

## Chairman's Report

Hello everybody!

I'm afraid that I have to start this bulletin off with a plea for help. You'll remember when I last wrote I asked for help from members to run the committee. I'm a little sad to say that we've only had one person so far put his head above the parapet and offer his services. At the moment what we really need is someone to take over as Editor of our bulletin with a view to bringing it back up to full Newsletter. Our man David is doing a brilliant job as Editor, but there again he's also doing a brilliant job as Secretary, Membership Secretary, Webmaster & Observer, too!

As you'll understand, four roles for one person is about three too many so if any of you out there have any experience of editing a newsletter and would like to help out with ours, you will be made very, very welcome indeed! Please contact either David via [secretary@wessexam.uk](mailto:secretary@wessexam.uk) or me [chairman@wessexam.uk](mailto:chairman@wessexam.uk).

So what have we been up to in this last quarter? Moving on from November's AGM, the new Committee, myself included, have quickly settled into our new roles (previous role on the part of David Walton) and have continued to run the business of the group with hardly a break in stride. We've continued to recruit, enrol and take new members through the Advanced Driving Course to completion and the Advanced Driver Award. More of this from our Associate Co-ordinator, Pauline further in the bulletin. Mike, our Support Officer has researched, bought and trialled the new fleeces available for Members from the IAM shop [www.iamroadsmart.com/my-dashboard/my-benefits/iam-roadsmart-shop](http://www.iamroadsmart.com/my-dashboard/my-benefits/iam-roadsmart-shop) (log-in required). Mike's opinion is that they're a better fit and quality than the previous versions but if you'd like to know more, you can contact Mike on [cmmw@wessexam.uk](mailto:cmmw@wessexam.uk)

We continue to run our monthly social events at Hatch Beauchamp Village Hall (TA3 6SG) on the 3<sup>rd</sup> Wednesday of each month. Don't forget to check out what's planned for the month ahead by going to the WAM website [www.iamroadsmart.com/groups/wessexam/events](http://www.iamroadsmart.com/groups/wessexam/events).

So far this year we've had 3 absolutely great and completely different talks and discussions for our regular Monthly Meetings. In January our very own Andrew Griffiths gave a very entertaining presentation about the journey of organ jazz from its innovative origins to modern day, he even brought some props to look at and audio/video examples to listen to.

For our February gathering Sahrah Dutton of St. John Ambulance came along with her chum Emma with just some of their equipment and gave a very spirited talk on the life and times of St. John Ambulance. It went down so well that I'm hoping to invite them back again later in the year to give a very much shortened First Aid course. Hopefully there'll be more on this in the months to come.

Our guest for March was Dave Morris, Principal Conservator (Naval Aircraft) of the HMS Heron (RNAS Yeovilton) Museum. And what a fascinating talk he gave. He started with the construction of the station in 1939 moving through the war years giving a very insightful explanation of the research and planning that went into what came to be known as the 'Plotting Room'. This was certainly a talk that has left me wanting to know more, so I for one will be making a trip down to the museum at HMS Heron in the near future.

Our guest speaker for April is Kenneth Lavery and his talk will be about his time spent as a Surgical Neurologist. I encourage everybody who has been unable to make any of the Members' Evenings so far, to double down on

*No-one can do everything, but everyone can do something.*

their efforts to attend. No matter what the subject matter, they're always very, very interesting and informative.

For those of you who don't yet know, Andrew Griffiths, our Chief Observer has had to take an unexpected sabbatical and so I'm standing in his stead. So here's some news from the Training Department; we currently have one Chief Observer, four National Observers; two Local Observers and one Trainee.

I'm very, very pleased to announce that Stan Martin has very recently passed his National Observer Assessment and is already off to a flying start with his own Associate. So many, many congratulations to Stan for his sterling work during his training and now into his Observing career. Long may it continue.

Following up behind we have Spencer Modica. Spencer is currently a trainee Observer, but watch this space. I'm sure it won't be too long before he, like Stan, has his own portfolio of Associates.

Pauline Wills our Associate Co-ordinator has the full run down of Associates in training and those currently waiting to start the course and I'm sure you'll hear all about that from her in a page or two.

And if you, gentle reader, would like to train as an Observer, then please feel free to get in touch with me, or any member of the Committee so that we can start the necessary discussions and paperwork.

