

iam
RoadSmart

FORWARD

Issue 24



**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 24

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Future Events

The AGM of Somerset and Wiltshire Advanced Motorists will be held on Wednesday 1 April 2026 at Beckington Memorial Hall* beginning at 19.30. See pages 5 and 8 for further details.

Nominations for positions on the Committee (see page 5), which must be proposed, seconded and bear the signature of the nominee signifying his or her consent to the nomination, plus items for the Agenda, need to be sent to the Group Secretary to reach her by Friday 27 March **at the latest**.

After the formal AGM, the speaker will be Vicky Lovell from Carma Drivers. See page 8 for more information.

**The address of Beckington Memorial Hall is Bath Road, Beckington, Frome, BA11 6SH (just off the A36).*

Welcome to this latest edition of *Forward*. Our AGM will be held on Wednesday, 1 April, and we do hope as many members as possible will be able to attend. It is important to have support from members when we give our annual report and elect the new committee, so please come if you can. More information is available on pages 5 and 8.

We have no further meetings planned at present, but we will be having some events during the summer, so please look at the information on page 8 to see what is in store. One event last year, which proved very popular, was the Treasure Hunt and we plan to hold another one this year, along with one or more 3-in-a-car events. We also plan to attend events to promote SWAM, and IAM RoadSmart in general, and there is information about the Chippenham Cherished Vehicle Show, which was another popular event last year, on page 8.

On page 10 there is an article from Dave Edwards which is asking if any member is part of a local group which might welcome a speaker about Advanced Driving, for example a car club or community group. If this applies to you, please read the article and contact Dave about it.

We have two articles in this issue written by members of the group and we are very grateful for them. The first is about a newly qualified member's experience of doing the advanced course (page 11), and the second is about e-scooters and e-bikes (page 13). Both make interesting reading.

Clare Hogg, Sue Phillips

The next edition of *Forward* will be published in May 2026. Please submit motoring-related articles and/or digital photographs to the Editors (*who reserve the right to edit them*) by Friday 27 March 2026 at the latest. Names of authors and their home addresses should be disclosed to the Editors who will withhold them from publication on request.

Notice of Annual General Meeting—1 April 2026

The Annual General Meeting of Somerset and Wiltshire Advanced Motorists will take place on Wednesday 1 April 2026, beginning at 19.30 at Beckington Memorial Hall.

At the AGM there will be elections for Committee positions, and the nominees at present for these positions are:

Chair:	Lindsay Flower
Group Secretary:	Rosemary Tandy
Group Treasurer:	Mike Twitchett
Chief Observer/Associates Co-ordinator:	David Major
Membership Secretary:	Peter Huntington
Newsletter Editor:	Clare Hogg
Public Relations Officer:	Robin Clark
Committee member:	Ron Lomas:

Additional nominations for all the positions on the Committee are welcome. Nominations, which must be proposed, seconded and bear the signature of the nominee signifying his or her consent to the nomination, plus items for the Agenda, must be sent to the Group Secretary to reach her by Friday 27 March **at the latest**. The full list of nominations for the Committee positions will be posted on the group website prior to the meeting.

Note that the election of the new committee, to serve for the year 2026-27, plus any proposed changes to the Supplementary items to the Group's Rules of Affiliation, will be effective from Wednesday 8 April 2026.

Anyone intending to stand for election to the Committee must be aware that all the Committee members act as Trustees for the charity, which is Somerset and Wiltshire Advanced Motorists, and are thus liable to follow the legal requirements of HM Charity Commissioners.

In addition to the committee members, we have the support at committee meetings of our President, Dave Edwards, and, for digital, website and IT support, Neil Bannister and Simon Cowley attend our

meetings on occasion to discuss matters relevant to their areas of expertise. We are grateful for their support.

Trustees' Report

The Chair of Somerset & Wiltshire Advanced Motorists, together with the Secretary and Treasurer, are delighted to report that the group is in good shape financially, the Observers' training is ongoing thanks to David Major, Chief Observer, and all the Objectives from 2025 have exceeded expectations.

