

**iam**  
RoadSmart

# FORWARD

Issue 16

CML 722



1935 Aston Martin Ulster (LM18)

The 1935 Ulster Team cars were the very last of the works 1.5 litre cars. That year, this car was driven to fifth overall in the Tourist Trophy and 12th overall at Le Mans. Based on the 'M' chassis, the Ulster was the apotheosis of the pre-war open-wheel design. It was made available to Martini drivers in 1935.

Engine format: In line 4 cylinder  
BHP: 85

Capacity: 1495cc  
Top speed: 102mph

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



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Newsletter of Somerset & Wiltshire Advanced Motorists

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

Registered Charity No 1050592

February — April 2024

Issue 16

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## Details of Annual General Meeting

The AGM of Somerset and Wiltshire Advanced Motorists will be held on Thursday 21 March 2024 at Beckington Memorial Hall beginning at 19.30.

Nominations for 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 15 March **at the latest**.

After the formal AGM, the speaker will be Mac McGarry, an IAM RoadSmart Examiner, and an entertaining speaker. His topic will be 'The most dangerous roads – how to negotiate them skilfully'. It promises to be an interesting talk.

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

Welcome to *Forward*. Our AGM is being held at Beckington Memorial Hall on Thursday 21 March. Please see pages 3 and 5 for details. As you will see, all members of the current committee are willing to stand again for their positions. 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 Mac McGarry who is an IAM RoadSmart Examiner.

Our event in November was held on Zoom but was badly attended. It was a Q&A session and these are normally popular, so perhaps it was its being on Zoom that led to the poor attendance. We may hold another Q&A session in person or on Zoom depending on what members want. Please read Robin's article on page 6 and respond to his request at the end. It is important for us to provide events that appeal to members and also educate them and ensure that all members maintain their advanced driving standards. That is why each issue of *Forward* has reports of any events which have been held in the previous few months.

If you look at page 12 you will see that we have had some very impressive test results recently. Out of the four IAM RoadSmart Advanced Tests taken, three were awarded F1RSTS, for which we congratulate the Associates and their Observers. In addition, Oliver Ganfield, who passed his Advanced test last year at the age of 18 years and ten days, has now gained his Masters with a distinction, again at the age of 18. Congratulations to Oliver and his mentor, David Major. You can read an article about Oliver in *Forward* 14, published in August 2023. We are very proud of his achievements, and those of all our Associates.

*Clare Hogg, Sue Phillips*

**The next edition of *Forward* will be published in May 2024. Please submit motoring-related articles and/or digital photographs to the Editors (*who reserve the right to edit them*) by Tuesday 2 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—21 March 2024

The Annual General Meeting of Somerset and Wiltshire Advanced Motorists will take place on Thursday 21st March 2024, beginning at 19.30 at Beckington Memorial Hall.

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

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

All the Committee members are willing to stand again.

Nominations for all the 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 15 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 2024-25, plus any proposed changes to the Supplementary items to the Group's Rules of Affiliation, will be effective from Thursday 28 March 2024.

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 Q & A Event with Martyn Buckland – Thursday 23 November

For our November event, Martyn Buckland, IAM Examiner, as well as David Major, SWAM Chief Observer, kindly gave up their evenings to hold a Q & A session, hosted by Robin Clark (SWAM Public Relations). The attendance was disappointing with only four other attendees, though all agreed that it had been beneficial.

The event, held via Zoom, covered a number of topics for Martyn and David to field, providing everyone with some valuable advice based on their experiences.

***The first question raised concerned road signage, specifically what was the significance of a round traffic sign with a green border, containing a speed limit (in this case 20) that had been seen by the member when out on a drive? (see library picture below)***



Martyn and David both agreed that whilst they had never seen this signage in person, their opinion was that it was an advisory sign and whilst not mandatory, any driver involved in an incident causing a colli-



sion with another vehicle or pedestrian causing personal injury having ignored this advised speed limit, could find themselves embroiled in a court case to answer for their actions, including prosecution by the Police, e.g. for driving without due care and attention.

***The next few questions concerned parking.***

***What are the rules of the road concerning how one should street park at night?***

***Should you leave your lights on or not?***

***Can you park facing oncoming traffic on your side of the road?***

***If you're parked in an allocated parking bay then do you need to leave parking lights on?***

Martyn replied that if the speed limit is greater than 30mph then you must park with your side/parking lights on and facing in the direction of traffic on your side of the road. If however you are parked in an allocated parking bay/space, then you do not need to leave your lights on and you may park in the opposite direction. Also worth noting is that if your vehicle weighs more than 2.5 tonnes then in both instances you need to leave your side/parking lights on.

