



iAM
RoadSmart

FORWARD

Issue 19



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

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FORWARD

Newsletter of Somerset & Wiltshire Advanced Motorists

www.swam-iam.org.uk

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November 2024 — January 2025

Issue 19

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November Event

Monday, 18 November at 19.30: Wessex 4x4 Response at Beckington Memorial Hall*

Dave Edwards and Norman Dagger will be talking about the work of Wessex 4x4 Response, which is an organisation where drivers who own a 4x4 vehicle volunteer to support the emergency services, and other public organisations such as hospitals, in various ways. For example, they assist the police during major incidents, and they support the health and social care sector in providing essential transport for health and care professionals and their equipment during severe weather conditions. More details are given on page 8.

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

Welcome to the latest edition of *Forward*. It's that time of year again when we need to remind members that membership fees are due in January. There is an article on how to pay your fees on page 9. There are, however, a few members who still haven't paid for 2024, and we would ask that you pay this year's fees as soon as possible. All members who haven't paid yet will by now have been notified. In addition, there are some members who have paid twice for this year. Where this is the case, the membership fee will be carried over to 2025. All members affected by this have been notified. The easiest way to make sure that your membership fee is paid on time, is to pay by Standing Order.

In August a very successful Observers' training meeting was held. It was well attended by Observers from SWAM and from Swindon group. Swindon group also held their own training meeting which some of our Observers attended. As a group we try to co-operate with other IAM groups whenever possible, and Observer training is one way we do this. Another co-operative activity we had earlier in the year was at the Bath Festival of Motoring where we shared our gazebo with Wiltshire and Bath Advanced Motorcyclists (WaBAM).

Winter will be on us before we know it and there is an article on Winter Driving on page 12. We hope you find the advice helpful.

Clare Hogg, Sue Phillips

The next edition of *Forward* will be published in February 2025. Please submit motoring-related articles and/or digital photographs to the Editors (*who reserve the right to edit them*) by Friday 3 January at the latest. Names of authors and their home addresses should be disclosed to the Editors who will withhold them from publication on request.

Group News

In September we held a **3-in-a-car event** at Beckington which was quite well attended and proved popular with the members who were present. There was a good opportunity to chat about Advanced Driving both before and after the drives, and we will continue to hold these events in the future.

Members' Advanced Refresher Course

IAM RoadSmart has introduced a pilot scheme for members to take an Advanced Refresher Course, and SWAM is taking part in this pilot. It will run from 1 October 2024 to 30 April 2025. Here are some of the details of the scheme and how it will run. For more information see the website:

<https://www.iamroadsmart.com/my-dashboard/advanced-refresher-course>

The member books and purchases the Refresher course online or over the phone. The cost is £99. The Observer meets the member at the agreed time, date and location for each session, and follows the stages described in The Observer's Guide to the Refresher Course.

This is what the IAM says about the course:

What is a typical course structure?

Each session is **60-90 minutes** long and may include a break.

Everyone's course will differ because it will be tailored to your needs, and your Observer will complete a written report (known as a run sheet) after each session which will be emailed to you.

Your Observer may suggest reviewing specific sections of the Advanced Logbook between sessions to help refresh your knowledge. The Advanced Logbook is available online at https://iamwebsite.blob.core.windows.net/media/docs/default-source/default-document-library/0384_driver-associate-logbook-v14.pdf?sfvrsn=944f995c_2

Advanced Driver Course Logbook



A typical course structure is as follows:

Session 1:

- Introductions
- Initial driving assessment

Opportunity to identify and discuss any areas to address, improve or finesse

Session 2 and 3:

- Revision of IPSSGA

Skills development led by Member's needs under the guidance of an Observer

Session 4:

- Observer feedback and encouragement

Optional session to recap on learning and to finesse the drive.

What happens on completion of the course?

There is no test and you cannot pass or fail. You will receive a Certificate of Completion by email after you have completed the course celebrating your efforts to upskill.

Taking the course

Before the course

Your Observer will be in touch with you to arrange the first session.

Reflection:

Before you meet for the first time, it may be useful to think about any areas of your driving that you would like to focus on, for example:

- Roundabouts
- Urban routes
- Rural routes

- Unfamiliar roads
- Use of gears
- Bends and limit points
- Hazard identification
- Overtaking including filtering

Or anything else

Refresh your knowledge:

You may also want to have a look at the Advanced Logbook if it has been a while since you did your Test. You may want to refresh your knowledge of IPGSA.

