

OAD Newsletter

February 2020

iam
RoadSmart
Oxfordshire
Advanced Drivers

www.iamroadsmart.com/groups/oad

Under the Weather



So far, we may be having one of the mildest of winters, but we've certainly not been short of weather! As we write this, areas across the country are bracing themselves for storm Dennis, threatening to bring high winds heavy rain and flooding for the second time in a week.

Our own area has avoided the worst this time but there are numerous places which are prone to localised flooding that can take drivers by surprise. For example, the run from Oxford to Islip through Woodeaton - a favourite for Oxford based observers - is often covered by several centimetres of water. So, how can drivers safely negotiate flooded roads?

The following advice is adapted from the AA website.

Flooding can happen any time thanks to rain, blocked drains, burst water mains, tides and burst river banks.

If you hear there's flooding on the way, move your car to higher ground to stop it getting damaged. Water plays havoc with electrics and can even cause airbags to go off suddenly some time later.

Heavy rain

- Turn your headlights on – the Highway Code says you must use them when visibility is less than 100m.
- Use fog lights if you like, but switch them off when visibility improves.
- Leave twice as much space between you and the car in front – it takes longer to stop in the wet.
- If your steering feels light, ease off the accelerator and slow down gradually.
- If you break down don't prop the bonnet open while you wait. Rain-soaked electrics can make it harder to start the engine.

Floods and standing water

- Try to avoid standing water if you can.
- Don't drive into flood water that's moving or more than 10cm deep. Let approaching cars pass first.
- Drive slowly and steadily so you don't make a bow wave.
- Test your brakes as soon as you can afterwards.
- Fast-moving water is very powerful – take care or your car could be swept away.

If you do get stuck in flood water, it's usually best to wait in the car and call for help rather than try to get out.

Why slow down?

Driving fast through water is dangerous, inconsiderate and can end up being very expensive.

Your tyres can lose contact with the road, causing you to lose steering control – called aquaplaning. If you feel it happening, hold the steering lightly and lift off to slow down gently until your tyres grip again.

At anything above a slow crawl you'll throw water onto pavements, soaking pedestrians or cyclists. You could be fined and get points on your licence for this.

It only takes an egg cupful of water to be sucked into your engine to wreck it, and on many cars the engine's air intake is low down at the front.

What to watch out for

- Look out for slip and trip hazards like kerbs under the water.
- Manhole covers can get lifted and moved.
- Water levels can change quickly.
- Assume that flood water is contaminated. Urban flood water can carry dangerous bacteria from drains and sewers. Rural flood water is more likely to be contaminated by agricultural chemicals and animal waste.

Fords Just because the road goes into the river on one side and comes out on the other, that doesn't mean a ford is safe to cross. The depth and speed of the water changes with the weather.

Floodwater facts

- Most drowning deaths happen within only 3m of a safe point.
- Two thirds of those who die in flood-related accidents are good swimmers.
- A third (32%) of flood-related deaths are in vehicles.
- Cold water reduces your muscle strength – 20 minutes in water at 12C lowers muscle temperature from 37°C to 27°C, reducing strength by 30%.
- Just 15cm of fast-flowing water can knock you off your feet and be enough for you not to be able to regain your footing.
- It's a challenge to stand in waist-deep water flowing at only 1m/s. By 1.8m/s (4mph) everyone is washed off their feet.
- If the speed of the flood water doubles, the force it exerts on you or your car goes up four times.
- Just 60cm of standing water will float your car.
- Just 30cm of flowing water could be enough to move your car.
- A mere egg-cupful of water could be enough to wreck an engine.
- Flood water can be contaminated and carry diseases.
- Culverts are dangerous when flooded – the siphon effect can drag in pets, children and even fully-grown adults.



And When the Big Freeze Comes...



If you do encounter some extremely cold conditions this winter, the A-Plan Insurance website offers an interesting variation on the usual advice.

