

e-NEWSLETTER

iAM
RoadSmart

WESSEX ADVANCED MOTORISTS



www.wessexam.uk

Number 160

Autumn 2021





WESSEX ADVANCED MOTORISTS

e-NEWSLETTER

Published Quarterly
Editor: David Walton

IAM Group No. 1005
Registered Charity No. 1062207
www.wessexam.uk

Any comments or opinions expressed in this e-Newsletter 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 e-Newsletter to David Walton, our Editor (details on the back page). Items will be published ASAP.

GENERAL DATA PROTECTION REGULATION

Members' details, i.e. names, addresses and telephone numbers, are kept on computer to assist group administration. This information will not be passed outside the IAM. WAM may from time to time publish photographs taken at group events in this newsletter and on the website or display them at publicity events. If you do not wish to have your photo taken or published by WAM, please contact the Editor in writing (contact details on the back page).

CONTENTS



- 4 [Chairman's Corner](#)
- 8 [The Committee](#)
- 9 [From the Editor](#)
- 10 [Group Observers](#)
- 11 [Events Corner](#)
- 14 [Spot the difference](#)
- 15 [Driving in Bali](#)
By Chris Bell of Exeter RoADAR Group
- 19 [Shades of Grey](#)
By Nigel Albright
- 26 [Local IAM Examiner Caught Out by Speed Limits](#)
By Andy Poulton
- 32 [In Car Distractions](#)
By Keith Hayman
- 37 [Highway Code Confusion](#)
An IAM Blog
- 47 [Talking About Driving and Eyesight](#)
With thanks to Traffic Safety Roads
- 48 [Shortage of Drivers Lead to Questionable Changes](#)
With thanks to Traffic Safety Roads
- 49 [Driver Stresses Revealed](#)
- 50 [Stolen Cars in 2020](#)
With thanks to Traffic Safety Roads
- 51 [Older Drivers fit, healthy and determined to keep driving for at least the next 12 years or more](#)



Chairman's Corner



It's been a while since I was last in touch with you. So I'm a little bit "rusty" when it comes to writing and you may see even more mistakes here than usual!

The sunny weather we've been having has been glorious albeit perhaps a bit too hot on occasions. While we are having bouts of heavy rain and gales now, we're being told by the Met Office that another heatwave may be heading our way. So make the most of the cooler weather!

The sun and the rain have resulted in hedges and shrubs growing at an alarming rate! You may have had the same experience I've had... trying to keep hedges under control only to find that within a short period of time, they have grown again! So there is always lots to do around house and garden here.



By Andrew Griffiths





WAM Activity

As you will be well aware, our Group has been inactive for some 18 months due to Covid and while some Groups across the UK have recently begun opening up and restarting observed drives, they do so with caution and mitigation in place.

Our Group made a step in that direction when a Skills Evening was held at Hatch Beauchamp Village Hall car park on 21st July. My congratulations to Mark Stephenson for putting in the winning performance. I was unable to attend because at present, I am not very active after 5pm. Why?

I've not been as active as I would normally be because in April I had open heart surgery at the Bristol Heart Institute. I am recovering well but it is a slow (but steady!) process and can take many months and up to a year to make a full recovery. So I'm still at the stage of getting progressively fatigued throughout the day; hedges don't help!

Members' evenings have kicked off at last. I, for one, am looking forward to welcoming our Full Members and Associate members to

physical meetings we have been denied for a very long time. Of course, everything is subject to any changes the Government might impose to address new waves of infection and we are all too familiar with statements from PM and MPs that Covid is still with us - it hasn't gone away. So let's look forward with positive minds to reinstating some degree of normality in our lives.

Our next scheduled members evening is a social in September; a great chance to meet up for a casual chat over tea/coffee.

And with my Chief Observer on;
What about restarting **observed drives**?

Well there is work to be done before these can restart. The work begins with peer reviews for our Observers and is "strongly advised" by RoadSmart because this is crucial to ensuring our Associate Members receive the highest standard of training and coaching WAM has been so successful in delivering hitherto.

Regrettably some of our Observers have resigned their roles; it will take time to identify, train and qualify replacements. So we have fewer Observers but more Associates to mentor through their courses.





The roadmap to restarting observed drives for our Associates Members is as follows;

1. Classroom Sessions (see below)
2. Peer reviews between National Observers (myself, Barry and Delphine) and Local Observer Assessors (myself and Barry);
3. Check-drives (if required) for those named in (1) with Area Manager Shaun Cronin
4. Peer Reviews between Local Observers (David, Isobel, Guy, Andrew H, Brian).
5. Refresher training for those named in (3) if required.
6. Restart observed drives in a sequenced manner; WAM has Associates who were part-way through their courses when Covid lockdowns/restrictions prevented completion. We have new Associate Members who bought their courses over the last year or so and have yet to start training.

I haven't set a timescale yet but once my driving stamina has improved, stages 2-6 of the roadmap starts from then.

Classroom sessions

I mentioned last year that I planned to run a

series of THREE classroom sessions for new Associates. These sessions will now also be offered to those who had already started their course but, due to Covid restrictions, were unable to complete.

The classroom sessions will be held in Hatch Beauchamp Village Hall and will cover;

1. The Advanced Driver Course Logbook (which you received when you registered for the Advanced Driver Course)
2. The Highway Code
3. Commentary Driving

These will be scheduled as soon as we are able and Associate Members will be contacted with the arrangements. You can help prepare yourself by reading the following sections of your Handbook;

1. Human Factors (Including IPSSGA -Information, Position, Speed, Gear, Acceleration)
2. Core Driving Skills

Many of us drive less than we used to before Covid hit; like many drivers I was limited as to how much driving I could do in 2020 (within the legal and advised frameworks established by UKGov to "control" Covid) and I haven't driven





very much at all this year (lockdown, a month of self-isolation, heart surgery followed by adhering to DVLA regulations stipulating 4-6 weeks of **no** driving post-surgery). Now I'm beginning to make short trips to build up my "driving stamina"; driving to the advanced standard - and particularly at Masters level - can be exhausting as it requires a high level of concentration... **Observation, Anticipation and Planning** in a continuous manner.

When one reads about the plethora of collisions on our roads in recent times (M5, A303 for example), ask the question "**what is the main reason for a collision?**". The answer is **driver error**. With many drivers taking to the roads for the first time in a long while, errors are inevitable (remember that there is no such thing as the perfect driver!); lack of observation, driving a vehicle outside its specification, driving too fast for traffic conditions and/or road conditions, tailgating and more.

So as you resume driving again, take extra care and use OAP, for example;

- **Observe**; *there is a cyclist ahead traveling towards me, a car is behind the cyclist and closing on him/her. This is a potential hazard!*

- **Anticipate**; *What might reasonably be expected to happen? The driver could pull out to overtake the cyclist, putting themselves partly in my path.*
- **Plan**; *What will I do? Check my nearside ahead; Check my mirrors; move gradually to my nearside. This will give the oncoming vehicle more space to safely pass the cyclist. When I've cleared the hazard, check my mirrors again.*

If this manoeuvre was not possible due to sufficient space not being available (eg line of parked vehicles to my left), slow down to give more time to safely negotiate the hazard.

OAP sounds like a lengthy process but the advanced driver will have learned to expedite it safely and quickly; and move on to negotiating the next hazard using OAP. Coupled with this, the advanced driver can be assessing and prioritising several hazards simultaneously to deal with them in order.

I hope to meet up with you all soon!

If you have questions regarding the roadmap, please contact me (chairman@wessexam.uk).

Andrew



THE COMMITTEE



Committee meetings (for committee members ONLY) are held bimonthly at 7:30pm on the first Wednesday of the month at Hatch Beauchamp Village Hall. If, as a group member, you need to raise any issue at committee level, then please feel free to contact any committee member to put your views to the next committee meeting.

Chairman	Andrew Griffiths	chair@wessexam.uk
Vice Chairman	Mark Stephenson	cmms@wessexam.uk
Events Coordinator	Barry Keenan	events@wessexam.uk
Secretary/Membership Secretary	David Walton	secretary@wessexam.uk
Treasurer	Isobel Jennings	treasurer@wessexam.uk
Associate Coordinator	Pauline Wills	coordinator@wessexam.uk
Support Officer	Michael Wotton	cmmw@wessexam.uk
Chief Observer/Masters Mentor	Andrew Griffiths	chair@wessexam.uk
Newsletter Editor/Webmaster	David Walton	ed@wessexam.uk



FROM THE EDITOR



Volunteer Required

As my seventieth birthday approaches all too rapidly and after editing your newsletter for nearly ten years, I have decided that the time has come for me to pass the job on to someone else. It means that the Winter newsletter, that will go out in November, will be my last as editor.

As Secretary, Observer, Web Master and Newsletter Editor, I am finding that I spend too much time on WAM stuff as I get older and my energy levels decline. The editor's job is probably the least onerous of them and the one I have decided to give up first. The group therefore needs a volunteer to take over. It's just a few hours work four times a year and only involves putting together contributions from various sources; no journalistic talent required – I have none – just basic literacy, a little computing knowledge and a desire to help the group. Without a volunteer, the next newsletter will be the last.



GROUP OBSERVERS



Chief Observer, Masters Mentor & LOA	Andrew Griffiths
National Observer & LOA	Barry Keenan
National Observer	Delphine West-King
Local Observer	Brian Dodd
Local Observer	Andrew Hepworth
Local Observer	Isobel Jennings
Local Observer	Guy Tucker
Local Observer	David Walton

Group observers must be fully paid up Wessex Group AND National IAM members at ALL times to carry out your vital observer roles.