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Well, that's it from me at the moment. Don't forget that we hold regular Committee Meetings on the 1<sup>st</sup> Wednesday of every other month. As you know, these are closed meetings but if you want to raise a point or bring something to the attention of the Committee, then please feel free to drop me a line at [chairman@wessexam.uk](mailto:chairman@wessexam.uk) and I'll raise it at the next Committee Meeting. If a more urgent response is required, then I'll email everybody and seek their opinions and get back to you with an answer as soon as possible.

Remember, this is *your* group and we are *your* Committee, please feel free to contact any of us at any time on any matter pertaining to the group.

Happy motoring,



## Membership Bit

WAM currently has 95 members and friends, of whom 21 are associates and 7 observers; congratulations to Stan Martin who qualified as a National Observer in January.

Since the last bulletin back in December 2023, we have welcomed seven new members to the group; we hope you enjoy your association with the Wessex Group and we look forward to welcoming you to our meetings, events and activities.

	<u>TOWN</u>	<u>LEVEL</u>
Ella Penny	Taunton	Associate
Lloyd Campion	North Curry	Associate
Andrew Redfern	Langport	Associate
Alexander Swarbrick	East Chinnock	Associate
Bridget Restall	Bridgwater	Associate
Marianne Bull	North Curry	Associate
Laila Sadler	Curry Rivel	Associate

Since December, four members have passed their Advanced Driving Test; so congratulations to:

	<u>OBSERVED BY</u>
Kevin Hodge	Andrew Griffiths
Mark Roy	Barry Keenan
Jay Ralph (F1RST)	Chris Aston
Justin Cole (F1RST)	Andy Bourne

## Exceeding the Speed Limit

RoSPA have put out a Fact Sheet, which you may find interesting, or not:  
[Inappropriate-Speed-Factsheet-Oct-2023.pdf](#)

## Learning from Near Misses



**ROAD SAFETY** organisation GEM Motoring Assist is encouraging drivers to reflect on the dangerous moments they have experienced at the wheel, to reduce the risks they face on future road journeys.

GEM says those ‘oops factor’ moments we have all encountered, offer a golden opportunity to reflect on our driving and to find ways of being safer in future.

GEM road safety adviser James Luckhurst comments: “By definition a near miss means no collision occurred and no one was hurt. But a near miss is only a near miss thanks to luck interrupting a chain of events that could have been catastrophic.

“Think of a time when you found yourself braking at the last second. Or when someone sounded their horn at you. Or when you found yourself dropping off on a long, dull journey and ‘woke up’ with a start.

“It’s widely reported that most of us see ourselves as ‘above average’ drivers, yet up to 94 per cent of collisions are a result of driver error. so we can’t all be as good as we think we are.

“Giving ourselves time to reflect on our own particular close encounters means we can learn from what happened and work out how to be safer in future.

“But rather than dwelling on the danger there and then, it’s better to wait until the end of a journey and set aside a few moments to think about why it happened.

“That short period of reflection may be all that’s needed to identify the reason and to adapt techniques of observation or concentration in order to prevent a similar situation happening again.”

GEM has produced the following four simple tips to reduce risk for drivers:

1. Think about risk on journeys. This risk could come from a dangerous stretch of road, from not taking breaks, from bad weather, from unwise speed choices or from a lack of focus on the driving task.
2. Expect the unexpected. This is especially true on familiar stretches of road. Keep your guard up, anticipate what could happen and stay ahead of the situation, rather than having to react urgently.
3. Eliminate the word ‘suddenly’ from your driving vocabulary. By identifying all the possible areas of risk, you can adapt and update your speed and position to keep yourself away from trouble.
4. Learn from every journey. What went well? Where were the biggest risks? Take time later to think about why that moment happened. Did you fail to see another vehicle? Did you misjudge distance or speed? Did you gamble with a changing traffic light? Most important, what different action could you take next time to reduce the risk?

“We all make mistakes; but unfortunately a lot of us look to blame everyone or everything else – making it difficult or impossible to learn. But we are all more vulnerable on the road than we think we are,” concludes James Luckhurst.

“By recognising the situations that may lead to greater danger and learning from those ‘oops factor’ moments, we can actively reduce risk, both to ourselves and to those around us.”

*Hopefully, as advanced drivers we have fewer “oops” moments than most but nevertheless learning from bad experiences rather than having the same bad experiences again and again must be the aim for us all. Ed.*

## A National Highways Campaign

*As advanced drivers, we should all be very aware of tail gating and middle lane hogging, but it's good to see a comprehensive awareness campaign being launched by National Highways. Ed.*

### Little Changes campaign summary

#### Campaign goal

The campaign aims to improve everyone's experience when driving on our network. In this first wave of our long-term campaign, we will raise awareness of two driving behaviours that can make a big difference.