Here is their list of items not to leave in your car when the temperature drops below zero.



Electronic Devices with Lithium Batteries.

Apple recommends not exposing an iPhone, iPad or laptop to temperatures below minus four degrees Celsius; battery life can reduce and condensation can damage the screen of chilly electronic devices.



Medication.

Most medication needs to be stored at room temperature for optimal efficacy. Insulin, for example, becomes ineffective once frozen, as do many liquid medicines which require shaking before use.



Wooden Musical Instruments.

Wood contracts when it freezes, possibly resulting in cracking. Guitars, for example, should be stored at room temperature to prevent cold damage to the neck and strings.

Tinned Food and Fizzy Drinks.



The water content in tinned food, once frozen, will expand, resulting in possible explosion! If you don't want to wake up to a car peppered in baked beans, make sure you don't leave your groceries in your boot during freezing weather. Similarly, fizzy drink cans are susceptible to exploding if allowed to freeze. Coca-Cola freezes at just minus one degree Celsius and beer at minus two! In sub-zero temperatures, it's worth refraining from using your car as a drinks' cooler!



Low Fuel Tank.

Keeping your tank more than half full can prevent fuel lines from freezing. It's also the ideal time to check antifreeze levels, and your tyre pressure; a drop in 10 degrees can cause a constriction of air in the tyre.

Your Keys!



Don't be tempted to leave your car idling to 'warm up' or just to pop-in to the shop. You'll increase wear and tear, use unnecessary fuel and possibly have your car stolen, having invalidated your insurance. Run the car for *30 seconds at most* before driving off slowly to allow the oil to heat up.

Show Some Horse Sense!



Vulnerable Road Users
The roads are there for everyone to use and as advanced drivers and riders we have a duty to make sure we share them safely.

IAM Handout 2016

In our primarily rural area, among the vulnerable road users we are most likely to encounter are horses and their riders. In fact, most horse riders would prefer not to ride on the roads. However, a lack of off-road access means using roads is a necessity for many riders. Riders have the same right to be on the road as motorists, cyclists or any other user group. With a bit of understanding and consideration on all sides, there's room for everyone to use the roads in harmony and safety.

At our February meeting, OAD members were given a presentation by Alan Hoscox of the British Horse Society which explored the sometimes uneasy relations between horse riders and motorists. In particular, Alan introduced the BHS Dead Slow campaign.

It's important to understand that horses are prey animals and their usual response to danger is flight. This means that however well-trained and calm a horse normally is, they can still be unpredictable and frightened by something they perceive as a threat. This is their natural instinct and means a horse's reaction to a threat is to try to escape the situation. A horse's range of hearing is greater than a human to higher frequencies - (over 33kHz in the horse compared with under 20kHz in humans - although a horse may not be able to hear the lowest frequencies audible to humans.

Horses use their hearing for three primary functions: to detect sounds, to determine the location of the sound and to provide sensory information that allows the horse to recognise the identity of these sources. Horses will always react to unexpected or loud noises.

This is why it's vital to always pass horses slowly and with plenty of room.

In some instances, the rider may be busy keeping control of their horse and not able to acknowledge your consideration, but they will be very grateful to you.



What should drivers do?

- On seeing a horse on the road in front of you - whether ridden, driven or led - please slow down to a maximum of 15mph and be prepared to stop if necessary.
- Heed a rider's or carriage driver's signal if they ask you to stop or slow down.
- Look out for a rider or carriage driver's signal to turn and wait for them to do so safely before continuing your journey. Wait until they are fully off the road before continuing.
- If the horse shows signs of nervousness as you get closer, please stop and/or turn the engine off and allow them to pass.
- Please don't start your engine, or move off again until horses are well clear of the rear end of your vehicle.
- If you are approaching horses on the road and would like to overtake them, please approach slowly, or even stop to give them time to find a gateway or other place off the road where there will be enough space between the horse and vehicle to allow you to pass safely.
- Please be patient. Most equestrians will do their best to reassure their horses and will allow you to pass as soon as safe to do so.
- The safest place for the rider's hands is on the reins, so they may only be able to nod their thanks to you – but please do be assured that they will be very grateful for your consideration.

