



**iAM**  
RoadSmart

# **FORWARD**

**Issue 12**



**The Newsletter for  
Somerset & Wiltshire  
Advanced Motorists**



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# FORWARD

Newsletter of Somerset & Wiltshire Advanced Motorists

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

Registered Charity No 1050592

February – April 2023

Issue 12

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## Details of Annual General Meeting

The AGM of Somerset and Wiltshire Advanced Motorists will be held on Wednesday 15 March 2023 at Beckington Memorial Hall beginning at 19.30.

Nominations for the vacant positions on the Committee (see page 5), 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 10 March **at the latest**. Note that the new committee, to serve for the year 2023-24, plus any approved changes to the Supplementary Items to the Group's Rules of Affiliation, will not be effective until Wednesday 22 March 2023.

After the formal AGM, our speaker will be Martyn Buckland. Martyn is a member of SWAM and an IAM RoadSmart Examiner. His title is 'Poacher turned Game-keeper – or how I went from teenage ne'er-do-well to IAM Examiner.' It promises to be an entertaining talk.

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

Welcome to the first *Forward* of 2023. In this edition you will find details of some of our plans for the year ahead including varying the kind of events we are holding and the day of the week. This is to enable members who have been unable to attend events held on a Thursday because of other commitments to attend our events, and we hope this will attract more members to them. Please read the article on page 14 to find out more details.

Our AGM is being held at Beckington Memorial Hall on Wednesday 15 March. As you know, the position of Chair of SWAM is currently vacant and our Deputy Chair, Lindsay Flower, has been Acting Chair since the summer. We are grateful to her for the way in which she has taken on the duties of Chair. If you feel that this is a way in which you could help the group, by taking over this role, please contact Lindsay. We are also looking for any other members who would like to join the Committee in any position, or who would like to take on the role of deputy to any of the Committee positions with a view to taking over in that role eventually. Please see pages 3 and 5 for details. Please try to attend the AGM if you can as it is important that members are fully represented at this official occasion. The speaker will be Martyn Buckland who is a member of SWAM and also an IAM RS Examiner.

Those of you who receive *Forward* by email will have had an email recently asking if you would like to receive it by post in the future. Since the formation of SWAM we have only been sending *Forward* by post to those without email, but we are aware that some members are not able to read it this way. Please see a copy of the email you were sent on page 13, and if you haven't already responded, please do so now if you would like to have a hard copy of *Forward* and are unable to print it for yourself.

You will find under Group News (see page 6) our reports of the October and November meetings last year on Night Driving and Winter Driving. Both these issues are particularly important at this season and we highly recommend that you read them and take note of the good advice you will find there.

*Clare Hogg, Sue Phillips*

**The next edition of *Forward* will be published in May 2023. Please submit motoring-related articles and / or digital photographs to the Editors (*who reserve the right to edit them*) by Friday 7 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.**

## Notice of Annual General Meeting—15 March 2023

The Annual General Meeting of Somerset and Wiltshire Advanced Motorists will take place on Wednesday 15 March 2023, beginning at 19.30, at Beckington Memorial Hall.

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

Group Chair:	Vacant
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

The former Group Chair, John Morley, stood down during the year, and the Minutes Secretary, Sue Phillips, is standing down at this AGM, and nominations are sought for these positions. The remaining Committee members are willing to stand again.

Nominations for 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 10th March **at the latest**. The full list of nominations for the Committee positions will be posted on the group website prior to the meeting.

Note that the election of the new committee, to serve for the year 2023-24, plus any proposed changes to the Supplementary items to the Group's Rules of Affiliation, will be effective from Wednesday 22nd March 2023.

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.

## Group News

**SWAM's October meeting was held at Beckington Memorial Hall** and Ray Robbetts, Deputy Chief Observer, spoke about Night Driving.

Night driving is one of the most dangerous things we do. 17 million drivers in the UK struggle to see at night – 50% of all drivers.

As eyes get older they take longer to react to or recover from light changes. The time taken to recover from glare between the ages of 15 and 65 increases from 1 to 9 seconds! (ROSPA). How far can you go in 9 seconds?

Drivers are three times more likely to have an accident at night! Therefore annual eyesight checks are vital, certainly after the age of 40.

