

**Bishop's Palace, Wells**



**Forward**

**Newsletter of  
Somerset & Wiltshire Advanced  
Motorists**

[www.swam-iam.org.uk](http://www.swam-iam.org.uk)

Registered Charity No 1050592

# Committee Members and other Group Contacts

**President – Helen Schofield**

**Vice Presidents – Judith Pepler, David Gallagher**

<b>Group Chair</b>	John Morley	☎ 01380 828618( <i>home</i> ) ☎ 07562 266303 ( <i>mobile</i> ) chair@swam-iam.org.uk
<b>Deputy Chair</b>	Lindsay Flower	☎ 07968 126162 ( <i>mobile</i> ) deputychair@swam-iam.org.uk
<b>Group Secretary</b>	Rosemary Tandy	☎ 01985 846643 secretary@swam-iam.org.uk
<b>Group Treasurer</b>	Clare Hogg	☎ 01749 343059 accounts@swam-iam.org.uk
<b>Chief Observer</b>	David Major	☎ 01985 217050( <i>home</i> ) ☎ 07743 246746 ( <i>mobile</i> ) chiefobserver@swam-iam.org.uk
<b>Associates Co-ordinator</b>	David Major	☎ 01985 217050( <i>home</i> ) ☎ 07743 246746 ( <i>mobile</i> ) associatescoordinator@swam-iam.org.uk
<b>Membership Secretary</b>	Peter Huntington	☎ 07703 000263 ( <i>mobile</i> ) membership@swam-iam.org.uk
<b>Minutes Secretary</b>	Sue Phillips	☎ 01225 849058 minutes@swam-iam.org.uk
<b>Newsletter Editor</b>	Clare Hogg	☎ 01749 343059 newsletter@swam-iam.org.uk
<b>Public Relations Officer</b>	Robin Clark	☎ 07974 764094 ( <i>mobile</i> ) pr@swam-iam.org.uk
<b>Young Driver Representative - David Gallagher email: <a href="mailto:youngdriver@swam-iam.org.uk">youngdriver@swam-iam.org.uk</a></b>		
<b>E-mail enquiries about SWAM: <a href="mailto:deputychair@swam-iam.org.uk">deputychair@swam-iam.org.uk</a></b>		[Please pass this on to potential new members to join SWAM.]
<b>Telephone enquiries about SWAM to Lindsay Flower: 07968 126162 (mobile)</b>		
<b>Website</b>	Adrian Plummer	<a href="mailto:webmaster@swam-iam.org.uk">webmaster@swam-iam.org.uk</a>
<b>Social media - Twitter: @SomersetWiltsAM; Facebook: <a href="https://www.facebook.com/SomersetWiltsAM">https://www.facebook.com/SomersetWiltsAM</a>.</b>		

# Somerset & Wiltshire Advanced Motorists

(Registered Charity No. 1050592)

FEBRUARY - APRIL 2022

**Forward**

Issue 8

## Contents

Notice of AGM	3	Changes to the Highway Code	13
Editorial	4	Quiz	15
Next publication date	4	Skill at the Wheel—9	16
Message from the Chairman	5	Proposals for future meetings	21
Details of AGM	6	Quiz answers	22
Group News	7	Tale Light	23
Welcome new Associates	12	Future Events	24
Congratulations	13	Editorial disclaimer	24
Welcome New Associates	13		

## **NOTICE OF ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING**

The AGM of Somerset and Wiltshire Advanced Motorists will be held on Thursday 17th March 2022 at Beckington Memorial Hall if possible, otherwise on Zoom, beginning at 19.30.

Nominations for the vacant positions on the Committee (see page 6), which must be proposed, seconded and bear the signature of the nominee signifying his or her consent to the nomination, plus items for the Agenda, need to be sent to the Group Secretary to reach her by Friday 11th March **at the latest**. Note that the new committee, to serve for the year 2022-23, plus any approved changes to the Supplementary Items to the Group's Rules of Affiliation, will not be effective until Thursday 24th March 2022.

After the formal AGM, our Young Driver Representative and Vice-President, David Gallagher, will be speaking to us.

The address of Beckington Memorial Hall is Bath Road, Beckington, Frome, BA11 6SH (just off the A36).

## EDITORIAL

Welcome to the latest edition of *Forward*. As you will see, the AGM is coming up in March and information about it is on pages 3 and 6. We very much hope that we will be able to hold the meeting at Beckington Memorial Hall but, if conditions do not allow that, then it will be on Zoom. The speaker will be our Vice-President, David Gallagher, and we look forward to welcoming him to our meeting again.

Also in this edition you will see an article (page 21) about how we are hoping to arrange our meetings for future years, and about events we hope to attend during the year. These plans are proposed but we welcome suggestions from members for other ideas, so please get in touch if you have anything you would like us to do. We are always happy to receive suggestions for speakers so if you know of anybody who you think would be a good person to invite to speak to us, please let us know. One advantage of holding some of our meetings on Zoom is that we can invite speakers from anywhere in the country.

There is also an article (page 13) about the changes to the Highway Code which came into force in January. Many drivers (not Advanced drivers, I hasten to add) never look at the High-

way Code after they have passed their driving test so it is very important that these changes, which will affect all road users, are taken on board.

