



DECEMBER 2023

Chairman's Chat

Greetings everyone. Dark nights, roads covered in wet leaves and water test our driving skills as winter arrives. In recent days the first frosts have appeared with the challenge of icy roads to come. Is your car ready for these challenges? See the article on page 5 from Richard Gladman, IAM's Chief Observer.

Robert Pepper, our Chief Observer since 2019 asked to stand down from the role in November for personal reasons. I would like to thank Robert for his tremendous contribution and personal support to me during his time in the role. I know that he is very busy in other areas of his life and send him very best wishes. Gary Smith has kindly stepped up to the Chief Observer role. Gary comes with considerable experience from the Central Southern Group.

In October, I attended the regional IAM RoadSmart Autumn Forum along with Vice Chair Phil Tebble. We spent an interesting day learning about IAM's latest news and taking part in workshops to brainstorm new ideas. The presentation can be found in your dashboard on the IAM website.

Gloucestershire continues to have a poor Road Safety record compared to the rest of UK. Partly because of our road network but also because we have a higher proportion of older drivers. The Older Drivers' Forum exists in this county to provide help and support. See the article on page 4 for more information.

Our Young Driver Programme is now funded by Gloucestershire Fire and Rescue who has provided funding for 11 young drivers this year and 20 next year. Applicants must be between 18 and 26, live or work in Gloucestershire and have a full driving license. Please help spread the word and encourage young drivers to apply.

Do you have any talents that could help the Group Committee? New blood is always welcome. In particular, if you are adept with Web sites and Social Media, I would love to hear from you. Similarly, if you have any good contacts or ideas that might help the group, do please drop me a line and let me know.

Finally, we have a full programme of speakers at our meetings up to April next year as you will see elsewhere in this newsletter. Please try to attend our monthly meetings on the last Thursday of the month, except for December.

As this is the last Newsletter of the year, may I wish you and yours very best wishes for the Festive season as well as a happy and healthy New Year.

Rod

Congratulations on passing the Advanced Test

The following members recently passed the Advanced Driving Test

Associate	Observer	Result
Graeme Palmer	Klim Seabright	Pass
Daniel Birch	Rod Harrison	FIRST
Elliot Leach	Colin Hooker	Pass
Tim Ockwell	Colin Hooker	Pass
Mark McCormack	Carolyn Menteith	Pass
Brenda Commons	Aron Mockford	FIRST
Christine Coughlan	Richard Lee/Colin Hooker	FIRST
Richard Aldred	Robert Pepper	Pass
Charlton Nunn	Rod Harrison	Pass
Don Gillanders	Aron Mockford	Pass



Welcome to New Members

Aryton Cable
 Richard Johnson
 Louise Brannon
 Toby Martin
 Sara-Jayne Phillips
 William Clewes
 George Derbyshire

The current membership is:

IAM Members	Observers
Full members	Trainees
123	1
Associate Members	Local
28	1
Fellow Members	National
3	15
	Masters
	10

Your Committee 2023

Chair	Rod Harrison	chairman@glosiam.org.uk	07917 851706
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Secretary/Membership	Sue McClung	membership@glosiam.org.uk	07712 302509
Treasurer	Richard Lee	treasurer@glosiam.org.uk	
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Data Manager	Andrew Bowden	datamanager@glosiam.org.uk	
Robert Pepper			
Marketing and media	Vacancy		
Newsletter Editor	Coral Pepper		

FORTHCOMING GROUP EVENTS

(Full details of all events for the year are on the IAM Gloucester website)

January	13th	09.00—14.00	Introduction to Advanced Driving Seminar
	25th	19.00—21.00	Group meeting: 'Are we really making progress?' (Carolyn Menteith)
February	8th	19.15—21.00	Committee meeting
	22nd	19.00—21.00	Group Meeting: Young Driver Ambassador, (David Ghallagher)
March	21st	19.00—21.00	Annual General Meeting plus 'Skillzone & Road Safety' (Freya Willis)

Group Incentives

Are you aware of the current group incentives. Spread the word and help recruit your friends.

Young Driver Programme

The Gloucestershire Fire and Rescue Service has funded 11 places this year and 20 places for 2024.

Applicants must be between 18 and 26, work or live in Gloucestershire and have a full driving licence.

The Group offers a free Advanced Driver Course to applicants, but a £50 deposit is required which is refundable on taking the Advanced Driver Test.