David added that if parked in a 30mph or less limited area with street-lights, then parking lights would not be required and you are permitted to park on either side of the road. Parking illegally however could attract a fine of up to £2000!

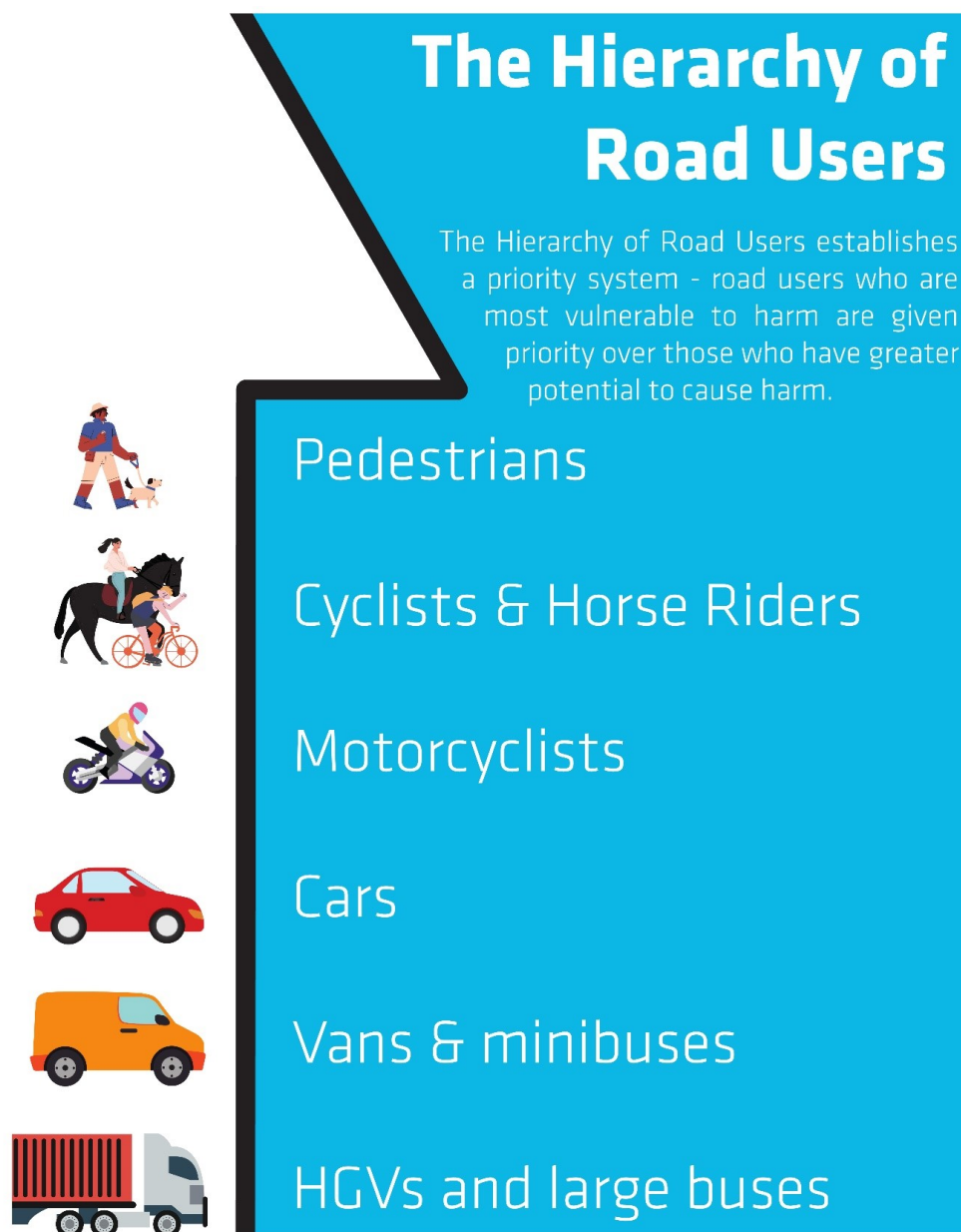
Robin raised an observation concerning the weight limits mentioned by Martyn and given that electric vehicles (EV) are considerably heavier than traditional petrol and diesel vehicles – though often smaller – there is the possibility that an EV might well exceed 2.5 tonnes and, if so, would they be required to leave their lights on as mentioned above? Martyn replied that if it stipulates a weight restriction in the Highway Code, then yes, that requirement would indeed apply.

