



Newsletter ~ February 2025

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



Welcome

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

I trust you all had a nice Christmas and have kept safe during the recent periods of snow and cold weather.

2025 is the Group's 40th year, a tremendous achievement and a testimony to the countless committee members and Observers who have volunteered to help hundreds of drivers from St. Helens and the surrounding area to pass the advanced driving test. Above all, we have helped people to become more confident, better and safer drivers and have made a significant contribution to road safety. We will be celebrating this occasion. I'll let you know our plans later in the year.

Our Winter Advanced Driving course is now up and running with five regularly attending driver Associates. Our riding group is developing nicely and I must thank Alan Douglas for his management and enthusiasm to create a sustainable riding element within the St. Helens Group. We also have several driver and rider trainee Observers. All this bodes well for the future of the Group.

We need to continue to raise awareness of what we do. We cannot rest on our laurels. We must continue to innovate, to streamline our processes, to take advantage of new technologies and, above all, to create a top-class customer (Associate) experience that is flexible to meet their needs and availability.

As members and friends of the St. Helens Group please help us to go from strength to strength. I have dozens of IAM leaflets. If you would like some for your workplace, your local shops or a community group that you are involved with, then let me know. If you are a member of a community group that has invited speakers then let me know. I'd be more than happy to go along and talk to them or deliver a tailored presentation from 20 minutes to an hour.

Lets make 2025, the Group's best year ever!

Safe driving and riding

Mark Farnworth
Group Chairman

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

Contacts:

contactshgam@gmail.com
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](#)

Buckle Up for Safety: Make a New Year's Resolution to Always Wear Your Seat Belt! - News post 7th January 2025

As we step into 2025, make a new resolution to prioritise your safety on the roads. Recent government statistics reveal that nearly a quarter of those who lost their lives on Britain's roads last year were not wearing seat belts. Here are some top tips to keep you and your family safely strapped in:

Always Buckle

Up: Make it a habit to buckle up every time you get into a vehicle, no matter how short the trip. This simple action can significantly reduce the risk of injury or death in

an accident.

Proper Fit: Ensure the seat belt fits correctly. The shoulder belt should lie snugly across the centre of your chest and shoulder, not on your neck or slipping off your shoulder. The lap belt should be low on your hips, not your stomach.

Check for Damage:

Regularly inspect your seat belts for any signs of wear and tear, such as fraying, cuts, or a malfunctioning buckle. If you notice any damage, it's crucial to get it repaired or replaced im-

mediately.

Keep Belts Clean: Dirt and grime can affect the retraction mechanism of seat belts. Clean them periodically with mild soap and water but avoid harsh chemicals that could weaken the fabric.

Use with Airbags:

Remember that seat belts and airbags are designed to work together. Airbags alone are not sufficient protection, and without a seat belt, airbags can cause more harm than good.

Professional Check: Have your seat belts checked every year as part of your routine service schedule. If you have been involved in an accident, they will need checking and possibly replacing as part of the repairs.

Child Passengers: Children under 135 cm tall must use the appropriate car seat for their height and weight. You can also be fined if a child under the age of 14 years old is not correctly restrained either in the correct car seat for younger passengers or in the seat belt for those over 135 cm.



One in two motorists pulled over on suspicion of drug-driving fail roadside drug tests as number of fatalities rises

The number of deceased drivers with 'impairment drugs' present has increased by over 70% from 2014 to 2022, leading to concerns from road safety organisation that drug users continue to get behind the wheel despite the dangers. One in two motorists pulled over on suspicion of drug-driving are failing roadside drug tests, leading to concerns that not enough is being done to tackle the issue.

A Freedom of Information request was submitted to all 45 police forces in the UK, with 31 forces providing data. According to the data obtained by IAM RoadSmart, Britain's leading road safety charity, more than half (51%) of drivers tested positive during

roadside testing in 2023, while in 2024, 49% of drivers tested positive in the first 7 months of the year. This is based on failure rate data provided by 17 of the 31 police forces that responded to the FOI request.

Meanwhile Department for Transport (DfT) figures show that the number of deceased drivers with 'impairment drugs' present has increased by over 70% from 2014 to 2022. The prime times of the year for catching offenders is during the party season: summer festivals and at Christmas. This coincides with Operation Limit, a national policing operation that takes place every year during various festivities to reduce drink

driving.

IAM RoadSmart Policy Manager William Porter said:

The fact that one in two motorists are failing roadside drugs tests shows that the message about the dangers of drug-driving is not getting through. Separate research by IAM RoadSmart indicates that one in seven (16%) drivers aged 17-34 admitted to getting behind the wheel after taking class A drugs, indicating how vital it is to tackle this growing epidemic." "We urgently need a new approach to combat drug-driving which focuses on both greater enforcement and establishing rehabilitation courses to reduce reoffending.

Notice Board

Welcome

Welcome to Jacek Wilk, Przemyslaw Trzeciecki, Phil Marrow, Alan Taylor and Ryan Sanders who have joined as Advanced Rider Associates and Peter Bellis who has joined our Winter Advanced Driver Course.

Meal at the Bottle and Glass

26 St Helens Road
Rainford, WA11 7QT

Thursday 20th February
7.15pm for a 7.30pm start

Let our events co-ordinator, Kay Heppenstall know, by the 13th February, if you are planning to Attend. Family and friends are welcome

AGM

Thursday 12th June
Ibis Hotel, Haydock.
8pm Prompt start

Spring Advanced Driver Course

Course Introduction on Thursday 1st
May at the Ibis Hotel, Haydock

8pm Prompt start

AA CHARITABLE TRUST LAUNCHES SEATBELT CAMPAIGN

- 43% of young car passenger fatalities are unbelted
- Attitudinal research shows young people less likely to consider seatbelt important when travelling as a passenger
- New AA Charitable Trust analysis of 5 years of car crash data
- 'Belt Up in the Back' message to all young people

Young people are being urged to 'belt up in the back' as new data highlights the staggering numbers killed in car crashes not wearing their seatbelts. New analysis by The AA Charitable Trust shows almost half (43%) of young passengers (17-29) who die in car crashes are not belted. Wearing a seatbelt reduces the risk of death by around 50 per cent, meaning up to around one quarter of all young car passenger deaths could be avoided if all young passengers put their belts on.

"It is an utter tragedy that young people are dying as passengers and drivers because they have failed to put their seatbelt on. **Edmund King, Director of the AA Charitable Trust** When the data, provided exclusively to the AA Charitable Trust, is analysed across all ages, unbelted fatalities fall to 27% of car passengers, highlighting the disproportionate number of young passengers being killed when not wearing their seatbelt. Young, male car passengers are more likely to die unbelted in a car crash than their female peers. The research, based on five years of car crash data where seatbelt wearing status was known, shows 68% of young passengers who die unbelted are male. These crashes are also more likely to happen at night, with 74% of young, unbelted, passenger fatalities happening in the night or evening.

New Department for Transport data shows the rate of seatbelt non-wearing fatalities for car occupants is highest for rear seat passengers (40%). Weekends also show the highest rates of non-seatbelt wearing among car fatalities (28% Saturday; 30% Sunday).

Drivers

As drivers, young people are also needlessly dying due to not wearing their seatbelt. The AA Trust analysis shows one third (29%) of young drivers (17-29) who die in car crashes are not belted.

Article taken from [AA Motoring News webpage](#).