



Driveway

Issue: 180 Autumn 2015

From The Chair

As Autumn and Winter approach with sickening speed, your committee are putting together some plans to hopefully brighten the darker days ahead. Full details of all of the events are not yet available, but as almost all of you are now on email we will be able to update you "between issues" as and when we get confirmation.

We are planning 2 more Group Meetings at Stourport before the year's end, one on 4th November and the other, a Group Meeting with Supper, on 2nd December. Further details inside.

Out of the meeting room and behind the wheel of a car (which I know many of you believe is the whole essence of Advanced Driving) I am delighted to be able to announce a "Skidpan" Plus (!) course later this year. Although we are waiting for confirmation of the date, details are given later on in Driveway, so book early to avoid disappointment!

In addition to the above, we are working towards a brighter and better website which will automatically update with all the information from IAM in Chiswick. We are being somewhat handicapped because of all the other groups wishing to take advantage of the IAM template, but really hope to have this in place before 2016 is too old! So keep an eye out and let us know what you think.

Congratulations to Bob Fox who passed the Masters in June. KAM now has two drivers at Masters level and other members considering taking the test.

Next year, our Drive Sundays will be held in all 12 months of the year, rather than shutting up shop in August, which we have done in the past. Holidays these days seem to be spread over the whole calendar rather than being confined to July and August. Volunteers to help us will, of course, always be welcome.

I look forward to welcoming you to any or all of these events and to meeting you again soon.

Andrea

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Charity No: 1098808
The Newsletter of Kidderminster Advanced Motorists

Group Contact: 07050 691252 & www.k-a-m.org.uk

Better Driving, Pt 1.

We belong to the Institute of Advanced Motorists (IAM) because we aspire to be better drivers. How we actually achieve this may initially be something of a mystery. Let us explore the process and start by looking at ourselves.

A safe and competent driver will:

Have a critical and honest self-awareness of their personal characteristics, attitudes and behaviors necessary for safe driving.

Act to keep identified risks to a minimum.

Be aware of their own limitations and that of the vehicle and road.

Be aware of the risks inherent in particular road and traffic situations.

Concentrate and use good observation skills.

Continuously match the vehicle's direction and speed to the changing conditions.

Make skillful use of the vehicle's controls.

There are four levels in the European Goals for Driver Education (GDE). These are: Human factors that affect your driving;

The purpose and context of your journey;

Traffic situations;

Vehicle and vehicle control.

Let us look at each of these in a little more detail.

Human factors that affect your driving.

Your personal characteristics can increase or reduce your risk of a collision compared with other drivers. Tiredness, stress, emotional mood and the effect of medication may influence your attitude to other road users and your driving concentration.

Learn to recognise personal tendencies that increase your risk and develop ways to manage them. Am I safe to drive?

The journey.

Ask what is the purpose of the journey; what preparation is needed, what is the best route, what distractions are there and how may they be minimised.

Traffic situations.

As you progress to become an advanced driver, your hazard perception skills and your ability to progress safely through traffic will improve because you will be scanning the road and anticipating hazards. Situational awareness is essential and you will be using all your senses, including that of

smell!

The vehicle.

It is essential that you know what your vehicle is and is not capable of and how to make use of the technologies it contains. When you acquire a new vehicle, familiarise yourself with it by reading the owner's manual, trying the different settings for steering, traction control, gears etc. Before each journey undertake a POWDER* check to ensure that the vehicle is fit to drive.

*Petrol (fuel)

Oil

Water (coolant and windscreen wash)

Damage or insecure items around the body, bumpers etc

Electrics – all lights, light lenses & horn

Rubber – are all tyres, (including the spare if carried), correctly inflated, with sufficient tread and undamaged?

Tiredness, stress, emotional mood and the effect of medication may influence your attitude to other road users and your driving concentration.

Stress

We are all vulnerable to driving stress from work to home related stressors. If allowed to cloud our thoughts, these will reduce our concentration on observation and driving, thus have a negative impact on our safety. We need to be able to recognise when we are stressed and take conscious steps to disengage from them.

Are the seat and steering wheel set to maximize your comfort? Don't dwell on previous stressful experiences or errors of judgment. This is where continuous use of the System of car control (or IPSGA) is helpful, especially if combined with a spoken commentary; it forces you to concentrate on your driving.

