



Winter blues?

Right now, with the focus on safer driving in winter, there are hazards unique to the season which warrant extra vigilance.

So, here are some practical, useful tips to help you cope with the weather - however tricky that might be!

May we take this opportunity to thank all those who are helping us spread the word and to wish everyone, Committee, Members, Associates and supporters a Happy Christmas and fulfilling New Year.

Driving safely, of course . . .

Editor's seasonal note:

I heard of a wonderful idea when appointing a designated driver who will agree that he/she will not drink, so that the rest of the party could enjoy their wine and dine, without fear of running foul of "drink-drive" offences.

*After the festivities, those who were driven treated the designated driver to a slap-up meal, whilst **they** stayed sober!*

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Herefordshire Headlines



Report on Probud Club Driving Refresher Day: 24 October 2017

Participants were asked to complete a written *EVENT EVALUATION* before leaving, of which this is a summary:

- The venue was rated mainly good or excellent and the course was deemed to be good value for money. Some background noise from the public area made hearing problematic for some.
- Course instructions, content coverage and presenter knowledge were rated as good or excellent.
- Observer helpfulness and clarity of advice were highly rated as excellent or good.

Comments/Suggestions

- Many facets were covered and anything which updates and helps to correct bad habits has got to be good for all road users. A very worthwhile day, which probably ought to be repeated as I get older.
- Splendid day. Efficient and friendly. Helpful and instructive, now to work on it!
- I have learnt a lot which was enjoyable, very well organised too! Overall worthwhile; I will certainly think about what I am doing. Lots to think about and put into practice.

What did you find most useful?

- Coping with roundabouts. The opportunity to refresh my driving skills and learn about the current safer driving skills. The observed drive, very helpful and reassuring
- Driving assessment. Identifying some bad habits. The observed drive and sessions which dealt with driving principles with lots of examples.
- Guidance on safety issues when driving. Observed drive and the "Better, Safer Driving Day" with David.



What did you find least useful?

The session on winter driving could have been halved in length. (2 responses)

From now on, what would you find most useful in advancing your driving skills further?

- More thought for road positioning and anticipation.
- Becoming a member of IAM Herefordshire. Greater observation.
- Periodic meeting with IAM members and reading some of the very useful literature which I neglect.
- Practise! Increasing ability to read the road, maybe try another course.

NOTE

Additionally, 2 members plus a wife and partner attended a Refresher Driving Day held in Leominster on October 10th. Their feedback was also very positive.

Martin Thomas

Editor's note

Thanks, Martin, for such constructive feedback, from which we can all learn.

To all our readers: Our focus this coming year will be on attracting bookings from Clubs and special interest groups, so please let us know of any in your locality which would find them useful if run at their facility.

Ideally, we like to deliver a full day for 20 or more attendees, but we shall willingly give a 1-hour talk to smaller groups.



Do you follow trends?

I don't mean in fashion or housing, but obviously in vehicles- cars to be precise.

A look at the magazine racks in newsagents shows several magazines, such as What Car and Auto Express, comparing SUVs, those euphemistically-titled Sports Utility Vehicles.

There are now well over 120 so-called SUVs to choose from with companies as diverse as Jaguar and Skoda bringing out at least two new models right now. It appears to me that the only thing that they all have in common is a higher ride height, although in some cases that is marginal.

The attraction of the SUV is not its sportiness, but that higher ride height. It can also give a feeling of spaciousness, even in smaller versions. From an advanced driving perspective, having driven large SUVs and low-slung sports cars, there is a distinct safety advantage in having a higher eyeline. Your observation opportunities are enhanced; you are less likely to suffer from headlight dazzle; the angle of your legs to the pedals is more natural and relaxing; you feel encouraged to sit up and be/look alert. The trade-off in some is the ride quality, but they are very few these days - indeed the majority make no pretence at being mud pluggers, sticking to 2-wheel drive and concentrating on refined on-road behaviour which makes them considerably more affordable, whilst still having the cachet that the *fashionistas* are seeking.

