

NEWSLETTER

February 2016



Paddy Hopkirk MBE has been appointed IAM Mature Driver Ambassador

GUILDFORD & DISTRICT GROUP OF ADVANCED MOTORISTS

Registered Charity No. 1051069

guildford-iam.org.uk

Data Protection Act

Members and Associates are reminded that names, addresses, telephone numbers and membership details are stored on computer files to assist with the management of the group and the distribution of Guildford Group correspondence.

We do not pass your details on to anyone else.

Editor's Notes

Please note that the views and comments herein are published without prejudice, being those of the writers and not necessarily those of the Group or the IAM. Deadline to submit articles for the Spring 2015 edition is Friday, 22 April 2016

KEY DATES

Observed Sunday Runs 2016: 09:15 onwards (Third Sunday in each month)
21 February, 20 March, 17 April, 15 May, 19 June, 17 July, 21 August

Committee Meetings 2016 (Wednesdays)
Ripley Small Hall GU23 6AF 8pm - 10pm
March 2nd, May 4th, July 6th, Sep 7th, Nov 2nd 2016

AGM 2016
Saturday 24th September - Ripley Large Hall GU23 6AF - 09:30am – 12:30pm

Events

See next page for details – next event is skid pan training on 18th April, then 'Meet your Examiner' on Tuesday 17 May at 7pm in Ripley Village Hall

Cover photo courtesy of IAM - Paddy Hopkirk - Mature Driver Ambassador
Other photographs courtesy of Group members unless otherwise indicated.



@IAMgroup



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Some of the 60 or so group members, associates and guests who attended a really interesting morning with Lester Parsons, hosted by our President, Alan Bone (pictured above).

Events News

Skid pan training

We have been fortunate in getting access to a facility which will allow us to start offering skid pan training again.

The first planned course is for Monday 18th April in Kelvedon, Essex. We would try to get participants to travel together and share the cost of the journey about 90 mins away. The cost of the three hour training session is £50 for Group members and £55 for non-members.

If you would like to join us please e-mail paulw2000@btinternet.com or call Paul on 07860 600477. Payment by cheque in advance to Guildford Advanced Motorists to reserve your place.

“Meet your Examiner” – Tuesday 17 May - 7:30 pm – Ripley small hall.

Places limited, so please let us know if you are coming

– e-mail sec@guildford-iam.org.uk.

Shaun Cronin is our new Regional Quality Manager for the IAM and he has been invited to a special group meeting to talk about the IAM test. Shaun will explain to new Associates and those just about to take their IAM test exactly what he will be looking for and how the test will be conducted. He will answer all your questions and tell you how to get the best out of your Observed runs with the group so that you will be successful on the day of your test.

Book the date now as this is a terrific opportunity to talk to an IAM Examiner ‘one-to-one’ so that you are fully prepared for your test. Of course, all other group members and friends are welcome to hear Shaun’s talk. Light refreshments will be provided. See you there!



Lines & Signs – a talk by Lester Parsons

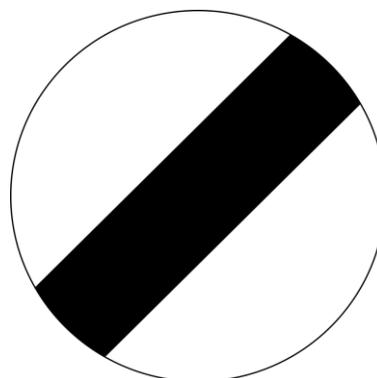
Alan Bone, our new Group President, brought three Police colleagues to Ripley on a chilly Saturday morning in January and over 60 group members, guests and visitors from other groups attended for a very interesting lecture. The main event was a talk by Lester Parsons.

Lester has spent a life-long career in the Police, starting as a young policeman who could not drive, and remembering the early driving lessons all carried out strictly to 'the Roadcraft system', so he had no bad habits to break. He has since worked in a variety of Police traffic roles, driving and riding, and has a long list of stories to tell which he does in a very amusing style.

However, the main point of his talk related to speed through bends, what some advanced drivers call 'limit points'. And the starting question was 'how do we build roads'?

Lester made the point that all motorways and 'A' roads in the UK are built to the same standards and to the same legislation. In 1930 speed limits for cars and motorcycles were abolished, then in 1934 a general 30mph speed limit was imposed on roads in built up areas (effectively roads with street lighting) which remains to this day.

Other roads had no speed limits at all. It was not until 1965 that a national upper limit of 70mph was introduced for all roads, including motorways. Since 1977 the speed limit for cars and motorcycles on dual carriageways has been 70mph, with a 60mph speed limit on single carriageways. Because motorways were designed in the days before speed limits the legislation required them to be designed for a maximum speed of 120mph in dry conditions. This was at or above the speed that could be achieved by almost all cars of the day. Slip roads leaving motorways were to be designed to a limit of 30mph – this requires good observation and skilful application of the brakes!





