



January 2025

## Chairman's Chat

Pothole damage claims to councils in Britain skyrocketed between 2022 and 2023. Data from the RAC shows claims submitted to 18 local authorities with the largest road networks jumped from 8,327 to 20,432 in just a year. Surrey County Council had the sharpest rise, with claims climbing from 734 in 2022 to 3,418 in 2023. Hampshire County Council wasn't far behind, seeing claims leap from 750 to 2,654.

But here's the catch: only 15% of the claims filed last year were paid out, amounting to around £824,000, with drivers receiving an average of just £260 per claim. That's less than half the typical cost of fixing serious pothole damage, which can run up to £460.

Want to file a claim? The odds aren't in your favour. Nearly 76% of the 17 councils that paid any compensation refused over three-quarters of the claims they received. Some were even harsher: **Gloucestershire**, Essex, Kent, Cornwall, and Powys councils **rejected at least 90% of their claims in 2023**.

Surrey turned down the most overall, rejecting 2,954 (86%) of its 3,418 claims. Meanwhile, Shropshire Council stood out as the most generous, approving 68% of its claims.

The most common reason for rejected claims was that councils claimed they weren't aware of the pothole. Under Section 58 of the Highways Act 1980, councils aren't liable if they didn't know a pothole existed. Of the 8,172 claims denied for this reason, 74% were rejected because the councils claimed ignorance. In **Gloucestershire** and Hertfordshire, 100% of refused claims were thrown out for this reason. It would seem that these two councils are either not inspecting the roads for potholes or it's just a convenient, difficult for the car owner to verify, excuse for rejection of claims.

The data also shows where pothole hotspots are. Surrey had one claim for every mile of its road network, while Hampshire, Essex, and Hertfordshire had one claim for every two miles.

Defending claims isn't cheap either. The councils spent over £166,000 in legal fees last year, with Lincolnshire County Council alone burning through £96,000 to fight claims.

Simon Williams, head of policy at the RAC, called out the inefficiency: "These findings are a stark reminder that the ongoing poor condition of many of the UK's local roads is burning holes in the budgets of both local authorities and car owners".

There is also the safety aspect of drivers' attention being, at least partly, taken up by attempting to spot and avoid potholes. Difficult at night and in rain when the potholes are often hidden by being full of water. Avoiding some potholes also forces drivers onto the other side of the road; sometimes on blind bends. The correct positioning of the car on the road can also be thwarted by potholes.

Continues.....

While some councils appeared to prioritise paying legal fees over settling pothole claims, the cost in time and money of defending claims appears to far outweigh the expense of reimbursing drivers for the damage done to their vehicle in the first place. Even if a driver successfully pursued compensation, the average sum paid out of £260 is often well below the cost to fix a pothole-damaged car, for anything more serious than a punctured tyre.

When it comes to the true extent of the problem, we may only be seeing the tip of the iceberg, as almost the same number of councils refused to tell us why they threw out pothole claims compared to those that did. We strongly urge drivers to inform councils about any potholes they see.

We have long argued that local authorities need greater certainty of funding so they can tackle to the root cause of the UK's pothole plague. For this reason, we're pleased they'll receive £500m to soon start the process of improving their road networks. It's vital that this money is used by councils not to merely fill potholes, but to carry out preventative maintenance – through surface dressing roads at regular intervals to stop roads falling apart in the first place. Roads that are beyond reasonable repair should be resurfaced."

£500m is well below the sum of money required to eliminate even just the most dangerous potholes from the UK's roads.

Potholes can be reported on a smartphone by using the Fix My Street app or visit: <https://www.gloucestershire.gov.uk/highways/roads/potholes/report-a-pothole/>

---

A reminder that the group's offer of a **FREE** Advanced driving Course to partners of group members is still available until the end of April 2025.

Any partner of a member of the group who completes the Advanced Driving course will have the £200 cost refunded when the test has been taken.

