



**April 2024**

## **Chairman's Chat**

Greetings.

This is my first 'Chairman's Chat' since becoming Chairman at the AGM on 21<sup>st</sup> March 2024.

For those of you who did not know before, I offer a few facts about my time in the Group.

I joined in 2006 as an Associate and passed the IAM Advanced Test in the July. My Observer had been Peter Davies who at that time was Chairman and Chief Observer. He promptly recruited me as an Observer and soon after as Membership Secretary and Associate Coordinator.

I left the committee in 2020 and returned in 2023 as Vice-Chairman and I am looking forward to taking up the role of Chair at this interesting time with the welcome addition of our friends from the Cirencester Group.

(Phil outlines his plans for the future in his address to the AGM (page 3))

**WELCOME** to our new members from the Cirencester Group

We look forward to working towards the merger and listening to your concerns and needs.

# Your Committee 2024

<b>Chair</b>	Philip Tebble	chairman@glosiam.org.uk	07484 271553
<b>Secretary</b>	Christing Coughlan	secretary@glosiam.org.uk	
<b>Treasurer</b>	Tim Ockwell	treasurer@glosiam.org.uk	
<b>Membership Secretary</b>	Sue McClung	membership@glosiam.org.uk	07712 302509
<b>Chief Observer</b>	Gary Smith	chiefobserver@glosiam.org.uk	
<b>Associate Coordinator</b>	Aron Mockford	asco@glosiam.org.uk	
<b>Data Manager</b>	Andrew Bowden	datamanager@glosiam.org.uk	
<b>Media Manager</b>	Rod Harrison	media@glosiam.org.uk	
<b>Newsletter Editor</b>	Robert Pepper	newsletter@glosiam.org.uk	

## Welcome to New Members

Ben Ambler	Sharon Armfield
Olivia Hunt	Charles Keys
Thomas Manderstrett	Carol Rose
Janet Saitch	Phillip Smith
Richard Smith	Danny Sutton
	Steve Woodward

## The current membership is:

<b>IAM Members</b>	<b>Observers</b>
<b>Full members</b>	<b>Trainees</b>
130	3
<b>Associate Members</b>	<b>Local</b>
28	1
<b>Fellow Members</b>	<b>National</b>
3	15
	<b>Masters</b>
	10

## Congratulations on passing the Advanced Test

The following members recently passed the Advanced Driving Test

<b>Associates</b>	<b>Observer</b>
Lucy Hampshire	Gary Smith
Rob Dartnell	Rod Harrison
Isaac Meredith	Colin Hooker
Brian Guy	James Baker
Sarah Astbury	Kim Seabright
Ayrton Cable	James Baker
Sara-Jane Phillips	Andrew Bowden
Angela Joyce	Colin Hooker
Alex Impey	Robert Pepper

# Farewell from Rod Harrison as Chair.

I started my IAM journey in 2006 with the North Wales Group, but was unable to take my test before being posted out to Australia and then India with my work. I returned to UK in 2011 on retirement and moved to the Cotswolds. Shortly after then I joined the Cirencester Group and completed my training to achieve an Advanced Driver pass.

I was keen to become an Observer and Peter Davies, the Chair at the time, invited me to transfer across to the Gloucestershire Group.

In 2013 I became Secretary of the Group, serving under Peter Davies as Chair until 2013, when Tony Higgs took over and then Tom Carr in 2015.

In 2015 I also took over the role of Chief Observer until 2019. I retook my test to obtain a F1RST and was assessed as a National Observer and Local Observer Assessor. I then went on to obtain a Masters with Distinction and was subsequently appointed as a Masters Mentor.

In 2016 I assumed the role of Chair and have served in that role until today. I have been supported during that time by a great team of volunteers on the committee and whilst the committee has seen changes over the years, we have always had a very strong team.

It has been a privilege to serve this wonderful Group for the last 8 years as your chair. My thanks go to everyone who has supported me during that time, especially the committee members and our hard working observers. I believe the Gloucestershire Group to be a strong presence in the County and I am delighted to see that we will be merging in the Cirencester Group members and therefore becoming a bigger force across the whole county during this year.

I look forward to supporting our new Chair as he takes on the role and serving on his committee as Media Manager.

Thank you to all of the members and committee for your support.

Rod



FAREWELL, and  
THANK YOU, ROD

## DRIVING POSITIONS

In the past couple of years I have seen increasing instances of a phenomena that never ceases to amaze me. I notice cars coming towards me, or following me, in which the driver is sitting so low relative to the steering wheel that none of their face below their nose is visible above its rim. The worst I have seen is a driver sitting so low, or the steering wheel adjusted so high, that I couldn't see the bridge of their nose. Also steering with one hand in the centre of the top of the steering wheel, making it necessary for her to lean towards the centre of the car to obtain a view around her hand!