If you used the *How to be a Better Driver* book for your Advanced Course, the Advanced Logbook has replaced this.

Preparation:

Before you meet each time, please:

- Check over your vehicle and make sure it is roadworthy and legal, for example, check tyres, lights, fluid levels, etc.
- Ensure the vehicle has a full tank of fuel or is fully charged.
- Bring any required eyewear.

Make sure you are fit to drive and not taking any medication that impacts your ability to drive.

Declarations

At the start of each session, you will be asked to sign a declaration to confirm that:

- **1. You hold a full and valid driving licence for the category of vehicle you will be driving throughout the course.**
- **2. The vehicle has a valid MOT certificate (if applicable) and is taxed and roadworthy.**
- **3. The vehicle is covered by insurance.**
- 4. Your eyesight meets the legal requirements for driving.**

After the course

When you complete the Refresher Course, your Observer may suggest further ways to progress with IAM RoadSmart. Perhaps you

would like to become a Volunteer, take a retest and try for a F1RST, take the Masters Course or the Fellow's Entry Test. Or maybe you have lost touch and would like to re-engage with your group? We would love your feedback after completing the course.

If you are interested or have any queries about this course, please contact David Major, SWAM Chief Observer, for more details. Contact details are on page 2.

Forthcoming Events

Monday, 18 November at 19.30: Wessex 4x4 Response at Beckington Memorial Hall*

We will be having a talk about Wessex 4x4 Response from Dave Edwards and Norman Dagger. Wessex 4x4 Response is an organisation where drivers who own a 4x4 vehicle volunteer to support the emergency services, and other public organisations such as hospitals, in various ways. To name just two of their activities, they assist the police during major incidents enabling the police to focus on their vital roles, and they support the health and social care sector in providing essential transport for health and care professionals and their equipment during severe weather conditions. To find out more about what they do, come along on 18 November.

December: no meeting

At present no events have been planned for January or February, but notification of any events organised will be sent to members by email in good time. If you do not receive emails, but would be interested to know if a meeting is arranged, please ring the Secretary, Rosemary Tandy, to ask. Her contact details are on page 2.

Thursday, March 20 2025 at 19.00 for 19.30: SWAM AGM at Beckington Memorial Hall*. Details of the speaker at this event will be in the next issue of *Forward*, due out in February 2025.

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

Membership fees and Gift Aid

Membership Fees

The annual membership fee for SWAM is £12, or £15 for two members at the same address, due at the beginning of January. If you pay by Standing Order, you don't have to do anything. If you pay by BACS or cheque you will need to pay in January and if we do not receive your payment by the middle of the month, Peter Huntington (Membership Secretary) will send you a reminder. Please send cheques to Clare Hogg, 4 Great Ostry, Shepton Mallet, Somerset, BA4 5TT. If you need information about how to pay by BACS or Standing Order, please ask Clare, contact details on p. 2.

If you have already paid for 2025 (see Editorial on page 4), and you do not cancel your Standing Order, any overpayment will be regarded as a donation to SWAM, so please check. This also applies to the few members who have two Standing Orders set up.

Gift Aid

Because we are a registered charity, we are able to augment donations using Gift Aid. This means that for every pound you pay, provided you are a taxpayer and sign up to Gift Aid, Somerset & Wiltshire Advanced Motorists will receive an extra 25p from HM Revenue & Customs.

Subscriptions qualify as donations, which means that your £12 can be turned into £15, so long as it is made through Gift Aid, thereby generating extra funds for the Group, and it won't cost you anything. We are therefore asking all members to sign up to Gift Aid if they are able to.

Many of you have sent us forms and we are very grateful for that. If you are a new member and haven't returned a form but are able to sign up to Gift Aid, please ask Clare Hogg (Treasurer) for the form. It is also necessary to remind members that if for any reason they are not able to claim Gift Aid after having signed a form, they **must** tell the Treasurer. The form which you have signed permits the claiming of Gift Aid until you notify the Treasurer otherwise. This can often happen when members change jobs or retire. It can be a permanent or temporary change, depending on circumstances, but it is your responsibility to tell us so that we can make the necessary change to our records. If you are unsure if you have sent us a form, please contact Clare. Contact details are on page 2.

