

## Chair's Hello

As the hours of daylight increase, so it seems does the cost of fuel as well! As summer is almost upon us, don't let the cost of fuel stop you (if possible) from practicing for the forthcoming Members Skills Evening on Wednesday 22<sup>nd</sup> June.

If you would like to keep your skills up to date, consider becoming a Fellow of IAM RoadSmart. I have found that form of membership very rewarding as a way of staying 'up to date'.

In July, we will be holding a members evening at The Shrubbery Hotel in Ilminster, Somerset, with a light buffet refreshment. It's an evening to come along and show your car, old or new and tell others about it for a minute or two, if you would like too, as if it was the preamble to an advance driving test. This is not compulsory, take part only if you wish too! The best 'presentation' will receive a small accolade. The main point of the July meet up, is to come and chat with like-minded people. I appreciate that some of you may not have been out and about to our meetings for some time due to the pandemic, have a think about attending this event on Wednesday 20 July 2022 at 7:00pm for 7:30pm at The Shrubbery Hotel Ilminster. Please let us know if you are coming; further details/ reminder closer to the date.

We are looking to members for new Observers, if you are interested, please do not hesitate to contact me.

As for my own driving, my daily mileage is on the increase as the world starts to get back to 'normal', so lots of driving practice for me... back to plus 20K miles per year. Although that doesn't include my 'smile' mileage in my BMW Z3!

I look forward to seeing as many of you as possible at the Members Skills evening and giving up the Camelot Cup, I won last year... may be!?!

Best wishes

Mark

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## Editorial

We STILL have no newsletter editor so here is another bulletin to keep you informed and make another plea for someone to come forward and compile the various contributions into one document. I did the job for 10 years so it can't be that much of an imposition so please think seriously about it.

David

## Associate Co-ordinator Report

Since our last bulletin was issued, we have been joined by four new Associates, namely Charles Hunt, Jonathan Evans, Rosemary Evans and Celia Robbins. I would like to welcome you all and wish you success with your Advanced Driver Course.

Congratulations to Simon Margetts and Robert Hayes who have recently taken their Advanced Driver Test and achieved a F1RST class pass. They each began their course before COVID-19 hit and waited patiently for observed drives to resume. Simon was observed by Isobel Jennings and Robert was observed by Guy Tucker pre-COVID and David Walton post-COVID.

Pauline

## Events

Hello everyone. This is my first proper report since taking over as Events Co-ordinator from Barry Keenan, and I am pleased to say we have recommenced our regular members' evenings as of March 2022.

The 16th of March event was very successful despite a rather low attendance. Of course, it is understood that people are still concerned about Covid, so no surprises there.

John Frosdick gave a superb presentation on First Aid and CPR, demonstrating how to administer CPR and how to operate a defibrillator. He also showed how to put someone in the recovery position using a volunteer to lie on the floor – and guess who was the volunteer – me!

John is a most entertaining and informative speaker, and everyone went away much wiser.

As to our April evening, much the same can be said of Roger Weeks, who also gave an excellent presentation on Diabetes and how it affects people in many ways, explaining the difference between Type 1 and Type 2, and the implications on driving. Roger is also an advanced driver, and an avid supporter of Diabetes UK, having lost his brother to this awful disease a few years ago.

This too was an eye-opening presentation, dispelling many of the myths around diabetes, and the attendance was somewhat better.

So to our next members' evening in May, when we have Somerset Road Safety Partnership visiting, which should prove most entertaining so please do come along.

Our June and July events have yet to be confirmed, and we will be sure to be in touch on them soon, so until then drive safe and keep well.

Serena Lonton

Events ***[See calendar on page 7 for update on June and July. Ed.]***

### **Challenge issued... and well achieved!**



As a part of my Observer training, given by Mac McGarry, the next phase was to be a demonstration drive, with full commentary, by Mac.

Prior to the training day I had a text from Mac apologising that he was 'without car' for the demonstration drive... No problem I said as you can drive mine (after confirming that valid insurance was in place). That all being agreed I did happen to mention that, for that day, I would not be in my usual

Cupra, but would be bringing the TVR. I think Mac's comment was "that sounds like a challenge"!

