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RoadSmart

FORWARD

Issue 14



The Newsletter for
Somerset & Wiltshire
Advanced Motorists

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FORWARD

Newsletter of Somerset & Wiltshire Advanced Motorists

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Issue 14

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Westbury White Horse Classic and Vintage Vehicle Show Sunday, 3 September 2023

For the first time we are attending the Westbury White Horse Classic and Vintage Vehicle Show on Sunday 3 September. This looks like an interesting show with lots to do and there is more information on page 12.

There will be a wide variety of vehicles on display, as well as live music, fair rides and games, stalls including crafts, autojumble stands, icecreams, and many other food options, with hot and cold snacks and a licensed bar throughout the day. The organisers are always striving to ensure there is something for everyone.

The address is White Horse Country Park, Coach Road, Westbury, Wiltshire, and the postcode for sat nav is BA13 4LX. We look forward to seeing you there.

Welcome to this edition of *Forward*. We have some great news to tell you about some young members who have recently passed their tests. First, Callum Chamberlain, who we congratulated in the last issue on passing his IAM test with a F1RST, has now passed his National Observer Programme test at the ripe old age of 20. Well done, Callum! Next we congratulate Elliette Noad who has passed her IAM test at the age of just 19, and finally, Oliver Ganfield who passed his IAM test when he was only just 18, and only six months after passing his DVLA driving test. Not only has Oliver achieved this feat, but he is also in the final 12 from whom IAM RoadSmart will choose two candidates to represent the UK in the international final of the FIA Best Young Driver competition.

The FIA Best Young Driver Event is an annual initiative to raise awareness of road safety among young drivers and put forward the message that young drivers can drive skilfully, responsibly, safely and in an environmentally conscious way.

The 2023 UK final will involve a series of in-car skills competitions at Thruxton circuit, at which two finalists will be selected to represent the UK in an all expenses paid trip to the international final, taking place at a state-of-the-art vehicle testing facility in Austria. Many congratulations to Oliver on getting to this stage, and we wish him well for Thruxton!

We are very proud of what these young people have achieved, and wish them well in their driving careers. On page 13 you will find an article about Oliver's experiences preparing for the test. The front cover photo for this issue shows Oliver with his Observer, Ray Robbetts, at Nunney Castle where they met Robin Clark and David Major for a chat.

Clare Hogg, Sue Phillips

The next edition of *Forward* will be published in October 2023. Please submit motoring-related articles and/or digital photographs to the Editors (*who reserve the right to edit them*) by Friday 6 October at the latest. Names of authors and their home addresses should be disclosed to the Editors who will withhold them from publication on request.

Group News

At the April meeting the Speaker was Rachel Mahy, a member of the Avon and Somerset Police Road Safety Team. Rachel outlined her areas of experience as a member of the Police for over 20 years: Road Safety Officer, Family Liaison Officer, a member of Triforce (a special operations unit which has now been disbanded), coach and lorry driver, biker and IAMRoadSmart Examiner for the southwest.

Unfortunately, because of a technical glitch, it was not possible to show the slides that Rachel had brought with her.

Rachel spoke about the Avon and Somerset Road Fund, a road safety budget that every Police Force is given to be spent on aspects of road safety in a variety of ways. For example, IAMRoadSmart motorcycle groups use some of the money to reduce the cost of courses for participants; Parish Councils use some of the money for speed education and awareness signs – the smiley (or frowning) faces that light up as you drive by them; or for Community Speedwatch schemes.

Rachel commented next on the Police Officers who attend a crash and the ripple effect this has on the police, their families and friends. She said that there are more than 1,600 road deaths every year in the UK costing in the region of £36 billion. She asked us to imagine four 747 aeroplanes crashing each year in which everyone dies and said there would surely be a public enquiry. That is the equivalent of fatal collisions, and this should not be accepted.

She spoke about the 'Fatal Five', the contributory factors in fatal Road Traffic Collisions:

1. Drink and drug driving
2. Dangerous and inconsiderate driving
3. Distraction – from mobile phones etc
4. Speed
5. Seat belts

She queried why little priority seemed to be given to some of these factors – Wiltshire, for example, had turned off their speed cameras.

In Avon and Somerset there are more than 50 deaths and 300 people seriously injured every year. There are only two Road Safety Officers in the area.