Once again we are publishing one of Andy Poulton's 'Skill at the Wheel' series and you may notice that we are going straight from number 7 in the last issue to number 9 in this one. 'Skill at the Wheel' 8 will appear in a later issue of *Forward*. The reason for switching them round is because number 9 is about Night Driving which is very appropriate in the winter. Night driving is not something which is discussed very often, but you may also notice that we plan to have our evening meeting in October as an opportunity to drive at night with an Observer so that we can all get some good advice about how to drive safely at night.

Finally, apologies for an error which appeared in the answers to Andy Poulton's September quiz (answer 3 on page 9 of *Forward* 7). Catgut is not sourced from squirrels but from sheep. Thank you to Valerie Bearne for pointing this out.

*Clare Hogg*

*John Morley*

*Sue Phillips*

**The next edition of *Forward* will be published in May 2022. Please submit motoring-related articles and / or digital photographs to the Editors (*who reserve the right to edit them*) by Friday 1 April at the latest. Names of authors and their home addresses should be disclosed to the Editors who will withhold them from publication on request.**

## A MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIRMAN

Hello and welcome to the first edition of the newsletter for 2022.

I hope that you and your families all had a merry Christmas and a happy New Year.

It was originally intended that the group would hold a Christmas party at Beckington. Unfortunately the virus struck again, and arrangements had to be made to hold a Christmas quiz via Zoom. Those who logged on found the quiz great fun, and it was won by Jeffrey Chourlarton who is to be presented with a bottle of wine. Unfortunately, only a small number of members attended, which was very disappointing, in particular for the organisers. Please bear in mind that the committee does its best to organise group meetings via Zoom, or at Beckington, and it would therefore be much appreciated if more members would join in. Details of future group meetings will be found in this edition of *Forward*.

In the last issue of *Forward*, I mentioned that we had made a bid for funds from the Melksham Town Council. It was proposed that free membership could be provided to drivers within the Melksham area, with the intent that this would improve safety on our roads. This bid was made against strong competition, and unfortunately it was resolved not to award SWAM the grant at the time as Councillors felt that the project benefitted individuals more than the community, and they should therefore pay the fees themselves.

On the subject of membership, the group is doing quite well. We currently have 189 full members and 40 registered Associates, of which 19 are active. We have 25 Observers, two Trainee Observers, and three Trainee Masters. During the last year 16 Associates passed the advanced test, with six gaining a F1RST. Well done to the Observers.

During last year the committee has been busy identifying and achieving the group's set of Objectives. These have included broadcasts on live radio, plans to attend at least two public events, and plans to approach local groups (e.g. car clubs, Lions, WI etc).

Our publicity officer Robin Clark has made enquiries regarding SWAM attending the Middlewick House Open Garden event. Whilst not obvious, this event is a hive of interest for 'petrolheads'. Middlewick House is owned by Nick Mason (Pink Floyd) and he opens the grounds once a year to host this event, which includes displays of vehicles from his extensive car collection. See: <https://middlewickhouseopengarden.com>. We are hoping that we will be allocated a suitable pitch for our gazebo to be placed near to the cars on display.

For those members who are not on standing order for membership renewal, please ensure that you renew your membership for 2022.

Please enjoy reading this issue of *Forward*, and if you have any ideas for future editions please contact our editor Clare Hogg.

John Morley  
Chairman, SWAM

---

## **NOTICE OF ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING—17th March 2022**

The Annual General Meeting of Somerset and Wiltshire Advanced Motorists will take place on Thursday 17th March 2022, beginning at 19.30.

It is hoped to hold the 2022 AGM in person at Beckington Memorial Hall but if restrictions in place at the time do not allow this, the meeting will be held on Zoom. Voting for the Committee positions will be held at the meeting but any member unable to attend the AGM may vote by contacting the Group Secretary before the meeting.

The Committee positions, and the members currently holding them are:

Group Chair:	John Morley
Deputy Chair:	Lindsay Flower
Group Secretary:	Rosemary Tandy
Group Treasurer:	Clare Hogg
Chief Observer/Associates Co-ordinator:	David Major
Membership Secretary:	Peter Huntington
Minutes Secretary:	Sue Phillips
Newsletter Editor:	Clare Hogg
Public Relations Officer:	Robin Clark

Nominations for these positions on the Committee, which must be proposed, seconded and bear the signature of the nominee signifying his or her consent to the nomination, plus items for the Agenda, must be sent to the Group Secretary to reach her by Friday 11th March **at the latest**. The full list of nominations for the Committee positions will be posted on the group website prior to the meeting. Members unable to access the website ([www.swam-iam.org.uk](http://www.swam-iam.org.uk)) are asked to contact the Group Secretary for this information.

Note that the election of the new committee, to serve for the year 2022-23, plus any proposed changes to the Supplementary items to the Group's Rules of Affiliation, will be effective from Thursday 24th March 2022.

Anyone intending to stand for election to the Committee must be aware that all the Committee members act as Trustees for the charity which is Somerset

and Wiltshire Advanced Motorists and are thus liable to follow the legal requirements of HM Charity Commissioners.

All the existing Committee members are willing to stand again for their current positions on the Committee.

---

## GROUP NEWS

**The October meeting was held at** Beckington Memorial Hall. John Morley, Chairman, opened the meeting by welcoming everybody who attended, with a special welcome for John Baker, a reporter with the *Wiltshire Times*, and his wife.

John then introduced Robin Clark, Public Relations Officer of SWAM, to give his talk on 'The Challenges of Towing'.

Robin began by saying he was not going to teach us how to tow a caravan, but to highlight the challenges of towing from an advanced driver's perspective, as they encounter vehicles towing caravans and trailers on our roads.

