



# Newsletter ~ April 2010

**St Helens Group of Advanced Motorists**  
*Working to make our roads safer every day...*



## Chairman's Remarks

Welcome to the first of two editions of the Group's April Newsletter which you will note is different from usual. This month to help celebrate the Group's Silver Jubilee Mark Farnworth has been hard at work producing not one, but two, newsletters, your usual bi-monthly one and a '25th Anniversary Special'. Thanks to Mark for his hard work and also to everyone who has taken the time and effort to send him the contributions that have made this possible. In preparing for this newsletter I was pondering what an achievement it is for the Group to have survived the many changes of the last quarter of a Century.

St Helens as a town has seen significant change. Employment in the region has altered radically with a decline in less skilled jobs and a growth in high-skill, professional and 'knowledge' jobs. This is coupled with more temporary and part-time employment. More jobs are now in the service sectors, e.g. retailing, financial services and health services with a significant reduction seen in the manufacturing industry and mining.

The ecology of St Helens and the surrounding areas has also changed. The local council website states that "many of our most familiar and well-loved species have undergone alarming declines in numbers, during the last 25 years. Increased pesticide usage, removal of hedgerows and field margins, specialisation of farm enterprise, changes in crop sowing times have all contributed to the decline of many farmland species such as Corn Bunting, Lapwing and Skylark." It is not only rural species which have declined. Birds such as swifts and house martins are thought to be declining due to habitat loss, reduction of food sources and modern house design precluding nesting.

Another more positive change is 'WIFI'; I am now able to use a wireless lap-top to prepare my column for the newsletter. On the downside it is all too easy to be distracted by the wonders of the 'World Wide Web'. You may have noticed how my previous columns tend to contain all sorts of unconnected ramblings. This one will no

doubt do the same. Through the wonder of 'Google' and 'Wikipedia' I have now learned that the concept of the Jubilee is a special year of remission of sins and universal pardon. In the Biblical book of Leviticus, a Jubilee year is mentioned to occur every fifty years, in which slaves and prisoners would be freed, debts would be forgiven and the mercies of God would be particularly manifest.

Whilst our Jubilee will not, alas, forgive all debts it is still quite an achievement anyway, so thank you to everyone who has been involved with the Group in any way helping to make it what it is today; you should all feel very proud.

Twenty-five years ago 'WIFI, World Wide Web, Google and Wikipedia' would have sounded like the language of an alien, rather than the language of our children and grandchildren. I wonder what the next 25 years has in store for us? Whatever it holds, I know it will be amazing.

**Rob Evans**  
**Group Chair**



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## Secretary's Remarks

We are coming to the end of the Winter course which was undersubscribed, unusually for the Group. The extreme bad weather may have had something to do with it. Let's hope we've seen the last of it until next Winter.

We are hoping to fill the May course and a warm welcome to all new Associates. We expect to have some people from Age Concern and we are recruiting at the Hardshaw centre on the 27<sup>th</sup> March. However, if members could recommend the course to friends, family and col-

leagues that would help to keep up the numbers.

Please approach any of the Committee if you are interested in the job of Group Secretary as I intend to stand down this year. Also we need someone to take over the Recruitment role from Val. We will both stay on the Committee and will work alongside new Officers to make the handovers as smooth as possible. For more details contact me or Val.

**Sue Hunt, Group Secretary**

**Competition - the result**

Thank you to all those who took part in the Car Manufacturers competition organised by Ken Nevitt. The winner is Josephine Gray who has won a Special Assessment by an IAM Examiner. Second place goes to Stephen Linell who has won a Driving Assessment by an IAM Examiner. E-mail the Editor if you wish to have a copy of the answers.

## Associate Coordinator's Corner

Welcome to James Fawcett who joined the Group in February.

Because we have not had many Associates on the Winter Course, I invited some members of the Group who passed the IAM Test some time ago to come for 'Refresher Drives' in order to keep our Observers occupied. Accordingly, I would like to thank Ray McCulloch, Don Rodrigues, Doris Hale, Val O'Hanlon and Darren, who have all taken at least one 'Refresher Drive'. The feedback we have had has been most positive and some enjoyed the experience so much they returned for more such drives!

