



FORWARD

Issue 22



**The Newsletter for
Somerset & Wiltshire
Advanced Motorists**

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FORWARD

Newsletter of Somerset & Wiltshire Advanced Motorists

www.swam-iam.org

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Issue 22

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Camerton Gathering—Sunday, 3 August

This year, for the first time, we are attending the Camerton Gathering, to be held on Sunday, 3 August, at Camerton Community Hall, Camerton, Meadgate, Bath, BA2 0NL, from 10.00 – 16.00. This classic car show is hosted by Norton Radstock Classic Vehicle Club and normally has 500 – 600 vehicles on display. It is open to any classic or cherished vehicle registered before 2000, so if you have such a vehicle, and would like to display it, you can just turn up on the day as no advanced booking is required.

We need volunteers to help at our gazebo on the day, at any time from 09.30 onwards. If you are able to help, please contact our President, Dave Edwards, at president@swam-iam.org.

More information about this event is on page 10, including links to two YouTube videos showing scenes from the 2024 Gathering. Anyone who likes classic cars would enjoy the day there.

We are very sorry to have to tell you that our former President, Helen Schofield, sadly died early in May. A celebration of her life was held at Bath Golf Club in June to which Helen's friends and acquaintances were invited. This was an opportunity to share memories and several members from SWAM attended to remember her. There is a short obituary on page 5.

On page 8 you can read about our first Treasure Hunt which was a great success. All those who took part enjoyed it, and there are already requests for another one in the future. Lindsay and Robin did a great job in designing it, and we are grateful to them for their hard work. You have set a high standard for the next one.

This year we are attending the Camerton Gathering on 3 August at Camerton, near Bath. This is a classic car show hosted by Norton Radstock Classic Vehicles Club which is open to any car registered before 2000. More information about this event is on pages 3 and 10.

As a committee we have realised that we need more IT support to make sure that we are taking the best safety precautions we can with your data. We currently use Microsoft 365 for our emails. If there is any member who would be able to help us with this, please contact Lindsay Flower at deputychair@swam-iam.org. Amongst all our members we hope there is somebody with the necessary skills for this important task, so please come forward if you are that person. See page 11 for more information.

Clare Hogg, Sue Phillips

The next edition of *Forward* will be published in November 2025. Please submit motoring-related articles and/or digital photographs to the Editors (*who reserve the right to edit them*) by Friday 3 October at the latest. Names of authors and their home addresses should be disclosed to the Editors who will withhold them from publication on request.

Helen Scofield 1950—2025

Helen was a staunch supporter of SWAM and, prior to the merger with Melksham group, of the Bath & District Group of Advanced Motorists (BADAM). Helen had a long career in the IAM and was an active member of BADAM. She was Regional Co-ordinator for the South West in the early 2000s, and became Secretary of BADAM in 2005. When she retired from this position, she became President of BADAM, and subsequently President of SWAM on its foundation in 2020. We are fortunate to have had the benefit of her expertise over many years.



Helen was a great lover of golf and played a lot in her retirement. The celebration of her life was held at Bath Golf Club and it is typical of Helen that the dress code for that occasion was Colourful and Cheerful. We shall miss her.

Group News

3-in-a-car

In April we held a 3-in-a-car meeting with a talk about doing a Powdery Check and the Cockpit Drill. David Major, Chief Observer, handed out sheets with all the details of doing the checks before you drive off, and went through them to explain the different points. The handout is summarised here, but if anyone would like the full sheet, please apply to newsletter@swam-iam.org.uk.

Powdery Check and Cockpit Drill

Outside the car

Petrol stands for fuel (including diesel and battery) for journey

Oil – check level

Water – check all fluid levels

Damage – check all round car

Electrics – includes all lights, inside and out, and operation of windscreen wipers

Rubber – includes not only tyres but wiper blades and pedal rubber

You – make sure you are fit to drive, including wearing spectacles if required.