The other trend is the take-up of automatic gearboxes - and multi-gearred autos at that. The latest autos are 9 and 10 gears. With seamless shifting and auto cruise and retard response, manufacturers are gradually making us move away from manual gear changing.

After all, the intervention of the driver is usually what causes gearboxes to fail!

Interestingly the change has been led not by cars, but by HGVs. Automatic gearboxed fire engines were common 40 years ago. Experience from when they were first introduced showed a dramatic reduction in downtime due to gearbox damage/failure and that same experience was shown in the trucking industry.

Of course, the automatic gearbox might be seen by some as a step towards the driverless car. I have driven automatics for over 30 years and get no less pleasure as a result. Just consider the times you have been stuck in slow moving traffic! That's when you will be very grateful for your choice of an automatic!

An insurance tale.

We all know how important it is to give accurate information to our insurers or broker, but sometimes the benefit of certain information can have a positive result we didn't expect.

Checking through my recent quote, it was close to last year - and the increase due to the government increasing the tax take was expected. However, I am doing higher mileage which, on admitting this, the premium was increased. I was looking for some off-setting factors and was discussing what I do with Advanced Drivers mentioned that I was about to take my Masters re-test, which brought an instant response from the guy on the other end of the phone "You've got your Masters!?" "Yes" said I. "Hang on" said he. When he returns to the conversation, I was not only offered something close to the original quote (before the extra mileage), but also free legal protection and free breakdown recovery!

Which just proves that the time and effort to improve our driving can yield some tangible financial paybacks, too.

David

Safer driving in winter



Muck and mirk seem to sum up both the weather and our roads right now.

Our concentration is tested, perhaps more than at any other season of the year.

We know it's not going to be good driving weather very often!

Preparation of our vehicle is vital, with lots of intermediary checks whenever we pause in our journey:

- Carrying some extra screen wash, old dusters, or suitable cloths for helping to clean grime off windows, lights and door sills.
- The ventilation/climate control system is going to be tested, so ensure that it is functioning properly.
- Don't let tyres get too low on tread. 1.6mm might be legal, but in bad weather a minimum of 3mm will make all the difference.
- If you are changing tyres, consider winter or all-weather, for the extra grip in icy conditions.

So much has been said about the log jams of traffic throughout the year. In the cold weather, it is very important to carry suitable extra clothing and sustenance, in case you are caught up in one.

Make sure you have plenty of fuel, because if you run out, the car will go cold very quickly.

I have had many older drivers asking me how to cope with driving in the dark- nights are longer! It's too easy to get into the rabbit syndrome- staring at – and cursing- the oncoming bright lights.

The answer is to focus somewhere else of course and the obvious choice, once you have

identified that the oncoming vehicle is safely on their side of the road, is the nearside verge and if it has one, the roadside white line. That's what it's there for. If you are dazzled, it can take up to 20 seconds for your eyes to fully readjust after a vehicle has gone by.

Check your rear-view mirror for other vehicles behind whose drivers may also be suffering, but not as aware as you.

Whatever the weather, safe driving!

Sarah Sillars, Chief Executive Officer at IAM RoadSmart, said: "It is clear from the statistics that people need to change their driving behaviour when faced with poor weather conditions and more hours of darkness.

"Winter driving needn't be difficult and, with a few small changes, driving in bad weather conditions can be made far safer and more enjoyable. We advise motorists to avoid travelling in severe weather conditions – could you delay that visit to the shops or walk to school instead? But if you do need to travel, prepare properly and read our advice to ensure you and your loved ones are safe."

Editor's note:

Winter can be unpredictable but Highways Authorities have already got their snow-clearing on the road. If they are getting ready, why don't we? With a little preparation, we can avoid getting stuck and adding to the problems that bad weather can bring.

Complementary articles on:

- *Page 8: Winter Tyres*
- *Page 10: Driving Vision*



Season's greetings to all!

There could be one very important act of charitable contribution that you might have overlooked at this time of year and, assuming that you have any funds left over at all from the expenses incurred over the last few weeks, it's time to consider your much-appreciated annual subscription for 2018.