Of course, anyone reading this Newsletter may come for a Refresher or Assessment Drive at any time when the Group meets. However, it would be helpful if I could be notified first so that I can ensure that there is an Observer available to take you—as you would expect, priority must be given to Associates participating in the Course.

The Group has always tried to accommodate Associates who have

asked for midweek runs when they have been unable to attend on a Sunday morning. These usually are easier to arrange on the May Course because of the lighter evenings.

Clearly, the number of Associates we can accommodate depends on the number of Observers who are able to do midweek runs and due to changes in circumstances for some Observers, I am not certain which Observers are now available to do midweek runs. Therefore, I would be grateful if those who are able to assist at those times would let me know as soon as possible.

Finally, I would like to thank both Observers and Associates for their patience and commitment during the Winter Course as the weather was the worst in the history of the Group. It can only get better!

**Alan Prescott  
Associate Coordinator**



**Treasurer's Note**

Many thanks to members for their speedy replies to the annual subscription reminders. A special 'thanks' to those who have signed Gift Aid forms, this tax return really does make a big difference to the Group funds.

**Rona Houlton,  
Group Treasurer**



## Summer 2010 Course Programme

### Course Programme – Starting May 2010

*All Thursday evening meetings held at the Deafness Resource Centre at 8pm.*

<b>Introductory Evening</b>	Thu May 06 2010
<b>Run 1</b>	Sun May 09 2010
<b>Run 2</b>	Sun May 16 2010
<b>Run 3</b>	Sun May 23 2010
<b>No run – Bank Hol</b>	Sun May 30 2010
<b>Corners &amp; Bends</b>	Thu Jun 03 2010
<b>Run 4</b>	Sun Jun 06 2010
<b>Demo Drive</b>	Sun Jun 13 2010
<b>Run 5</b>	Sun Jun 20 2010
<b>Run 6</b>	Sun Jun 27 2010
<b>Meet The Examiner</b>	Thu Jul 01 2010
<b>Run 7</b>	Sun Jul 04 2010
<b>Revision Night</b>	Thu Jul 08 2010
<b>Run 8</b>	Sun Jul 11 2010
<b>Consolidation</b>	Sun Jul 18 2010
<b>Consolidation</b>	Sun Jul 25 2010

### Congratulations



Congratulations to David Dixon (left) who recently passed his Advanced Driving Test, seen here receiving his certificate from from Mark Farnworth

## Committee Vacancies

There are some planned changes occurring on the Committee: Val O’Hanlon is going to be more involved with Group Events so her tenure as Recruitment Office/Group contact will end and Sue Hunt is to step down as Group Secretary, though she will continue to support the Group as Minutes Secretary at Committee meetings, with promotions and writing a piece for the Newsletter. Therefore, we have two vacancies! Please speak to Val or Sue if you would like more detailed information about what the roles involve.

### Group Contact/Recruitment Officer

- Answer enquires made by e-mail and by phone. Send information to casual enquires or, if a free assessment is requested, pass details to the Associate co-ordinator.
- Decide and communicate course dates to others.
- Meet and greet Associates at Intro Evening.
- Book rooms for classroom sessions and book external Examiner.
- Prepare and distribute Associate info packs.
- Liaise with IAM concerning Associate paperwork and maintain Associate database.
- Order stationary as required.
- Place Adverts in local post.
- Attend recruitment sessions such as Hardshaw Centre or the St. Helens Festival.

### Group Secretary

- Book rooms for Committee meetings.
- Prepare Agenda for Committee meetings.
- Receive and distribute all IAM Head Office Communication to relevant Committee members e.g. policy, finance, staffing, Group Annual Records.
- Arrange AGM, booking room, speaker, refreshments etc.
- Assist with promotions.
- Contribute to the Trustees Report for the AGM.



## IAM News Releases



### **Baby on Board: save driving for mothers-to-be** **3rd March 2010**

Awkward but necessary, driving while pregnant can be an uncomfortable experience. The IAM (Institute of Advanced Motorists) advises mothers-to-be on how to drive safely and comfortably. Peter Rodger, IAM Chief Examiner, said: "It seems obvious, but we do urge pregnant women to keep wearing their seatbelts while driving.

