

Frome Town Hall



Forward

**Newsletter of
Somerset & Wiltshire Advanced
Motorists**

www.swam-iam.org.uk

Registered Charity No 1050592

Committee Members and other Group Contacts

President – Helen Schofield

Vice Presidents – Judith Pepler, David Gallagher

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

Somerset & Wiltshire Advanced Motorists

(Registered Charity No. 1050592)

AUGUST—SEPTEMBER 2021

Forward

Issue 6

Contents

September Welcome Meeting	3	Quiz	19
Editorial	4	Tale Light	20
Next publication date	4	Automated/Autonomous Vehicles	21
Message from the Chairman	5	Future Events	22
Group News	5	Any Suggestions?	23
Welcome new Associates	13	Quiz answers	23
Congratulations	13	Stating the Obvious	24
Skill at the Wheel—6	14	Editorial disclaimer	24
Frome Cheese Show	18		

WELCOME MEETING, 16 SEPTEMBER at 19.30, in BECKINGTON MEMORIAL HALL

Our planned Welcome meeting had to be postponed from July and will now be held at our meeting on 16 September, subject to government restrictions at the time. This will give members a chance to meet in person at an indoor venue for the first time since the merger between the Bath and Melksham groups in March 2020.

The meeting will be a social evening, with refreshments provided by the group. There will be an opportunity for the members of the committee to introduce themselves and say what they do for the group and you will have the chance to ask questions about what we do and our plans for the future. Observers will also be there with their Associates, to give them the opportunity to get to know each other better outside of observed runs. Andy Poulton will be telling us about some of his experiences as an IAM examiner for over thirty years. This is sure to be an entertaining and enlightening talk, and it is a very good opportunity for Associates to meet an examiner.

Please come along and join us then. The address of the Hall is Beckington Memorial Hall, Bath Road, Beckington, Frome, BA11 6SH (just off the A36). We hope to see you there.

EDITORIAL

Welcome to the latest issue of *Forward*. Unfortunately, because of the delay in the relaxation of government rules, we were not able to hold our July meeting in person at Beckington and had a Zoom quiz instead. We now propose to have our Welcome meeting in September at which, instead of a quiz, Andy Poulton will be giving us a light-hearted look back on 3,300 tests he has conducted since 1986. As always with Andy's talks this will be amusing and informative and we hope to see you at Beckington Memorial Hall for SWAM's first ever indoor meeting. This is, of course, subject to any government restrictions in place at the time (which we sincerely hope there won't be). More details of the September meeting are to be found on page 3.

Also in September we shall be taking the gazebo to Frome Cheese Show to spread the word about safer driving. If you are attending the show, please look out for our stand. There are lots of activities, events and other stalls there so it will be a welcome opportunity to enjoy a fun day out after such a long time without events. For more details, see page 18.

We are pleased to be organising some indoor meetings but will continue to hold some meetings on Zoom, particularly in the winter when the weather might make us less inclined to drive to a venue. However, we are aware that this means that those who aren't able to attend a Zoom meeting are being left out again, but it does allow those who live too far away to travel to Beckington to take part in some of our meetings. We are trying to strike a balance between the two. Thus, our October meeting will be at Beckington, the November meeting on Zoom, and we will hold a Christmas party at Beckington in December if we are allowed.

A few successful 2-in-a-car meetings have been held recently and we are pleased to announce a 3-in-a-car meeting on 1 August at Lansdown Park & Ride in Bath, starting at 10.00. There will be no group meeting later in August, so our next group meeting is the September one. We look forward to seeing you then.

Clare Hogg
John Morley
Sue Phillips

The next edition of *Forward* will be published in November 2021. Please submit motoring-related articles and / or digital photographs to the Editors (*who reserve the right to edit them*) by Friday 8 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.

A MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIRMAN

After a long wait we are now back on the road with our main business, that of observed runs. However, it is still important that Observers and Associates agree what precautions need to be taken before setting out on a run.

We recently set up an opportunity for Associates to be taken out by another Observer, and for current full members to have a refresher session. The meeting was at the Park & Ride, Odd Down, on a Sunday morning. The turnout was lower than desired, but those who attended had an enjoyable experience. Further sessions are being planned, so look out for the invitation, and join in the fun.

Since publication of the last edition of *Forward*, the committee has been busy trying to get its head around what we need our website to look like and what information we need to display. We have looked at the website produced by the Weston & Mendip group, and if we can produce something similar it would be a great bonus, but it is likely to take a lot of work.

The committee has also been busy preparing the way ahead for the group's representation at the Frome Cheese Show in September this year. This will be the first time that we shall put our gazebo to good use, and we shall be looking for volunteers to help by encouraging members of the public to join IAMRS, hopefully in SWAM's area. At the time of writing we are in discussion with the Wilts & Bath Advanced Motorcyclists group, in the hope that they will join us, and have a bike on show. Please come along and join in.

By the time that this edition of *Forward* is published we shall know if all of the lockdown restrictions have been removed, and whether or not we are back to normal.

In the meantime play safe, enjoy your advanced driving and this edition of *Forward*.