Lester explained that on 'A' roads the requirement is for the road to be safe at the National speed limit. So a straight single carriageway road in a rural area with a 60mph limit only has the centre lane marking to guide you. As soon as a bend appears, it is the number and intensity of the signs that indicate the severity of the bend. The first and most common sign is the hazard warning line, so Lester's advice is to drop 10mph. For every additional sign he advises a further 10mph drop in speed, so if the bend also has a warning sign and some chevrons he advises 30mph for the bend, adding 3 separate warning devices together to get the reduction of 30mph.

This seems to be a much simpler way of arriving at a bend in the road with some confidence that you will proceed safely. Sometimes, as Lester admitted, this process will leave you approaching the bend a little too slowly, but accelerating gently through a bend is far better than arriving too fast. The key point is to remember that the more signs and paint there is, the tighter the bend. And, the bigger the sign, the greater the danger; but look out for country roads where there is no space for paint in the road and no money for signs. 'B' roads and country lanes are built to different standards and you must proceed with more caution.

Other signs that caught Lester's attention were at cross roads. He was quite clear to say that every 'cross roads' sign is actually a warning sign with some directions added. Sight lines at cross roads can be very restricted, and this gave rise to another interesting point. To pass a roadside eyesight test you are only required to be able to read a standard number plate at a distance of 20 metres. However, a car travelling at 60 mph will cover those 20 metres in well under a second, so someone with just legally acceptable eyesight will not have very much time to react to a small car approaching the junction at a legal speed. Lester encouraged us all to take great care at junctions, especially on roads with a National speed limit, and not to believe that all other drivers 'think like you do'.

So we all need to think about the information on signs more carefully, not just what they say but simply the fact that they are there. Each sign costs money to erect and keep maintained; they are all there for a purpose.

We hope that Lester may be willing to return to Guildford in the future and give us some more insights into the life he has led patrolling the roads and delivering his road safety messages.

Welcome

A couple of 'observations' this issue. Firstly, I was tempted recently to try an 'overtake' on a straight, clear stretch of road. I expect some of you are asking where I may have planned to attempt this increasingly rare manoeuvre, since the speed of many vehicles and the distance available ahead usually precludes the possibility of carrying out the task without going over the speed limit, and many stretches of previously National speed limit road are now 50mph, or even 40 mph in some cases. HGVs at 50mph also reduce opportunities.

However, despite my impeccable observation and planning for the task ahead, and a very good knowledge of the particular road with perfect weather and visibility, I did not dare complete the task. On reflection, two things conspired against me.

The driver I wished to pass was either not paying attention and 'weaving' a little, giving me sufficient cause for concern, or they were driving around potholes and road imperfections causing me to think they may stray into my path whilst alongside (if they had even seen me!). But more important than that, I realised the road was simply not wide enough for the safe passage of two vehicles side by side at elevated speeds.

Is it because of the gradual fattening of our motor cars that we have reduced the effective space available on the carriageway? Or is it a by-product of poor road maintenance that makes us drive more closely to the centre line?

Have you tried to overtake anyone recently and come to a similar conclusion?

Moving on to another topic, I see every week there are more and more reports declaring that the 'self driving' car is just a few years away. I am not completely against change, and advances in technology do need to be embraced and developed to make our lives easier, but I do wonder about many of the issues that these vehicles will raise.

One report said that there were two things the software programmers were having trouble

with, poor weather (mainly fog and snow affecting the laser and radar scanners that keep the cars in the right position) and boredom of the human attendants who had to sit in the car and stay awake and alert, but had no actions to perform as long as the car was proceeding safely.

No-one is going to beat the weather, and if the forecasters are right we will see increasingly extreme weather in most parts of the world; having said that, it is possible to land an aircraft in fog, but that is one vehicle in one specific place with one pre-planned route and two highly trained pilots; no 'side-by-side' space management required here.

Another article I read mentioned the interaction between vehicles, particularly the ability of a driverless car being able to keep in a lane, keep a safe distance, change lanes, and 'see' potential hazards and obstructions. All clever stuff, and actually available in some form in a few top specification cars right now. But if we accept the computers in driverless cars are going to be able to think and react significantly faster than humans, how are we going to fare when the human driven cars go along the same lanes as the computer driven cars?

The ability of some drivers to squeeze into small gaps, both side by side and front to back, whilst driving at motorway speeds, never ceases to amaze me. I try to spot these people early and make some space, but is the computer driven car going to have this 'sixth sense' and spot the weaving undertaker in the mirror as they make progress along an otherwise crowded road. And will the driverless car be sufficiently skilful to make an adjustment in speed and space around it to compensate, or will it just stop, bringing all the other vehicles around it to a sudden halt as well.

I guess the answer for now is that driverless cars and driven cars will not share the same road space, since there are too many unprogrammable variables and a huge potential for very complex law suits.

Drive safely
Paul Whitehead
Secretary

Letters should be addressed to the Editor
editor@guildford-iam.org.uk

Hi Gerry

Great news, I passed my test this week which I am thrilled about.