General Data Protection Regulation

Information for SWAM Members

GDPR Contract Statement

SWAM is required, under GDPR regulations, to notify members each year of our contract with you regarding the data we hold about you and the way in which it may be used. Please read the following statement carefully.

Somerset and Wiltshire Advanced Motorists (SWAM) would like to thank you for being a member of the group. As part of your membership contract with us, we may contact you with information on training, committee matters, social events or group drives together with newsletters/magazines relating to the group and road safety.

Photographs, videos and written updates of SWAM events such as training, committee matters, social events or group drives, at which you may be in attendance or referred to, may also be published on social media sites such as Facebook, X, etc., in the group newsletter (*Forward*), on group related websites or in the press.

SWAM may also share your information with IAM RoadSmart in order to administer membership activities.

Option to withdraw from the above

You have a right to withdraw from receiving or participating in any of the above by contacting SWAM.

If you do not wish to receive information on training, committee, and social events, together with newsletters/magazines relating to the group and road safety, or if you do not wish to appear in or be referred to in or on any group social media sites such as Facebook, X etc, in the group newsletter, on group related websites or in the press, please contact the membership secretary, Peter Huntington, either by email (membership@swam-iam.org.uk) or by post to: 17 Regents Field, Trossachs Drive, Bath, BA2 6RP. In addition to your full name, please give your IAMRS membership number.

Welcome and Congratulations

We Welcome New Associates

Julie Arblaster	[<i>Observer:</i> Lindsay Flower]
Mike Dodd	[<i>Observer:</i> Val Czerny]
Tony Moore	[<i>Observer:</i> Paul Moignard]
Aogan O'Hare	[<i>Observer:</i> Michael Muncer]
Robert Parker	[<i>Observer:</i> Mark Ellis]
Duncan Poole	[<i>Observer:</i> Graham Bennett]
Rejin Ravi	[<i>Observer:</i> John Badley]
Adam Westcott	[<i>Observer:</i> David Major]

We Congratulate

IAMRS Test Pass

Ken Fryer*	observed by Thomas Flynn
Robin Heywood*	observed by David Major
Jennifer Leonard	observed by Lindsay Flower
Mick Midcalf	observed by John Morley
Katarina Russell	observed by Callum Chamberlain

*FIRST pass

IMI National Observer Programme

Paul Moignard	mentored by David Major
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IAMRS Masters

Trevor Blackshaw	mentored by David Major
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Winter Driving

Winter Driving Tips from IAM RoadSmart

This advice comes from Richard Gladman, Head of Driving and Riding Standards at IAM RoadSmart.

Driving in winter can be difficult, and fog frequently makes the dark mornings and evenings more dangerous. It is important to know exactly how to adapt your driving behaviour to suit the weather conditions at the time.

Check before you travel

Checking the weather forecast before you set off on your travels will help to ensure you are fully prepared for the conditions that may impact your journey. Severe weather can present different challenges, and it's not just winter weather which can wreak havoc on the roads. Rain at any time of year can be dangerous. In fact, nine out of ten weather-related deaths and serious injuries on the roads take place in the rain. With today's technology and the right App or website, most weather forecasts or warnings are communicated ahead of time allowing you to be prepared.

Keep your distance

When you're driving in wintry conditions, it's important to substantially increase the stopping distance between you and the vehicle ahead, and approach every junction intending to stop well before the stop or give way line. According to advice from the Highway Code, it can take up to 10 times as long to stop in icy conditions.

Higher the better

Driving your car in a higher gear will help you avoid unwanted wheel-spin. If it's icy and you're struggling to get started, try pulling away in second gear. This should make it easier to get you going, as pulling away in first gear on ice will give you poor grip. Most modern automatic cars will have the ability to pull away in a higher gear or may even have a separate system for winter driving and a low torque pull away.

Light the way

The winter doesn't only see us hit with cold weather; we also see the days getting shorter which means you'll be using lights much more. Before setting off on every journey, check all your lights are working correctly and clean. If you've changed your car recently, in the summer, you might not be aware of automatic settings, how to override them or about how to activate full beam. Be prepared before you set off.

