



October 2024

Chairman's Chat

Special Offer

Following the merger of the Cirencester group with GlosIAM the merged group has increased funds at its disposal. 2024 is the 50th anniversary of the group and it has been decided to use some of the increased funds for the benefit of the group members. As a registered charity it is essential that all expenditure is towards the group's stated aim of improving road safety in Gloucestershire by promoting further driver training and experience.

It is noticeable that very few of the partners of the group members have taken the IAM Advanced Driving test. The group has, therefore, set aside funds to enable the group to make the following offer until the end of April 2025 or until the set aside funds are used up.

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 the Associate Coordinator at asco@glosiam.org.uk, quoting their 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 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.

Welcome to New Members

Keith James	Joseph Campbell
Sam Pullen	Miranda Smith
George Rose	Josh Netherton
Evan Falwasser-Bowery	Callum Edwards
Madeleine McClement	Nathan Hedges
Jamie Turner	Hawrez Earl
Tigger Wilkes	Amy Ashwood
ReubenWatt	Maisie Marshall
Joanne Harmer	Lola Williams
	Andrew Varsey

The current membership is:

IAM Members	Observers
Full members	Trainees
176	4
Associate Members	Local
48	3
Fellow Members	National
6	19
	Masters
	10

Committee

Chair	Philip Tebble	chairman@glosiam.org.uk	07484 271553
Secretary	Christing Coughlan	secretary@glosiam.org.uk	
Treasurer	Tim Ockwell	treasurer@glosiam.org.uk	
Membership Secretary	Sue McClung	membership@glosiam.org.uk	07712 302509
Chief Observer	Gary Smith	chiefobserver@glosiam.org.uk	
Associate Coordinator	Rod Harrison	asco@glosiam.org.uk	
Data Manager	Andrew Bowden	datamanager@glosiam.org.uk	
Media Manager	Vince Harris	media@glosiam.org.uk	
Events Manager	Aron Mockford		
Cirencester Rep.	Gordon Burley		
Newsletter Editor	Robert Pepper	editor@glosiam.org.uk	

Congratulations on passing the Advanced Test

The following members recently passed the Advanced Driving Test

Associate	Observer	Result
Louise Brannan	Andrew Bowden	F1RST
Philip Smith	Klim Seabright	PASS
Steve Woodward	Aron Mockford	F1RST
Richard Smith	James Baker	F1RST
Charles Keys	Andrew Bowden	F1RST
Julian Stocker	Klim Seabright	PASS
Thomas Evans	Gordon Burley	F1RST
Alice Chamberlain	Gordon Burley	F1RST
Martin Davies	Nigel Garbutt	F1RST
Matthew Penley	Klim Seabright	PASS
Matthew Batson	Robert Pepper	PASS
John Horan	Patrick Ward	F1RST
Callum Edwards	Gordon Burley	F1RST
Nathan Hodges	Gareth Zimmerman	PASS
Andrew Norton	Rod Harrison	F1RST

Electronic Handbrake and Auto Hold

From conversations in which I have been involved on the group's stands at shows and with some group members, Electronic Handbrake and AutoHold are two features of many modern cars that are not fully understood. The way they operate and how they are controlled does vary from one car manufacturer to another although the basic principles stay the same. As my experience is with a 2018 Seat Leon FR, which is one of the cars manufactured by the VAG (Volkswagen, Audi, Skoda and Seat) group, that is the system I will describe.

Interaction with the car's braking system

Electronic Handbrake (EHB)

Automatically applies only the rear brakes by the use of electric motors turning screws that push the brake pads against the rear brake discs when the ignition is switched off. Has the advantage that failure of the system when the car is parked will cause the rear brakes to stay applied; hence the car cannot 'run away'. Also a disadvantage in that if the system fails the car can't be moved, or towed with the rear wheels on the ground, until the rear brakes have been released.

Auto Hold

Uses the car's ABS (Antilock Brake System) hydraulic pump to apply, and hold on, all four brakes when the engine is running and the car comes to a halt.

Driver Controls

The car has small pull up levers (actually on-off switches) on the central console to select each system. The photograph shows my car's central console behind the gear selector (it's an automatic gearbox).



The front switch allows the EHB to be applied, but this is usually unnecessary as the two systems work together to apply whichever is appropriate in the current circumstances.