I have to say that the whole IAM experience has been great from start to finish and I would like to thank all of the team at Guildford for their valued efforts, especially the observers for their instruction which clearly paid off for me this week.

As for the test, the on-line booking was very simple and response was extremely swift, from booking to making contact with the examiner to actually taking my test was just 10 days.

My examiner was Graham Young and was a top chap. I passed with 19 1's and 7 2's and a comment of 'a very good drive, well done'.

The only issue raised was my appalling commentary which I can only put down to nerves and probably lack of time spent learning (luckily not part of the test).

Thanks again, and hope to catch up with you all in the future.

Kind Regards
Darren

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Dear editor,

I am pleased to announce that I passed the IAM driving test recently. I would like to convey my thanks to all the observers who helped me achieve this milestone. I now look forward to attending IAM events and lectures, and who knows maybe becoming an observer.

Regards, Craig

Dear Editor

I thought it might be of interest, having read the article on 'When to give up', to recite the following.

In December, I turned 80. Shortly before this, I was contacted by both the Charities for whom I have been driving for 15 years. The first asked that if I wished to continue would I go to an interview with the Organiser? She stated this was customary when a driver became 80, and even more so in my case, as I have a slight balance problem – which has never affected my driving. Despite pointing out that I had, in 2013, worked hard to obtain my Advanced Driving Certificate, and supplying a copy, I not only went to see the Organiser, but also went on a day course for 'Moving and Handling People', a course I had already done twice before. Following this, I appear to have been ignored by the Charity for a while, but now, as I write this, I am being used as previously, with no problem. They really wanted me to do a job for them which did not involve driving, but I enjoy driving, and was not prepared to go along this route.

The second charity involved driving people to either hospital or to appointments with their doctor. Here I was told that I would not be able to drive unless I agreed to go on a test drive in a Dual-Control car with an experienced driver – possibly, who knows, someone from IAM! I was, for some reason, quite angry about this, although before the law changed, this Charity had automatically retired drivers at 80. My immediate response was to point out that such a decision was discriminatory, and that I regarded a session with an experienced driver in a dual control car a bit insulting, particularly as I reasoned that my performance in a car I was unused to might not be acceptable. Again, I pointed out that I had worked hard, throughout 2013 – with all the help from Observers in the Guildford Branch of IAM – to become an accredited Advanced Driver, an aim achieved in December 2013. There was some reluctance – I could tell by the tone of voice, but when I said I would send them a copy of my certificate also, it was accepted.

Referrals from this Charity, nevertheless, dropped away, and I began to wonder if I was

being gently 'removed' by just giving me no referrals. However, I am pleased to say that only yesterday, I checked with those making referrals, and thankfully discovered there was no 'block' on my driving for them. Today, I received a request to drive a couple to Frimley Park Hospital, so hopefully, all is well, thanks, certainly in part, to the Guildford Observers who assisted me through the process. Thank you so much.

Vernon Young

"Thank you" to Shân Hughes for the next two articles

A moral dilemma!

There is a phrase which says be careful what you ask for as you may not like the results! This can apply to lots of different situations and can pose a lot of problems.

Recently I was checking something on the DVLA website and saw that they had provided the opportunity to check if a vehicle is taxed. Ever curious I looked out of the window and took the registration of the first vehicle I saw and fed it into the web page. Imagine my surprise then when I saw the response – the vehicle was not taxed and had not been for three months.

Perhaps the absence of printed tax disks for display on the vehicle has led to a false sense of security! Just to check my understanding I checked a few other vehicles including my own vehicle which was standing in my drive. Fortunately they all came back positive!

But what to do with the information? As far as I know, this is a vehicle which is used regularly and therefore is breaking at least one law. The absence of a valid vehicle licence may also impact any insurance policy the driver may have, if indeed they have insurance!

There is also the risk that the DVLA could come along and clamp the vehicle and pose a large fine for release. A worst case scenario is that the vehicle could be confiscated. If the

original reason for non payment of vehicle tax is a lack of funds, then the penalty when caught is likely to exacerbate the situation.

Perhaps the driver doesn't own the vehicle and has been led to believe that the vehicle is taxed? Perhaps the owner was too busy at the time to renew the tax and has since forgotten all about it. New cars registered since the change in legislation have never had that little paper disc on display and there are many cars that are displaying an old disc because they have kept the it for sentimental reasons or they just can't be bothered to remove it. The disc holder has some information that I hope I never need on it but I am too superstitious to remove it!

So what do I do with the information? Should I track down the driver and let them know that the vehicle is untaxed? Should I tell the authorities and cause an 'expensive' problem for the driver? Where do my duties as an upstanding citizen lie? Or is it any of my business?

NUMBER PLATES

Cherished Number Plates

Have you ever wondered about the person driving the vehicle in front of you – what their name is or what they are interested in? Well many people do use autonumerology to tell the world a bit about themselves. Autonumerology was invented by Noel Woodall in 1964 and he and many others are fascinated by the mechanism of turning what appear to be random numbers and letters into one or more words. The art of autonumerology has contributed a lot to the growth of personalised or cherished number plates.