Always check that your associate has an up to date membership card before departing on any observed drives. Please try to make and maintain contact with your new associates and listen to any concerns or fears they may have. When associates pass their Advanced Driving Test, PLEASE inform the associate coordinator as soon as possible as we have a duty to keep accurate and up to date records. All new associate members are normally teamed up with a conveniently placed observer. If you have any problems please contact our chief observer, Andrew Griffiths.

The following IAM and WAM members are Driving Standards Agency Approved Driving Instructors:

Nick Tapp 07900 900678 niktapp@hotmail.co.uk
Graham Tuffey 07916 137915 www.passwithgraham.co.uk

Members and/or enquirers must establish their own facts and details when contacting a Driving Instructor. If any other IAM and WAM full member driving instructors wish to be on the above list, contact the newsletter editor. (NB: You MUST remain *full* IAM and WAM members at all times.)



Events Corner



Morning All!

It's another sunny day in Taunton as I sit here scratching my head wondering what on earth I can chat about this time. As you know there's been a dearth of events over the last couple of years, but I'm pleased to say that things are at long last starting to look up on that front, at least.

July saw our first event of 2021 in the form of our in-house Car Skills Night. It wasn't quite the resounding success in numbers that I'd hoped for but for those hardy few who did make it to Hatch Beauchamp, what a night it was. Much laughter and a whole lot more chatting to chums. Although there were actually 13 people on site, only 5 were brave, or daft, enough to actually compete. (Observers are banned from competing for obvious reasons).



**By Barry Keenan, Events
Co-ordinator**





And the winner of the Camelot Cup was... Mark Stephenson with a very good score of 33 out of a possible 36. Mind you, the runners up weren't too shabby either with very respectable scores of 32; 31; 29 & 24 points.

The other events we have planned for the rest of the year are:

September

An informal get together in the hall. No guest speaker, just general mingling and a chat with friends over coffee & biscuits.

October

The Somerset Road Safety crew will be visiting along with their driving simulator for us to play on. It's a great laugh so come along and see how many times you can crash on a short journey in snow. (My personal best was 7 and believe me, I really was trying to keep the car on the road! 😂)

November

Our AGM. Followed by a chat from our new (?) chairman briefly laying out the problems we've had over the last 2 years and the proposals we have for getting us all back up and running again.

December

It's Christmas!, so no member's Evening this month because you're all far too busy getting ready for the big day.

As for our annual Christmas lunch; I'm afraid that's off too. You'll recall that last year we were changing our venue to The Far Canal in Wrantage. Unfortunately, 'Covid' stepped in and wrecked those plans. Never mind, I thought, there's always this year. However, in the last couple of months (happily for him but sadly for us) the landlord has sold up and moved on and with such a short time frame left, there's no quick alternative so as I say, the WAM Christmas Lunch is cancelled for the second year running. I do apologise. Hopefully we'll have better luck in 2022.

Whilst we are not running any major events ourselves, I'm pleased to point out that previously postponed Ilminster Classic Vehicle Show will now take place at the Ilminster Recreation Ground, Canal Way, Ilminster. TA19 9DS on Sunday 29th August. Entries via their website only at

<https://ilminsterexperience.co.uk/imex/sunday/classic-car-show/> I wish them (and you if you enter) the very best of luck for a successful show.





Now, with nothing else 'Eventy' to offer, last quarter's quiz answers follow. In anticipation of my resigning from the post of 'Events' at the November AGM, this is my last quiz. My thanks to all those of you who took part in completing them.

May 2021, Quiz Answers

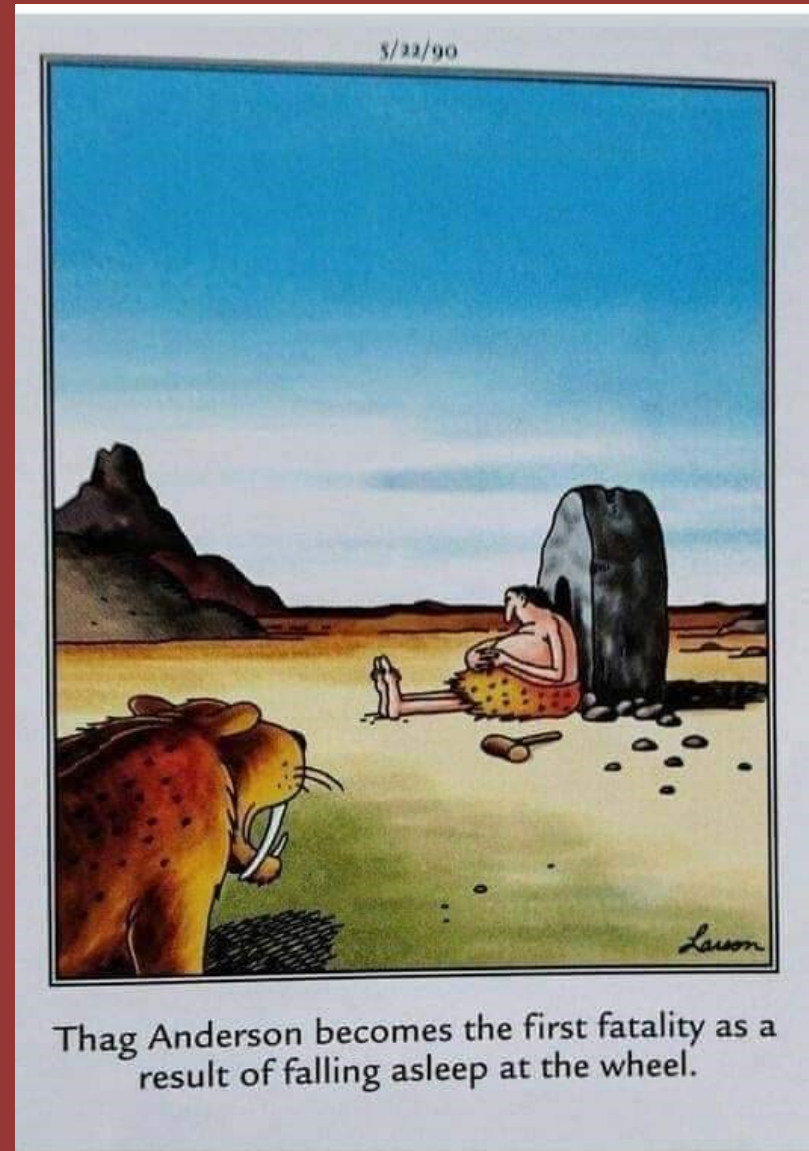
- | | |
|--------------------------------|------------------------------|
| 1 Arsenal | 11 Fireworks |
| 2 Coldplay | 12 Arabesque |
| 3 Gemini | 13 World Health Organisation |
| 4 Anna Karenina | 14 Jacob Rees-Mogg |
| 5 Steve Martin | 15 Blue Peter garden |
| 6 Taxi | 16 C.S. Lewis |
| 7 Boy George | 17 Eurovision Song Contest |
| 8 Hagrid | 18 90 |
| 9 Bootleg (or illicit) whiskey | 19 Oliver! |
| 10 Boxing | 20 Octave |

As always, thanks for taking the time to read my scribblings. Hopefully you'll be able to join us at the remainder of this year's Member's Evenings. In the meantime, stay safe, stay well and enjoy your driving.

Barry

Events Co-ordinator

events@wessexam.uk



Spot the difference!

This is an extract from an Ordnance Survey Map published in 1960

Can you spot what changed in the 1970s?

By Pauline Wills





Driving in Bali – new RoSPA ‘good practice’ guidelines? With kind permission of Chris Bell of Exeter and Central RoADAR Group

Our initial web research into hiring a car for a two week stay in Bali generated advice such as:

- “Most visitors would not even consider hiring a car. They all hire a driver. The roads are a nightmare and you really need to know what you are doing.”
- “Imagine the hairiest fun park ride you have ever seen: a roller coaster/dodgem cars/ghost train all mixed-in, together with a few cows and the odd monkey on the way - this is what the roads are like”
- “In the event of an accident, even if it is demonstrably no fault of yourself and you have insurance, you will still be held liable and you will be expected to financially compensate. Even if you hire a driver and they have a crash, you will probably still be held liable and have to pay damage/bribes”
- “Please, for your own well-being, do not hire a vehicle”.

Oh well, armed with such invaluable advice, we contacted several hire companies. (There are a plethora of them, so someone must hire cars!) A typical response from most ran like this one:

“Hi Chris, I would like to inform you the price for rent the car for self driver per day is 250.000 (that’s about £13) Car type: Toyota Avanza manual. Insurance: not include (just pay for the damage, no insurance). For garanty i keep your copy of pasport. Kind regard Gede”

We found one company who offered insurance and went for this one. They turned out to have a really helpful owner (like all Balinese we later met) and hired us a great little car.

We booked a car and driver from the airport to our resort, about 40 miles and a 2½ hour drive; the aim being that I could start to figure-out driving habits - quite an experience! Next day our car was delivered to the resort – a really small group of apartments, beautiful location





on the coast, wonderful staff – all of whom seemed astonished when I said I was actually going to drive it. They still looked-on in amazement two weeks later!