The first is that drivers should drive in the left-hand lane when driving conditions allow. The second is that drivers should keep at least a two second gap between themselves and the vehicle in front.

#### Campaign duration

The campaign will run from 1 March – 31 March.

#### Audience

All drivers on the strategic road network.

#### How you can get involved

You can help to influence safer driving behaviour on our roads by supporting this campaign through your own channels.

To promote the campaign:

- Use a range of digital and social resources on your social media channels, websites or any other digital channels, e.g. digital screens (if you require any bespoke formats that are not included here, please request it via [marketing@nationalhighways.co.uk](mailto:marketing@nationalhighways.co.uk)).
- Use your internal communication channels such as email, intranet and newsletters to communicate campaign messages to your colleagues.
- Reshare the campaign's social posts from National Highways' Facebook, X, Instagram and LinkedIn on your social channels using #LittleChanges
- Have a conversation with your audience, letting them know about the importance of considerate driving and direct them to the campaign page for more information: [nationalhighways.co.uk/little-changes](https://nationalhighways.co.uk/little-changes)
- You can download a copy of the [Little changes toolkit here](#)

**national highways**

# Don't hog the middle lane

Transform your journey

**Little Changes**  
Change Everything

**national highways**

# Keep a safe distance

Transform your journey

**Little Changes**  
Change Everything

# Another campaign, this time by Somerset Road Safety



## Fatal Five

The main causes of death on the roads

**There are five main causes of death on the road. These are known as the Fatal Five. Read our tips on how to avoid these dangers and stay safe whilst driving. Irresponsible driving risks not only your life but the lives of others too.**

### 1. Speeding

#### Tips to help you stick to the speed limit

- Make a habit of checking your speedometer regularly
- Look for road signs, especially at junctions
- Remember – street lights mean 30mph until signs tell you otherwise
- When driving at 30mph, try using third gear to stay within the safe limit

Even if you are within the speed limit, make sure you are driving appropriately. Think carefully about the road you are on and any other conditions.

### 2. Not wearing your seatbelt

#### Always wear your seatbelt.

It is against the law to not wear a seatbelt in vehicles where they are fitted.

### 3. Distractions - using your mobile or a hand-held device

It only takes a brief glance at your phone for a fatal accident to happen. Whatever it is will still be there when you are in a safe place to answer it. This means safely parked, off the road, with the engine switched off and the keys out of the ignition.

#### Some ways to avoid the temptation

- Switch off your phone or device before you set off
- Divert your phone to voicemail
- **For Apple iPhones** – go to settings, Control Centre and tap 'Do not disturb while driving'
- **For Android users** – download the Live2Txt app. This allows you to block calls and texts whilst on the road.

Even though hand-held device kits are legal, they can be dangerously distracting. Operating SatNavs whilst driving is also an unsafe behaviour.

### 4. Drink and drugs

Driving under the influence of drugs or alcohol could lead to your or someone else's death.

It also has serious penalties, such as a driving ban, a criminal record, in some cases a conviction on your licence (that will be visible to employers if you drive for work) and up to 14 years in prison if you kill someone when drunk or drug driving.

- Make a plan, so you have a way to get to or from your destination without having to drive yourself or others.
- Don't accept drinks if you are planning to drive and don't offer drinks to someone who you know will be driving.
- Do not get a lift with someone who is under the influence. Your life is just as much at risk as a passenger.

#### Should you be driving?

The only way to be truly safe when driving is to not drink at all, however, you should still know the legal limits. Be aware that the next morning, you could easily still be over the limit.

**Here are some examples of the minimum times that have to have passed before you can safely drive again.**

- **For three large glasses (250ml) of wine** – At least 11.5 hours from finishing the last drink
- **For four pints of 4% lager** – At least 10 hours and 20 minutes from finishing the last drink
- **For three pints of 6% lager** – At least 15 hours from finishing the last drink.
- **For four double 40% spirits (50ml)** – At least 9 hours from finishing the last drink.
- **For four 5% alcopops (275ml)** – At least 6 hours and 40 minutes from finishing the last drink.

### 5. Careless and inconsiderate driving

To be safe on the road, you need to concentrate at all times.

**Here are some examples of dangerous behaviours to avoid.**

- Driving too close to the vehicle in front
- Not giving way at a junction
- Eating or drinking at the wheel
- Under-taking or dangerous over-taking

**[Somerset Road Safety – Fatal 5 video](#)**

## More than one in six jobs require applicants to be able to drive

[Research by the RAC Foundation](#) shows that in the first week of October 2023 a total of 1,092,172 recruitment ads were posted on the job vacancy aggregator site Adzuna.