*Dictionary main entry: autonumerology
Part of speech: noun
Definition: 'the study of unusual and distinctive vehicle licence plates'*

A lot of its success is the way in which our brain perceives things and how we can easily infer something from the shape and layout of the letters. From a distance a number can be mistaken for a letter – e.g. 8 instead of B. Or using slang e.g. K9 has become a common reference to dogs.

As the format of licence plates has changed at intervals over the years then the level of creativity has changed too.

Cherished plates can be used on most vehicles so long as you don't use a plate that suggests the car is newer than it is. Going back in time is perfectly acceptable and 4 ART is still around to amuse us. If you are buying a cherished plate you may find that it gets more expensive the less numbers you have and there are instances of licence plates costing more than the price of a car!

Judicial placing of coloured rivets to hold the plate in situ have also been used to great effect (*not sure of the legality of this one - Ed*) and allow the reader to infer a word not immediately obvious. Families might adopt a common theme for all their vehicles and companies often use the licence plate to continue the branding of their vehicles. A local company uses either their name or initials of the company so that there is an obvious link back to the company.

Some plates would appeal to a sense of status or position – BO55 MAN , SU51 MUM, Others are more descriptive - SH15 FAB, B16 BOY, H15 TOY, KI55 MEE. Others want to show the world where they are based CH08 HAM – this driver obviously has a sense of pride in the community

Some are just clever – VER 510N, whilst others are slightly ironic – this CATerham thinks it is a dog. There are also those that might be considered rude and would not therefore be issued by the DVLA!

Next time you are stuck in a traffic jam why not see if there is a meaning to the licence plate on the vehicle in front and if so what it might mean! Then add autonumerology to your CV as one of your hobbies.

Shân Hughes

*Your comments and suggestions are valued.
Letters should be sent to
editor@guildford-iam.org.uk*

Succession Planning

We are a group of volunteers who run the Guildford & District Group of Advanced Motorists and we are always looking for new faces to join the committee and help us organise our group activities.

Can you help; would you like to shadow a person in a role currently to see what's involved? Is there another skill you could offer to help the group?

Currently we have three roles where we urgently need your assistance.

Group Treasurer

Gerry Raleigh has held the post of Group Treasurer for many years now and has reluctantly decided to retire from the post at the next AGM in September. So we have a vacancy for someone to look after the group's finances and keep a simple set of accounts. The role is not onerous, but it is important as the Treasurer is an Officer of the Charity.

Gerry will be very happy to give a thorough handover to the next incumbent, and he has all the usual financial records on some easily digested Excel spreadsheets, so there should not be any difficulties in a new Treasurer taking over quite quickly.

Group rules require that the Officers of the Group have at least 6 months' committee experience, so we will speak to potential new Treasurers very soon with a view to co-opting them on to the committee as an 'understudy' without delay.

First Contact Point

This is the person who responds to all the requests from the public for information about the IAM and the Guildford group. It is an 'ad-hoc' role, not requiring any specific time commitment except attendance at the six committee meetings during the year. All we need is someone with a few hours spare each month to respond to e-mail and telephone enquiries and 'sell' the IAM to interested parties. No cold calling, just a friendly chat with like-minded motorists. We provide a mobile phone to allow you to accept and return calls at times to suit you.

Newsletter Editor

One of the unsung roles that is essential to the aims and objects of the Group and the IAM and can be done in any few spare hours you may have during the year. We aim to publish 4 printed newsletters each year and a number of electronic versions as well. Material is freely available from a number of sources and it is simply a matter of compiling the text and photos into an appealing and interesting journal for our members. Once again, the only time commitment is attendance at the committee meetings to keep up to date with group activities and adherence to a publication timetable.

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These roles are essential for the running of the Group and we would welcome any assistance you can give to help us out.

Please contact Steve, chairman@guildford-iam.org.uk and he will give you a call to discuss.

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Observer Training

Due to increasing numbers of associates Guildford IAM has several vacancies for new Observers. This is an opportunity to use your advanced driving skills and pass them on to others - a challenging and rewarding activity.

Of course we will provide friendly and supportive training matched to your experience. If you've recently passed your advanced test then we'll focus on the observing and teaching skills. If it's a while since you passed the test we'll start by making sure your driving is definitely up-to-scratch.

As well as having the satisfaction of passing your skills to others I'm sure you'll see your own driving ability progress to a higher level. You'll be encouraged to progress from Local Observer to become a National Observer and we'll even support you taking the IAM 'Masters' qualification.

Even if you are only interested in a better understanding of what's involved please contact John Holcroft, Training Officer – john.holcroft@gmail.com or call or text 07933 196138, whichever you prefer.

Don't hesitate! Female and male volunteers of all ages are welcome.

