



Newsletter ~ June 2010

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



Welcome

Hello and welcome to the June Edition of the St. Helens Group Newsletter.

I'd like to give a special welcome to all those who have joined our May Course. By now you will be about half way through the course and are probably realising that Advanced Driving is about much more and is much better than what you originally thought. As I mentioned during the Introduction Evening a good attitude is a key element that needs to be in place before you can develop your driving skills. Having a good attitude is about recognising your own capabilities and limitations and those of your vehicle, accepting and allowing for the mistakes of others and having a positive attitude to the Highway Code and the Law. Anyone with a poor attitude in any of these areas will struggle on an Advanced Driving course.

For all those who want to take up the challenge of the IAM's Advanced Driving Test then our team of Observers is here to help. All our Observers have passed the Advanced Test and have then undergone further training

involving in-car, written and verbal assessments so as to meet the high observing standards we have in the Group. Some of our Observers have even gone on to get further driving related qualifications.

The result of this excellence in Observer Training is that 94% of our Associates pass the Advanced Driving Test on their first attempt and that over the last 25 years we have had some 525 Test Passes. Thus, you Associates on our present course are in good hands. You do your part by practising during the week what you are advised to do by the Group's Observers and we'll surely do our part to help you pass the Advanced Test.

As I mentioned above the Group is 25 years old this year and by the time you read this Newsletter is only a few weeks away from what will be a very special 25th Annual General Meeting, to be held at the Town Hall on Wed 23rd June starting promptly at 8pm.

If you have never attended one of our AGM's or if you used to but have

not attended recently then I would like to ask you to make every effort to attend this AGM.

The Mayor of St,Helens, Councillor Neil Taylor and our President Lady Kirsty Pilkington will be in attendance. Our invited speakers are IAM Council Member, Mike Lyne and IAM Vice-President Joe Thomas who actually helped to set up the St.Helens Group 25 years ago!

Dozens of people have helped the Group in various ways over the years. If you are a current member or, indeed, a lapsed member then consider attending the AGM. You will be given a warm welcome.

For those who joined the Group in its early years I'd like to point out that I joined in March 1986, four months after its first AGM in Nov 1985. Thus, there's a good chance that at least one person will remember you!

Good driving and good Observing

Mark Farnworth
Group Vice-President
and Newsletter Editor



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Secretary's Remarks

Welcome to everyone on the May course. I am sure you will enjoy the course and will find your driving much more enjoyable and less stressful. The good news is that Steve Linell has agreed to stand for Group Secretary, so I can step down happily at the AGM on 23rd June. Steve has been on the Committee for a while now so knows what it entails. I will continue as Minutes Secretary and provide a report for the Newsletter. As usual, we have been busy on your behalf: Jim and Alan went to a Regional Observers meeting in Chester so

will be able to bring all the latest developments to our Group. We have some interesting people coming to speak at the AGM, so we hope old members and new will come along to hear about the 25-year history of the Group. We still need someone to help Val O'Hanlon with recruitment with a view to relieving her of this duty. Most of you would have had contact with her so have some idea what she does. If you are interested please speak to Val or any Committee member.

Sue Hunt
Group Secretary

Deepest Sympathy

The Chairman and Committee would like to offer sincere condolences to George Gaskill and family following the recent loss of his beloved wife Beth.

George, his daughters Barbara, Sarah, Clare and Lisa, and his 11 grandchildren, are in our thoughts at this sad time.

Associate Coordinator's Corner

Congratulations to James Fawcett, Dave Roberts and Paul Auerswald on their recent Test Passes.

Welcome to the following Associates who have joined the May Course:- David Flynn, Norma Holden, Norma Jenkins, Helen Madden, Alan Makin, Rob Marsh, Stephen Plumb and Ken Taylor.

As this is the first Newsletter following the end of the IAM year, April 1st 2009 to March 31st 2010, it seems an appropriate time to give you the relevant statistics.

