

Newsletter

2nd Quarter, 2026

High Wycombe Group 42nd Annual General Meeting.

(Photographed from left to right, Tim Nicholson - Treasurer, Nigel Mason - Chair, and Margaret Gordon - Secretary)

In attendance were 17 members, plus 2 guests. Committee Members available for re-election were duly appointed, with Nigel's successor as Chief Observer, Bern Warr, being welcomed into the role. (See Page 2 for the list of the elected Committee Members.)

Nigel informed the meeting that Valerie Brickell was in poor health and had reluctantly decided to stand down as Membership Secretary.

Valerie sadly passed away on the Thursday following the AGM. Valerie was a stalwart Committee member, with special responsibilities for membership and admin support for our Observers. She fulfilled her duties with diligence, and her sense of humour was greatly appreciated. (See page 3.)

It was reported that in January/February, 9 new Associates joined the Group taking the current number of Associates to 32, and there were 3 Test Passes including a F1RST.

Following the AGM, there was an enlightening **presentation** by **Rob Heard** (photographed below) titled '**Helping Older Drivers Stay Safer for Longer'**. Rob is Founder and Chair of the Older Drivers Forum, and formerly Road Safety Sergeant for Hants & Thames Valley Police, and Head of the Special Escort Group.

For more information about the older drivers' forum follow this link https://olderdriversforum.com/



The key takeaways:

- Daily road collisions in the UK result in 5 deaths, 81 serious injuries, and 347 slight injuries, at a total annual estimated cost to the economy of over £43billion.
- The 4 main factors are **SPEED**, **DRINK** and **DRUGS**, **MOBILE PHONE** usage, lack of **SEAT BELT** usage. *(5th factor now being added, **CARELESS DRIVING**. Ed.)*
- There are over 6.3million **older drivers** (increasing at an annual rate of ¼ million). They account for 15% of all motorists, 11% of total mileage driven, 8% of all casualties **BUT 24% of all road deaths!**
- **Research** indicates that motorists of any age **driving under 2000 miles** annually are at **higher risk of collisions** and that older drivers require 22% more time to recognise and respond to hazards (at 70mph this equates to an extra 2 car lengths).

Older drivers are **more likely to be in a collision**; when **failing to look** properly; when **failing to judge** another person or path when turning right, like at T junctions; when **involving illness or disability** (mobility and head movement reduces with ageing); when driving too slowly for the road conditions. *(Remember to apply O-A-P, Observe-Anticipate-Plan. Ed.)*

Rob described the three-pronged approach by the Older Drivers Forum: **Raise awareness**; **Voluntary driving assessments & eyesight checks**; **Referral scheme**.

Rob highlighted the importance of **regular eye check-ups**, especially for older people. Over **3million** motorists do **NOT** meet the required vision standards, and this number increases in summer months when some switch to the regular use of uncorrected sun spectacles.



Rob also discussed the key proposals in the **Government's Road Safety Strategy 2026,** with the goals of **65% (70% for children) reduction in Death & Serious Injury by 2035**, through: **Stricter Drink/Drive limits; Better support for New/ Younger drivers; Tackling Dangerous Driving; Safer Vehicles (ADAS) and Safer Roads.**

The evening was appropriately rounded off by celebrating exemplary Older Driver skills, with a **presentation** to 91 year old **Barry Hatch** (centre) receiving his Certificate for a F1RST Pass in his IAM Advanced Driver Test. For more on Barry's achievement, please see our 1st Quarter 2026 Newsletter, or click **here**.

(Above visuals are courtesy of Sean Pearce, High Wycombe Group of Advanced Motorists)

IAM RoadSmart ROAD SAFETY REPORT 2025 – "The Motoring Public has its Say":



Conducted annually, this is a detailed survey of **the road safety issues** that matter most to the UK's motorists. The key topics of concern are:

- **potholes** on the local road network.
- **aggressive** driving, and **conduct** of other drivers (especially, adherence to rules, and their standards of driving).
- **congestion**.
- **e-scooters and riders**.
- awareness of **modern vehicle safety and technology.**
- supporting both the **enforcement of, and penalties for**, illegal/dangerous driving.
- **policy initiatives** to support drivers of all ages, for example:
    - Insurance Premium Tax (IPT) reductions for those gaining additional driving qualifications.
    - mandatory eye tests for over 70's'
    - mandatory re-testing of the Highway Code every 10 years for all drivers.

Examples of personal behaviours admitted to the researchers were driving whilst using a handheld mobile, not wearing seat belts, being over the drink driving limit the "morning after", and impatience with others.
For full details of the **IAM RoadSmart Road Safety Report 2025** click this **link**.)
(Photo source: IAM RoadSmart.)