With an increase in local councils introducing strategies to tackle climate change which involve dimming or reduced street lighting, your headlights become even more crucial.

Don't get lost

This goes back to planning. Know your route, where you are going, where you plan to stop and anticipate delays, and leave plenty of time for the journey. With unpredictable or fast changing weather, such as severe drops in temperature, being prepared should include avoiding getting lost. If you don't know where you are going, it's dark and you're in the middle of a snowstorm, then the danger gauge has just gone through the roof. Having a Sat Nav, phone, map and torch and some warm clothes all apply to this point and don't forget water and a snack. Planning really can help. Rather than getting stranded, book into a hotel, leave earlier or don't leave home at all. However, if you enjoy 'exploring' and don't mind getting lost, just pack for the occasion.

Under pressure

Your grip will be seriously reduced in the winter, so ensuring your tyres are in good condition is essential. Whilst law requires you to have your tread depth at a minimum of 1.6mm, grip starts to reduce on anything under 3mm, so make sure you keep an eye on your tyres and replace them if needed.



Car tyre with good tread
Photo courtesy of supereuro.ca

You can also get your hands on some winter tyres which will give you a better grip and traction during winter. If your budget allows then this could offer optimum traction and grip in cold conditions, and help disperse water/snow, and allow the rubber to move around to improve the contact with the road. If you are likely to encounter extreme snow conditions, consider carrying snow socks or chains.

Prepare a winter kit for your car

It's worth packing a few essential items in your car's boot to make sure you're ready in case of getting stuck in cold and wintry weather. If you were to breakdown then it's best to be as prepared as possible:

Ice scraper and de-icer

There's nothing more frustrating than rushing to get out in the morning (or the evening) and your front and back windscreens are iced over. Instead of having to use a credit card, having an ice scraper and de-icer in the car will save you lots of time.



Photo courtesy of express.co.uk

If you are tempted to clear the windscreen with water, make sure it is not too hot, otherwise you'll be dealing with a cracked windscreen rather than a frosted or icy one if it finds its way into an imperfection. [See Forward 16 p.13 for further advice on de-icing a car, and p.15 for advice on using water to de-ice a windscreen.]

Remember that if you don't clear your car windscreen fully, and

this includes inside misting, you won't be able to see properly. So, leave extra time too, to ensure you have full visibility!

Or if you are lucky enough to have the facility, pre-condition your car for your departure time; the screen will be clear and the interior ready for you just to jump in and drive off.

Torch, warm clothes, blankets, and high visibility jacket

With fewer daylight hours in winter, it can get dark quite quickly in the evenings so a hi vis jacket or vest and a torch will mean you won't be missed by other drivers. Another useful item to keep you warm and comfortable, if you get stuck in cold weather, is a blanket and warm clothes; you never know when you'll need them.



Photo courtesy of firstaid.co.uk

First aid kit

It's always a good idea to keep a first aid kit in your car. Items such as sterile wipes, plasters, dressings and scissors to treat minor wounds might come in handy.

Jump leads

Car batteries are one of the most common reasons drivers may find themselves stranded in the winter months. Jump leads are useful to have in the boot of your car in case you need them to kickstart your battery.

Reflective warning triangle

It can be put on the side of the road by anyone to warn other drivers of a breakdown or crash ahead, but remember not on the motorway.

In-car phone charger

If your car has a USB charger then keep a mobile charger lead in the car so you can charge your phone as you go. If your car doesn't have a USB, then there are lots of gadgets on the market that will do the same, usually using the cigarette lighter as the charging point. Don't forget to take your phone in the first place and it's also a good idea to take a plug too as if you have to stay overnight you can charge the phone in a hotel or restaurant before restarting or completing your journey.

Food and drink

Non-perishable foods, such as crisps, biscuits and dried fruits are a good choice and easy to store in your vehicle. Some bottled water will also stand you in good stead if you find yourself stranded or in unexpected standstill traffic.

Remember if you don't have to go out don't risk it.

With the adoption of online shopping, deliveries, and remote working there is now little need or excuse to leave the house in extreme weather. Do you really want to risk your safety in snow? If in doubt or you don't need to, then don't take your vehicle out!