We had some choice advice from locals, mainly around concern for this strange person who was going to venture out on Balinese roads. A couple of the more memorable ones ran something like: “In Bali, the larger vehicle always has right of way.” “Honk your horn when going around blind bends, many drivers drive in the middle of the road or on the wrong side.” “Balinese drivers have great spatial awareness; those that don’t are in hospital, or worse.” “Most people drive on the left, just like in your country.”

After a couple of days of driving we learnt that Bali has a ‘traffic vibe’, quite different from any other country I’ve driven in. Lots of un-learning needed (à la Alvin Toffler). Balinese are very courteous if you ‘follow the flow’ and imitate what other drivers do (apart from those on scooters!) If you upset the flow... well, its best not to! One quickly gains an expectation of what most other drivers are going to do, when and how; when it clicks, driving is OK.

A few ‘clicks’:

- Overtaking is entertaining: expect to be overtaken by a lorry, bus or car; a few scooters simultaneously overtake that vehicle; and if there is room on the left (or a footpath) a row of scooters will overtake on that too. This is where spatial awareness really comes-in: they will all get back on their side of the road just before meeting something approaching – and I mean “just”! Some scooters have an entire family on board, including a baby, while others carry boxes of cargo.
- Turning right is interesting: one technique is to take advantage of any gap in the oncoming traffic well before the turning, get over to the ‘wrong’ side of the road and drive along that side until the turning. Approaching traffic seems to expect this and copes. It seems to work better for scooters. I’ve not yet tried this in the UK (not sure I plan to either!)
- Most roads are well maintained, but a few comprise mainly pot-holes with the odd bit of surfacing. These are interesting, with some holes being about 30 cm deep.

- The technique is to drive very slowly and try to avoid the really deep ones. Many mobile shops are interesting too, particularly when meeting one around a bend:



- Road signs are few and far between, but where they do exist, they seem to be taken by most to have a somewhat different meaning to that in “Know your traffic signs”.
- For example:



Like most road signs (and traffic lights) this one seems to be taken as advisory by many. Exemplified by an instruction to us something like “head into

Amlapura, turn left at the roundabout, look for a no entry sign on the right, drive up that street...”



You are likely to meet any type of vehicle on this road, together with cows and monkeys; and especially scooters.



“In Bali, you can park anywhere unless there are no-parking signs”... but if you want to park here and there is nowhere nearby free, then go ahead. Side by side parking and dogs are OK too!



“Turn left ahead”... unless you want to go straight on or turn Right.

We had a wonderful time driving around Bali: we didn't have a crash (but quite a few scary moments!); didn't get stopped by the police (apart from being approached to ask why we stopped at a red light!); had a great time visiting places that could only be reached by private transport, including some really excellent warungs (little eating places, often in someone's front room or garden) and didn't get lost very often (sat nav was a must) – though when we did there was always a local on a scooter eager to help, and even guide us for miles. And many of the roundabouts are wonderful:



Would I hire a car again? Definitely. Perhaps we should think of opening a branch of RoSPA in Bali, but then I'm not sure that there would be much take-up!

Chris Bell





Shades of Grey

By Nigel Albright

In the article *The Black, The White and the Grey* what the grey zone actually is was not defined, so this item explores this area. The additional comment was that the further one moves into the grey zone the wider it becomes, as opposed to the criteria for what I now call the Basic Driving Test (aka The (DVSA) Driving Test) which essentially keeps to black and white¹.

Two things arise from this; one is that at the learner level black or white decisions – either this or that – are plainly suitable for the job considering the basic test is really a Starter for 10. The second point is that the further ones moves up the scale of ability & understanding the more one realises how poor the average standard of driving really is and, as I have often said before, just how many unwittingly travel like the next crash waiting to happen. Sometimes that is because people do fundamentally stupid things and get away with them, which leads to a creep factor where they

do the same thing again and again with impunity; the ‘creep’ bit being that gradually the behaviour becomes more comfortable and, eventually, a norm. But, often a higher level of vulnerability is merely due to lack of awareness, what I refer to as *low threat perception*.

The problem with drivers generally is that at the Basic Driving Test (or lower!) level most have no motivation to develop particularly the mental side of better driving skills, always remembering that ‘better’ means lowering the vulnerability. Many will not even recognise when they have had a close call or, via the creep factor, will have become de-sensitised to potential threats. Some will blithely be going along at 40 in a 30 but, still be doing 40 on the open road – what used to be called ‘disassociated passive’, in essence quite disconnected from all that is going on around them and some will blatantly get away with everything they can regardless of circumstances.





And some others will think, 'whatever the rules I am not going to let them apply to me! and all shades in between. We need to add in that almost all motoring legislation is retrospective. Put it another way, if everyone behaved sensibly and ethically there would be no need for a police force or laws to ensure that society conforms to rules of good behaviour. Idealistic? Yes, but I think you might see where I am coming from. Originally, there was no highway code per se. There were, of course, writers and driving enthusiasts who promoted ideas on good behaviour on the roads, often from the point of view of safety and this went right back to 1906, but nothing which originated from the Government itself. Not, that is, until some 44 years after the invention of the motor car in 1886. By the late 1920s it was clear that the situation generally needed taking in hand. In other words, motorists left to their own devices, were effectively creating mayhem on the roads and were not generally demonstrating the common sense needed to co-exist with safety in mind, and the crash rate was going up accordingly². Baseline it means that on their own and collectively they could not be trusted

to act sensibly. The very first Highway Code in 1930 was some 12 pages long. By 1946 it was 32 pages and the 1968 version, 51 pages. The current edition of HC is 100 pages. But even with whatever legislation and rules there currently are, there are still motorists who behave in stupid and thoughtless ways, so the answer is that basically, and as much as possible, they should not be let loose beyond the black and white zones.

In helping anyone improve their driving or riding there are some basic areas of development. One is the physical management of situations, or potential situations via System etc and, in parallel with that – and probably by far the most important - is the mental development. The ultimate aim of course is to reduce vulnerability to crashes as much as possible. Roadcraft makes the point that working with it 'leaves nothing to chance'. So, if one goes about it the right way there is basically no reason to have a crash. (The currently favoured word is 'collision', but that is three syllables and 'crash' is only one. Besides the phonetic effect of CRASH – the 'CR' at the





beginning of the word being harder than the softer 'CO' in collision, gives greater impact (sic!) in my view, so that's two reasons for preferring to use the word 'crash').

There is one exception to the rule where a crash would normally be totally unavoidable. That is approaching a right hand bend and being faced with oncoming traffic which has entered their, left hand, bend too fast and is exiting wide, goes over the line and is then head-on to you. Apart from that and the isolated cases where, for example, a swan flew into a vehicle on a motorway, 98% of crashes involve driver error but don't let the 2% exception undermine the 98% rule. In the front of the D12 Manual which I wrote is the sort of mission statement, '*To the average driver safe means not having had a crash. To the advanced driver safe means not being vulnerable to a crash*'. Vulnerability, or lack of it is the real key and that's where most of the training should be focused.

The mental development side also involves two essential elements. One is a much higher level of perception about where threats might come from, as opposed to the obvious ones already in view, and the other, as Sgt Pat

Forbes at Hendon once said, consists of self-discipline and restraint. When you observe the general pattern of driving there is, at least to my mind, a pretty wholesale lack of these two essential ingredients and yet more of them would clearly result in much higher safety levels, which would mean significantly less crashes, on the roads.

In some sections of the road safety industry there appears to be an open resistance to so called advanced driving which follows 'police principles' on the basis that it is all about making progress which induces in their minds the horror word, 'speed'. Nothing, I am afraid, could be further from the truth and such attitudes demonstrate a lack of knowledge and understanding of the subject. As Derek van Petegem, long term Hendon skid-pan and advanced wing Hendon instructor, said, 'The art is knowing when to go slowly'. If Derek, or his like, was sitting alongside me and my speed in the middle of a busy town environment was not, for example, down to, say, an appropriate 10mph for those circumstances, so that I could easily pull up if anything unexpected happened, he would tell me.





At the other end of the scale, I recall working with an associate who would only ever do 50 mph on the open road when it would have been quite safe to do 60. As I explained to her, there are essentially three elements here. One is that obviously nobody should be induced to drive faster than they are comfortable with. However, firstly, I needed to explain that at 50 mph in a 60 zone, and as a so called advanced driver, one would be expected to be up to the limit if it was safe to be so, thereby not potentially causing a restriction in traffic flow. The second point is that in helping her in her training if the bend ahead is good for 50 and she is doing 50 then nothing changes and, in turn, I have no information on which to base her judgement of that bend and the management of it. However, if she was doing 60 approaching a 50 mph bend then, obviously things need to change and I could see and assess how she went about it and give her feedback accordingly and then that can be magnified up to higher levels.

The training should obviously place a heavy emphasis on the mental side and the judgement

about when to come off the throttle. Indeed, in training associates one of the early lessons I favoured was developing the 'off reflex'. That is whenever a situation occurs which might – and the key word is obviously, 'might' – threaten his or her safety I wanted to see a reflection of that in the driving. It might be subtle, perhaps even just a slight easing of the foot on the throttle, but it was enough to show (a) that the associate had observed the threat, or a potential one, and (b) that he or she was willing and prepared to react to it. If an associate was not developing properly in this area then, later on in the programme, I was not going to be getting into overtaking with them because overtaking uniquely involves a fine balance in self-discipline between progressing forward against the need to exercise restraint whilst quickly deciding when it is a safe 'go' situation and then, if so, acting smoothly and decisively. In mental terms it's a bit like having one foot on the throttle and the other simultaneously on the brake, being like a coiled spring ready to go and yet calmly holding back until the moment is right. That is why, if you bring it to an art form, good overtaking in a variety of conditions is the epitome of it.