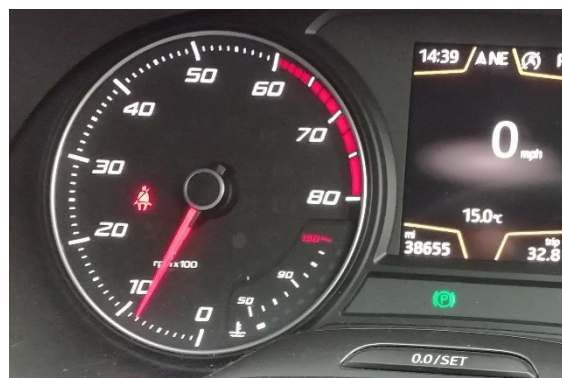
The EHB can still be used if there is a (extremely unlikely) failure of the hydraulic brake system. Pulling up, and holding, the EHB switch will apply the rear brakes. There is no sensitivity in the switch, the rear brakes are either off or fully on.

The rear switch selects whether the AH system is to be active or not.

In the 5-1/2 years I have owned the car I have left the AH active; although after a service the dealer often returns the car with AH off and I have to re-select it.

System Indicators

So that the driver knows when either system is holding the car stationary there are illuminated symbols in the instrument cluster. A red brake indicator for the EHB and a green brake indicator for AH, These are shown in the photograph below. Both lights are never on at the same time.



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Electronic handbrake and auto hold continued

Operation when driving

The easiest way to describe this is for you to imagine I'm taking you for a drive.

The last time I reversed onto my sloping drive and stopped the AH was automatically applied. When I switched off the ignition the EHB was applied to hold the car still and the AH became inoperative.

So when I next use the car the EHB is still operative and remains so when I start the car. As soon as I press the accelerator the EHB releases. If I am facing uphill it will not release until I have applied enough throttle to prevent the car rolling back.

Each time I come to a halt the AH is applied (and as my car has DSG, automatic Direct Shift Gearbox) the clutch is disengaged. When I use the acceleration to move off (as the car has DSG, the clutch re-engages) the AH releases but won't do so until I have applied enough throttle to prevent the car rolling back. This cycle repeats each time I stop. Finally when I park and switch off the ignition the EHB is applied to hold the car still and the AH became inoperative.

A disadvantage of AH on most cars is the brake lights are kept illuminated as long as the car is stationary. This can be irritating to the driver of the car behind, especially at night or in poor visibility. In most cases with EHB and AH this can be prevented, if the stop is to be more than a few seconds, by momentarily gently pulling up the EHB switch after the car has completely stopped. This applies the EHB & also releases the AH so no brake lights are then shown. When the car is driven away the EHB automatically releases and the AH is still 'live' for use at the next stop.

For more details of differences if your car has these systems please refer to your car's driver manual.

If any member has a car with EHB and AH but the systems operates differently to how I have described then if you state the car model and describe the differences in an email to me I will include it in the next Newsletter.

FUTURE EVENTS—NOVEMBER-JANUARY 2025

The following events will take place at Churchdown Community Centre, GL3 2JH

13th November

7.30 p.m.

Group Committee meeting

21st November

Group meeting

11th January

9.15 a.m.—2.00 p.m.

Introduction to Advanced

Driving Seminar (1 of 4)

(Please see the website for more information)

A Track Day Experience

How to open an article like this? On first glance it may seem to be about speed and performance, but my objective is to explain the Track Day experience from a Masters Mentor, road safety/advanced driving perspective. So on a platform that is heavily safety, economy, and technology focused – where does this article sit?

For me, the 'speed' element of a Track Day is not the primary focus, although lap times do provide an objective measurement of an improvement in a driver's performance.

The primary focus is, instead, the competence element – how well can I control a vehicle in a controlled environment? Not so that I can replicate it in public, although the ability to 'think fast' and manage emergencies is, arguably, improved through such an experience. I love IAM track days – I've done four. I have learned a lot, including how to kill a cone. So to extend on that learning I booked several track days in 2021 (before my 60th birthday). I thought I'd tell members about my experience. Starting with the preparation.

It's expensive. In fairness, the day itself isn't the major cost unless you book the Big Circuits (Brands, Silverstone), although it is all relative to income. You can hire a garage at some circuits if you wish. It goes without saying your car must be roadworthy if it's not a track special, but ensuring your car is up to it means you might fit new brake pads (and bed them in) and consider new(er) tyres. You'd buy them anyway, in time, so the biggest one-off, irrecoverable cost is – insurance. Ignore the ad for 'just £67 a day' - £250+ a day is easily paid out, although there is a broker who will insure for half that..