Increase in headlight glare and halos around headlights are signs of eye problems such as glaucoma, cataracts, retinal damage and diabetes. These also produce a decreasing ability to see clearly into dark areas. This all leads to the question 'Do I really need to go out tonight?'

### Preparation for a night drive

**Personal:** have a good level of alertness and make sure you are not tired after a long, busy day. Make sure glasses are clean with a non-reflective coating on the lenses. There is no evidence that yellow-tinted glasses reduce glare. They may improve contrast but as they are tinted they will allow less light through. Have a torch, a blanket and warm clothing in the car in case of a breakdown. Allow more time for the journey.

**Car:** Check all lights, especially headlights, are clean and working properly. A dirty windscreen and rear window will increase glare. A good windscreen cleaner, both inside and outside, is essential. Keep dashboard lighting dim. Use the dip function on the interior mirror to reduce headlight glare from behind.

### Driving in urban areas

Some street lighting is very poor. More caution is needed as dark areas can hide pedestrians and cyclists with no lights and dark clothing.

As visibility is reduced there is less time to react to hazards so keep speed low and make greater use of main beam.

One benefit of night driving is that it is easier to spot oncoming traffic as there is obvious glare from approaching cars around blind bends or from behind parked cars. Look for reflections in windows or on parked cars.

Do not keep your foot on the footbrake longer than necessary. This annoys and blinds following drivers. If stopping for a long time, apply the handbrake and

take your foot off the brake so that the bright brake lights don't disturb anybody behind you. This applies to automatic as well as manual cars. Many drivers of automatics keep their foot on the brake while they are stationary. Also, turn off your indicators when stationary so that they don't disturb the driver behind.

## Driving on country roads

Country roads can be narrow and often have poor road markings and sharp blind bends. They are often unlit and wild animals are more common at night.

Use main beam whenever possible but return to dipped beam in the face of oncoming traffic or when following other vehicles. Also remember to dip your headlights for pedestrians.

If you are on dipped beam because of oncoming traffic but you see a hazard on your side of the road which you can't see properly, go to main beam for a very short time so you can see what it is and then back to dipped.

Use the reflection of oncoming cars' headlights on hedges on blind bends – an advantage of driving at night. Another advantage of night driving is that there are fewer cars and lorries on the roads.

## Driving on major roads and motorways

These are the safest roads but when driving at night can be monotonous, leading to tiredness or even falling asleep.

Owing to a lack of visible landmarks speed can rise and following distances can reduce.

Be aware of vehicles travelling slower than you, and they may actually be stationary!



Be well rested beforehand. Stop for a break of about 20 minutes (longer if you are an older driver) every two hours and have a caffeinated drink and a short walk.

## Headlight range and stopping distances

'You must be able to stop on your side of the road in the distance you can see ahead to be clear.'

Depending on your type of bulb, on main beam the range is about 350ft, and on dipped beam about 180ft. Halogen, high intensity or LED bulbs should be fitted where possible. Halogen headlights are very bright which is good for you, but not for oncoming traffic. You should always drive within the range of your headlights.

When it is raining slow down. Your stopping distance will increase and there



will be additional hazards such as flooding and water on the road.

## The difference between Perception and Seeing

Perception is the ability to see a hazard, understand its possible danger and then react to it. As speed increases a driver can only expand their field of vision where the increasing amount of visual information balances the amount they can handle. Your brain finds it harder to process information that is moving fast around you. Therefore, increasing speed will reduce the driver's perception range. It is vital to have a stopping distance lower than your perception range.

On a dark road with no oncoming traffic and good eyesight:

At 30mph: Perception range – about 220ft; Stopping distance – 75ft

At 40mph: Perception range – about 200ft; Stopping distance – 120ft

At 50mph: Perception range – about 180ft; Stopping distance – 175ft

Therefore beyond 50mph you are overdriving your headlights. With age-impaired eyesight about 40mph is the fastest safe speed on dipped headlights.

If oncoming headlights cause glare then perception range is dramatically reduced and you could be overdriving your headlights at just over 20mph.

If you are dazzled look to the left hand side of the road. There may be a white line to mark the edge of the road to help you.

Most drivers drive by luck more than judgement at night. They assume there is no hazard beyond the range of their headlights. They probably get away with it 99% of the time. The other 1% could be fatal. **Always drive within your headlight range.**

Ray was thanked for his talk.