Alan Hoscox was at pains to stress the Dead Slow campaign doesn't simply point the finger of blame at motorists. Sensible behaviour by riders is just as important in avoiding injuries and deaths. So, as well as aiming to raise awareness among drivers about the dangers that arise when horses and motor vehicles share the road, BHS also offer riders a Ride Safe Assessment to raise their awareness as well.

As Alan pointed out, compared with other countries, the UK offers relatively few opportunities for riders to enjoy their riding away from busy roads. And the network of existing bridleways is under threat; those that are not used regularly are likely to be closed. In 2000, the Countryside and Rights of Way Act was introduced in England and Wales. Section 53 of the Act provides for a cut-off date of 1st January 2026, which means that many historical routes for horse riders will disappear if they are not formally recorded as a bridleway or restricted byway beforehand.

More horses on our roads will mean that it becomes even more important for motorists to behave towards them safely and with real understanding.



Many thanks to Alan for such an instructive presentation, delivered with enthusiasm and conviction. Thanks also to Assistant Secretary, Lisa Collins, for organising it all.

The most vulnerable road users are pedestrians, particularly children, older or disabled people, cyclists, motorcyclists and horse riders. It is important that all road users are aware of the Code and are considerate towards each other.

The Introduction to the Highway Code, 2019

If I see a horse on the road;

Then I will....

- Slow down to a maximum of 15mph
- Be patient, I won't sound my horn or rev my engine
- Pass the horse wide and slow - at least a car's width, if possible.
- Drive slowly away



Petrol Head Heaven!



*Back in December, members of Oxfordshire Advanced Drivers (OAD) were privileged to visit the home of Williams F1 Racing for a presentation on the work of the organisation and a tour of their historic collection of motor racing memorabilia. Chief Observer, **Geoff Ayres**, reports:*

At Grove, just north of Wantage, we were waved through the main gate of the fabled home of Williams F1, where our host, OAD member Jeremy Taylor, explained how the technology used in the F1 racing cars is repurposed by Williams for many diverse uses outside the world of motor racing. These range from the design of lightweight baby incubators to clever deflectors that control the flow of cold air for supermarket refrigerator cabinets to keep the air in the cabinet and not on the customers! For me, with a background in public transport, most amazing is the way pit stop knowledge and technology is used by TfL to ensure maintenance work on the tube can be completed between the last train at night and first train the next morning.

Our guide, Simon, then took over for the most exciting part of the evening: the actual F1 cars. We strolled through the Hall of Fame where former drivers' helmets are displayed in cabinets glowing with subdued lighting. Mansell... Hill... - they were all there. It was pure petrol-head heaven! Next was a vast display arena of the F1 cars, past to present. All the cars on display were in pristine condition. Apparently, the life of a racing car from design concept to being on display here is a mere eighteen months!

A thoroughly enjoyable evening and a wonderful group event.

Important Information About Your OAD Subscription



The following letter was recently circulated by email to all OAD members. We are publishing it here again in case you missed the email. It contains information for all OAD Members.

The letter explains the way we are planning to collect OAD Members' subscriptions for the financial year 2020-21.

Dear OAD Member

You may recall that in our first OAD newsletter last November, we outlined our plan to introduce a new subscription structure, designed to encourage prompt payment and save administration time. Moving forward, we would now like to update you on our progress.

With your support, starting **from April 2020, we are planning to align all group subscriptions to the single renewal date of 1 April**, with the assurance that no member will be financially disadvantaged in respect of existing part subscriptions.

We would also like to actively support and **encourage members to pay their subscription by direct debit**, as this can substantially cut down on administration costs, and benefits your charity by ensuring regular guaranteed payments.