If you received this magazine in the post, then the letter included in the envelope that provided your address details hopefully outlines the correct situation for you and should suggest one of 3 options:-

1. You are a new Associate who has recently joined us and can continue to enjoy receiving communications from us for a little longer at no additional cost to you.
2. You are an Associate or Member who needs to do nothing more as you have set up a Standing Order (SO) to us - many thanks - and we will receive your subs to our bank account very soon.
3. You do not have a Standing Order currently set up with us and can either do that now, or you may send us your subs via a cheque, (£15 per individual, or £17.50 for a family group living at the same address). More details are advised on the letter, and we look forward to hearing from you very soon.

Some 64% of our members now pay by SO and this makes things so much easier and helps us to continually reduce our costs. You can use the reverse of your letter to send us your instructions to very easily simplify your subscription payment.

All subscriptions or donations should be made out to "IAM Herefordshire" for payment to our Barclays account as noted on your particular letter.

As a registered charity, we can also collect a further 25% at no cost to you from your contribution if we can claim Gift Aid. The only stipulation is that you currently pay tax.

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Please contact me directly if you require more details.

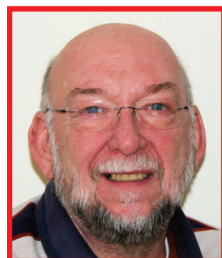
If you need any help or guidance I will be very pleased to assist, just call me or send me an email and I'll get back to you.

Thank you in anticipation of your continued support; we look forward to receiving your payment very soon and I do hope that you have a very merry Christmas and my best wishes to you all for a happy new year

Kind regards,

Alan

Alan Eastough
Membership Secretary



A new year; a new approach



As we announced in our Autumn issue, we plan to reach and serve our market in a more flexible, interactive way.

Based upon the success of the Leominster team with their Refresher Day and Probus Safer Driving Days, we believe that we shall be able to reach and teach more people in their local venue than just inviting them to fixed events, which many have said they found less convenient to reach.

Because of our recent change in identity, few people throughout the county know what we stand for, the quality and value of what we do - even who we are!

So we recognise that we need to improve our presence significantly, as a leading Road Safety charity.

When our new season starts in March, we aim to have appointed Team Leaders in Hereford, Leominster, Ledbury and Ross-on-Wye, with the help of others in their region, to contact local groups, clubs and similar organisations.

Please would you volunteer to help them spread the word to family, friends and neighbours in your locality?

As Nigel Jenkins says, in his article on page 9, "It's far easier, less time-consuming - and more rewarding - than you might think."

We shall continue to run our own **Refresher Days**, preferably for more organisations that can provide premises, refreshments and organise attendance by their members.

Every session will include an update on Rules and Regulations, discussion about driving in Herefordshire and an observed drive in their own car with a friendly Observer, who will give them practical, constructive advice.

These will have most value to those who have not updated their skills recently, or those who have lost confidence whilst driving these days, whether because of more hazardous conditions, or a change of circumstances.

Also, to cater for drivers wishing to raise their skills to advanced level and fulfil their potential, we shall run the **IAM RoadSmart "Advanced Driver"** course, whenever sufficient applications have been received.

The feedback we have received from both events indicates that the way we run them is proving more effective because they are designed in ways that drivers find works better for them:

- an open style of learning, encouraging self-analysis and personal planning
- interactive presentation, with team participation and open discussion
- non-judgmental, no pressure . . . just working at their own pace - and enjoying it!

Wherever feasible, we shall also promote our group at county events using the new displays we have purchased this year where, again, the local team will be drumming up support.

- which brings to mind the old proverb:

*For the want of a nail, the shoe was lost;
for the want of a shoe, the horse was lost;
for the want of a horse, the rider was lost;
for the want of a rider, the battle was lost;
for the want of a battle, the kingdom was lost
- and all for the want of a horseshoe nail . . .*

If this rings a bell with you, please **ring Stella on 01432 840835** and tell her all about **your "nail"**



In-car safety features & winter driving

In the previous issue, we discussed the advanced driving aids that insurance surveys indicated were having the most beneficial impact on accidents. With the approach of winter, we all need to understand the aids which are to cope with winter conditions.