John Holcroft

Training Officer
07933 196138
training@guildford-iam.org.uk

SHARED SPACE

An interesting article from Paul Wallace-Stock in response to the discussion last time on 'too many signs'

Shared Space - a relatively new name for a concept emerging across Europe. It encapsulates a new philosophy and set of principles for the design, management and maintenance of streets and public spaces, based on the integration of traffic with other forms of human activity. The most recognizable characteristic of shared space is the absence of conventional traffic signals, signs, road markings, humps and barriers - all the clutter essential to the highway. The driver in shared space becomes an integral part of the social and cultural context, and behaviour (such as speed) is controlled by everyday norms of behaviour.

Shared Space implies more than simple design techniques. It also requires an innovative approach to the process of planning, designing and decision-making. New structures for municipal organisation and public involvement are the result Shared Space offers a basis for addressing safety issues, for overcoming community severance, for tackling congestion and for enhancing economic vitality in streets and public spaces.



Oosterwolde is a small market town in Holland. The site consists of a complex five-way intersection close to cafes and local shops. It carries around 5,000 vehicles per day, and is especially busy around school opening and closing. Before 1998, the junction was laid out as a conventional priority junction, with standard kerbs, road markings, turning lanes and stop signs. Little economic activity took place around the intersection. The new arrangement accords no priority to any form or direction of traffic.

A slight rise in the approach roads, and some deliberately squared handrails, gives the space a slightly stage-like feel, reinforced by the raised element within part of the square. Cars, buses, lorries, bicycles, wheelchair-users and pedestrians share the space on equal terms. Negotiation and eye contact, similar to those of any busy pedestrian area such as a departure hall of an



airport or train station, are the only basis for movement. There are no formal highway rules, no markings, and no signs.



Drachten also in Holland, is home to around 60,000. During the 1970s, an inner ring road was set out around the town centre, and much of the older fabric was rebuilt at this time. For some years the municipality has been pursuing policies aimed at reducing congestion and traffic delays, improving road safety and enhancing the social and economic vitality of the outer town. In support of this policy, many traffic signals, signs and conventional highway elements have been removed, particularly at some of the key

intersections. There are many examples of junctions that have been re-designed along shared space principles throughout the town.

The intersection of the ring road close to the town's theatre forms part of a major piece of public space. The theatre and a few restaurants are on the outer edge of the ring road, and were suffering from declining trade in the 1990's. One major intersection handles around 22,000 vehicles per day. The bus station lies close by, and every regional bus passes through the junction. Formerly, traffic signals and conventional pedestrian crossings controlled movement and the approach roads had bicycle lanes, bus transponders and left-hand turning lanes.



The new arrangements accept the need for a roundabout, but have attempted to integrate such a highway element as part of the overall design of the civic space. This has been achieved with the help of vertical water fountains which respond in height to traffic volumes.

All traffic, including buses, enters the roundabout on narrow six-metre approaches without conventional "flares", and there are "courtesy crossings" (informal) for bicycles and pedestrians at each entry point to the roundabout.

The lighting arrangements contrast with the surrounding highways, and the floor lighting emphasizes the whole space, rather than the roundabout itself. The kerb detail is sufficient to retain vehicles on the roundabout, but allows bicycles to cut the corners of the intersection. During busy periods, the fountains attract numbers of children and adults, and the increase in human activity caused speeds to drop. This in turn increases the capacity of the junction, and delays to traffic and to other users have been significantly reduced. The bus company reports a reduction in average bus delay at the junction from 55 seconds to 9 seconds. The major change has been the revitalising of the theatre and businesses around the area, the increase in pedestrian and bicycle activity, and the reduction in traffic delays.



It is interesting to note the range of signals and informal protocols that have emerged spontaneously amongst all users since the scheme was introduced. Although formal zebra crossings are provided, these are very rarely used. Hand signals are common amongst bicyclists, unlike elsewhere in The Netherlands. Accident figures at one junction where traffic lights were removed have dropped from thirty-six in the four years prior to the introduction of the scheme to two in the two years following it. Only three of the original fifteen sets of traffic lights remain. Tailbacks are now almost unheard of at the town's main junction, which handles about 22,000 cars a day.

However, public perceptions of traffic safety have declined and the junction is the second most dangerous location in Drachten for cyclists, the site of more cyclist injuries than all 21 roundabouts and all the Simultaneous Green traffic light junctions in Assen combined.

Reviewing the research which underpinned national policy in the UK it found that some of the claims made for shared space schemes were not justified by the evidence - particularly the claims that pedestrians are able to follow desire lines, and that shared space reduces traffic speeds. Their primary research in **Ashford, Kent**, suggested that in streets with high volumes of traffic, pedestrians are more likely to give way to vehicles than vice versa. Most people, but particularly women and older people, found the shared space intimidating and preferred the previous layout with conventional crossings.

A case study in **Hereford** found that if traffic volume was relatively low and speeds of vehicles slow anyway then vulnerable road users found it easier to share the area with vehicles, including those blind or partially sighted and older people with mobility impairments. The Dutch have demonstrated ambivalence over shared space schemes, describing some benefits but also some drawbacks for the less assertive cyclist. It was noted that shared space has decreased car speeds but that "some cyclists do not dare take priority. Instead, they dismount and wait for priority to be clearly given, then walk or ride across the intersection. A problem may be that they are met halfway by cars from the other direction and must rely on the drivers to give way of their own volition. Owing to low speeds and the cyclists' defensive behaviour this crossing strategy need not be unsafe in itself, but it most certainly is not convenient."