Therefore, while we are retaining the current full membership annual subscription of £30, we now intend to offer just a single discount of 50%, given for prompt renewal by direct debit.

During the whole of the month of April, this reduces the cost of a subscription paid by direct debit to only £15.

Once you have set up a direct debit payment, there are numerous benefits to you and your charity.

For you:

- 50% discount of £15 for prompt payment by direct debit
- paid automatically (unless you cancel with your bank) - you don't have to remember
- payment flexibility - if the subscription changes, the correct amount is paid without further authorisation from yourself
- customer protection - immediate refunds in the event of an incorrect payment
- puts you firmly in control

For your charity :

- substantially reduces administration
- automatically credits the charity bank account
- instant notification of failures or cancellations
- subscription payment flexibility
- regular subscriptions

Your membership will become due for renewal on 1 April 2020. As soon as possible thereafter we will be sending you a **link** to set up a **password** with **WebCollect**, together with full instructions for setting up your direct debit. The whole procedure should be very quick and straightforward, but if you do have any questions or need some support, please see below for our contact details. There is nothing that you need to do until then.

Please note that if you **already pay by direct debit**, your existing arrangements should continue to be valid, so no further action will be necessary.

And if you are currently doing the **Advanced Driver Course** as an **Associate Member**, your first year's OAD membership is included in the price of the course, so again no action is required.

Thanks for your support.

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If you are a Full Member of OAD and don't already pay your subscription by direct debit...

Look out for an email in early April with your *WebCollect* password and full instructions for setting up your direct debit.



Future Events Coming Up

A number of group events for 2020 are still at the planning stage. Look out for mailouts with further details, dates and instructions for signing up to take part.

Wednesday, 11 March: Robbie Downing

7.30pm, Woodstock Social Club, 44 Oxford St, Woodstock, OX20 1TT

Robbie Downing is our Area Service Delivery Manager. His role is to support OAD and provide a direct line to IAM RoadSmart Headquarters.

Robbie will be giving a presentation about the work of IAM and ways to keep your advanced driving skills up to standard.

Wednesday, 16 September: Mike Quinton, IAM RoadSmart Chief Executive

7,30pm, Woodstock Social Club, 44 Oxford St, Woodstock OX20 1TT

We are delighted to invite IAM CEO, Mike Quinton, to address our September meeting. Mike will be explaining the work of IAM and sharing with us his vision for the future of the organisation.

August – date to be confirmed: Slow Manoeuvring Event, Thame

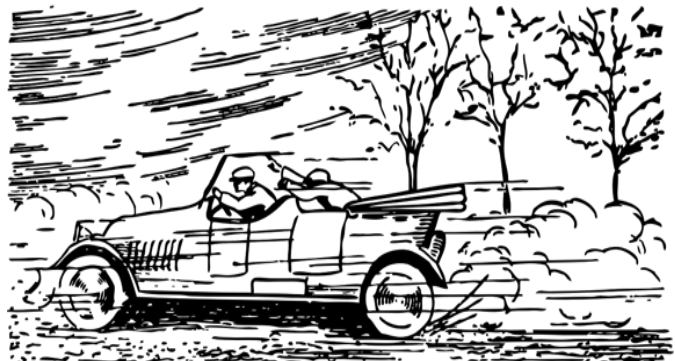
We are also hoping to run another Slow Manoeuvring Event in August, like the one in Banbury last September. It will be held in Thame – and we're crossing our fingers for better weather this time!

Drive out

Saturday 29th February

Full details on page 12

The drive outs are particularly recommended for associate members as an extension to the advanced driver course.



Drive Outs are for Everyone!



A particular feature of the OAD calendar are our regular drive outs during the summer months and also on occasional winter Sundays.

Drive outs are for all group members who wish to polish their driving and observing skills. The aim is to offer sociable and enjoyable evenings to support the continued maintenance of high level advanced driving.

