

A red MG sports car, likely an MG MGA, is the central focus of the image. It is parked on a grassy field at what appears to be a car show or rally. In the background, there are other vehicles, including a white van and a blue and white motorhome, and several people are visible. The car has a chrome grille with the MG logo, round headlights, and a chrome bumper. It also features several badges on the grille, including one for the 'Somerset & Wiltshire Advanced Motorists' club. The car's license plate is partially visible at the bottom.

iam
RoadSmart

FORWARD

Issue 26

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

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FORWARD

Newsletter of Somerset & Wiltshire Advanced Motorists

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Forthcoming Events

In August and September there are four events to look forward to.

On **4 August** there is a talk at Beckington Memorial Hall on the subject of SMIDSY (Sorry Mate I Didn't See You), important to both drivers and motorcyclists. Information is on page 11.

17 August sees the rearranged Treasure Hunt which had to be postponed in July. This was a great success last year, so please join us for a fun evening. Information is on page 11.

1 September is the visit to the Wiltshire Air Ambulance, which will be an interesting and enlightening occasion. See page 12 for information.

On **7 September** we are holding another 3-in-a-car evening with the theme of Confidence vs Over-Confidence. See page 10 for information on this event.

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

Welcome to *Forward*. In this issue you will find information about our summer events, see pages 3 and 10, including the Treasure Hunt which was due to take place in July. However, thanks to an inconvenient road closure, it was decided to postpone it until 17 August. We are also having an interesting talk on SMIDSY, Sorry Mate I Didn't See You, on 4 August, and more information on both these events is on page 11. Following a successful 3-in-a-car evening in May, we are holding another one in September, with the theme of Confidence vs Over Confidence, an important topic.

Clare was writing this during the June and July heatwaves, with the occasional thunderstorm thrown in. She got caught in one thunderstorm and had to find a safe place to pull off the road as she did not feel at all safe driving. On pages 16 and 17 there are two articles from IAM RoadSmart, one about driving in hot weather and the other about driving in heavy rain, which give helpful advice about what to do in these circumstances. Hopefully, we won't have too much more hot weather this year, but the advice can be borne in mind for the future.

There is also an interesting article, Wide or Narrow, on page 13, from Simon Cowley (thank you, Simon) about Active Travel, and overtaking cyclists, and the problems posed by the width of our roads. I found the Active Travel England definitions particularly interesting as I didn't know about defining those who use mobility aids as 'wheelers'. Car drivers need to take precautions overtaking cyclists, and scooter riders, as well as walkers and wheelers, and the width of our roads often doesn't make it easy to give the necessary leeway for those you are overtaking.

Clare Hogg, Sue Phillips

The next edition of *Forward* will be published in November 2026. Please submit motoring-related articles and/or digital photographs to the Editors (*who reserve the right to edit them*) by Friday 2 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.

Group News

3-in-a-car

Peter Huntington introduced the 3-in-a-car session in May by talking about Anticipation. He started his entertaining and informative talk by telling us a bit about his driving career. Having learnt to drive at a young age, and working for British Leyland and running a small garage, he became over-confident in his abilities to drive safely and ended up having a large number of endorsements on his licence before finally being banned from driving. He moved to New York where few people drive and passed his American driving test. He drove a taxi in Philadelphia and worked as a mechanic in California.

When he eventually returned to the UK, he spent two years driving a minicab in London. In fact, over Christmas 1984 and 1985, he won a £1,500 prize for completing the most journeys during the holiday period, driving 18 hours a day for two months!

Eventually he decided that the motor trade and he needed some distance from each other. He went to university, studied Estate Management, and has worked in property ever since.

Peter took his advanced driving test in 2016 and went on to take a further advanced driving test, and achieved a distinction in his Masters test. He is a Fellow member of the IAM and an Observer. Peter, therefore, brought a great deal of experience and knowledge to his talk on Anticipation.

Many accidents happen because drivers fail to see hazards early enough. Advanced drivers do not react to problems, they predict them before they happen.

Anticipation means observing what's happening all around you, predicting what could happen next and preparing to respond safely and calmly. Looking ahead gives drivers more time to make decisions, brake smoothly, avoid danger and protect themselves and others.