**Before opening the November meeting, on the subject of Winter Driving,** which was held on Zoom, and whilst waiting for members to join, Lindsay Flower, Acting Chair, asked for comments and questions for David Major, Chief Observer, who would be giving the presentation.

Lindsay began by remarking that a taxi driver had told her that he reduced his tyre pressures in bad weather. David said that this was a dangerous measure and he would be referring to it in his presentation.

Lindsay said that all drivers should be sure to put antifreeze in their cars – a 50/50 mix is sufficient for newer cars.

John Morley asked how to correct the driver in front of your car who has kept their fog lights on. David replied that you should pull back and overtake when it is safe to do so. Do not take any retaliatory measures.



Lindsay then opened the meeting and invited David to speak about Winter Driving.

## Do you need to go out?

The roads can be dangerous in winter when there's snow, ice or sleet. Our top tip is to take it slow. Stopping distance can be ten times longer, if not more, when it's icy. Gentle manoeuvres and slow speeds are the key to safe driving in ice and snow.



## The format of my car

Is it rear wheel drive? Is it front wheel drive? Is it four wheel drive? All this information will affect the performance of the car in normal conditions as well. Are all four tyres OK? Are your tyres run-flat tyres? Is the spare tyre OK (if you have one)?

So, know your car. Get the car manual out of the pocket and read it.

## Before you set off

Allow extra time for winter journeys. Plan routes around major roads, which are more likely to be cleared and gritted.

Try to get up at least ten minutes early to give you time to de-ice the car.

Wear comfortable, dry shoes for driving so your feet don't slip on the pedals.

Check fuel levels – have at least a quarter of a tank in case of unexpected delays.

Clear all windows using a scraper and de-icer and wait until the windscreen is fully demisted.

If you drive an automatic, check the handbook – some have a winter mode or recommend selecting '2' in slippery conditions.

## POWDERY Check

Don't drive like a tank driver with just a tiny patch of windscreen to see out of (it's illegal). Make sure all your windows are clear of ice, snow and condensation before you set off. Keep the windscreen and other windows clear of dirt and snow to avoid a fine. Clear snow from the roof – it can fall onto the windscreen and block your view. The Highway Code says you **must** clear your roof.

A member asked about the use of the air-con to demist the interior of the car. David said it can be used to demist the car at first, and kept on throughout the journey to keep the windows clear – using air-con does not affect engine performance. He said drivers should learn how to use the air-con in winter and summer as it demists and improves ventilation. Ray Robbetts (Deputy Chief

Observer) agreed that he leaves his air-con running. Lindsay remarked that the car can get cold when using the air-con so she sets it to 25 degrees. David sets his at 18 to 20 degrees to keep the screen clear.

Replace worn or damaged wiper blades. Don't leave your wipers on auto when you park up if there's a risk of frost. If the blades freeze to the screen, you could damage the blades or wiper motor before you set off when you turn the ignition on.

Ray remarked that electric windows might stick, so try de-icer around the rubber first. A member asked if de-icer damages the rubber. David replied that it doesn't, but he prefers to use luke-warm water as de-icer smears the screen. Ray agreed with that and recommended the use of a scraper. Another member said she uses a windscreen cover from Aldi, which hooks into the doors and when removed the screen is clear and doesn't need de-icing. David remarked that there is a risk of rain getting in the windows if they are not tightly shut.

Use a good quality de-icer in your screenwash to reduce the chance of it freezing and to protect the wiper blades.

## Make your car visible in poor winter weather

With shorter days and more chance of rain, sleet and snow, there can often be poor visibility when driving in winter. Make sure all car lights are working and the lenses are clean. If the roads are really mucky, you might have to clean your lights after every trip. Keep number plates clean, to avoid fines. If you have to clear snow or ice, don't forget the lights – front and back.

You must use headlights when visibility is seriously reduced. If you use fog lights, remember to switch them off when visibility improves so they don't dazzle other drivers or obscure your brake lights.

## Choose the right winter tyres

We recommend at least 3mm of tread for the winter, although the **legal limit is 1.6mm**. Don't let air out of your tyres to get more grip – it doesn't work, and it's unsafe. When under-inflated the tyres are wider; they ride on top of the snow, reducing the grip. Properly inflated tyres are thinner so travel through the snow. There was a discussion on the merits of using winter tyres. Ray remarked that these are not often necessary in the South of England, but you can think about getting winter tyres or all-season tyres – these are made from a special rubber that gives better grip in cold, wet conditions.

