



# THREE SPIRES

Lichfield Advanced Motorists

(Registered Charity 1027300)



Group Newsletter

Issue 46 Winter 2017

## 2017 - A Year in Photos



*"I know you strive for extremely high standards and your observers are delivering everything you and the organisation want."*

**Stephen Ellis**

**Area Service Manager  
IAM RoadSmart**

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# Chairman's Chat

By LAM Chairman, Nigel Rogers

Welcome to our winter edition of the LAM Newsletter!



I am pleased to say that our Group seems to be going from strength the strength, which is wonderful news! That is not just my opinion, but from very positive feedback from our IAM-ASDM's as well, so well done to you all for making our Group the success it is!

We have, through the dedicated efforts of everyone in our Group, managed to get a full set of Local and National Observers and LOA's up and running. Read more inside from our Chief Observer.

We have more new Associates joining us for a variety of reasons, be that a desire to "be a better driver," or a "more confident driver" and so on. Whatever the reason for having the courage to come through our door for the first time, they are all most welcome. I suspect that the efforts of the IAM RoadSmart advertising, social media and so on contributes greatly to "spreading the good word" and long may it continue. Our own "media team" have very professionally refreshed and updated the LAM website, so please take a look on <http://www.lamm.org.uk/> Further updates are scheduled, so this site will become a good source of up to the minute information for you and those looking to learn more about what we do.

Which brings me to the book that all learner drivers read (?) to pass their test and then hide it in a cupboard, never to be seen again. That is of course, the Highway Code. It is my pleasure to conduct a few of our new Associate or visitor "intro" sessions and one of my favourite questions when I put an image of the Highway Code book on screen is "remember this"? That question usually causes a few moments of stunned silence, followed by "I last read that (XX) years ago when I passed my test". Let's just consider for a moment, that some of us have driven for 40+ years since passing our test! One wonders if anything about our roads could have changed in 40 years? Surely not!

The fact is that most drivers still believe that passing a basic driving test in a low power, dual control car when you are 18 years old is all the training needed to drive a high-powered car 40 years later. Every year, the equivalent of four "Jumbo jet's" full of people lose their life on our roads and the number injured, seriously or otherwise per year, greatly exceeds the population of the City of Lichfield. Can anyone think of any other human activity, other than war, where such annual carnage is thought of as acceptable?

Even with modern cars having more and more safety features and devices fitted as standard and a lot of "road engineering" being safety focussed, the casualty statistics continue to increase. Could it be that eventually, the Government will realise that that with 93% of accidents being caused by driver error, that one day someone in Parliament will be brave enough to tackle the fundamental issue of training and driver behaviour?

Back to the Highway Code and on the back cover of old editions and hidden inside newer versions of the Highway code, is a nice pictorial of the stopping distances that are required at various speeds. Apparently, the stopping distances shown assume a "thinking time" of just 0.67 seconds before one's foot gets anywhere near the brake pedal. I don't know about you, but if someone said to me "let's go to the pub and I'm buying", it would take me longer than 0.67 seconds to react to joyful news, whereas if you are faced with something of a dilemma developing on the road before you, could you decide what to do in 0.67 seconds?

The Transport Research Laboratory performed a study commissioned by "Brake" (a road safety charity) and found that unless your name is Lewis Hamilton or someone similar, the average thinking time

in a "situation on the road" is 1.5 seconds (and a lot more if "distractions" are factored in). The effect of this revelation is that rather than a total stopping distance on a dry road at 30mph being 23 metres (75 feet or 25 yards, if you are still in old money), as advised in my copy of the Highway Code, it is 31 metres (102 feet or 34 yards) on average. That is a difference of 2 family car lengths and one heck of a difference if you are on the receiving end of this situation!

Ever been tailgated? (I can hear the collective "groans and complaints" already)! Looking at the somewhat ancient motorway picture here and thinking about what would likely happen if the car in front of the blue van in the 3<sup>rd</sup> lane was, for any reason, to brake suddenly. Assuming those vehicles are all travelling at 70mph and employing a strange technique called "high-speed tyres and tarmac" (tailgating in other words), then according to this research, those drivers tailgating each other and not using distance observation require about 47 metres of "thinking distance", according to my slide-rule calculation. (Our younger LAM members may need to Google "slide-rule"). That's about the length of 12 average size cars. Can you see that sort of gap between those vehicles? Nope, so say "Hello, to a multiple vehicle motorway pile-up" waiting to happen!