These are the skills used by advanced drivers, emergency drivers and professional drivers every day.

Many drivers only focus directly on the car in front of them. They are driving reactively instead of proactively.

A driver should ideally try to look around 12 to 15 seconds ahead in urban areas and even further ahead on faster roads and motorways. Looking ahead allows you to spot traffic slowing down, see pedestrians near crossings, cyclists changing direction, cars pulling out, roadworks or obstacles, and changes in weather or road conditions.

For example, if you see a brake light several cars ahead you can start to ease off the accelerator early.

Never accelerate towards a dead end, and what he meant by a dead end is a red traffic light, a line of traffic or some other roadblock.

Looking ahead and anticipation creates smoother driving, better fuel efficiency, less stress and safe stopping distances. Remember, every time you use your brake you're wasting fuel. Anticipation means asking yourself what could happen next. Good drivers constantly scan for possible risks:

1) Look out for pedestrians: If you see a child near the road you should anticipate unpredictable movement. Children can run into the road, chase a ball and ignore traffic.

2) Watch out for parked cars: A parked car may pull out unexpectedly, a door may be opened into traffic, or it may hide a pedestrian crossing. Look underneath the wheels of parked cars, if you can.

3) Junctions: Cars at side roads or drives can misjudge your speed and can pull out without seeing you. A good driver will cover the brakes and prepare to stop early in case of unexpected events.

Weather conditions: rain, fog, ice or bright sunlight can reduce visibility and stopping ability. Anticipation means adjusting your speed, adjusting your following distance and your braking style before danger develops. There are several techniques drivers use to improve anticipation:

1) Scanning: drivers should constantly move their eyes, check mirrors

and the road ahead and to the sides.

2) Keeping space: maintaining a safe following distance gives more reaction time. In normal conditions use the two second rule and in wet conditions increase to four seconds, or in icy conditions and snow even more, up to ten seconds. More space means more time.

3) Reading body language: Road users often give clues about their intention, for instance a pedestrian looking both ways if he's going to cross the road; a cyclist turning their head, maybe they're going to make a turn; the vehicle edging forward at a junction is about to come out onto the road. These help drivers to prepare.

As an advanced driver, always think where can I go? What if something went wrong? This may mean leaving space beside the vehicle. Avoid driving boxed in by traffic and identify safe stopping areas.

There can be serious consequences of poor anticipation, for example: a rear-end collision, harsh braking, loss of control, increased stress and road rage, serious injury or death.

To conclude, anticipation is about looking ahead and safe drivers observe early, predict hazards, plan ahead, stay calm and are always prepared. Good anticipation reduces accidents, improves reaction time, creates smooth journeys and protects all road users. Remember, a good driver reacts to hazards, a great driver sees them before they happen.

Peter went on to explain that members and Observers would go out for a drive and then return and change drivers to go out again. There were routes of 20 to 30 miles prepared, or members could choose their own route. The successful evening was enjoyed by all.

Chippenham Lions Cherished Vehicle Show

The Chippenham Cherished Vehicle Show was held on Sunday 7th June.

We were lucky that the weather stayed dry after a rather wet week. Our stand was situated towards the rear of the site, near some



cherished Jaguar cars that did not seem to be particularly popular. However, we were visited by the Mayor of Chippenham, Councillor Matthew Bragg, as he was shown around the ground after opening the event.

We greeted passers-by and talked to those of them who showed interest in what IAM RoadSmart and SWAM do.

A number of people sat to complete the Highway Code quiz and interacted with various members of the team.



Two people were signed up for test drives on the day.

We were able to walk around the event, marvel at some of the exhibits and sample the

variety of food and drink stalls.

Some of us listened to our President as he performed with the Rock Choir, the highlight of the day!

We packed up the marquee and all the publicity material etc. ready for its next outing to



the Bath Festival of Motoring on the last weekend of June.

It was, perhaps, unfortunate that the event clashed with the Middlewick House Open Garden event, but the Chippenham Lions always hold their event on the first Sunday in June.

Bath Festival of Motoring

SWAM attended the Bath Festival of Motoring on the last weekend in June. Attendance on the Saturday was lower than expected, probably because the forecast was for another hot day following the June heatwave. On the Sunday it was cooler and attendance was much higher.