The audited accounts will be available on the website from early February, and will be printed in full in the next issue of *Forward*.

Group News

Our October meeting was held at Beckington and Lindsay Flower introduced the guest speaker, Graham Mearns, of the Swindon Group.

Graham's talk was about Road Rage and the Human Factors that affect it.



He said that the 1960 edition of Roadcraft referred to the physical and mental requirements needed by drivers. He illustrated his talk with a series of slides and associated videos. The first videos showed examples of how our behaviour as drivers can worsen or improve various situations.

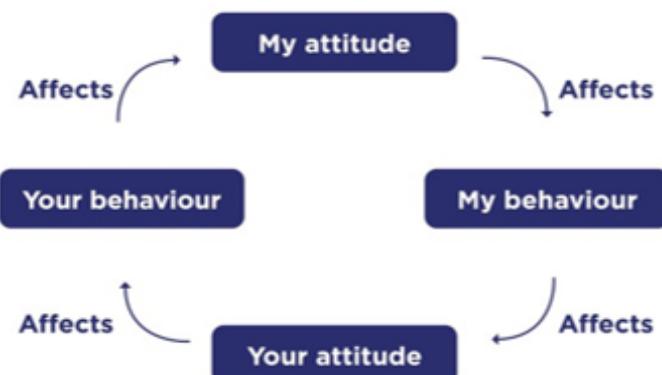
Graham then spoke about things that affect our behaviour: personal feelings such as time pressure or being stressed or irritated by events in your life. We need to address our conflict management – when someone pushes in at a roundabout, for example, do we fight or

submit? Do we strive for 'vicious vortex', or 'virtuous victory'? He suggested we learn to know ourselves – we all have feelings but we need to control the outputs. We should absorb heat and radiate joy! Graham mentioned the Betari Circle, where our attitudes and beliefs affect those of others. We can step in to control our attitudes and behaviour, but we can't see other people's attitudes, only their behaviour. He said that there are over 33 million licence holders. If they could control their behaviour, then driving standards would improve. Graham referred to the IAM and Roadcraft and said that if you only read one chapter of the manual, it should be the one on Human Factors.

Human Factors



- Betari Circle



- Don't forget – you can only see "behaviour"

Graham showed a short video of 'dreadful driving' and asked how many incidents were down to poor car control, poor state of the vehicle, or poor state of mind. He referred to the Stress Hangover where anger and near misses can lead to carryover effects on you, leading you towards erratic driving, delayed hazard detection, and poor concentration, because you haven't controlled your feelings.

This was followed by a video of 'nice driving'. He suggested that to deal with the stress hangover, you take your time, breathe calmly, drive slowly, perhaps take a break, let the adrenaline settle. Rehearse your safe response to situations that could anger you, anticipate the

needs of other road users, remember that priority is given, not taken – there is no right of way.

Graham summarised his talk :

Human Factors: understand yourself, absorb heat and radiate joy.

Making things worse: impatience, the ‘right’ to be ‘right’.

Making things better: you’re managing all the road users you can see.

What can you do? Use the gap between attitude and behaviour and rehearse the answers before you need them.

Graham pointed out that the only person we can control is ourself. There was a lively discussion on how we can do this, and Graham suggested that to help us, we could use cruise control to stop us going too fast; use our horn as a tool and in a way that is constructive; use our brakes and steering instead of the horn.

Lindsay thanked Graham for his interesting and amusing talk.

Forthcoming Events

Wednesday, 1 April: AGM at Beckington Memorial Hall, Bath Road, Beckington, Frome, BA11 6SH (just off the A36). See page 5 for more details. After the formal AGM, our speaker will be Vicky Lovell from Carma Drivers. This company aims to create a space where individuals can reflect on themselves as drivers in a completely non-judgemental manner. This process encourages participants to consider how they might become better versions of themselves behind the wheel. Vicky is an inspirational speaker and this is an important topic, so please come along to hear her speak.