Data from incidents is being used to try to prevent collisions and keep people informed of the risks and how they can help the police. For example – encouraging people to phone Crime Stoppers to report drivers not wearing seatbelts; encouraging drivers to supply dash cam footage if they witness an incident; Community SpeedWatch schemes which have 1600 volunteers involved in 149 schemes and which resulted in 52,000 warning letters being sent to speeding drivers.

Rachel spoke about drink and drugs being at the top of the list. She said that it has become more acceptable these days, especially with the rise in the use of cannabis and cocaine. In 2020, drink/drugs were involved in a quarter of all fatal collisions, in 2023 this had risen to one third. However, it is not only illegal drugs that are involved, prescription medication can also render a driver unfit to drive.

Rachel said there were 278 arrests for drink driving in December, but during the period of the World Cup there were 346!

Mobile phones can be seized after a collision as they can be checked for evidence of distraction.

She said that roads can be closed for considerable periods after a collision so that all the evidence can be collected – for families, for drivers, for compensation etc. When the Police close the road to investigate an accident, it annoys drivers who cannot see a good reason for it, BUT it is the only chance to find out why and how the accident happened because the minute the road is opened, the evidence has gone.

The Road Traffic Act gives the police powers to stop any vehicle – if you are asked to stop you must do so when it is safe.

Rachel progressed to e-scooters. It is not illegal to buy them – indeed some 1,300,000 have been purchased privately – but they must be used only on private property because insurance is not available. The exception to this is the trials that are taking place in various cities and

towns in the UK and elsewhere in Europe. Those taking part in the trials are insured by the scheme. The trials in the UK are due to finish in 2024 and it might be expected that e-scooters will be made



Rental e-scooters in Bristol

legal. However, Paris recently decided to ban e-scooters and this may affect the UK decision. Rachel spoke about e-batteries which can catch fire relatively easily. If they catch fire, there are not always water sources on roads and motorways!

Rachel spoke about cyclists. She remarked that it has been noted that cyclists who do not wear helmets are passed more closely by motorists than cyclists who wear them. She would like cyclists to be insured and registered.

Rachel referred to the Highway Code and said it is for EVERYONE! The Hierarchy of Road Users means that pedestrians should have a copy and read and learn it too. She said that Road Safety starts at home and we should all share our knowledge. She also remarked that the 47 Road Traffic Laws should be reduced to 1.

A couple of final points were that being an IAM member does not confer a badge of honour – everyone needs to keep their skills up, and 80% of collisions occur within a mile of home.

The May and June SWAM meetings were both 3-in-a-car events, held at Beckington. They took the form of a short talk in the hall, followed by a drive with at least one Observer in each car. There was the option

of driving yourself, being a passenger, or being driven by an Observer giving a demonstration drive. These proved to be popular and valuable drives.

The May meeting was designed specifically for Associates, and it was a great pity that not a single Associate was present. However, there was a very good turnout of Observers who will have been able to pass on what was discussed to their Associates.

The meeting began with Peter Huntington warning us that the old idea that it was all right to exceed the speed limit by 10% plus 2 mph (eg 79 mph in a 70 mph area) is wrong. Police forces in different parts of the country are now being more strict, so don't rely on this. Stick to the speed limit!

David Major then went on to talk about mini-roundabouts. In most respects they are treated the same as larger roundabouts. You should avoid going over the white circle and should always aim to go round it. However, on occasions that is not possible, and if on test an Associate has to go partly over the white circle, they should declare it to the examiner. Rule 188 of the Highway Code says: 'All vehicles **MUST** pass round the central markings except large vehicles which are physically incapable of doing so.'



Mini-roundabout—note the worn paint on the central white circle, caused by vehicles driving over it.



How **not** to drive 'round' a mini-roundabout! The car has completely missed the white circle.

David's next topic was 'What to do on test day'. The Observer should tell their Associate to be there 10-15 minutes early, before the examiner, and they should introduce themselves to the examiner.

David said that some examiners say that there is no need for the cockpit drill, but it is better for the Associate to do it as it calms them down before the test, and they can insist on doing it.

David's final advice was to enjoy the day and sparkle.

There was then a discussion on mini-roundabouts in general, and how dangerous some of them are, and about the Wick roundabouts in particular which are very tricky. It is important for Observers to take their Associates there to practise them as it is easy to end up on the wrong road.

The June meeting was introduced by Lindsay Flower who invited Alistair Andrews to give a talk on Ecological Driving before the main event.