Robin said he had passed his advanced driving test just over a year ago and remarked on the similarities of advanced driving and towing, such as the importance of checking the mirrors, good observation and looking well ahead, particularly as it can take considerably longer to stop when towing, due to the extra weight and potential for instability.

First, he addressed safety issues and the most common problem, snaking. This could be due to various reasons such as speeding, sudden swerving, strong crosswinds, the caravan being badly loaded, the tyre pressures not being checked, or being overtaken. This last emphasises the need for other drivers to give cars towing

caravans or trailers plenty of room and not to cut in front of them.

He stressed the importance of the POWDERY test that all Advanced Drivers undertake before setting off on any journey. However, when towing he suggested that 'POWDERY' could be applied in a slightly different way:

**P** is not only petrol, but the driver must ensure the caravan is **Packed Properly**.

**O** is to check whether the trailer is **On**. He related a story about a driver who had attached his caravan to his car without first removing the towball cover. Consequently when pulling away, the cover came off and the trailer parted company with the towing vehicle!

**W** is not only water, but the driver must ensure that the **Weight** is evenly distributed and within the stated limits. Belongings must be properly packed, not just stuffed in anyhow to get everything in, because bad packing helps induce snaking.

Robin said that when he first started towing, about 15 years ago, he went on a manoeuvring course, but statistically it appears not many people do this.

Robin also highlighted the growth in caravanning and caravan sales. According to 2019 figures, Germany was the biggest country in Europe in terms of sales with 27,000, followed

by the UK with 18,000. France and the Netherlands, by contrast, total only 15,000, but sales figures are rising across the board. There are 550,000 active caravans in the UK and caravanning holidays are becoming more popular.

Robin went on to consider some of the other challenges of towing. First he spoke about visibility: with normal car mirrors the driver will struggle to see the sides of the caravan and rear view visibility will be severely hampered so the driver cannot see vehicles which are too close or about to overtake. It is important – indeed law – to attach extension mirrors to improve the view of the sides and rear of the caravan.



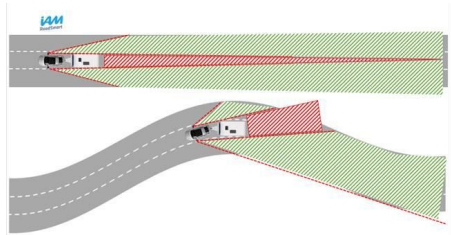
View without extension mirrors



View with extension mirrors

Second, he discussed the problem of bends, especially at higher speeds on the motorway. In a series of slides, Robin demonstrated the restricted view the driver has and how he loses visibility when going

round bends. Other drivers need to be aware of this when following any long vehicle.



Robin included mention of different towing limits, which depend on when the driver passed the driving test. If this was before January 1997, a driver can pull a combined weight of 8.25 tonnes (though with additional weight constraints for those aged 70 or over). If it was after January 1997, a driver is restricted to 3.5 tonnes. To exceed that limit a driver must take another test. However, in September 2021 that test was scrapped and there is no longer any formal training. New limits are to be introduced but these have not yet been confirmed. Trainers and examiners have been taken off the tests in order to train and examine more lorry drivers because of the current shortage.

Robin also spoke about the dangers of side winds. All drivers should be aware when overtaking high sided vehicles, particularly car transporters, that side winds affect the handling of their cars. They should also be aware that, when passing a car and caravan, the tunnel effect caused by the overtaking vehicle(s) may make the towed vehicle more unstable, and he recommended leaving extra space between the vehicles involved. Robin then answered questions from the audience. One concerned the problems of satnav. Robin said the Caravan Club recommend using a



special satnav designed for towing vehicles, which avoids narrow roads and low bridges. Unfortunately, this version is expensive and therefore not widely used.

There was a question about snaking. Robin said that there is less likelihood of snaking when going uphill. Drivers towing vehicles should consider reducing their speed when going downhill, especially if the road is wet, or if it is windy. If the vehicle starts snaking, the driver should gradually slow down and avoid the sudden use of their brakes.

A question was asked about the differences between front- and rear-wheel drive. Robin said that rear-wheel drive is preferable to front-wheel drive. However, with fewer rear-wheel drive cars on the roads today that becomes a challenge and whilst front-wheel drive cars are perfectly safe, the ideal option is probably four-wheel drive.

John thanked Robin for his interesting and useful presentation.

**The November meeting was held** on Zoom and Chairman, John Morley, introduced our speaker for the evening, Tony Greenidge. Tony is the current CEO of IAM RoadSmart (IAMRS) and has been in post for four years; he will be leaving next March. During that time he has had to deal with the covid pandemic.

Tony had been an Associate with the Melksham group and his Observer, Nick Elton, was present so Nick also said a few words to welcome him to our SWAM meeting.

Tony went on to talk about IAMRS as an organisation and he said that IAMRS Headquarters were very appreciative of all the work the

groups and their volunteers do. He said that the organisation's business model would not work without the volunteers.

Last year the impact of the pandemic was very positive financially with the operating profit one of the best in the last 20 years. So how was this achieved? Tony is from a commercial background with the ethos that what you do, you do profitably. IAMRS needed to look at what it was doing and make sure it was not wasting money and took opportunities to be more efficient. So, contracts were looked at and tightened up and made sure that they were delivered. Most of IAMRS's money is generated by members' subscription fees and must be spent wisely. Financially IAMRS is in a secure and stable position now, but that wasn't always the case as in the fairly recent past there were losses of more than £1million in a year.