***Whilst you are not allowed to park over a dropped kerb, can you park over your own dropped kerb?***

Both Martyn and David advised that one is NOT permitted to park over or next to a dropped curb, even if it is your own. In doing so you may be restricting pedestrian access for wheelchairs and prams/push-chairs etc., whether travelling along a pavement or looking to cross the road.

David added that for anyone interested, they could refer to Rule 2.4.3 in the Highway Code.

***The next question moved onto the subject of the hierarchy of road users, specifically, should you always stop for, say, a pedestrian to cross the road, regardless?***



The roads are a space to be shared in safety. Every road user has a responsibility for their own safety, and a responsibility to minimise the risk they pose to others. For a more detailed explanation see rules H1, H2 and H3 in the latest Highway Code.

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Robin said that this refers directly to the new Priorities for Road Users, contained in the refreshed Highway Code published in early 2022. Martyn stated that there are two very key words contained in the Highway Code, namely 'MUST' and 'SHOULD'. If it states you MUST do something then it is the law and you must comply. If it says you SHOULD consider an action then that is discretionary.

David added that if a pedestrian, cyclist or horse rider has already started crossing the road, then they have priority over motor vehicles. However if they are waiting to cross, then it is up to your discretion, and common sense should prevail to only stop for them to cross if it is safe to do so. In this case the Highway Code states that you SHOULD consider allowing them to cross.

***Many of us are reaching an age where our eyesight may not be as sharp as it once was, especially when called upon to drive in the dark. What precautions should we take and what assistance is available these days to assist drivers with failing eyesight?***

The general consensus was that if you find difficulty seeing at night when driving and if your journey is not absolutely necessary, then (as contained in Roadcraft), don't drive! Oncoming headlights at night tend to create more glare, particularly, but not exclusively, in older as well as tired eyes. One of the attendees – who is a National Observer – mentioned two specific instances he had encountered with Associates, both under 18, who were unable to pass the number plate reading test.

Martyn said that he would encourage everyone to have their eyes regularly tested (at least every two years). Variations in eyesight can be caused by many things, whether it is a medical condition, or simply eye strain – and any age group may be affected. One particular tip that Martyn shared was to try and avoid looking directly at the oncoming headlights at night, as doing so will naturally draw you towards them. Also, there are glasses on the market that are specifically tinted to help reduce glare at night. Robin added a word

of caution, though, to ensure any optical aids are professionally prescribed, as different tints can have the effect of cancelling out certain colours, e.g. a green tint may cancel out a red (traffic) light, which could prove fatal.

***What should drivers be checking before they start their journey – including Electric Vehicle owners?***

Whilst advanced drivers will be aware of POWDERY, the key advice was to focus particularly on tyres and visibility. Tyres are your single point of contact with the road and if they are compromised in any way then you risk your, as well as everyone else's, safety. Keep a close eye on the amount of tread across the whole width of the tyre as well as whether the pressures are correct – and don't wait for the TPMS (Tyre Pressure Monitoring System) to warn you! The general consensus was that once tyres have reached 70% wear then it is worth considering changing them.

Robin also mentioned a formula that exists as a guide to help calculate the effectiveness of a tyre depending on the speed it is travelling at and how performance varies based on the tread depth versus the depth of water being driven through. When the depth of the water equals the depth of the tread (let's assume 7mm of tread driving through 7mm of water), then the tyre's ability to expel the amount of water it is being driven through is compromised and the tyre is likely to begin to aquaplane. The aquaplane speed (AS) is the speed at which you will start to aquaplane, and should not be exceeded.

$$AS = 10.2 \times \text{square root of inflation pressure.}$$

If a tyre is inflated to say 36PSI, then  $AS = 10.2 \times \sqrt{36} = 10.2 \times 6 = 61.2\text{mph}$ .