Alistair asked if electric cars are eco-friendly and said the answer at the present time is probably no. They start with a hole in the ground where the minerals are mined. Whilst they can be driven in an ecological manner, the tyres on an e-car are wider because of the weight of the vehicle, leading to more damage to the road surface and more pollution because of the dust and particles from the tyres and road surfaces. Then there is the disposal of the batteries.

[Clare Hogg remarked that Helen Schofield, our president, has a new e-car with tyres made of a different material which is non-polluting. Helen will be giving a talk on driving e-cars in September.]

If you see a car with a green bar on the number plate, it indicates it is a fully electric vehicle. However, not all electric vehicles have them.

Alistair went on to talk about how eco-friendly driving can be achieved. He said that every time the brakes are used, fuel is wasted thus causing more pollution. Thus, there should be minimal use of the brakes and anticipation and planning is essential. Drivers should be looking five seconds ahead to see what's happening and using acceleration sense to change the speed of the car and reduce the need to stop. Stopping and starting again, at a Give Way, for example, uses more fuel than keeping your wheels turning. 'Slow to go' is the motto. Alistair stressed the importance of observation and planning, to avoid harsh braking and acceleration. Keeping the car well maintained also

helps to reduce pollution.

A question was asked about Auto Stop and Go cars and whether it uses the battery more. Alistair said that it works well on new cars but doesn't always work well on older cars, and it does need a more powerful battery than normal. He said that warm engines produce little pollution and that modern cars are pretty clean.

Bath Festival of Motoring — June 2023 by Robin Clark

SWAM attended this event in 2022, with some success, albeit we didn't have the best location and felt a little bit out on a limb. This year though we had a prime spot on both days, directly adjacent to the show ring and footfall past our pitch was pretty much non-stop for most of the time. The weather was favourable as well, with a fabulous array of cars and bikes to enjoy.

Our event presence has significantly improved over the past couple of years and we now have a smart gazebo to protect us from the sun, and of course the rain, plus a couple of tables with some chairs where we can sit down with prospective Associates and discuss advanced driving in a pleasant, relaxed manner.



We also had a competition running to win one of ten copies of the new Highway Code published in 2022, which is a great fun way of getting to talk to people as well as help share our expertise and guidance. I wish we could afford to give everyone who entered a

copy of the Highway Code booklet; when going through the completed entry forms it was a tad concerning to discover that out of 113 entries, just 12 had got all of the answers right!

Everyone who helped out on our stand this year appeared to have a good time. Here are some of their comments:

'A resounding success. We were all busy the whole time and people were keen to do the quiz and discuss their answers. It is amazing that only 12 people got all correct answers and explains a lot of what we

see on the road.

A number of people requested Taster Sessions and we have had two new Associates already this week.’ Lindsay Flower – SWAM Chair.

‘A warm and sunny Father’s Day drew in the crowds. Everyone we met seemed in good spirits and most who we approached were willing to stop and chat. There were of course some who briskly passed us by, announcing "No thank you as I am a very good driver.

‘Our gazebo was noticeable from afar and on closer inspection made a welcome space for visitors to sit and fill in our competition quiz for a copy of the new Highway Code. I was surprised how many individuals claimed to already have a copy! I was also surprised how many drivers did not know the answer.’ Rosemary Tandy – SWAM Secretary.

‘The event was well organised, we had a very good position for the stand.

Good response from all.

Good take up on Free taster drives.

Quiz was a good idea — made people sit down and talk.

All helpers had an enjoyable day.’ David Major – SWAM Chief Observer.

Two of the cars on display



And so our quest continues. Our next major outing is the White Horse Vehicle Show at the White Horse Country Park on Trowbridge Road near Westbury, Wilts, on Sunday 3 September 2023, and it would be great if a few of you might be willing to offer your services, if only for a couple of hours, as it helps relieve the same old faithful SWAM members who put themselves out time and time again to try and help encourage new members and associates. Without that help SWAM will surely sink!!

Westbury White Horse Classic and Vintage Vehicle Show
Sunday, 3 September 2023

**WHITE HORSE CLASSIC & VINTAGE
VEHICLE SHOW**



SUNDAY 3RD SEPTEMBER
WHITE HORSE COUNTRY PARK, WESTBURY
PUBLIC ACCESS FROM 10:30AM TO 4PM



**OVER 500 VEHICLES ATTENDING INCLUDING
CLASSIC CARS, COMMERCIALS, TRACTORS
STATIONARY ENGINES & MOTORBIKES!
LIVE MUSIC - HOT FOOD - BAR - FAIR RIDES**

FREE EXHIBITOR REGISTRATION
WWW.WHITEHORSEVEHICLESHOW.ORG
A CHARITY EVENT HOSTED BY THE LIONS CLUBS OF TROWBRIDGE & WESTBURY

We will be having our gazebo there and would welcome help on the day. Please let one of the committee know if you are able to come. The address is White Horse Country Park, Coach Road, Westbury, Wiltshire, and the postcode for sat nav is **BA13 4LX**.