Only use snow chains if there's enough snow to prevent damage to the road.

## Look after batteries and electrics

Car batteries rarely last longer than **five years**. There are extra demands on

them in the winter thanks to lights, heating and wipers. Here are some tips to prevent a flat battery in winter:

Turn off electrical loads like lights, heated rear window and wipers before trying to start the engine;

Use the starter in short 5-second bursts;

If the engine doesn't start quickly, wait 30 seconds between attempts;

If you don't use your car often, give it a regular overnight trickle charge.

## **Top up your antifreeze in cold weather**

Antifreeze only costs a few pounds, but a frozen and cracked engine costs hundreds to repair. You need a 50/50 mix of antifreeze and water for the winter – this protects your engine down to -34C. Most modern cars use long-life antifreeze but some types of antifreeze need changing after only two years. Make sure you use the right type and check your service schedule.

## **Carry the essentials in your car**

What do you need in your car for winter driving?

There are a few essentials you should keep in your car when you're driving in winter. These will help you deal with ice, snow and dark winter nights. Here are things to keep in your car:

Ice scraper; deicer; torch and spare batteries; first aid kit.

You should also keep a fully-charged mobile phone and power bank. That way you can let friends or relatives know if your journey's taking longer than usual or call for help in an emergency. Ray stressed the importance of telling people when setting off on a journey and giving an ETA so that the alarm can be raised if you don't arrive. A member remarked that it would be a good idea to include your registration number with the information so that the police could be informed if necessary.

What3Words is a good app to have on your phone as it pinpoints your position. It was suggested that phoning 112 can be better than 999.

## **What should be in a winter car survival kit?**

No matter how safely you drive, there's still a chance you could get stuck somewhere in poor weather. Pack a winter emergency kit, just in case. That way you'll be prepared for a long wait in the cold. Here's what to include:

Warm clothes, waterproofs and high-vis jackets (have enough for everyone in the car);

Sturdy footwear;

Hot drinks and snacks;

Shovel;



Jump leads (but they do require somebody to know how to use them);  
Warning triangle.

## Driving on winter roads

Pull away in second gear, easing your foot off the clutch gently to avoid wheel-spin. If you have to use your brakes, apply them gently.

**Driving uphill** – leave plenty of room between other cars or wait until it's clear so you don't have to stop part way up. Keep a constant speed and try to avoid having to change gear on the hill.

**Driving downhill** – slow down before the hill, use a low gear, so using engine braking, and try to avoid using the footbrake. Leave as much room as you can behind the car in front.

## Skid Correction

**Don't brake!** That will make it worse. The simplest response is to ease off on the brake or accelerator and try to keep the front wheels pointing where you want to go. Pressing the clutch relieves the tyres of the job of engine braking and makes all their grip available for steering.

## If you get stuck in snow or ice

If you get stuck, straighten the steering and clear the snow from the wheels. Put a sack or old rug in front of the driving wheels to give the tyres some grip. Be Safe.

David then opened up the meeting for discussion. John remarked that most of the information on Winter Driving had concentrated on manual gearboxes and that the only reference to automatic cars had been in the first slide. Ray recommended going into manual operation in snow, as he would not trust an automatic car to select the correct gear.

David stressed that the main message is not to go out if your journey is not really necessary. He showed some photos of what can happen in the snow. He said that we all have views on driving in bad conditions, but the main thing is to be safe.

David reminded members to drive with their headlights on in poor conditions, not just their driving lights, because in this mode there are no rear lights on.

Lindsay said that this was the final meeting of the year and meetings would recommence in January. She closed the meeting by wishing everyone a Happy Christmas and Happy Motoring.



## Letter to members about receiving *Forward* in the post

*The following is a copy of an email from Clare Hogg, Newsletter Editor, which was sent to members in January about how they receive Forward.*

Dear Member

I am emailing to ask you about how you would like to receive our newsletter, *Forward*, in future. When SWAM was formed we decided only to send printed copies of *Forward* to those members who don't have email. Other members receive it as a pdf attachment to a group email. One reason for this was to save printing costs, both environmental and financial, and postage costs, because we are trying to keep our environmental footprint as low as we can.