During that year we generated 12 Tests with 9 Passes and 3 Fails. This is less than last year but it is fair to say that the January Course was badly affected by the winter weather which was the worst we have had in the history of the Group.

Since the Group began in 1985, we have had 528 Test Passes and 34 fails. This Pass rate of around 94% is a testimony of the work done by our Observers, past and present, over the last 25 years.

Those figures should be encourag-

ing to our new Associates, each of whom I wish every success.

It is, of course, important that you do your best to attend each Sunday but if you cannot, please let me know and I will try to arrange a midweek run for you so that you will not fall behind.

Please try to attend the Classroom Sessions.

Our Senior Observers put a lot of work into preparing these and a good attendance makes them feel that their efforts are worthwhile. You will also learn something as well!

During the Course you may think of a few questions regarding what you can and cannot do on the IAM Test. To address this, one of our Classroom Sessions is a *Meet the Examiner* evening. There is no one better qualified to answer such questions as an IAM Examiner. However, if you are well prepared for the Test (and by the end of the Course you should be) then if your drive can be described as safe, systematic, smooth and reasonably progressive, then you should pass.



Finally, I hope that you are all enjoying the Course but if you do have any concerns or encounter any problems, let me know and they will be dealt with in confidence.

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.

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

Congratulations



Group Vice-President Mark Farnworth presents IAM Test Certificates to David Roberts (top) and James Fawcett

Raffle Prizes donated for AGM



★ Sincere appreciation and thanks to: ★

★

★ • Paula Reid, Burns & Reid Estate Agents, Lynton Way, Eccleston ★

★ • The World of Glass ★

★ • Nicky Williams, Park Inn Leisure Centre ★

★ • Stephen Bishop, Morrisons, Boundary Road ★

★

★ For their most generous donations of raffle prizes and their support for the St. Helens Group of Advanced Motorists ★





Letter to the Chair / IAM News Release



Dear Rob, I am writing to offer my sincere congratulations to you and all involved with the St Helens Group of the IAM on a very creditable achievement. I first became involved with the Group when serving with Merseyside Police No 4 Traffic Group at Oliver Lyme, Prescott, I had already been roped in at Runcorn and Widnes Group by my then Sergeant, Bryan Moore, I also worked on the Motorway Unit with John Baxendale and Malcolm Darbyshire .

I spent time with Anne and Denis Painter, along with John and Malcolm in the Group's formative years. I took over from John Baxendale as Examiner in 1993 when he was unfortunately unable to continue this task. I have vivid memories of turning up at Saints Ground on a wet and windy night to be 'introduced'. I also tried, duty permitting, to attend Birchley Street car park on Sunday mornings, again fond memories of Alan Prescott and his clip board organising the troops, then coffee in the caravan, with Maureen Leonard.

One event that does stick in my mind was the Senior Observer Test with Roger Eaves and Norman Griffiths - Laurel and Hardy eat your hearts out!! I also remember conducting Sue Hunt's test, what a courageous lady and I'm glad that she's still there with you, I know this because my friend and ex-work colleague Paul Griffiths was kind enough to forward your Newsletter and I read her article.

As I read the Newsletter many memories came flooding back as I read the list of names and thought of the annual blood letting event, The Driver of the Year competition when the gauntlet was laid down to all who dared to enter.

I left the area in 2002 to return to my home town of Morecambe due to parental problems. I now exam-

ine for Kendal/South lakes Group with the odd ones who live in the Lancaster area from Blackpool and Preston Groups so in reality my area stretches from Garstang to Kendal and out west as far as Barrow in Furness so I'm not stuck for test routes. Keep up the good work, and if all your efforts help to reduce road traffic collisions well it's all been worth it. Once again many congratulations and thanks for the years I was attached to the Group.

Paul Derham, IAM Examiner

IAM rebrands its occupational driver risk management operation 13th April 2010

The IAM (Institute of Advanced Motorists) has announced the merger of its two commercial businesses, IAM Fleet and Drive & Survive. They will now trade under the **new** name **IAM Drive & Survive**. The news was announced today at an official launch at Palmer Sport's motor circuit, Bedford Autodrome.