Electronic Stability Control (ESC)

Now common on all modern vehicles, ESC continuously monitors steering, adjusts engine power and applies braking differentially to the wheels when loss of control in slippery conditions is indicated.

Anti Lock Braking (ABS)

Anti Lock braking monitors the rotational speed of all wheels under braking and if a wheel locks up the system applies and releases braking at high frequency. To be effective the driver must apply firm braking pressure continuously and many drivers do not understand this.

Adaptive Headlights

This system optimises the headlights position on the road according to steering angle and speed. Not yet as common on volume car production but a valuable aid to driving in winter conditions.

Fatigue Warning

Winter driving often involves greatly extended driving times when fatigue can become an issue especially when driving alone and is responsible for many accidents.

Technology will not always compensate for drivers not knowing what to do in an emergency.

Keeping your driving skills up to date is an essential investment.

Latest changes in Driving Test

On 4 December, Driver & Vehicle Standards Agency (DVSA) introduced changes in the Driving test to reflect today's lifestyle:

1. Independent driving: this part of the driving test will increase from 10 to 20 minutes - roughly half of the test time.

2. Following directions from a sat nav set up by the examiner. One in 5 driving tests won't use a sat nav. Candidates will need to follow traffic signs instead.

3. Reversing manoeuvres will be changed. Candidates will be asked to do one of 3 possible reversing manoeuvres:

- parallel park at the side of the road
- park in a bay - either driving in and reversing out, or reversing in and driving out (the examiner will tell candidates which they have to do)
- pull up on the right-hand side of the road, reverse for 2 car lengths and re-join the traffic

4. Answering a vehicle safety question while driving:

- "tell me" question (where they explain how to carry out a safety task) at the start of the test, before they start driving and
- "show me" question (where candidates show how to carry out a safety task) while driving - for example, showing the examiner how to wash the windscreen using the car controls and wipers

Full details available from
<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/driving-test-changes-4-december-2017>

Editor's note: *How would you fare, right now? If in doubt, we'll help you out . . .*

Winter tyres . . .



Rain, wet leaves, snow, black ice: winter brings its own set of hazards. Fitting winter tyres to your car improves driving safety – but only in certain conditions.

First thing's first; what exactly do they do and are they right for you?

What are winter tyres?

Winter tyres are designed to offer optimum traction and grip in cold conditions. They have a softer compound, along with deeper grooves and narrow cuts – called sipes – built into the tread. These features help disperse water/snow, and allow the rubber to move around – improving contact with the road.

You can identify a winter tyre by the snowflake symbol on the sidewall. Note that tyres without the snowflake symbol but marked 'M+S' (mud and snow) are not necessarily proper winter tyres.

What are the benefits of winter tyres?

Winter tyres work best at temperatures below 7 deg C. Indeed, they outperform conventional 'summer' tyres for traction, cornering grip and braking in such conditions – regardless of whether there is snow or ice.

Tyresafe, an independent road safety charity, has tested the effectiveness of winter tyres.

Stopping distances vary considerably:

| Temperature/ condition | Summer | Winter |
|-----------------------------------|---------------|---------------|
| 20°C | 65.3m | 67m |
| 5°C | 70.5m | 65.7m !! |

On snow, the gap widens considerably, as the sipes on winter tyres offer grip even when the tread is packed with soft snow. In such conditions, a two-wheel-drive car with winter tyres is invariably safer than 4x4 on summer tyres.

How much do winter tyres cost? Can I save money?

The price of winter tyres varies widely, dependent on your car and wheel-size. On average, they are slightly more expensive than an equivalent summer tyre in the UK. However, while the cost of four winter tyres is significant – especially if you also buy a set of 'winter wheels' to avoid swapping over twice a year – remember that your summer tyres will last longer as a result. Thus, while you may have a fairly high initial outlay, the longer-term cost of winter tyres is relatively low. That said, you may also need to pay for storage at a 'Tyre Hotel' if you don't have a suitable garage or shed. ATS Euromaster, for example, charges £7.50 per tyre per season.

