

Lichfield Advanced Motorists

LAM **DRIVE!**

TIME FOR A SPRING CLEAN

By Group Chairman Grahame Ottewell

Welcome to the Spring 2023 edition of our newsletter. Regardless of what the weather is doing outside, Spring 2023 began on Monday 20 March. In the Northern Hemisphere it is the Vernal Equinox.

Vernal translates to "new" and "fresh" and equinox derives from the Latin aequus (equal) and nox (night). In simple terms, it is getting lighter and summer is approaching.

There are various interpretations of Spring cleaning, from religious sources to just giving the house a good clean out. It might be a good time to get motivated and make a fresh start on your driving by getting yourself and your vehicle ready for the months of driving that are approaching.



We can all lose our expertise over the years so it might be time for some of us to brush up on our driving skills. We do not tend to notice our own gradual loss of performance.

We might have picked up a few bad habits along the way. If it has been some time since you passed your IAM RoadSmart advanced test then why not come to one of our end-of-month meetings to take advantage of your group membership and have a free drive assessment (about 20 to 30 minutes).

All it takes is an email to one of our committee members and we will pass on your details to the appropriate person to get you booked in.

There is nothing to lose. You will still keep your advanced driving qualification but you might find a few tips from the feedback to keep your driving skills up to date.

These informal group assessments are meant to be fun and for us to learn from. We are lucky in that our group has a strong number of observers, all highly qualified, and waiting to do drives and assessments. Make the best of this opportunity.

Spring cleaning may also apply to your vehicle. Are your services up to date. Have you done your regular POWDERY checks? Are you still OK to drive?

What if you are a low mileage driver? If so it may be unlikely that your tyres will need replacing as often as other drivers due to minimum tread depth wear, but are they old and perished? Have you checked the date of manufacture on them? Those four black bits on the road surface have to work hard for us.

If you have not been to a group end-of-month meeting for some time then why not make an effort to join us. We have had some excellent guest speakers. Anyone can also come to our mid month theory sessions. That is another way to *brush up* on what the current test standard is and add *polish* to your driving.

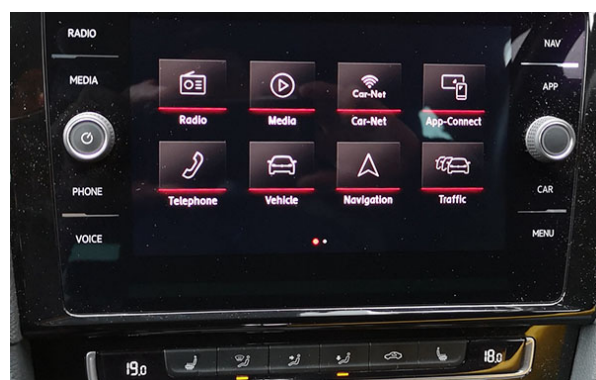
So let's "spring" into action and make an effort. Let's go driving and have some fun. Make the most of your group and meet other drivers and members.

TECHNICAL HITCH - at 110mph!

National Observer and Master Driver John Watson on the benefits and sometimes bizarre challenges of advanced car technology

As Advanced Motorists we should know how to use all the technology available on our cars. But we must stay in complete control, and know when to safely disengage certain high-tech electronic aids, which can sometimes do more harm than good.

For example, many drivers use cruise control, especially on long motorway journeys. And many use "speed limit assist" systems, to ensure that the limits are not inadvertently broken.



But what if the technology goes out of control? What if the electronic speed system suddenly tries to take your car way, way over the limit? This has happened, according to a Sunday Times report, with certain makes of car fitted with so-called “intelligent speed limit assist” systems - which can automatically accelerate as well as decelerate the car, to keep a constant speed.

One driver found that when entering a 30mph limit his car suddenly started trying to take him up to 110mph!

The technology works by reading speed limit signs, but on this and other occasions it mis-read the 30mph limit sign as a 110mph limit sign, even though no such sign could exist in Britain.

And the car took off, said the driver, like a rocket - until he hit the brakes.

It's hard to imagine anything more dangerous than this kind of faulty car technology.

There have also been instances when speed limit technology has had the opposite dangerous effect - with the built-in camera reading 30mph signs on a side road or slip road and slamming on the brakes, despite the car actually being on a 70mph parallel dual carriageway.

The Sunday Times report claimed that the car maker involved in the “runaway” speed defect was dismissive of tests proving that the technology could be faulty, simply pointing out that the car handbook warns that it has “system limitations” - and that it is the driver's responsibility to keep control at all times.

Well, it certainly is our responsibility to keep all the technology on our modern cars under control at all times. But manufacturers bear a heavy responsibility to ensure that all technology is safe to use, especially when set as a default.

It's a good idea to read your car handbook in detail, and not be caught out. Many unwanted functions can often be disengaged, usually on the dashboard or infotainment system menu.