Poynton is a village with a population of 16,000 on the southern fringe of Greater Manchester. The historic focus of the village is Fountain Place, a busy, signal controlled junction. Fountain Place forms the commercial and social centre of Poynton. As such it has a critical place function for the village, helping to define its identity and local distinctiveness, requiring a high quality environment that will encourage social interaction and economic vitality. It also has an important movement function, for both vehicles and pedestrians.

The resultant Village Improvement Scheme cost around £3m and involved the creation of a *sequence of informal crossings highlighting pedestrian desire lines*, a central reservation to assist pedestrians to cross, narrow traffic lanes to keep vehicular speeds low, and repaved footways, including the re-paving of the private shop forecourts to enhance the pedestrian environment.



In a different area the design identified five locations for gateways to highlight the transition from highway, with its predominant movement function, to the village centre, where other activities and functions are equally important. The design replaced the existing traffic signal control and strongly defined arrangement of footways and carriageway with a design based on shared space principles, comprising two distinct but interconnected circular spaces. In view of the heavy traffic flows, paving materials and low kerbs were used to define the areas for traffic circulation as a guide for drivers and other users, but these physical clues are subtle and also emphasise the pedestrian desire lines through the space.

Whilst the basic idea is that by making an area appear more dangerous all users will take greater care and for traffic this results in lower speeds. Whilst not everyone is convinced there is no doubt that in the right area it has the desired effect and is more pleasing to the eye.

Motoring data from the IAM

Half of experienced drivers would fail their driving test if they were asked to take it again – if the results of an experiment by Auto Express and the Institute of Advanced Motorists (IAM) are anything to go by.

The industry-leading magazine and website (autoexpress.co.uk) joined forces with the Britain's biggest independent road safety charity in an exercise to see if the UK's driving test, which marks its 80th anniversary this year, still meets its objective in allowing only the most competent drivers onto the road.

The IAM found 12 experienced drivers who were prepared to undertake a mini-driving test again and discover if they would pass their test if they had to take it in today's conditions.

Going by the criteria of the IAM's qualified assessors on the day, just 50% (six of the 12 who took part) would pass if they took it again today.

Auto Express revealed that 46 million people have taken their driving test since it was introduced in 1935. Back at the start the pass rate was 63% - today it has fallen to just 47%.

At the same time as the pass rate falling, the volume of vehicles has risen sharply over the years – currently there are 35 million cars registered for use on UK roads.

Failing to use mirrors enough, speeding and underuse of signals were typical of bad habits picked up by the IAM's volunteers on the day of the experiment.

Of the 12 volunteers, seven had undergone advanced driver training with the IAM. Of those, six passed the mini test. And of the five who had had no advanced tuition, just one passed.

Steve Fowler, editor-in-chief of Auto Express, said: "Driving standards has always been a hot topic and the result of our tests shows that too many people just aren't as good at driving as they think they are."

"Although technology is making driving safer than ever, the attitude and ability of the person behind the wheel is the most important element. We always encourage people to take pride in their driving and take additional training if necessary."

Added Sarah Sillars, IAM chief executive officer: "The results of our joint experiment were very interesting. It shows that keeping your skills topped up and knowledge of the Highway Code current is crucial in making safer drivers and riders."

"Road skills cannot be allowed to lapse. Keeping your skills current through advanced tuition and other proven methods can only be a benefit to everyone who uses our roads."

Multi-tasking whilst driving is a myth

Expert psychologists have concluded that multi-tasking whilst driving is a myth – and the most dangerous of those driving multi-tasks is texting and talking on a mobile phone, according to a new report produced by the Institute of Advanced Motorists (IAM) and the Transport Research Laboratory (TRL).

The research focuses on the dangers involved when drivers try and engage in more than one task, indicating this can have a 'detrimental' effect on the quality and accuracy of driving performance.

The findings come from a report launched this week titled 'The battle for attention', jointly produced by TRL researchers Dr Neale Kinnear and Dr Alan Stevens, and the IAM's director of policy and research Neil Greig.

Dr Kinnear, who is a senior psychologist in the study of human behaviour and transport, and Dr Stevens, who is chief scientist and research director with internationally recognised expertise in 'Human-Machine Interaction', both reviewed existing research behind in-car distractions to understand the various cognitive processes and complexities in driving.

They said texting engages three of the five key areas of distraction to a 'high' level – cognitive, visual and manual. A mobile phone conversation also engages three of five areas of distraction to a 'high' level – cognitive, audible and exposure time.

Figures from the Department for Transport (DfT) in 2013 found 2,995 cases where distraction in the vehicle was listed as a contributory factor to accidents. A further 1,627 cases were listed where distraction outside the vehicle was a contributory factor.