All this means that on a broad basis as one moves into the grey scale there is a parallel development in the responsibility to act properly in proportion to the circumstances with total regard to safety and consideration for others, which is obviously where the self-discipline and restraint elements enter in copious quantities. This also involves the ability to quickly change one's state of mind in relation to the circumstances. Back in the days when there were only 30mph limits and what is today's National Speed Limit sign was originally a Derestriction Sign, Devizes instructors, for example, would expect you be spot on the 30 until the sign, 'passed the whites of your eyes', and then it was 'so long as it is safe', or otherwise known as GLF, but then, in the interests of safety, always looking for reasons to lift the foot. Conversely if you were driving a really progressive section and came into a 30 it would be expected that you would on 30 at the 30 sign and that almost instantly your mindset changed from being highly progressive to being mentally completely comfortable at 30. 'Just like that!' as Tommy Cooper used to say. It's a discipline which a lot

of people have to work at to get right but, that sort of willing mental adaptability is crucially important in all areas of improved driver skills.

This, 'acting proportionately and responsibly' can also be reflected in another scenario. Imagine a standard 4 ways roundabout (RAB) (3, 6, 9 & 12) with more than one lane and you are, say, planning to go from 6 to 12. Remember that your driving plans are based on, 'what you can see, what you cannot see and what may reasonably be expected to develop in the circumstances' and also, that positioning is based firstly on checking for Safety and View and then, if those two are cleared up one can minimise the lateral forces on the vehicle which is maintaining Stability, given also that a vehicle is most stable either in acceleration or braking, in a straight line. In the first example let us say that we are out for a nice brisk early morning drive. In the summertime that could even be say 5am, - yes, I have often done that, literally before the world is awake. All is quiet. We approach the roundabout. Nothing behind and the view onto





the RAB is opening up nicely with nothing circulating on it. In commentary that's about the time one says, 'Planning to stop but hoping to go'. In the circumstances why would one keep to the lanes? What is the value of doing so and who else might be affected? The discretion to make a judgement based on Safety, View and Stability is there so why not use it and minimise the lateral forces between the entry and the exit. The other question, obviously is who would, or might, benefit from a signal? In the circumstances the obvious answer is, nobody, either way. That is example one. Example two is the same roundabout but, now it is during the day with a reasonable amount of traffic around or even at commuter time when it might be heaving with traffic. Need I go further? Here you would carefully consider and apply signals to inform others of your intentions and keep in appropriate lane/s all the way through. The point is to imagine a scale between these two extremes. At the higher levels a so called advanced driver would be expected not just to

stick to a pedantic set of rules but, to make a proper judgement call, based primarily on safety, on each occasion wherever it might be on the scale. To do it responsibly obviously involves far more thinking than the average driver is prepared to put into it but, at the proper advanced level a continuous active thinking process is what is expected, always looking out for areas of potential conflict in order to avoid them, but also remembering that so called unforeseen threats can impact the unwary. These are some of the major differences between an advanced driver and those who have only ever taken the Basic Driving Test and because many sit quite literally in a delusionary bubble of safety without contributing any real or continuous active thought to the process and, therein, obviously, is their weakness.

A key area in the grey zone is obviously positioning and perhaps particularly any action which involves going over the centre line. This involves the highest level of care and





responsibility to make the right judgement call in all circumstances. At a basic level this just might be going over the line in a built up area to pass parked vehicles on your side³. Remember, Safety and View are intrinsically linked. As much as possible you need view to see and assess as far ahead as possible. But, there is no value in developing view if simultaneously that might compromise safety so, this is a particular area where the need for self-discipline and restraint can play a crucial role. And that, again crucially, involves the right mindset. It is also an area where the untrained and undisciplined driver should not go because if he or she is not suitably aware of the potential downsides they should not be out there in the first place. There is also the valid case in certain multiple bend situations where keeping out will maintain the forward view and, again, subject to Safety enables the vehicle to be positioned to minimise lateral forces which also makes it more comfortable for passengers. An advanced driver should be

able to work confidently and consistently in this area with complete regard to safety.

Working in the grey areas without thinking could make a driver more dangerous than they would otherwise be so they are best kept away from it. but, conversely, working in the grey zone with what might best be called continuous active thinking gives such a driver a much greater range of choice in maintaining his or her safety level and, very importantly, with that responsibility, encourages and helps to develop a much higher level of awareness and threat perception.

¹ See the author's article, The Black, The White and The Grey

² Year Killed Total injury
1930 7,305 178,000

in 1923 there were 383,525 cars on the roads of Great Britain. By 1930 the number topped a million. Within another eight years another million cars were added to the roads.

³ The One Sided Rule. See the article: Space the Real Key to Safety by the author.





Local IAM Examiner Caught Out by Speed Limits!

By Andy Poulton

Okay yes, I did, I was, BIG TIME. [wait for it]:

I [once] spent the weekend driving around Hampshire and West Sussex. [Goodwood Festival of Speed week.] [not recently!!]

I should know better. It was my fault I was not paying as much attention as I should.

Shocking I know. [Tut tut]

Here is what happened. All excuses I know.

All around Bath, Keynsham, Bristol and South Glos we have 15mph 20mph and 40mph speed limits. Nightmare to adhere to, terrible holding everyone up. Camera vans out two or three times a week, and on Sundays. Often prosecuting little old ladies [friends] for 24 and 26mph. [Yes, they rang me all upset]

That weekend it was all 40s 50s 60s and even on a parallel road to the A27 in Portsmouth, a 70mph dual carriageway, in an urban area. Never even saw a 20 and few 30s in urban and town like areas.

Okay then. What did I do wrong? SIMPLES!

I kept going too slow!

Yes, but true. I found myself, very often, travelling less than the posted limit. Fortunately, not holding anyone up and once we got to the 'normal' Nationals made progress. Even found myself down to 15 to 20 MPH self imposed speed limits through some very quiet narrow villages on the rat runs [little known back roads into the car parks]

PS My sis in law has been caught speeding.

I gave her the usual advice GO TO THE SPEED AWARENESS COURSE. You'll enjoy it. I did. She rang her insurance company to inform them. They said not interested will not affect the premium. So, she paid the fine and didn't go. [I wonder what the Insurance companies say now.]

So, I signed her up for the FREE IAM RoadSmart assessment with a National





Observer. That went so well and she had so much praise and encouragement [eh!] She did not bother to take it any further. Thinking and feeling she was already good enough.

WORSE was to follow. Every time her car broke the speed limit. A gong sounds in the car. Her Observer asked what the noise was. She jokingly said 'it tells me when I am driving well and sticking to the rules of the road and speed limits'

The Observer accepted this and complimented her? SIGH! SIGH!

PS not local then? Cannot believe that would EVER happen locally. Mmmm.

HAVE YOU BEEN WARNED OFF?

Or are you switched on?

Okay let's get to the point. We are talking about your WARNING LIGHTS on the dashboard or in the car.

Let me start with saying that you will be unable to take the test if any warning lights are displayed [MOT failure]. We are open to consultation re this but NOT on the day when you turn up unless it has just happened.

Some of the usual ANECDOTAL evidence. FYI.

We set off and had been driving for 30 minutes when through the steering wheel past the drivers hand a red light glowed. Looked like an AIRBAG icon.

I queried this. The driver said 'Oh it's okay it's just the passengers air bag fault'

[Oh, good, that means me then? Err end of test!]

Next candidate had what was an ABS icon illuminated.

I queried this? 'Oh, it is a bit of damp in a connection to a sensor under the driver's side carpet'

[Oh, good that means us in an emergency then, will it work or not which wheel or not, end of test!]

Next had an ECU or ECM engine management light on.

I queried this? 'Oh. It keeps coming on and going off. It stayed off for the MOT otherwise it would have failed. The garage said it's okay!'

[Oh, good that's us in lane three then, on an overtake, accelerating out of a hazard or danger it goes into 'Limp Home Mode' with drastically reduced power, end of test!]





Lastly had a rare [odd] one. 'Ambery' coloured, battery, 'thingy', with wings! [You know the one Mr A.C.]

I queried this 'Oh, that's a stop start fault or battery just below full charge.'

[Oh good, that's us then. Couldn't care less. Drive on. Passed with a FIRST] [Then Masters Passed with distinction] [YES Mr A.C. you know who you are ha ha]

That brings me on nicely to the colours. Remember **PSI**.

REDS are **P**Primary

AMBERS are **S**Secondary

OTHER COLOURS are for **I**Information.

If anything glows RED then you need to stop ASAP and investigate the cause. [Or the whereabouts of the AA card.] [Other breakdown organisations are available]

If anything glows amber. Make a note and deal with it ASAP. Could be a low fluid level of non-damaging sort or lights are on

The other colours are generally informative such as indicators or headlight main beam, or even Auto Parking brake activated for example. [instead of normal parking brake]

As an ex-Police Driver Trainer and Examiner, it is down to me [but should be you] to ascertain what ALL the icons mean and their function. In case. It's also my hobby and interest [NO not icons] but the Manual to inform me what they all mean.

So, to help you all I have attached a recent pull out from a Daily Paper, and a couple of updates, for EV's and a 'dopey'/bizarre/ surreal' answer to the shape of the ECU or ECM Icon!

PLUS, some 'other' dopey ones please do not believe these!