Prior to attending, I recommend viewing circuit videos – there are some professional videos on YouTube and watching them will identify any track-specific foibles, particularly challenging corners such as Quarry at Castle Combe, which has a bumpy bend right in the braking zone that has caught out many an uninformed driver.

On the day, strip the car of loose 'stuff', but carry a small, emergency tool kit and extra fluids. I didn't use mine but I was prepared. Fill up at a nearby supermarket, you'll be using a lot of fuel and will want to avoid premium retailers and the track-based provider. At the circuit your car will suffer a sound check – sitting in neutral at 4,500

revs hurt my sensibilities but any road car with an MOT should clear this hurdle. Then, after an obligatory safety briefing and (possibly) a familiarity drive with escort, you're let loose. You can pay for instruction but an IAM Trackday is enough to get you up to speed (sorry) on lines, braking and gear selection, so if you've had that magnificent experience you're probably set.

How did my first experience go? For my first drive I chose Castle Combe in Wiltshire. (It cost nearly as much as Brands Hatch but a hotel wasn't necessary.) Passing through Tiddlywink and Kent's Bottom en route, I arrived in plenty of time to prepare. . I spoke to anyone who'd been before as part of my Information phase. I noted that I was almost the oldest driver, and that my car was evidently the only bog-standard, unstripped and unmodified one present.

With my ESC firmly switched ON – as it would be on the road – I prepared to venture out. As I waited in the queue to enter the track, and heard a screech, and looked over my shoulder onto the track to see a green BMW saloon facing the wrong way up this one way street.

An obvious parallel with road driving was the need for extensive mirror use. I was frequently going to be passed by some powerful machines so IAM training was truly helpful. Whereas I have only been passed once on a Skills day, I was a mobile chicane here, and had obtained the yellow badge of shame that rookies should display. Fortunately, the briefing outlined that overtaking was only allowed on the right, was barred at certain points, and required the passee to communicate their awareness to the passer. Yes, on a racetrack I frequently took, used and gave information by indicator, as per IPSGA.

The driving itself, though faster than 'normal', was still IPSGA compliant. Approach the corners and brake to the appropriate entry speed, select the appropriate gear and drive through on the optimum line, guided by cones representing braking points (optimistic, I felt!), clipping/apex points and the exit points. I applied learning from a Skills day about where to focus my sight – *past* the apex (once identified) and on to the exit point. Thanks you, Barry. It pays to start tentatively: run off areas differ in size and Castle Combe has few.

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The organisers recommend 15 minute limits – I believe I initially lasted about three laps before the smell of my brakes caused me to leave the circuit and watch the smoke emit from the (newish) pads, causing a nearby participant to state, “No one can say you aren’t trying!” As the day went on the pads bedded in and I adjusted my braking application, so the brakes coped far better

The other drivers were extremely well behaved and overtaking was conducted patiently and safely. (Unlike on a later experience at Anglesey Circuit, where some BMW boy racers were particularly troublesome to the organisers.)

I caused the occasional queues in the prohibited areas – Caterham 7s, a Radical, a plethora of race-ready MX5s – but I accepted the limitations of my Ford Focus ST estate and quietly surrendered to the inevitable. Yet there was no sense of pressure – no flashing lamps, just pure patience. I found that the advantage of being the slower car (!) is that eventually you feel as if you have the track to yourself. Everyone else has gone.

I had a few goals for the day – to enjoy myself, to learn about my car and myself, and to beat the Stig’s lap time. I achieved them. I beat the Stig by 4 seconds. Okay, he used a Vauxhall Astra diesel and I had a 254bhp Focus but I’ll take the win.

All in all I would describe the organisation and experience as enjoyable, educational, and expensive.

I manged about 80 miles at the circuit, and 10 mpg. I drove home in 6th gear....



David Palmer

ADVANCE NOTICE

**The next newsletter will be published in
DECEMBER. Articles can be sent to the Editor ANY
TIME up to Monday 23rd December**

PASSING MY ADVANCED TEST HAS ENABLED ME TO GIVE SOMETHING BACK

by Richard Smith

"An electrical engineer by trade, my world and that of my family was turned upside down in 2019 when I was diagnosed with cancer. With three young sons and a loving wife, my future suddenly looked very uncertain and it was a very stressful time for all of us. However, I'm pleased to say that 2024 marks my fifth year in remission. But whilst receiving treatment, I witnessed firsthand the vital service that local Blood Bike charity Severn Freewheelers EVS (*Emergency Voluntary Service*) provides; and as a keen driver, I decided that volunteering with them would be my way of giving something back to the NHS after it had treated me."