FUEL SAVING TIPS (In the light of the current impacts on fuel availability and pricing):



Have **correct tyre pressures** – incorrectly inflated tyres affect fuel efficiency.

- **Read the road, and Anticipate**.
    - **"Gentle"** on the accelerator / "**gentle"** on the brake.
    - **Drive according to the road conditions**, remembering the applicable speed limits.
    - Try to **maintain momentum**.
    - **Avoiding F1 style** driving on the normal road system is a key factor in fuel economy.
- **Manual gearbox** - Select the appropriate gear for the conditions, in town and country.
- Use **in-car technology** to aid fuel consumption.
    - **Cruise control** aids fuel efficiency especially on motorways/dual carriageways.
- **Remove** roof boxes/racks when not in use.
- **Plan** your day – using a warm engine is more efficient than a number of shorter trips.

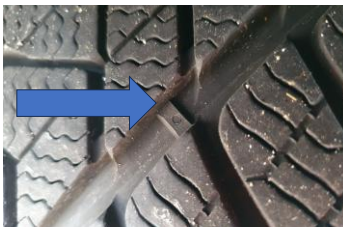
Although electricity is generally cheaper for vehicles, the above rules can still apply, as they do affect energy consumption.
(Photo source: IAM RoadSmart)

NO EXCUSES, NO SPEEDING! (Bucks Council Campaign):



Speeding is a major factor in road traffic collisions, and also probably the most abused Criminal Law in the UK, and often impossible to police. Speeding is an offence under the Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984.
While often handled via a **fixed penalty notice** (currently a £100 fine and 3 points) that avoids Court, it may lead to prosecution, higher fines, and potential disqualification.
On the **Buckinghamshire Council** website is an interactive module called **"Speed Choice"**. It is designed to help you recognise the speed limit for your vehicle, the type of road you are on, and stopping distances. Click **here** to view the **speed module** and to test yourself.
(Photo source: Buckinghamshire Council)

APRIL "SHOWERS" TIPS:



Check tyres for;

- **wear and tear** - as a guide, look for the rubber strips going across the tyre. The actual tyre tread must be above the tyre depth marker (see visual, left).
- **correct tyre pressures** (including the spare, if you have one).

Remember, **smooth braking**.
Beware of possible **aquaplaning**!

COMMITTEE:

Chair	Nigel Mason	Treasurer	Tim Nicholson
Membership Secretary	Vacancy (Margaret Gordon - acting)	Deputy Treasurer	Tara Ridgeway
Group Secretary	Margaret Gordon	Chief Observer	Bern Warr
IT Admin	Sean Pearce	Without portfolio	Bob Hill

Valerie Brickell: 1948 – 2026.



Valerie photographed with Keith Chanter at the 40th Anniversary AGM.

Valerie was truly a stalwart of the High Wycombe Group of Advanced Motorists. She will be greatly missed.

Prior to retirement, Valerie worked for many years in the London advertising business, eventually rising to the position of Chief Accountant at a major Agency. In 1985 she and Colin moved to Marlow Bottom, from where she commuted to High Wycombe Rail Station and onwards to London's West End. She had special memories of her Citroen 2CV, particularly on the return evening journey up the A404 Marlow Hill. She would be wanting to get home as quickly as possible, but the 2CV had other ideas, taking the Marlow Hill in a very leisurely manner!! (Apparently, going down to work in the morning was no problem at all!) Ironically, the Agency that employed Valerie was the creator of the "Nicole/Papa" advertising campaign for the Renault Clio.

Valerie maintained an interest in classic cars, and when Valerie passed her Advanced Driver Test, she drove a blue MG ZR (version of the Rover 25). Soon after her test she joined our Group Committee, where, over time, she fulfilled a number of functions ranging from Group Secretary, to Membership Secretary dealing with new Associates and maintenance of the Group data base. Throughout she maintained a support role with the Chief Observer. She was an integral part of the Committee, always there, always supportive, and with a very engaging sense of humour.

Among Valerie's many other and varied interests, she was the Day Manager of the Sunday team of room guides at the National Trust's Hughenden Manor, and long-standing Treasurer and, later Chair, of the South Bucks Branch of the RSPCA.

To quote one of our members Valerie was "modest, not looking for praise, just wanted to get on with whatever was thrown at her."

Valerie will certainly be greatly missed by the many friends and colleagues who knew her through her diverse areas of interest and, in particular, our sincere condolences are offered to her husband Colin.

(Visuals, unless stated otherwise, are courtesy of High Wycombe Group of Advanced Motorists)

www.highwycombeiam.org