Inside the car

Adjustment of seat, head restraint and mirrors

Seat belt – check functioning properly

Before starting engine – check doors are closed, handbrake on, gear in neutral and clutch engaged

Ignition on – check all warning lights working, and then go out except for handbrake light

Remind yourself of the speed limit for when you drive off

When safe, do a moving brake test.

After the talk, members went out to their cars for a chance to practise what they had just been hearing about, and to go for a drive, with National Observers present to give the benefit of their expertise.

The evening was a valuable reminder of the importance of making sure that your car, and you, are ready for your journey.

Cherished Vehicle Show

In June Chippenham Lions held a Cherished Vehicle and Family Fun Day, which SWAM attended with the gazebo. It proved to be a useful and well-paced event which attracted many people to our stand.



The Highway Code Quiz was an excellent tool for engaging with the public and talking to them about their driving skills. People who own Classic Cars are also interested in upping their driving skills and as a result, we have had a number of Taster Sessions booked.

It was a thoroughly worthwhile day. Thank you to those who helped on the day. In between attending to interested visitors, the helpers took time to enjoy the cars on display.



Treasure Hunt

Also in June we held our first Treasure Hunt. Lindsay Flower and Robin Clark had worked very hard to organise an interesting and fun evening. They had worked out a route of about 20 or so miles with 25 questions to answer as the participants went round the route, involving good observation skills. There were also three items which the teams had to produce at the end of the drive.

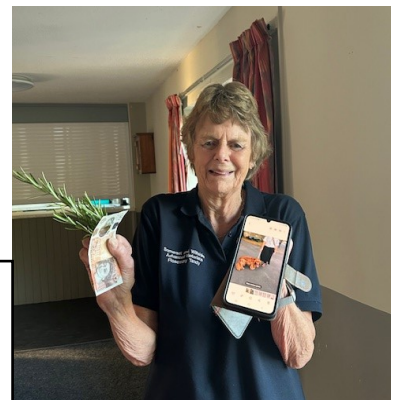
Those taking part went out in pairs to follow the course, and most returned after about an hour to an hour and a half. One couple unfortunately didn't make it back because their car broke down, and we hope they didn't have to wait too long for the recovery vehicle to arrive.

All of the teams did well, and the final results were very close but only one team scored full marks. Fittingly, this was our illustrious President, Dave Edwards, and his wife, Nicky, with a full-house of correct answers. All the teams did well and so they were all awarded prizes. It had been made quite clear that speed was not a factor to be taken into consideration as this was not a race.



Winners:
Dave and Nicky
Edwards

Rosemary with
her three objects



Ray and Roland



Peter and Sara

The evening was reckoned to be a great success, and we are sure to be repeating the event in the future. Congratulations and thanks to Lindsay and Robin for organising it all, and thanks too, to Penny and Rosemary for the refreshments which were very welcome and gratefully received.

Welcome and Congratulations

We Welcome New Associates

Liam Beattie	<i>[Observer: Mark Ellis]</i>
Charlie Cox	<i>[Observer: Michael Muncer]</i>
Darcey Crownshaw	<i>[Observer: Callum Chamberlain]</i>
Harry Edwards	<i>[Observer: Mark Ellis]</i>
Susan Haines	<i>[Observer: Val Czerny]</i>
Victoria Holbrook	<i>[Observer: Rob Norburn]</i>
Simon Holford	<i>[Observer: John Morley]</i>
Ron Lomas	<i>[Observer: Lindsay Flower]</i>
Columbus Mais-Harding	<i>[Observer: Ken Fryer]</i>
Hugh Pillinger	<i>[Observer: Simon Cowley]</i>
How Tung Su	<i>[Observer: Andy Lee]</i>
James Willis	<i>[Observer: Graham Bennett]</i>
Paul Willis	<i>[Observer: Michael Muncer]</i>

We Congratulate

IAMRS Test Pass

Karen Allen	observed by John Morley
Liam Beattie*	observed by Mark Ellis
Columbus Mais-Harding*	observed by Ken Fryer
Aogan O'Hare	observed by Michael Muncer
Rejin Ravi *	observed by John Badley
William Vickery	observed by Dave Edwards

*F1RST pass

IMI National Observer Programme

Andy Lee	mentored by Thomas Flynn
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We must congratulate two of the new Associates as they have passed their tests, both with F1RSTs, within the three months between one issue of *Forward* and the next. Many congratulations to Liam and Columbus and their Observers, Mark and Ken. Well done to all concerned.