John Morley

Chairman, SWAM

GROUP NEWS

Chairman, John Morley, welcomed everyone to the Zoom April meeting and reminded us of the planned return to normal activities. He reminded Associates that they had to contact the IAM themselves in order to get the free extension to their membership in order to continue their training. Observed drives could resume from 17 May if IAM RoadSmart and government advice allowed.

David Major, Chief Observer, then introduced the speaker, Ray Robbetts, one of our National Observer team, who would be talking about types of bends and how to negotiate them, and on the 'S's of advanced driving. Ray started by asking what is 162 miles long in Saudi Arabia and 14 miles long in the UK? The answer was 'the longest dead straight stretch of road in those countries'. In

fact, the road in Saudi Arabia is the longest dead straight stretch of road in the world, and the 14 miles in the UK is on the A15 in Lincolnshire. In this country the most common hazards on the roads are bends and it is important that we know how to deal with them.

Ray's next question was 'What is a bend?', to which the answer was 'a deviation in the road' and Ray went on to discuss the different types of bends.

Bends can deviate to the left or the right or vertically up or down, be open or closed, and can be gradual or acute. An open bend is one where you can see to the end, or exit, of the bend, while a closed one is one where the exit is hidden by an obstacle such as a hedge or a building. A gradual bend is one that deviates by less than 90° from the straight road ahead; an acute bend deviates by more than 90° so that the road physically bends back towards you. An extreme example of an acute bend is a hairpin bend. There are thus ten different types of bend:

Left open gradual; left open acute; right open gradual; right open acute; left closed gradual; left closed acute; right closed gradual; right closed acute; vertical summit bend (brow of a hill) and vertical valley dip.

A lot of people forget the last two. The vertical summit bend is a closed gradual bend and the vertical valley dip is an open gradual one. Each type of bend requires a different approach and he would be concentrating mainly on closed bends.

The technique for dealing with closed bends is called limit point analysis

and Ray showed some diagrams to illustrate the method. The limit point is the furthest point ahead at which you have a clear view of the road surface. When approaching any bend the question you must ask yourself is not 'how fast can I take this bend?', but 'can I stop, on my side of the road, in the distance I can see ahead to be clear?'. In fact, this is the golden rule for all advanced driving. If you don't think you can stop, then you are going too fast. The more distant the limit point, the faster you can travel because you have more space in which to stop.



Ray explained that a car is most stable when it is being driven in a straight line at constant velocity so it is important to keep the car in as straight a line as possible when going through a bend. With an open bend it is often possible to keep a fairly straight line, but this should not be attempted with a closed bend.

Approaching a left hand bend you need to position yourself near the centre white line and you can go slightly over it with your offside wheels to improve vision and stability (but don't 'offside' which means having the whole car on the wrong side of the road), and only when there is no oncoming traffic or vehicles behind you which might be upset by your actions. The limit point is the point where the centre line and the

near side of the road meet. This reduces the limit point distance in case there is something hidden just around the bend on your side. Approaching a right hand bend, position yourself at the left hand side of the carriageway, but not so close to the edge that you hit the debris and potholes often to be found there, as this gives the best view. The limit point is where the near and far sides of the road converge. An advantage of keeping to the left is that you are going the longer way round the curve and this makes the car more stable.

To summarise, the rules for bends are: Safety, View and Stability.

Using the limit point: as you approach the bend the limit point doesn't move to begin with and you should be asking 'can I stop safely in the distance that is clear?'. As you get closer to the limit point you need to reduce speed, and when the limit point starts to move you are starting to go through the bend. At this point you will be at the correct speed to complete the bend and you can select the correct gear for that speed. Drive smoothly round the bend, keeping sufficient pressure on the accelerator to maintain a constant speed. You are not 'chasing' the limit point, but 'following' it at a speed at which you can stop in the distance you can see to be clear. When the bend opens up, and the limit point starts to move away from you, you can start to increase speed.

Ray then went on to consider using IPSGA in relation to bends.

Information: use this to judge the severity of the bend. There was a discussion about useful tips for this such as other vehicles, hedges, road signs, SLOW in the road, chevrons

etc. A satnav can help, but only if it is not distracting you from looking at the road. If it is placed in a position, such as at the edge of the windscreen, where you can see it and the road together, you can get advanced warning of the severity of a bend before you reach it.

Position: this had already been discussed for left and right hand bends.

Speed and Gear: about 30-40 metres before the bend you will be at the correct speed and have chosen the right gear.

Acceleration: use gentle acceleration to keep the limit point at the same distance as you drive through the bend, and then, as the limit point starts to move away, you can begin to increase speed.

Use **Information** all the time so that if anything happens, such as the bend tightening up, you can change your plan, and if necessary, reduce speed.

There were then a number of questions. The first was to ask if one can assume that an automatic will select the correct gear or is it better to select manual. Normally the car will select an appropriate gear but on a twisty country road, it might be easier to select manual for that section of road.

The question of camber was then discussed; normally it will help on a left hand bend but there are occasions when there is an adverse camber.

Ray concluded this section of his talk by repeating that you must always be able to stop, on your side of the road, in the distance you can see ahead to be clear. Using that, and the limit point, bends should not cause a problem.

