

# NEWSLETTER

## 2017 - Issue 24

### Chairman's Chat

I would like to wish all our members a Happy New Year and hope that it is a year of safe driving for us all.

I notice with interest that the Government in Westminster is at last considering allowing learner drivers to drive on motorways as part of their training as long as they are in a dual controlled car. I am sure like me most of you agree that this is long overdue as any increase in driver education before passing a test must make better and safer drivers.

I noted too that motorcycle testing was mentioned also with further training required but I am unsure on what is proposed.

Our group car and bike observers are busy working away with their associates and I am pleased to report that our car waiting list is coming down. We are at present engaged in a recruitment process for new car and bike observers and hopefully they will be working with associates before March this year.

**An appeal** – Our present Treasurer wishes to stand down from this position and I wish to appeal to our membership for someone to take on this role. I would be pleased to hear from anyone who has the necessary skills, time and commitment to take on this task.

Looking further ahead to our AGM in May, we will be looking for persons to take on the role of **Chairman** and **Secretary** so please give it some thought and let me know if you are interested in taking on any of these roles.



**Angus Maciver**

## Newsletter Editor

Entering 2017 has made me think about exciting things that have happened to me in the last year. Few can compare, though, with events from the last decade, starting when I was seventeen and obtained my provisional licence, with my first driving lesson a few days later. In 2009 I took up the Skills for Life course, achieving my Associate membership after six months of Advanced Driving practice. Then I got my first car in 2012, a silver Renault Clio (whatever that says about me!). Since then, like many people, my daily journeys require taking the car for commuting, and I often drive for leisure. Ten years later it is still a pleasure to get behind the wheel. As Advanced Motorists we should always gain mental stimulation from driving or riding, as each journey is unique in its sequence of events, determined by a multitude of factors – weather conditions, surrounding objects both stationary (signs, road markings, buildings, etc) and moving (other vehicles, pedestrians, even litter or leaves blown onto roads). Our brains continually process this information with amazing speed and this then translates to the conscious part which decides every action we take with our vehicles to enable us to continue safely through the route to our destination. It's why boredom can never set in driving or riding no matter how many miles you clock up.

I wish to take this opportunity to thank a fellow Advanced Motorist of Thames Valley Group, Peter Soul, for kindly getting in touch giving his permission to dip into his own Newsletter articles for reproduction. I've selected the topic appearing in this edition because no doubt it's a scenario which resonates with most of us, either from personal experience or that of family and friends. The reflection afterwards on situations which presented a hazard to ourselves is also essential for the next time in equipping us to respond in the best way possible for the safety of everyone using the roads.

**Kenneth Grant**

## GROUP NEWS

### Dates for your Diary:-

Group meetings - 7.30pm

<b>9th February 2017</b> <b>IAM Roadsmart review of driving standards and its implementation.</b> Presentation by Angus Maciver, Chairman and Lyndsay Pyall, Motorcycle Chief Observer.	<b>Falkirk Fire Station, Westfield, FK2 9AH</b>
<b>9th March 2017</b> <b>Overtaking using the System of Car Control</b> Presentation by Roddy Benzies, retired instructor from Scottish Police College, Tulliallan.	<b>Smith Museum, Dumbarton Road, Stirling, FK8 2RQ</b>
<b>11th May 2017 (AGM)</b>	<b>Smith Museum, Dumbarton Road, Stirling, FK8 2RQ</b>

### Congratulations to the following people who have passed their IAM Test:

<b>Associate</b>	<b>Observer</b>
Jim McAulay (car) 04/07/2016 <b>F1rst!</b>	Gerry Smyth
Elaine Ellen (car) 13/09/2016	Angus Maciver
Christine Ffinch (car) 16/10/2016	Angus Maciver
Calum Cameron (bike) 27/10/2016	Ronnie MacLean
Emma Binnie (car) 11/12/2016	Angus Maciver
Alistair McKenzie(car) 18/12/2016 <b>F1rst!</b>	Gerry Smyth