Introduce a member

If you introduce someone who then purchases an Advanced Driving Course we will pay you £20.

Free Taster Drives

Anyone who takes a Free Taster Drive and then purchases an Advanced Driver Course within 30 days will receive £25 cash back.

The Older Drivers' Forum

Nigel Lloyd Jones and his sister Alexandra sadly lost their mother in an accident involving an older driver. They decided to honour her death by setting up the Older Drivers' Forum in Gloucestershire to raise awareness of the vulnerabilities facing drivers as they age and to provide support to them.

The forum hosts monthly webinars on Zoom where very comprehensive presentations are given on driving as we age, often with guest speakers on allied subjects. Last month, Gloucestershire Highways gave an excellent talk on their work. Nigel and Alexandra also carry out live events at public libraries in the region including, in recent months, at Stroud, Stow on the Wold and Moreton-in-Marsh. I try to support both the Zoom and live events to offer IAM advice too.

The forum actively promotes the IAM RoadSmart Mature Driver Assessment, available for £65. This assessment is carried out by an IAM Examiner or Driver Trainer and is strongly recommended for anyone who feels uncertain about their safety on the roads.

The Older Drivers' Forum can be found online at: <https://olderdriversforum.com>.

Rod Harrison

Is Your Car Feeling The Cold?

There's nothing worse than your car not starting on a cold, icy morning, but with a bit of planning, you can make sure your vehicle is ready for the colder months. Richard Gladman, Chief Examiner at IAM RoadSmart, has a handy guide to help you prepare for the colder weather.

Battery

The battery on your car can go flat at any time, whether you're popping out for a Christmas celebration or to catch the fireworks at New Year. Make sure you keep a set of jump leads in your car so you can start your engine with help from another driver's vehicle if you need to.

Check antifreeze and screen wash

Antifreeze stops the water in the engine's cooling system from freezing and overheating, so make sure yours is topped up. Also check your screen wash levels, as something might seem minor, but something as simple as a bird doing its business on your windscreen can completely reduce visibility.

Get kitted out

Always carry a winter driving kit. This should include an ice-scraper, torch, blanket, de-icer and a first aid kit, just in case. Packing water and snacks is also a good idea, should you find yourself waiting for a recovery truck.

Light it up

Less light means, of course, using your headlights more. Check that they are clean; a wipe down with a cloth should suffice, and make sure none is blown or cracked, as not only do they make you less visible, it's also an MOT failure. Don't forget to check your full beam and fog lights as well.

Keep your car clean

Salt will often make your car windscreen, headlights, number plates and rear parts very dirty. You should stop regularly at service stations to clean your windscreen and headlights when the roads have been gritted or keep a filled bottle of water in the car boot to give your lights, windows and mirrors a quick wash over.

Seasonal Tyres

If you often drive in the winter, you should consider buying a set of winter tyres. Even cold, damp roads can dramatically affect the performance of tyres, leading to an increased accident risk.

Warning lights

Never ignore any warning lights that appear on your dashboard. If one appears, get it checked out as soon as possible. Being stuck on the side of the road is annoying at the best of times, but breaking down in freezing conditions is not only uncomfortable it can also be dangerous.

IAM RoadSmart Chief Examiner Richard Gladman said:

"Autumn and winter can bring difficult driving conditions with heavy rain, strong winds, frosty mornings and snow. Preparation is key to avoiding a dangerous situation whilst driving in bad weather. Don't rely on the performance of your car systems to get you out of trouble - allow time, create a safe space, make sure you have good visibility, and carry the right equipment. If conditions are extreme remember the best advice is not to travel."

With thanks to Richard Gladman, Chief Instructor IAM RoadSmart.

Signalling

The purpose of signals is to '...inform other road users of your presence and intentions.'

Obvious isn't it! *"Give a signal whenever it could benefit other road users. Do not just consider those road users you can see - also consider road users you cannot see and those you may reasonably expect to appear. You may also need to give a signal to override lane-changing technology"* (Roadcraft 2020 page 152).

Signalling, when to signal and when not to signal, is a subject that causes some of the greatest confusion amongst drivers and other road users. It is therefore one which leads to much debate.

The Roadcraft rule is quite straightforward and in the main there will usually be someone around who will benefit from a signal - so, if this is the case, build it into your driving plan and give one in good time.