The stand was in a very good location beside the parade ring, and we had a very successful weekend. There was a lot of interaction with the public, some answering our Highway Code quiz, and some signing up for Taster Sessions. Those who

answered the quiz and provided an email address were sent a link to the online version of the Highway Code, so we hope they will be benefitting from reading it.

We were pleased that so many signed up for Taster Sessions as they often convert to people becoming Associates, and at the least they will have benefitted from a drive with an Observer to give them advice about their driving.

In addition, Lindsay got us a radio interview for Radio Bath, we have been asked to do an advanced driving presentation



at the Bath Motor Club, and we made a couple of other useful contacts. Following the success of this year's attendance at the Festival, we will probably be attending next year. We do need more support to man the gazebo, and especially to erect it, which can only be safely done with at least three people, preferably more. Please think about helping us at our events in future — and you get free admission! Thank you.



Future Events

Tuesday, 4 August at 19.00: Understanding and avoiding SMIDSY (Sorry Mate I Didn't See You) collisions. Stephen Wilkinson-Carr, ROSPA Senior Tutor (Glos) will be talking about this important topic at Beckington Memorial Hall*. For more information, see page 11.

Monday, 17 August at 18.30: Treasure Hunt at Beckington Memorial Hall*. This was a great success last year so Lindsay and Robin are organising another one for us this year. This event is postponed from July. See page 11 for further details.

Tuesday, 1 September at 15.00: Visit to Wiltshire Air Ambulance headquarters and airbase at Semington near Melksham. This is sure to be a very interesting visit. Details are on page 12.

Monday, 7 September at 19.00: 3-in-a-car meeting at Beckington Memorial Hall*. A 3-in-a-car meeting is an opportunity to practise an aspect of advanced driving with one of our National Observers, and to benefit from their experience and advice. You can either drive or be a passenger, so please come along to make the most of this opportunity.

The topic for this event is Confidence vs Over-Confidence, with a short talk prior to going out on the road. The talk will be given by Ray Robbetts, our Deputy Chief Observer.

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

SMIDSY Talk — 4 August

Understanding and avoiding SMIDSY (Sorry Mate I Didn't See You) collisions

Ever had a vehicle pull out on you at a junction?

Ever pulled out from a junction into the path of another vehicle?

Ever wondered why such incidents happen?

There are numerous reasons such potential and actual collisions happen, and most are more to do with human physiology (our eyes tell us lies), vehicle design, and environmental factors than driver/rider ability.

Stephen Wilkinson-Carr, ROSPA Senior Tutor (Glos), will be answering these questions at our meeting on 4th August. This is an interesting and important topic, so please come along for the talk at 19.00, doors open at 18.30. We look forward to seeing you there.

Treasure Hunt — 17 August

Good advanced driving is about improving OBSERVATION alongside ensuring EARLY ANTICIPATION of hazards, to help PLAN how they can be best and safely negotiated, taking account of all road users and, of course, road conditions.

This Treasure Hunt aims to embrace all of the above qualities over an approximately one and a half to two hour drive along the roads of Somerset and Wiltshire. Each team must consist of two people, one driving, plus one keeping a tab on the notes and questions/challenges that need to be worked out. You can come as a pair, including bringing a guest, or on your own and you will be paired up with another member.

WE MUST STRESS THAT THIS EVENT IS **NOT**, REPEAT **NOT**, A RACE.

The 'Hunt' should take about one and a half to two hours, but no prizes will be given for arriving back early!

We do hope that you will join us for this event, and to try and ensure that a convoy isn't created, we will be staggering each team's start time by a minute or two.

It would help us in organising this event if you could let the SWAM Secretary know if you intend taking part in this event, so that we can plan for the number of Treasure Hunt Notes to be produced, also with regard to numbers for catering etc. Contact: secretary@swam-iam.org.uk

It will start/finish at the Beckington Memorial Hall (see page 11 for location), where competitors should aim to arrive at 6:30pm. Refreshments will be available, both before as well as after the 'Hunt'. The event should be finished by 9pm at the latest.

We look forward to seeing you on the day.

Visit to Wiltshire Air Ambulance — 1 September

We have a private behind the scenes tour in the Wiltshire Air Ambulance headquarters/airbase at Semington near Melksham starting at 15.00 on Tuesday 1st September. This tour is limited to 30 places at a reduced price of £20 (reduced from the usual tour price of £25).

