



WELCOME FROM THE CHAIRMAN

Adrian Barlow

Our programme of Driver Refresher Days for 2025 was concluded in October with a continuation of the considerable increase in demand from members of the public wishing to attend. Such was the demand that we had to arrange a second Refresher Day in Ross and also accommodate some participants at St Michael's which is normally reserved for their volunteer drivers. Altogether, 41 people attended the final three Driver Refresher Days. Feedback from attendees was extremely good with virtually all stating that the programme had made them safer and more confident drivers. Once again there was much praise for our presenter, David Williams and for all our Observers.

We aim to build on the success of 2025 next year with some changed venues and reorganisation of our Events Team. I would remind members that they are entitled to a free Observed Drive every year which is so valuable in helping to maintain safe driving.

Our Events Team has been strengthened by Linda Harding as Area Co-ordinator West and Debbi Kinsey who will take over as Group Contact. This will allow Stella Boyd-Carpenter who has undertaken a massive amount of work for our Group to organise Advanced Driver courses.

We still need at least two people to act as Area Co-ordinators and we also continue to require a Young Driver Ambassador and also a Technical Administrator to organise our email accounts and our website.

I reiterate that 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 in any of these roles and do let me know if you might be interested or need more information.

Many thanks to Anne Harling-Bowen, Linda Harding and Martin Thomas for producing our Newsletters.

***Best wishes and a very Happy
Christmas to you all.***

Adrian Barlow
chairman@advanced-drivers.org.uk

FROM OUR GROUP CONTACT

Stella Boyd-Carpenter



The last few months have been very busy as we have run three of our Driver Refresher Days based in the South of Herefordshire. We had two in the Ross-on-Wye area where we find many of our current members return for the day just to make sure their driving is of a good safe standard.

This is rewarding for our Observers who took them through the course - perhaps many years ago - and it is very good for group members when they are reassured that they have remembered the basics of Advanced Driving. Although it is just one day in the year it is a day worth spending in the company of others who may have passed the test many years ago to have that reassurance - and to learn things have changed and there are new rules and regulations that have been added to the Highway Code.

We are also pleased that we are continuing to attract younger drivers to take the Advanced Driving Course

This is really good news when you read "*Approximately one in five new drivers crash within their first year of passing their test....*" Over the last couple of years parents and grandparents have asked is to take on young drivers to make them safer on the today roads. The people we have helped have really enjoyed the experience and say it gives them more confidence.

Young Drivers

Do you know a young person (17-25) who could benefit from Advanced Driver training? Did you know that if they pass their Advanced Driving test, HAD will give them a 50% refund on the course fee! If they get a F1RST, it's 75%.

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.

Please contact me if you would like a Member Refresher Drive or wish to refer a Young Driver to us.

Stella Boyd-Carpenter
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OUR CHIEF OBSERVER WRITES.....

A few weeks ago, I was in Derbyshire to meet with friends and, due to my apparent knowledge of all things related to vehicles and the fact that my friend has no knowledge beyond getting into it and driving away, I was asked to check the tyre pressures on their car because one tyre "looked a bit low." The pressures should have been 36 psi all round with a normal load but were found to be between 8 & 15 psi. "I thought it felt a bit strange to drive" my friend said, "and I was going to get it looked at." On being asked about when the pressures and tyre condition had been checked, I got a vague response of "within the past few months."

Those tyres were in a dangerous condition, the grip would have been compromised, the vehicle's braking, handling and stopping ability would all be affected. Furthermore, in the event of the vehicle being involved in an accident, the driver could have been held partly responsible by the police who could bring charges. The insurance company could also refuse or reduce any payout. Remember, it is our responsibility to ensure our vehicles remain in a roadworthy condition. Keeping your tyres at the correct pressure will also reduce your fuel consumption.

We are not all "petrol-heads" who routinely check our vehicles but please spend a few minutes a week doing a few basic safety checks on tyres, lights and cleaning the windscreen, then note any defects and get them fixed. This is especially important as we move into winter with shorter days, dark nights and lower temperatures. If you don't feel confident about doing your own checks or rectifying minor faults, your local garage or Halfords offer this service for a small fee. Doing this now could save your life and, potentially, someone else's!

My friend, who incidentally, drives an expensive BMW, had driven 35 miles to meet me on those tyres. He emailed after he had returned home to say that the way the car behaved was totally transformed and how much more confident he felt driving it. He also stated that he would ensure someone checks his car regularly, summer and winter, because he now recognises how important it is to keep his car in good condition.

Just a reminder: as the clocks have now gone back and nights have drawn in, we are more likely to need to drive in the dark, in inclement weather and with the possibility of being dazzled by bright headlights. Please be more aware of the possible hazards you can't see and reduce your speed accordingly. Stay safe!