This is even more important on the motorways where speeds are greater and time is shorter. So on motorways, if it would benefit another road user, allow one signal click for every 10 mph before you change a lane. At 70mph you should therefore plan for 7 clicks before changing lanes. If you are the sort of driver who is inclined to 'FLASH 'N' GO' it's a clear indication that you are not planning sufficiently far enough ahead.

However, you should note that when returning to lane 1 after overtaking on a motorway, it is generally unnecessary to give a signal because lane 1 is the 'normal' driving lane and ideally that is where you should be much of the time. *'...If you are overtaking...you should return to the left-hand lane as soon as you are safely past'*. Highway Code rule 264.

Signalling is part of **'giving information'**. Associate Members taking the Advanced Driving Course will hear that you should **'...only give a signal whenever it could benefit another road user'**. After some analysis it will be appreciated that ideally a signal should be employed in any situation **where you are not certain if someone will benefit or not**. However, in deciding whether or not *'another road user will benefit'* from your signal you will need to consider the various factors and observation links which constantly unfold in front of you whilst you are driving.

With thanks to Geoff Bevan, Chief Observer of the Bristol Group.

When evaluating the benefit of a signal you should consider the 'TUG' acronym attached to the 'INFORMATION' stage of the System of Car Control, i.e., Take information – Use the information – Give information. You will also need to include 3 other major factors, i.e. **'what you can see – what you can't see – and what you might reasonably expect to happen in the particular situation'**.

If for instance, as you approach a wide and open junction from a minor road, from which you can clearly see into all exits, you observe that no one is following and that no other road user is approaching, or will approach, from any direction who could benefit from a signal, and also that there is no possibility of someone 'unexpectedly' appearing who might benefit - then to give a signal would be unnecessary.

However, if something is obscuring your view at the junction; for instance, hedges, walls or parked vehicles, it would be wrong to assume the principle *"I can't see anyone who might benefit therefore there is no one who will benefit"* because you will almost invariably be caught out as someone 'unexpectedly' appears in view. Not signalling in this situation will lose points on an advanced driving test.

In other words: if the view to potential other road users is obscured then you should consider applying a signal in anticipation of *"...what I might reasonably expect to happen in this particular situation"*.

Generally, it is unnecessary to give a signal to pass a parked vehicle, especially if your signal could be misconstrued to meaning *"...I intend to turn right"*. There are three options open to you when passing parked vehicles; you can pass on the verge or pavement, you can try to knock them out of your way, or you can pass them on the right. I think you get the point.

However, as with many facets of advanced driving you need to weigh up whether, by giving a signal to pass it would be beneficial to another road user or just downright confusing. Any signal you give should leave the beneficiary in no doubt as to your true intentions.

Lastly: if you do need to signal - always signal before you brake!! Showing brake lights without any other signal leaves following drivers to wonder what will happen next i.e., 'are they turning left - or right or are they just slowing down'? Signalling before you brake leaves very little doubt about what may happen next!

The North Coast 500

My husband and I have done many trips to Scotland in the last 25 years all around the beautiful coastline and the islands including the Inner and Outer Hebrides, Shetland and Arran but had one Island left on our bucket list – Orkney. We did the NC500 before the term was introduced.

We decided to take the road trip this year in September to avoid the midges and I planned a route up the west coast over the top, over to Orkney and down the east coast to Falkirk where we have family. Our total mileage was 1526 from door to door. The weather we experienced was amazing, plenty of sunshine, very little rain other than in Glen Coe which made it even more atmospheric.

For anyone who enjoys driving it is an absolute dream. The roads obviously start with motorways and dual carriageways but as soon as you get further up its A and B roads and some roads which are little more than single lane dirt tracks - the scenery is specular.

We met many groups travelling together on classic motorbikes, Porsches, Morgans and many other overseas vehicles and even groups of very fit cyclists. The only problem we encountered were very large motorhomes attempting the route even though they are officially advised not to – not a good thing on single track roads but it gave us plenty of practice in reversing! Small camper vans were just fine. The NC500 is very well signed travelling from the east to west coast as many people fly into Edinburgh and hire a vehicle there. We would recommend doing the route the other way, west to east – the sun is then not in your eyes during the journey along the most beautiful parts of the northwest coast.

Our route took us up to Fort William, Ullapool along the beautiful coastal roads to Thurso, where we caught the ferry to Orkney. Inverness and down to Falkirk. Having undertaken road trips in Canada, New Zealand, Scandinavia and New England we don't think this trip can be beaten.

Sue McClung

Membership Secretary

(see Sue's beautiful photographs on the next page)

