road if your car breaks down. So when in France, do as the French do – or it'll cost you.

Charmaine Wong  
Contributor, Time Out Travel

**Submitted by SHGAM friend Fred Fitter**

## Notice Board

### Welcome to

Jacqueline Parkes  
Carla Hay

Who have joined the Group as Associate members and will join the Autumn Advanced Driver Course

### Congratulations



to Tavish Cross, who has passed the advanced Driving Test and achieved a F1RST. Well done Tavish, an excellent result.

### Group Meal

Quattro's Italian Restaurant  
(North end of Rainford Bypass)

Wed 30th August  
7.00pm for a 7.30pm start

Contact Kay Heppenstall if you are planning to attend.

Family and friends welcome

### Autumn Advanced Driver Course

#### **Course Introduction**

8pm to 9.30pm  
Thursday 31st August  
Mercure Hotel  
Linkway West, St. Helens,  
WA10 1NG

A welcome meeting for the Autumn Advanced Driver Course covering the course programme and outlining what advanced driving is all about. For those who have already signed up for the course as well as for those wanting more information before making a decision.

100% cashback scheme still active.  
T&Cs apply.

Tell your family and friends

### Observer Meeting

10am to 12noon  
Sunday 27th August

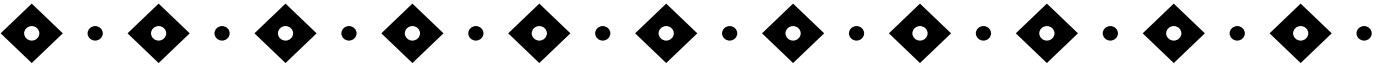
St. Helens Community Fire Station

### New Lead National Observer



Best wishes to Mark Hemans in his new role as Lead National Observer. Mark H took over from me at the Committee meeting on the 6th June having previously been approved by the Group Committee. I continue as Group Chair and newsletter/web editor.

**Mark Farnworth**  
**Group Chairman**



## AGM - 7th June

The Mayor of St. Helens Councillor Lynne Clarke presented the Associate of the Year and Observer of the Year Trophies to Paul Fryer and Chris Bradley respectively. The judges for each trophy were Alan Prescott and Phil Sharples. The Driver of the Year was later awarded to Garry Maddocks (the judge was Mark Farnworth).



**Associate of the Year**  
Paul Fryer



**Observer of the Year**  
Chris Bradley



**Driver of the Year**  
Garry Maddocks (right)

## Group Meal at the Stanley Gate - 22nd June



On Thursday 22nd June members and guests gathered for a meal at the Stanley Gate restaurant, Bickerstaffe near Ormskirk. It was an enjoyable meal in good company.

For me it was particularly nice to again meet Brian Jackson and his ????. (left side of photo nearest to the camera). When I joined the Group as a 24 year old Associate back in 1978 I had a couple of observed runs with Brian who was an Observer and a founder member of the Group in 1985. On both observed runs Brian wrote "get the system in a little earlier" in my Associate booklet which I still have and showed it to Brian during the meal. Thank you Brian, I hope my driving is still okay!

Brian is one of about three Observers who inspired me with advanced driving. In the day Brian was an excellent driver and he won the Group's Driver of the Year trophy in 1991.

**Mark Farnworth**  
**Group Chairman**



## **AGM Talk - Constable 1209 Mark Hemans, Forensic Collision Investigator, Merseyside Police**

Mark said that he works at the Forensic Collision Investigation Unit, Rose Hill HQ, Liverpool. The unit comprises one sergeant, eight constables and one vehicle examiner. The unit is working towards ISO accreditation. The purpose of the unit is to obtain all evidence and reconstruct events. The investigator although employed by the Police is independent of the Police since the evidence and findings obtained are shared with prosecution and defence representatives. The report is unbiased. This is one of the few areas of Police activity that opinion can be given.

The Forensic Collision Investigation Unit deals with the following: scene and vehicle examination, photography, analytical work, research papers, testing, expert report, vehicle examination, CCTV analysis, examination of the Event Data Recorder (EDR), interpretive work and peer review. In contrast, the Serious Collision Investigation Unit deals with witnesses, the prosecution file, post modern, suspects, CCTV collection, coroner and the Crown Prosecution Service (CPS).

To become a qualified forensic investigator there is a four-week residential course, a 2hr maths exam, a 2hr physics exam and skid mark assessment. Further qualifications include a university certificate in continuing professional development, a certificate in higher education, a foundation degree and a BSc (Hon). In addition, there are several specialised courses that include tachograph analysis, crush analysis and light bulb forensic analysis.

A forensic investigator investigates all fatal collisions, likely to prove collisions, serious injury police vehicle collisions and serious injury collisions. At the collision site debris, contact marks, dashcam footage glass and blood splatter are all considered. Photographs are taken of observation lines, vehicle controls and mechanical defects. A scene survey can be conducted using a laser scanner (Trimble TX8). Airbag control modules are inspected. Expert witness evidence is provided to the Coroners Court, Crown Court, Civil Court and the Officer of the Traffic Commissioner.

For the final part of the talk Mark gave a case study about a fatal Road Traffic Collision. The victim was a motorcycle pillion passenger. Mark guided those present through from initial scene analysis, followed by more detailed analysis of the motorcycle tyres, marks on the car door and bonnet and on railings adjacent to the point of collision. Mark gave a fascinating insight into how the investigation evolved and led to the successful prosecution of the car driver – death by careless driving.

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Thank you Mark for an excellent talk. It was interesting and engaging. I'm sure everyone who attended the AGM enjoyed it

***Mark Farnworth***  
***Group Chairman***