Many cars, including mine, have “lane assist” set as a default, but to change lanes smoothly using this technology you have to activate an indicator signal - otherwise the steering starts fighting you.

As Advanced Drivers, we do not give unnecessary signals, of course, and I quickly disengaged the “lane assist” system in the infotainment touchscreen menu (the home menu on my own car is pictured above).

There's nothing new with car technology unexpectedly failing, of course. For example, in 1998 owners of cars in Sutton Coldfield had an alarming experience when the nearby BBC transmitter sent out a stray signal, activating certain vehicles' central locking systems and temporarily locking drivers out of their cars.

So take care - keep informed, and keep control!

Chairman's Chat

by Grahame Ottewell

As the lighter evenings approach we look forward to warmer weather and being able to keep warm without having to pay huge utility bills.

It is not all good news though. We know that our neighbours at Walsall had to close down and unfortunately the same thing has happened to Birmingham Advanced Motorists. A few groups are struggling to form committees which result in the groups not being able to continue anymore.

But there is always a good side to things. Our Lichfield group has gained members from both the Walsall and Birmingham groups which include experienced observers and committee members.

Our group area has also expanded to take in more post codes. Our committee has been busy making these changes as smooth as possible for everyone concerned. We now need more associates to keep our team of observers busy. If you can help advertise the advanced courses and our group then please do so.

There had also been a change of Area Service Delivery Manager (ASDM) for our area. Our ASDM Steve Ellis has now taken over another region. We had a new ASDM for a short while; he was Neil Rowley. Unfortunately, Neil resigned after a couple of weeks in the post but will still continue to be an examiner for IAM RoadSmart. IAM RoadSmart are now looking for another person to replace him so when you read this there might be yet another change of ASDM.

It is planned that Steve Ellis will become the Area Service Delivery Manager for Area 5. However, we shall see what happens. Our group area includes postcodes from three different regions so we will no doubt be liaising with different ASDMs at times.

The last 12 months have flown by and it will soon be our AGM. This year's AGM will be on Wednesday 31st May 2023 at 7.30pm in the Fradley village hall. A separate notice of the AGM is included in this edition of our newsletter.

We have access to the Fradley hall from 7.00pm but on some occasions we have had to wait for the dance class to clear up before we can go in. Hopefully we can set up and be ready to go by 7.30pm. There will be a light buffet after the AGM and we shall also be inviting an ASDM.

Nigel Rogers and Mike Brinkworth have been busy with Observer training and getting all our observers on track. That leads me nicely to Curborough

Spring Course. We have started to attend their monthly breakfast meetings for 2023. These are free events, quite often with a sprint meeting taking place, and we meet up for a chat and a bite to eat. We then go on local roads - sorry, not the track - for observed drives or training drives. All our group members are welcome to attend even if it is just for breakfast and a chat and no drive.

We look forward to seeing you all at our group meetings and events. Please support them if you can. In the mean time enjoy your driving and if you are a full member then why not use our Observers for the occasional brush up? After all it is Spring cleaning time!

BOOSTING OUR TEAM - AND EXCITING WANDERINGS

By Chief Observer Nigel Rogers

I am pleased to say that our Observer colleagues from Walsall are more or less settled in now and making a good contribution to our overall Observer Group.

We now have Observers local to all of our Associates and covering all of our catchment area, so that makes things convenient for everyone.

John Stretton is the latest to join our Observer team (congratulations John) and Neil Thomas is on the final leg of his training to do likewise. That nicely boosts our Observer coverage in the Burton Upon Trent area. All we need now are more Associates, so please do have a chat to the young and not so young drivers in your locality and persuade them to book a free, no obligation Introduction session at one of our End of Month meetings.

A note to all Local Observers to consider "upgrading" to National Observer status. As mentioned many times, all this involves is a bit of preparation and being assessed by an IAM Examiner. No change to your already excellent driving and Observer skills.

As to my wanderings, our quest for warmth took Anne and me to Thailand last month. 30+C being much preferable to watching the snow fall as I write this message!

Being an adventurous sort, I hired a car for a couple of days on the island of Koh Samui. IPSCA came into play but "modified" to suit local driving styles. Cars are more or less being driven sensibly but those



riders on 100cc mopeds and scooters just "go for the gaps in the traffic" regardless of what anyone else is doing and with scant regard for life or limb.

The locals can be identified by their universal uniform of shorts and flip-flops. Crash helmets are a legal requirement but the only riders wearing them were fast food delivery riders and tourists.

Tourists could be identified as people of mature age who last travelled on two wheels 30+ years ago, but suddenly feel a compelling need to participate in what amounts to the most dangerous activity you can think of.

These riders are usually perched upon a moped three sizes too small for them with bare white knees sticking out, wobbling about the road and often with a terrified pillion passenger praying for this ordeal to end without hospitalisation. Having said all this, in typical Thai fashion, there is no aggression and drivers and riders just accept the situation for what it is.

Not recommended on UK roads!