On drive outs we aim to meet the needs of all OAD members. That can mean all of the following – and more:

- Observers team up to refine their driving and practise their observing skills on each other.
- Associate members have a chance to get their driving observed by a different observer. - a new voice can help to reinforce or clarify the advice already received from their regular observer.
- Full members polish up their advanced driving, sometimes focussing on a particular skill or topic.
- Members preparing for the Masters qualification benefit from advice from a range of experts.
- Members who are thinking about becoming observers can find out what's involved and give observing a try.
- Members with particularly exciting or unusual vehicles can put them through their paces for the benefit of colleagues.
- Non-members can come along and enjoy a taster drive before committing to the full Advanced Driver Course.

OAD drive outs offer an opportunity to discuss and practise advanced driving in convivial company.

The next drive out will be on **Saturday 29th February.**

Meet at the [Old Shed, Charlbury](#) at **9.00am for a 9.30am start.**

If you wish to take part, you must register beforehand. To register, [click here.](#)

Sampling the Course at Harwell



Recently, a small group of OAD observers, led by Geoff Ayres, visited the offices of Nuvia Ltd on the Harwell Campus to promote the Advanced Driver Course.

The event was arranged by Dougie Hore, who gained a F1RST in the advanced test last summer. Dougie is keen to share his experience of advanced driving with his work colleagues, so here was a group of engineering apprentices being given an introduction to IAM RoadSmart, along with an opportunity for some short taster drives.

We were impressed by these young people's enthusiasm and engineering knowledge, as well as their already considerable driving skills.

Here's hoping that we'll soon be welcoming them as new members to our group.

Have you considered signing up for an IAM RoadSmart Skills Day?

Meet other car enthusiasts, boost your confidence and get the most out of your vehicle in a safe and fun environment.

Skills Days – sometimes referred to as Track Days - are the perfect way to learn about what you and your machine are capable of, exploring on a famous UK race track how to enjoy your driving to the full, but in a safe controlled atmosphere.

The Skills Days are open to anyone with a full driving licence, and any road-legal car – it doesn't have to be a high performance one.

More information about Skills Days 2020 can be found on the [IAM RoadSmart website](https://www.iamroadsmart.com).

Test Passes: November 2019 – January 2020

We offer our warmest congratulations to members who passed the advanced driving test recently.



Husband and wife **Stephen and Emma Wiggins** have recently passed the Advanced Driving Test.

Stephen writes: I am a Senior Consultant at Arup, where my line of work is geospatial analytics and work on large infrastructure projects. I was given the course as a Christmas present and found completing the course to be a good experience which has helped me become a smoother driver overall. I am pleased to have passed as my grandfather was involved in the IAM in the early days of the organisation and my uncle still is involved in another part of the country.

Emma adds: Both my husband and I were given the IAM course as a Christmas gift. At first I was quite apprehensive as I thought it was going to be very much like re-sitting my driving test! After a couple of drives with my observer, Geoff, I began to enjoy the course more and found a new confidence with my driving.

Whilst taking the course my car broke down and both my husband and I used his car for the test itself. I felt anxious about driving a different car. However, through what I had learnt on the course, I found the transition far easier than I had imagined.

It was difficult taking the course at the same time as my husband as naturally it felt a bit competitive! I'm thankful we both passed!

Another recent Advanced Driving Test pass was gained by **Craig Rouse**.



Craig explains: I'm a 32 year old software engineer living in Didcot and have always had a passion for cars and driving - as evidenced by numerous photos and video from my childhood.

My 'fun' car is a 2004 Toyota MR2 Roadster, which I bought about half way through my IAM course, as I felt I wanted the full experience of learning IPSGA with a manual gearbox. My family car for carting the kids round in is a dragon green Skoda Superb estate (220PS 2.0 petrol) with a very nice DSG gearbox, but nothing quite compares to the connection you feel to the road in a little sports car with a manual gearbox.

