



## Newsletter

October 2024



Diary Date: AGM - March 4<sup>th</sup> 2025

### GROUP NEWS:

Group membership is holding steady at around 90 members, and so far this year 11 new Associates have enrolled with us. We have had 8 Advanced Driving Test passes, including two F1RSTs. Our training to National Observer status is almost complete, with three new Trainee Observers in the programme being prepared for test.

### Group Events:

A successful show at “**The Big Meet**” in West Wycombe in July resulted in one new member signing up on the day, plus one more who has joined following a free taster session (see below).

**The Group Tour of Mini Plant in Oxford** was on 8 October. It takes just 22 hours to assemble a complete Mini. They produce 850 cars each day and the 1200 robots run 18 hrs/day for 5 days/week. Our 2hr tour encompassed all aspects of the production. We arrived at the Visitor Centre to be met by our excellent tour guide, Andrew. After leaving all mobile phones in secure lockers due to strict security rules, we were taken to the “body-in-white” department, where production of the chassis begins. The pressed steel panels come from Swindon and are spot welded together by robots (the first of many on the production line) to create the platform. The completed body is thoroughly cleaned and then painted prior to entering the finishing line for the installation of the wiring, interior, engine transmission, suspension and wheels. The noise level in the production halls was quite high, so it was good that we all had radio earpieces to be able to listen to our Guide’s wealth of information. A most interesting and very enjoyable tour. (Report by Bob Hill.)

### MEET OUR OBSERVERS:



**Bob Hill** (left) joined the Group following retirement from the motor and transport industry. He is a National Observer and has a Masters’ Distinction. Bob is also a Committee member. He is a member of three local choirs, most notably The Wycombe Orpheus Male Voice Choir.

**Tim Nicholson** (right) is a National Observer, and Fellow of IAM. Tim is a Committee member and Treasurer of our Group. He is a structural engineer having had a long career in bridge design and heavy civil engineering both in the UK and overseas. He retains a keen interest in cycling and has cycled extensively in Europe on his beloved mountain bikes, although not too active these days!



### ARE YOU AWARE:

We offer **FREE** driving skills refreshers specially designed for our members, including guidance. This entails 45-60 minutes in the company of one of our National Observers to help keep your Advanced Driving skills at their best. We also offer non-members shorter **FREE** assessments, please mention **FREE TASTERS**. To book your session, please contact [info@highwycombeiam.org](mailto:info@highwycombeiam.org)

### COMMITTEE:

Chair	Nigel Mason	Treasurer	Tim Nicholson
Membership Secretary	Valerie Brickell	Chief Observer	Nigel Mason
Group Secretary	Margaret Gordon	IT Admin	Sean Pearce
Without portfolio	Bob Hill, Tara Ridgeway and Bern Warr		

[www.highwycombeiam.org](http://www.highwycombeiam.org)

## DRIVING TIPS:

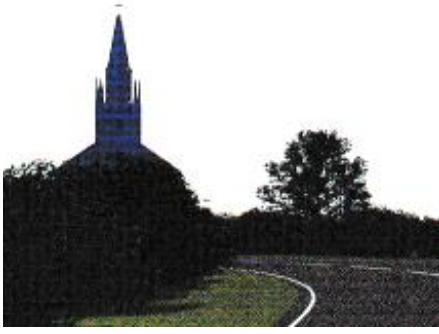


Photo Source: IAM RoadSmart

**Steeple means people!** Begin preparations to comply with a lower speed limit ahead – probably 30mph. Show your brake lights to alert those following, who may not be so speed-limit compliant.

**Managing distractions:** Use of a hands-free phone while driving causes a 27% increase in driver reaction times, and using a hand-held phone increases reaction time by 46%. Avoid taking/making any phone calls while driving. In autumn 2023 a UK Gov survey identified 0.3% of all drivers using a mobile phone while driving. Driving distracted is one of the biggest causes of road traffic accidents in the UK, don't be tempted.

## Vehicle Cloning (Thames Valley Police Advice):



Photo Source: IAM RAC

If you receive a ticket that causes you to suspect that your vehicle has been cloned, please report it to the police. You should also notify DVLA.

Contact the organisation that issued the ticket/fine, explain that your vehicle has been cloned and request cancellation. Tell them that the police and DVLA have been informed and send any available supporting evidence, such as a police issued crime reference number.

## IAM RESPONDS:



Photo Source: IAM RoadSmart

IAM urges Government to implement a comprehensive roads renewal plan following a new report on the state of Britain's roads. IAM RoadSmart's Nicholas Lyes said: "This report lays bare the challenge required to improve the standard of our road network. While focus is often on the expensive damage potholes can do to vehicles, they are also a huge road safety hazard particularly for those on two wheels. We urge the Government to come up with a roads renewal plan, which includes ringfenced funding so we can finally start to get a grip on our crumbling road network."

## SMART MOTORWAYS "WHAT TO DO IN A BREAKDOWN SITUATION":

National Highways advice is to leave at the next junction or Service Area if possible. Alternatively, move to the nearest Emergency Area, exit the vehicle from the left side, get behind the safety barrier, and move as far away from the motorway as possible – **THEN** call for help.

If your vehicle stops in live traffic and you are unable to reach a place of safety, **STAY** in the vehicle, **KEEP** your seatbelts on, turn on the hazard warning lights, and **CALL** 999 immediately and ask for police, or **PRESS** the vehicle SOS button.



Photo Source: National Highways.

**SMART MOTORWAYS DRIVING TIP:** Always stay very alert, and do not allow yourself to get distracted. Always remember the 2 second rule, and take note of where the safety refuge points are located.

## DRIVING IN HEAVY RAIN:

IAM RoadSmart has prepared a simple motoring advisory chart – See Following Page.

**Heavy rain, poor driving conditions; flood risk**

**Amber**

<b>Impact on steering and drive</b>	Steering may feel light, effective acceleration and braking will be reduced
<b>Advice</b>	<i>Reduce speed, make sure inputs on controls are smooth, slow earlier and slow more for turns, avoid harsh acceleration or coarse braking. Beware of standing water, it may contain potholes or defective drains that will affect steering and damage your car.</i>
<b>Impact on grip</b>	Grip will be reduced, in wet/damp conditions the road surface will be slippery. With standing water, the tyre treads may become overwhelmed and lose grip.
<b>Advice</b>	<i>Keep speeds low, if <u>possible</u> avoid puddles and areas of standing water</i>

**IAM ADVICE FOR DRIVING IN HEAVY RAIN, POOR DRIVING CONDITIONS; FLOOD RISK.**

<b>Impact on visibility</b>	Spray will reduce visibility
<b>Advice</b>	<i>Dipped headlights on, windscreen wipers active (blades to be checked as part of vehicle checks) Reduce speed, give yourself and others time to react.</i>
<b>Impact on safety if breakdown occurs</b>	Spray from passing vehicles may make your vehicle difficult to see
<b>Advice</b>	<i>Call for help – if <u>possible</u> leave the vehicle lights on – High viz marker if you have one. Get out of the vehicle to an area of safety if possible (Do not get out into a live lane of a fast road unless the traffic has been stopped) Stand in an area of safety away from the vehicle</i>