"The steering wheel hitting the abdomen is the main danger for pregnant drivers in a collision, and the seatbelt is the only thing stopping the driver flying forward."

Mr Rodger added: "A lot of women don't like the way belts feel and, without realising the danger, let the shoulder strap or the lap belt ride up into the middle of the abdomen."

The law requires you to wear a seatbelt, even if you're pregnant, and wearing a seatbelt while pregnant will not harm your baby - in fact the risk of injury could be reduced by up to 70 per cent if you are involved in a crash.

#### **How to wear it:**

- Wear the lap strap below your bump, as low as possible, from hip-bone to hip-bone.
- Keep the diagonal strap between your breasts, moving the strap around the side of your bump.
- Adjust the fit to be as snug as comfortably possible.
- You can push the seat back, as long as you adjust your mirrors accordingly and can reach the brake, accelerator and clutch. You can buy after-market pedal extenders for this purpose. Being an extra three inches away from the steering wheel makes a lot of difference in an accident.

Professor Sir Sabaratnam Arulkumar, President of the Royal College of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists (RCOG), said "The RCOG supports the advice set out in the NICE Antenatal Care Guideline on the use of seatbelts in pregnancy. Correct use of seatbelts by pregnant women is important, as incorrect use can cause harm to the fetus and fail to protect the woman in the case of an accident. Pregnant women should use three-point seatbelts above and below the bump, not over it".

### **Don't be a victim of car crime, says IAM** **11th February 2010**

Despite alarm systems being fitted as standard and an increase in video surveillance over the years, the IAM (Institute of Advanced Motorists) has warned against complacency and given drivers advice on how to reduce the chances of a car break-in or theft.

Peter Rodger, IAM Chief Examiner, said: "It seems obvious, but we'd still remind drivers, where possible, to park in a well lit, busy area with valuables out of view - and make sure your car has both an alarm and an immobiliser.

"Never underestimate the determination of some thieves: don't leave your car keys in a bowl or on a rack by the door - one of the most common methods of stealing a car is using a pole to reach through the letterbox to get the keys," said Mr Rodger.

If you have a garage, now's the time to clear out the ski boots and rolls of old carpet and make way for the thing it was built for - your car - although cars have got bigger over the years, meaning most of us have to park outside which affects

both road safety and car security. More advice on avoiding car crime:

- Try to use a car park with the 'ParkMark' logo which means it has achieved basic standards of security - but remember that you have no consumer rights in a car park and the car park operator has no legal responsibility whatsoever to protect your car.
- Thieves will break into homes to get the keys to steal a car. If your car is high value, check the security of your home.
- Don't leave the keys in the ignition when filling up your car with fuel or warming it up - remember your insurance could be invalidated if you do and your car is stolen.
- Don't leave a satnav fitting on display, and rub off any ring left on the windscreen by the suction pad - a thief will smash the window and go straight to the glove compartment to find it.
- Never store your car's documents within it and keep the glove box empty, leaving it open to make it clear there isn't anything inside.
- Consider fitting a vehicle tracking device to help track and find your car if it gets stolen.

Mr Rodger added: "The value of property stolen from your car may be relatively low, but the cost of repair to the car will be considerably more, not to mention the inconvenience, so vigilance and common sense could save you money and hassle."



**You are cordially invited to the  
 St Helens Group of Advanced Motorists  
 25th Anniversary AGM  
 to be held on  
 Wednesday 23rd June 2010  
 at 8pm at the St. Helens Town Hall  
 Guest Speaker – Mike Lyne, IAM**

**Prompt start! *Bring a friend!***

**Help us eat our 25th Anniversary Birthday cake!**

**NOMINATION FOR 2010/2011 ST HELENS GROUP COMMITTEE**

I \_\_\_\_\_ (full name in capitals)

\_\_\_\_\_ (signature)

wish to be elected to the following position:-

\*Chairman

\*Vice-Chairman

\*Secretary

\*Treasurer

\*General Committee. Member

\*Other (specify)

*\*delete as appropriate*

**Proposer** (full name in capitals)

**Seconder** (full name in capitals)

\_\_\_\_\_

(signature)



## DVD Resource Library

**Ultimate Driving Craft (DVD 100 minutes):** Chris Gilbert has a relaxed teaching style which is very suitable for a DVD audience. The DVD covers many advanced driving techniques throughout the range of driving environments (urban, rural, motorways, bad weather, progressive etc) with an initial emphasis on the benefit and development of commentary as a method of driving "self development". The DVD instruction is given in the form of an Instructors style of commentary which Chris delivers in a very listenable manner.