I'd been toying with the idea of taking an advanced driving course a few times over the past few years, but never got round to organising it. Eventually I got round to it by taking a taster with OAD in August 2019, and immediately decided I wanted to do the full course.

I've really taken a lot from the course, and found my sessions with Chris, my observer, to be very enjoyable. I feel I now enjoy driving even more than I did before. My biggest areas of improvement have been observation and general car control and I look forward to continuing to improve over time. It really is true what everyone says, that the highlight of the whole course is the test, due to the excellent feedback you get from the examiner, and I've since recommended the course to several friends.

The Oxfordshire group is very friendly and welcoming, and I look forward to meeting some new people when the summer drive-outs start up again.

Eliana Santos, who has passed the Advanced Driving Test, enthusiastically recommends the course:

Eliana says: *What a fantastic thing it is to be called an advanced driver.*

When I joined the IAM I knew I would become a better driver but the whole experience was a pleasant surprise.

I have learned driving techniques that I would never have learned for my national test. I now enjoy driving even more and I feel more confident to drive anywhere. I truly think everyone should apply for the Advanced Driving Course. The observers are very knowledgeable and helpful. It's a great experience.

And, of course, improving my own safety on the road makes the roads safer for everyone else as well!

Highly recommended.



Congratulations are also due to **Alan Mayor** who gained a F1RST. Well done!



**My teenagers will soon learn to drive.
Should I stick with a manual petrol/diesel
or is the era of geared cars over?**

The Guardian newspaper's finance section recently asked its readers for their thoughts on this question. Below is a selection of the replies they received. The strong opinions do not necessarily represent the OAD's view and we can't vouch for the statistics quoted!

What do you think?

Is the IPSGA system destined to drop the G and become simply IPSA?

"Manual cars are dying ... but not just yet. Most car club and holiday rentals in Europe are still manual and if you ever want to hire a van, it's hard to find an automatic. Most of the cars that a new driver can afford to insure will be manuals so it's still limiting for a teenager to have an automatic-only licence. However, there's a school of thought that suggests it's better to begin on an automatic so you gain confidence being on the road without having to worry about gears and then switch to a manual and learn about gears later."

"Hybrids aren't the long-term future: they're too heavy. A different technology will ultimately win out, in my opinion. I'd get a manual petrol for exactly the reason you describe: It's a useful skill. Not a diesel, obviously."

"Get them to learn on manual cars. It is easier to learn on an automatic, but driving a manual car will give them more options in the future. I'm sure that those drivers who only have an automatic licence often pass up on their dream car in the future rather than take a manual test."

"Don't worry about automatic gearboxes - clutch and gear coordination is a skill that will become obsolete as we transition to all-electric and eventually driverless cars."

"The age of cars running on congealed dinosaur remains is over. Buy an electric vehicle."

"I'd really question whether your children need to learn to drive. Someone I know spent a fortune getting three kids through driving lessons and only one of them regularly drives, seven years on. Better for them to foot the bill as and when they need the skill. Between the ages of 17 and 22-plus, you don't really need to drive, especially if you go to university. I'd probably add a few years on, too, for living in hovels in trendy areas near a bus stop."

"Driving tests for automatic cars are less than 10% of the total. And the pass rate for automatic is consistently lower, possibly because automatic tests attract those who struggle to drive at all. There will be fuel-powered manuals around for maybe 20 years after the sale of new ones is stopped, probably another 40 years, and there is every possibility that they'd be the cheapest cars to run. The obvious choice is still manual and possibly will be for another 15-20 years."

No new smart motorways until they are 'guaranteed safe' says IAM RoadSmart

In our last Newsletter we reported on the introduction of smart motorways in the UK. Since then, concern has been raised about their safety – specifically the fact that for substantial distances the hard shoulder is used as an extra lane and is replaced by regularly spaced designated emergency areas. This means that drivers whose vehicles break down between the refuge areas are effectively stranded in the middle of fast moving traffic.