Future Events

Sunday, 3 August, 10.00 – 16.00: Camerton Gathering, at Camerton Community Hall, Camerton, Meadgate, Bath, BA2 0NL.

This event is organised by Norton Radstock Classic Vehicle Club and is popular with those who like classic cars. On their website there are links to two YouTube videos from the 2024 Gathering which will give you an idea of what is on offer. For more details, see page 3.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ReuObyyWdag>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=x2nqoMc9vag>

Thursday, 18 September, 18.00 – 21.00: Observer Training at Beckington Memorial Hall.

Monday, 20 October at 19.00: Speaker at Beckington Memorial Hall, Bath Road, Beckington, Frome, BA11 6SH (just off the A36). Graham Mearns, Chairman of Swindon Group of Advanced Motorists, is coming to give us a talk on 'Anger on the roads'. Please come along to hear more about how to deal with this, sometimes frightening, situation.

IT, Data, emails and more

As mentioned in the Editorial, we have realised that we need more support for our IT to be certain of keeping the data we hold about members safe and secure. With all the news about hacking and cyber-crime, the last thing we want is for our systems to be hacked. We are therefore looking at various options for saving our data, emails etc, for example in the cloud, but we also need help when we have problems with our email system. As stated earlier, we currently use Microsoft 365 for our emails. If there is any member who would be able to help us with IT support, please contact Lindsay Flower at

deputychair@swam-iam.org.

If you look at the Contacts page, you will see that some of our email addresses end in .org, and some with .org.uk. Please check before you send an email that you are using the correct address, or your email might bounce back to you. This is an example of one of the problems we are having with our emails.

Looking on page 3, you will see that our website address is now www.swam-iam.org, so please use that when you want to see the website. IAM RoadSmart are withdrawing the website support they have been giving to groups because of changes to their website, and we thank Neil Bannister very much for creating our new, improved website for us.

IAM RoadSmart have sent this message to all groups:

Your Group needs to have a Data Manager. A group email address is advised to keep all the relevant information in one place e.g.

datamanager@groupname.co.uk

Roles and Responsibilities of a Data Manager include:

- Answer data questions from members.

- Respond to Subject Access Requests.

- Ensure all the data held within the Group is necessary.

- Ensure all relevant data is deleted/anonymised in accordance with your Group data retention policy.

- Investigate and report data breaches.

Some of our members may already have experience from their work of this sort of data management, and we are appealing to members for a volunteer, with or without prior experience, to undertake this role. It would not necessarily be a committee position, and we hope that someone will respond to our request for a volunteer. If you are able to help, please contact Lindsay Flower at deputychair@swam-iam.org.

Members' Advanced Refresher Course

Last year IAM RoadSmart introduced a pilot scheme for members to take an Advanced Refresher Course, and SWAM took part in this pilot. It proved to be successful and IAMRS has now rolled it out nationally. Here are some of the details of the scheme and how it runs. For more information see the website:

<https://www.iamroadsmart.com/my-dashboard/advanced-refresher-course>

The member books and purchases the Refresher course online or over the phone. The Observer meets the member at the agreed time, date and location for each session, and follows the stages described in The

Observer's Guide to the Refresher Course.

This is what the IAM says about the course:

What is a typical course structure?