I have owned the TVR for over 20 years so am well used to its 'peculiarities and foibles'. It is rear wheel drive, weighs just over 1000kg, has 320bhp with 320ft/lb of torque and no electronic driving aids whatsoever.

Road conditions were slightly damp (it is easy to get the rear to 'step out' in the dry...) and being very low it has the issue of reduced visibility. Needless to say, Mac gave a perfect demonstration drive, with full commentary, of nearly one and a half hours! His only 'regret' was that he wasn't able to 'stretch its legs' although a couple of quickly dispatched overtakes did give him an idea of the performance available.

I do wish to give my thanks to Mac for the time he is taking with me in achieving my aim of becoming one of WAM's Observers.

Chris Aston

IAM Advanced Driver and Rider.

### **The Best of the Best**

For this next 'short' bulletin I need an item which will fit into around 1000 words rather than the normal 2-3000. I think if there is one over-riding thought in my mind behind most, if not all, of my articles it is the level of knowledge and understanding which I became aware existed in police driving instructors back in the 70s & 80s. But first, it is important to illustrate what those standards were in relation to what I feel generally exists today and, therefore, retrospectively why those days, and the knowledge gained there, have turned out to be very special.

I have followed the trend in police driving standards on cars since those 70s and early 80s days and, in my mind and for reasons below, those were the peak of the police driving standards curve. It was a time when the techniques had gradually been refined from the pre-WWII days of Lord Cottenham all the way through the massive expansion of police driving schools in the late 40s and early 50s, through the 60s and into the 70s. It was also a time when an officer's almost complete career in the police force could be at a driving school. The schools were staffed by totally dedicated and enthusiastic drivers whose sole object was the safest possible techniques and on the open road the highest safe speeds in relation to the conditions. Such people truly raised road driving to an art form, particularly when you consider that, for example, advance course instructors were going

out daily with three students and working at up to 120mph (and even more later) on the open road over 20 or 30 years, or even more and still be alive and kicking at the end of it. Theirs became a world reference point for safe road driving with over 64 foreign police forces sending officers to Hendon for instruction.

This was also a period before standards became compromised over time by a combination of factors. Major elements included the tenure system and, coincidentally, some who felt that Traffic was an elitist department and needed bringing down to earth. They favoured the tenure system because it principally limited the time an officer could spend in any department. Very significantly, the gradual financial squeeze ultimately affected the number of staff, the length of courses and the loss of refresher courses as such. Nowadays an officer might only be sent on refresher if he or she is in a crash. The introduction of the Unit Beat Policing Scheme, otherwise known as the 'Panda Scheme' had a significant impact because the driving standard was below that of a Standard Course, then considered the lowest level of competence for police driving, and it started a change in culture in police driving. The current Standard Response level ultimately evolved from the Panda scheme. The movement of a beat officer from here to there made a vehicle just a tool whereas Traffic patrol officers took a pride in their driving standards, part of which was being conscious of the example they were setting for the public. The ARV effect hasn't helped with many good Traffic men deciding they did not want to be around the 'guns and bullets boys', where firearms tickets generally have a higher priority than driving standards. The movement from proper police driving schools where a course was a residential several weeks concentrating purely on driving or riding, to the force driving schools, where there now seems to be a practice of taking officers off operations for a day or so here and there, has also had its impact. The latter is also 'complimented' by using Roadcraft as a remote learning device and essentially a substitute for the focused classroom sessions at the original driving schools. The general trend being a dilution of focus. For those instructors who may have started their career at driving school and stayed with it as courses were squeezed and followed the gradual transition to the force driving schools, and all that that entails, there was often frustration at not being able to achieve the standards they wanted. For those former 70s & 80s instructors who are still around today, often in their 80s, and still as enthusiastic about road driving as they were then, they

often look with horror at a lot of the police driving seen today. However, Roadcraft still states that, '*Police and other emergency services drivers should be exemplary drivers. Your attitude towards your driving is noticed by members of the public and influences other drivers. Always be aware that you are a role model....*' All of which is not helped by PCSOs with negligible training driving marked police vehicles.