I note that as well as offering stopping distance in metres and feet in the newer versions of the Highway code, my copy also mentions in smaller print "keep a 2-second gap between you and the vehicle in front on roads carrying faster moving traffic and in tunnels, where visibility is reduced". This confuses me, because not only does recent research suggest that the Highway Code has the thinking distances wrong, it only recommends a 2-second gap in certain circumstances. Would it be a lot easier if the Highway Code simply advised a 2-second gap at all speeds on dry roads with an alert driver? Who can accurately peek out of their windscreen and say, "yep, that car in front of me is exactly 6.2 metres in front of me" with any accuracy? No one! But everyone can remember to chant "only a fool breaks the two second rule".



So, now you have something else to think about on the odd occasion you find a motorway running at 70mph and you look at the succession of (seemingly) German cars and white vans playing "follow my leader's bumper" in the overtaking lane. The consequences when some awful stuff hits the fan can be horrible and unfortunately fatal, despite "crumple zones, air-bags, forward acting radar and a string of bewildering abbreviations to do with braking systems and the computers that control them. The weakest and most unpredictable element here is the human being in the driver's seat.

As IAM RoadSmart drivers, we employ a range of techniques to try to keep us out of situations like this and that's what our old friend "IPSGA" is about. "Observation" is the key to IPSGA, where we employ and continually re-assess the IPSGA sequence based upon our ever-changing observations of what is happening and what could happen in front and all around us. I describe Advanced Driving as a "thinking person's drive," rather than using a car to take us from A to B, often with no recollection of how we managed to get to B and sometimes when a text or animated conversation with passengers takes higher priority than thinking about driving a tonne or two of moving metal.

We still have much work to do it seems!

Keep safe and see you all soon.

**Nigel Rogers, Chairman**



The UK's biggest road safety charity IAM RoadSmart is giving its backing to a campaign by the Road Safety Foundation for the government to inject £220 million in improving the most high risk 'A' roads across the country.

Last year the Government allocated a £175 million Safer Roads Fund to tackle the 50 most dangerous local A roads in England. These roads have been inspected, solutions designed and the first findings will be reported in 2018, but funding is needed to improve a further 6,000 kms of high risk routes.

IAM RoadSmart believes the investment is a relatively low-cost way of making an immediate difference to roads that are a risk to high numbers of road users.

Neil Greig, IAM RoadSmart director of policy and research, said: "A lot of research has gone into identifying which roads could be improved at a modest cost, delivering fewer serious injury and fatal crashes, as well as less disruption on our already overburdened roads."

For the first time, the Road Safety Foundation/Ageas UK partnership has launched an interactive Road Crash Index which shows the level of road safety improvement (or declining performance) in each county between 2010-12 and 2013-15. That information can be found at [www.roadcrashindex.org](http://www.roadcrashindex.org)

IAM RoadSmart's own Safety Culture Survey (to be launched later this week) found that 83% of drivers support the publishing of annual maps that show the locations of motor vehicle accidents in which people were seriously injured or killed.

The road at the top of this year's list is the A537 between Macclesfield and Buxton, known as the Cat and Fiddle, in the Peak District. This short section of road has been listed in the persistently higher risk list six times in the last 10 years. At its peak in around 2006 to 2009 there were around 10 fatal and serious crashes on average every year.

With high risk roads spread all over the UK it is more important than ever that drivers ensure they are at the top of their game on rural roads. For just £49 a 'Driving on Country Roads' module can equip you to avoid the largest single cause of death on the network - run-off crashes, or the largest single cause of serious injury - crashes at junctions.

The on-road modules are delivered by an IAM RoadSmart expert in your own car at a time to suit you. He/she will give you in-depth 1-2-1 coaching during your course and hopefully leave you feeling able to tackle the road ahead with confidence and enjoyment. For more information click here: <https://www.iamroadsmart.com/on-road-offer> To book call 0300 303 1134 or email [support@iam.org.uk](mailto:support@iam.org.uk)

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*"Paddy has proved to be an enthusiastic and hard-working ambassador for IAM RoadSmart for the past few years, so it comes as no surprise that the BRDC has elected him its new President"*

**Sarah Sillars,**  
*IAM RoadSmart*

IAM RoadSmart's mature driver ambassador Paddy Hopkirk MBE has been elected to one of the highest profile roles in motorsport this month – President of the British Racing Drivers' Club (BRDC).