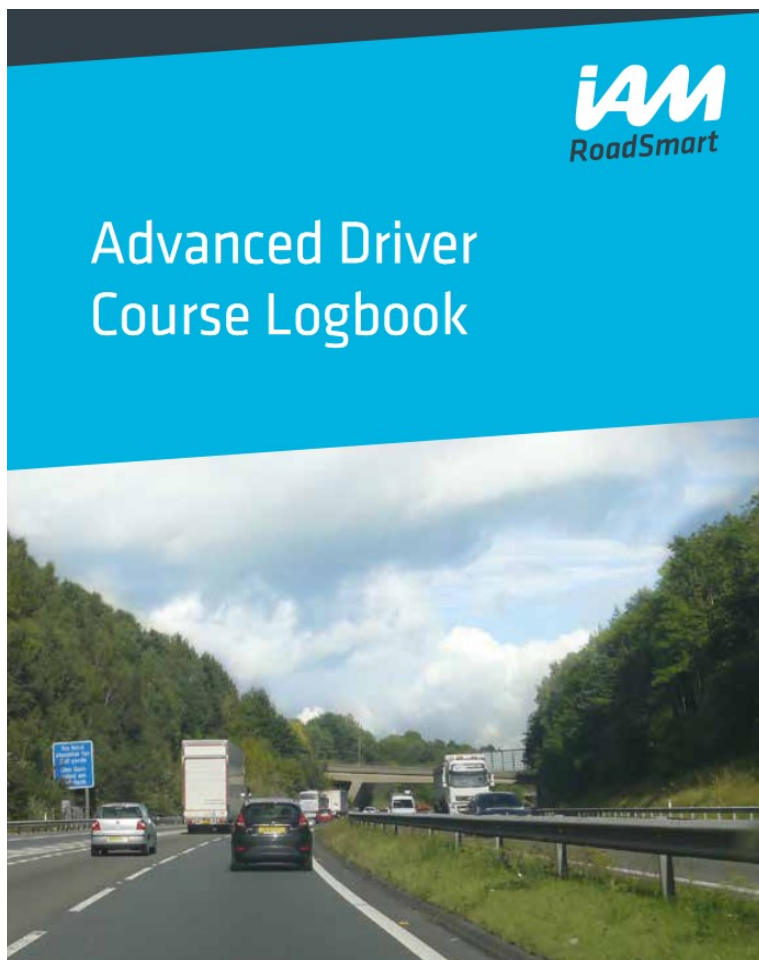
Each session is **60-90 minutes** long and may include a break.

Everyone's course will differ because it will be tailored to your needs, and your Observer will complete a written report (known as a run sheet) after each session which will be emailed to you.

Your Observer may suggest reviewing specific sections of the Advanced Logbook between sessions to help refresh your knowledge. The Advanced Logbook is available online at

https://iamwebsite.blob.core.windows.net/media/docs/default-source/default-document-library/0384_driver-associate-logbook-v14.pdf?sfvrsn=944f995c_2

A typical course structure is as follows:



Session 1:

Introductions

Initial driving assessment

Opportunity to identify and discuss any areas to address, improve or finesse

Session 2 and 3:

Revision of IPSGA

Skills development led by Member's needs under the guidance of an Observer.

Session 4:

Observer feedback and encouragement

Optional session to recap on learning and to finesse the drive.

What happens on completion of the course?

There is no test and you cannot pass or fail. You will receive a Certificate of Completion by email after you have completed the course celebrating your efforts to upskill.

Taking the course

Before the course

Your Observer will be in touch with you to arrange the first session.

Reflection:

Before you meet for the first time, it may be useful to think about any areas of your driving that you would like to focus on, for example:

- Roundabouts
- Urban routes
- Rural routes
- Unfamiliar roads
- Use of gears
- Bends and limit points
- Hazard identification
- Overtaking including filtering

Or anything else

Refresh your knowledge:

You may also want to have a look at the Advanced Logbook if it has been a while since you did your Test. You may want to refresh your knowledge of IPSGA.

If you used the *How to be a Better Driver* book for your Advanced Course, the Advanced Logbook has replaced this.

Preparation:

Before you meet each time, please:

- Check over your vehicle and make sure it is roadworthy and legal, for example, check tyres, lights, fluid levels, etc.