Apart from the members' side of IAMRS, there are other businesses such as Drink Drive and Fleet, which caters for businesses. Drink Drive is a business started in 2013-14 and its purpose is to improve road safety. Convicted drivers have the option of taking part in a three-day rehabilitation course. It is not about driving but about the driver's relationship with alcohol, to understand and support them with a view to improving road safety. There is a time limit within which the course must be completed. It is three days, one a week for three weeks, and is classroom based. It is a moving experience to witness a person going through the programme. Many of the drivers had made errors of judgement and were not alcoholics.

How drink driving has impacted lives is not always appreciated. One person who was a very good sportsman with guns, almost to Olympic level, lost his gun licence because of his conviction. The programme helps to make a genuine difference. It is hoped to run similar Drug Driving courses in the future.

The onset of the covid pandemic in early 2020 meant that the courses could not continue in person and Tony lobbied the government to put courses online. The authorities resisted but IAMRS pressed their case because of the time limit. The DVSA & Welsh government eventually said yes and 4,500 drivers have taken the course online. IAMRS is the largest provider of Drink Drive in England and Wales and the business is doing well.

Fleet has suffered a bit in the pandemic over the last 18 months but there is now e-learning available. Another route is to provide education to businesses about their responsibilities. There is a requirement on businesses to provide risk management to drivers. This is difficult to apply and very hard to enforce. If a driver kills a person while driving for a business but has no licence, the business is responsible.

It is now more common not to provide a company car but to provide money for an employee to buy their own car, but the business is still responsible when the employee is driving for work. Many businesses don't know that. Only one in five businesses look after risk management appropriately and there are very few enforcements.

Businesses now doing deals with IAMRS include HMRC, Manchester

United and the Health and Safety Executive (HSE). It is quite a coup that the HSE selected IAMRS for their driver road training.

The main work of IAMRS is driver/rider training. There are 76,000 members and this number has been declining for the last 20 years. By most standards, the loyalty of members is fantastic. 87-88% renew each year and recently this has been 90-92%, but we are not gaining new members.

In 2019-20 there were more rider courses sold than driver courses for the first time, and this has continued to 2020-21 – perhaps this is a reflection of the pandemic and it being easier to train Associates on bikes. It is also the case that many groups are not yet up and running again after the start of the pandemic in March 2020.

What is the direction going forward and how will outside factors impact us? For example, there is the phasing out of petrol and diesel, the green agenda, technology – with autonomous cars there would be no need for driver training.

There are large portions of our potential market we have still to attract, in particular, younger and older drivers. There is more work to do to engage with them so how do we make our courses more attractive? Some groups have young driver programmes but young drivers don't necessarily retain membership. (Lincolnshire has a very good young driver recruitment scheme but not one of the successful Associates remained members of the IAM.) Since restrictions lifted in April, courses sold are still 20% down on pre-pandemic levels.

So, what do we have to offer them?

More information is being sent to members about member offers and more people are taking an interest. There has also been good feedback to the revamped magazine.

Insurance is one of the main benefits on offer, but Tony felt that Cornmarket had become complacent and he has worked with them to help members get good deals. With Cornmarket one in two people sign up who ask for a quote, and over 80% renew, but there is still work to be done. Comparison websites charge the insurers £60 for including them on their sites. Cornmarket is having a complete revamp of its website and will have its own version of a comparison website. You put in your details, and they will give between three and six offers and will help you choose the best one. Tony would not continue the contract with Cornmarket if it came up for renewal now, so they are trying hard to improve before it does.

The IAMRS website is being updated and they are trying to give members the feeling that they are getting something over and above group membership. However it could still be better. There is a central web hub which groups can use but they need confidence that it will work. Two thirds of groups have their own website but IAMRS would like all groups to be able to use the IAMRS website.

The DARTS system for the use of groups' administration was introduced by necessity because the old system was no longer going to be supported. It had to be done within a year, which was achieved broadly on time and on budget, but it does not give everything which was wanted. Changes are to be made in DARTS phase 2.

IAMRS punches above its weight as regards exposure in newspapers and radio and TV and compared with the RAC etc. we do particularly well, for example in getting local stories published. The Road Safety Forum road collision investigation branch asked if IAMRS would sit on the committee which says a lot about the standing of IAMRS, and it has been paid £30,000 for research on older drivers.

In summary, Tony said that IAMRS had come through the pandemic in an excellent financial state, it has increasing influence with government stakeholders, it is adapting to a changing role and has the funds to do that, and it can look forward to the future with confidence.

Following Tony's talk several people asked questions. One related to e-learning and it was pointed out that younger drivers in particular would welcome online courses. Tony agreed that there was a need for change and said that modules are being developed. There is e-learning on the website but it is hard to access and an app leading straight to it would be an asset.

The website itself was also raised and the lack of a search facility was mentioned as a drawback. Tony agreed that there was a need for change and said that it needed a lot of money spending on it to make it fit for purpose.

A question was asked about what IAMRS' five-year strategic plan is. Tony said that it would be the job of the new CEO to take on responsibility for this. It would include an aspiration to engage more with young drivers.

The question was raised of competi-

tion with other providers of Advanced Driver/Rider training, for example RoSPA which has a cheaper course than IAMRS. Tony said that £149 for the IAMRS course was exceptional value. He also mentioned that IAMRS' Drink Drive programme cost £150 and was competing with courses costing less than £100 but it is still doing well.