Paddy has been a member of the BRDC since 1965, and for the past 10 years has been the organisation's Vice-President.

He is perhaps best known for winning World Championship rallies in Monto Carlo and Greece in the 1960s, but has competed in road and rally events all over the world including Bridgehampton and Sebring in the US and the Le Mans 24 Hours; achieving class wins.

Paddy has been mature driver ambassador for Britain's biggest independent road safety charity IAM RoadSmart for the past two years, with the task of ensuring older people keep their safe motoring careers going as long as they are happy to continue with it.

He travels the length and breadth of the country promoting the charitable work of IAM RoadSmart; meeting with countless local groups affiliated with the charity as well as other key influencers in the car industry and beyond.

Paddy becomes BRDC President at a key time for British motorsports, with the future of the British Grand Prix currently under discussion.

Sarah Sillars, IAM RoadSmart Chief Executive Officer, said: "Paddy has proved to be an enthusiastic and hard-working ambassador for IAM RoadSmart for the past few years, so it comes as no surprise that the BRDC has elected him its new President.

"I have no doubt he will throw himself into the role 100% and we all wish him well in his new role and for British motorsport."

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# Events

## New Events Organiser

I have been doing the events for a few years now and I would like to thank everyone for supporting them when they can. We have recently formed a new committee and due to taking on another role I am pleased to say that there are now two of us organising events. Margaret Jackman a new committee member has volunteered to help out with them. Thank you Margaret for volunteering. Well I think you volunteered!

Grahame Ottewell

## Upcoming Events...

### LAM Group Activities

Over the past year Grahame, our secretary, has organised several visits to places of interest around the region, not all vehicle related. As well as interesting and informative tours around the contrasting Jaguar and Morgan plants, we have walked around the WWI Somme memorials in the National Arboretum at Alrewas, toured the inner workings of the BBC's Mailbox, Birmingham; and explored Amazon's huge storage and packing facility at Rugeley.

We still have one free event to go to on Wednesday January 10<sup>th</sup>, 2018 which Grahame is collecting numbers for. We have an invitation to join the Wolverhampton Advanced Driving Groups for an evening with Paddy Hopkirk MBE, the Mature Drive Ambassador for IAM RoadSmart who will be supported by his "opposite number" David Gallagher who is the Young Driver Ambassador for IAM RoadSmart. The venue will be arranged once the organisers know the size of the audience.

We are now looking to organise more excursions for 2018. In each case we go in our own transport and meet up with our group on arrival. We are now collecting expressions of interest for the following:

### Explore the Royal Shakespeare Company theatre, Stratford on Avon

Includes: Theatre Tour, Tower visit and *The Play's the Thing* exhibition.

The tower referred to is the glass panoramic viewing tower. Tour takes an hour, museum up to an hour. Cost £15 (£14 if there are 20 or more in the group).

### Coventry Transport Museum

Coventry Transport Museum is home to one of the largest collections of British road transport in the world – a collection of Designated national importance, consisting of 300 cycles, 120 motor-cycles and 250 cars and commercial vehicles, and over a million archive and ephemera items. **Free** – optional Land Speed Record Simulator £3.50.

### Black Country Living Museum, Dudley

There's a chance to learn how to, and experience driving a tram! An open-air museum with a reconstructed village setting of historic buildings. The size of the museum site also provides the opportunity to demonstrate many of the road transport exhibits which were both used and made in the Black Country. £17.50 (£14 concessions)



*If Members and Associates would like to join the group for one or all of these outings, please email [margaret@lamm.org.uk](mailto:margaret@lamm.org.uk) with the names, contact details and preferred days/days unavailable.*

## BBC Studios Tour - Oct 17

Our party comprised 18 people from LAM.

Following security checks and introduction to our guides at the BBC, we all enjoyed a very interesting 2-hour adventure "backstage"!

Those who watch "Midlands today" will recognise the studio image, which is much smaller in real life than it looks on TV. The backdrop scenes are, as some may have guessed, computer generated and are changed according to the programme and time of day of transmission.

The picture showing lots of TV's is the control room, where everything from the studio cameras, external reporters, auto-cue etc are controlled.

Want to know what the odd-looking kitchen and scruffy wooden box is? For fans of the Archers, this is where all the sound effects come from. The floor comprises several different coverings to mimic walking on a hard or soft floor, the oven door provides the "washing machines sound" when the drum is out of balance and the wooden box, that is the bar! The strange looking wall comprises Acoustic Absorption Panels, so that a person talking or shouting at one end actually sounds miles away from where they are in reality.