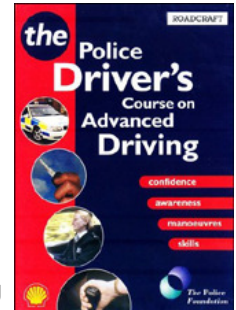
**Advanced Roadcraft (DVD – 68 minutes):** This DVD features general skills and techniques for driving safely and progressively in the range of road environment and

includes tips for driving at night. The techniques and skills presented cover much of the syllabus of the Police Roadcraft Manual including a section including demonstration of safe overtaking a twenty minute demonstration of advanced driving through busy city traffic and a section on motorway driving.

**Commentary Driving (DVD- 75 Minutes):** This programme presents the development and expert examples of driving commentary. The Programme features 3 commentary sections.

**Roadcraft - The Police Driver's Course on Advance Driving:** Rather than being a purely instructional this DVD follows police candidates on an advanced driving

course run at the Metropolitan Police Motor Driving School, Hendon. The DVD complements *Roadcraft: The Police Drivers Handbook* by showing the instructors coaching the candidates through advanced driving techniques and particularly the System of Car control. The course includes the range of driving situations covered by the group and additionally includes sections on night driving and skid pan training.



Contact John on 0151 289 3798 or [johnplumb@shgam.org.uk](mailto:johnplumb@shgam.org.uk)

## NOMINATION FOR 2010/2011 ST HELENS GROUP COMMITTEE

N.B. The Nominee, Proposer and Secunder must be *full* members of the St Helens Group.

Nominations **must** be **submitted** to the Group Secretary, Mrs S Hunt, by **9th June 2010**

Mrs S Hunt  
IAM St Helens Group  
8 Kenmore Grove  
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WIGAN  
WN4 0RS



## EcoSafe Driving by Mark Farnworth

EcoSafe-driving is about driving in a way that suits you, your car and the environment and minimises risk to yourself and others. It is driving to reduce fuel consumption, greenhouse gas emissions, accident rates and noise levels – therefore having a positive impact on both you as a driver and the environment.

### The Benefits:

#### Environmental

- Can reduce use and demand for non-renewable natural resources (fuel economy)
- Can reduce greenhouse gasses Helps improve overall air quality.
- Can reduce ambient noise levels
- Reducing the need to change tyres and brake pads so often will also benefit the environment.

#### Personal

- Contributes to preserving the environment.
- Reduces running costs, less fuel/lower spend on vehicle maintenance and lower insurance costs.
- Reduces fuel use by an average of 30%.
- Can reduce stress
- Can reduce vehicle wear and tear.
- Reduces the risk of you being the cause of an accident.

### Before you start driving:

#### Refuelling

- Where possible refuel at night; fewer hydrocarbon vapours when it is cool
- Make sure you fully tighten your fuel cap. Up to 30 gallons of fuel can be lost annually due to evaporation when the fuel cap is not fully tightened
- Try to find a competitive price in a forecourt. Refuelling should be a planned process. Look for competitively priced fuel in your local area. Avoid motorway service stations!

#### Before setting off

- Get plenty of rest before a journey. An alert driver is in better control of themselves and their vehicle. You are likely to be much calmer and less prone to road rage, erratic driving and heavy braking.
- Plan your journey. Three jobs in one trip is better than three separate trips.
- Consider if the journey is necessary. For short distances try walking or cycling.
- Avoid areas of congestion. Check traffic and travel news before you set off, as it may be advisable to avoid a certain route. The DSA website is a good place to get this information.

#### Vehicle Preparation

- Get rid of excess weight. Clutter in your boot or on the back seat is extra weight that your engine must carry around. You can save fuel and reduce emissions by removing things such as buggies, golf clubs, tools, paperwork.
- Reduce aerodynamic drag. 50% of the energy required for motorway speeds is used to overcome wind resistance. Becomes even greater when roof racks and other items are attached to the car.