Finally, there was a question about breakdown insurance. Without insurance the cost of repair of a car can be very expensive, and shopping around for breakdown cover can halve the cost. Tony said he would look into how Cornmarket deals with this issue.

John Morley thanked Tony for his talk and information and wished him well for the future.

**Unfortunately, because of increasing covid infections in December,** it was reluctantly decided to hold the Christmas meeting on Zoom instead of having a party at Beckington Memorial Hall.

John Morley, SWAM Chair, opened the proceedings by welcoming everyone. He explained that there would be a quiz, courtesy of AHA Slides, which had been organised by Peter Huntington, with the help of Robin Clark.

Many participants brought their own beverages, some had Christmas hats and the event was very lively. All the questions were car related and included 'What average speed did the E Type Jaguar achieve in tests, in 1961? 100mph, 115mph or 150mph' and 'Trotters Independent Traders van is a: Reliant Regal, Reliant Robin, or Reliant Wreck'.

The scoring was listed halfway through and the eventual winner was Jeffrey Choularton who was rewarded with a bottle of wine for his efforts. He was closely followed by Leigh Woodham (2nd) and Paul Pywell (3<sup>rd</sup>). Well done to all the participants.

At the end of the quiz John thanked Peter for arranging it and he thanked people for taking part.

## *We Welcome New Associates*

<b>Nigel Barlow</b>	[Observer: John Morley]
<b>Joe Branston</b>	[Observer: John Bradley]
<b>Mark Bryan</b>	[Observer: John Bradley]
<b>Ben Davis</b>	[Observer: Paul Pywell]
<b>Catherine Galley</b>	[Observer: Paul Moignard]
<b>Callum Liddell</b>	[Observer: Ray Robbetts]
<b>Roger Rhodes</b>	[Observer: Nick Elton]
<b>Sally Wililamson</b>	[Observer: Lindsay Flower]

## **We Congratulate**

### ***IAMRS Test Pass***

<b>Mark Bryan*</b>	observed by John Bradley
<b>Jocelyn Clark</b>	observed by Lindsay Flower
<b>Rachel Harries</b>	observed by Graham Bennett
<b>Gabriel Nitecki</b>	observed by Val Czerny
<b>Michael Twitchett*</b>	observed by Lindsay Flower

\*FIRST pass

### ***IAM Masters Pass***

**Craig Jamieson\*\***

**John Morley\*\***

\*\* with distinction

Both candidates were mentored by David Major

## **CHANGES TO THE HIGHWAY CODE**

There are changes to the Highway Code which came into force on 29 January 2022, having been approved by Parliament. These include a new 'Hierarchy of Road Users', new rules for using mobile phones whilst

driving, and use of the 'Dutch Reach' for opening a vehicle door.

The '**Hierarchy of Road Users**' is a concept that places those road users most at risk in the event of a collision at the top of the hierarchy. It recog-

nises that those who drive motorised vehicles must give way to more vulnerable road users. Pedestrians (including wheelchair users and mobility scooters) are the most vulnerable, then cyclists followed by horse riders. Then come motorcyclists, cars and taxis, vans and minibuses, and finally large passenger vehicles and HGVs. None of this detracts from the responsibility of ALL road users, including pedestrians, cyclists and horse riders, to have regard for their own and other road users' safety.

Other updates which have been included clarify existing rules on pedestrian priority on pavements and reaffirm that drivers and riders should give way to pedestrians crossing or waiting to cross the road, establish guidance on safe passing distances and speeds when overtaking cyclists or horse riders, and ensure they have priority at junctions when travelling straight ahead.

The law regarding use of a hand-held **mobile phone** whilst driving has been tightened up (Rule 149 of the new Highway Code). It was already illegal to text or make a phone call (other than in an emergency) using a hand-held device while driving. New laws go further to ban drivers from using their phones to take photos or videos, scroll through playlists or play games.

This will mean anyone caught using their hand-held device while driving will face a £200 fixed penalty notice and six points on their licence.

Drivers will still be able to continue using a device 'hands-free' while driving, such as a sat-nav, if it's secured in a cradle. They must,

however, always take responsibility for their driving and can be charged with an offence if the police find them not to be in proper control of their vehicle.

The '**Dutch Reach**' (Rule 239 of the new Highway Code) is a law primarily aimed at protecting cyclists, but will also ensure drivers, and passengers, are able to spot vulnerable road users as they open their doors to get out of the car.

This method of opening a car door is simply using the hand which is further from the door to open it as you exit, naturally making your body turn towards the door and increase your chances of spotting an approaching person/motorcycle/cycle. It is used by anyone opening a car door, driver or passenger.

Rule 239 states: 'You should open the door using your hand on the opposite side to the door you are opening, e.g. use your left hand to open a door on your right-hand side.

'This will make you turn your head to look over your shoulder. You are then more likely to avoid causing injury to cyclists or motorcyclists passing you on the road, or to people on the pavement.'

It is highly recommended that you obtain a copy of the new Highway Code as soon as it is published, and in the meantime, it is available online.

[Acknowledgements are made to Graham Feest's Traffic Safety Roads, the Highway Code, and GOV.UK's website.]

