



# Driveway

Issue: 183, Autumn 2016

## From The Chair

A good mix of committee, full members, associates and guests attended the AGM. All 3 Officers were re-elected as were the existing committee with the exception of Nev Simpson who had decided to stand down and Mike Doyle who has resigned as President.

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I announced a number of new initiatives, all geared at increasing overall membership whilst maintaining a healthy balance between observers and associates and include:

Relaunch of the KAM website which with a completely new look and easier navigation, with links to important associated sites and regular updates.

An advertising campaign in the Kidderminster Shuttle and Stourbridge News. This will run over a series of 4 months, launching in July, and will appear the Thursday before our Drive Sundays. To ensure that we are able to handle assessment drives, Observers will receive a reminder email each month asking for their help. PLEASE CHECK YOUR EMAILS – LAST THURSDAY OF THE MONTH.

The reintroduction of Theory Classes – assuming our recruitment campaign is successful, we will resurrect our theory classes which will of course be open to new associates, existing members wanting a refresher and observers.

The full report of the AGM will be posted on the website when it launches. This is to be my final year as Chairman and I shall be working hard to encourage new blood onto the committee with a view to handing over in May next year. With your help we shall have a strong and growing group and a bright and sustainable future. So PLEASE can I encourage all of you to put just a little bit back into your group and offer help as new observers, new committee members, promoting KAM to friends, family and work colleagues. Word of mouth is the most important recruitment weapon we have. We have 122 members – if everyone introduces just one person, we have a brilliant future!!!



Thanks once again to everyone who came along in May and to all of the Committee who work so hard on your behalf. Thank you.

Andrea

Charity No: 1098808

The Newsletter of Kidderminster Advanced Motorists

Group Contact: 07050 691252 & [www.k-a-m.org.uk](http://www.k-a-m.org.uk)

## Better Driving, Pt 4.

Full control of a vehicle starts with the driver being seated comfortably. There must be sufficient legroom to enable full access to and depression of the clutch pedal, the wheel set to enable all instruments to be seen. All hand controls must be accessible. The wheel should be held comfortably with both hands and the elbows slightly bent, palms on the rim, thumbs extended so that thumbnails are visible. Hold the wheel lightly and keep both hands on the wheel unless operating a control. Wherever possible, operate controls whilst driving in a straight line, keeping both hands on the wheel whilst negotiating bends.

A vehicle is at it's most stable when being driven in a straight line with it's weight evenly distributed and the engine is just pulling, without increasing the road speed. Smooth use of acceleration, deceleration and steering will maximize the vehicle's stability and economy.

On average, contact with the road is no greater than about the size of a hand for each tyre. The importance of ensuring that tyres are in good condition and correctly inflated cannot be overstated. Tyre grip is shared between the forces of acceleration, braking and steering. Too much of one leaves too little for the others, e.g. too fast into a left-hand bend causes the weight distribution to shift to the front off-side wheel leaving too little grip for steering, which may lead to skidding. This is known as "Tyre Grip Trade Off" and it is for this reason that we always brake on the straight approach to a bend, enabling us to safely steer round it.

The accelerator is used to increase or maintain road speed and when released, road speed reduces. When accelerating, the weight transfers to the rear wheels, which may result in front wheel drive vehicles losing grip and steering. Rear wheel driven vehicles will gain grip on the driving wheels but steering may be diminished.

Changes of speed and direction should be smooth. This maximizes passenger comfort, decreases fuel consumption and minimises wear & tear on the vehicle. The ability to vary the vehicle speed by use of the accelerator will result in reduced use of the brakes and lower fuel consumption. This is known as Acceleration Sense. Developing Acceleration Sense is an important part of becoming an Advanced Driver.

Braking and gear changing should only be done whilst the vehicle is at it's most stable, i.e. when traveling in a straight line, hence the need for good anticipatory skills.

Common mistakes include accelerating towards a hazard, followed by sharp braking; often seen when catching up with a slower moving vehicle and commonly, braking when traveling uphill! Anticipation is key!