- | | | | | |
|---------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|---------------------------------|----------------------------|-------------------------------|
| 1) Fog light (front) | 13) Ignition switch warning | 26) Trailer tow hitch warning | 39) Airbag warning | 52) Bonnet open |
| 2) Power steering warning light | 14) Key not in vehicle | 27) Air suspension warning | 40) Handbrake warning | 53) Low fuel |
| 3) Fog light (rear) | 15) Key fob battery low | 28) Lane departure warning | 41) Water in fuel filter | 54) Automatic gearbox warning |
| 4) Washer fluid low | 16) Distance warning | 29) Catalytic converter warning | 42) Airbag deactivated | 55) Speed limiter |
| 5) Brake pad warning | 17) Press clutch pedal | 30) Seat belt not on | 43) Fault problem | 56) Suspension dampers |
| 6) Cruise control on | 18) Press brake pedal | 31) Parking brake light | 44) Dipped beam headlights | 57) Oil pressure low |
| 7) Direction indicators | 19) Steering lock warning | 32) Battery/alternator warning | 45) Dirty air filter | 58) Windscreen defrost |
| 8) Rain and light sensor | 20) Main beam headlights | 33) Parking assist | 46) Eco driving indicator | 59) Boot open |
| 9) Winter mode | 21) Tyre pressure low | 34) Service required | 47) Hill descent control | 60) Stability control off |
| 10) Information indicator | 22) Sidelight information | 35) Adaptive lighting | 48) Temperature warning | 61) Rain sensor |
| 11) Glow plug/diesel pre-heat warning | 23) Exterior light fault | 36) Headlight range control | 49) ABS warning | 62) Engine/emissions warning |
| 12) Frost warning | 24) Brake lights warning | 37) Rear spoiler warning | 50) Fuel filter warning | 63) Rear window defrost |
| | 25) Diesel particulate filter warning | 38) Convertible roof warning | 51) Door open | 64) Auto windscreen wiper |



QUESTION

What new warning lights have hybrids and electric cars given rise to?

David Potts, St Albans

ANSWER

One of the strangest has to be the Nissan Leaf's tortoise light. It means the car has limited power. Another is the Renault Zoe's battery with a thermometer through it. It's telling you the temperature of the traction battery is either too low or too high and that you must reduce your speed. A third is the plug and cable light that's telling you the car is still connected to the charger. Wonder what would happen if you sped off? **JE**



Safe Driving
Andy Poulton
Examiner





TALELIGHT

TAKEN FOR A RIDE

A mother strapped her two young children safely in to the back of the car and went off to school.

BUT she forgot her young baby, which was still sat on the roof.

THE WORD IS 1

A Pastor injured in a hit and run accident said he would not press charges if the offender agreed to read the Bible every day.

THE WORD IS 2

A religious sect's roadside billboard's new slogan reads "Keep using my name in vain and I'll make rush hour longer" – GOD.

DON'T DO AS I DO

The Policeman who is the face on the Drink Drive posters is in disgrace and shamed after being arrested for driving whilst over the limit.

HOPE HE DIDN'T TALK WITH HIS HANDS

A political candidate was pulled over for speeding whilst also conducting a live radio phone in on his cars mobile phone

AND ONE OF YOUR TYRES IS LOW

Police who pulled over a lorry driver for not indicating a lane change found 1.800 Lbs of Cocaine worth £30 Million in the vehicle.

BE CAREFUL OVERTAKING

A motorist pulled out a gun and shot out all 4 tyres of a car that had just overtaken him at Traffic Lights.

NODDING OFF COULD COST YOU

Dozens of cars converged on a Petrol Station after the pump attendant fell asleep in the booth allowing everyone to fill up for FREE.

OBVIOUSLY NOT TAUGHT PROPERLY

A driver had his first crash after passing his test by hitting his old driving instructor's car and writing both vehicles off.

Andy POULTON





In-car distractions

by Keith Hayman

Do you have the car radio on when driving 🚗 ??????

Some people listen to music, the CD or Talk Radio and so on. What do you find soothing or interesting? Do you resist the temptation to say to Apple Play or Android Auto “Alexa – call Talk Talk Radio?” so you can interact with the radio programme host who is deliberately stirring up opinion to maintain station viewing numbers. Perhaps you just sing along with classic country melodies or listen fervently to Radio 4 as Auntie BBC carefully presents itself as the people’s channel? Or do you passively hear the din created by rear seat children who still see everything as a game?

The very notion of anything that can distract seems to go against the grain of full concentration and situational awareness whilst driving. But the reality is that all of us will, at least occasionally have other things on or happening in our cars that can theoretically distract. It’s not just music or music, (as those

procuring background music for commercial use used to call this music). The myriad of distractions is well known to us all from bickering children to the chat show which can make you infuriated, to electronic interactions with the vehicle itself.



This whole discussion raises the known issues of conscious and sub-conscious awareness and consequential decision making. When we are fully conscious and focused, we actively make (driving) decisions based on the total telemetry available. It follows that when distracted, the risk exists that we may not receive all the available information and thus may not make the best decisions during our driving process. We are all aware that limiting the amount of data available usually impacts the accuracy of the decision been taken (as in all walks of life).





So given that all of us will at some point be distracted by the radio or the back seat driver, how is it that relatively few of us are involved in RTCs that might be attributed to in-car distraction? To get some factual data on this 'in-car distraction' phenomenon, I put the old research cap on and trampled into *Department of Transport* statistical DATA sets. By this point, those of you who have not yet switched off will be thinking how sad this fellow is. (I actually like interrogating DoT DATA sets as some very interesting facts emerge, typically those that discredit current transport policy!)

As many in this group will know, road traffic collisions invariably have one or more contributory factors which are identified and recorded as part of post-collision data assembly. As with most of this data, the figures are usually surprising. For collisions where distraction inside the vehicle was a contributory factor, there was a link to 3-4% of events. In other words, in car distractions contributed to 3-4% of RTCs. As it receives so much attention (nee fury), I also specifically looked at mobile phone use as a contributory factor. This was cited as a contributory factor in 1% of RTCs. To add further context, the

actual number of RTCs where mobile phone use was cited as a contributory factor was 420 with in-car distraction being 2,563 for 2019. These datums need to be seen in the context of over 78,000 RTCs for the year.

So to get back to the thread of this piece, being distracted whilst driving does not actually result in a large number of RTCs, relatively speaking. Yes, one could argue that severity of consequence is what counts and we have all seen the headlines of '*child killed by motorist recklessly using hand held 'phone'*'. I deliberately have not analysed the data further to put minor RTCs against major and fatal collisions etc as that might be too much for this piece!

So the question remains 'why are there NOT more RTCs driven (excuse the pun) by in-car distractions?'

The answer as many will know is about the mixture of and crossover between the conscious and sub-conscious mind. For most of us, when we are learning to drive or upskilling to advanced standard with an observer beside us, we are fully concentrating on what we are doing. The running commentary that





many of us do further examples how our conscious mind is fully engaged. It is almost the conscious consciousness in full tilt.

We are (all) aware of the headline grabbing academic research heavily publicised by road safety and anti-motivist groups. Those of the last five years have typically shown how poor our observational skills are whilst driving and simultaneously engaging in a telephone call in the car. Even the participants exclaim their total amazement at how little they remember about the fictitious journey in the video they have just undertaken. Whilst there is little doubt that the distraction (engaging in a telephone conversation) does affect observational skills and by deduction, safety, few (if any) of these studies have assessed how much the guinea pig driver would remember anyway (without distraction) given that for the average motorist, observational recall is not a driving requirement. These experiments were not designed or intended to assess sub-conscious awareness.

Then of course there is the opposite where we are fully conscious but just not seeing or taking in a lot of the telemetry around us. (Conscious

but not fully aware). Yes, the engine is screaming for a gear change but we do not change gear in a timely manner – the conscious mind is not sufficiently engaged. In our up-skilling to advanced standard, we will have discussed the notion of consciousness and its various in or out stages. How do these notions contribute to our understanding? Perhaps a little more discussion is warranted...

So what is it that stops us increasing the RTC statistics when we are (typically) being distracted by the radio, the children, the dog or even the telephone conversation?

In short, all of us have our sub-conscious which keeps an ever vigilant 'eye out for us'. From the day we are born (in the womb actually), our sub-conscious is rapidly developing what historically was often called our 'sixth sense'. Yes, the sub-conscious is learning all the time and rapidly developing to counter whatever potential threats might attempt to creep past our conscious recognition. Because it has to learn and adapt based on experience, our sub-conscious effectively builds its own skill-sets and needs developmental time. Thus, as with many





things, experience over time impacts the ability of our sub-conscious to do its job effectively. It is no coincidence that more experienced drivers have fewer accidents than those in the 17 to 26 year age group. This age group will largely have a less developed sub-conscious skill-set in driving. Yes, there are other factors affecting the risk level of this age group and as we know, an 18-year-old tutored to advanced level early can, with continued practice develop an enhanced sub-conscious in driving skill-sets equivalent to an advanced driver of many years' seniority.



It is those sub-conscious skill sets that help keep all of us out of RTCs in spite of the numerous distractions that are ever present in day-to-day motoring. Looking over our shoulder (metaphorically as well as literally), our sub-conscious is able to focus on more of the critical parts of our driving when we are having to cope with distraction.

We can all example this with a little reflection but to illustrate the point, I'll first revert to the

oft cited telephone conversation whilst driving as this usually excites critics the most - example number **one**.