The whole seating position, not just seat and steering wheel heights, are important to enable the driver to have the best possible view out of the car and to be able to control the car. I can recommend the article below for comprehensive advice on achieving a comfortable and safe seating position in your car.

[Physiomed Sitting Guide - Driving Digital.pdf](#)

Phil Tebble  
Chairman

## Annual General Meeting 2024

The Chairman welcomed our President Dr. Timothy Brain.

The meeting opened with the Charman's address (extract below).

"The previous Chairman, Rod Harrison, joined the Gloucestershire group in 2012. That year he became an Observer, and was soon appointed Group Secretary. He became the Group Chairman and Chief Observer in 2016. In all, 12 years of service to the Group with 8 of them as Chairman.

I could say that as chairman Rod will be a hard act to follow, but I won't, because he will be nigh impossible to follow. He has consistently shown the 3 Es – Expertise, Effort & Enthusiasm. Fortunately he is staying on the Committee as Media Manager, so the Group will still have the benefit of his 3 Es.

Every new Chairman should have definite plans for his term of office. I have two, so far.

Firstly, to increase the number of young drivers we recruit for our Young Drivers scheme which has been running since 2015. Its continuation is made possible by funding from Gloucestershire Fire & Rescue Service. To qualify for the scheme the drivers must be at least 18 years and under 26 years. However, they can register a few weeks before their 18<sup>th</sup> birthday and will be contacted shortly after reaching it. The recruitment effort has already been started by members of the committee contacting organisations that deal with young people – The Prince's Trust, youth clubs, Scouts, etc. These organisations also often have volunteer helpers who fall into the age range for the scheme. Group members can help with this recruitment by ensuring that sons and daughters, grandchildren, nephews and nieces, etc. are aware of the chance to improve their driving skills without having to pay the recently increased fee of £200.

My second aim is to encourage Group members to continue to maintain, or even improve, their driving skills by making use of the Group's free Check Drives with one of the Observers or by undertaking the IAM's Refresher Course.

In bringing the meeting to a close, the President endorsed the tribute to Rod Harrison, and thanked him for his Chairmanship of the Group for the last eight years. Rod led with great efficiency and effectiveness and he would no doubt support the new Chair as he settled into the role.

Dr Brain commented that as the introduction of seat belts and the advancement of car safety had reduced fatalities it was now for groups such as the Gloucestershire IAM to educate drivers on safer driving. He knew that this would be done with enthusiasm and by the leading by example of the Group members. He was also pleased that the Fire service had stepped in to support the Young Driver training scheme, as this was an important initiative. Dr Brain finished by thanking all the Group members and felt sure the Group would be reinforced with the merger of the Gloucestershire and Cirencester groups.

*(Full details of the AGM and items mentioned therein can be found on our website).*

## The merger of the Cirencester group with GlosIAM

Following the passing of the necessary resolutions at the March AGM of both groups the merger will be going ahead.

The first meeting between representatives from both groups will be on 30<sup>th</sup> April where the documentation required by IAM RoadSmart will be discussed.

Members of both groups will be kept informed of progress. If you have any queries, or suggestions, please contact the chairman at [chairman@glosiam.org.uk](mailto:chairman@glosiam.org.uk).

## Distractions in your car

A recent University study on the distractions of using a hands free phone threw up some interesting results. The study was carried out scientifically in a fully instrumented car driving simulator. The simulator was a real car (Volvo) converted to be a static vehicle in front of a high fidelity display.

The drivers were asked to answer the mobile phone in a hands free situation and memorize a simple list of grocery items, whilst driving in a simulated traffic environment with a series of hazards being injected by the control staff. The same trial was carried out with a mobile phone in the driver's hand.

The results clearly showed that there was little difference between the two scenarios. The cognitive distraction of engaging in a phone conversation caused the drivers to miss hazards on the road.

The same results, unsurprisingly, were found when drivers engaged with their in-car displays, either to modify settings or engage with the navigation display.

The police were then asked what advice was given to drivers who were caught using a mobile phone in a car. The response was that drivers were instructed that they must use their phones in a hands free situation. The results of the trial were communicated to the police, who then agreed that the correct advice should be - do not engage in conversations on your phone whilst driving. Similarly we should not be distracted by trying to engage with our in car displays.

What do you do? *[answers on a postcard to .....]*

## A 4x4 Off-Road Experience - the most fun you can have under 10mph!

Last year, I wrote an article about a Gravel Rally experience day at Cotswold Rally. I noticed they also had a 4x4 off-road track and loads of muddy Land Rover Discoveries. So, when they had a sale this Christmas, I bought a voucher for the 4x4 off-road experience, thinking it would be perfect for winter driving with all that mud when most tarmac tracks are closed until spring. I was initially sceptical that it may not be as fun as high-speed driving, but I was happily proven wrong!