Ray then went on to consider the 'S's of advanced driving. He said that you can tell an advanced driver, if you are following one, by the way they drive.

1. **Safety.** This is the prime consideration when driving and controls all other driving. If it's not safe, DON'T DO IT. If you are asking yourself if it is safe, then don't do it.

2. **System.** I→P→S→G→A. It is vital to start the System EARLY on the approach to hazards to give yourself time to plan and to change your plan if necessary. Take one thing at a time (although occasionally you can overlap braking and gear changing, for example on a steep twisty downhill), and have good long range observations.

3. **Speed.** Drive to the prevailing speed limit, wherever possible, if road and traffic conditions allow. However, the speed limit is a limit not a target and you must adjust your speed to the hazards.

4. **Space.** Effective all-round observation (sight, sound, smell) increases your 'situational awareness'. Create a 'safety bubble' around your car and know exactly what is happening inside it. Forward observation involves looking far ahead, middle distance and near. Lateral observations, using peripheral vision, are looking for cars parked or coming out of side roads, or pedestrians on pavements etc. Rear observations are looking at what is happening behind you. The further you can see, the bigger your safety bubble. Approaching traffic lights, check how close the car behind is and, if it is very close, then brake earlier and more slowly.

5. **Stability.** A moving car is most

stable when travelling at constant velocity in a straight line. Maintain maximum stability on open bends by straightening (if traffic allows). On closed bends drive 'the long way round' (over to the left on right hand bends and over to the centre line on left hand bends). This also improves safety and view.

6. **Signalling.** Consider the need to give a signal on the approach to every hazard and before you change direction and speed but only give a signal where it would benefit other road users, including pedestrians. Signalling does not give you any right to carry out the actions you indicate. If you are signalling automatically, then you are doing it out of habit and not thinking about what you are doing. Don't signal too early (this might be confusing) but signal in good time. If you signal to change lanes, on a motorway for example, you are telling another driver what you want to do. It doesn't give you permission to do it. A car approaching from behind might move to the right hand lane or slow down to allow you to move to the middle lane, but don't move until you are sure it is safe. The range of signals includes indicators, hazard warning lights, brake lights, headlights, reversing lights, position of your vehicle, horn signals, arm signals and courtesy signals. You should know when to use hazard lights and this does not include when parked on double yellow lines! Be careful if flashing your headlights. That simply tells another driver that you are there. The horn is often wrongly used and should not be used to tell another driver off. Arm signals are seldom used nowadays but can be used to reinforce the indi-

cators. Using your left hand for courtesy signals is safer and is less likely to be hidden by a pillar.

7. **Spoken thoughts:**

What do you see?

What may happen?

What are you planning to do?

If you see it, say it.

Describing helps focus and good spoken thoughts will often cover for slight mistakes as the examiner knows what you are thinking.

8. **Steering.** Hold the wheel lightly so that your palms are on the rim with thumbs extended. Do not wrap thumbs around the wheel. Hand position should be 'ten to two' or 'quarter to three'. For normal driving, use the 'pull-push' method of steering keeping your hands in a 'mirror' position on either side of the wheel. Slide your hands on the wheel to keep the mirror image. This method keeps both hands on the wheel and allows an immediate turn in either direction. The 'rotational' method of steering (crossing hands) can be used for slow manoeuvring but moving your hands past the 12 o'clock position places your hands across the wheel. This increases the risk of injury to hands, arms or face if the steering wheel airbag inflates during a collision at high speed.

9. **Smoothness.** Passengers and the car will appreciate a smooth drive. Make the best use of acceleration sense, well-timed gear changes and progressive braking. Take your time over a gear change, perhaps five seconds to allow a smooth change. Brake gently, then with firmness, and then ease off the brakes gently again, for a smooth stop without jerking.

10. **Sparkle!** Finesse, Panache, Polish, Confidence – all, of course, based on safety first! Your drive doesn't have to be boring but can be both safe and exciting.

A question was asked about how many flashes of your signal you should allow on a motorway before moving out of your lane. It was suggested that seven or eight flashes gave time for the following drivers to see that you intend to move. Signalling to move back into the inside lane can help the following driver by letting them know you will be moving out of the way. You should be able to see both headlamps of the vehicle you are passing before moving back into the inside lane.

David thanked Ray for his very helpful talk and all the members for attending, and John closed the meeting.

The May meeting, held on Zoom, was opened by the Chairman, John Morley, who welcomed everyone and introduced Lewes Hambrey, an Optometrist, who was to give us a talk about Driving and Vision.

Lewes introduced himself to the audience by saying he works at the Frome branch of Specsavers, but is soon taking over the eye clinic and doing research at the University of the West of England in Bristol.

Lewes said he would explain how optometrists decide whether their patients are safe to drive when they ask 'Can I drive?' He would explain the standard of vision that is legally required for Group 1 entitlement and talk about how sight can be compromised. He said that it is considered that 90-95% of the information used in driving comes through the eyes

and the driver has to process that information. It is important, therefore, that drivers have the ability to see clearly at multiple distances, to change focal length quickly and precisely, to follow objects moving in many directions, to adapt to different lighting conditions and to utilise peripheral vision.