We are aware that some members appear not to be receiving *Forward*, or are unable to read it because they find it difficult to read on a phone or other device and are unable to print it themselves. We suspect that the email may be going into some members' spam boxes as we know this can happen with a group email with an attachment.

The purpose of this email is to ask you if you would prefer to receive a printed copy of *Forward* in future. *Forward* is an important means of communication with our members and we want to make sure that everybody has a chance to read it.

Please email me at [newsletter@swam-iam.org.uk](mailto:newsletter@swam-iam.org.uk) if you would like to receive a printed copy of the next issue. If you do not respond to this email requesting *Forward* in print, we will assume that you are happy with the current arrangements.

## Skid Pan Experience by Anthea Kemp

In September last year Peter Huntington advertised a discounted Skid Pan opportunity for SWAM members at the Castle Combe Circuit, organised by Drive-Tech.

It sounded interesting and fun so I signed up for my son Tom and myself. The big day arrived eventually in November so off we went with an air of anticipation and excitement.

We were greeted by three charming ex-policemen who were to be our instructors and given the necessary induction talk.

There were nine participants and three cars so we took turns to drive and be passengers. They comprised a Front wheel drive car to demonstrate Understeer, Rear wheel to demonstrate Oversteer and a Four wheel drive car with ABS (Anti-lock Brake System).

I let Tom drive first. I was his passenger on the slippery surface on the designated course between various cones. Then the fun began!

It was an altogether strange and slightly scary experience, skidding as he turned corners; he was really going for it, always in second gear though. I felt better driving myself afterwards!



Photo courtesy of Drive-Tech

Everyone had a turn at driving both the front and rear wheel drive cars after which we gathered for some tuition on how to deal with skid scenarios in real life. We were given notes to take home.

Then we all had a go in the four wheel drive car with an instructor who encouraged us to brake suddenly at speed, demonstrating the ABS braking system present on most cars, including an emergency stop and avoiding a potential pedestrian marked by a cone. That was interesting and none were touched!

Finally, we all had to perform a speed test round the circuit finishing with a speedy reverse between two cones. Very exciting.

We both enjoyed the afternoon, finding it fun, interesting and informative and a useful addition to our driving skills. Highly recommended.

## SWAM Events Programme for 2023

The SWAM Committee has been considering what form our Group Events will take in 2023 and we have decided on a number of changes.

First, we are calling all our events Events and not Meetings. This way we can include everything we do under the same umbrella and not distinguish between events held on Zoom or at Beckington Memorial Hall (BMH) for group members, and other events specifically for a sub-group of our membership, such as Observers, or occasions where we attend an outdoor event, such as that held at Middlewick House Open Garden or the Skid Pan.

We plan to hold two events specifically for Observers and two for Associates each year, though other members will be welcome at some of these.



Another major change we are making is to have our Group Events on different days of the week in the hope of attracting members who have been unable to attend on a Thursday which has been our regular day up until now.

We have been considering holding Group Events in different venues, and not all at BMH (which is very central to our area), but have been unable to find a suitable location with adequate parking either in Bath or further east in Wiltshire. If you have a suggestion, please let us know.

The following is our programme for 2023 so far:

- Thursday, 12 January at 19.30:** Observers' meeting at BMH
- Tuesday, 24 January at 19.30:** Under-17 Car Club talk on Zoom
- Thursday, 16 February at 19.30:** Talk from Reg Local on Zoom
- Wednesday, 15 March at 19.30:** AGM at BMH – Speaker: Martyn Buckland, SWAM member and IAM RS Examiner
- Thursday, 20 April at 19.30:** Talk from a member of Avon and Somerset's Road Safety Team at BMH
- Monday, 22 May at 19.00:** **Associates' Event**, but all members are very welcome: **3-in-a-car event** at BMH. There will be a short talk for Associates in the Hall followed by going out on the road, with at least one Observer in each car. Refreshments will be available.
- Saturday/Sunday 3-4 June:** Middlewick House Open Garden. We will be present with our gazebo, and we highly recommend that you attend as it is a wonderful place with a superb collection of cars to see.
- Tuesday, 20 June at 19.15:** **3-in-a-car event** at BMH. There will be a short talk in the Hall on eco-driving followed by going out on the road, with at least one Observer in each car. Refreshments will be available.
- Thursday, 20 July at 19.00:** **3-in-a-car event** at BMH. There will be a short talk in the Hall on slow manoeuvring followed by going out on the road, with at least one Observer in each car, when there will be an opportunity to practise slow manoeuvres. Refreshments will be available.
- August:** No event
- September:** We hope to arrange a talk at BMH on driving electric cars. Date to be confirmed.

