



Newsletter ~ June 2020

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

Chair's update

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

I hope you and your families are all doing well during this period. It's a strange time but I'm sure it's all for the best. I know that I've missed driving and the easing of restrictions has meant I could drive just a little bit more!

As we're still being advised that we can't carry out observed runs and exams are still on hold, we are not really doing very much as a group. Fingers crossed by the next newsletter we have something more positive to say, but in the meantime please stay safe.

Here's to your continued safety!

Tom Field, Group Chair

Associate Co-ordinator's update

Normally I would be welcoming new Associates in the June Newsletter but, of course, due to the current crisis we have none to welcome. We can only speculate as to how long these unprecedented times will continue but I fear it will be for several more weeks yet. My thoughts are with those Associates who had Tests arranged with Examiners. Those Tests had to be cancelled along with everything else. I can assure them and any other returning Associates of our full support when normality returns.

As everything has, quite rightly, come to a full stop I am sure that the IAM will make correct decisions regarding memberships and Tests for Associates so that no one will lose out due to the

crisis. At the moment it is a case of keeping safe and awaiting guidance from IAM HQ.

Alan Prescott,
Associate Co-ordinator

From the Editor

Apologies to those who didn't receive a paper copy of the Group's April newsletter. Due to lockdown restrictions in April we were unable to justify the usual vehicle movements to get the dozen or so newsletters put into envelopes and posted.

If you receive paper Newsletters but you now have an email address could you please consider 'going electronic'. Please let me know so that I can put you onto our email distribution list.

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More Information (click links)

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[Up and coming events](#)

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[SHGAM Driving Tips](#)

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Back to school tips following coronavirus lockdown, IAMRS blog

With a phased return to school for primary school pupils due to begin on 1st June I'd like to remind parents, carers, drivers and riders to be on full alert in the vicinity of schools.

For parents and carers, take some time to check your vehicle and make sure it's in good order well in advance of that first school run, particularly if it's been stationary for a while during lockdown. Make sure you have enough fuel, check oil and water levels, look for defects, check the en-

gine, rubber (tyres) and, last but not least, you. Make sure you clean your windscreen thoroughly; inactivity can cause a film to build up on it which will not come off with the wipers. Also remember to check your tyres carefully. You need to examine them for cuts or bulges and check the tread and pressure.

Feeling nervous about being back out on the roads as you begin to drive children to school again after lockdown? Start off slowly to re-familiarise yourself with your vehicle

and driving again.

Has your usual route changed? With the introduction of pop-up cycle lanes and other initiatives to promote walking and cycling and keep public transport use to a minimum, check before you leave to avoid any difficulty.

Leave enough time. Setting off for school can be a frustrating and rushed experience at the best of times and your morning routine will almost certainly have been changed by the

lockdown arrangements.

Traffic levels will be increasing as children return to schools. Cyclists and pedestrians have no airbags, crumple zones or seatbelts to protect them.

At the same time, all drivers - including those not on the school run - need to be vigilant for children getting out of cars, walking or cycling to school, possibly at unusual and unexpected time.

Richard Gladman
Head of Driving and Riding Standards,
IAM RoadSmart



IAM Road Smart Press Release

Switch off your phone when you get behind the wheel IAM RoadSmart reminds drivers

18th May 2018

As Coronavirus travel restrictions begin to ease, IAM RoadSmart is reminding drivers to refocus on the road after weeks spent relying on screens and phones to keep in touch with family, friends and work colleagues.

The UK's largest independent road safety charity is concerned that driver distraction from mobile phones could escalate because good driver behaviour habits may have been lost during the Coronavirus lockdown.

The use of mobile phones while driving, for texting, emailing or to use social media, is seen as one of the biggest threats to road safety for nine out of 10 motorists, according to IAM RoadSmart's annual Driving Safety Culture Survey.

Now in its fifth year, the survey shows mobile phones to be consistently one of the main stress factors for British motorists. The survey reflects the views of just over 2,000 motorists, weighted by gender, region and age group to be representative of the UK driving population as a whole.

While the majority (90%) of respondents claimed not to use the

internet, text or email while driving themselves, for 70% of respondents other drivers' distraction from talking or texting on a mobile phone is more of a problem than it was three years ago. Just 6% believe the problem has reduced.

And with technology companies reporting that demand for data has risen substantially during lockdown, as people have turned to their devices for entertainment and to stay in touch with loved ones and work, IAM RoadSmart believes that a new dependency on video conferencing apps, social media and instant messaging could cause a rise in dangerous driving behaviours. The charity is concerned that phone-loving drivers could ignore driving safety legislation and continue to use their devices when they get back behind the wheel.

More women (73%) than men (68%) are concerned about the risks posed by mobile phones. Concern rises with age and drivers aged 70 and over are the most concerned (73%), compared with 68% of 17-34 year olds.

Regionally, concern about the use of mobile phones while driving is greatest in Wales (80%) and Yorkshire and Humberside (78%) compared with just 61% of drivers in the East of England.

Although overall, levels of concern about mobile phone use have fallen back slightly since 2016, it has consistently remained a top three problem for motorists, along with traffic congestion and aggressive

drivers. And while the majority of drivers, in all age groups and all regions, continue to perceive talking and texting on a mobile phone as a threat to their personal safety, as many as four per cent admitted to using the internet, or sending a text or email while driving, and nine per cent stated they have used voice activation to interact with their smartphone.

Neil Greig, IAM RoadSmart's Director of Policy and Research, said: "These results make it clear that there is still an alarming minority of drivers who access social media, send and read texts or even email while behind the wheel. And we believe this could now grow with increased screen dependency following lockdown.

"Driving is a complex activity that requires concentration. Anyone behind the wheel should have their full attention on the road and other road users so they can observe, plan ahead and anticipate what action is needed to get to their destination safely.

"Being connected to family, friends and work colleagues is important, but nothing should be more important than keeping your full attention on the task of driving. This is even more important after an extended period off the roads.

"If you make a journey in the coming days and weeks as travel restrictions start to ease, remember that the best way to avoid the distraction of your mobile phone is to switch it off or put it out of reach."

Group events

There are no Group events until further notice

Offer of support

In response to the way that the Covid-19 epidemic is having on us all, you are reminded of the kind message that Observer Val Cunningham kindly sent to all Group members in April.

"Following recent news that we shall not be meeting for sometime, 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".

Val Cunningham
Wellbeing Consultancy & Public Speaker. MSc MA
(naturally, there is no cost involved, only supportive and comforting words)