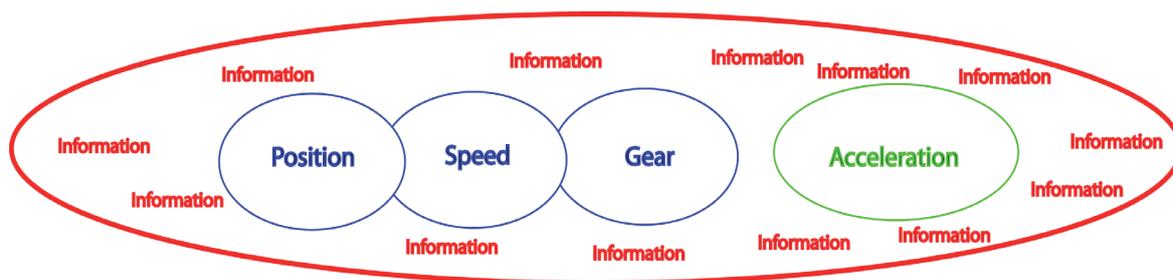
Ensure that you have left sufficient time for your journey and if not, accept that you may be late for your appointment. Relax, don't be irritated by other road users who lack discipline and courtesy and don't succumb to the red mist of "road rage". Better to arrive late and intact than fail to arrive because of a collision and injury.

Learning, practice and feedback

The System of car control

The System (IPSGA = Information, Position, Speed, Gear, Acceleration) describes the approach to dealing with a hazard: gather information early (and

continue doing so throughout), make use of the information to form a plan, and communicate to other road users; be in the right place on the road, at the right speed, in the right gear to keep the vehicle responsive, and finally accelerate after you're clear the hazard.



Having developed the skills and become familiar with use of the System of car control, it is essential that we practice and hone our skills in order to maintain them. This requires us to ask ourselves the following after each journey;

What was the aim of my journey?

What went well? Why?

What went less well? Why?

How could I improve next time?

Have I been honest with myself?

You will only become a better driver if you understand your own vulnerability, know the limits of your driving capabilities and recognise the human factors that affect your safety.

And remember, there is no such thing as a perfect drive.

Stay safe at the wheel.

Bob Fox

Central England and West Wales Forum

KAM forms part of the IAM region known as CEWW. In the last issue I raised the issue that CEWW had lost 2 of its principle officers, namely the Treasurer and Secretary, who had both decided not to offer themselves for re-election at the Forum AGM in May. The Forum were unable to find volunteers for the 2 posts and so the AGM was postponed until the next Forum meeting (19 September). Sadly since then, Neil Atkins, who was the Forum Chairman, died very unexpectedly. He will be greatly missed, not just as the Forum Chairman, but as Chairman of his own group, Lichfield and for the enormous amount of work he has put in to the development of observer training.

Following on so sooner after the death of its President, Bob Jackson, in January, Neil's death, obviously presented what was left of the CEWW committee with a huge challenge – where were we going to find the essential all three officers to enable the Forum to continue? A huge effort has gone into recruitment and hopefully we will be able to report back to you after 19 September with a happy outcome.

Andrea.

Forthcoming Meetings

We are planning 2 more Group Meetings at Stourport before the year's end, one on 4th November and the other, a Group Meeting with Supper, on 2nd December.

The first meeting is also going to be open to members from other IAM groups in the area, as KAM have been asked by Ian Firth, the new Regional Operations Manager for the Central England & Wales (West) area, to host a Trustees Meeting. Like me, you are probably wondering who the Trustees are and what – if anything – they have to do with our local group! This is our opportunity to find out and we are pleased to be able to offer this opportunity to meet at least some of them and find out what they do within the IAM organisation and how it impacts on you and me as IAM members.

The Group Meeting on 2nd December follows a succession of similar meeting where we offer a discounted supper to members, friends and families prior to Christmas. We have not yet decided on who will be our speaker for this, but again, we will let you know beforehand.

Andrea

Skidpan Experience

An exciting opportunity for some really worthwhile driver training -

At last we have found the facilities to offer some "Skidpan" training to our members – although it isn't called that anymore, it is termed as "Dealing with Emergency Situations! Sanden Driver Training is based at the Throckmorton Airfield, just outside Pershore where they offer a range of highly enjoyable driving experiences. The half-day course on offer will include 3 elements as follows:-

1. Dealing with emergency situations – (Used to be called skidpan training)
2. Collision avoidance – (Steering to avoiding obstacles while using ABS braking at high speed)
3. Precision driving – (Driving through and reversing back through a slalom course)

The Vehicles are provided by Sanden Driver Training. There will be a mixture of manual and automatic transmissions, giving you the chance to drive both.