Given all of that you might well understand why I feel intensely proud of the times spent visiting Derek Van Petegem, Dennis Johnston and Pat Forbes at Hendon from the early 70s through to the early 80s. Although Derek and Dennis were skid-pan instructors they were also Advanced Wing Instructors\* each with around 20 years' experience at the time. Pat was an Advanced Wing Instructor also with goodly years under his belt. Despite



their time at the driving school their enthusiasm for road driving and knowledge about it never abated, even to the point where someone like myself who went as a sponge was constantly examined to see if there was anything I understood just a little bit better than they did. It was a very humbling

experience but, inevitably, I learned much more from them than they ever did from me. It's important to emphasise that the learning was almost more about mind-set than it was about the physical aspects of driving. Their enthusiasm to help and yet with innate modesty will always stay with me. The great sadness in my mind is that a lot of this information and knowledge is getting lost in the mists of time. However, there are still bubbles of enthusiasm around to tap in to. Not infrequently I have conversations with a former Bridgend, the South Wales Police Driving School, instructor who spent some 35 years there and left as head of the school. Big problem: what we know starts as a five-minute chat inevitably ends up being up to an hour long – just like that. And even then, we have to cut it short. And also, chats with a former Chief Instructor at Hendon, now in his 80s and yet still regularly getting out on his motorcycle for a 'good run'. And there are others. And just in case anyone comes up with the argument that, 'them there police drivers – well that style is for them', the answer is definitely not. What they knew, understood and applied was all about doing it safely and nothing else.

In any case there was no other basis on which they could run at full tilt on the open road and come back safely over the whole of their driving career.

For me it makes advanced course police driving instructors, such as I knew, and former ones I know today, the very best exponents in being safe on the roads and understanding the very necessary associated mind-set. It forever grieves me that throughout the road safety industry people can emerge from some sort of academia waving a piece of paper claiming they are qualified in some aspect of road safety or driver behaviour. Or, that you have, for example, a career journalist who presumably spends most of his day at the desk, as editor of a key road-safety media and information hub which can arbitrarily filter and relay what is considered pertinent RS information. It seems none of these has, for starters, even thought of going to such police driving instructors to get a head start on what being safe on the road is really all about. For most such an approach would also give a firm base of understanding. Additionally, it would put many academics streets ahead in their starting point when investigating aspects of safety on the roads and probably save them research time and money in the process.

It's been my experience in over 50 years of advanced driving – finding the best, practising assiduously, running courses and workshops and tutoring others – that the best never lose their enthusiasm to learn or, to engage in some topic related to road driving. And such enthusiasm is always infectious to others wishing to learn. In fact, in many ways it is almost mandatory because sometimes that is the very key which can enthuse others to want to learn. It should also reflect just how much depth of knowledge there really is available on the subject. However, I would caution against generally following the ideas of competition or racing drivers who will have you believe that the best of them are automatically and equally the best in road driving. There is bound to be some overlap between each discipline, mainly in understanding vehicle dynamics but, apart from that, the different mind-sets and techniques need to be properly understood. I certainly would not like to see, say, an F1 racing driver step into the place of an advanced course police driving instructor for a six-week focused high speed road driving course with total regard to safety. In the same way you would not expect an advanced course police driving instructor step into an F1 racing car and immediately be competitive in a race.

In general, anyone with any enthusiasm for road driving needs to go searching for the right information. Nowadays finding 'the knowledge' might

be much more difficult than it used to be but, it is still out there for those who want to find it.

\* Advanced Wing instructors were almost exclusively Sergeants.

Photograph; Sgts. 'Johnny' Johnston and Alan Spree in Rover P6s on the famous duo-display, here for Dutch police officers.© 1978. The author.

Addenda:

1) Up to the 1980s all police driving schools were Government approved. On introduction of the Panda scheme some local forces started basic courses to teach driving from scratch because all officers had then to be drivers and the proper driving schools could not cope. The Force driving schools were not Government approved.

2) ARVs were (and still are) the Armed Response Vehicles introduced in the early 1990s due to high profile shootings and stabbings. To expedite the programme most ARV officers were initially from the forces and not drawn from normal police ranks, as such. As a matter of convenience ARVs were placed within Traffic Division which was subsequently re-named as Roads Policing. Nowadays ARVs are the dominant element in many Roads Policing Units.