Prior to the re-brand, Drive & Survive and IAM Fleet were two of the most prominent occupational driver training organisations in the UK, owned and managed by the IAM, the UK's largest independent road safety charity. The decision to combine the two companies was made by newly appointed IAM Chief Executive Simon Best as part of an overall business strategy to ensure that all resources are more effectively channelled into offering one, comprehensive product range with the benefits of both companies.

Simon Best said: "In the past six months IAM and its commercial divisions have undergone a lot of positive change. IAM Drive & Survive offers a completely comprehensive range of driver risk

assessment and driver training products, both on-line and on-road driver training modules."

Today guests including journalists and clients have been introduced to the new brand, as well as being given the opportunity to get behind the wheel with IAM Drive & Survive trainers for taster sessions of some of the company's on-road training. Activities included *ecolution*, IAM Drive & Survive's fuel-saving and CO2 emission-reducing course, skid-control, and parking. Parking is a particular cause of concern for businesses, as statistics show that low-speed incidents result in substantial costs to fleet operations. There were a number of speakers during the day, including Dr Graham Hole, a Senior Lecturer in Psychology at the University of Sussex. Dr Hole spoke about the dangers of in-car communication for those driving for work.

Dr Hole said: "With the advent of the latest generation of smart-phones, computing has finally become truly mobile. The obvious temptation is to use these applications while driving. Many drivers regard their time spent driving as 'wasted' time, and this is perhaps especially true for those who are driving as part of their job. It is widely accepted that this is dangerous to both the driver themselves, not to mention other road users. Employers have an obligation to society to ensure that their employees' working conditions are such that they can perform their jobs without recourse to using a phone while driving."

The day finished with a driving experience, where guests took to the track in a Porsche 911 JPE, and a sporty Renault Clio, in order to enjoy their driving in a controlled environment.



**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 Speakers: Mike Lyne, IAM Council Member
 Joe Thomas, IAM Vice-President**

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)

Secunder (full name in capitals)

_____ (signature) _____

_____ (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.

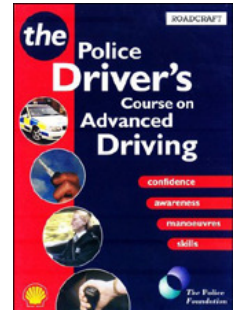
Advanced Roadcraft (DVD – 68 minutes): This DVD features general skills and techniques for driving safely and progressively in the range of road environment and

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

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
Garswood
WIGAN
WN4 0RS



Report: Region 5 Spring Conference, Christleton, Cheshire, 24th April 2010

Jim Cunliffe and I attended this event in the leafy countryside of Cheshire. There was quite a few guest speakers who were both very informative and amusing.

Peter Shield & Frances Edgerton from Cheshire fire service

These two officers from the fire service gave a really good insight into the consequences and effects of road traffic collisions covering the roles that each emergency service play where there have been death or serious injuries with current cost of £1.5m per death and £300,000 for a minor injury. The role that they are currently in is that of raising awareness and education. Giving facts and information so that road users have the correct information to ensure they may make informed decisions at all times. Peter and Frances attend schools, collages, motorcyclist engagement events and speak to focus groups of high risk young drivers. Both individuals displayed a passion for their vocation which was a pleasure for me to see.

One statement that Francis made really made me think "*from April 2009 to January 2010 in the county of Cheshire there has been 1 death by house fire and 42 killed on the roads*"

Colin Patterson

Colin has taken responsibility for marketing and communication function within IAM who is based in Chiswick House. He gave a good insight into his plans for making the brand IAM more appealing to all members covering some research he is currently overseeing about developing membership for the 8-25 year old road users. He also made quite a few analogies about where the IAM is currently and where it should be. Colin entertained us by applying I.P.S.G.A. to

his strategic plan for his side of the business within the IAM.