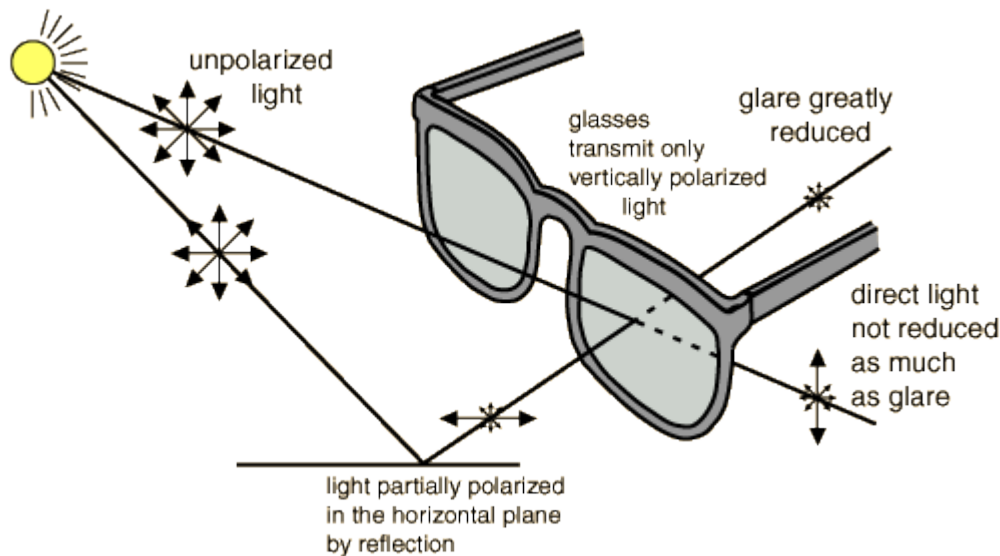
# CAR / MOTORCYCLE SECTION

## A PHYSICIST WRITES . . .

How often does it happen that you're driving along a local road and you see a familiar face on the pavement looking in your direction, so you give its owner a wave or perhaps a toot on the horn – but you get no equivalent response? Conversely, how many times have you been walking along when you saw the lift of a hand from a driver, but you had no idea who it was (unless maybe you recognized the car)?

The explanation for this poor visual communication is, of course, that whereas you can see out perfectly clearly from the driving-seat, it's much harder for people to see in, because the light reflected off the windscreen from sky and surroundings is usually much brighter than the light being reflected off you.

A pedestrian might identify you more easily if he or she was wearing Polaroid sunglasses. These use the fact that light reflected off a flat, more or less horizontal surface tends to be horizontally polarized (meaning that the 'light waves' are vibrating from side to side instead of in all directions), as shown in the diagram. So the reflected light will be partially blocked by the lenses, which only allow vertically polarized light through them.



On second thoughts, though, *you* would probably have difficulty identifying the pedestrian, behind the sunglasses! But the reverse problem of seeing the driver through the windscreen leads on to something potentially serious that happened to me a couple of days ago: I arrived near home on our local bus (not for the first time or even the hundredth), alighted from it and, as usual, strolled along to its rear end intending to wait for it to move off, before thinking about checking for traffic in both directions and crossing the road.

During the short stroll I saw someone I knew, a locksmith called John, get into his van in front of his house a few yards along the road. He then reversed out so as to face me, and straightened up to wait behind the bus, but still some way away from it. As the bus departed I expected John to move off after it, past me, but he didn't. Instead, I saw the lift of his hand. I returned the wave, assumed that he was kindly letting me cross the road, and started to walk.

Before I was halfway across (luckily), there was the blare of a horn right beside me. It was from another van travelling in the opposite direction, which had been concealed from me by the bus. When I did get safely across, John drew level with me, wound down his window and explained that he had actually been pointing at the approaching van, trying to draw my attention to it. As best as I could, I said thank you very much, and don't worry about what nearly occurred.

Later I started to count the different lessons that might usefully be learnt from this narrow escape. I could think of half a dozen at least...

> Pedestrians first: you may know the rules for crossing the road – but never forget how easy it is to be distracted from them, for example when a driver is – or seems to be – waving you across. It's your responsibility to check for other traffic!

(Remember too that the direction-indicators on the front of some cars can be hard to see, not only after dark against the glare of the headlights but also in daylight because of being positioned close to daytime-running lights. And vehicle-owners: are you aware of how visible your indicators are, or aren't, against the other lights?)