On bends, cornering forces cause vehicles to loose speed. To maintain a constant speed through a bend gentle depression of the accelerator is required. The same applies to ascending a hill. On the approach to a bend reduce speed to ensure that you can stop within the distance you can see ahead to be clear, on your side of the road; as you enter the bend, maintain your speed by gently increasing pressure on the accelerator but do not increase road speed until you are past the apex of the bend and as the limit point of vision increases you may consider gently increasing your road speed if it is safe to do so.

Gears convert engine revolutions to useable power; the lower the gear, the greater the torque or turning power transmitted from the engine to the wheels. This is why at low speed in slippery conditions, selection of a higher gear is less likely to result in wheel spin. Gears are used to accelerate or maintain a given speed. They are not used to reduce speed. That is what vehicles have brakes for!

Slowing and stopping a vehicle may be accomplished in two ways. Engine braking, where pressure is removed from the accelerator causing the engine speed to drop, known as "engine braking" and used for gradual reductions in speed. Tapered braking, where initial free movement of the brake pedal is followed by a progressive increase in

pressure until the desired effect is obtained at which point the pedal is released very gently to avoid halting with a jolt. With good anticipation, engine braking will become the norm, whilst the brakes will be used less frequently. This results in a smoother drive and reduced fuel consumption.

As previously stated, anticipation is essential and the identifying and prioritizing of hazards enables us to drive smoothly. In good weather follow a

**"mistakes include  
accelerating towards a  
hazard, followed by sharp  
braking"**

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minimum of two seconds behind the vehicle ahead. "Only a fool breaks the two second rule, when the weather is poor, best make it four." To which may be added "and when conditions are tough, will ten be enough?"

The overall safe stopping distance comprises two elements – Thinking Distance + Braking Distance. Thinking distance will vary depending on driver attentiveness, anticipation and vehicle speed. Braking distance depends on the weight and effectiveness of it's brakes and the condition and gradient of the road surface.

Emergency braking is undertaken by depressing and holding the brake as hard as possible. Remember that if the vehicle has an Antilock Brake System (ABS) fitted, a pulsing action will be felt and that ABS enables better steering control whilst braking hard.

The Parking Brake should only be used when the vehicle is at a standstill. When in a queue at night, consider using it in preference to the footbrake to avoid dazzling the driver behind. When parking a vehicle with a manual gearbox on a slope, consider leaving it in gear in case of parking brake failure.

Steering should be delicate, smooth and gradual, making several small changes in direction without moving hands provided that your hand does not pass the twelve o'clock position. For larger turns, usually undertaken at lower speeds, the most frequently used technique is the "pull-push" where neither hand passes the twelve o'clock position but the wheel is fed from one hand to the other, one gripping and the other sliding round to continue the turn. Always keep both hands on the wheel when braking, cornering or driving through standing water.

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

Stay safe at the wheel.

Bob Fox

National Observer.

### KAM & Tenbury Wells U3A

Fourteen members of Tenbury Wells U3A (University of the Third Age) recently undertook free driving assessments with three KAM Observers.

The U3A members signed up for driving assessments after a talk at one of their meetings, given by Clive Tong, KAM National Observer. They were keen to have a 'health check' on their driving

### Driver First Assist –

#### Saturday 24th September 2016.

Following our own DFA course last September, Lichfield Group are running this course on Saturday 24 September, from 9.00am to 5.30pm at the Belgrave Fire Service Community Room Tamworth. Just off the M42 / A5 Junction.

The course is now live on the DFA Website ( <http://www.driverfirstassist.org> ) You will need to go to this site to book the course, but first of all contact Graham Ottewell at Lichfield Group ([gottewell@gmail.com](mailto:gottewell@gmail.com)) and he will give you the discount code, reducing the cost from £144 to £80.

This is not a full first aid course more about staying safe at the scene of an accident, what to do and how and what to relay to emergency services. There is a little first aid to do with breathing. It counts towards peoples Certificate of Professional Competence (CPC) should you need it.

This is an excellent course with a recognised qualification, plus it is tremendous fun! Go for it! Andrea.

and, learn more about advanced driving.