More Test Pass Success for Young SWAM Drivers – by Robin Clark

Following on from my article in the last SWAM Newsletter (May-July 23), there's more good news for Callum Chamberlain, who has since gone on to pass his National Observer qualification, at just 20 years of age. Well done Callum – and also of course to his mentor, Mark Ellis.

Then, just when you think you can't better that, along come two young drivers in their teens passing their advanced test with SWAM. Elliette Noad was just 18 when she started her advanced course and 19 when she passed her test, and Oliver Ganfield managed to pass his advanced driving test at the tender age of just 18. I managed to arrange a meeting with Oliver, as well as his Observer (and also our Deputy Chief Observer), Ray Robbetts, over a very pleasant coffee at Nunney in Somerset.



Oliver with his Observer, Ray Robbetts and Chief Observer, David Major

To put Oliver's achievement into perspective, he only started learning to drive in May 2022 and passed his Driving Test in December the same year. Then without further delay he was out on the road again in February of this year to start his Advanced Driving course, coming through that by passing his test on 9 May, just 10 days after his 18th Birthday.

Not bad you might say, until you realise that he has also been working hard on his A level subjects with a view to studying Medicine, hopefully at Cardiff University. You simply have to take your hat off to his work ethic and positive attitude! Oliver hopes to further improve his driving CV by working towards his Masters qualification – at some point. But I think we would all understand his reluctance to immerse himself in anything else that might compromise his chances of getting the exam results he is seeking in support of his career aspirations and I'm certain that everyone at SWAM wishes him well on that front.

Oliver also told me that his dream car would be a white BMW 320D

unmarked Ambulance Vehicle, which might seem a strange choice, until you realise that he would like to attain the Level 3 Certificate in Emergency Response Ambulance Driving (Blue Lights licence).

The two main aspects of advanced driving which Oliver told me he felt were the most valuable to him were **Observation** and **Planning**, something I'm sure all of you advanced drivers out there will appreciate as being key to ensuring your and other road users' safety on our roads.

Of course, we shouldn't forget the cogs in the background that enable our Associates to achieve such high standards of driving and SWAM is blessed with a solid team of Observers, ready and waiting to share their extensive knowledge. One such Observer is Ray Robbetts, who mentored Oliver towards achieving his qualification. Ray's background is in teaching and he joined the Bath and District Advanced Motorists (BADAM) Group over 15 years ago, with the aim of using that expertise to help drivers improve their knowledge and driving ability. Ray told me that *'being a teacher certainly helped me to explain new advanced driving techniques quite fluently. Also coaching other drivers helped me to maintain my standards. An excellent reason for others to become Observers!'*

I asked Ray how many Associates he had helped to become advanced drivers. Ray replied that he certainly hadn't kept a record but admits that maybe he should have. *'It's always nice to look back. Over the years I would guess possibly 25 or so.'*

'Oliver has been my youngest Associate. He was still 17 when he was going out on observed runs and to pass his test only days after his 18th birthday was quite an achievement!'

'At the other end of the scale, my oldest successful Associate was 80!' Ray added, *'Mind you, youth has both advantages and disadvantages – the main advantage being that that there are no ingrained bad habits, although one or two actions learned during Oliver's driving lessons needed correction – no fault of Oliver's. Being young also allowed him to assimilate knowledge quickly.'*

'On the other side of the coin, younger drivers' inexperience tends to come to the fore when encountering a wide variety of driving hazards – what you might call not being as 'road-wise' as more mature drivers. They lack that

'library of actions' to which to refer. This is why the advanced driving System, 'IPSGA', is so important. It gives drivers the ability to anticipate new events and cope safely with them.'*

When we were about to leave, I asked Ray what his best bit of advice would be for drivers on today's roads. Ray replied. 'My advice to all drivers, both new and experienced, would be:

'Don't just practise until you get it right: practise until you can't get it wrong!'

You can't really say fairer than that.