## QUIZ set by John Morley

1	What car manufacturing group did Hillman, Humber, and Sunbeam belong to?	BMC; British Leyland; or Rootes?
2	What did the Saab company produce other than cars?	Boats; Aircraft; or Railway Engines?
3	What sports car manufacturer produced cars at Westbury in Wiltshire?	Marcos; Healy; or MG?
4	The Aston Martin DBS was showcased in which 2006 film?	The Departed; Casino Royale; The Fast and the Furious; Tokyo Drift; or Cars?
5	What is the term for bypassing a gear when changing gear?	Double declutch; Block changing; or Gear skipping?
6	What motorway was Chris Rea referring to in his song 'The Road to Hell'?	M4; M6; M25; or M8?
7	What term describes the stickiness of oil?	Grade; Liquidity; or Viscosity?
8	Originally released in 1997, the Toyota Prius was the first mass-produced hybrid car. What does the Latin word 'Prius' mean?	In the lead; Coming before; or Most important

Answers on page 22

## SKILL AT THE WHEEL — 9 by Andy Poulton

### *What's it like in the **DARK***

#### *Your 'GUIDE' to driving at night*

One of the most common faults of driving at night is a driver over-driving their lights.

**Roadcraft** tip: 'You should always drive so as to be able to stop within the area that you can see to be clear; at night this is the area lit by your headlights.'

What does all this mean?

Well, a new word creeps in here –

#### **"PERCEPTION"**

– which is different from 'seeing'.

Let me explain.

In **Roadcraft** driver reaction time was defined as the time that passes between the moment a driver observes the need for action and the moment, he takes that action.

At night –

first, the headlamps have to illuminate the object or hazard

then, you have to work out or decide what it is!!

then, comes reaction time.

According to the findings of a number of tests and experiments, a driver with average headlamps, who is travelling at 35 mph, can pick out a pedestrian in dark clothing at 210 feet – as long as there are NO approaching headlamps. If the headlamps are three times as powerful (for example, Xenons or LED'S), then the driver could pick out the pedestrian at over 285 feet. (There may be a point in using very strong headlamps.)

As speed increases, perception range decreases by roughly 20 feet for every 10-mph giving the following figures.

	<b>PERCEPTION RANGE</b>	<b>OVERALL STOPPING DISTANCE</b>
20 mph	240 feet	40 feet
30 mph	220 feet	75 feet
40 mph	200 feet	120 feet
50 mph	180 feet	175 feet
60 mph	160 feet	240 feet



It will be seen from this table that anyone exceeding 50 mph under perfect conditions, at night, is not driving within the limits of their lights. That is to say, you would not see a dark object in sufficient time to allow you to pull up before reaching it.

Under glare from an approaching vehicle using dipped headlamps, the perception range decreases as follows. *[Again, the overall stopping distances are listed alongside.]*

<b>SPEED</b>	<b>PERCEPTION RANGE</b>	<b>OVERALL STOPPING DISTANCE</b>
20 mph	48 feet	40 feet
30 mph	44 feet	75 feet
40 mph	40 feet	120 feet
50 mph	36 feet	175 feet
60 mph	32 feet	240 feet

This means that at anything over 22 mph and you are over-driving your lights. Frightening eh! This emphasises the importance of the **Highway Code** rules: 'If dazzled, slow down or stop' and 'You should always reduce your speed when driving at night as it is harder to see other road users'.

Poor visibility, hills and dales, bends and curves all reduce perception range and may easily reduce the safe speeds to 40, 30 or even 20 or 10 mph.

Now consider further the **Highway Code** rule on stopping distances. This states that in wet or icy conditions the braking distances should be at least doubled.

In wet weather, therefore, or with any vehicle with poor brakes, the overall stopping distances will become:

<b>SPEED</b>	<b>OVERALL STOPPING DISTANCE</b>
20 mph	60 feet
30 mph	120 feet
40 mph	200 feet
50 mph	300 feet
60 mph	420 feet

Under these conditions, the maximum safe speed becomes:

No glare                    40 mph

Dipped glare            33 mph

Main beam glare    18 mph

### **Driving on side lights**

Tying up with this is the dangerous habit of driving in poorly-lit streets on side lights. Your range of perception is then dependent on the street lighting and you may be driving through black patches which could hide a cyclist, pedestrian or any other obstruction. When you remember that at 30 mph on a wet night you require to be able to see clearly at least 140 feet ahead – or nearly 50 yards – you can quickly judge whether you need to switch on dipped headlights.

### **Other points to bear in mind are:**

1. Night driving is about three times as dangerous as day driving.
2. It is not easier to see objects on a light-coloured road than on a dark one.
3. At night you can only see an unexpected object about half as far away as an expected one.

So, I must reiterate the **Highway Code** rules: **Always drive so that you can stop well within the distance you can see ahead. You should also slow down, and if necessary, stop, if you are dazzled by oncoming headlamps.**

It does seem that some motorists drive by guess and luck.

There are two types of drivers:

1. those who regard the road as clear, unless they can see an obstruction;
2. those who regard the road as obstructed or likely to be obstructed unless they know it is clear.

If, as an Advanced motorist, you are the latter type, you are, or will become, a skilful driver. This is largely the basis of Police Driving. If you are of the first type, you must have been born lucky!

### **Stopping at night**

An investigation was carried out into 456 crashes involving stationary vehicles at night. It transpired that in the majority of cases the stationary vehicle had its rear lights on.

Why does a driver crash into a vehicle with its lights on?

The main reason is, of course, that the majority of drivers out-drive their headlights, but the secondary reason is that a driver who sights a rear light ahead, on an open road, immediately assumes that there is a vehicle ahead traveling in the same direction. In 99 cases out of a 100 that is correct. In the hundredth case, by the time you realise the vehicle is stationary, it may

be too late to avoid a crash.