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## Email feedback from IAM RoadSmart

Email from Stephen Ellis, IAM Roadsmart Area Service Delivery Manager after he had taken our the following four observers on qualification drives

*"Subject: Nigel, Peter, Sally and Michael Lichfield Massive*

*Hi Grahame*

*Just a quick line to say how impressed I was with the 'Lichfield Massive' yesterday, all 4 were an absolute credit to both the group and the organisation, a truly enjoyable day for me.*

*I just wanted to thank you personally as I know you strive for extremely high standards and your observers are delivering everything you and the organisation want.*

*Absolutely impeccable standards, well done to everyone."*

Stephen also forwarded his note to Robbie Downing also an Area Service Delivery Manager, IAM RoadSmart, saying

*"Robbie*

*An absolutely phenomenal group performance."*

# CONGRATULATIONS...

## Advanced Pass

Lucy	Parker
Michael	WATSON
Louise	SHENTON
David	MACKLIN



Paul Wilkinson - 1st Advanced Test Pass



Louise Shenton - Advanced Pass

## New Members

Wendy	EGERTON
Mary-Lou	LEES
Peter	SHENTON
Vincent	MAXTED
Andrew	SWIFT
Jack	HUGHES
Alan	DANDY



Lucy Parker - Advanced Test Pass



Michael Watson - Advanced Test Pass

## Observer Passes

Mike	BRINKWORTH	Local Observer
Geoffrey	RUSSELL	Local Observer
Mike	WEBB	National Observer
Sally	BASKETFIELD	National Observer
Nigel	ROGERS	National Observer Requal
Peter	THOMAS	National Observer Requal
Grahame	OTTEWELL	National Observer Requal



Simon Best - Inaugural IAM Fellow



Grahame/Nigel - Nat Observer Requal



Geoffrey Russell - Local Observer Pass



Sally Basketfield - National Observer



## General Data Protection Regulations come into force in May 2018

### Data Protection, friend or foe?

The LAM committee have for the last few months been dipping their toes into the lake of Data Protection to see if anything comes up and bites them, as there were some head scratching and beard stroking on how we as a group are complying with the Data Protection Act 1998.

It just so happens that one of the new committee members is also a qualified and experienced Data Protection officer, who took up the task of looking at this what seemed to be a scary subject.

What seemed to be labelled as a bit of a foe, in terms of "you don't want to go there" based on perception, and probably when you ask for your personal data from companies, the reply is usually "can't give you that due to Data Protection", is in fact your friend in terms of ensuring whoever holds your personal data must keep it secure, not use it for any other purposes without your permission (Subject to an exemption), and keep it up to date.

To these ends the committee are conducting a root and branch review of all aspects in the way we manage your personal information. This review will either affirm that we are managing your data in accordance with the Act, or highlight one or two processes that need amending. The committee will keep you up to date on the progress of this important piece of work.

Finally, you may have read from IAM Roadsmart that they are also conducting an audit on something called the General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR) coming into force in May 2018. This is a set of regulations that will be modernising the current Act as it's been nearly 20 years since DPA98 came into force, and the world with it's technology has moved on since then. We will also be building that into our review.



Data Protection Act 1998





# OBSERVER NEWS

Grahame Ottewell

Chief Observer

## Observer Update

***Wow, we have been very busy on the observer training front!***

Our final two trainee observers Suzanne White and Mike Brinkworth have now completed their training to the required Institute of Motor Industries (IMI) standards and are now Local Observers. Congratulations to both of you.

On top of that we have been very busy getting all of our National Observers ready for their standards re checks. Peter Thomas, Nigel Rogers, Alison Bridgman and myself have all had to re qualify due to us being Local Observer Assessors (LOA's). LOA's have to re qualify every 3 years as opposed to the normal National Observer who has to re qualify every 5 years. The re assessments are done with the Area Service Deliver Manager. Thankfully we all passed with flying colours. Also we have two new National Observers, Sally Basketfield and Mike Webb, who have now both qualified as IMI National Observers. Again these 2 hours tests were done by Steve Ellis an Area Service Delivery Manager. Well done to everybody.

This now means that our group are completely up to date with the new IMI qualifications and all of our observers meet the very high standards set by the IMI. I would like to thank those associates who have helped us with the training as we needed to use proper associates for that. We have now taken on three new trainee observers. Margaret Manuell, Susan Webb and Paul Wilkinson. We have registered them with IMI and they have started their journey to becoming a Local Observer.