To take up the offer the member should email [asco@glosiam.org.uk](mailto:asco@glosiam.org.uk) quoting their own IAM membership number and their partner's full name, to inform the Associate Coordinator, Rod Harrison, that the offer is being taken up. Then the partner should apply for the course in the usual way via the [www.iamroadsmart.com](http://www.iamroadsmart.com) website ensuring to state Gloucestershire Advance Drivers as the preferred local group. When the group receives notification from IAM Roadsmart that the course has been purchased the ASCO will note that the applicant is to receive a full refund after the test is taken.

---

A further reminder

The Older Drivers Forum and IAM RoadSmart are participating in a national trial, initially in five counties of which Gloucestershire is one, to establish a new standard for mature driver assessments.

If you are 65 or over and willing to attend a free assessment to assist in the trial then please email [odfglos@gmail.com](mailto:odfglos@gmail.com), put "National Trial" as the subject and state your name and age.

---

Phil Tebble  
Chairman

## GlosIAM's Vice-Presidents

The group has three Vice-Presidents:

Anthony Whitehouse : Jean Whitehouse : Peter Davies

Anthony has sent me the information below and the two scans of documents.

Jean took her test in 1974 when the Group was still known as Severn Vale, and joined the Committee soon after. Anthony never took the test as he was then a Police Class One driver, and hence exempt. It was when Anthony joined the group that the group's name changed from Severn Vale to Gloucestershire. Anthony was also an IAM Advanced Driving Test examiner for 25 years and both are still both paid up IAM Members.

Jean has recently received a certificate congratulating her on reaching 50 years membership of the IAM. The certificate is shown below as well as an article from a 1997 edition of the IAM magazine published on her retirement from the IAM Council. The article also mentions the serious road collision she had been involved in a few years previously.



/continues.....

## JEAN WHITEHOUSE RETIRES

After more than 15 years on the IAM Council, Jean Whitehouse has decided to step down from her role as Divisional Council Member for the Midlands and South Western England.

Jean has been a dedicated Council Member, heavily involved in Group matters and a regular participant in Council meetings. She has always been steadfastly backed by her husband Anthony, a former traffic patrol officer and someone as much involved in the IAM as Jean herself. Their popularity is underlined by the fact that Jean won the nomination, by Groups in her Region, for Council membership on five consecutive occasions.

Jean brought to the Council not only a Group viewpoint on IAM activity but also the woman driver's view. And she is among the few who have learnt at first hand the importance of road safety and advanced driving. A few years ago, there was nothing that Jean, who was driving to work, could do to avoid an out-of-control car that came spinning towards her on a bend. The impact was a heavy one and poor Jean had to be cut free from the wreckage. It took her many years to recover fully from the injuries she sustained. Needless to say, the driver who so nearly killed her escaped with a trivial penalty and (in those days) no suggestion that he might do anything to improve his driving.



The third vice-president is Peter Davies, a member of the IAM and the Gloucestershire group since 1998. He has served on the group's committee in many roles (on some occasions holding a number of posts simultaneously) including Chairman (for two long separate periods), Chief Observer, Associate Coordinator, Membership Secretary, Treasurer, Newsletter Editor and Secretary and was also an Observer for many years.

Phil Tebble

## Committee 2025

<b>Chair</b>	Philip Tebble	chairman@glosiam.org.uk	07484 271553
<b>Secretary</b>	Christine 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>	Rod Harrison	asco@glosiam.org.uk	
<b>Data Manager</b>	Andrew Bowden	datamanager@glosiam.org.uk	
<b>Media Manager</b>	Vince Harris	media@glosiam.org.uk	
<b>Events Manager</b>	Aron Mockford		
<b>Cirencester Rep.</b>	Gordon Burley		
<b>Newsletter Editor</b>	Robert Pepper	editor@glosiam.org.uk	

## Welcome to New Associates

Pierre De Carteret  
Leandra Edmands  
Keyan Beard  
Amelia Hayman  
Hazel Crawford  
Robert Bridges

Edward Skeith  
Bethany Revell  
Adam Cleave  
Jenny Vallely  
Samjhana Lamichhane  
Luke Worsfold