During June, Clive was joined by KAM Observers Peter Howells and Rex Mound, who took the U3A members on a route in and around Tenbury Wells, which included town roads, 'A' roads and country lanes, to check out their driving skills.

All the drivers appreciated the time given by the Observers and valued the feedback they received. A number expressed an interest in the IAM RoadSmart advanced course.



Pictured are Rex Mound and Peter Howells with U3A drivers Jan Downward and David Patrick.

Clive Tong  
National Observer

## A Physicist Writes . . .

All my life, from university days until recently, I kept a finger lightly on the pulse of school education, taking a mild interest in some of its methods, trends and problems. Let me say right away that I have every sympathy with teachers, as they contend with pupils who have been insufficiently taught and inspired at a lower level, plus an influx of distracting (and in some ways harmful) smart-phones, and an ever-growing mountain of administration and red tape!

Nowadays I mostly know only what I read in the papers, but for about forty years I had some insight into how both maths and physics were being taught (the first has plainly and gradually been 'dumbed down', while the second may even have gone the other way). This came about simply because at my post-graduate university I overheard someone say: Who might be able to help the son of a friend of mine with his school physics?

I said: well, I might... and that's how I started to coach a succession of (in total) some hundreds of schoolchildren, in physics and in maths, at A-Level, O-Level, GCSE and CSE (not all still in existence now, of course). And I would say that I benefited from this – by retaining and adding to my knowledge – as much as any pupil did!

I only gave it up around the time I retired, eleven years ago. I also found myself jumping straight from a salaried job into a voluntary one: editing our residents' newsletter for Maiden Erlegh (part of Earley, on the edge of Reading). We have a large and well-regarded comprehensive school on our doorstep, and I set out to feature it in every issue, of which there were three a year. Topics ranged from controversial changes in its catchment area to exciting reports of school trips to Africa.

Then it occurred to me to invite each head of department in turn to write a column waving the flag for his or her own subject(s), by saying why studying them was worthwhile. My special interests, science and music, were covered first but by the time I gave up the editor's chair, three years ago, I had attracted an enthusiastic essay from every department – and each story nearly made me wish I had chosen a different direction at school, long ago!

**“I have every sympathy with teachers, as they contend with pupils who have been insufficiently taught and inspired at a lower level”**

**“As for looking left and right at junctions, staring at a phone-screen takes priority over anything like that”**

I don't have such direct and up-to-date awareness now of what goes on in schools. Nevertheless, I feel that certain steps can and should be taken to improve matters within them. Something that I'm made well aware of, just by looking out of our front window, is the length of the school day: this seems to have increased slightly in the last year or two, but half the afternoon is still being wasted (unless homework occupies it, which somehow I doubt). So I was pleased to hear in the Budget in March that there will be a general extending of school hours. Though perhaps it would be kinder if this was applied on a sliding scale with increasing age!

Let's now focus on particular subject-areas: from what I've read about maths and the sciences, going all the way up through secondary school and into university, some pupils arrive at each new level unprepared for it. Much time has to be spent in remedial teaching – and even then these pupils will progress more slowly than others, probably, because the missing proficiencies had to be instilled too quickly. (As for the other more advanced pupils, they are probably disadvantaged by this situation too.)

Well, call me simplistic but, with due acknowledgment to any readers who are primary-school teachers, it seems to me that the whole solution is for them to teach multiplication tables and the other basic skills rigorously and early. The advantage gained and the time saved at the next stage will then allow more effective teaching there, and thus, surely, the benefits will ripple upwards and outwards through the whole education system...

Next, may I put in a word for school musical activities – or rather, several words: coordination; self-confidence; self-esteem; brain development; teamwork; achievement from effort; general academic improvement; learning to take risks and to conquer fear. *All these things come from playing in an orchestra and/or singing in a choir.* Yet unaccountably, music facilities in schools (where they exist at all) are under pressure as never before. I have had the pleasure of singing in choirs ever since my early

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teens but, to my regret, the opportunity to play in an orchestra never came my way. (Though if it had, maybe I would have missed certain other musical experiences whose memory I treasure almost more than anything else.)