- Ensure the vehicle has a full tank of fuel or is fully charged.
- Bring any required eyewear.

Make sure you are fit to drive and not taking any medication that impacts your ability to drive.

Declarations

At the start of each session, you will be asked to sign a declaration to confirm that:

- 1. You hold a full and valid driving licence for the category of vehicle you will be driving throughout the course.**
- 2. The vehicle has a valid MOT certificate (if applicable) and is taxed and roadworthy.**
- 3. The vehicle is covered by insurance.**
- 4. Your eyesight meets the legal requirements for driving.**

After the course

When you complete the Refresher Course, your Observer may suggest further ways to progress with IAM RoadSmart. Perhaps you would like to become a Volunteer, take a retest and try for a F1RST, take the Masters Course or the Fellow's Entry Test. Or maybe you have lost touch and would like to re-engage with your group? We would love your feedback after completing the course.

IAM RoadSmart have said that 'Members who participated in the trial benefitted from expert guidance and overall it was rated 5 stars.' That is a good recommendation from those who have taken part.

If it's been some time since you passed your Advanced Driver Test and are still an IAM RoadSmart member this is a great opportunity to brush-up on your advanced driving skills without the added pressures attached to achieving the high standard required for a test.

If you are interested or have any queries about this course, please contact David Major, SWAM Chief Observer, for more details. Contact details are on page 2.

To EV or not to EV, that is the question

by Robin Clark

Reading through my post the other day, I came across a competition to win a Ford Explorer EV, which required me to sign up for a test drive. I don't enter that many comps but I thought, why not, my wife and I can make it a day out in Bristol.

So I duly entered, quickly followed by a phone call from the Bristol Ford dealership near Cribbs Causeway. We agreed a date and time and on the day we duly toddled over to experience what would be my first ever drive in an Electric Vehicle. I'm talking about a full blown EV, not a hybrid.



Photo courtesy of www.autoweek.nl

On arrival we were met by Tom who of course was obliged to run through the pros and cons of owning an EV, compared to an ICE (internal combustion engine) powered vehicle. Based on the figures I gave him (10,000 miles per annum) he claimed I could make a saving of as much as up to just over £100 a month. In reality I would probably halve that figure. Why? Only because our 'family' car tends to do longer journeys away from home (often including a few thousand miles abroad) – Yes we are retired! However, if we opted for a small

'Citycar' EV, then I could see the figures working – maybe even more than Tom claimed. My reasoning? Currently, charging your vehicle at home on a dedicated charger – ideally overnight – can cost as little as 3p a mile, compared to around 20p per mile for an ICE. Obviously if you need to charge an EV en route then it's going to cost considerably more, in the region of £50-£60 for a full charge. Based on a range of around 300 miles, that works out at around 20p per mile.

So those are the stats. What about the driving experience? Tom took us out to the demonstrator and gave me (designated driver) a rundown on the essential controls, which were fairly intuitive. This included the start-up sequence (it'll become apparent why I mention this, later in the article). The central display console was full of buttons and features, so I left my wife to enjoy pushing those, hoping there wasn't an ejector seat option fitted!

Popping the vehicle into drive via a column mounted selector, we made our way slowly along the forecourt and out onto the main road. We had already got a route in mind, including a bit of motorway driving. The driving experience is alien to begin with, but you very quickly apply yourself to no engine sound – just the rumbling of the tyres on the road. As has been written on many occasions, the acceleration on EVs is generally outstanding and should provide enough oomph to get yourself up to speed and/or get the vehicle into a position for a lane change or similar. The other key feature is the dynamic braking. The 'gear' selector includes (D)rive as normal, but also (B)rake for additional assisted braking when you lift your foot off the accelerator pedal. Again this is a bit weird to begin with, but does come in handy when you're manoeuvring in and out of traffic – and also makes the brake pedal less of a feature in day to day driving. Having said that, the first time I needed to brake for stationary traffic ahead, I nearly misjudged the stopping distance. I stopped OK, but of course EVs are generally much heavier than ICE vehicles, so will often require a greater stopping distance; a word to the wise for anyone

driving an EV for the first time!