There are three activities, three vehicles and three drivers in each vehicle in addition to the instructor/observer. Each driver will have approximately 20 minutes driving during each of the three activities. The cost is £75 per person this year, although will go up slightly in 2016. This includes light refreshments. It is proposed that this will be the first of several courses if enough of you are interested.

Brian Elliott and I had an "introductory" session back in July and believe me, it is FANTASTIC. Brian, as some of you will know holds his Masters certificate (with distinction) which is the highest non-emergency service driving certificate around, and even he said he learned so much in the short time we were there. I, as a humble, basic-pass Advanced Driver, was completely bowled over by everything these guys were able to show us about driving in a very short space of time.

All in all, this is a VERY HIGHLY RECOMMENDED course.

We currently have options on either 21st November or 5th December.

If you are interested, please email me with your date preference no later than Friday, 25th September. If you don't have an email facility, then pick up the phone to either Brian or myself and we will make a note of your details and interest. Numbers are restricted, but as I say, we will be running others next year if we have the numbers to warrant it.
Andrea.

Scam Avoidance

The numbers of intentionally staged road accidents has increased over the last few years, forcing insurance companies to pay out on bogus injury claims. Here are some tips to help you stay clear of these scams.

When travelling through busy urban roads use your mirrors to keep an eye on what is going on around you; a motorist driving erratically, or a surge of oncoming traffic. Slow down and maintain a large, clear space ahead of you until you can pass safely. Always maintain a safe following distance from the car in front of you.

Be cautious of motorists tailgating you – the driver might be trying to get your attention intentionally so you look at them. Whatever you do, focus on the road ahead and ignore any gestures another driver makes.

Use your judgement to make progress only when you feel it is safe to do so. Even if you think a driver is flashing their headlights to give you priority, think again – they may be flashing their headlights to distract and lead you into a collision. Don't react to another driver's bad behaviour or "road rage". If, at any point, you do feel threatened pull over where it is safe and legal to do so and call the police.

If you have been involved in a collision, collect all the driver's details and take photographs, including passengers from the other car. If the photograph indicates there are fewer passengers in the car you can reduce the potential of any fraudulent injury claims being made.

Witnesses may be able to offer a statement and a dashboard camera can be used to help understand how the collision happened and who was involved. You may consider installing this in your car to help protect you against accusations and insurance fraud.

For more information on how you can avoid insurance fraud please visit: <https://www.insurancefraudbureau.org/>

Wyre Forest Dial-a-Ride

Can you spare a half-a-day a week to help the Wyre Forest Dial-a-Ride scheme? Drivers need to hold a D1 licence and will receive tuition on how to use the wheelchair clamps etc. Also required, are Driver Assistants (who don't need the D1 licence). Further information from Peter or Stephanie Ainsley p.ainsley@blueyonder.co.uk or s.ainsley@blueyonder.co.uk

A Physicist Writes

A recent information request to Highways England (HE, though until recently the Highways Agency, HA) had revealed that in 2014 there were *more than 440,000* lane-closures on motorways and primary A-roads – closures all sanctioned by HE (I mean HA), presumably.

Vehicle breakdowns were by far the biggest cause, numerically, at 41% of the total. The second-largest item in the list was planned roadworks, but at only 14%. But let's think about it: roadworks on major roads might be completed overnight, but equally they may continue and disrupt traffic for months. I doubt if the 14% figure reflects that! You only have to consider the extra time that you spend in queues or diversions on account of the road being dug up, compared with delays due to broken-down vehicles, to suspect a flaw in Highways England's presentation of the data.

And for many drivers, of course, time is money: what an appalling waste it is of both, when traffic gets held up. Are there really no (further) steps that HE can take to minimize disruption caused by roadworks? Why can't all or most main-road repairs be carried out at night, for instance? The extra cost could very well be smaller than the gain to the economy from causing less daytime queuing.

You may rightly guess that I dislike any sort of waste! As an example, on the road as I approach a roundabout or other 'obstruction', always in my mind is the petrol I can save by lifting my foot early, hence having to brake less – in other words, converting less fuel finally into totally wasted heat.

Do I overdo this? Possibly. But I like to think (a) that it counterbalances other drivers who race up and then brake hard at the last minute, and (b) that I can make up for any time lost, by afterwards accelerating away briskly, which is I believe the most efficient way, fuel-wise, of getting back up to speed. (Incidentally, it's also a way of clarifying the intentions of a driver behind who you sense may be a tail-gater: if you succeed in putting a gap between you, and you're now up at the speed limit, then he/she will have to *exceed* the limit by some margin in order to close the gap again.)