Summary

Winter brings difficult driving conditions with frost, ice and snow all adversely affecting road conditions and vehicle handling. Preparation is key to avoiding a dangerous situation whilst driving in snowy or icy conditions. Don't rely on the performance of your car systems to get you out of trouble – allow time, create a safe space, make sure you have good visibility all around and carry the right equipment. If conditions are extreme remember the best advice is not to travel.

[I would add something to this which actually applies all year round, and especially this year, when it has been raining a lot. It is important to make sure that the windows and wing mirrors are clear of rain drops before driving, and going round the car cleaning the windows gives a good opportunity to clean the lights, front and back, at the same time. Clare]

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.

Parking

As a pedestrian, I am noticing more and more that cars are parking next to lowered pavements. In *Forward 16* there was a report of the Q&A session held in November 2023 in which this very issue was raised, and the advice was that one is not permitted to park over or next to a dropped kerb, even if it is your own. The Highway Code says the following in rule 243: **DO NOT** stop or park where the kerb has been lowered to help wheelchair users and powered mobility vehicles, and **DO NOT** stop in front of an entrance to a property. Have a look as you go around your local area, and I'm sure you will see what I mean.

The RAC has a very interesting item on this subject:

The whole of the UK could soon follow London in making parking on pavements illegal – but is it the right thing to do?

The Department for Transport (DfT) has announced it's considering bringing the rest of the country in line with the capital's rules – which could land drivers with a £70 fine.

Here we look at the current laws and why it's not clear cut for drivers looking to catch a break in difficult areas to park.

Is it illegal to park on the pavement?

Parking on the pavement is not illegal outside of London. You can, however, still get a fine for doing so in some instances, which makes the law quite a grey area.

Since 1974, Highway Code rule 244 has stated that drivers "MUST NOT park partially or wholly on the pavement in London and should not do so elsewhere unless signs permit it."

The key things to note here are the words *must not* and *should not*.

In London, you *must not* park on the pavement, the *must* indicating there is legislation behind this rule and you could receive a fine for breaking it.

However, outside of the capital or “elsewhere”, the Highway Code states drivers *should not* park on the pavement, meaning it is advisory and not, therefore, backed up by any legislation.

Rule 242 is where it gets a little less clear, stating: "You **MUST NOT** leave your vehicle or trailer in a dangerous position or where it causes any unnecessary obstruction of the road."

This is a *must not*, again, meaning if your car is reported or seen by a police officer and judged to be either in a dangerous position or causing an unnecessary obstruction of the road, you could receive a Fixed Penalty Notice.

What the RAC says:

Outside of London, we advise people to use common sense when faced with no other option but to park on the pavement.

If you are parking along a narrow road, where parking wholly on the road would stop other cars, and particularly emergency vehicles, from getting through, then it is a sensible option to park partially on a pavement, providing there are no parking restrictions and providing you are not blocking a wheelchair user or pram from using the pavement.

If there are restrictions, or your parking would cause wheelchair users or people with prams to have to walk into the road, then you should find somewhere else to park.

I would go further than the RAC here and say that where parking on the road would block emergency vehicles, then you *should* park on the pavement (or look elsewhere for somewhere to park), not just that it is a sensible option. The Highway Code section on parking (rules 239 – 252) is well worth a read.

[Edinburgh joined London in banning pavement parking early in 2024, so the references to London should now include Edinburgh.]

I remember watching an item on the local news a few years ago showing a street in Bristol where there were cars parked on the pavement on both sides of the road leaving room for one vehicle to go along the street at a time. Parents with pushchairs were having to go on the road round the cars to get past, which was obviously extremely unsafe, but if the cars had parked on the road, then there would be no room for vehicles at all. In these circumstances, the only option would be to ban parking on one side of the road. I can see big problems arising when there would be half the number of parking spaces in a row of terraced houses. This is not an easy problem to solve.



Photo courtesy of transportxtra.com

In this photo you can see that the car has blocked the pavement so much that there is no room for the pushchair. This is clearly very dangerous.

Is there really room for the wheelchair beside the car? The lady is not going to find it easy to manoeuvre the wheelchair through the space.



Photo courtesy of news.sky.com



Photo courtesy of express.co.uk

Here the space between the cars is wide enough for an emergency vehicle, but if the cars were not parked on the pavement, there would hardly be room for a car, never mind a fire engine or ambulance.

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.