Rear lights, therefore, would not appear to be the best method of lighting a stationary vehicle. Some sort of special parking lights, which cannot be confused with rear lights, would be an obvious advantage. Probably the best way of indicating that you have stopped is by switching on a roof light or other form of interior lighting, or hazard lights. If we are wise, however, whenever we have to stop on an unlit road at night, we will not rely on our rear lights as protection.

Just remember the case where one vehicle ran into a stationary vehicle at night: whilst the two drivers were arguing about the accident, a third vehicle ran into them and both were killed.

### **Dazzle**

The ill-effects of dazzle could be overcome if all drivers could ensure that their headlamps were correctly adjusted. A quick check can be carried out by stopping the vehicle on level ground, about 20 feet away from a plain wall or garage door, and switching on the lights. The height of the centres of each beam can be measured and compared with the height of the centres of the lights themselves. If the height of the beam is higher than the lamp itself, it is out of alignment. Headlamps, when dipped, should be about 3° below the horizontal. This is the equivalent of about 1 foot down in 20. If in any doubt, get them correctly and accurately (not just within tolerance) adjusted by the garage.

### **Headlight Drill, Hints and Tips**

Make sure your lights are properly adjusted.

Learn when to dip. An advantage can sometimes be gained by dipping early on left-hand bends or brows of a hill or hump back bridges – even perhaps dipping late on right-hand bends. Be dictated by circumstances.

On unlit roads your headlamps should be on MAIN BEAM (unless they are dipped because of other vehicles). The average motorist tends to drive on dipped beam all the time which is of no help to him or us.

Headlights can be used for most of the purposes of a horn, such as to give warning of approach or an intention to overtake (or even to tell drivers of approaching vehicles that their lights are not on).

When following another vehicle, headlights should be dipped or, according to the circumstances if stationary, switched off to avoid dazzling the driver ahead.

If dazzled, slow down and be prepared to stop. **Roadcraft** advocates a quick flash of main beam to remind drivers coming the other way that they are on main beam and have forgotten to dip. You must never retaliate though by leaving your lights on main beam. (After all, one driver blinded by opposing lights with a closing speed up to 140 mph is not that good an idea – let alone two!)

Always be able to stop within the distance you can see to be clear. Even with good lights and a clear screen, slow down if your view is restricted.

Observe vehicles' lights ahead. Watch the sweep of lights for an idea of the severity of a bend ahead. Brake lights on the vehicle ahead provide an early warning of the need to reduce your speed. Headlights of oncoming vehicles give an early warning of approach.

After brightly lit areas keep your speed down until your eyes have grown accustomed to the dark. (Did you know that this takes up to 3 or 4 hours – then, just one bright light ruins your night vision for at least another 20 minutes? So, your eyes never really quite get accustomed.)

Avoid lights in the vehicle, particularly if they are bright or reflect in the windows.

Always try to avoid looking directly into the lights of oncoming vehicles. Try to cast your gaze to the nearside, ahead or to the limits of your headlamps beam.

When following other vehicles, keep at a generous distance back from them, unless you are intending to overtake (but never get closer than your overall stopping distance). Move out early before overtaking. Except for a quick flash of your lights to warn the other driver of your presence or intention, if required, keep on dipped beam until the overtaking manoeuvre is commenced and your main beam is required for the view ahead. To avoid dazzling the driver of the vehicle about to be overtaken, this is usually as your vehicle gains a position to the offside of the road. If this driver is not an Advanced Motorist and has been driving on dipped beam prior to being overtaken, obviously your view ahead may be slightly restricted and a better assessment of the road situation ahead may be made now.

A change of driving plans, if required, can be made at this point.

### **Driving Plans are based on:**

What can be seen.

What cannot be seen.

What might reasonably be expected to develop.

Which hazards represent the greatest threat.

What to do if things turn out differently from expected.

DO NOT commit yourself too early.

**IF IN DOUBT, HOLD BACK, AND WHENEVER IN DOUBT, WAIT.**

It is very difficult to judge speeds of approaching vehicles at night: what may at first appear to be a car some distance away could be an old car with weak lights quite close. What appears to be a slow motorcycle could turn out to be a vehicle with a defective light, or a farm tractor or Land Rover with close-set lights. Only experience on the road at night (or practice) can help – so be aware of your limitations.

When being overtaken, dip your lights at the last minute, just as the vehicle is alongside you. This helps you to obtain a final view of the road ahead and make any final assessments and plans. It also helps the overtaking vehicle 'see' better. Return to main beam only when you can do so without dazzle.

Always be the first to switch ON your headlamps and the last to switch them OFF. After all, they are free!! BUT, be the first to switch them off if they are not required for any reason, and use them thoughtfully: for instance, do not leave them on during enforced stoppages; do not leave your foot on the brake pedal or leave indicators flashing, annoying or dazzling the driver behind.

Keep all windows scrupulously clean – inside and out: having a dirty rear window may help in cutting down dazzle from the rear, but it does nothing for effective rear observations and planning!

Keep and carry a spare bulb and fuse kit. Your garage or your local accessory shop can supply you, and instruction on how to change or replace fuses or bulbs is contained in your vehicle's handbook. If not, do not worry as long as you have the spares – someone else will know how to help you.