## The current membership is:

### IAM Members

#### Full members

198

#### Associate Members

44

#### Fellow Members

6

### Observers

#### Trainees

5

#### Local

1

#### National

18

#### Masters

10

## Congratulations on passing the Advanced Test

The following members have passed the Advanced Driving Test since October 2023

<b>Associate</b>	<b>Observer</b>	<b>Result</b>
Courtney Craze	Gordon Burley	PASS
Tim Besein	Robert Pepper	PASS
Keith James	Dan Jennings	PASS
George Rose	James Baker	PASS
Jamie Turner	Klim Seabright	F1RST

## **FUTURE EVENTS (to be held at Churchdown at 7.30 p.m. unless otherwise indicated)**

23<sup>rd</sup> January 2025

### **Guide Dogs for the Blind and their training**

The ex-mayor of Nailsworth, Michael Kelly, who has been blind for more than 30 years, will discuss the assistance provided to the blind by their guide dogs, their limitations and the methods of choosing and training the dogs. He will be accompanied by his current and previous guide dogs.

27 February 2025

### **Racing v Advanced Driving**

Mel Higgins (a group member), racing driver & co-founder of Doris Archer Motorsport, will take you through her journey from everyday driver to full-on racer. Mel will dive into the differences between advanced-road and track driving, with anecdotes and insights from her own experiences on track. Whether you're just curious about performance driving techniques and track days, or considering becoming involved in motor racing, Mel will be able to answer your questions and offer practical advice for getting started in Motorsport.

Thursday 20th March 2025

### **Special Event**

Annual General Meeting to be followed by our 50-year celebration for Gloucestershire Advanced Motorists. (See page 12 for Chairman's request for attendance information)

24<sup>th</sup> April 2025

### **Gloucestershire and Worcestershire 4x4 Volunteers**

Information on how the volunteers assist the emergency services, and members of the public, in difficult conditions such as during floods and following heavy snow fall.

June/July 2025 - time and date to be announced

### **Members Check Drive**

A chance to have a drive, in your own car, accompanied by a group Observer who will assess your current standard of driving and give hints on how to raise the standard of your driving even higher.

23<sup>rd</sup> October 2025

### **Steering Young Drivers – A Gloucestershire Fire and Rescue Service Update**

Outlining Gloucestershire Fire & Rescue Service's multifaceted approach to road safety, from delivering educational initiatives like Biker Down, Bikeability, SkillZONE and Passenger to supporting community programmes aimed at reducing road traffic collisions. Also describing their collaborative efforts with local and national organisations, the impact of their targeted campaigns, and how they utilise data-driven strategies to address key road safety challenges in the county.

## Top tips for success on the IAM Masters Programme

Following my success on the IAM Advanced Test, I embarked on my Masters journey in September. I quickly realised how high the required standard was; the standard of a FIRST pass on the advanced test, as highly regarded as it is, would not even be good enough to achieve a pass on the Masters test. The Masters programme was designed to be the civilian equivalent of the Police Advanced Course, so it really is a case of taking everything learned to pass the advanced test and turning it up to 100! In November I was thrilled to pass my Masters with Distinction with ASDM Robbie Downing, and I thought I would share my top tips for passing Masters with other members who have enrolled on the Masters course.

### **Make a good first impression.**

Ensure your car is spotless inside and out, including the glass. Demonstrate a comprehensive cockpit drill (including POWDERY checks) and show the examiner that you know about the vehicle you're driving (e.g. "Today I will be driving a 2019 Seat Ibiza with a 1 litre TSI petrol engine, 113 brake horsepower, a 6 speed manual gearbox and front wheel drive"). Ensure you know what's normal for your car and what ancillary systems it is fitted with. Offer to perform a moving/rolling brake test. Don't forget the shutdown drill at the end - the test isn't finished until you switch the engine off!

### **Have excellent theory knowledge.**

Needless to say, *Roadcraft* is essential bedtime reading! If you can integrate your knowledge and *Roadcraft* quotes into your commentary, it will convey your knowledge to the examiner in a natural way. Make sure you can recite the definition of System verbatim and are familiar with concepts such as the five principles of safe cornering, limit point analysis and tyre grip tradeoff. Read through the *Highway Code* again and make sure you know your road signs and markings, as well as key rules such as the situations where you must not overtake.

