



WELCOME FROM THE CHAIRMAN Adrian Barlow

Our Annual General Meeting which was held a few weeks ago was followed by presentations from West Mercia police who described their wide range of work in relation to improving safety on our roads. The large number of questions to them indicated the high level of interest from the audience who were clearly greatly impressed by the number of safety related activities being undertaken and it was a very great pity that more members were not present to hear of this work.

Our latest Driver Refresher Day in Bishops Cleeve was attended by 19 participants all of whom felt the programme had made them safer and more confident drivers. The need for Refresher Days and the other work we undertake is emphasised by the latest figures for casualties on British roads. A total of 129,920 casualties of all severities were reported for 2024 with rural roads representing the highest rate of accidents. Hence, the greater risk to road users in this county. I would remind all our members that they are entitled to a free Observed drive every year which can be so beneficial in helping to maintain safe driving.

We still have vacancies for a Young Driver Ambassador and also a Technical Administrator to organise our email accounts and our website. Additionally, a recent audit has shown that the amount of work being undertaken by our Group Contact is unsustainably high and must be reduced. Hence, we need a minimum of four people to act as Area Co-ordinators for Driver Refresher Days. We are really concerned that if those currently undertaking key roles were unable to continue due to ill health or relocation there would be a serious threat to the future of HAD. So, please consider whether you could help us with any of the roles and do let me know if you might be interested or need more information.

Best wishes, Adrian Barlow
chairman@advanced-drivers.org.uk

FROM OUR GROUP CONTACT Stella Boyd-Carpenter



Over the last 12 months, we have run several Driver Refresher Days across the county – we have been from Whitney-on-Wye in the west, to Bodenham in central Herefordshire – and across to Bishops Cleeve in the east.

We hold two events each year at St. Michael's Hospice, Bartestree, and if there is availability we can arrange for people to attend there too. Those of you who have attended one of these days will know that it is a fabulous opportunity to have an update on the latest rules of the road - there are many changes in the Highway Code - and how best to handle the hazards we face every time we drive. On Driver Refresher Days we offer everyone the opportunity to go out for a drive with one of our qualified Observers who can give you an assessment and maybe one or two tips to help you enjoy your driving more.

We welcome people who are not HAD members some of whom may have lost a little confidence or those who just want to make sure they are as safe as possible on the road – so if you know anyone who might benefit from such a day, please just tell them to get in touch with me. **Our next two events are: Ross on Wye, 13th September and St Michael's Hospice, 11th October.**

Since our last newsletter we have received details of a further six new Associates and they are currently at various stages of their aim to become Advanced Drivers.

Member Refresher Drives

Just as a reminder, we also offer our members a free refresher drive each year with one of our Observers – so just let me know if you would like to take up this opportunity. See below a report from a recent review session. Give me a call to book yours!

Stella Boyd-Carpenter
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Feedback from Peter, a HAD Member, on his recent assessed drive:

"Thank you for accompanying me on my recent IAM members drive assessment. I found it a really useful exercise, predominantly as a refresher but in one or two cases as rather more than that, e.g. the limit point of view in bends. Somehow the theory of that has previously escaped me in my 55-year driving career to date!

It was also reassuring that nine years after I originally passed my IAM test, driving with an Observer provided me with a helpful reminder of what it takes to be an Advanced Driver. Of course, I was also pleased that my driving ability is still pretty much competent, albeit not quite at pass level any more. Therefore, following on from that, by me concentrating on two or three of the specific issues mentioned, hopefully I can improve a little further and get back to a pass level standard again. So many thanks."

OUR CHIEF OBSERVER WRITES..... ACCIDENTS ARE FOR OTHER PEOPLE or are they.....?

It's that time of year when our rural roads are busier than normal. And there are hazards everywhere! Just a few are: agricultural vehicles hauling in the harvest, sometimes leaving mud behind; hedges and verges left uncut; morning and evening commuters, often on autopilot and speeding; tourists who are not familiar with our roads. Look out for clues to potential hazards, horse droppings, skid marks, straw, mud. Expect the unexpected and anticipate what may be around the next bend. COAST.....Concentration, Observation, Anticipation, gives you more Space & Time. Stay safe!

Refresher Days have kept us busy since early March and I am conscious of the demands I place on our limited pool of Observers who are essential to the smooth running of these events but, as always, they step up and give their time freely and willingly to help all the attendees drive a little more safely and confidently, so grateful thanks are due. As I wrote in the previous newsletter, we can never have enough Observers so, if you are an advanced driver, contact me and, over a coffee somewhere, I will show you how you could take the next step and what it means to be an Observer. And it is completely free of charge and with no obligation.