*Please note the different days of the week for each 3-in-a-car event.*

## Competition Corner—Quiz set by John Morley

Name the singers associated with the following car related song titles:

1	Cars	Robert Plant; Gary Newman; Phil Collins; or Lou Reed?
2	I drove all night	Kate Bush; Aretha Franklin; Chris Rea; or Cyndi Lauper?
3	Drive	Prince; Mick Jagger; The Cars; or The Doors?
4	Fast Car	Tracy Chapman; Paloma Faith; Joss Stone; or Paul McCartney?
5	Little Red Corvette	Billy Ocean; Chuck Berry; Lou Reed; or Prince?
6	Mustang Sally	Wilson Pickett; Elvis Presley; Chuck Berry; or Bob Seger?
7	Little Deuce Coupe	The Kinks; The Rolling Stones; T. Rex; or The Beach Boys?
8	Car Wash	The Supremes; Martha and the Vandellas; Rose Royce; or Tracy Chapman?

Answers on page 19

## Welcome and Congratulations

### ***We Welcome New Associates***

<b>Sharron Collins</b>	[ <i>Observer:</i> Jeff Vincent]
<b>Simon Cowley</b>	[ <i>Observer:</i> Thomas Flynn]
<b>Mark Evans</b>	[ <i>Observer:</i> Mark Ellis]
<b>Brian Fisk</b>	[ <i>Observer:</i> Jeff Vincent]
<b>Christopher Fry</b>	[ <i>Observer:</i> John Badley]
<b>Robert Galvin</b>	[ <i>Observer:</i> Lindsay Flower]
<b>Elissa Gay</b>	[ <i>Observer:</i> Robin Clark]
<b>Christian Rolleston</b>	[ <i>Observer:</i> Jeff Vincent]
<b>Barry Seed</b>	[ <i>Observer:</i> Thomas Flynn]
<b>Marion Skinner</b>	[ <i>Observer:</i> Jeff Vincent]
<b>Simon Tate</b>	[ <i>Observer:</i> David Major]
<b>Mark Thornhill</b>	[ <i>Observer:</i> John Morley]
<b>Janette Whittaker</b>	[ <i>Observer:</i> David Major]
<b>Fiona Williams</b>	[ <i>Observer:</i> John Morley]

### ***We Congratulate***

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

<b>Callum Chamberlain*</b>	observed by Mark Ellis
<b>Steve Pratt</b>	observed by Lindsay Flower
<b>Barry Seed*</b>	observed by Thomas Flynn
<b>Martyn Whalley</b>	observed by David Major

\*F1RST pass

Special congratulations to Barry Seed for appearing in both lists!



## Profile of Robin Clark — SWAM Public Relations Officer



I am 63 years old and I am married with one daughter.

I was born in Sussex but have lived most of my life in Somerset and Wiltshire. I am now based in Bradford on Avon where I have been for over 30 years.

I was a career Civil Servant for nearly 40 years and during this time I worked my way up through the ranks, learning all manner of skills along the way, including becoming an IT specialist as a

programmer and systems analyst, which then developed into Programme & Project Management, then latterly Risk Management.

In 2015, I was fortunate enough to be able to take early retirement, when I set up my own company. Then in 2018 my wife and I decided it was time to put away our working clothes and concentrate on the more important things in life (see below).

### **My Role as Public Relations Officer:**

In summary my role is to ensure that the Group:

Receives as much positive publicity as possible and that any negative publicity is subject to damage limitation;

Has an overall focused and cohesive approach to publicity and public relations.

### **What are my key interests in motoring?**

Since I was a small boy, I have always loved anything with four wheels (no I'm not a motorbike fan I'm afraid). My father and I used to sit in his car on a Saturday morning, with me trying to name all the cars going by whilst my mother was shopping along the High Street. I also love watching all manner of motor sport, from Formula One to Rallycross and pretty much everything in between.