## Mentors

Following discussions amongst committee and observers we have decided to introduce a mentoring scheme for all new associates that join us.

The idea is that as an associate joins our group they will be allocated an observer who will be their mentor. A mentor is not an observer who will do all of their drives. The mentor is someone who they can just contact for any help or guidance should they need it. The associate will still be expected to contact other observers as usual for drives in the normal way. Of course if they want to do a drive with their mentor then that is Ok as well. Their mentor may not be local to them but that will not be a problem as contact will be by phone or email so new associates can expect the odd phone call or email from their mentor to see if they are progressing OK or have any problems. We shall not be backdating this so those associates already with us will not have a dedicated mentor. However they can still contact any observer for help or guidance at any time.

## Associate Training/Coaching/Updates

Associates go out on observed drives with observers from the Fradley hall or by drives arranged via the observer contact form that have been given. The drive will help the associate to make progress through their course and they will have things to go away and practice. It is up to the associate to go away and practice what they have been doing on the drives. We do get the odd associate who

once the drive is over reverts back to their old styles or forgets IPSCGA and what they have just been doing. When they come back to do another drive it is quite obvious that they have not been practicing and the drive has to start from where they left off instead of progressing on through their course. Associates need to put IPSCGA into their daily drives so it becomes second nature. That way they will make good progress. It is a bit like doing homework and will help achieve results. We have had a few associates now who have passed with a F1st qualification. Well done to those.

### What if?

A long time ago, more years than I wish to remember, I was in the boy scouts. We had a motto "Be prepared". That motto can be applied to driving. Instead of "Be Prepared" we could say "What if". When we approach a hazard we should be thinking "What if". By doing that we should "be prepared" for anything which might happen. How often do you hear someone talking about a road collision they have had and they say "suddenly". The car "suddenly" came from nowhere, "suddenly" the child ran out in front of me etc. If we apply the scout motto of "be prepared" and the "what if" then "suddenly" will happen a lot less and we can anticipate for things happening. From the "what if" we can formulate "Driving Plans". They are what we can see, what we cannot see and what we might expect to happen. If we think about those things we shall be much more prepared for hazards. In fact if mention what you are thinking out loud then you are also doing speaking thoughts. Have a practice and speak your thoughts out loud. Remember to prioritise your hazards so that you are picking out the one that is likely to affect you first. That is simple homework!

### Gearboxes

Due to the amount of different types of automatic gearboxes now fitted to vehicles the IAM RoadSmart have advised that the associate should read their handbook and understand how their gearbox works and what they have to do to get the best use from it. Some of those automatics types with a clutch system may require you to put the car into neutral for prolonged stops to prevent wear and tear on the clutch system. Some may not! The examiner may ask you how your gearbox works. Also have a read about any technology that you have fitted to your vehicle. Again you may be asked to demonstrate it.

**Grahame Ottewell,**  
Chief Observer  
grahame@lamm.org.uk

*As requested by IAM RoadSmart and in line with all other IAM RoadSmart Groups, all Lichfield Advanced Motorists Observers have now met the end December 2017 deadline to hold either the National or Local Observer qualification awarded by the IMI (Institute of Motor Industry). Congratulations to all Observers for helping us achieve this milestone.*

# Driving across East Africa

[By Margaret Manuell](#)

A tenderfoot on *Safari*: Bwiru via Singida towards Arusha

In the mid 1960s, I arrived with my husband at Bwiru boys government secondary boarding school, in upcountry Tanzania, where he was to teach English. On arrival, I discovered I was expected to teach English at the equivalent girls school, which was news to me. I hadn't been asked, and I majored in Sociology! Having already spent five years in the entertainment business, I could at least keep them amused while catching up with what would actually have to be done to get them through O-levels. So began an alternative career as a specialist English teacher!



Elephant Rock, Bwiru

© Robin Manuell, 2007

A car was essential. Behind our bungalow, the African bush; a short walk from each school took us to the shores of Lake Victoria, and we were five miles from the port town of Mwanza: at first on a dirt road before joining the tarmac that ran between the airport and the town. Those were the only roads we travelled in our first three months. We were advised to go for a VW Beetle, because, "You can always lift it out of trouble". There were many occasions over the next five years that we were grateful that we heeded that advice. Our first *safari* (journey) tested us and the car to the limit.