### **Demonstrate progress and restraint and remember that they are two sides of the same coin.**

A good Masters drive will show contrast between progress and restraint (the concept of 'light and shade'). This means 'getting on with it' when you can (e.g. when a 30mph road opens up into a nice open national speed limit road), then holding back and taking the speed off when a hazard arises. This includes the use of brakes where appropriate, not just relying on acceleration sense. You should aim to drive up to the speed limit where conditions allow. A useful phrase to remember is the '4 Ups' - "up the speed, up the gears, up to the speed limit, up to the car in front". A Masters driver negotiates hazards slower, but makes progress *between* hazards faster than a standard driver. Admittedly restraint is the area that I struggled with the most.

### **Remember that a Masters drive is not an 'eco drive'.**

The examiner is looking for you to make maximum safe progress. Driving at 50mph in 5th gear on a national speed limit road in conditions where it is safe to be doing 60mph, is not making adequate progress, and you will lack important acceleration power and engine retardation compared to being in 4th gear. Resist the urge to move up through the gearbox too quickly. Use the power band of your car where appropriate, e.g. when accelerating down a motorway slip road. There is still a section on the marksheet for eco driving, so select a higher gear when appropriate to do so, in order to relax the engine and conserve fuel.

Having said that, you still need to make sure everything is as smooth as possible, so no harsh braking, coarse steering or lumpy gear changes. Rev match the gear changes as much as possible.

/continues .....



### **Develop a fluent, informative commentary.**

Beginning the commentary from the start of the test is usually easier than starting it at a later point; I found this helped me get into the 'zone' and my observations were better as a result. For every hazard encountered, you need to tell the examiner two things: what you can see and what you are going to do about it. It isn't enough to drive along pointing out obvious features without telling the examiner how you are going to modify your driving plan in response. Use hazard links, e.g. 'horse droppings in the road, looking for equestrians'; 'church visible through the trees, anticipating a town/village and a change of speed limit; 'vehicle has emerged from a junction, looking for a second vehicle behind it'. There are many others! Remember: observe, understand, react (OUR).

### **Execute safe, decisive overtakes.**

The examiner will expect you to have a desire to overtake and to always be in a position to overtake should the opportunity arise. An overtake should never be attempted if in any doubt about its safety and never forced just to try and get one 'in the bag' on the test. The safest time to perform an overtake is as soon as the opportunity presents itself; if you hesitate, the moment may have passed and it is no longer safe. A driver decides whether to overtake a vehicle as soon as he/she comes upon it, but the opportunity to do so may not present itself for many miles, *if at all*, due to road and traffic conditions. You should know when the best opportunities to overtake are likely to be, e.g. after solid white lines, after bends and after hill brows, so you are prepared. Overtakes should be 'ghost-like' and executed with stealth.

### **Watch advanced driving videos.**

I recommend Reg Local and James Ward (Ward Advanced Driver Training) on YouTube. Reg has a couple of videos specific to the Masters test including a demo drive of the required standard. James has a couple of blue light run demo videos and blue light training videos which I also found useful for observations and commentary quotes.

### **Practise lots.**

In order to perfect the techniques covered in the sessions with your Mentor, you will need to practise on a variety of different road types in your free time between sessions. I chose routes based on the technique I wanted to practise, for example I would go out on roads with lots of bends for cornering, nice open NSL roads for overtaking opportunities and urban areas for restraint. Practise doing a commentary from the start to the end of your drive.

### **Be reflective but not too hard on yourself.**

Masters is a tough course and you will make mistakes; there is no such thing as the perfect drive. The key thing is to reflect honestly on your drive and act on feedback from your Mentor to improve. You will make much better progress on the course by taking feedback on board and working on issues as they arise rather than allowing them to build up uncorrected.

### **Most importantly, enjoy it!**

The Masters course is great fun! Make the most of having one to one coaching with a very experienced and enthusiastic advanced driver. The skills you learn on the Masters course will set you up for a lifetime of driving at a very high standard.