Information:- Looking at the assets, resources, financial position and the operational capability.

Position:- Financial results, competitors' position (Diamond, AA & ROSPA). *This year the IAM recovered £1.2m for incorrectly paying VAT last year.*

Speed:- Recruitment & Retention, influence on road safety agenda. *Every year for every 100 new members 8 leave and don't renew membership*

Gear:- Organisational Shape, Re-organisation at HQ

Acceleration:- Membership growth, increase influence

As a final item Colin hopes to provide material which can be adapted by local Groups to maintain a corporate image with a target date of July 2010.

Derrick McMullan

Derrick volunteered his services last year and was successfully selected as a Board Trustee, He gave a short presentation covering the role which a Trustee plays including the responsibilities, ensuring prudence and care is applied at all times

Derrick kindly gave an overview of the IAM, its main structure being, 82 staff employed at the Chiswick base, with 220 local groups who engage approx 20,000 active members using the services of 400 Examiners. A total membership of 100,000 drivers/riders only equates to 0.3% of the nations road users.

Derrick also talked us through the new process of getting the members' ideas to the Board in a streamline fashion the details of



which will be detailed in the IAM's monthly members' Newsletter.

Staff Examiner Chris Givvons (retired traffic police officer)

Gave a short presentation on road safety cameras, covering the introduction in 1988 by the metropolitan police service in London and the development of the complex models which in days gone by were used only to police accident black spots but now seem to spring up everywhere. He also told a few trade secrets of some cameras which were not operational for many months and some of the strict regulations which must be in place to gain a successful prosecution—which a Mr Freeman, who has represented the rich and famous, has used and Mr Givvons has observed in his previous role.

And finally, we were informed of an event in which all Groups could learn some tips on recruitment. The Chorley Group are holding a "Drive to Survive" event on the 18 & 19th of June at the Tesco site in Chorley town centre. Last year, from the event, they got sixty Associates for their Group!

Alan Meadows Committee Member and Observer



Driving Tips/Advice by Mark

Applying The System of Car Control

The 'System' is a systematic method of driving which, if used correctly, will substantially reduce the risk of a driver being the cause of an accident.

An explanation of the System is given in the IAM's **Advanced Driving** book and it is to this you must refer if you want a greater understanding. There are five phases of the System which must be considered on the approach to any hazard. A hazard can be the presence and / or movement of any vehicle or pedestrian, a road feature such as a roundabout or a climatic feature such as a sudden downpour of rain.

The five phases are: **Information, Position, Speed, Gear, and Acceleration**. The Information phase overlaps every other phase of the System.

Take information by looking at traffic signs and looking at the position and movement of vehicles and pedestrians. Be aware of observation links i.e. the hazards associated with what can be seen e.g. parked vehicles, a pedestrian flagging a taxi, a garage forecourt, a pedestrian walking to the front of a bus or roadside telephone poles formed into a curved line in the distance. Use your mirrors at any point in the System but particularly before changing position, before slowing or after changing gear i.e. a final check behind before the hazard is reached.

Use the information you have gathered by making a plan to deal with the identified hazards and making contingency plans for dealing with the unexpected e.g. car doors opening, a taxi suddenly stopping, a car shooting out of a roadside garage, a bus suddenly stopping or a car coming fast out of a bend ahead.

Give information to other road users e.g. using your indicators to inform them that you are going to change position, using your horn or flashing your headlights to let them know of your presence. Position your vehicle to re-enforce any other form of signal.

Position yourself so that you can pass hazards safely and smoothly. Give a good clearance when passing parked vehicles, cyclists or when overtaking moving vehicles. Follow the advice given in the Highway Code for positioning on the approach to roundabouts. Position yourself when approaching bends in national speed limit areas so as to maximise your view of the road ahead-taking account of oncoming / following vehicles and near-side hazards. Good observation will allow you to make the most effective use of available (legal) road space e.g. taking a clear lane at traffic lights on a dual carriageway. Good positioning allows smooth progress.