* IPSGA: Information; Position; Speed; Gears; Acceleration.

SWAM Events Programme—Autumn 2023

August – no meeting

September:

Sunday, 3 September, Westbury White Horse Classic and Vintage Vehicle Show – see pages 3 and 12 for details

Thursday, 21 September, 19.00 for 19.30 at Beckington Memorial Hall. Our President, Helen Schofield, will be talking about what it is like to drive an electric car, which can be different in many ways from driving a petrol or diesel car. **We are inviting anybody who has experience of driving an electric car or a hybrid to come to the meeting and share their experiences.** More of us will be buying electric cars in the near future and it will be good to learn what we need to know about driving them.

October – Nothing arranged at present.

November:

Q&A session on Zoom when a team of our National Observers will answer questions about any aspect of driving. If you have questions that you would like answering, please submit them to David Major, Chief Observer, in advance, or you can ask them on the night. The date of this meeting is yet to be decided, but it will be published in the next edition of *Forward*, and you will receive an email from Peter Huntington inviting you to the Zoom meeting and reminding you to submit your questions.

December – no meeting

Welcome and Congratulations

We Welcome New Associates

Pamela Clifford	[<i>Observer:</i> Mark Ellis]
Jeremy Gilpin	[<i>Observer:</i> John Blakeley]
Pete Morgan	[<i>Observer:</i> Rob Norburn]
Peter Rusbridger	[<i>Observer:</i> Ray Robbetts]

We Congratulate

IAMRS Test Pass

Jo Chambers-Grant*	observed by Thomas Flynn
Oliver Ganfield	observed by Ray Robbetts
Malcolm Greenaway	observed by David Moreman
Elliette Noad	observed by Paul Pywell

*FIRST pass

IMI National Observer Programme

Callum Chamberlain	mentored by Mark Ellis
Rob Norburn	mentored by Alistair Andrews

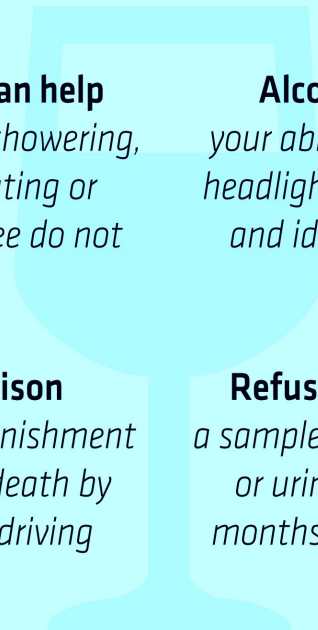
IAM Masters


Rob Norburn	mentored by Alistair Andrews
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Alcohol and the Effects on Driving


IAM RoadSmart has produced a couple of posters relating to Drink Driving which we are reproducing here. This article supplements that information.


ALCOHOL AND DRIVING





 **Carrying keys just to get personal belongings counts as being in charge of a vehicle**

You are 4 times more likely to be involved in a crash when just below the legal limit 

 **Only time can help you sober up; showering, sleeping, eating or drinking coffee do not**

Alcohol inhibits your ability to adjust to headlights, judge depth, and identify hazards 


 **Life in prison is the max. punishment for causing death by dangerous driving**

Refusing to provide a sample of breath, blood or urine can mean 6 months' imprisonment 

Your drink limit may be affected by factors including...

- Gender - Weight - Medication
- Metabolism - Food eaten - Age
- Strength and amount of alcohol

Our recommendation is always none for the road



Fact or Fiction

Food will absorb the alcohol – **this is NOT true**. Whilst you may feel better having eaten some food, either as an accompaniment to your drink(s) and/or perhaps as breakfast following a heavy session, this will not speed up the time it takes for your body to process the alcohol.

The same is true for having a shower or a few cups of coffee – your body still needs processing time – you may just feel a bit brighter.

Equally, lining your stomach with a glass of milk before you go out on a heavy session will not make your body any more efficient at processing alcohol – it will take time...

So what are the limits?

Government guidance says that men and women shouldn't regularly drink more than **14 units a week**. If you regularly drink this many units, it's better to spread your drinking over 3 or more days. The following advice applies to individual drinking sessions.