Observer Training: An Observer Training session is planned in the next few months. Further details will be in the next issue of *Forward*.

Sunday, 7 June: We will be attending the Chippenham Cherished Vehicle Show, at Langley Burrell near Chippenham. This proved to be a popular event last year and we are looking forward to attending again. Details are on page 10.

We are planning to have another Treasure Hunt following on from the

success of last year's event. The date is still to be fixed, but further details will be in the next issue of *Forward* and on the website.

We are also planning to have at least one 3-in-a-car session in the summer, but have not yet finalised details. Keep your eye out for more information about this popular event.

We are considering a possible outing for the group, maybe to a car museum or something similar. Look out for further information in *Forward* and on the website. If you have any suggestions for somewhere suitable, please let us know.

Welcome and Congratulations

We Welcome New Associates

Giles Bulsing	[<i>Observer:</i> John Morley]
John Edmunds	[<i>Observer:</i> Lindsay Flower]
Paul Horne	[<i>Observer:</i> David Major]
Tim Knowles	[<i>Observer:</i> Neil Bannister]
India Morgan-Nash	[<i>Observer:</i> Paul Pywell]
Elizabeth Murray	[<i>Observer:</i> Andy Lee]
Jack Wigmore	[<i>Observer:</i> Jeff Vincent]

We Congratulate

IAMRS Test Pass

Darcey Crownshaw	observed by Callum Chamberlain
Doug Keating	observed by Mark Ellis
Paul Willis	observed by Graham Bennett

Calling Local Car and Community Groups Dave Edwards

SWAM is looking for groups that meet locally (within the SWAM area*) who may want a presentation about Advanced Driving.

We want to promote our activities and potentially recruit new members. We can provide a highly skilled Observer to give a presentation at a meeting, and answer driving questions.

If you are interested for your group, then please identify the person responsible for booking speakers at those meetings, and send their contact details to Dave Edwards (president@swam-iam.org).

*For reference, the SWAM geographical area spans approximately Bath – Chippenham – Salisbury – Wells

Chippenham Lions Cherished Vehicle and Family Fun Day—Dave Edwards

Following last year's very successful show when we recruited several new Associates, we are taking our gazebo to this year's Chippenham Vehicle Show. This will be on Sunday 7th June at Langley Burrell near Chippenham.

Volunteers to help on the stand would be very welcome. You don't have to be Observers, just be enthusiastic about advanced driving. We would like enough volunteers so that we can share time on the stand and also to look round the show. If you can help then please contact Dave Edwards (president@swam-iam.org).

Further details are available on this link:

cvs.rocks | Chippenham Lions – Welcome



IAM RoadSmart Advanced Driving

Is it Worth It? — Ron Lomas

I write this just a few hours after I have achieved a pass in my first attempt at the advanced driving test. I am certainly now in a completely different state of mind than I was just minutes before I was to meet the assessor, where I was questioning what I was doing and asking 'why am I putting myself through this?' Now sitting, having had the congratulatory handshake from the assessor with a pass, my mindset is a big PHEW and the question now is 'was it worth it?'

Simple answer..... of course it was!

I look back to that afternoon at Langley Burrell where I had a random discussion at the IAM RoadSmart display stand. I summarised that I had passed my driving test in 1981 and at no time since had anyone assessed my driving. In my honest self assessment I knew I had an array of bad habits, I knew I was making more and more silly mistakes, my judgement wasn't as quick as it should be and I certainly wasn't enjoying driving as much as I used to. I would get home after a journey tense, with a headache, not entirely happy and relieved that I had survived the drive without incident. At only 68 I was already starting to question how much longer I would feel comfortable driving.

The IAM member persuaded me to come out for a taster drive and it all started to change from that day on. It was a pressure free drive with an honest assessment. Not surprisingly, 45 years of bad habits all came to light during that first drive. Yes, although my driving was assessed as "generally safe", there was a lot I could achieve and re-hone up on with a structured course of tuition.