A typical E. African murrum road

© Robin Manuell 2007

Our arrival in the country coincided with a dockers strike in the UK. Our personal chattels took months to arrive by sea, and by the end of that first term with only a couple of books and a radio tuned to local Swahili broadcasts, Russian propaganda and Chinese stations pouring out songs in praise of Mao Zedong, we were stir crazy and desperately needed to get away. In the December/January long break, we would go on *safari*. Everyone on the campus, expats and locals, told us it was a crazy idea. It was the short rainy season. We didn't listen.

My husband doesn't drive and my driving, like my teaching, was self taught. I was reasonably road-wise, having had a push-bike from junior school. At harvest time, in my teens, I drove a field tractor for the local farmer. Later, I rode a two-stroke Heinkel moped, graduating to a brand new Frances Barnet Plover motorbike (remember those? made in Coventry). I studied road craft from the Police Drivers Handbook and the Highway Code (a very old one that included signalling for horse-drawn vehicles). A friend showed me the controls on her Mini. I went once round the block and learnt how to reverse, before her father put a stop to my 'lessons', because I wasn't covered by insurance. Undeterred, I asked my father if he would book a driving test for my Xmas visit, had a few drives with him, and passed my test in the snow a couple of weeks later. In the two years before the Beetle, I'd been driving a clapped out Renault Dauphine, a model with only three forward gears. There was no way I was *safari*-ready for unmetalled roads and bush tracks, and we were embarking on a hazardous, nightmare journey I was woefully unprepared for. We had been warned!

We had no fixed plans, but decided that driving to Nairobi through the Serengeti wasn't an option even in the short rainy season. Only a week or two before we had met a Brit in Mwanza, who was based in Singida, a small town to the south; and she had offered to put us up if we were passing through. So we set off south to Shinyanga (the diamond mining centre) and turned off eastwards Singida. So far so good; but 'hairy', because the murrum was only wide enough for one-and-a-half cars so you drove in the middle of the road; and that was fine if the two drivers coming towards each other were travelling cautiously, they could pass, each with half the car on the road and the other half off-road, in the rough.

But, if it was an oncoming lorry, or worse – a car driven at speed, then you got off the road a.s.a.p and prayed that you weren't going to smash into a hidden boulder or fall into a ditch. On the hoof, I had to learn defensive driving techniques very quickly, with a constant lookout for safe places to escape, always asking myself, "What if?" and "Where can I go?". Fortunately, crossing great tracts of bush, you might only encounter another vehicle every two or three hours! The only vehicles you needed to overtake were lorries, because they travelled more slowly than cars. That was a nightmare, because the tyres threw up dust from the road so that the truck was invisible, there was just this huge moving red cloud which completely obscured the view ahead as you approached. You had to trust the driver to make way when the road was clear. I learnt to be grateful to the professional truckers who gave me the confidence to drive on, encouraging me through the hazards we encountered on our travels.

There were no wayside resting places, no petrol pumps outside the larger towns, only the road and the surrounding bush. You had to plan your journeys well and always carry a can of fuel in case you'd miscalculated the mileage. Some chicken wire and a shovel were also useful for getting you out of a quagmire – the prevalent cotton grass, made it very difficult to extract a vehicle from mud.

## Driving across East Africa continued...

Although we didn't know it at the time, we weren't actually surrounded by vast emptiness. Settlements and people were rarely seen from the road, but there were villages, hidden away within walking distance, with their small fields, or *shambas*, women and girls carrying water from distant springs, and little boys herding cattle.

Refreshed after our overnight hospitality stop at Singida, and with a full tank of petrol, we set off the next morning, hoping that we might make Arusha on the next leg of the journey. We had not reckoned on what was waiting for us at Babati. Progress had been good, there were dark skies ahead, but no rain. Then we saw ahead in the distance what looked in the sunlight like a shimmering mirage, but as we got closer, seemed to be a river in flood. Lake Babati had broken its banks and its waters were now sweeping in front of us, across our path, in a rushing torrent: fast, wide and deep. We could see how deep when a trucker, going in our direction, took the plunge and steered his vehicle across. We got out of the car. There was no way I could navigate safely across this. The Beetle would be swept away in the current!

The lorry safely made it to the other side to where the road was intact, and the driver got out and came to the edge of the flood and shouted over, "You can make it, Mama! stay in a low gear and steer to the right – keep steering to the right."