This is a walking tour of up to 2 hours which will visit the Operations room, helicopter hangar and simulation suite. It will be an operational day when the helicopter will be flying, so the helicopter may not be there at the time. The simulation suite covers medical training.

We will take deposits of £10pp to guarantee places on a first come first served basis. If there are fewer than 30 members who wish to visit then we will accept friends and family, to a maximum of 30 people. The balance of £10 will be payable on the day.

If you would like to attend then please email me, president@swam-iam.org, and I will advise deposit details. Thanks to my Associate (and volunteer presenter at the Air Ambulance), Chris McCormack, for enabling this visit.

Welcome and Congratulations

We Welcome New Associates

Reuben Alcock	[Observer: Michael Muncer]
Alex Jacobs	[Observer: Graham Bennett]
Peter Jones	[Observer: John Morley]
Patrick Kelly	[Observer: Simon Cowley]
Elisabeth Manners	[Observer: Val Czerny]

We Congratulate

IAMRS Test Pass

Giles Bulsing*	observed by John Morley
Jennifer Crossey	observed by John Cameron
Joshua Patrick*	observed by Mark Ellis
Sarah Simmonds	observed by Lindsay Flower
Cathy Warner	observed by Nick Elton
James Wills*	observed by Michael Muncer

* F1RST pass

Wide or Narrow – Simon Cowley

New government guidelines for roads

Can't argue against safety – but how best to achieve it ?

Back in January 2022 the Highway Code was updated to include a hierarchy of road users, highlighting the responsibilities of larger, faster

more massive vehicles to enhance the safety of vulnerable pedestrians and cyclists who are more easily damaged – all perfectly reasonable.

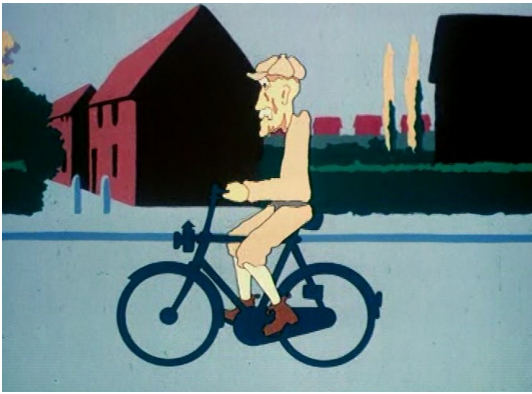
Overtaking cyclists

To help keep cyclists safer Highway Code 163 states – ‘As a guide: leave at least 1.5 metres when overtaking cyclists at speeds of up to 30mph, and give them more space when overtaking at higher speeds.’

Cyclists are suggested (advised?) to keep at least 0.5m away from the kerb, we can probably say a cyclist is in the region of 0.6m wide, allow overtaking separation of said 1.5m, add on width of average UK car that is a smidge over 1.8m and we get that an ideal minimum width of lane to allow safe overtake, and not encroach into the opposing lane, of 4.4m. Typically carriageways are 5.0-5.5m, halve that for each lane. Of course crossing a broken centre line can be an option.

Enter Active Travel England (ATE)

ATE is tasked with making walking, wheeling (I didn't know that was a thing*) and cycling the preferred modes of transport in England. They have highlighted concerns over the width of our roads in relation to the safety of active travel. ATE's guidance is now on the Department for Transport website and they are a statutory consultee on large road projects. There is far too much detail to go into in this short article because their guidance is substantial and covers more than lane width but here is a snippet from the ATE guidance: ‘... it is recommended that lanes between 3.25m and 3.9m are avoided. Where there are two opposing 3.65m lanes, a 3.25m lane and a 4.05m lane would resolve this issue, as would removing the centre line.’ So wide or narrow seems to be the choice. With the government's proposed £7.3 billion local road development budget and their keen interest in active travel we can expect to see carriageway design change significantly and soon. We are all for safer roads and these guidelines from ATE should be a positive move. However I wonder, if a small portion of this road budget was allocated towards better driver training, and to continued driver education, if we could enhance safety even more with additional benefits in all areas especially ‘the thinking driver’ and consideration.