I was soon on the road on my first accompanied drive with my designated Observer. We talked about the general concerns I had with my driving, resulting in a demonstrated and practised drive of road positioning, incorporating the first principles of the system of car control. All that week I practised what I was taught and with a concentrated

effort to perfect I found I hated driving even more as I made even more mistakes. With the second and probably third sessions, working further through the structured course, as adopted by IAM RoadSmart, I was becoming even more frustrated. With some patience though from my Observer, and a touch of kind but forceful encouragement, we worked together and things gradually started to click into place.

Three sessions later, having worked through the nine sections of the course book, I was assessed as ready for a check drive. This first independent and critical assessment of my driving, since my test back in 1981, was, surprisingly, an enjoyable experience. Yes, there was no getting away from it, I was apprehensive and tense but I now had an opportunity to prove myself as a safe, competent driver. The check drive went well and I was assessed as test ready.

I chose to sit with my Observer for another couple of drives and hone some of the new techniques and processes learnt. After some additional self-practise drives across the full range of roads and conditions the day of my test arrived and the pass achieved.

Of course it was all worth it. I haven't all of a sudden become a perfect, error free driver, but who is? However, I now feel I am a more disciplined, knowledgeable driver, with new found techniques that enhance my safety on the road, and therefore safer for myself, my passengers and other road users. I know my observation has improved, my anticipation has improved and therefore what I do on the road is more methodical and structured. My confidence and enjoyment in driving has returned.

So, yes it is worth it. Congratulations IAM for all the hard work you do and I certainly will be encouraging anyone I know to consider very seriously the safety of their driving and to challenge themselves to improve.

I have always been intrigued that drivers pass a rudimentary test and then are left to their own devices, without another assessment, for the rest of their driving life on the road. In our various occupations, whether that is in an office, a shop, a factory or wherever, as employees

we have all experienced sitting compulsory, regular, often repeated annual, health and safety assessments. However, in the most hazardous situation we all put ourselves into in our daily lives, by jumping into our cars to drive, we are never reassessed. Crazy isn't it?

Another intrigue! When we pass our tests we are handed a piece of paper and we sign it. I wonder how many drivers realise they are declaring, with that signature, that they will keep themselves fully informed of the regulations and laws of the road? I ashamedly say, I didn't. In 1981, when I passed my test, the Highway Code was about 70 pages. In the same comparable format today it is 174 pages. A lot of additional regulation and material applied in those 41 years.

The advanced driving course not only re-concentrates the mind back onto the rules and regulations but also delves into highway structure and reasoning why signs and road markings are as they are. With this deeper knowledge and reasoning it becomes natural to start using the rules, signs and markings in the way you drive, and in planning your actions, all adding to the enjoyment of a drive, especially when you get it right.

So, please don't be afraid, challenge yourself to improve. As well as the seriousness of what you will try to achieve, I can vouch it is fun and it can only be an improvement to your well being, safety, control and knowledge when on the road.

E-bikes and e-scooters—Simon Cowley

Do they need to be treated differently on the road ?

What is an e-scooter ?

Electric scooters (e-scooters) are the powered versions of the two-wheeled stand on and propel with your leg transport we used as kids.

Is e-scooter an official term ?

Not really. They are legally categorised as a 'Powered Transporter' (PT).

What is an e-bike ?

Unsurprisingly, e-bikes are electrically powered versions of the pedal cycle.

Is e-bike an official term ? Not really. They are legally categorised as an 'electrically assisted pedal cycle' (EAPC).

A bit of background

If you drive in or around Bath or Bristol you will have come across the manifestation of the Government's trial into rental e-scooters. The trials were initiated in July of 2022 and currently are due to end in May 2028 – they are going to be around for a while.

Road legal ?