The mobile rings and let's assume the driver is relatively safe and OK to press the steering wheel answer button. S/he engages in a conversation for 5 minutes and hangs up. No collisions. Then, upon considered reflection, s/he asserts that two roundabouts and four sets of traffic lights were negotiated and the local speed limit varied between 30, 40 and 60mph. Traffic level was moderate and average for the time. The reflection is, in this example key to the point being illustrated. The driver does not actually remember negotiating the 'hazards' but still did so in what might be deemed a 'safe' and event-free way. No RTC.

For example **two**, I'll remove the telephone call and have no obvious in-car distractions on the same journey. The driver is doing nothing different apart from getting bored with the drive so does what many do, thinks about anything and everything, rather like daydreaming. The reflection in this example is the same. Little remembered about the last 5 minutes but s/he has not, like the example in **one** above, had an RTC.





In both these examples, one could argue that the sub-conscious has very effectively contributed to the safety of the drive. A simple assertion but probably very accurate in the majority of cases given the power of the sub-conscious.

Of course, it doesn't work all the time and some distractions will overpower everything else with consequences. This is typically the case when distractions become cumulative and additional factors come into effect.



Is there anything we can do to improve the ability of our sub-conscious?

Put simply, yes. Sub-conscious learning can fade as do our conscious skill sets for many.

Those who drive regularly and frequently tend (statistically) to have far fewer RTCs than less frequent drivers per mile travelled. Our sub-conscious needs 'refreshing' and keeping up to date with regular practice. It is the same for advanced drivers. I for one freely admit that Covid lockdown has made me feel less sharp in my driving. I'm having to work hard at keeping my standard up with frequent self-commentary to make myself consciously take into account all the telemetry and in doing, update my sub-conscious.

As an enthusiast for advanced (safety) driving, I see imparting all our advanced level skill-sets into our sub-conscious as a fundamental objective. No, not so that I can dose off on my journey, or prepare for the doom of autonomous driving, but to raise the overall standard of driving so it is safer (and more enjoyable) for all.

Copyright Keith Hayman 2021





Highway Code Confusion

An IAM Blog

Changes to the Highway Code are imminent and one of the changes is to promote Walking and Cycling but how familiar are you with the existing rules and guidance?

IAM RoadSmart has taken part in the inaugural meeting of a new publicity committee dedicated to clear communications for all road users of the new 'hierarchical' changes.

The consultation outcome should be published soon, followed by legal changes laid before parliament and then, following approval by MPs, these should all become law early in 2022.

What's important now – forgotten parts of the Highway Code

Before we focus on changes, let's look at what you know now about the Highway Code. When was the last time you looked at it and if you don't know the rules how can you stick to them when driving?

Whether you passed your test 12 months ago or 24 or more years ago you need to remain current with the rules. Breaking them will lead to penalties but also potential accidents which could be avoided if you knew the rules.

While you may not remember the introduction of the Road Traffic Act of 1930 you can familiarise yourself with the full history of road safety and the driving tests here.

www.gov.uk/government/publications/history-of-road-safety-and-the-driving-test/history-of-road-safety-the-highway-code-and-the-driving-test

A key date was 1 July 1996 when a separate theory test was introduced. This replaced 'random' questions that were asked to test the knowledge of the student. The new theory test is designed to be more thorough, but is it? Test your knowledge below.





Why does it exist and who is it for?

Richard Gladman, Head of Driving & Riding Standards & Product Development for IAM RoadSmart states: “The Highway Code was designed to keep all road users, passengers, and pedestrians safe. Do you know that the front page is a blended view from behind the wheel or handlebars of a driver and rider? Check it out! It applies to all road users, including the most vulnerable: pedestrians, older and younger people (including children) or disabled people, cyclists, motorcyclists, drivers, and horse riders.

All road users should be aware of the highway code and make decisions considering each other. Most people would like to think that they have relatively safe driving habits, but evidence suggests this isn't quite as true as it could be.

Legal requirements

Many of the rules in the Code are legal requirements, and if you disobey these rules you are committing a criminal offence. You may be fined, given penalty points on your licence, or be disqualified from driving. In the most serious cases you may be sent to prison. Such rules are identified using the words

‘MUST/MUST NOT’.

Although failure to comply with the other rules of the Code will not, in itself, cause a person to be prosecuted, The Highway Code may be used in evidence in any court proceedings under the Traffic Acts (see The road user and the law (<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/the-highway-code/annex-4-the-roaduser-and-the-law#roaduserlaw>)) to establish liability. This includes rules which use advisory wording such as ‘should/should not’ or ‘do/do not’.

Knowing and applying the rules contained in The Highway Code could significantly reduce road casualties. Cutting the number of deaths and injuries that occur on our roads every day is a responsibility we all share. The Highway Code can help us discharge that responsibility. Further information on driving/riding techniques can also be found in ‘The Official DVSA Guide to Driving – the essential skills’ <https://www.safedrivingforlife.info/shop/product/official-dvsa-guide-driving-essentialskills-book> At the bottom of this article we've included some of the most important rules of all. Check for yourself if you were aware, always obey or need to do some re-education.





Facts on the Highway Code:

- Each year 2.1 million people study and are tested on driving theory, which requires a thorough knowledge of the Highway Code, Know Your Traffic Signs and Driving – The Essential Skills.
- 84% of the 16-24 years olds in 2019 confirmed they had read the Highway Code as part of their study according to a survey by the Driver and Vehicle Standards Agency (DVSA).
- 1,313,438 official publications of the Highway Code as a book, app or download have been recorded as sales or downloads in the past 5 years. These might also have been shared increasing the number or views.
- 3,673,515 driving theory product sales and downloads were recorded in the same 5-year period.
- 18,189,854-page views were recorded educating people in the Highway Code and the other official sources. Analytics for the Highway Code on gov.uk show.
- There are currently 307 rules contained within the Highway Code.

If you have any doubts about the Highway Code, look it up, don't get caught out as that could involve penalties or worse consequences. You really have very little excuse it's available for free online.

The most important rules of all:

1. Never drive under the influence of alcohol, drugs, or prescription medication. IAM RoadSmart recommends 'None for the Road' for good reason.
2. Always drive at a safe speed for the conditions at the time - and only up to maximum speed limits.
3. Make every effort to be aware of your surroundings on a 360-basis, monitoring for other road users, pedestrians, cyclists, and hazards.
4. Always keep a gap of at least 2 seconds between your car and the vehicle in front, or more when travelling at speed and in poor weather conditions extend this gap even further.
5. Understand that loud music and other distractions while driving can take your attention away from the road ahead.





6. Drive with extra care in built up areas where children, elderly people, animals, or obstacles may appear in front of you at any time.
7. Ensure that all satellite navigation systems, audio systems and general electronics are set up and activated before you set off - never while your vehicle is in motion.
8. Switch your mobile phone to silent and place out of sight or set to travel mode before setting off and under no circumstances use any mobile devices while driving. However, it's legal to use your phone as a sat nav, if it has secure, hands-free access and it does not block your view of the road or traffic ahead. According to the UK laws, hands-free access can include Bluetooth headsets, voice command features, a built-in sat navigation or a safely mounted device. No driving aid should ever be a distraction or block your view, this includes dash cameras. It's extremely important that your dash cam cannot in any way be deemed to be obstructing your field of vision while driving. If the police decide it's positioned unsafely, you could be fined, and footage recorded on it might not be rendered inadmissible in court.
9. Always ensure that the clothing and footwear you drive in is appropriate and enables you to operate your vehicle's controls properly. Rule 97)
10. Carry out a series of basic checks and adjustments (seat position, mirrors, and of course your vehicle checks including tyre pressures etc.) before taking to the roads.
11. It is against the law to take even the shortest of journeys without wearing your seatbelt unless you have a medical exemption certificate.
12. Avoid the temptation to drive aggressively or excessively fast by allowing plenty of extra time to reach your destination.
13. It's actually encouraged, where possible, to avoid driving during peak hours when roads are at their busiest and the chance of a collision is at its highest.





14. Do not drive if you feel tired or lethargic, as you may fall asleep behind the wheel and cause an accident. We have recently released statistics that claim 4 million people have fallen asleep at the wheel. It's easy to push yourself too hard, ignore warning signs and cause serious accidents with devastating effects.
15. Take regular breaks during long journeys, stopping every couple of hours at least for a short walk, a coffee (remember this will only have a temporary effect), or a nap in a safe place.
16. Exercise patience and restraint at all times, as road rage is one of the leading causes of accidents and dangerous incidents on the roads.

Opening doors without checking first

Do you always check to make sure the road is clear before opening your door? Not just your mirrors but the surrounding areas. Despite the Highway Code stating that you **MUST** check before opening your car door, this rule is often ignored and is to blame for thousands of accidents every year. Do you remember being taught

about Dutch Reach by your driving instructor?

Dutch Reach, is not currently included in the Highway Code, despite excitement over recent years that it might be added. We are still waiting. However, Rule 239 says you **MUST** ensure you do not hit anyone when opening your door.

To refresh your memory Dutch Reach is a simple technic taught to help you open your car door safely. Instead of using the hand closest to the door, it means reaching across to open the door with the hand furthest from the door - your left hand if you're the driver. This naturally turns your body towards the window, helping you spot approaching cyclists, other cars, or hazards.