#### Vehicle Maintenance

- Regularly check that all tyres are at the correct pressure. Every 6 psi under inflation increases fuel consumption by 1%. Incorrect inflation produces tyre wear.
- Keep your engine clean. Carry out the recommended maintenance checks.
- Where possible use energy-conserving motor oils, fuels with good detergent additives and maintain appropriate levels of oil, transmission fluid and coolant levels.

#### Attitude

- Recognise your own capabilities and limitations as well as those of your vehicle.
- Accept and allow for the mistakes of others.



- Have a positive attitude to the Highway Code and the Law

#### Skills

- Apply your concentration to the task of driving
- Good observation gives warning of dangerous situations
- Anticipation gives time to react
- Good planning allows you to drive in the correct position, at the correct speed and in the correct gear at all times. This increases safety and reduces fuel consumption.

#### Concentration

- Concentrate on the task in hand
- Don't use mobile phones when driving
- Don't read maps etc when driving
- Allow plenty of time for the journey.
- Plan your journey before you start
- Long distance driving - 15 minute break every two hours.
- Consider overnight stays if long journeys and long working days - tiredness kills!

#### Planning

**Hazard awareness/planning and anticipation:** Identify hazards early, allowing adequate time to react – this will result in braking and acceleration that is smooth and progressive. Maintain space around your vehicle and drive calmly.

**Keep moving:** An engine has to work hard to move a stationary car. When approaching a roundabout or junction try and get an early view and continue if safe to do so.

**Engine braking when possible:** e.g. traveling downhill. With your foot off the accelerator the engine needs little, if any, fuel. Never coast to save fuel; vehicle control must not be compromised.



## Summary of EcoSafe Driving Presentation - contd.

**Stopping the engine:** When you are stuck in traffic or waiting for someone, the engine is idling so you are wasting fuel and adding to CO2 emissions. If you are likely to be at a standstill for a while, simply switch off your engine.

**Best when hot:** Low speed maneuvering increases fuel consumption. When you park up, position yourself so that it will be easy to drive away when the engine is cold.

### Vehicle Control

**Start/moving away:** Try to avoid excessive revving when starting your engine and moving away.

**Appropriate use of speed:** Ensure that your speed is appropriate to the road, traffic and weather conditions. Don't exceed speed limits. Inappropriate speed can reduce fuel consumption and increase emissions.

**Gears:** Its not always necessary to change up or down through each gear; try skipping gears e.g. 2nd to 4th or 5th to 2nd. As soon as conditions allow, use the highest possible gear, without making the engine struggle.

**Accelerator:** Use the accelerator smoothly and progressively. When appropriate take your foot off the accelerator and allow the momentum of the vehicle to take you forward. Avoid pumping the accelerator as this uses more fuel.

### Tackling Bends

- Assess severity of bend in good time
- Consider the best position on approach to improve safety margins. In advance of bend reduce speed to what is required (check mirrors before reducing speed).
- Select gear most suited to your speed
- Drive through bend at constant

speed for good vehicle stability and to minimize wear on tyres. When the view opens up smoothly increase speed by progressive use of the accelerator.

### Speed Limits

- The higher the speed the greater the fuel consumption. Vehicles have the best fuel consumption when they are not being driven! The driver has to reach a compromise between reasonable progress and fuel usage.
- Driving at speed higher than the speed limit is illegal, potentially dangerous and wastes more fuel than necessary.

### Timing and Flow

- Do you make reasonable progress on straight, traffic free, dry roads? If safe to do so, are the gears used efficiently when accelerating away from bends?
- Are far distance views continually sought - looking across fields for road route, monitoring of buildings ahead for potential areas of speed reduction, looking at tree lines, telephone poles?
- Moving and stationary obstructions: do you see them at the first opportunity, position for them in good time and pass them decisively?
- At junctions, traffic lights and roundabouts do you try to get early views so as to keep your car moving as much as possible?
- In traffic flows are you looking at least 2 or 3 cars ahead to recognise early vehicles turning to minimise 'stop-start' driving
- Do you drive at a steady speed in areas of speed bumps / ramps.