E-bikes, or more correctly, Electrically Assisted Pedal Cycles (EAPC's), can legally be ridden on roads by people over 14 years of age; no licence and no insurance are required. E-bikes are not categorised as motor vehicles.

E-scooters, or more correctly, Powered Transporters (PT), are categorised as motor vehicles. Privately owned e-scooters are not allowed to use public roads; however e-scooters rented through an authorised scheme are allowed to be used on public roads but the rider must:

1. Hold a valid driving licence
2. Be insured (normally through the rental operator)
3. Obey the rules of the road pertinent to motor vehicles.



A bit of an aside Obey the rules of the road, really?

Well they are supposed to. I'm not the only one who's come across an e-scooter weaving in and out of traffic with abandon, rider with their hood up, no peripheral vision, no hint of a look behind, relying on the universe being kind to them to keep them from injury. Recently I came across an e-scooter two-up climbing Wellsway Road in Bath at less than 5 mph in rush hour wobbling chaotically!! But a discussion on the behaviour of riders is not the focus of this article. Moving on...

A bit of a 'wait, what ?'

So an e-bike that is propelled by an electric motor is not considered a motorised vehicle under the Road Traffic Act but an e-scooter that is propelled by an electric motor is considered a motorised vehicle under the same act.

A bit more thought

Accepting the definitions of these two e-devices above, does that have any practical considerations for road users who happen across them on the roads ?

Bath & North East Somerset (BANES) has issued a Temporary Traffic Regulation Order(TTRO ref:THTTC3960) that allows e-scooters (rented through an authorised company) to use any road, or length of road, that can be used by pedal cycles. So e-scooters can emerge at speed from cycle paths, cycle lanes, bus lanes. Conversely pedestrians should expect e-scooters to enter, use & exit combined cycle/ pedestrian lanes. *[Note that this TTRO contradicts the rule on the previous page saying that e-scooter riders must 'Obey the rules of the road pertinent to motor vehicles'. Editor]*

Mirrors become more important when we know e-bikes and rental e-scooters are permitted a maximum speed of 15.5mph (probably derived from 25km/h). Not that long ago MAMILs (middle aged men in Lycra) were the most likely bike riders to do these sorts of speed, now 14 year olds with minimal road wisdom have the technology to dart by us on either side. Some even seem to have mastered quantum superposition abilities and appear on both our left & right at the same time!

No mention of e-anything in the Hierarchy of Road Users but, as EAPCs are just an extension of pedal cycles, can we confidently place them on the same level of vulnerability ?

An e-scooterist is surely just as squishy as an e-cyclist but motor vehicles aren't listed until mid-table in the hierarchy – motorcycles – more responsibility than pedestrians, cyclists & horse riders.

By inference the 1.5m separation whilst overtaking a cyclist up to 30mph would also apply to e-bikes. Do we apply similar to e-scooters? As BANES sought the traffic order to allow e-scooters to use the same roads as cycles, I'll put the common sense safety hat on and say yes.

E-bikes are here to stay, no doubt. E-scooters, whilst still under trial, are likely to co-exist on the roads be that rental only, privately owned,

illegal ones, or most likely all three.

Until the e-scooter situation settles down and is less novel I'll drive with a shortened quote by Oscar Wilde in mind:

where e-scooters are concerned '**Expect the unexpected**'.

To summarise

E-scooter

Rental only on public roads
Max mass (unladen). 55kg
Max power (cont). 500W
Max speed. 15.5mph
Must have front & rear lights
May have indicators
Must have rear & side reflectors

E-bike

Rental or private on public roads
Must have pedals
Max mass. Unspecified
Max power (cont). 250W
Max speed with electrical assistance. 15.5mph
Lights/reflectors requirements same as cycles.

E-scooter rider

Full or provisional driver's licence
Min age. (varies)
No helmet required

E-bike rider

No licence required
Min age. 14 years
No helmet required

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.

SWAM may from time to time publish photographs taken at group events in *Forward* and on the website, or display them at publicity events.

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