Formed in 2007, Severn Freewheelers EVS is a dedicated group of volunteers committed to providing a fast, reliable out-of-hours courier service to the NHS across Gloucestershire, Worcestershire, Herefordshire and Swindon / North Wiltshire. The team consists of highly trained advanced motorcyclists and drivers who all give their time freely to help save lives. Operating 365 days per year, they cover evenings, weekends and public holidays - when NHS courier services are usually limited or unavailable. A group of co-ordinators oversee a fleet of nine motorcycles and a response car in each county area, offering a free-to-user transport service that ensures hospitals and healthcare facilities can receive critical deliveries of blood, plasma, medications, donated human milk and medical equipment, quickly and efficiently.



"Before I could join Severn Freewheelers as a response driver, I was told I would need to take an advanced driving course. So in February 2024, I signed up for the IAM course with Gloucestershire Advanced Motorists. My Observer James Baker was superb throughout and we completed six observed drives together. On test I was thrilled to be awarded with a F1st by examiner Carolyn Menteith, and I am now looking forward to progressing 'on' to Masters."

As part of the nationwide network of Blood Bike charities, Severn Freewheelers' mission is simple but impactful: to help reduce financial and logistical burdens on the NHS. Their service is funded entirely by donations and fundraising efforts and they rely on the generosity of individuals, businesses and community organisations to keep their vehicles on the road. Funds raised go towards fleet maintenance and fuel, along with purchasing the specialist equipment needed to transport sensitive medical supplies safely.

To find out more about Severn Freewheelers EVS, or to support them with a donation, use the QR code, or visit their website: <https://severnfreewheelers.org.uk>



A Tribute to Glos IAM From Charles Keys

In January 2024 I decided it was the right time to do something I'd been wanting to for a while: enrol on the IAM Roadsmart Advanced Driving course. I passed my DVSA driving test in late 2016 and quickly realised when I began driving that I had an interest to continue learning; I would still find myself watching instructional videos from driving instructors on YouTube, which evolved into more advanced content, and I was introduced to the IAM.

I received a warm welcome from the Gloucestershire Group initially, then my Observer, Andrew Bowden, got in touch to arrange my free taster session. This was extremely helpful, as even in the short time he observed me driving, Andrew picked up on several aspects which required improvement, but it was also reassuring to hear that there were also a few things I was doing right! Following this I decided to commit to the course, and as I enrolled within one month of my taster session, I received £25 cashback from the Group.

Before starting the observed sessions, I attended the half-day Saturday seminar by Mike Addis, which was engaging and very informative. Attending this before starting the observed sessions was well timed, as it gave an excellent introduction to the System, which was then brought to life with the observed sessions.

The course was everything I wanted it to be: interesting, eye-opening, challenging, but also fun! It has completely transformed my driving style, especially in regard to cornering, use of the gearbox and (mostly!) eliminating brake-gear overlap. Even simple things, such as steering technique and my hand position on the wheel, which over the years had slipped into a lazy 'twenty to four' position, were rapidly corrected!

After a few sessions with Andrew I had a demonstration drive by James Baker in his manual car, and following this he observed me. This really helped to refine my use of the gearbox, as having been taught as a learner driver to try and get into the highest gear as quickly as possible, meant that I would find myself racing up through the gears, often bypassing the extremely flexible intermediate gears, just to try and keep my rev counter 'happy'! It wasn't until I observed James making full use of third and fourth gear whilst driving at, or close to, the national speed limit that I appreciated how useful these gears are for acceleration sense, balance when cornering and just feeling that the car is more 'planted' on the road surface.

Finally, it was time to put my skills to the test, and I was quickly put at ease by my examiner, Carolyn Menteith. The route she chose was varied and interesting with plenty of hazards to negotiate and commentate on, but I genuinely enjoyed the drive. I was overjoyed when she informed me that I had passed with a F1RST! Following Carolyn's suggestion, I have enrolled on the Masters programme and am already looking forward to the further challenges that await me.



Observer Development Day Saturday 5th October 2024

There were eleven attendees at Churchdown for the latest in a series of Observer Development Days organised by Gary Smith our Chief Observer. The numbers included one of our local Examiners and a guest Observer from Gwent plus two possible Trainee Observers. After introductions were made we settled in to hear news and updates from IAM Roadsmart followed by an open discussion on observing and examining. Gary gave some figures which showed that the Gloucestershire Group has performed well so far this year with results indicating a F1st pass rate of 43% compared with 16% last year and 20% in the previous.