Anyway, we ran our route over a variety of major and minor roads and after about half an hour drove back to the dealership. This is when it became clear that whilst Tom had given me an excellent introduction into how to get the car going, he hadn't told me how to turn it off! It was OK though and a logical look at what you normally do when securing/shutting down a vehicle before exiting it provided the answer: depress brake pedal, put into (P)ark, then open the door – Simple!

My impression of the Ford Explorer? Mmmm. Nice enough external design; easy to see around the vehicle when manoeuvring; good acceleration (though not as quick as some EVs in which I've been a passenger). There was, though, a feeling of understeer, especially around roundabouts, which felt uncomfortable. Interestingly this vehicle is rear-wheel drive. Inside the cabin there's plenty of room for a family; the driving position is good with loads of adjustment. There is also an instrument binnacle straight in front of the driver as well which I was glad to see, rather than continually having to glance across to a central screen. Buttons, switches and features abound everywhere. Steering wheels are getting more like Sir Lewis Hamilton's F1 car, to the point that during the drive I inadvertently managed to turn on the heated steering wheel feature and, possibly more worrying, the Cruise Control. Luckily the latter happened whilst I was on the motorway so wasn't a huge issue, but I'm not sure I'd want that to happen in busy traffic?

My impression of driving an EV? I was pleasantly surprised. It would be of little benefit as a replacement for our family car; the traits of EV ownership just don't add up for the way we use such a vehicle. However, my wife has a small 'citycar' which we both use for popping into town etc. and I could see how it would work in that light.

I should say thanks to Ford for the driving opportunity. The staff at the dealership were very hospitable and made it a very enjoyable experience.

Editor's Corner

Editor's Corner is an opportunity for me to air issues which occur to me in relation to cars and driving, while I am out and about. If you have anything you would like to air in a similar way, please get in touch.

More on Speed limit signage

Further to my Editor's corner last time (*Forward 21*), I have an update. The whole stretch of road (a section of the A371 between Arthur's Bridge near Ditchheat and the Bath & West Showground) now has a 40mph limit on it, so the roundels on the road now make sense. I think it was a mistake to paint the signs first, before putting up the official signs, but I expect it was a question of when the different teams were available to do the work. I also wonder why it was necessary to make the whole of that stretch of road 40mph, but I suppose they had their reasons.

Remaining on the subject of speed limit signs, I am sometimes in a quandary. Occasionally, there are countdown markers to a speed limit sign ahead, for example on the A367 between Peasedown St John and Dunkerton. There is a good reason for the countdown markers as it is a hill with a bend at the bottom where the new speed limit comes into force. The countdown markers have a black border, so it is clear that the limit doesn't apply at that point. However, I have come across occasions where there are countdown markers with a red border, and I don't know whether I should be slowing down immediately, even though it is clear that they are countdown markers as they have the three, two and one lines under them to indicate it. It is obviously a mistake, and they should be bordered in black, but do I assume that the speed limit only comes into force at the main sign, or do I obey a sign with a red border? Please will somebody advise me? What I usually do is treat them as if they had a black border, but am I actually breaking the rules of signs with a red border? Comments and advice, please, to newsletter@swam-iam.org.uk.

Clare Hogg

Want to earn £30?

**Let our Chief Observer know about someone you
would recommend
who buys the Advanced Course with SWAM,
and it's all yours!**

**Contact David for information
chiefobserver@swam-iam.org.uk**

PLEASE NOTE

The views expressed in this Newsletter are those of the authors and are not necessarily shared by the Committee of Somerset & Wiltshire Advanced Motorists, nor by IAM RoadSmart.

Due acknowledgement is made whenever material is taken from other sources.

SWAM keeps names and addresses of members on computer to assist in group administration. This information will not be passed outside IAM RoadSmart.

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