I'm sure many of us remember public information films like Augustus Windsock, the world's oldest cyclist with his sage advice. I still recall them some forty years later so they must work**. Was IAM consulted by ATE? Are public information films confined to the past? Is post-DVLA test driver education wishful

thinking? Is government too reliant on technology to solve problems? Are low road use standards the root problem? **“That’s why he’s stayed alive so long”** (Augustus Windsock video**)

Active travel? Active Travel is the term used for modes of getting around that make you physically active. **Who is ATE?** Active Travel England is a government executive agency. **What is ATE’s purpose?** They are responsible for making walking, wheeling and cycling the preferred choice for everyone to get around in England.

Information Highway Code Hierarchy of road users H1 H3 HC 72 HC 163

Links: [activetravelengland.gov.uk](https://www.activetravelengland.gov.uk)

[gov.uk](https://www.gov.uk) (search for critical safety issues for walking, wheeling, cycling)

Public Information Safety: we (probably) still remember Think once, think twice, think bike ! Clunk click every trip ! Coooooeeee !

***Active Travel Definitions: Walking/Wheeling**

Walking:

Foot/pedestrian-based mobility that may incorporate the support of aids to mobility such as stick/s, cane/s, crutch/es, the arm of another person and/or assistance animal/s.

Wheeling:

An equivalent alternative to foot/pedestrian-based mobility. Includes wheeled mobilities such as manual self- or assistant-propelled wheelchairs, including wheelchairs with power attachments or all-terrain attachments (such as the “[Freewheel](#)”), powered wheelchairs, mobility

scooters (three and four-wheeled) and [rollators](#) or [walkers](#). Some people rely on their cycle to move (at a pedestrian's pace) through pedestrianised environments when it is not physically possible to walk/push their cycle. Some people use their cycle as a walking aid, by leaning on it, some people use e-scooters (with or without a seat), to wheel/scoot through a pedestrianised environment if they cannot walk unaided.

We recommend never using “walking” on its own as it potentially reinforces ableist stereotypes and makes Disabled people invisible. Instead, we recommend always using “**walking, wheeling**” together. Both words represent the action of moving at a pedestrian's pace, whether or not someone is standing or sitting, walking or wheeling unaided or using any kind of aid to mobility, including walking aids, wheeled aids, personal assistants or support animals.

**Link to YouTube video of one of Augustus Windssock's films: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-M_OUGIE63Y

Driving in Hot Weather — IAM RoadSmart

At the time of writing we are in the midst of the third heatwave of the summer, and the following advice from IAM RoadSmart may well come in useful if we have another one.

Driving in hot weather can quickly become uncomfortable and tiring, especially on longer journeys. High temperatures, strong sunlight, and glare can all affect concentration and increase fatigue behind the wheel. Preparing your vehicle and yourself properly can make a significant difference to your comfort, safety, and overall driving experience.

Water

Keep fresh water in the car to ensure all occupants stay hydrated. This helps reduce fatigue and keeps you more alert during your journey.

Sunglasses

When needed, wear polarised, UV-blocking sunglasses to reduce glare from the sun. They are especially useful during low sun conditions in

the early morning and late evening.

Screenwash

Screenwash is particularly important at this time of year, as pollen can quickly build up on your vehicle. This can lead to dirty windscreens and reduced visibility, so keeping your washer fluid topped up is essential.

Coolant checks

Checking and topping up your coolant levels during warmer weather can help reduce the risk of your vehicle overheating, especially on longer journeys or in heavy traffic.

Sunscreen

Breaking down in hot weather can leave you exposed to sun, heat, and dehydration. It's a good idea to keep SPF 50 in your car during the summer months, in case you're stuck outdoors for any length of time.

Driving in Wet Weather — IAM RoadSmart

Driving in heavy rain: Top tips from IAM RoadSmart

Heavy rain:

Heavy rain will affect your visibility, so take it slow. Rule 126 of the Highway Code states that the braking distance between yourself and the vehicle in front of you should be two seconds when driving on a dry road, and at least four seconds in the wet. It is even longer on icy surfaces. IAM RoadSmart recommend up to ten times the braking distance when driving on ice.