[You might think that children at primary school would not (yet) have picked up the idea that classical music wasn't for them. But I have just read about the experience of a lady who goes into a school to take music sessions, as a volunteer. She played some of *The Planets* by Holst (a local man, as it happened). A boy piped up: "Isn't this stuff just for posh rich people?" He was five years old.]

There's a vital topic which, as far as I know, is not taught at all – or if it is, then the knowledge rapidly fades as the school gates are left behind: *road sense*. I have observed cycle-proficiency classes being conducted out on the highway, but I never see teenage cyclists ride as if they've attended one. Either side of the road will do for them, or both sides if in a group, and lights at night are for sissies. As for looking left and right at junctions, staring at a phone-screen takes priority over anything like that. If instead road sense was made a subject for proper education, immediately (too) there would be a stronger basis on which to start the follow-on course, namely driving lessons...

Lastly let me report a news item that I read at the beginning of the year: as part of a university research project, schoolchildren were taught the meanings of dozens of Latin and Greek word-parts – *dict* (= say), *dis* (= not), *bio* (= life), *chron* (= time) and so on, all of them of course appearing often within English words. The astonishing result (though not so surprising to me) was that the pupils started to make rapid progress not only in deciphering English words that were new to them, but also in all school subjects. Some were said to have advanced six years in reading age, in no time at all.

So there you have it, the Soul Scheme for Superior Schooling: longer hours, early times tables, music, Latin and Greek. Oh, and road sense. Over to you, teachers!  
Peter Soul

## Emergency Vehicles

Whenever you hear the sound of an emergency siren mute your music so you can work out where the noise is coming from. Be prepared to plan your next manoeuvre if the emergency vehicle requires your help to get past.

Pull over and stop where it is safe to do so, giving the emergency vehicle a wide enough berth. Make your intentions clear and avoid blocking any major junctions, stopping in the middle of the road, on the brow of a hill or before a bend.

Avoid stopping on kerbs, pavements and verges as they may mask hazards, damage your vehicle or put pedestrians at risk.

Going through a red light or using a bus lane to make way for an emergency vehicle is in fact breaking the law and cameras have no discretion. Avoid this at all costs and be sure to stop only where it is legal and safe to do so.

Emergency lights are not always easily visible and the sirens can be heard from different directions so be as vigilant as possible. Motorcycles are also used by all emergency services and they may be hard to see – be prepared to respond and plan your route before acting.

Further information is available at [www.bluelightaware.co.uk](http://www.bluelightaware.co.uk)

Bob Fox

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## Observer Meeting

**13 July 2016**

We were fortunate to have Alison Bridgman from Lichfield Group as Guest Presenter at the recent Observer Meeting. She is a tremendously busy lady and it has taken us several months to co-ordinate diaries and book a date with her.

Her talk "All in The Mind" is a fascinating and stimulating presentation about the psychology of driving and how to use this when working with nervous or difficult associates. It was a very interactive evening and everyone thoroughly enjoyed it and felt it was extremely helpful.

If we are successful in swelling our observer ranks I shall certainly be inviting Alison back for a repeat visit as it is a subject about which you learn more every time you hear her talk!

Andrea.

## Test Passes

### Associate

Lucy Jenner  
Kevin Hogan  
Clive Haycock

### Observer

Bob Fox  
Mark Griffiss  
Clive Tong

Congratulations to you all.  
Ed.

## New Members

Clive Haycock	Bewdley
David Webb	Stourport on Severn
Ann Martin	Kidderminster
Rosemary Illidge	Tenbury wells
Wendy Davies	Kidderminster
Edwin Corfield	Tenbury Wells
David Patrick	Tenbury Wells

Welcome to the Group, wishing you all success.  
Ed.

## Volunteers Please

Peter Howells has organised for KAM to have a stand at the Truck Fest on Saturday 10th September. This will be held at "The Shed", Crossway Green, (off the A449 between the Mitre Oak and Bells Fruit farm).

If you have a couple of hours to spare during the day, it would be very much appreciated. For further details please contact Peter direct, (details below).

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

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## Who's Who in KAM

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