*My thanks to the former police driving instructors who have kindly given their time to check through this item.*

**Hi Nigel,**

**I much enjoyed reading your article and I'm sure it will be very well received – particularly by those of us who were around in the pre 2000 era!**

A former Commandant of The Metropolitan Police Motor Driving School, Hendon.

**Hi Nigel,**

**Another excellent article.**

Former head of Bridgend Police Driving School.

**Thank you, Nigel. I enjoyed reading it. You've hit the nail right on the head**

A former MPMDS Hendon Chief Instructor.

Nigel Albright

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## Restraining the Dog

Millions of drivers could be breaking the law when it comes to travelling with their dog - and it might lead them to fines of up to £5,000 according to research carried out by IAM RoadSmart which has revealed that 42 per cent



of dog owners surveyed put their dog in an unsafe place in the car while driving. 42 per cent of dog owners admit to not taking enough care when having their dogs in the car. Over a third said they left their pet unrestrained, either in the back seat, the

passenger seat, the footwell or loose in the boot. A further 8 per cent said they left their dog restrained on the passenger seat, which could lead to a pet being killed or badly injured in a collision if the airbag is activated, even at relatively low speed.

The Highway Code states dogs must be suitably restrained when travelling in a car so they cannot distract the driver or cause injury to either themselves or the motorist. And while disobeying the Highway Code doesn't carry a direct penalty, drivers could be pulled over by police and fined up to £1,000 for driving without proper control if their pet distracts them.

This could be escalated to failing to drive with due care and attention, which carries a maximum fine of £5,000 and nine penalty points if the case goes to court. To make matters worse, insurers are unlikely to pay out for an accident in the event of driving without proper control, leaving the motorist with a sizeable damage repair bill.

*With thanks to the UK Safety Network*

## Uncertainty over new 'Hierarchy of Road Users' could cause more conflict on our busy shared streets

Almost two thirds (59 per cent) of UK motorists believe that there will be more conflict on the nation's roads as a result of the introduction of the new hierarchy of road users, according to road safety charity, IAM RoadSmart.

The new risk-based hierarchy is the biggest change to the new Highway Code launched at the end of January, and states that road users who possess the potential to do the greatest harm will have the most responsibility to reduce the danger or threat they may pose to others.

The hierarchy applies to all road users, including pedestrians, but applies most strongly to drivers of HGVs, vans, buses, cars and motorcycles, as they typically cause the most damage in the event of a collision.

59 per cent of the 1,000 motorists surveyed said they believe that the new system will create more conflict on the roads, rather than making them safer. Meanwhile, only 6 per cent of motorists thought the new implementation would cause less conflict, and 13 per cent believed nothing would change at all.

Under the new policy, pedestrians now have priority at junctions, meaning that vehicles turning in or out of them should give way. Over half of those surveyed (54 per cent) believe this new rule will cause more conflict, whereas only 15 per cent thought it would reduce incidents on the roads.

Responsibility sits with each road user to know how the new rules affect them, and how they should act in the safest way. Many of the rules are legal requirements and can carry fines and points if not obeyed.

Neil Greig, Director of Policy and Research at IAM RoadSmart, said: "It is concerning to see the number of motorists who believe the new rules implemented in the Hierarchy of Road Users will cause more conflict on our roads, rather than less.

"The changes to the Highway Code are a reminder to all road users to behave responsibly with a mutual respect for each other's safety. The hierarchy offers clarity as to where priority should be given in various scenarios, so it is important for all road users to understand how the changes will affect them and others in real situations on the road.

"An upcoming Department for Transport (DfT) information campaign will hopefully go some way towards disarming the scepticism around these

changes, by ensuring the proper messaging is getting through. However, we would urge the DfT to be more realistic about the impact that simply changing a seldom read document will have on the behaviour and safety of road users, and instead, roll out more intensive and timely campaigns to build awareness and confidence in the new code.”