## **SAFE DRIVING AT NIGHT**

For further references see: -

THE HIGHWAY CODE (various rules)  
ROADCRAFT (chapter 4, page 72-)  
DRIVING The Essential Skills

**Andy Poulton**

Examiner, Region 1 South West

---

## **PROPOSALS FOR FUTURE MEETINGS AND EVENTS**

### **Meetings**

Your committee has been discussing how best to organise our meetings during the year to give a mix of Zoom meetings in the winter months, some indoor meetings at Beckington Memorial Hall with either a speaker, or perhaps a panel to answer questions, and some outdoor meetings. We have decided not to hold meetings in August, because of holidays, or in December, because it is too near Christmas.

If you have any suggestions about our proposals, or for potential speakers, or any other ideas for meetings, please let any member of the committee know – contact details are on page 2

January	Zoom meeting with a speaker
February	Zoom meeting with a speaker
March	AGM at Beckington Memorial Hall
April	Meeting at Beckington Memorial Hall with a speaker
May	3-in-a-car meeting, based at Beckington but not in the Hall
June	To be decided: either an outdoor driving meeting (perhaps a refresher drive or a manoeuvring exercise) or indoors at BMH (perhaps a talk or a question and answer session)
July	3-in-a-car meeting, based at Beckington but not in the Hall
August	No meeting
September	Beckington Memorial Hall: Welcome back Party after the summer
October	Night driving meeting
November	Zoom meeting with a speaker
December	No meeting

## Events

### Bath Festival of Motoring

The Bath Festival of Motoring will be held on 18-19 June 2022 at Walcot Rugby and it is hoped that we will be taking our gazebo there. In the past the Bath group attended on several occasions and the event was much enjoyed by those taking part.

### Middlewick House Open Garden

As John Morley has mentioned in his Chairman's message, this is an event full of interest for those who like classic cars and we are planning to attend with our gazebo. The event is being held on 30 and 31 July 2022.

### ANSWERS TO QUIZ on P.15

- 1: Rootes
- 2: Aircraft
- 3: Marcos
- 4: Casino Royale
- 5: Block changing
- 6: M25
- 7: Viscosity
- 8: Coming before

## **TALE LIGHT—Andy Poulton**

### **ALWAYS WORTH CHECKING FIRST**

Police drove around in a second-hand car as a patrol car for a year before realising it had been stolen.

### **AND SECOND**

A driver who crashed a stolen car then stole the recovery vehicle he called out to help him.

### **AND THIRDLY**

A new £2.7 million Bus Station has had to be redesigned when it was found that the buses were too big to go in it.

### **KEEN MOTORISTS**

Two thieves were so keen to steal a newly installed ATM cash machine that they crashed a stolen pick-up through the shop window and stole the 300lb machine BEFORE the owner had put any money in it.

### **WHERE WAS THE SATNAV**

Two anglers got lost on a camping trip and took the wrong turn on their 80 mile journey home. It was over 700 miles later when they crashed into a ditch.

### **VERY ALARMING**

A motorist was continually being woken at night by his pet parrot imitating his car alarm.

### **ADVANCED OBSERVATIONS AND PLANNING HAS REWARDS!**

A thief drove off in a new Porsche 911 Turbo after convincing the dealer it was his. The real buyer turned up 20 minutes later.

### **GOT A TICKET? JUST SIT BACK, RELAX AND WATCH**

A video shop gives out free films to motorists who can produce a speeding or parking ticket to 'comfort' them.

### **SPUD-U-LIKE**

Police are investigating a Road Rage attack in which a driver injured another with a hot jacket potato.

### **DON'T ASK**

A driver who was lost stopped to ask a policeman the way and was fined for driving in a traffic free zone.

## FUTURE EVENTS

*Meetings will be held either on Zoom or at Beckington Memorial Hall, depending on circumstances. Invitations to Zoom meetings are sent out by email during the week prior to the event. The address of the Hall is Beckington Memorial Hall, Bath Road, Beckington, Frome, BA11 6SH (just off the A36).*

**Thursday, 17 February.** This will be a Zoom meeting and our speaker will be Paul Pywell talking about Freewheelers and Blood Bikes. This will be an interesting topic and we hope as many members as possible will attend.

**Thursday, 17 March.** Group Annual General Meeting. Details of the AGM are on pages 3 and 6 and the speaker, after the formal business, will be David Gallagher, our Young Driver Ambassador and Vice-President. It is planned that this meeting will take place in person at Beckington Memorial Hall, but if circumstances do not allow this, then it will be held on Zoom.

**Thursday, 21 April.** This will be a meeting at Beckington Memorial Hall if possible. The speaker will be Shaun Cronin, our Area Service Delivery Manager, who will be talking about hybrid cars. With an increase in sales of hybrid and electric cars, this is an interesting and topical subject.

**Thursday, 19 May.** This will be a 3-in-a-car meeting at Beckington. This is an opportunity to drive with one of our Observers and is an ideal way of keeping one's driving up to the Advanced standard. Even if you don't want to drive yourself, you can go out with an Observer for a demonstration drive.

## PLEASE NOTE

The views expressed in this Newsletter are those of the authors and are not necessarily shared by the Committee of Somerset & Wiltshire Advanced Motorists, nor by IAM RoadSmart.

Due acknowledgement is made whenever material is taken from other sources.

SWAM keeps names and addresses of members on computer to assist in Group administration. This information will not be passed outside IAM RoadSmart.

SWAM may from time to time publish photographs taken at group events in *Forward* and on the website, or display them at publicity events.

If you have any concerns or wish to opt out of having your photograph taken or published by SWAM, please email or ring the Secretary (details on page 2) and request an acknowledgement in writing.