The legal requirements for visual standards are now set by the Department for Transport, so there is no conflict of interest between the various bodies who submit their recommendations to the Department, and the requirements are applied by the DVLA. These standards are embodied in Chapter 6 of a government publication which affects all aspects of health when assessing fitness to drive. Chapter 6 sets out the minimum eyesight and field of vision standards required by all drivers and covers visual disorders which prevent people from driving and necessitate the DVLA being notified. For example, Diplopia: a person suffering from diplopia, or double vision, is not allowed to drive, (occasionally, double vision can be controlled, in which case the person may have their licence returned); Nyctalopia or night blindness; Blepharospasm, or uncontrolled closing of the eyelids; Monocular vision or complete loss of vision in one eye. This last is more controversial and the person may be allowed to drive if other standards of sight are met.

Lewes then discussed visual acuity, how well a person can see fine detail. Minimum eyesight standards for driving are set out in Chapter 6 and make reference to the Snellen charts which Lewes expanded on.

Snellen was a Dutch ophthalmologist who worked out how to record visual acuity in the mid to late 1800s. His charts are still in use some 160 years later. Snellen used a system consisting of two lines drawn at an angle of 1 arc minute apart which he developed into 'optotypes' and then into the letters which are familiar to us today. He defined 'normal' vision as 20/20 – this is what a person with normal vision can see on the test chart at 20 feet. 20/30 vision is defined as being able to see at 20 feet what people with 20/20 vision can see at 30 feet. Using his chart, vision can be recorded from 20/20 up to 20/200. The top number is the distance at which the patient can see the letter, the bottom number being the distance at which the normal eye can see the letter, so that the bigger the number on the bottom, the worse the clarity of the patient's vision.

When the metric system was introduced into the UK, feet and inches were converted into metres and centimetres and so visual acuity is now measured from 6 metres. 20/20 becomes 6/6, 20/30 is 6/9. 20/40 is 6/12 and so on up to 20/200 being 6/60. This also explains why most opticians' rooms are six metres long – or three metres with a mirror!

The minimum standard of visual acuity for driving must be at least Snellen 6/12 with both eyes open (or in the only eye if monocular) – so that clarity of vision only has to be half as good as normal to be able to drive safely.

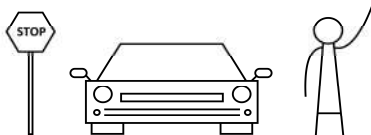
There are also minimum standards for peripheral vision. The visual field is measured using the flashing lights test. If patients miss a certain number

of flashes in certain areas, they can no longer drive. Lewes had slides showing the effect of visual field defects on vision and it was clear why people could no longer be allowed to drive.

Lewes went on to discuss how driving vision may be compromised. The leading causes of sight impairment are:

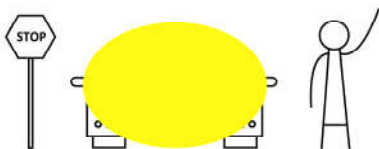
- Macular degeneration (52.5%)
 - Glaucoma (7.6%)
 - Cerebrovascular accident (6.4%)
 - Diabetic retinopathy (6.3%) (new to the list in 2016)
- Other causes include cataracts.

Macular degeneration is a disease that affects the 'macula lutea', which is the focal point of the eye. There are two types, Dry, age-related, macular degeneration which accounts for 90% of cases, and Wet, age-related, macular degeneration.



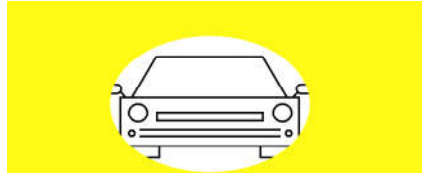
A normal field of vision

Lewes's slides illustrated how macular degeneration affects clarity of vision and a reduction of visual acuity as central vision is affected.



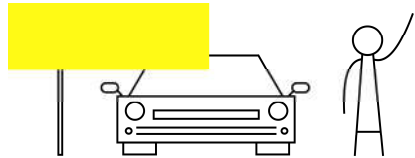
Macular degeneration

Glaucoma is a group of diseases characterised by progressive, irreversible damage to the optic nerve head, which is where the optic nerve enters the eye. Glaucoma affects peripheral vision and causes visual field defects, again illustrated by Lewes's slides.



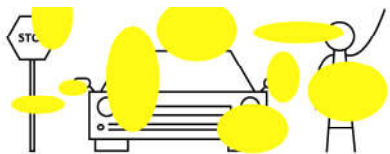
Glaucoma

Cerebrovascular Accident: stroke, sudden death of brain cells due to lack of oxygen, occurs due to impairment of blood flow to part of the brain. This can result in the loss of a quadrant of vision.



Cerebrovascular Accident

Diabetic Retinopathy is a disease characterised by high blood sugar and can cause changes to the blood vessels in the retina. This can affect any part of the retina and causes visual field defects and poor visual acuity.



Diabetic retinopathy

Cataract is a clouding of the crystalline lens that affects vision. The crystalline lens focuses light that enters the eye. It affects clarity of vision and causes visual acuity to decrease.