***An additional question was raised regarding overtaking other moving vehicles – particularly when you have vehicles behind you. Specifically when should you start indicating?***

Martyn and David agreed and advised that it is preferable to only

indicate once the overtake is on and you are about to go, as indicating too early whilst setting the vehicle position on the other side of the road to confirm whether the road ahead is clear, may result in the vehicle following you closing the gap between it and the car being overtaken, leaving you stranded without a space to pull back into, should it be unsafe to proceed. Of course if there is no one behind you then it is less critical when you choose to indicate, but do consider the vehicle(s) in front of you to help inform them of your intentions.

Generally speaking, it was advised that drivers should always indicate when it is beneficial to other road users, whatever the manoeuvre.

An example was given by David who had once been asked why his Associate had been encouraged to indicate when changing lanes on a motorway when there was no one behind them. David responded that 'whilst there was no one behind, what about the driver in front of them and might they not benefit?' David added that he would rather 'waste' an indication rather than not indicate at all.

The event concluded with some general discussion concerning consideration for other road users and how, not only ***your Behaviours might affect other road users' Attitudes*** but also how ***your Attitude might determine other road users' Behaviours***, which it was agreed was the underlying explanation for the amount of road rage on our highways these days.

Robin thanked those present for giving up their time and hoped to hold another similar event sometime during 2024, either by Zoom, or in person at a dedicated location.

**We hope that readers enjoyed this article.**

**Would YOU like to attend a Question & Answer session in the future?**

**If so, would YOU prefer it to be at a dedicated location, e.g. Beckington Memorial Hall, or on-line via Zoom.**

**Please let us have your thoughts.**



## Welcome and Congratulations

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

<b>Trevor Blackshaw</b>	[ <i>Observer:</i> Lindsay Flower]
<b>Charlie Brewer</b>	[ <i>Observer:</i> Graham Bennett]
<b>Charles Evered</b>	[ <i>Observer:</i> Paul Moignard]
<b>Jeremy Gilpin</b>	[ <i>Observer:</i> John Blakeley]
<b>David Little</b>	[ <i>Observer:</i> John Morley]
<b>Darren Smith</b>	[ <i>Observer:</i> Michael Muncer]
<b>Sally Williams</b>	[ <i>Observer:</i> John Badley]

### ***We Congratulate***

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

<b>Martin Brown</b>	observed by Mark Ellis
<b>Simon Cowley*</b>	observed by Thomas Flynn
<b>Katherine Groves*</b>	observed by David Moreman
<b>Darren Smith*</b>	observed by Michael Muncer

\*F1RST pass

#### ***IAMRS Masters***

<b>Oliver Ganfield**</b>	mentored by David Major
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\*\* with distinction

### De-icing your car

I recently read on the internet (a dangerous thing to do, I know) what I thought was a rather odd idea of a way of preventing a car windscreen from misting up, by rubbing the surface of a cut potato over it. This struck me as likely to cause smearing so I thought I would look into the whole question of de-icing a car and demisting the inside of windows in cold weather.

I found information on both the RAC and the AA websites, though I preferred the AA site. These comments are based on my own thoughts with information from those two sites.

The first thing that struck me was that it is better to prevent your car from icing up in the first place if possible. If you have a garage, then putting it away in the garage in cold weather is a sensible precaution. However, I know that a large number of people who own a garage use it for other purposes, and a large number have to park in the open because they don't have one at all. One thing I would say about keeping it in a garage is that when you take it out, it is going to come into contact with cold air, so the question of demisting inside the car when you start driving is still very important. If your car is outside there are things you can do to protect the windscreen, such as a cover for the whole car, or a blanket or cardboard over the windscreen.



Photo courtesy of [www.realhomes.com](http://www.realhomes.com)

If you do have to de-ice your car, then it is a good idea to turn on the engine so that the car's heaters can get to work. There are dangers in doing this that you need to be aware of. First, check that the windscreen wipers (front and rear) are turned off before you turn on the engine.

If they are on, the wipers may be frozen to the windscreen and switching on the engine will damage the wiper motors. Also, leaving the engine idling for too long is not a good idea, and if your car is on the street it is illegal in some places. Whatever you do, do not leave your car unattended with the engine running. It could be stolen and you would not be covered by your insurance if you were in that situation.