The report says: "Research has confirmed that tasks almost always interfere with other tasks carried out at the same time. The brain never actually focuses on two tasks at the same time – it switches back and forward between them.

"As driving is so complex and requires various cognitive processes, taking on another task when driving can mean a driver is unable to pay sufficient attention to all the activities required for safe driving. This can lead to a processing failure resulting in a loss of control, putting the driver and other road users in physical danger."

Sarah Sillars, IAM's chief executive officer, said: "This is proof, should it be needed, that multi-tasking and driving simply don't mix. Whilst there are plenty of distractions to tempt the driver, the individual needs to know that the phone, or internet, or the iPod simply don't matter – driving is the only activity that should occupy your mind while at the wheel.

"It's important that we work with the government, car makers and educators to deliver a renewed focus on driver training and road safety – and that people know that distractions can be fatal."

Cover Story- Paddy Hopkirk appointed Mature Driver Ambassador

Rally legend Paddy Hopkirk has been appointed Mature Driver Ambassador by the Institute of Advanced Motorists (IAM), and he will be championing the cause of the older driver for the organisation in the future.

Paddy, now 82, needs no introduction to a generation of motorsport enthusiasts. He won the Monte Carlo Rally in 1964 in a Mini Cooper, and he and his co-driver Henry Liddon remain the only all-UK crew to win the iconic event.

Belfast-born Paddy went on to win other world championship rallies, arguably the greatest of which was the Acropolis in 1967. However he and co-drivers Alec Poole and Tony Nash became famous for giving up a certain victory in the epic 1968 London-Sydney Marathon, when they stopped to rescue a fellow rally driver from his car which had burst into flames – undoubtedly saving his life.

In particular Paddy will be promoting the IAM's Mature Driver's Assessment (MDA) while also delivering safe driving advice – an area he is passionate about.

Paddy, who also received an MBE in the Queen's New Year Honours this year, said: "I am delighted to be involved with the IAM. Our joint goal is to bring the numbers of people killed and injured on the roads down as low as we can. It's something I know the IAM is dedicated to just as much as I am, so we are a great match.

"With the numbers of drivers age 70 or more now increasing by over 10,000 a month, the Mature Driver's Assessment is a great way for older people to gain the reassurance they need on increasingly congested British roads."

Older drivers are statistically less likely to commit a motoring offence than those in their teens and 20s and are less likely to be in a serious or fatal road accident. In 2014 the IAM discovered that while 36,001 people between 20 and 30 were disqualified from driving in the previous 12 months, just 10,025 people in their fifties and just 3,874 in their sixties were.

However some older drivers face certain challenges such as coping with reflexes that are not as keen as before, deteriorating eyesight or hearing, and the potential onset of diseases and dementia.

The IAM believes enlightened policies and practical actions are needed to help older drivers keep safe and competently mobile for as long as possible, and to help them decide when the time has come to stop driving. Giving up driving too early places a direct burden on health and other services, which can no longer be independently accessed.

Paddy himself has taken the Mature Driver's Assessment and was relieved to find he had fared extremely well in it. He said: "I really enjoyed taking the MDA. Everyone needs to revisit their abilities, and to get that from someone who is both independent and sympathetic to the driver is very valuable."

The Mature Driver's Assessment is a 60-minute one-off session in the driver's own vehicle administered by a qualified assessor.

The assessment gives an overview of any areas of the candidate's driving that might need improving as well as any areas of concern.

There is no pass/fail rating at the end, but every candidate is given a written report of how they have performed.

Many who have taken the Mature Driver's Assessment then go on to do the IAM's Skill for Life course leading to the Advanced Test, which gives candidates the chance to gain a comprehensive set of new skills for safer and enjoyable driving. Paddy's sons and daughter have taken the IAM's Advanced Test and passed.

Neil Greig, IAM director of policy and research, said: "We are delighted to have Paddy on board to promote the IAM and our Mature Driver's Assessment. He is the perfect example of how being older shouldn't be a barrier to a safe and enjoyable motoring life.

"Older drivers should always be aware their faculties might not be what they used to be, but as long as these are identified early and addressed, they shouldn't be stopped from getting behind the wheel."

Need a refresher?



Lost some of those finely tuned skills?

Book a refresher drive with our Associate Co-ordinator and get back to 'test standard' with our experienced volunteer Observers.

All it takes is an hour or so of your time and a gallon or so of fuel.

Call Paul on 01252 519355 and arrange an appointment for 11:30 on one of our Sunday Runs – it's free for Guildford Group members.

Don't delay, call today

Remembering Chris Hughes

Chris Hughes was the First Point of Contact for our Group for more than 12 years. Many Associates will have spoken to him as the first person they talked to in the IAM, and he was responsible for introducing hundreds of potential members to the Guildford Group and the IAM over the years.

Chris retired from Group activities only late last year, so we were very sad to hear that he is no longer with us. He passed away January 26, 2016, aged 78, much loved and missed by all family and friends.