July and August are usually when our Associates take holidays and so are unavailable to do training sessions quite so frequently as normal. However, we still managed to enter three for the advanced test and all passed, two of them with F1RST passes, so congratulations go to:

Associate	Pass	Observer
Fiona Leathart	F1RST	Stella Boyd-Carpenter
Eddie Parkinson	Pass	Geoff Cotter
Maureen Turner	F1RST	Stella Boyd-Carpenter

Finally, and by no means least, four more of our Observers have passed through their training and received their accreditation as National Observers. They are:

Stella Boyd-Carpenter
Paul Harris
Gary Whitehead
Graham Kinsey

Well done to you all! Safe motoring everyone.



Nigel Jenkins
Chief Observer

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AGM PRESENTATION BY WEST MERCIA ROAD SAFETY TEAM



This year's AGM presentation was kindly provided by Victoria Bristow, Engagement & Campaigns Manager and Ian Connolly, Traffic Management Adviser from West Mercia Police.

They gave a fascinating presentation, which prompted many audience questions, about the measures taken by West Mercia Police to educate road users and to help to ensure the road infrastructure facilitates safe driving.

Vicky began by explaining that her unit, which covers all of the West Mercia Police area of Herefordshire, Worcestershire and Shropshire, is funded entirely by receipts from Speed Awareness courses. Not many people know that! They run campaigns to focus on specific areas of road safety through education and community involvement. One area in particular is with young drivers and passengers. She highlighted that it is not alcohol that is the main issue, but drug driving. Many young drivers don't realise how long drugs can remain in the body and impair their judgement, leading to collisions and prosecution. Other areas are their free Mature Driver events and Webinars which have been very successful.

Ian described how the analysis of incident data helps to target funding and engineering works where it is most needed. Typical interventions are speed limits, speed cameras, community speed watch schemes. They also manage mobile speed vans. These are not just a camera but are occupied by a person trained to assess speed, hence two sources of evidence are produced. Operation Snap encourages drivers to submit dashcam footage of bad driving to West Mercia Police which can be used to send written advice and can result in prosecution. To submit footage, Google *West Mercia Police Operation Snap*, where you can see more details and access an online form.

Why I Became an Observer by Paul Harris

I wanted to do this having appreciated the help I had received from my National Observer, also to keep up and develop my own advanced driving knowledge and skills. I would encourage you to consider doing the same, I have found the group of observers at HAD very encouraging to the new boy.

THE FATAL FOUR



Last year 56 people were killed and 516 were seriously injured in road traffic collisions across the West Mercia Police areas of Herefordshire, Shropshire and Worcestershire. The common causation factors listed in these collisions include:

- Speeding or inappropriate speed
- Distractions, such as mobile phone
- Driving under the influence of drink or drugs
- Not wearing a seatbelt

Police and Crime Commissioner John Campion says:

"One life lost on our roads is simply one too many. The impact of that loss is devastating, as I often hear from bereaved families who detail the heartbreaking consequences of road traffic collisions. That's why it's vital that we, as a society, come together to create change. It's on all of us to follow the law and drive safely – there are repercussions where we don't, ranging from enforcement of the law to life-changing harm."

As advanced drivers we may feel we are doing our best to help prevent incidents on the road by controlling our own actions, but we also have a responsibility to pass on our knowledge to others to help them drive in a safer way by promoting IPSGA and encouraging attendance at our Driver Refresher Days.

YOUR VEHICLE TAX MAY BE GOING UP!

From 1 April 2025, owners of electric, zero or low emission cars, vans and motorcycles will need to pay vehicle tax in the same way as petrol and diesel vehicles. This is being phased in as follows:

The £0 zero tax rate is being removed. Vehicles in this band will pay £10 from 1 April 2025.

From the second tax payment onwards, you will pay the standard rate of £195.

Electric, zero or low emission cars registered between 1 April 2017 and 31 March 2025 will pay £195.

Electric, zero or low emission cars registered between 1 March 2001 and 31 March 2017 will pay £20.

Hybrid and alternatively fuelled vehicles (AFVs): The £10 annual discount for hybrid and AFVs will be removed, and the rate you will pay will depend on when the vehicle was first registered. If the vehicle was registered before 1 April 2017 the rate will depend on the vehicle's CO2 emissions. If registered on or after 1 April 2017 - you will pay the standard rate of £195.

Source: Gov.uk

ADVANCE NOTICE OF THE HAD CHRISTMAS LUNCH 2025

With soaring temperatures it seems a bit early to start thinking about Christmas..... But here is advance notice of this year's event to which you are all cordially invited:

Date: Saturday, 6th December
Venue: The Walwyn Arms, Much Marcle
Cost and menu: To be advised.

Please let our Secretary, Ray Papworth, know if you would like to attend so that we can ascertain numbers: secretary@advanced-drivers.org.uk



Herefordshire Advanced Drivers, developing safer driving

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