Of the 1,092,172 advertisements, 189,608 (17.4%) explicitly or implicitly required those applying to have at least a standard driving licence because the job was either:

- specifically for a driver,
- or required driving during the course of work,
- or a car was needed to reach work (due to reduced accessibility by public transport).

The analysis looked at data for the same week in October in the eight years from 2016 to 2023, inclusive.

Whilst the highest proportion of jobs requiring the ability to drive was seen in 2020 at the height of the pandemic (120,190 out of 611,702, or 19.6%) the proportion for 2023 was still higher than in any of the four years pre-Covid.

Table 1. Job adverts and driving requirements, 2016-2023 (first week of October in each year):

Year	All Adzuna Adverts		Driving %
	Driving	Total	
2016	178,535	1,173,630	15.2
2017	187,334	1,178,276	15.9
2018	182,840	1,141,802	16.0
2019	167,323	1,070,039	15.6
2020	120,190	611,702	19.6
2021	241,536	1,296,599	18.6
2022	185,792	1,083,525	17.1
2023	189,608	1,092,172	17.4
Total	1,453,158	8,647,745	16.8

Using specific occupation categories as defined by the Office for National Statistics (ONS), the data revealed that the need to drive was, to a greater or lesser degree, a requirement in a wide variety of roles, for example:

- 100% of driving instructors
- 67% of plumbers
- 59% of estate agents and auctioneers
- 34% of care workers and home carers

According to the ONS the average cost of a driving lesson is £35 per hour however they can be anywhere between £20 and £60.

Steve Gooding, director of the RAC Foundation, said:

“Our research shows that when it comes to getting work a driving licence can be a crucial qualification. Little wonder official figures show that about 45% of all driving tests conducted during 2022-23 involved candidates aged 20 or younger.

“Despite the predictions of a post-pandemic work-from-home legacy the data suggests that when it comes to driving as an employment qualification, things today look very similar to what they did before Covid struck.

“If anything, the one in six headline figure underestimates the importance of being able to drive for roles in locations, or with shift patterns, that make them inaccessible by public transport.

“Many of those job ads which list a driving requirement are in relatively poorly-paid sectors, such as the caring profession – something the chancellor should have in mind when making decisions that influence the cost of motoring and which impact on those who are already struggling to pay for the transport they can’t do without.

“It is unsurprising that the proportion of employers looking for people to be able to drive reached a peak during the pandemic, when we came to fully appreciate how key our truckers and delivery drivers are to daily life.”

## Breaking Down on the Motorway

Recent research by the RAC reveals that nearly eight-in-10 drivers would unknowingly put themselves in danger after breaking down on the motorway and stopping on the hard shoulder with only a fifth (22%) of the 1,900 drivers surveyed would do the right thing.

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YPFqSRN\\_kbY](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YPFqSRN_kbY)

## Changes to Driving Licence Rules on the Cards

The UK Government is considering changes to driving licence rules following a consultation in 2022 in which more than two thirds (69%) of respondents say all licensed drivers should be automatically entitled to drive vehicles up to 7.5 tonnes but no decision has yet been made.

## WAM events for the rest of the year

17 <sup>th</sup> April	Members' Meeting - It's not brain surgery	Well actually, it is. Kenneth Lavery is coming to talk to us about his time as a Surgical Neurologist - amusing rather than gory we promise.
15 <sup>th</sup> May	Members' Evening - The Royal National Lifeboat Institution	Kenneth Lavery will be talking about the RNLI. More details to follow.
19 <sup>th</sup> June	Skills Evening	To be held at Hatch Beauchamp Village Hall.
17 <sup>th</sup> July	Show and Tell event similar to last year.	At The Windwhistle Inn.
August	No formal members' evening in August	
18 <sup>th</sup> September	TBA	
24 <sup>th</sup> September	Jaguar track day at Castle Coombe	Sponsored by JEC. There will be an opportunity to experience typically 3 laps of the circuit in a very fast racing Jaguar with a professional racing driver. There's a charge of £10 per 3 laps and you can chose different jaguars to go in. If you want to go in 3 different jags it would be £30. Thrilling stuff.
16 <sup>th</sup> October	Members' Evening - The History of Jaguar Racing	Colin Porter from Jaguar Enthusiasts Club will be coming to tell us about the history of Jaguar racing.
20 <sup>th</sup> November	AGM	

*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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