IAM RoadSmart, the UK's biggest independent road safety charity, has welcomed reports that the Government intends to halt all smart motorway building – stating they must be guaranteed safe before any further public money is invested in them.

In the House of Commons on 30 January Grant Shapps, Secretary of State for Transport, said a £92 million project in Kent would not open to traffic while the dangers of the roads are being assessed.

Neil Greig, IAM RoadSmart director of policy and research, said: "A stop on new smart motorways until they can be guaranteed safe and understandable for all users makes sense.

"Spending scarce resource on roads that may have to be upgraded again in a few months would be a complete waste of time and put drivers' lives at risk.

"The focus must now be on quickly establishing what can be done to make existing smart motorways much safer. That must start with a programme to deliver the right detection technology and more frequent refuges, as well as safe completion of current 'live' projects"

He added: "Extended education campaigns can also start immediately as well as greater enforcement of Red X violations across the network."

Other smart motorways due to be completed this year are a 10-mile stretch of the M62 in Greater Manchester, an 11-mile stretch of the M23 near Gatwick Airport and a 13.6-mile stretch of the M6 between Coventry and Coleshill – as yet there is no word on whether these projects will be completed either.

Suggestion Box

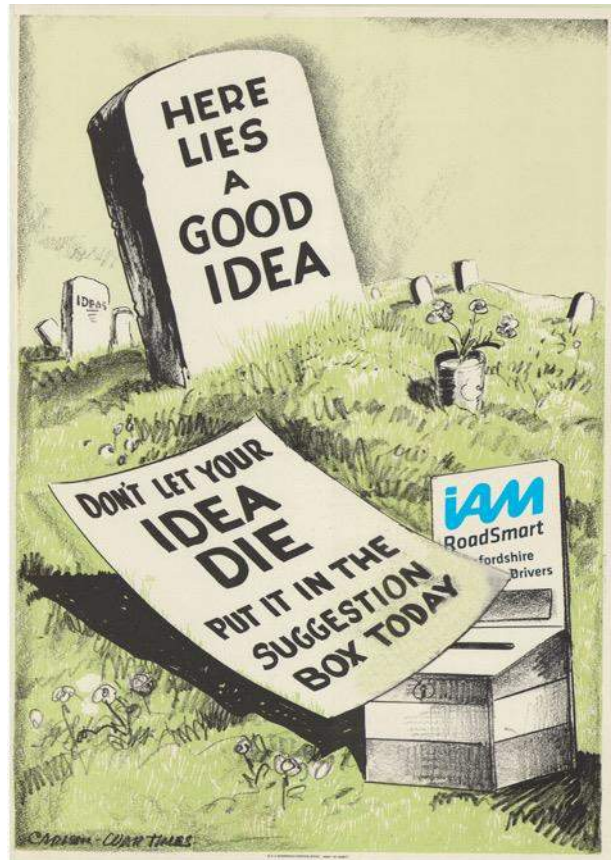
Good ideas welcome

The aims of IAM RoadSmart are to improve the standard of driving and promote road safety.

Your committee is working hard to extend the range of support we offer to OAD members and associate members in achieving these aims.

We therefore welcome ideas – and practical help - from members that will enhance and widen the activities of our group.

In particular, we'd love to hear suggestions in the following areas:



Visiting Speakers

We're looking for talks and presentations on subjects of interest to drivers of all levels of skill and enthusiasm

Outings and Visits

Do you know of places of interest for a group of advanced drivers to visit?

Newsletter Items

Interesting articles and photos are always welcome.

Providing for Under-represented Groups

Top of the list has to be young drivers, but there are other groups under-represented among our membership.

Suitable Venues for Meetings

Now that we cover the whole of Oxfordshire and beyond, we need to find affordable venues that are accessible for all our members.

All suggestions – and offers of help – will be very welcome!

If you have a suggestion, please reply to newletter@iamoxon.org .



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Please don't use our personal email accounts for OAD business.