Anyway, everyone has to strike their own balance between wasting something, and inconveniencing themselves by not wasting it! Though once you've got into the habit of economizing, the 'inconvenience' soon seems unimportant. At home, we have pairs of water-butts front and rear of the house, to collect rain from the roof. You might be familiar with the connector that goes into a

downpipe, at just the right height to divert water across to a butt without overflowing it. With the rear downpipe, though, my problem was that I could only insert the connector at first-floor level. How to stem the flow down to the butts after they had filled up?

Suddenly the solution came to me: I installed a ballcock-float in the (second) butt and attached a vertical beanpole to it, reaching up to a loop in my long plastic tubing coming off the connector in the downpipe. It works a treat: when both butts are full, the loop is lifted above the level of the connector, and water stops being diverted down the tubing.

From the front of our house, the driveway slopes down towards the road. This means that I can park a car down below the level of the butts, and then wash it from them using a long hose with brush attached. The 'natural' water seems to leave a nice sheen! But this reminds me that the other week we looked out to see my Golf covered in what appeared to be splattered white paint. We had previously noticed parts of the road similarly defaced, and so we feared that an epidemic of antisocial behaviour was beginning.

When I went out to inspect the 'paint', I was relieved to find that it wiped off easily, as if it had started out as simply flour and water. But it was still a mystery why someone would bother to intrude up the driveway and throw it. Then a few days later, Mrs S happened to see a heron flying low overhead... and watched as it deposited a huge shower of white mess on the ground!

We had hardly thought that a single bird could be the culprit. And even though there's a lake opposite with a heron or two on it, we've never experienced this trouble on or near the road before. Is it that fish-ponds in neighbours' gardens have suddenly become an attraction for these impressive birds?

One item of news from the IAM was most encouraging: its Mature Drivers Assessment scheme enables senior motorists to have a drive with an IAM assessor – and out of 558 participants, "36% took the assessment because their reaction times were decreasing". Well! As far as I know, it's never before been recognized that some people become more alert and quicker to react, as they get older. Maybe the reason is that after they retire they are able to catch up on their sleep, and are therefore wider awake when driving. Alternatively, though, it could have been just an IAM misprint: "decreasing", instead of "worsening"...

Peter Soul.

Retirees

This year has seen a number of changes within KAM.

Joe Crofts retired after 26 years of observing and another founder member of the group, Brian Carter has decided to stop observing as he gradually winds his working hours down. Mark Griffiths has after many years, resigned from the Chief Observer post due to pressures of work but continues to serve on the committee.

On behalf of the Group, I would like to take this opportunity to thank each of you for all the time and effort you have contributed to the success of KAM and the promotion of safer driving.

Best wishes for the future.
Andrea.

A Little Light Relief

Justification for hogging the center lane of a motorway, (for those who remember their nursery rhymes) -
Goldilox and the three bears; the inside lane is too slow, the outside lane is too fast but the middle lane is just right!

New Members

David Stansbie	Brierley Hill
Lynetter Martin	Stourport on Severn
Lucy Jenner	Kidderminster

Welcome to the Group. Enjoy the experience.
Bob Fox.
Editor.

Test Passes

Associate	Observed By
Jane Mallard	Bob Fox
Tony Jauncey	Mike Gardiner
Adam Moore	Mary Drummond
June 2015	

3 year re-qualification

Peter Howells (First)	Bob Fox/Brian Elliot
August 2015	

Many congratulations to you all, the effort was well rewarded, and especially to Peter for obtaining a "First".
Bob Fox
Editor.

DRIVE SUNDAYS, first Sunday of each month,
10.30am, The Lock Inn car park at Wolverley, DY10 3RN members and non-members, all welcome.

COPY DEADLINE FOR NEXT EDITION OF DRIVEWAY - 2 DECEMBER 2015

Who's Who in KAM

	President: Mike Doyle		
Chair:	Andrea Beech	01562 700730	07837 200967 andrea-kam@uwclub.net
Secretary:	Christine Lacey	01384 396267	kidderminsteriam@gmail.com
Treasurer:	Megan Weaver	01299 871278	meganweaver21@hotmail.com
Chief Observer:	Brian Elliot	07752090452	bp414elliott@btinternet.com

Committee Members:

	Mark Griffiss	01384 351314	mgriffissceilings@blueyonder.co.uk
	Rex Mound	07983 818350	rex.mound@btinternet.com
	Neville Simpson	07711 908509	simpson.n@blueyonder.co.uk
	Rich Brewer	07980901444	richiebrewer@hotmail.co.uk
Driveway Editor:	Bob Fox	07855817318	bob@bobfox.demon.co.uk

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