Fitting winter tyres should not affect your car insurance but it's worth double checking with your provider.

The supplier you purchase the tyre from will usually fit them for you.

What is the law on winter tyres?

Winter tyres aren't mandatory in the UK. Only a small percentage of drivers choose to fit them, many of whom live in more remote areas – such as the Scottish Highlands.

If you are considering travelling in Europe during the winter months, always check local guidelines to ensure you stay safe and legal

With acknowledgement and thanks to the RAC

Leominster drives ahead!

My association with Herefordshire Advanced Drivers began in Early 2014 when I saw a promotion for Leominster Older Driver Day and promptly booked my place.

The day, organised and presented to a very high standard by Tina Lawrence and David Williams, was supported by several Observers.

More than 25 people attended and their eagerness to discover if they were still competent to drive was memorable. I decided on the spot to progress further and enrol on an Advanced Driver course.

Over 3 years later, I'm proud to be associated with such a fine group, to have achieved a F1RST pass and qualified as a National Observer with all the rewards that come from coaching others.

As other IAM groups are finding, though, it is becoming more difficult to attract people to courses and, in turn, there are fewer Associates for them to coach to Advanced standard.

At the AGM, Mike Warnock outlined how attitudes to charity work had changed and response to local press advertising had declined, particularly in Hereford, together with Leominster, Ross-on-Wye and Ledbury. Perhaps that is because cities and larger towns have less of a community spirit than smaller communities.

He suggested ways we could better present ourselves to the public and so we split into regional teams to brainstorm new ideas - over 100 in 30 minutes between us all!

Somewhat reluctantly, I found myself Team Leader of the Leominster group and, although I felt a bit out of my depth, decided to try and take up the challenge. Mike, Stella and I got together to plan how best to promote the October event in Leominster.

In fact, it was not as difficult as I had imagined!

My wife Sandy and I put some A5 leaflets in our cars and took every opportunity to visit

cafes, post offices, newsagents, libraries, village stores and halls, council information centres etc. and ask to display them.

We made no special journeys, just casual approaches wherever we went.

Not one person refused to take leaflets and some even asked for the larger A4 posters. We spoke with different people and had such positive responses, particularly from Alice, Owner/Editor of Leominster News, who suggested that I wrote an article which would have more impact than just an ad. Because we are a registered charity, Alice kindly published them free of charge.



Other Observers and former Associates from "the North", particularly Ann Nevelos and Carole Sheppard, were also active in promoting bookings. Their personal enthusiasm helped spread the word much more effectively than advertising alone.

It is undeniable that small amounts of effort can generate sizeable results.

I'm convinced that our future depends on raising the profile of Herefordshire Advanced Drivers group by talking to people at every opportunity, telling them who we are, the value of what we do and how rewarding it is to be members of our group. Observers have a precious resource at their disposal; their past and present Associates. They can spread the word more effectively than any other means.

I am pleased now that we took up the challenge and helped make the Leominster Refresher Day a success and I am confident that it can work elsewhere.

It's far easier, less time-consuming - and more rewarding - than you might think. It just needs a key person in each of the regions to step up to the plate.

Together, we can do it!

Nigel Jenkins
Leader, Leominster Team



Campaign for eye sight tests every two years to be made compulsory

Driving in the dark winter nights and, at times of reduced visibility during the daytime, requires our eyesight to be operating at peak efficiency, so it's encouraging to read about a new campaign being launched by the Association of Optometrists to subject people to regular eyesight tests, particularly if they continue to drive.

An estimated 2900 road casualty are caused by poor vision every year, according to the Association of Optometrists and so they have launched a new campaign in the hope of persuading people to have their eyes tested regularly particularly if they continue to drive. The "Don't Swerve a Sight Test Campaign" is about reminding all drivers to have regular eyesight tests. It's the easiest way of making sure your vision meets the legal standard and is road safe.