So, what is the best way to de-ice your car? I'm sure we all have our own opinions about this, but my way is to use an ice scraper, and not a de-icer spray. This is because I have found that de-icer makes the windscreen smeary and that doesn't help with visibility. My daughter gave me a brilliant Christmas present a few years ago which was a scraper with a mitt attached so that I can keep my hands relatively warm while I am de-icing the car. I can wear my warm gloves inside it so it gives double protection. A lot of people do use de-icer sprays and there may be ones that don't leave a smeary windscreen, but the main thing is to get the ice off the glass.

It is very important to remember how much of the car you need to clear of ice. All the glass – both windscreens, the side windows and the wing mirrors – needs to be clear for you to have maximum visibility, and don't forget the lights. If they are covered in ice, they won't shine so brightly and won't be so visible to other motorists.

Another thing to remember is to clear snow from the roof of the car if necessary. As the car warms up inside, it will start to melt and could slide over the windscreen blocking your view – not a good idea! Clear it from the bonnet and sides too as it could blow onto the windows and reduce your visibility again.



How not to drive in snow! The windscreen wipers are not having much of an effect on clearing the snow which has fallen on to the windscreen.

Photo courtesy of [www.commuterline.com](http://www.commuterline.com)

So, now that the outside of your car is clear, you have to remember that the inside of the windscreen and other windows will start to mist up when you get in the car to drive and you start to breathe out warm, moist air, and remember that this applies even if your car has been in a garage. Wait until the windscreen is clear inside before starting to drive. It is best to use a glass cleaning cloth to wipe the inside, rather than your hand, as you could leave greasy smears on it. I use a rubber wiper, a bit like a wind-



screen wiper, to clear mist sometimes, and it works pretty well as it wipes the water away. Make sure the front and rear windscreen heaters and air-con are on, if you have them, and by opening the windows you will allow moist air to escape from the car which will speed up demisting. The important thing is to make sure that the inside, as well as the outside, of the windows is clear so that you can see out. **If you can't see where you are going, you are a danger on the roads, to yourself and other people.**

Now for some ways to de-ice your car which are not so helpful. The RAC has this advice:

### ***Use water to melt ice on your windscreen***

*In the past, people used to boil water in the kettle and then throw it on the frozen car to quickly melt the car. [I don't think they actually mean 'melt the car'!]*

*However, this is a very dangerous thing to do!*

*It will likely crack the glass – and even if it doesn't, repeatedly doing it will weaken the glass.*

*Known as 'thermal shock', this is a bad habit to get into.*

*Although it may be the quick option – spending an extra minute will be worth not having a large bill to replace your windscreen.*

*However, using lukewarm water can be used in the absence of de-ice spray.*

On the other hand, the AA has this recommendation:

*Can you use cold water to defrost a windscreen?*

*We wouldn't recommend using cold water as it can freeze on the windscreen and cause damage.*

Lukewarm water will also freeze quite quickly so I am inclined to agree with the AA on this one as I think frozen water is even harder to remove from the windscreen than frost.

The AA also has advice about the potato idea that started me off on this topic in the first place, and I'm pleased to say that it agrees with what I thought:

### ***Half a potato on your windows?***

*Another hack suggests rubbing half a potato onto the inside of your windows to stop them steaming up. We wouldn't recommend rubbing anything onto your windows that could smear them and impair your ability to see the road clearly.*

I would recommend taking a look at the AA and RAC websites from which I have taken these quotes so that you can read their advice in more detail.

<https://www.theaa.com/driving-advice/seasonal/defrosting-car-windscreen>

<https://www.rac.co.uk/drive/advice/winter-driving/how-to-de-ice-your-car/>

Clare Hogg

## SWAM Events Programme for 2024

### ***Events organised so far:***

**Thursday 21 March:** AGM at Beckington Memorial Hall\*. See page 5 for details. After the formal AGM, the speaker will be Mac McGarry, an IAM Examiner, and an entertaining speaker. His topic will be 'The most dangerous roads – how to negotiate them skilfully'. It promises to be an interesting talk.

**Thursday 18 April:** We are pleased to welcome back Rachel Mahy from Avon & Somerset Police Road Safety department. She spoke to us last year and was a very popular speaker, so we are delighted that she has agreed to return. This event will be held at Beckington Memorial Hall\*.

### ***Planned events:***

June and September: 3-in-a-car events

We plan to attend two external events during the year. Last year, the Westbury White Horse Classic and Vintage Vehicle Show was much enjoyed and we may attend that again. Watch this space.

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

### **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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