I arrived on a cold March day, wearing several layers, thinking I would not get that hot driving slowly. However, I was wrong again! The Land Rovers are older models with agricultural controls, long-throw pedals and levers, and the large steering wheel needs a LOT of turning! But it was the sweat of the course that really turns up the heat!

After the briefing that covers how to use the low ratio gears and diff lock, its go time! - a gentle introduction first, getting used to driving in VERY deep mud, then it was time to face the real challenges of near-vertical ascents and descents and lakes. The nerves kick in, and the sweat starts pouring as you take the vehicle in places you would never dream a vehicle could possibly go, with your brain saying "There is no way we can make it up there!".

Going up near-vertical ascents, not being able to see anything through the windscreen but the sky is an experience I will never forget. It really is quite incredible what these vehicles can do.

Low ratio gears, big knobby tyres and momentum help us get through deep quick mud, lakes (scaring a Heron off at one point), and incredibly tight descents and turns. If you get stuck, the key is to let the clutch out slowly with no throttle and let the engine torque do the work. The Discovery is brilliant and seemingly able to go anywhere.

However, the final main challenge was something next level and not for the faint-hearted - "The Failed Ascent." We go to the top of a near-vertical mud ascent, then deliberately stall the car just before the top so you have to go down backwards and do it again. The instructor demonstrates what happens if you try to use the brakes to back down - the car just immediately goes at a ridiculously scary speed backwards as soon as you release the brake even slightly, and any braking input just locks the wheels and makes no difference and makes control even worse. The solution is to put it in low ratio reverse and just take the brake off and clutch at the same time, which is EXTREMELY unnerving the first time you do it and requires a leap of faith - to add to the challenge, this had to be done with just the right hand on the wheel, the left having to hold the gear lever in reverse to prevent it popping out of gear! However, the Discovery just grips perfectly and does a controlled descent at 1mph in a safe manner that is incredibly satisfying. I learned more than I thought I would, and the fun level was through the roof! This was, for sure, the most fun I have ever had below 10mph! **Aron Mockford**



## Have you ever been to one of our group meetings?

We generally have a guest speaker on a motoring theme. A while ago we hosted the late great Paddy Hopkirk who gave an informative and entertaining illustrated talk on his rallying days when the world was introduced to the prowess of the "tiny" Mini. He was accompanied by David Gallagher, who was at the time the Young Driver Ambassador for IAM RoadSmart. Both were working on a project with the IAM to promote safety and skill with mature and young drivers across the country.

Since then, David has set up his own company promoting young driver education. He gives talks to groups all over the country and internationally. David gave a presentation to our February meeting and described how he is working in the automotive industry alongside road safety organisations, automotive manufacturers and motorsport clubs to help them engage and interact with young drivers.

The data for young drivers is striking. Drivers in that age group make up under 2% of UK licence holders, 9% are involved in fatal and serious crashes, with 1 in 5 having a crash within the first 6 months.

David outlined the four main causes of collisions –

- seatbelt
- phones
- drink and drugs
- speed.

The first cause is surprising but not the rest. We need to change the way we engage young drivers – instead of "don't use your phone", get them to consider how someone else using a phone might affect them. In a similar way the other three causes can be addressed. Remove the negative criticism and promote the positive driving skill.

It was an enjoyable evening. Why not come along to one of our evenings? A list of future events is on the website.

*Ed.*

## FUTURE EVENTS

Saturday 13th April 9.30 a.m. Introduction to Advanced Driving Seminar

Thursday 25th April 7.30 p.m. The Type 45 Destroyer—An Inside Story (Andrew Bowden)

Saturday 12th May Prescott Hill Climb

Saturday 6th July Stow on the Wold Motor Show

Saturday 13th July Introduction to Advanced Driving Seminar

*(Full details of these events can be seen on our website)*

## GROUP OBSERVER MEETING

Group Observers, accompanied by our Chairman, held an Observer Development day at Churchdown on Saturday 6th April. Three Observers from the Cirencester Group, who will shortly join our combined team, were welcomed.

Also attending were three new Trainee Observers from the Gloucestershire group who were warmly welcomed:

Brenda Commons

Guy Bryan

Richard Johnson

The active Observers paired up to compare notes on two drives each during the day, whilst the new trainees were introduced to Observing by the Chief Observer, Gary Smith.

We also spent time discussing the latest news from IAM, standardising procedures and discussing driving techniques and issues. A very informative and enjoyable day, thanks to our Chief Observer.