THE BIG BREAKFAST

Join our special Saturday breakfast meetings at Curborough Sprint Track, for drives, chats about motoring matters . . . and, of course, the splendid breakfasts.

These are the dates for the rest of this year: May 6th, June 10th, July 15th, August 12th, October 7th.

THE LICHFIELD ADVANCED MOTORISTS TEAM



Left: Chairman Grahame Ottewell



**Right: Chief Observer
Nigel Rogers**



Left: Treasurer John Russell



**Right: Deputy
Chief Observer
Mike Brinkworth**



Left: Membership Secretary Sally Basketfield



Right: Group Secretary Margaret Manuell



Left: Drives Co-ordinator Pat Round



Right: Local Observer and Committee Member Derek Bolton

Our visit to Hawkins Logistics

By LAM Chairman Grahame Ottewell

On Monday 20th March our group visited Hawkins Logistics at Fradley. The Managing Director Ben Hawkins and his Training/Transport Manager Jon Newbold greeted us and we started off with a chat in the boardroom.



Following the Q&A session we visited the offices where the logistics of the company were explained and met very friendly staff who chatted to us about their various roles within the company.

A huge display on the wall showed where

each particular truck was in Europe at that moment in time and if it was moving or stationary.

We then visited Warehouse One to look at the huge stacking systems and operation of that warehouse. There were different types of forklifts in use and our Membership Secretary Sally Basketfield took the opportunity to stand in a very high reach forklift and trundled off down the pallet lines to get a firsthand experience of how it operated.



We then visited Warehouse Two just down the road from the main offices. Again we were given a tour of the warehouse by the manager.

We then went to the loading bays outside and there were two of the Hawking LGVs parked for us to have a look at. Some of us took the opportunity to climb up and investigate the drivers cabs which had beds, microwave ovens and fridges inside them.



Our thanks go to the Hawkins family and Jon Newbold for allowing us this visit. Hawkins Logistics have a great partnership with our group and have helped us at our last Young Drivers event at Curborough.

The company are now involved in road safety with Staffordshire schools via Staffordshire Road Safety Partnership and Staffordshire Fire and Rescue Services.

Hawkins Logistics have their own spotters club on Facebook and if you want to see some of their fabulous airbrushed painted trucks then do a search for them on the Facebook and internet.

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Photos: Top, front view of a Hawkins truck. Centre, Membership Secretary Sally Basketfield gets some tips on forklift driving. Above, LAM chairman Grahame Ottewell at the wheel.
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CONGRATULATIONS! AWARDS FOR SUCCESS



Left: Membership Secretary Sally Basketfield presents a pass certificate to Hayley Gotheridge

Right: Chairman Grahame Ottewell presents a Local Observer qualification certificate to John Stretton



Left: Grahame Ottewell presents a test pass certificate to Mike Lewis

Right : Grahame congratulates Mike Brinkworth on Becoming a National Observer



Right: Grahame presents Simon Brailsford with his award for his 1Fst pass



LICHFIELD ADVANCED MOTORISTS

AGM Notice

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN by order of the Group Committee that the Annual General Meeting of "Lichfield Advanced Motorists" will be held at **7.30pm on Wednesday 31st May 2023** at Fradley village hall to enable the Trustees of the Group (Registered Charity No. 1027300) to present their Annual Report and Accounts for the year ended 2022/23 for approval by the Group Full Members and to conduct an election.

NB All Group Full Members, Associates and Friends are invited to attend but only Group Full Members may vote. A Member entitled to vote at the General Meeting may appoint a proxy to vote in his stead. A proxy need not be a Group Full Member.

CURRENT OFFICERS

All our group Officers retire annually and may offer themselves for re-election

Chair, Grahame Ottewell will stand for re-election.

Secretary Margaret Manuell will not stand for re-election as Secretary
Treasurer John Russell will not stand for re-election as Treasurer.

COMMITTEE MEMBERS

All committee members retire annually and the following will be standing for re-election:

General committee positions: Margaret Manuell, John Russell, Sally Basketfield, Pat Round, Derek Bolton, Nigel Rogers, Mike Brinkworth.

The following will also be standing for election:

Officer Positions :Francis Oldfield (standing for Secretary) Ian Locke (standing for Treasurer)

General Committee positions: Sue Archer

If interested in joining the committee or standing for any of the above officers positions please inform me as soon as possible. A nomination form will then be sent out to you by the group secretary. Nominations forms will need to be signed by the nominee and show your nominator and seconder. Completed Nominations will need to be lodged with the secretary at least 7 days before the AGM i.e. by 24th May 2023.

Margaret Manuell

26 Alexandra Mews
Tamworth B79 7HT
lichfieldadvancedmotorists@gmail.com

***The Lichfield Advanced Motorists newsletter LAM-DRIVE! is designed and edited by John Watson. Photos by John Watson and members of the group.
The group's website is: <https://www.iamroadsmart.com/groups/lichfield>***