Whilst drinking alcohol and driving a motor vehicle is certainly not recommended, there are strict alcohol limits for drivers, though it's impossible to say exactly how many drinks this equates to – It will vary depending on a number of factors. For instance:

Gender Weight Medication
Food Eaten Age Metabolism

Level of alcohol	England, Wales and Northern Ireland	Scotland
Micrograms per 100 millilitres of breath	35	22
Milligrams per 100 millilitres of blood	80	50
Milligrams per 100 millilitres of urine	107	67

Information courtesy of <https://www.gov.uk/drink-drive-limit>

To get a better idea of how the government limits apply to what's in your glass, here's how units of alcohol stack up in terms of glasses of wine – a very common drink these days:

A small glass of wine is 125ml and at 12% ABV (alcohol by volume) equates to 1.5 units. A standard glass is 175ml = 2.1 units and a large glass at 250ml is 3 units. A bottle is 9 units.

For wines with higher alcohol content, the units are higher. See the poster on the next page for the formula to calculate the units for any drink.

So if you consume a 750ml bottle of wine, that equates to three large glasses and at 12% is the equivalent of 9 units, so as a good guide you should wait at least 10 hrs from stopping drinking before driving or operating any machinery ...

Be aware of home measures as they are usually more generous than pubs which are heavily regulated – also the glasses you have at home may well be larger than the 125, 175 or 250ml sizes.

An average bottle of wine is 750ml, equating to just three large glasses!

General advice

***None for the Road* or *Don't Drink and Drive* is the best guidance we can give.**

<https://morning-after.org.uk/>

For individuals who have been caught drink driving – or if you know someone who has – then the following information may be useful:

Rehabilitation courses are available to reduce your driving ban if:

- you're found guilty of a drink-drive offence
- your ban is for 12 months or more.

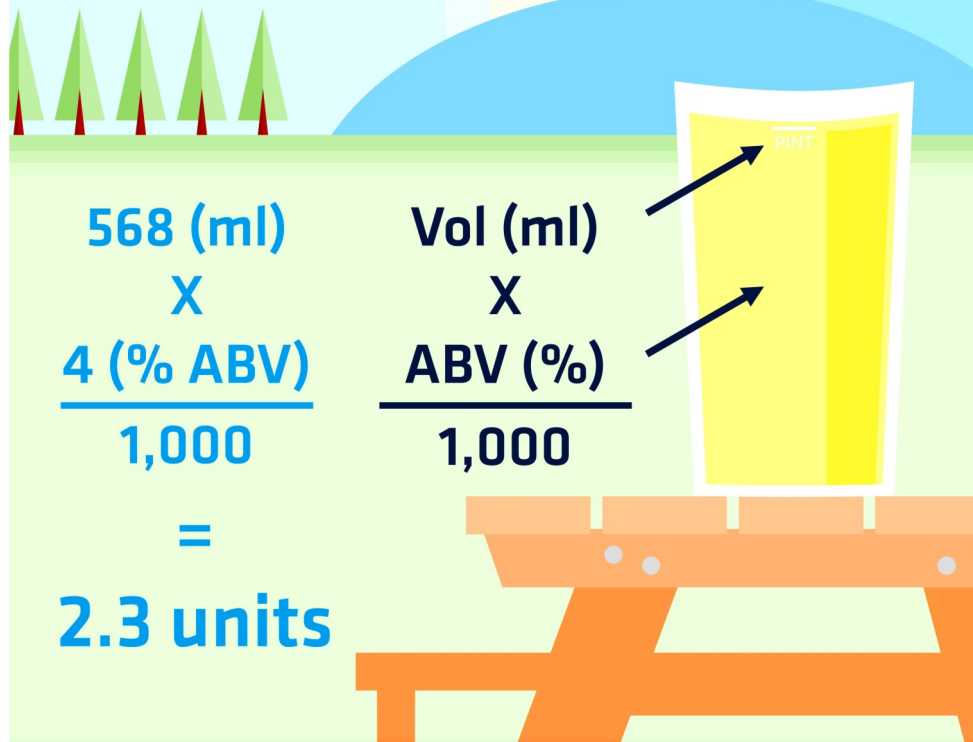
You have to pay to take the course though, and it can cost up to £250.

Your ban will be reduced if you complete the course within a certain time. The ban is usually reduced by a quarter.

However you have to decide in court whether or not you want to attend a course. You cannot change your mind later.

[Links to further information are available from the Editor.]

KNOW YOUR UNITS



Do you really know how much you've had to drink? The number of units it takes to be over the drink drive limit varies for each person, as does the time it takes to leave your system. To stay safe it's always best to have none for the road.

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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.

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