We were the only drivers on the road, and there was no way of calling for help. It would be sensible to abandon our journey and turn round. But the trucker was encouraging, "Just keep coming steady - tight on the steering... and hard right."

We got back into the car, wound up the windows, took a deep breath, started up and edged towards the waters. The trucker watched and beckoned, and in we went. He stayed nodding and smiling encouragingly as the waters quickly rose to window level and were pushing, pushing... propelling the car to go left with the torrent. I gripped the steering wheel tight and kept it pulled hard to the right. Amazingly we

progressed slowly, steadily in a straight line, the waters receded and we'd made it! Seeing we were safely over, the truck driver made for his cab. I called out, "Asante, bwana. Asante sana" and he waved and drove off.

"I'd better check the engine's not got wet. And I'll need to test the brakes," I said, and opened the 'boot' (the Beetle had a rear engine). The water that had been stopped at the rubber flanges poured onto the distributor head!

We laughed at the irony of the situation. The brake testing would have to wait. So we took time out, had a drink and sat in the hot sunshine, waiting for the electrics to dry out.

(to be continued? Next time: from Babati to Arusha and on to Nairobi)

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## **Do You Belong to a Group?**

Lichfield Advanced  
Motorists offer FREE  
talks on topics such as

Motorway driving;  
Vehicle technology;

Night driving;

Lone driving

Please contact  
[secretary@lamm.org.uk](mailto:secretary@lamm.org.uk) for  
more information

## LAM Online

### Twitter:

We have 399 Followers

Retweets and replies from IAM RoadSmart, Lichfield Mercury and other IAM Groups

### Facebook:

Our most popular posts have been about our events and monthly meetings

### Flickr:

See our gallery of pics on Flickr. Search for Lichfield Advanced Motorists

## Notices



### Follow LAM on Twitter!

@AdvMotorists



### Follow LAM ON Facebook!



Watch the IAM RoadSmart on [Youtube.com/roadskillsuk](https://www.youtube.com/roadskillsuk)

## WANTED

Lichfield Advanced Motorists are looking for an area of land, preferably tarmacked, where we could have observer and associate training sessions once in a while. We would want to use the land for parking and reversing practice. An industrial site car park with parking bays would be an ideal example.

If any our group members has any contacts such as haulage firms, farmers, car park owners etc who would be willing to allow us to do practice events once in a while then could they contact Grahame Ottevell please.

## PASSED YOUR TEST A WHILE AGO?

Book in for a free brush-up drive to take place at the end of month meeting.

Book in with [Pat@lamm.org.uk](mailto:Pat@lamm.org.uk)

## Lichfield Advanced Motorists

Lichfield Advanced Motorists (LAM) is one of a network of over 200 local IAM RoadSmart groups across the UK.



The group is run by dedicated volunteers who give their time and expertise in an effort to improve driver skills.

In addition, the group is a place where full and associate members can share ideas and contribute to the IAM RoadSmart's work in developing and promoting innovative road safety strategies. It also provides a social focus where members can meet and enjoy the company of fellow driving enthusiasts.

## IAM RoadSmart

At IAM RoadSmart we make better drivers and riders. As a registered UK charity formed in 1956, we've spent more than 60 years making our roads safer by improving driver and rider skills through coaching and education.



Our qualified experts, our network of thousands of volunteers and 200 local groups are our lifeblood. They champion our cause and help drive our vision – to be the best, most recognised provider of coaching and advice for all post-licence drivers and riders – and our mission is to make better drivers and riders.

We also help businesses to develop their staff to become more confident, skilled and responsible on the road. IAM RoadSmart provides a range of risk management and training services, include e-learning, on-road coaching and seminars. We are proud of our achievements but there's always more to do. In 2015 we welcomed 6,000 more people as full IAM RoadSmart members, helped 150 achieve Master driver or rider status and awarded our 1,000th F1RST Register membership.

We also helped Go Ahead London to win the Prince Michael International Road Safety Award. At any one time there are over 7,000 drivers and riders actively engaged with our courses, from members of the public to company drivers, while our Driver Retraining Academy has helped 2,500 drivers to shorten their bans through education and support programmes.

And, as the voice of advanced drivers and riders in the UK, last year we made 5,500 media appearances and had a place on 24 major transport and road safety panels. Everything we do is designed to inspire confidence, respond to individual driver and rider needs, make our courses and services enjoyable and drive progress

## Contact Us

### Lichfield Advanced Motorists

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