Speed: Obtain a safe speed to negotiate the hazard. Reduce speed, if need be, by either easing the pressure on the accelerator pedal (deceleration) or by braking. Whatever method is used it is essential to lose speed smoothly.

Gear: Once you have the right speed for the hazard, engage the correct gear for that speed. The aim, almost all of the time, is to have a clean separation between braking and changing gear i.e. no overlapping. Slight overlapping when going downhill into a corner or a bend is acceptable PROVIDED you do the gear change when most of the braking has already been done.

Acceleration: Consider accelerating away from the hazard after taking account of your speed and the position / movement of other road users. The accelerator pedal is

NOT an on/off switch to be suddenly pressed to the floor when a hazard has been negotiated. Use the pedal smoothly.

Commentary: The dreaded commentary is enough to make an Associate's hair curl and their palms sweat. Some potential Test candidates feel that this is a vital part of the Test. It isn't. In fact, it isn't even compulsory! A good commentary can never make up for bad driving but in a border line situation between a test pass or fail, a commentary could help.

A commentary should be given in a systematic way. A good way to start is to say where you are, where you are going and the route, what the weather is like and the state of the road. This 'opening' sets the scene for the Examiner but more importantly, it gets you talking. Be sensible however. Don't start talking about the weather if there is a hazard ahead that needs to be dealt with-and talked about.

Structure your commentary, perhaps breaking the road up into three areas: far distance, middle distance and behind. Far distance features could be roundabouts, traffic lights, or hill crests. The middle distance could be parked vehicles, pedestrians or side roads. Frequent mirror checks would enable you to comment on what is behind. A far distance feature soon becomes middle distance and then behind.

There is no need for complicated language. If you want to say "on the left" instead of "nearside" or "cars" instead of "vehicular traffic" then do so.

Remember, *practice makes perfect*.

Mark Farnworth
Senior Observer



Reproduced from the May 2010 Edition of Insight, The Institute of Advanced Motorists Group Briefing

THE SYSTEM

It's not just for cars and Motorbikes

We now have a new member in the IAM "family" – the cyclist.

From this month, it will be possible to join the IAM not just as a driver or a motorcyclist, but as a cyclist too!

We've posted every Group Chairman a complimentary copy of our new book "*How To Be A Better Cyclist*", which you should have had by now. Observers flicking through it will be pleased to see that the principles of IPSGA have been adopted and adapted for those using bicycles by our author John Franklin. There's no test involved for this category, but "the system" is just as relevant to those on two wheels as it is to our bed-rock membership categories – commercial, car and motorcycle.

The new guide provides comprehensive advice for safer cycling and is aimed at current and would-be cyclists of any level of experience. It also champions the idea of cyclists taking up a primary position

on the road.

"*How To Be A Better Cyclist*" is the third book in the IAM series, promoting proven cognitive road safety methods such as anticipation, self awareness and reaction, applying them to drivers, motorcyclists and cyclists. The new book can be used for personal study or in conjunction with training to the National Cycle Training standard.

The media launch at London's City Hall went well: Kulveer Ranger, the Mayor's Transport Advisor (pictured), said some very complimentary things about the IAM and endorsed our cycling strategy.

Mainstream media and cycling titles were there, as well as cycling organisations. London is on the verge of getting a massive new cycle access scheme and it's good to know that Transport for London (TFL) are prepared to support our safer cycling initiative.

We hope that people of any age will use "*How To Be A Better Cyclist*"



to get the most out of their cycle journeys, whether in the town or the country, and that the book will reach those who could benefit from our knowledge and experience.

"*How To Be A Better Cyclist*" can be ordered online at the IAM website, www.iam.org.uk, at £9.99 plus postage and packaging.

Simon Best
Chief Executive

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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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Lady Kirsty Pilkington

Group Vice-President

Mark Farnworth

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are purely the views of the members
and do not necessarily
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or the St Helens Group.*