Your windscreen should be clean, wipers effective and the jets positioned correctly and aimed at the screen. It is sensible to clean the windscreen, make any necessary adjustments and remove anything from the main area before you start your journey.

A good rule of thumb is that if you need windscreen wipers, then you need your headlights. Automatic light settings will not always activate in bad weather conditions, so it is up to you to make a sensible deci-

sion as to whether these need to be turned on.

Aquaplaning:

If the water is standing in puddles on the road surface, your car is at risk of aquaplaning. Aquaplaning is where a wedge of water forms in front of the tyre and lifts it up off the road surface. This is caused by the tread not being able to displace the amount of water present. To recover from aquaplaning, ease gently off your accelerator, have a firm grip of the steering wheel and be sure not to make any sudden steering actions. The car will eventually regain its grip as the water clears.

Floods:

First ask yourself – can you take another route? If not, then you need to identify how deep the flood is. If the standing water is more than six inches deep, avoid driving through it. If you are familiar with the road, you can judge the flood in relation to the kerb.

If heavy rain was not the cause of the flood, then what was? And what impact on the road does it have? For example, if it is a burst water main, the standing water may look like a normal flood but the road surface beneath the water may be completely broken up. If you are unsure how the flood has formed, then avoid it altogether.

Are there other vehicles similar to yours that are safely driving through? From this, make a judgement call as to whether it is safe to travel through or not.

If the water is fast-flowing, do not attempt to drive through it, as there is a real danger of your car being swept off the road.

If you have taken everything into consideration and decide to drive through the flood, be sure to do so slowly. The best approach is to press lightly on your clutch and add gentle pressure on your accelerator to increase your engine revs. Do so without increasing your speed, in a similar way to how you would undertake a hill start. This will prevent water from entering your exhaust. If you are in an automatic car, accelerate slightly but control the speed with your brakes. When you have passed the flood, test your brakes to make sure they are dry and working properly.

If you are in the slightest doubt, then turn around and don't go through the flood. Often modern saloon cars have the air intake in the wheel arch, which may be below the water level. If your engine should take in water, it will immediately hydro lock and the engine will stop.

Remember to stay alert and avoid splashing pedestrians. If this is done accidentally – even when causing splashes when driving through puddles at the side of the road – you could receive a fixed penalty and three points on your licence for driving without due care and attention, or without reasonable consideration for other road users. If deliberately done, it could be a public order offence, a court appearance and a fine.

Richard Gladman, head of driving and riding standards, said last winter: “With the British weather the way it is, we should all be well practised at driving in the rain. Keeping your car maintained and the rubber (wipers and tyres) in good condition will help you stay safe. In the recent extremes, we have seen that standing water and floods are becoming more commonplace, so take extra care and if possible avoid driving through standing water. If you're in any doubt about the depth or surface underneath a flood, then it's best not to take any chances.”

Editor's Corner

Speed limit signage

You will think I am obsessed with speed limits and their signage, but that is because I try to stick to the speed limits and sometimes find it hard to know what the limit is. When I learnt to drive, I was under the impression that, if the speed limit wasn't the national limit, or 30mph in an area with street lights, you should always be able to see a reminder of what the speed limit is. That may or may not have been true then, but it certainly isn't now. On a government website I found a document from which the following information was obtained. If you're interested, this is the link, and look at section 8.3 (pages 74

and 75:

<https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/5c78f895e5274a0ebfec719b/traffic-signs-manual-chapter-03.pdf>

I was staggered to find that there is no specific requirement to provide repeater signs, but it is recommended to do so. The recommended distance between repeater signs increases with the speed limit, so the faster you are going, the further apart the repeater signs are. The website gives the exact distances. On a road with bends, this can mean that you might go for quite a while before you see a repeater, and if you are not sure if you might have missed a sign, quite easy to do in summer with foliage hiding the signs in some cases, you might go on for some time going too fast, or too slow, for the road, which is not ideal. What I like is when the speed limit is painted on the road, as then it can't be hidden by foliage. Cars in front can block the sign, but if you are travelling at an appropriate distance behind the car in front, you should be able to see it. The problem with those is that the paint can wear off – there's always something. I know that as advanced drivers, we should be spotting all speed limit signs, and remembering what the speed limit is, but it isn't always that easy.

Clare Hogg

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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