- sight often deteriorates slowly so you might not even notice a change to your vision
- driving with eyesight below the legal standard is dangerous to yourself and others
- have a sight test every two years - and encourage other drivers to as well
- make an appointment with an optometrist at your local opticians; it's quick, easy and pain-free
- 30% of road users have doubted whether their vision is good enough, yet continued to drive
- 26% say they've delayed getting their eyes checked by an optometrist despite suspecting their vision was getting worse, and 6% admit to stalling a sight test for more than a year

- less than half (40%) would stop driving if they were told their vision, even with glasses or contact lenses, was below the legal standard for driving, with 10% saying that they would continue to drive as normal
- 16% admit to knowing a driver whose sight they believe to be below the legal vision standard

- and, for those wishing to stay fit and healthy, let's finish 2017 on a positive note . . .

Not keen on going to the gym?

A useful statistic that I picked up, which justifies not going . . .

An alternative to the gym, the "bucket and sponge" option is, for those of us so inclined, very satisfying and is a very healthy exercise.



Various estimates fly around the internet, but burning about 325 calories by washing a car and anything up to 1,000 if you polish it as well seems a common view.

Best get the bucket and sponge out and get fit!

May I end by sending Season's Greetings to everyone and wish you all a Happy and Safe driving in 2018.



From the Chairman



At first glance, 2017 seems to have been a quiet year. However, a closer look reveals a different story. Yes, there has been a reduction in Associates – down to 19 from 36 in 2016, but I'm told that is a common trend across our region. However, much hard work has been done to be innovative and reach out to the perceived needs of drivers.

Examples include the WI Refresher day at the Racecourse with 120 attendees and a great squad of Observers and Support Team: the complete re-vamp of our advanced course delivery, which spilled over into a similar approach to our Refresher Days for clubs and societies, again with tremendous support from Observers and Administrators: the review Mike Warnock led at the AGM, to create greater involvement of members and tap in to your ideas. We now have an active Regional team in Leominster ably led by Nigel Jenkins and are now looking to establish similar teams enabling us to reach all parts of the county.

This has all been possible because of the solid support and dedication of active members who are prepared not just to go the extra mile, but miles and miles - Bruce Foster lives in Rutland but still submits his technical articles regularly!

With Refresher Days and member events, efficient and effective planning, marketing and managing have become essential elements. We need look no further than to our Secretary, Stella Boyd-Carpenter and our Marketing Manager, Mike Warnock. The Group is fortunate to have people with such essential skills and expertise, willing to use them for our benefit - and to the benefit of the public.

To all of you who have been "active members" this year, a huge "Thank You!"

I wish you all a peaceful, blessed - and safe - Christmas and New Year.

Advanced Driver Test passes in 2017

Congratulations also to the following, who successfully passed their Advanced Driver test and are now full Members:

Member

Luke Jones (F1rst)

Kate Taylor-Edwards

Peter Baldus (F1rst)

Malachi Grogan

Linda Rumney (F1rst)

Lisa Moffett

Corinne Rover Parkes

Marilyn Reynolds

Andrew Lloyd

Imogen Gray (F1rst)

Sam Phillips

Denise Bradley-Lloyd

Christine Davis (F1rst)

Alistair Patrick

Max Howard

James Price (F1rst)

Saadi Hassan (F1rst)

Observer

Nigel Jenkins

Ann Nevelos

Jon Baker

Nigel Jenkins

Linda Harding

David Williams

Anthony Mansfield
& David Williams

David Williams

Peter Hodge

David Williams

David Williams

Iain Aird

Kath Watts

Peter Hodge

Ann Nevelos

David Rose

Ted Hayward

My sincere thanks, not only to the Associates who worked so hard, but also to their Observers for the quality and care they have shown in helping these new Members achieve their goal.

Congratulations, too, to Nigel Jenkins, who has recently achieved his National Observer qualification.

David



Who's who?

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