Road signs

The Highway Code is the rule book, it's the most important book and tells you what you must and must not do. Failure to do so can result in fines, convictions and even a prison sentence in extreme circumstances. However, it's not a standalone education piece, you also need 'Know Your Traffic Signs' when learning to drive or ride to understand what all the





different Road Signs mean. Difficult even for experienced drivers, it's key to ensure you do the same to refresh your knowledge. Generally, signs set in triangles give warnings, those in circles give orders and information is given on rectangular signs. Road markings painted on the surface of the road also serve the same purpose as signs and should be understood by road users too. Failure to obey will have consequences for road safety and penalties.

Flashing headlights unnecessarily

This is a Highway Code Rule that nearly every driver has ignored (or forgotten!) at some point. When there's no other way to communicate with other drivers, a quick flash of the headlights to say thank you or to communicate in some way is just as tempting as it is easy. But did you know that flashing your headlights for any reason other than to let another driver know you're there is contravening Rule 110 of Highway Code? How many of you put your hazard indicators on for a few seconds to thank someone for letting you in? Technically it's illegal to use hazard flashers for anything

other than indicating a hazard - and illegal on a moving vehicle except on a motorway or unrestricted dual carriageway to warn drivers behind you of a hazard or obstruction ahead.

Crossing the white line

Although many of us will forget at least some of the Highway Code rules after passing our driving tests, every driver knows that you cannot cross a solid white line. There are a few times when this code can be broken - obviously to turn right and at other times such as to overtake a horse, bicycle or a road maintenance vehicle travelling 10 mph or less - but this rule is often ignored at other times as well.

Undertaking

There are two instances when it's okay to pass a vehicle on the left: when the other vehicle is turning right or when stuck in congested traffic. Yet this rule is often ignored, and we've all seen a car undertake another at some point, especially on busy motorways. Do not move left to overtake. However, Rule 268 allows you in congested conditions to keep up with traffic in your lane even if you are passing traffic to your right that is moving more slowly.





It's not all about one type of vehicle

The Highway Code as detailed above isn't just for one type of vehicle.

I'm often asked about filtering as there is some confusion over it with regards to the Highway Code, should it be done? Lots of mentions including Rule 88 below on manoeuvring. All pointing to the fact that filtering is allowed if you're careful and aware of what's around you.

Manoeuvring. You should be aware of what is behind and to the sides before manoeuvring. Look behind you; use mirrors if they are fitted. When in traffic queues look out for pedestrians crossing between vehicles and vehicles emerging from junctions or changing lanes. Position yourself so that drivers in front can see you in their mirrors. Additionally, when filtering in slow-moving traffic, take care and keep your speed low.

Rule 160 again mentions filtering. Encouraging riders and drivers to keep both hands on the wheel or handlebars where possible, and to enable you to stay in full control of the vehicle

at all times. You may use driver assistance systems while you are driving according to the manufacturer's instructions. Be aware of other road users, especially cycles and motorcycles who may be filtering through the traffic. These are more difficult to see than larger vehicles and their riders are particularly vulnerable. Give them plenty of room, especially if you are driving a long vehicle or towing a trailer.

Room for all vehicles on the road

Rule 163 and 211 recommend caution for drivers about motorcyclists and cyclist. **Overtake only** when it is safe and legal to do so. Consider that motorcyclists and cyclists are going to have issues with uneven road and may need to manoeuvre away from potholes. All this adds up to Rule 163, (actually Rules 211 to 215) advising on giving motorcyclists, cyclists and horse riders at least as much room as you would when overtaking a car.

Rule 211 continues this cautious advice. It is often difficult to see motorcyclists and cyclists, especially when they are coming up from





behind, coming out of junctions, at roundabouts, overtaking you or **filtering through traffic**. Always look out for them before you emerge from a junction; they could be approaching faster than you think. When turning right across a line of slow-moving or stationary traffic, look out for cyclists or motorcyclists on the inside of the traffic you are crossing. Be especially careful when turning, and when changing direction or lane. Be sure to check mirrors and blind spots carefully.

Remember you are not the only vehicle allowed on the road and detailed in the Highway Code so be considerate and know the rules **MUST** and **SHOULD**.

Distracted driving

Perhaps one of the most pressing issues we face in driving today is distracted drivers - even though it's against the Highway Code. It's something the UK government is attempting to crack down on with measures, but there are more potential distractions than ever thanks to mobile phones, tablets, and other entertainment devices (many of which are built into the car) - many of which didn't exist when

the Highway Code was first written.

Try to avoid all in-car distractions

We're all aware of the legal requirement to keep hands well and truly off our mobile phones while in control of our vehicles. But how many of the Highway Code's list of distractions to avoid are we squeaky clean on?

The Code reminds us that safe driving needs concentration, and to 'avoid' the following distractions when driving:

- loud music (this may mask other sounds)
- trying to read maps
- even a hands-free device will cause a distraction
- inserting a cassette or CD or tuning a radio
- arguing with your passengers or other road users
- eating and drinking
- Smoking

In short, we're regrettably probably all guilty of violating the Code on this front from time to time.





Have you ever considered how disruptive your children, animals or partner are in the car? It only takes a second or two of distraction to cause a major accident. Think about what you can do to minimise the chances of them distracting you in the car. Are those road spotting games as appealing now?

Driving over painted roundabouts

A painted roundabout - as opposed to a built-up roundabout - is still a roundabout, even if driving round it does feel pointless. Driving over a painted roundabout is against both the Highway Code, all traffic **MUST** pass around the central markings except large vehicles which are physically incapable of doing so (they are designed to slow traffic at a point of possible conflict but be non-damaging), and the law and could land you with a Fixed Penalty Notice if you get caught (failing to comply with a traffic sign).

Documents

Do you always carry your documents with you? Drivers are advised to keep their driving licence, proof of insurance and MOT (you no longer get a certificate, but records are accessible virtually to the police) to hand when

behind the wheel. They will be required by the police if the vehicle is involved in an accident, however you have seven days grace so it's not illegal. And what happens if the car is stolen? More importantly know what to do in the unfortunate event of a collision. You must make sure you supply your name, address and telephone number, the make and registration number of your vehicle, who it belongs to and details of your insurance company (in cases involving injury, you also need to collect these details from the other party involved. It is a legal requirement for both parties to exchange these details).

Now with the mobile phones it's ideal to take a picture and if GPS is on it will record the exact location. Nowadays you might also be asked if there are any cameras in the vicinity or witnesses that can collaborate your story. So, to confirm you do not have to carry your driving licence with you when you are driving. However, it is strongly recommended. A Police Officer can ask to see your licence at any time even though this information is readily accessible to them via the Police National Computer (PNC).





Horn

The rules surrounding honking a car's horn seem to be the most disobeyed road law. Drivers should only use them while the vehicle is moving because they need to alert or warn other road users of their presence. It is also illegal to use a horn when the vehicle is moving on a restricted road between 11:30pm and 7:00am. A restricted road is anywhere with streetlights and a 30-mph speed limit. This applies to Highway Code Rule 112 with the only exception of when another road user poses danger. Drivers are not allowed to sound their horn with aggression, regardless of the situation.

Stopping distances

Drivers who sat their theory test many moons ago will remember the agony of trying to learn each individual speed's stopping distance. Stopping (or braking) distances are how long it takes a vehicle to come to a complete stop after the driver has seen a potential hazard, from thinking to applying the brakes to coming

to a complete halt. The distances have not changed but it is worth a brush-up, as they are still as important as ever.

20mph – 12m stopping distance in total.

30 mph – 23m stopping distance in total.

40 mph – 36m stopping distance in total.

50 mph – 53m stopping distance in total.

60 mph – 73m stopping distance in total.

70 mph – 96m stopping distance in total.

Can you get in trouble for splashing a pedestrian with a puddle?

Yes. If a police officer catches you splashing someone at the side of the road you might be charged with 'driving without due care and attention or without reasonable consideration for other road users.'

Breaking the rule could land you with 3 to 9 penalty points added to your licence for 4 years. However, if you are avoiding another hazard you might be forgiven but ultimately observation, anticipation and sound planning should prevent you from doing this.





Talking About Driving and Eyesight

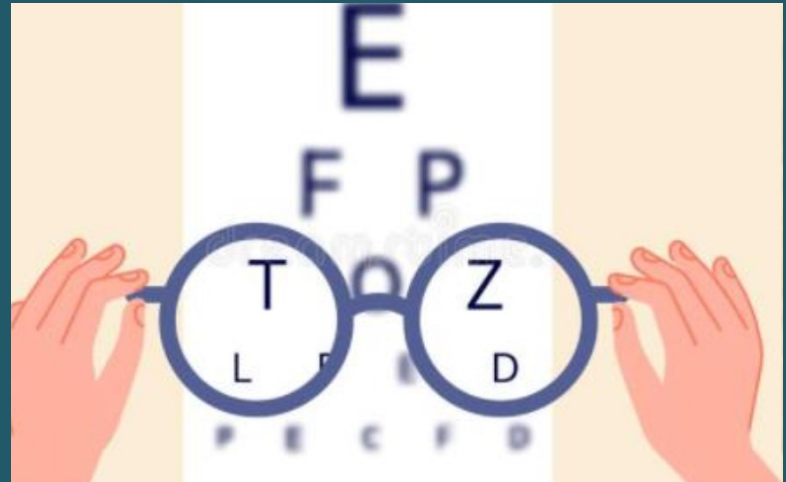
With thanks to Traffic Safety Roads

GEM Motoring Assist is once again encouraging drivers and riders of all ages to get their eye sight checked which they contend would make a significant contribution to reducing collisions and injuries on the UK's roads.