Lewes concluded by saying that to drive safely a person:

Must not have double vision;
Must be able to see in the dark;
Must be able to keep eyes open;
Must have 6/12 visual acuity;
Must have good peripheral vision.

He added that not on the list of visual impairments is a dirty windscreen which makes everything blurry!

Lewes welcomed questions from the Zoom audience.

He was asked if yellow tinted lenses improved night vision. He said that recent research suggested that the yellow tint stops the blue light which scatters more than other colours, and improves contrast. If the lenses are darker than 15% tint, they cannot be used.

He was asked about vitreous detachment. This occurs with age, when the jelly around the eyeballs becomes liquid and loosely attached. It is very common, usually benign, and patients get 'floaters' when they see the jelly move around. It rarely affects visual acuity. More serious is a retinal tear which needs emergency surgery and can affect the visual field.

He was asked if anything could be done to help the deterioration in eyesight in older people. Lewes said this was debatable. Most people would develop cataracts but surgery is available. Night blindness could be caused by a vitamin A deficiency, so a supplement might help. Macular

degeneration might be delayed by avoiding UV light, by eating green vegetables and taking vitamin supplements – but everyone will degenerate in some way.

He was asked if, in the future, stem cell research might allow us to grow new eyes. Lewes laughed, but did say that stem cell research was looking into growing new retinal cells, but the research was very much in its infancy.

John Morley thanked Lewes for his very interesting talk.

The June meeting was an outdoor meeting held at Beckington near the Memorial Hall where we plan to hold meetings in person when they are allowed. It took the form of 2-in-a-car drives. Lockdown restrictions meant that the more normal 3-in-a-car drives were not possible, but as, of the twenty or so people attending, about half were Observers and half were Associates or members, this worked very well.

The normal pattern was for Associates to drive first for half an hour with an Observer they did not know, and then to view an observed drive for another thirty minutes. This gave the Associates the opportunity to drive with somebody unfamiliar which is a good idea before they take their test. There are also always more things to learn from driving with different people.

Amongst those present were Alistair Andrews with his sage advice and Eddie Ruskin who now has his own disability driving school. Eddie was able to help one of our members, who had quite recently had a brain tumour operated on, who said that Eddie's understanding of his needs

and his knowledge and skills in putting that knowledge across were really helpful and encouraging for him.

The evening was regarded as a successful event and more meetings of this type are likely to be arranged in the future.



We Welcome New Associates

Jane Badger-Stevens	[Observer: Andy Lee]
Lynda Cross	[Observer: Mark Ellis]
Edward Drayson	[Observer: Ian Lassman]
Lesley Earp	[Observer: Lindsay Flower]
Zoe Garcia-Breton	[Observer: Peter Huntington]
Rachel Harries	[Observer: Graham Bennett]
Martin Jacques	[Observer: John Morley]
Bryan Piper	[Observer: David Major]
Philip Stunell	[Observer: Jeff Vincent]

We Also Congratulate

IAM Test Pass

Warren Beattie observed by Mark Ellis

SKILL AT THE WHEEL — 6 by Andy Poulton

Behind every successful Advanced Driver....

WHO IS BEHIND YOU?

CHECK YOUR MIRRORS THEN!

It is in the INFORMATION phase of the SYSTEM which runs throughout all the other phases.

This does not mean just one mirror check to cover all these PHASES.

It means between and before every phase. So up to five or MORE.

So, WHO WAS behind me that prompted this?

Anecdotal evidence

Firstly:-

It was an *err* 'BOY RACER' in an old banger of a car. (Possibly even badly serviced or faulty brakes.) Drinking out of a can bending down to change his Media!! Or send a Text, and as he kept disappearing below the dashboard from time to time, possibly even to change his SOCKS.

Secondly:-

A pickup truck following too close with a 3-metre-high pile of old tyres teetering around with every movement of the truck when it changed speed or direction.

Thirdly:-

A large radiator grill with OVLOV written on it was *all* I could see.

[Think about it]

NOW KEEP IT CLEAN AND WELL ADJUSTED?

Having got you looking at it we need to make sure it is clean, clear and unobstructed. Beware of 'fingering' it and leaving marks. Remove the film of dirt, traffic film and cobwebs (oh yes, seen plenty of them). Remove all the internal stickers.

Lower all the rear seat head restraints as low as possible if not in use. Remove any items stored on the parcel shelf to reduce reflections and stop items being flung forwards in a sudden stop. (*Brollies make good spears.*)

Clean the inside of the rear window as well and ALL the external mirrors. No residue of last month's rain (or those ruddy spiders again).

Remember when carrying out the COCKPIT DRILL to adjust the mirrors left, centre and right.

Outside mirrors should be set showing one third or one fifth of the car and two thirds or four fifths of the road scene behind. Angle the nearside mirror as a compromise so when raising yourself in the seat you can see rear wheel or road surface behind or relaxing in the seat, dipping your head up higher on

the scene behind. Check also all the doors are aligned with the bodywork to ensure they are properly closed.

Interior mirror aligned with the top of rear window for maximum view. No fingerprints which leave smudges and loss of view. Check out your blind spots or blank areas.