*With thanks to Carolyn Menteith, my Masters Mentor; Andy Poulton, Bristol Group Examiner and Masters Mentor; and James Baker, Glos Group National Observer, for all their coaching and support.*

Charles Keys

## Sharing the road with horses and their riders

How many times have you been driving somewhere and found that you are stuck behind a horse rider? Unable to get past, unable to take another route, you end up getting cranky. In an effort to not be late to your destination, you finally overtake in a not-so-ideal place, only to have said horse rider not say thank you or even make any visible response to your obvious chagrin at being delayed for so long?

Believe me, I feel your pain. We have all been there. I have been driving a car for 25 years, but I have also been riding a horse for over 45 years, 29 of those have been on Gloucestershire roads, so I feel that I have a good view from both sides of the coin.

I have just double-checked the Highway Code to make sure I am not going to tell you something that is illegal. If you are interested (it won't take you long, there is very little regarding car driver/horse rider interactions), check out Rule 215. The basis of which is to pass wide and slow (at least 2m and no more than 10mph) and remember that horses are animals and can be unpredictable. In all instances, when I suggest passing or overtaking a horse and rider, I mean to do so only if all other factors taken into account allow you to do so safely.

I am hoping to give you a slightly more true-to-life view of what to do when you next meet a horse (and hopefully a rider!) on the road. Loose horses on the road are a completely different kettle of fish - my advice if there is no-one around is call the police, then stop at the nearest house or farm and let them know, They may own the horse, or they may know who does.

If you are approaching a horse and rider, and both seem calm and relaxed, slow your speed and go past. There is no need to stop and wait for the horse to pass you, this generally only causes any drivers behind the horse to get more disgruntled.

If you are approaching a horse and rider, and the horse seems nervous and unsettled, slow your speed more than normal and proceed to pass with caution. If the horse is very unsettled and is taking up more than its body width of road, you may need to stop and allow it to pass you. Sounding your horn, flashing your lights and even running down your windows can cause a horse to spook. Most horse riders will be very appreciative if you don't do any of these.

If you are behind a horse and rider and have a clear view of the road ahead, use the same tactics as outlined above. Make sure that you give as much clear space as possible. You might be driving a large vehicle and think you are extremely obvious, but when you are wearing a helmet and sat on a horse, with the wind and the sound of steel-shod hooves clattering on a tarmac road, cars can sneak up on you. Especially electric cars. Even with their built-in fake noise, it can be extremely hard to hear these vehicles when you are trotting along the road.

With this in mind, if you are behind a horse and rider and think you are being polite by hanging back more than a car length, chances are we won't even know you are there and so will not move over. If we have to get off the road in order for you to overtake us, the sooner you can do this, the better. Some horses may become agitated if asked to stand still for extended periods of time next to a road and navigating drainage ditches, rabbit holes and broken bottles can make travelling on the verge quite dangerous.

Horse riders should always use hand signals to communicate their intentions to car drivers. Either arm extended straight out at shoulder level means we are turning in that direction. Please do not overtake us if we are indicating we are turning right and therefore crossing the road. You may think you have time to do so before the turn is started, but the horse may have other ideas!



And nobody wants a horse on their bonnet...

A raised right hand, held in position, is an indication to the cars behind that it is not safe to overtake. We are higher up than most vehicles and often have a much better view of what is approaching. An extended right arm, waving from back to front, is an indication that all is clear for the driver behind to overtake. Of course, the driver needs to be comfortable with what the rider is suggesting they do, do not overtake if you are not certain it is safe to do so.



/continues.....

If you are approaching a horse rider and have slowed, or stopped, and they are waving at you with a pulling gesture of their right arm, they really want you to keep moving forwards. It probably means that they have lots of cars behind them.

An extended right arm, moving up and down, means slow down.

**I find that this is the one that drivers acknowledge the least.**

There could be any number of reasons, my horse might be about to explode, your vehicle might be really scary, I may be riding a young horse or be travelling with a young horse/and or rider or you may just be going far too fast. For whatever reason, I have judged that your speed poses a risk to myself, my horse or my companions and would really appreciate you lifting your foot off the accelerator.