Failing to look properly - which could well be a symptom of poor eye sight, remains the single biggest cause of recorded road crashes in the UK (39%). This is closely followed by 'Failing to judge another road users path or speed' (20%).

The organisation is once again warning that our driver eyesight regulatory system is no longer fit for purpose. The regulatory framework needs to be updated urgently, but drivers also need to take more responsibility.

More and more people are staying behind the wheel for longer. We learn to adapt to what we



can see and don't immediately notice how poor our vision is becoming until it is too late. It takes a professional examination to reveal changes to our visual acuity, peripheral awareness, eye coordination, depth perception, ability to focus and colour vision so having an eye examination every two years is a key part of being a responsible driver and keeping ourselves and other road users safe.





Shortage of Drivers Lead to Questionable Changes

With thanks to Traffic Safety Roads



We are told that the UK is currently suffering from an estimated deficit of about 65,000 HGV drivers, but what is behind the shortage and what can be done to increase the numbers entering the industry? Such shortage is nothing new as it has been a constant problem for years, although it does seem to be greater just at present.

As a result the Government has announced a temporary, however long that might be, increase to driver hours regulations, meaning drivers will be able to drive for longer, which is causing safety concerns. Having said that, it is not yet confirmed how many companies or drivers will be willing to potentially compromise

what could well be a safety critical outcome.

Problems associated with the pandemic and the UK's departure from the EU are believed to have led to thousands of drivers leaving the country, while driver agencies have argued that IR35 tax changes have meant that it's no longer financially viable for them to place drivers in the industry.

Of course to an extent, it has not been helped by the shutdown of both vocational training and driving test centres throughout much of last year, meaning that only 15,000 candidates were able to complete their training successfully – a drop of 25,000 from the previous year.

Driver Require, a driver agency based in Stevenage, estimate that over the past decade about 150,000 of the new HGV drivers under the age of 40 who have passed their test, have subsequently left truck driving in pursuit of an alternative career.





Driver Stresses Revealed

Two areas which often dominate the driving agenda as to how we feel and react when it comes to using the road, are stress and fatigue.

IAM RoadSmart commissioned a piece of research with a sample of 1,000 motorists representative of the UK population in relation to stress and found more than 4-in-10 motorists (42%) are anxious about returning to sitting in long tail backs as more traffic returns to UK roads. It would seem that traffic levels are now estimated to be greater than the pre-pandemic level as people shun public transport for the potential safety of being on their own, by using their car more.

Results showed that simply getting used to busier roads again was causing stress among more than 3-in-10 motorists (33%), while other drivers returning to the road who might be out of practice was causing concern to more than a quarter of motorists (27%).

The top driving stresses/situations identified in the research were:

1. The return of traffic jams 42%
2. Getting used to busier roads again 33%
3. People returning to the road who might be out of practice 27%
4. Stressing to get to your location on time 24%
5. Returning to long car journeys to destinations 15%
6. With places being closed, there is nowhere to stop for a rest 12%
7. Commuting 11%
8. My general fatigue while driving 11%
9. Returning to the road when you are out of practice 11%
10. Not knowing if your car is still capable of longer journeys 7%





Stolen Cars in 2020

With thanks to Traffic Safety Roads

The days when you could break into a car with a coat hanger might be long gone, but figures from the Driving and Vehicle Licensing Agency (DVLA) show that there were still 74,769 cars stolen in the UK last year – one every seven minutes and a 33% increase on 2019.

According to the Office for National Statistics (ONS), 72% of stolen vehicles are never returned to their owners.

Unsurprisingly, the list of the most popular cars with thieves is dominated by a mix of prestige models and some of the UK's best sellers.

From the information gathered we note the top ten with the number reported stolen.

CARS STOLEN IN 2020

1.	Ford Fiesta	3392
2.	Range Rover	2881
3.	Volkswagen Golf	1975
4.	Ford Focus	1587
5.	BMW 3 Series	1435
6.	Vauxhall Astra	1126
7.	Land Rover Discovery	900
8.	Mercedes E-Class	766
9.	BMW 5 Series	678
10.	Nissan Qashqai	655





Older Drivers fit, healthy and determined to keep driving for at least the next 12 years or more

New research from IAM RoadSmart, the UK's largest independent road safety charity, reveals that motorists over the age of 60 intend to drive for as long as they are safe to do so, and that the average age they would consider giving up their licence is 82.

With a grant from the Department for Transport, IAM RoadSmart recruited Dr Carol Hawley from the University of Warwick to produce an update on **Keeping Older Drivers Safe and Mobile: A Survey of Older Drivers**, first published in 2015.

The new report details the findings from surveying over 3,000 respondents aged 60 plus from across the UK, and highlights that older drivers value their cars to maintain independence and want to stay mobile for as long as possible while they are safe and able to do so.

Neil Greig, Policy & Research Director from IAM RoadSmart, commented: "There are over 12.1 million drivers of 60+ according to the report.

With many being healthy, fit and with over 40 years' experience and knowledge, why shouldn't they continue to drive?"

Dr Carol Hawley, Author of the report said: "We recommend the Government should conduct a comprehensive review of the driver licensing and testing system in relation to the ever-growing number of drivers over the age of 70 and beyond. We need to ensure that those who are healthy, fit, and capable remain safely on the roads. Currently in the UK, the only safety requirement for mature drivers is to renew their driving licence at the age of 70 by confirming to the DVLA that they have no medical issues."





Overall drivers, asked in the survey, expected to continue driving for an average of 12.3 years.

- Drivers aged 60 – 69 years expected to continue driving for an average of 15 years.
- Drivers aged 70 and over expected to continue driving for an average of 9 years.
- The average age at which people think they will give up driving was 82.
- For drivers aged under 70 the average age for giving up was 79.4 and for drivers aged 70 and over the age of giving up was 85.3.

Figures on the number of drivers aged 60+ show there are now over 12 million (12,151,845) DVLA information at September 2020 shows: -

Age	Male	Female	TOTAL
60-69	3,668,171	3,052,996	6,721,167
70-79	2,181,699	1,766,261	3,947,960
80-89	803,487	555,630	1,359,117
90-99	80,671	42,521	123,192
100-108	283	126	409
	6,734,311	5,417,534	12,151,845

The oldest valid licences are held by two men aged 107 and the oldest female is 106.

- There are 612,908 69-year-olds who will need to sign the self-declaration to say they are fit and healthy to continue the renewal of their driving licences next year.
- The over 70's make up 13% of all licence holders

80% of 70+ drivers have no plans to give up their licences yet according to our survey. Taking the statistics from the DVLA that could equal (4,344,542) individuals aged 70 or over with no plans to give up.

In our survey the majority (79%) felt they were excellent drivers and would not consider giving up for years. Only a doctor/GP or optician/optometrist, who are considered the most influential people to give advice on giving up driving, were likely to convince them to relinquish their licence for health or eyesight reasons.





Neil Greig continued: “We need a joint education campaign to help drivers start to plan for the retirement of their driving licences at an earlier age, working in partnership with the government, health professionals, pension advisors, financial advisors, and transportation experts.”

“A wider range of easily accessible mature driver focused information is needed for consumers on accessible vehicle designs, mobility features, journey planning and mobility costs to help inform these campaigns. Mature driver reviews should be encouraged, and the government should consider the idea of offering them on prescription to encourage uptake and equal access.”

Survey findings on ability to drive

- 79% rated their driving ability as good to excellent.
- 79% said that driving was very or extremely important to them.
- Drivers aged 70 and over had checked the

current driving regulations more recently than younger drivers, probably because they had visited the DVLA website to renew their licence at age 70.

- 97% of mature drivers surveyed say they intend to continue driving for the foreseeable future.
- The most important reasons to continue driving were for independence and convenience.
- Most current drivers would consider giving up driving if they had a health condition or if a health professional advised them to stop driving, especially if advised by a General Practitioner (GP)/Doctor or Optician/Optomtrist.
- Only 164 drivers said they had been involved in an accident whilst driving in the last three years. Of these, the majority were men, which may be partially explained by their higher annual mileage.





- Over 40% of current drivers said they never avoided driving in difficult conditions, such as driving at night, driving in bad weather, driving long distances, or driving in rush hour.
- Over half of current drivers said they never avoided driving on busy or unfamiliar roads or on motorways.
- Drivers aged 70 and over were significantly more likely than younger drivers to avoid driving at night, at night in the rain, and driving long distances.

The survey took place early in the pandemic, many respondents reported missing a routine eyesight test, visual problems or medical problems were left unchecked, thus potentially making them unsafe to drive.

- 532 people (17.4%) said they had missed a routine eye test.

- 127 people (4.1%) confirmed they had a visual problem they were unable to get checked due to the pandemic.
- 396 (12.9%) confirmed they had a medical problem they were unable to get it checked

Neil added: “IAM RoadSmart, are already working with local authorities like Warwickshire, Lincolnshire, York and in South Wales, amongst others, on initiatives to help local residents update and improve their driving skills, increase confidence and stay mobile for as long as safely possible. We need more of these across the country.”

For more figures on demographic trends and the opinions of older drivers please see our infographic.

For more information about IAM RoadSmart, which helps to improve driving and riding skills through courses and coaching, visit www.iamroadsmart.com.





**Closing date for the winter 2021 edition
of the Wessex Advanced Motorists e-
Newsletter is 20th October.**

**All contributions would be very
welcome.**

**All items should be sent to
ed@wessexam.uk**