We then split into groups for the first of three drives out, giving each Observer a chance to give a demo drive and for the passenger to offer any constructive comments. This exercise was deemed successful for those taking part and several had made mental notes to take back to their next drives with an Associate. Every day's a school day.

A superb free lunch had been laid out by Sue and there was plenty for everyone, including a doggy bag at the end of the day. Thank-you Sue.

After lunch it was another couple of drives with changes of driver and passenger and finally back to Churchdown Hall for an open discussion and feedback. One of Robert's Associates (Tesla driver) had devised a useful acronym to possibly replace POWDERY for ev drivers.

i-CHARGE

- I I am fit to drive
- C Charge level – Ensure battery has sufficient charge for the journey
- H High Voltage System – Check HVS is operational and secure
- A Accessory power – Verify functionality of 12v systems (lights, wipers, heater, infotainment)
- R Rubber – Inspect tyres for legality, pressure, damage and also wiper blades
- G Grid connection – Ensure charge cable is disconnected and stored correctly
- E Electronics – Verify operation of all critical electronic systems, including regenerative braking, lights and dashboard indicators

All together a very useful and enjoyable day, thank-you Gary



From Associate to Qualified Advanced Driver: My Experience

Matthew Penley

I have recently completed the Institute of Advanced Motorist's Advanced Driving Course and I am now a qualified Advanced Driver. I was asked by Rod Harrison to prepare a short article on my experience, as his may be of interest to others thinking of embarking on the course.

Following a move to Cheltenham earlier this year, I have been driving more often as part of my work in professional services including commuting to work, traveling between different branch offices and driving to meetings, often with a colleague. Also, I seem to be driving more at weekends mainly visiting friends and family. I wanted to ensure that my driving was always safe, smooth and fully legal.

This course provides the associate driver with an opportunity to learn the IPSGA system and hone their driving through a series of observed drives with an experienced member of the IAM. There is also the opportunity to learn spoken thought commentary while driving. The observer will pick up on small issues with the candidate's driving and provide a short written report after each drive outlining areas to work on. The process ends with a driving test taking approximately an hour and a half, including motorway driving, urban areas and country roads.

I found the course useful in terms of learning new driving techniques, trying to iron out a few bad habits and making sure I got the most out of the features and driver assistance systems in my car. In addition to that, the course was, in its own way, quite good fun. I passed the test on the first attempt, though there are still a few areas for me to work on.

The course seems to represent good value for money and I would recommend this course to anyone who drives quite a lot and would like to improve their driving. Many younger drivers may well perceive that although they have passed the national driving test, there is more they could learn and this course may be the solution for that person. The one thing the course cannot help with is overseas driving, though it is often much the same with one important difference!

The qualification is something I could put on my CV and, as I said before, I would recommend it to others.



Volunteers required

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. This follows a recommendation from the National Older Driver Task Force. The trial has substantial funding from The Road Safety Trust to include an academic review, which is being led by Dr Carol Hawley, principal research fellow at Warwick University and Ian Edwards from Newview consultants. Over the next 12 months ODF Gloucestershire will be recruiting 50 drivers in 65+ age group to participate in the trial by attending an assessment. The assessments in Gloucestershire will be carried out by specially trained IAM RoadSmart ADIs. Funding from the Gloucestershire Road Safety Partnership enables these assessments to be free-of-charge.

If you are willing to assist in the trial please email odfglos@gmail.com and put "National Trial" as the subject.

Phil's call for volunteers is timely—see article from another contributor, below. *Ed.*

Scottish judge calls for compulsory tests for over-80 drivers after fatal crash

It was reported on Radio 4 yesterday that in Scotland it is being suggested that drivers of 80+ should undergo a series of cognitive tests. Joan Bakewell was interviewed and, in her opinion, older drivers need to ask themselves whether they are still capable of driving.

"... the UK government should require all drivers over 80 to take a short cognitive test to renew their licence, in addition to the current system, where drivers over 70 must apply afresh to keep their licence. Better still, ministers could even consider lowering the age for compulsory cognitive testing to 75 ..."

The Driver and Vehicle Licensing Agency (DVLA), which oversees licensing in the UK, said it was studying the ruling.

No one as yet has suggested elderly drivers contact the local Institute of Advanced Motorists group and seek their advice. We need to get the word out that we can help.