So far all of the above is based on further anecdotal evidence:

I used to have a 300mm x 50mm sticker in the back window proclaiming I was an IAM RoadSmart Examiner. *[If you've got it, flaunt it]*

[Of course, that's allowed!!!] Except someone took exception to it (or I had failed them!!)

The point I am trying to make is that the 300 x 50 mm sticker was not visible from the driver's seat mirror so that is a lot of view missing.

Or the Football coach taking the kit in a big wicker basket hit a car coming the other way. The kit acted like a hydraulic ram and squashed him against the dashboard.

Or the guy on test who drove off, turned onto the Motorway and the rear door sprung open and flapped in the wind. [Test over!!]

Lastly the car I followed from Bath city centre to Lansdown on full Horns and Lights. He did not see me until Lansdown Racecourse and swore I had only just put them on. *[sigh sigh]*

HOW OFTEN DO YOU DO IT THEN?

When I first became a Police Advanced Driver there were some 'guidelines' for when to check the mirrors.

Often it was stated to check every three to five seconds in town and every seven to ten seconds on country roads, open roads, or Motorways.

After many years this has been upgraded.

FIRSTLY:-

They are not 'Mirror checks', they are '*EFFECTIVE CONSULTATIONS OF THE MIRRORS*'. Or '*EFFECTIVE ALL-ROUND OBSERVATIONS*'

In other words, you have to CONSULT them to analyse what is happening behind you, the traffic type, speed, position, signals, overtaking, etc., in order to assist you to make sound driving plans.

Driving plans are based on:-

What can be seen

What cannot be seen

The circumstances that may reasonably be expected to develop

What to do if things turn out to be different (Contingency Plans)

Once again more Anecdotal evidence Quoting my last 'Accident victims' words!

No1

Vehicle travelling in lane 2 on the M4 at 75 mph. Shunted severely in the rear OFF the carriageway to the nearside. Driver sustained multiple fractures and whiplash. The following car (offender) turned right and hit the barrier head on.

'I had earlier looked in the mirror and saw a car a long way behind me catching me up fast. Then later this happened.'

[Driver had fallen asleep at the wheel prior to impact]

No 2

Vehicle stopped in the road to give way to a flock of sheep crossing road. Rammed HEAVILY from behind writing off both vehicles. Sustained whiplash injuries.

'I saw the sheep in the road and slowed to let them cross. I had been stopped only 2 seconds when I heard a long skidding noise of tyres on the road surface. I thought it was my car. Then I heard and felt the impact from behind.'

[Offending driver admitted lack of concentration]

QUESTION

Were these accidents – two of many – avoidable by mirror checks?:-

EFFECTIVE CONSULTATIONS OF THE MIRRORS

HOW IS IT DONE?

To help out then you must be *FREQUENTLY* looking in the mirrors. It is your third eye. You should know as much about what is going on behind as you do in front. There are no SET guide times or seconds. (The aforementioned ones are good to practise first.) There is a suggested routine of nearside – middle – offside for general routine checks, then this can be biased for turns, nearside for left, offside for right.

To further assist, you should ALWAYS link MIRRORS with the use of CONTROLS

MIRROR SIGNALS

MIRROR BRAKES (SPEED)

MIRROR ACCELERATOR (SPEED)

MIRROR STEERING (POSITION)

MIRROR GEARS

MIRROR MIRROR MIRROR [YES USE ALL THREE]

EXAMPLES OF EFFECTIVE CONSULTATIONS:

Goes without saying in all aspects of the Associate Logbook, Roadcraft and the Highway Code.

Common sense prevails. Before altering speed, is the driver behind aware of what is going on in front of him, or you? (Too close, poorly maintained vehicle, poor or new driver, under an influence.)

Before decelerating or accelerating: are you, were you, being overtaken?

Before pulling out around an obstruction, changing lanes, overtaking or altering course or position, and returning again after all the aforementioned.

And why not? You do not want to get 'caught out' changing gear, one hand off the steering wheel if about to be overtaken by an HGV or if overtaking one, alongside one, or an HGV coming the other way!

MORE Anecdotal evidence – here we go again

A student I was training proudly announced that he had 'FOOLED' his Examiner on test. He looked in his nearside mirror, scanned PAST the direction of the interior mirror, (without looking in it) and looked in his offside mirror and it was not picked up.

Thus, my new phrase, 'It's not what you can GET AWAY with on a driving course but TAKE AWAY with you for the future'.

Then on an IAM test I WAS BRIEFED [*yes it happens*] that they would NOT be looking in the interior mirror as it was a waste of time. They would be concentrating on the OFFSIDE mirror as that is where everything goes on or happens. [*If only he did. Guess the test result.*]

CHECK YOUR SHOULDERS

As you become more advanced, or if already trained or PSV, HGV, light commercial trained, you can then include left and right shoulder checks.

181 degrees each shoulder therefore equals 362 degrees, eliminating any blind spots. PLUS, your nearside and offside mirror checks. JOB DONE.