## 15 Tips to become an EcoSafe Driver

1. Make sure you fully tighten your fuel cap – fuel evaporation costs money
2. Find a competitive fuel price in a forecourt – avoid motorway service stations
3. Plan your journeys – can you do one trip rather than three?
4. Avoid areas of congestion – check traffic news before you start your journey
5. Avoid being tired when driving. Tiredness kills! It also causes erratic driving / heavy braking which cost money.
6. Get rid of excess weight – roof rack, clutter on back seats and in boot.
7. Switch off air conditioning at low speeds – open windows for ventilation.
8. Ensure tyres are correctly inflated – saves wear and money.
9. Keep engine clean – where possible use energy conserving oils and fuels
10. Use accelerator and brakes smoothly
11. Try and keep moving. An engine has to work hard to move a stationary vehicle.
12. Avoid excessive revving when starting the engine and moving off.
13. Don't exceed speed limits. The higher the speed the higher the fuel consumption.
14. Use engine braking when possible e.g. when going downhill.
15. Where possible, use the highest possible gear without making the engine struggle.

### EcoSafe Driving—Information Sources

#### Institute of Advanced Motorists

<http://www.iam.org.uk/Driving Tips>

#### GE Capital Solutions – Your Guide to Eco-Driving

<http://www.thegreencarwebsite.co.uk/Eco-driving-guide.pdf>

#### Driving Standards Agency, Eco-Safe Driving

<http://www.direct.gov.uk>



## Driving Down Emissions—Reproduced from an information leaflet produced by the Energy Saving Trust

### Smarter driving

- **Check your revs:** When you change up a gear, look at your rev counter. Change up between 2000rpm and 2500rpm
- **Slow Down:** At 85 mph you will use around 25 per cent more fuel than at 70 mph. Keep to the speed limit. The most efficient speed is around 45-50 mph
- **Read the road:** Anticipate road conditions as far ahead as possible to avoid unnecessary acceleration and braking.
- **Step off the accelerator:** Remain in gear but take your foot off the accelerator as early as possible, for example when approaching a red light or roundabout or when driving downhill. This reduces the fuel flow to the engine to virtually zero.
- **Drive off from cold:** Modern cars are designed to be driven off straight away. Warming up the engine just wastes fuel.
- **Check your tyre pressures at least once a week:** Under inflated tyres are dangerous and increase fuel consumption.
- **Air conditioning:** Use air conditioning sparingly as it makes a big

difference to the amount of fuel you use.

- **Plan your journey:** to avoid congestion, road works and getting lost.
- **Switch it off:** Modern cars use virtually no fuel when they're restarted, so if you are stuck in a jam for more than a minute, switch off your engine.
- **Reduce drag:** Drive only with the accessories you need. Roof racks, bike carriers and roof boxes significantly affect your car's aerodynamics and reduce fuel efficiency.

### Road transport causes 25 per cent of UK CO<sub>2</sub> emissions.

The easiest way to find information about a car's CO<sub>2</sub> emissions is to visit the Department of Transport's website at

**[dft.gov.uk/ActOnCO2](http://dft.gov.uk/ActOnCO2)**

You can also find information:

- On the environmental label which should be displayed on all new cars in showrooms. This grades each car from A (the

cleanest) to G (the most polluting) and is similar to the European Union label found on household appliances.

- In car adverts. Manufacturers must by law publish CO<sub>2</sub> emission information.
- The VCA Car Fuel Data website **[vcafueldata.org.uk](http://vcafueldata.org.uk)**
- The Society of Motor Manufacturers and Traders (SMMT) have information for cars registered since 1997. Visit **[smt.co.uk/co2/co2search.cfm](http://smt.co.uk/co2/co2search.cfm)**

If you're buying a diesel car, choose one with a diesel particulate filter (DPF); diesel engines without DPFs produce a lot more of the emissions that pollute towns and cities and effect human health.

Save energy today!

Visit  
**[energysavingtrust.org.uk](http://energysavingtrust.org.uk)**

or call  
0800 512 012

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**Articles for the Newsletter should be submitted no later than the 15th of the month prior to the month of inclusion.**

*Please email articles directly to Mark.*



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#### DISCLAIMER

*The contents of this Newsletter  
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and do not necessarily  
constitute the views of the IAM  
or the St Helens Group.*