## Motorist Views and Opinions



In the Annual Culture Survey Conducted by the Institute of Advanced Motorists (IAM RoadSmart) which gauges drivers' attitudes to key road safety issues over time, revealed that nearly 9 in 10 (89%) of over 2,000 motorists surveyed supported the idea of safety cameras being used to spot those who decide to flout the rules and drive illegally on public roads without the required documentation.

There was also support among respondents for more fines to be handed to those who decide to exceed the speed limit with 82% agreeing that cameras should automatically fine drivers who go more than 10mph over the limit in school zones and urban areas.

There was also support for similar schemes to be enforced for those who decide to exceed the speed limit in residential areas and motorways, albeit to a lesser extent (78% and 64%, respectively).

*With thanks to the UK Safety Network*

## Emergency Service Areas

National Highways could use some of the £390m pledged to retrofit emergency areas (EAs) on smart motorways to install a new type of place to stop on locations such as slip roads.

It is understood that a plan is being considered to add a small number of new spaces in certain locations where full emergency areas are not practical. This includes spaces alongside slip roads that will allow vehicles in difficulty leaving the motorway to leave the line of traffic. While such



spaces would not be fully-fledged EAs, they could still have features such as emergency telephones and CCTV coverage. These new spaces would not count against the target of 150 new emergency areas by 2025 but could be funded from the same pot if money was left over. In addition, such spaces could also be counted as part of a new standard of one emergency area every three-quarters of a mile and up to a maximum of a mile, where possible.

The DfT has already said that it will count other places to stop such as MSAs and new or existing hard shoulders for the purpose of this standard.

The DfT's 2020 'stocktake' offers a clear distinction between EAs and 'other places to stop in an emergency', defining EAs as: 'Approximately 110 yards long by fifteen feet wide and set back from the left-hand edge of the motorway. An emergency telephone from which to alert National Highways of an issue and call for help is provided in each emergency area and increasing numbers of them have orange surfacing to make them more visible.'

*With thanks to the UK Safety Network*

## Box Junction Worries for Drivers

From 1<sup>st</sup> June councils will be able to apply to enforce moving traffic offences, such as driving through 'no entry', 'no left' and 'no right' turn signs and stopping in yellow boxes, which are used to prevent gridlock at junctions. Currently, only local authorities in London and Cardiff have had the power to issue penalty charge notices for these infringements.

Research shows that 57% of drivers are generally in favour of yellow box junctions being enforced but the RAC has discovered that many junctions have design flaws 'which cause drivers to become trapped through no fault of their own and that some are so poorly maintained that it's hard to see where the yellow lines start and finish. The motoring organisation said it also believes the official guidance in Chapter 5 of the Traffic Signs Manual is

generally unsatisfactory as it does not clearly state the specific purpose of box junctions or show how to design them in relation to vehicle movements at junctions and lacks any information on how they should be maintained and enforced.

The RAC have indicated design flaws such as junctions that have been installed in completely the wrong places, boxes that are larger than they

should be and ones where buildings or street furniture obstruct drivers from seeing where boxes end, making it impossible to assess whether there is enough space beyond the junction for their vehicle to fit into.

However, the Department for Transport are adamant the present guidance is sufficient.

*With thanks to the UK Safety Network*

<b>CALENDAR</b>			
<b>JUNE</b>			
<b>22</b>	Wed	<b>7:00 pm</b>	Members' Evening – Car Skills Evening at Hatch Beauchamp. <b>NOTE DATE CHANGE</b>
<b>JULY</b>			
4	Wed	7:30 pm	WAM Committee Meeting
20	Wed	7:00 for 7:30 pm	Members' Evening – at the Shrubbery with light buffet – show and tell evening – see Chair's Hello
<b>AUGUST</b>			
		No meeting in August	
<b>SEPTEMBER</b>			
7	Wed	7:30 pm	WAM Committee Meeting
21	Wed	6:45pm	Members' Evening – Visit to Hyundai dealership in Taunton to look at their range of EVs

*Any comments or opinions expressed in this bulletin are those of the contributors and not necessarily of the Institute of Advanced Motorists Ltd., Editor or Committee. Please send any items for consideration to be included in the next bulletin to [Ed@Wessexam.uk](mailto:Ed@Wessexam.uk)*

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