In terms of cars I have owned, only relatively recently have I been fortunate enough to be able to indulge my passion for '*something special*' which over the past 10+ years has included a couple of replica AC Cobras, one with a fabulous 6 litre Ford V8 engine, and more recently a S550 Mustang V8 GT, which you may have seen at a couple of shows the Group has attended. Alongside those are our 'daily drives', including a little KIA Picanto – housing a surprisingly nippy 3 cylinder 1.2 litre engine, plus my trusty Hyundai Santa Fe for all of the load lugging that we do, whether it be family members, trips to the tip, or pulling our caravan.

### **How did I get involved with the IAM?**

I blame my wife! ...who decided to do the Advanced Driving course in 2019, dragging me along to one of the Group meetings (then in Bath) and the rest as they say is

history. To be fair, I had always intended doing the course but had never got around to it, so this proved to be the catalyst and whilst 2020 proved as we all know to be an extremely challenging year, I pressed on and managed to pass my Advanced Driving test that September, with a F1RST.

I followed this up in 2022 by becoming an Observer and when time permits I intend taking on the challenge of achieving my Masters qualification.

### **My hobbies and interests:**

As I said earlier, I love all things to do with Motor Sport. My favourite venues are Goodwood and Castle Combe, and I was lucky enough to go to the Monaco Grand Prix once, which I'll never forget! I also love attending car shows, sometimes exhibiting my car.

I am a keen photographer, often focussing on all things automobilia. I've got a website at [www.clickboa.co.uk](http://www.clickboa.co.uk), in case you're interested.

Music has always been another passion and for over forty years I played drums with various bands, from rock to strict tempo dance, plus a bit of panto!

After a thirty year break I have taken up snooker and billiards again and am thoroughly enjoying the challenge of getting back up to speed.

DIY: I love the challenge of making or fixing something myself.

My wife and I have always been into camping and latterly caravanning and we try to get away whenever we can, whether around the UK, or across to Europe. In fact in many respects, I prefer driving in Europe to the UK. But then I love driving – full stop – and I hope to get as many years in as possible before restrictions make it too difficult.



Recently IAM RoadSmart ran a competition for members in conjunction with Cornmarket Insurance, the official insurance partner of IAM RS. The ten winners were each to win a Fortnum & Mason hamper and Robin was one of those lucky winners. Congratulations to Robin! I'm sure he and his wife enjoyed Christmas with the contents of the hamper.

### Answers to Quiz (p.16)

- |                 |                   |                   |
|-----------------|-------------------|-------------------|
| 1. Gary Newman  | 4. Tracy Chapman  | 7. The Beach Boys |
| 2. Cyndi Lauper | 5. Prince         | 8. Rose Royce     |
| 3. The Cars     | 6. Wilson Pickett |                   |

## Editor's Corner

*Editor's Corner is an opportunity for me to air issues which occur to me in relation to cars and driving, while I am out and about. If you have anything you would like to air in a similar way, please get in touch.*

### Idling

I don't know about you, but it infuriates me to see stationary cars with their engines running unnecessarily. This is what is known as idling and it is actually illegal, though not many people seem to know that. Rule 123 of the Highway Code says 'You MUST NOT leave a parked vehicle unattended with the engine running or leave a vehicle engine running unnecessarily while that vehicle is stationary on a public road.'

Obviously, there are times when the engine is running when you are stationary, when you are waiting at traffic lights for example, but when you are parked, perhaps waiting for a passenger, you must turn your engine off, and the reasons for this are both environmental and economic. First of all, and most important, is the pollution that is caused by an idling engine which can actually be twice as bad as when the car is moving. This pollution can exacerbate a number of respiratory conditions such as asthma, and it is bad for the environment in all sorts of ways.

An idling engine is also wasting fuel and this has both environmental and economic consequences. We don't want to be using any more fossil fuels than we have to, hence the move to electric vehicles, but it is also a complete waste of money. Fuel is very expensive and to waste it in this way is, in my view, madness.

The next thing is: what to do about it? I frequently pass a car with the driver sitting there with the engine running and I feel like stopping and challenging them about it. However, I am a coward in this respect and don't want to get myself into an awkward situation. Sometimes I think they may have the engine running so they can have the heater on, for example, and in the case of HGVs I don't know if they need to have it running to keep something going in the vehicle. But I would like to do something. If anybody has any suggestions of how to tackle this problem, please get in touch. Email me, Clare Hogg, at [newsletter@swam-iam.org.uk](mailto:newsletter@swam-iam.org.uk). I would be delighted to hear from you.

#### 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.

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