The last, commonly used, hand signal is the "Thank you" wave. Different riders use it to varying degrees (and some, most certainly, do not use it enough). Personally, I use it whenever a vehicle has been hindered by my horse's presence. It costs nothing and I understand the frustration felt by drivers. But, please understand, it is not always possible to wave. No matter how much we appreciate your patience, taking a hand off the reins (these thin strips of leather control the direction, speed and balance of a flight animal that can weigh up to 1000kg) may not be possible if we are using two hands to keep an unsettled horse under control.

In a perfect world, and given a choice, I am sure most horse riders would choose to not ride on the road. But, we all know our world is not perfect, and with diminishing green space and the ever-increasing loss of bridledways, we are also losing the choice. I hope anyone reading this can take a few minutes to consider what their reaction may be the next time they meet a horse and rider on the road.

Sarah Jones

## Annual Quiz Night

Fourteen eager participants turned out to take part in the annual quiz at the end of the year. Don't miss out on next year's event, usually held in November, with fabulous vehicle accessory prizes.

Robert Pepper

### **BEHIND THE SCENES OF QUIZ NIGHT**

*It usually begins about August, just before we go on holiday. Him in-doors shuts himself away in his study, whilst I am trying to organise the garden, packing and general jobs.*

*I peer around the study door, and he is staring intently at the screen. "Any chance of a hand out here" I ask, brightly.*

*"In a minute."*

*I silently sigh, and carry on.*

*This pattern repeats itself on and off until we approach mid-October, when the absences become more prolonged. By now I have given up asking what he is doing – familiar as I am with 'putting the final touches to the quiz.' Then, of course, starts the hunt for prizes.*

*"Did it go well – was it worth the effort?" I ask when he returns home on Quiz Night.*

*"Well, they seemed to enjoy it."*

*I will enjoy 'normal service' until come August it begins all over again.*

*Do enjoy the next one!*



## Chief Observer Report

Last year was a very good year for Associates and Observers. We had 39 Associates take the Advanced Driving Test with 18 Associates achieving a F1rstpass which equates to 41% of passes were F1rst. This is a fantastic achievement and congratulations to all the Associates and Observers involved. This pass rate is a lot higher than the National average and something our Group has not achieved in the past and can be very proud of this fact.

Last year saw our Observer team increase significantly to 24 Observers. We had 6 Observers join us when Cirencester merged with us and we had 7 new Observers. We now have a very good team of Observers who continue to develop their skills through reassessments and Observer Development Days.

We could always do with more Observers so if you think you would like to see what is involved then please get in touch. It is a great way to keep your driving standards up to scratch

Gary Smith, Chief Observer ([chiefobserver@glosiam.org.uk](mailto:chiefobserver@glosiam.org.uk))

## A word from the Associate Coordinator.....

2024 was a record year for Gloucestershire Advanced Motorists. Not only did we expand our Observer force by the assimilation of the Cirencester Group but added 6 more. We now have a total of 24 Observers. My Associate chart tells me that 96 Associates were entered on it.

We also did rather well with passes: 18 F1RSTS and 19 Passes to date. 20 young drivers have been accepted for Funded courses over the year too. To cap it all off we did 15 Free taster drives.

A huge thank you to our Observers who have worked very hard, particularly over the summer months and continue to do so. Your cooperation in accepting Associates, fitting in Pre-Test drives and Free tasters is very much appreciated.

Rod Harrison

## Gloucestershire Advanced Motorists Fifty Years of Safer Driving.

It has been suggested that we should hold a celebration of the group being active for over 50 years. It is intended to hold the celebration after the AGM on the evening of

**Thursday 20<sup>th</sup> March 2025.**

There will be a buffet and, if enough support is indicated, skittles. The celebration will start after the AGM, so at approximately 20:15 . Please email your indication to attend all, or part of this event, at this stage we just need an indication of the numbers likely to attend, particularly for booking the skittle alley at Churchdown Community Centre. A reminder email will be sent out nearer the event.

Please email            I will be attending the AGM    Yes/No  
                                 I will be attending the Buffet    Yes/No  
                                 I will be taking part in Skittles Yes/No

I hope to see you all there.

Phil.