This is particularly important when moving off after remaining stationary for a short (or long) period. This ensures that no cyclists or motorcyclists have moved up or are overtaking you whilst you have been stationary, and even at pedestrian crossings when you will find a last-minute dash by a KAMIKAZE pedestrian hell bent on running out in front of you just as you were going to move off. [*OH, how we have all been there!!*]

FINALLY

One last tip. If the following driver is too close or does not appear to be reacting to your SIGNALS – SPEED – POSITION – SITUATION etc. you may like to gently STARE on and off pointedly at the following vehicle in the mirror, or raise your head to judge how close they are behind, then stare in the mirror again.

SOMETIMES a message may be seen and understood.

You may also like to look at the driver in front in their offside, nearside, and interior mirrors to see how often they glance in them IF AT ALL. Some drivers

ONLY use the offside door mirror for example.

So, you therefore have to ask yourself? *ARE THEY AWARE OF YOU?*

Okay, MORE ANECDOTAL evidence to finish.

I followed a huge Mercedes 300E right across Bristol city centre being driven by a young person. They were engaged in a very 'animated' conversation with the front seat passenger, continually LOOKING at them. The interior mirror was angled upwards so I could only see the headlining. I could see the face of the driver in the offside mirror.

No effective all-round consultations of the mirrors were made for over 40 minutes. It then pulled into a prestigious office block.

SO, WHAT IS GOING ON BEHIND YOU?

KEEP CHECKING!

May be a PLAIN UNMARKED POLICE Road traffic car, monitoring transgressions – YOURS? Look for the TWIN rear view mirrors inside the windscreen or mounted on the exterior mirrors.

Cheers

Andy Poulton

Examiner, Region 1 South West

REFERENCES

Highway code

Rules:-

97,161,184,202,229,288-289

Changing lanes 133

Fog 234-235

Motorways 254,267

Moving off 97,159

Overtaking 163,267

Turning 179-180,182

& Page 128

ROADCRAFT

Chapter 2 System pages 27-28 and throughout.

FROME CHEESE SHOW—11 September

Many of you will know about the Frome Agricultural & Cheese Show as an enjoyable family day out with lots of entertainment and interesting things to see. This year we have decided to have a stand there with our new gazebo, promoting safer driving to the general public who attend the show. This is our first opportunity to attend a public event since the formation of SWAM and we are very much looking forward to meeting people and encouraging them to think about their driving and how much they would benefit from taking an advanced driving course. We will be offering Free Taster Sessions, and this is also a reminder that these are available to anybody so, if you know anybody who would like one, please get in touch with Lindsay Flower, our Deputy Chair (contact details on page 2), who will arrange it.

QUIZ set by John Morley

1	1970-76: Which small four door saloon was introduced by Hillman to compete with the very successful Ford Escort?	A40; Avenger; Anglia; or Allegro?
2	1968-2002: Which small family saloon, later a hatch-back, was the best-selling car in Britain throughout the 1980s and 90s, as well as being very successful on the rallying circuit?	Ford Escort; Honda Civic; Ford Focus; or Peugeot 307?
3	1966-1976: Which company built a luxury Grand Tourer called the Interceptor?	Jaguar; JZR; Jowett; or Jensen?
4	When translated into English, what does BMW stand for?	Bavarian Motor Works; Berlin Motor Works; Brunswick Motor Works; or Borgholzhausen Motor Works?
5	Shocking statistics released claimed that, incredibly, one in seven new drivers have never done what?	Washed their car; Changed their oil; Used top gear; or Driven at night?
6	Owners of which cars were named the worst drivers in the country?	Land Rover; BMW; Ford; or Audi?
7	What human organ is the radiator grill of a BMW often compared with?	Heart; Lungs; Kidneys; or Buttocks?
8	When did the first British Motor Corporation Mini roll off the production line?	1958; 1959; or 1960?

Answers on page 23

TALE LIGHT—Andy Poulton

THAT'S TYPICAL

A worried owner slept in his brand new Porsche in his drive to protect it from thieves. He woke the next morning to find his house burgled.

H'OWLING NOISE FROM THE ENGINE

A farmer heard some strange noises from under the bonnet of his Land Rover. When he opened it he found three new Barn Owls living there. He had to leave the vehicle until they had flown the nest.

TIRED OF THIS PARKING PROBLEM

A pensioner has received £2,000 in compensation after parking authorities towed away his car whilst he was asleep inside.

HIS BUBBLE BURST

A driver crashed after blowing a huge bubble of chewing gum which burst over his face and obscured his vision.

LATEST GIZMO WITH COMMANDING VOICE

A driver confidently and obediently obeyed his satellite navigation and drove straight into a river at the Ferry Crossing!!

HEALTHY GLOBAL WARMING

An inventor drove a car for a mile using GIN for fuel and BANANA oil as lubricant in order to get into the record book.

EVEN HEALTHIER

A car, which runs on fuel made from crushed oranges, has been invented. It uses 6,000 oranges to make a litre of fuel.

EVEN HEALTHIER STILL

Authorities want to close an unauthorised car park run by a local farmer. It is located next to the local railway station and is FREE as long as you visit the farmer's fruit stall.

THAT'S BACKWARDS

A nurse has fitted a huge turntable in the drive of her home so that she does not have to reverse out into the busy traffic.