The funeral service was at Slough Crematorium on Wednesday, February 10, 2016; donations to the charity of your choice in his memory. He was a lovely man with a good sense of humour and a keen artist, and a loyal and generous supporter of our group.

MEMBER INFORMATION

Membership Renewal and Communications

Last year we told you about changes we were making in our communications with Group Members and annual membership renewals. Most of this has worked very well but I felt it would be worth reminding members of some of the choices they can make when renewing, as subscriptions will fall due before the next newsletter.

For 2015/16 we gave members the option of limiting e-mail communications to essential messages only. This meant we would only contact you in respect of your membership of the Group and would not clutter your inbox with details of Group activities or other motoring information that we might circulate from time to time. A handful of you selected this option and have therefore missed out on details of talks, such as the excellent presentation by Lester Parsons in January, the resumption of our skid pan activities or other days out, and events organised by Graham Ranshaw, unless of course you are a regular visitor to the website where we usually post these notifications.

The renewal form will again this year give you the chance to amend your preferences and to update your Gift Aid choice if necessary. If you are not sure what you previously selected, just drop me an e-mail at memsec@guildford-iam.org.uk and I can confirm or change your status. The default is that we will send all e-mails unless you have elected otherwise.

I shall be sending notifications and renewal forms by email around the end of March. If you have changed your email address in the last twelve months and not notified me, please advise me now via the email address above. I shall also be posting details to those members who do not have email access. The subscription for 2016/17 remains at £7.50 for individuals or £10 for joint members at the same address.

More than 85% of members renewed last year but we would like to push this closer to 95% this year. Whilst there are always a few who move away from the area or feel it is time to give up driving, we hope that the rest of you appreciate the extra efforts the Committee has made during 2015 to increase the activities and benefits the Group provides and will continue to support us in 2016. As always, feel free to let us know if there are particular things you would like us to arrange and we will do our best to oblige. Equally, any offers of help will be welcomed and we would very much appreciate fresh ideas for the committee or offers just as an occasional volunteer.

David Pearce
Membership Secretary

Annual Membership of the Group is from 1st April each year.

NEW ASSOCIATES

Welcome to:

Marilyn Senga, David Clifton, Paul Mullins, Rosemary Henderson, Thomas Walker, Trevor Towler, Rachel Nicholson, Vanessa Jackson, Mark Brookes, Laura Armstrong, Paul Cassini.

We hope you enjoy your observed runs and wish you luck taking your Advanced Driving test.

We also welcome Jed Wootten who has joined us from another IAM group.

RECENT TEST PASSES

Congratulations to:

Gordon Farquharson (First)

John Mercer, Julian Knopf, Darren Alford, Craig Featherston, Rachel Sarno, Marcus Bird, Ruth Croucher, Steven Croucher, Richard Bennett-Chick

Well done on passing your advanced driving test; keep up the skills you have demonstrated.

Special congratulations to our Chief Observer, Phil Headen, for achieving a 'Distinction' in his IAM Masters test.

Can't make your Observed run appointment?

We try to match the number of available Observers (all volunteers) with the number of booked Associates, but sometimes we realise things can go wrong. If you cannot attend your booked appointment please let us know. Call the Associate Co-ordinator on 01252 519355 any time, or on the morning of your appointment please call 07791 914031 or 07817 490446.

Passed your Advanced Driving Test Want to do more?

Promise to keep up the standard –
take a refresher.

Get a friend to match your skills and
take the test!

**“WORD OF MOUTH” IS OUR
BEST ADVERTISEMENT**



Officers and Committee Members

PRESIDENT – Alan Bone

| | | |
|--------------------------------|-----------------------|---|
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| COMMITTEE MEMBER | John Panting | |
| COMMITTEE MEMBER | David Mesquita-Morris | |
| WEB SITE EDITOR | VACANCY | |

Observed Runs

These will be conducted on the 3rd Sunday of each month at 9.15am and 10.30am – refresher/taster drives at 11:45 am
Guildford Borough Council Woking Road Depot, Guildford GU1 1QE

Telephone 07791 914031 or 07817 490446 on third Sunday only from 9am to 1pm

Appointments for Observed runs - contact the Associate Co-ordinator:
associates@guildford-iam.org.uk 01252 519355



Skill for Life package £149

Entitles the Associate to 6 Observed Runs in their own vehicle during the 12 months following the date of their first appointment, and includes:

- ✓ the cost of the IAM Advanced Test
- ✓ the first year's membership of the Institute from the date of the first run
 - ✓ copy of 'Advanced Driving' manual
 - ✓ copy of the Highway Code
- ✓ Associate membership of the Guildford Group

Full Group Membership (whilst a Member of the Institute)
£7.50 per annum per individual / £10 for a couple at the same address

Do you have a friend or relative who would benefit from
our advice and guidance?

How about Skill for Life as a birthday present
for a younger driver?



If so, please put them in touch with us,
firstcontact@guildford-iam.org.uk - 07814 172531

Please pass on this newsletter once you're done with it –
how about taking it to the garage where you have your MOT
and asking them to support us?