> Drivers next: for the same reason of possibly distracting pedestrians, take great care in gesturing to them (or flashing other drivers, for that matter) to say that they may cross in front of you. Be as sure as you can that there are no other hazards, especially approaching traffic, that they might overlook.

> Certainly do not try to give any other sort of message with gestures – remember that your hands, like the rest of you, are likely to be hard to see behind your windscreen, as I explained at the start.

(I am not at all attempting here to transfer the blame for my near-miss to John, but I might not have started crossing the road with such confidence if he had kept his hands on the wheel...)

> Better, really, never to signal that you are giving way – either with your hands or with your lights. Instead, just let the pedestrian or other road-user calmly work out what your intention is from the speed (if any) and position of your vehicle, giving them time also to take full account of any other traffic.

> When you're on the move and passing stationary vehicles of any sort (and on whichever side of you), be ready for some idiot to step out from behind one!

> Watch for opportunities to prevent a possible accident or incident by obstructing it. For example, if John had been thinking at a really high level he could have stopped me stepping off the kerb by simply rolling his van slowly towards the bus. More generally, I'm reminded of times when I have obstructed a driver who clearly had the intention of overtaking me dangerously on a roundabout (on the outside or even the inside), by straddling the lanes while going round it.

Similarly, if I'm starting along a length of road that has been 'narrowed' on the right-hand side (by parked cars, for instance), and in the distance an oncoming vehicle is about to move out and then present me with a tight squeeze as it passes, I see nothing wrong with moving out a bit myself first – deliberately and clearly giving the other driver no room to pass at all.

I think that's enough lecturing for one column! Anyway, I'm glad to have been extracting lessons from a near-accident, instead of from an actual one...

**Peter Soul, Thames Valley Advanced Motorists  
October 2016**



# NATIONAL NEWS

## Safer Road Users honoured with distinguished Royal Awards

For nearly thirty years HRH Prince Michael of Kent has played a leading role in supporting improved road safety both in the United Kingdom and around the world.

The Prince established his awards scheme in 1987 in the UK and now fully international, the [Prince Michael International Road Safety Awards](#) recognize achievement and innovation in road safety worldwide.

<http://www.roadsafe.com/saferroadusershonouredwithprestigiousroyalawards>

## International acclaim for A9 Safety Plan

The A9 Safety Group's efforts to reduce the number of casualties on the route ahead of dualling has won a prestigious [Prince Michael International Road Safety Award](#).

The [A9 Interim Safety Plan](#) has been recognised for the contribution it has made to improving the safety of the world's roads, with judges particularly impressed by its size and complexity and evidence based approach.

<http://www.roadsafe.com/internationalacclaimfora9safetyplan>

## UN Report calls for more effort

A major UN report on sustainable transport from an advisory panel established by UN Secretary General Ban Ki Moon, has called for a 'redirection in infrastructure expenditure' to set the world on a sustainable, low-carbon, path.

<http://www.roadsafe.com/unreportcallsformoreeffort>

## Crashmap Updates

Five years after its creation, CrashMap, [the award-winning website](#) which allows members of the public to search for details of recorded injury collisions, has undergone a series of major upgrades with a roadmap for future updates in place.

The data archive now stretches back 17 years to 1999 covering 3.15 million recorded injury collisions.

<http://www.roadsafe.com/crashmapupdates>

## Your Committee 2016/17

Chairman IMI National observer	Angus Maciver	07801951508	chairman@forthvalleyiam.org.uk
IMI National observer Chief Observer	Alan Penman	07966897354	
Secretary	David Legge		secretary@forthvalleyiam.org.uk
Treasurer	Shazad Gul		
Membership/Liaison Secretary	Mark Elder	07973217256	membership@forthvalleyiam.org.uk
Newsletter Editor	Kenneth Grant	01324228126	newsletter@forthvalleyiam.org.uk
Motorcycle Chief Observer	Lindsay Pyall		

Forth Valley Group website: [www.forthvalleyiam.org.uk/](http://www.forthvalleyiam.org.uk/)

Enquiries to Membership tel: 07973217256