THAT WILL TEACH YOU

A teacher convicted of a motoring offence was ordered by the judge to write a 500-word essay on careless driving.

AUTOMATED AND AUTONOMOUS VEHICLES

What have they got to do with advanced driving?

From IAM RoadSmart

There is a large difference between an automated vehicle and an autonomous one. This sometimes causes confusion for people trying to understand the expected level of performance in these vehicles. For some this is still a new concept and some consumers may be confused if they are not fully aware of the options, and in some cases limitations, of their current vehicle. Different words and descriptions being used to explain what the vehicle is able to do is leading to incidents on the roads. What is important, and key to us, is that road safety remains the number one priority.

A quick explanation: an automated vehicle is one that performs 'some' functions automatically for you or to support you, while a fully autonomous vehicle will perform all functions and drive for you, but we are not there yet!

The progression towards autonomous vehicles is measured on a scale. As technology is developed and improved the level of autonomy will increase and move up the scale. The scale runs from 0 to 5 to enable us, manufacturers, and Government etc. to measure and categorize vehicles against each other. Currently there are no level 4 or 5 vehicles available to buy.

As such, an automated vehicle will offer levels of automation from complete manual control (level 0) to Level 1, where driver assistance is offered to monitor speed and control,

moving through to Level 2 with more sensors, radar and monitors to assist with parking, manoeuvring etc. The higher the level the more automation but we are still not at a place today where you can remove the need for human control.

Automated controls will assist you to do things like remote parking, but we must remember the driver still has ultimate control and responsibility. When we get to autonomous vehicles, where, in a driverless car, you are simply the passenger, then the car makes all the decisions for itself. This requires sensors, radars, monitors and Lidar (light detection and ranging) sensors to be installed and working to guide the car without human interaction.

The chances are you have already driven in some sort of partially automated vehicle, perhaps not as advanced as remote parking but with other features that we take for granted these days.

As technology develops the automated vehicle will become even more connected and able to communicate and interact with other things; for example it will be able to receive current information regarding road conditions and traffic, alerting you to hazards on the road.

Fully autonomous and driverless cars will be able to operate completely independently of humans by using artificial intelligence to get their passengers from A to B safely. Within this fast-developing market, it is

natural for a road safety organisation such as IAM RoadSmart to want to ensure these vehicles drive themselves to the highest possible standard.

IAM Policy and Research Department are involved in various projects looking at the future safe delivery of autonomous and assisted driving; it's a hotly debated topic and one we feel we can add value to. If it is to really deliver the promised benefits, then this new technology must exceed the general standard of driving on our roads and be more akin to the standards set by an advanced driver.

We have recently been working with the authors of the British Standards review of CAV (Connected and Autonomous Vehicles) safety benchmarking to develop a proposal

for a 'Digital Commentary Driving' technique.

Focusing in on the quality of the drive and benchmarking 'what makes a safe drive?', this has led to the writers of the report exploring the ways in which advanced drivers and riders are trained and assessed today, and teasing out the potential relevance to autonomous vehicle software design. As part of this, our long-established concept of the 'commentary drive' has been promoted as an excellent technique to be adopted for use by autonomous cars.

Our input was welcomed and included in the final document, proving once again that we can still influence the future of road safety even if it becomes an autonomous one!

FUTURE EVENTS

Sunday, 1 August. 3-in-a-car at Lansdown Park & Ride, BA2 8PA at 10.00. Please take this opportunity to brush up on your advanced driving.

Thursday, 16 September. Welcome meeting at Beckington Memorial Hall, Bath Road, Beckington, Frome, BA11 6SH (just off the A36), with Andy Poulton speaking about some of his experiences as an IAM RoadSmart examiner. Details are on page 3. (Government regulations allowing.)

Thursday, 21 October. Robin Clark will be talking to us about towing caravans and trailers and will be focused particularly on what Advanced Drivers should be aware of when encountering towing vehicles. This meeting will be held at Beckington Memorial Hall (see September for details), if current government regulations allow.

Thursday, 18 November. Our speaker will be Tony Greenidge, CEO of IAM RoadSmart. He will be talking to us about the organisation and this meeting will be on Zoom which will allow members who are unable to attend physical meetings to join us. Unfortunately, it does mean that those members who are not on the internet will not be able to attend but they will be able to read about it in a future issue of *Forward*.

Thursday, 16 December. Christmas Party with Quiz at Beckington Memorial Hall, if circumstances allow. There will be food and fun and we hope you will be able to attend. If we are limited to a Zoom meeting, then there will be the Quiz only.

ANY SUGGESTIONS?

Photo by Helen Schofield



Helen spotted this sign in West Wales. Any suggestions about the meaning of the sign would be gratefully received. Please send your ideas to the Editor – contact details on page 2.

ANSWERS TO QUIZ on P.19

- | | |
|-------------------------|------------------|
| 1. Avenger | 5. Used top gear |
| 2. Ford Escort | 6. Land Rover |
| 3. Jensen | 7. Kidneys |
| 4. Bavarian Motor Works | 8. 1958 |

STATING THE OBVIOUS

Photo by Helen Schofield



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.