Nigel Jenkins
Chief Observer

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EVER HAD A SMIDSY MOMENT?

(Sorry Mate, I Didn't See You!)



I recently had a tricky encounter outside Leintwardine, at a junction where the B road from Craven Arms meets the A4113 main road to Ludlow. Visibility is very poor due to the acute angle of view, so a careful look between the head restraint and window pillar are needed to get a clear view. I looked carefully twice each way, and there was nothing coming in either direction. There was no-one following, so I did a casual right turn towards Leintwardine. Imagine my horror when a motorcyclist, clad in black, passed right in front of my bonnet as I was turning! If I'd been going faster, we would have collided, and he would certainly have been injured, or even worse.

It was such a shock, he just carried on down the road, but I really beat myself up for what looked to me to be a careless error on my part. "I'm an advanced driver, that shouldn't have happened" I told myself but I had a clear image in my mind of an empty road both ways. How could it have happened?

An article in the Autumn Roadsmart magazine (p.18) may hold the answer. It was about a phenomenon called '**saccadic suppression**'. Saccadic eye movements are rapid involuntary jumps of the eyes that shift a person's visual field between two focal points. Saccadic 'masking' in the brain blocks visual processing while the eyes are moving between the points to prevent you seeing a blurred image. So, if you glance in one direction, then another at a junction, there is a risk that you won't see an approaching vehicle.

The solution suggested is to look for longer in each direction and to focus on the spot where there could be a vehicle, rather than scanning the whole road with large eye movements. I could also have opened my passenger side window, so I would have heard the motorcyclist approaching. There are always ways for us to improve, even when we are advanced drivers.

Anne Harling-Bowen
Observer & Newsletter
Co-ordinator

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WEST MERCIA POLICE URGE ALL ROAD USERS TO SHARE THE ROAD RESPONSIBLY IN THE WINTER MONTHS



Keeping everybody who uses our roads safe is a 24/7, year-round priority for West Mercia Police. In line with this they supported 'Operation Dark Night' (27 October – 7 November), a national police lead operation focusing on keeping cyclists, pedestrians and horse riders safe during the darker months.

Motorists are being urged to look carefully for other road users, especially during the winter months.

Cyclists, pedestrians and horse riders are also being encouraged to think about how visible they are to other road users, especially as the nights start to get darker and to consider wearing high visibility clothing and reflective material, to ensure they can be seen easily. Pedestrians are reminded to always use pedestrian crossings where possible, especially those taking new journeys to and from school. Cyclists should ensure their bike is in good working order and carries front and rear lights.

As advanced drivers, we hope that we already follow this advice, but do we? Do you keep a hi-vis vest in your car in case you break down? Do you find it hard to drive at night? Be aware of your own limitations and reschedule if needed.



This article appeared in **Neighbourhood Matters**, a very useful free email service you can sign up to run by West Mercia Police.

To sign up visit
<https://www.neighbourhoodmatters.co.uk/#SignUp>



HEADLIGHTS TO BE REVIEWED AFTER DRIVERS COMPLAIN OF BEING 'BLINDED' AT NIGHT

Criticism from drivers over the dazzle from oncoming headlights has prompted the government to take a closer look at the design of cars and headlamps on UK roads. Drivers say LED headlamps, which are increasingly common in new vehicles, are causing them problems and making it harder to drive at night.

Research into the issue on behalf of the Department for Transport (DfT) has still not been published, but the government now plans to launch a new assessment of the causes and remedies. New measures will be included in the government's upcoming Road Safety Strategy, reflecting what is becoming an increasingly fraught issue for road users.

A survey from the RAC found that more than a third of drivers were nervous about driving in the dark. Three quarters of respondents said driving was getting more difficult due to brighter lights. The beam from LED headlights is whiter, more focused and brighter than the more diffuse light from halogen lamps fitted in older cars.

What to do in the face of brighter headlamps:

- Ensure your windscreen is clean
- Wear glasses and keep them clean
- Avoid looking straight ahead, instead focus on the edge of the road
- Do not wear night sunglasses sold for night-driving, as they reduce overall light and won't reduce glare.

Source: College of Optometrists

Read the full article on BBC News
<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/articles/cn971jlpvvro>

Thank you Martin Thomas for spotting this. If any readers see articles that would interest HAD members, or you want to write one yourself, please email Anne Harling-Bowen on info@advanced-drivers.org.uk.

OUR NEW ADVANCED DRIVERS:

Associate	Observer	Pass
George James	Anne Harling-Bowen	Pass
Joseph Robertson	Megan Thompson	F1RST
Frances Surridge	Ted Hayward	Pass
Kevin Surridge	Alex Cunningham	Pass
Fergus Mowbray	Martin Thomas	Pass
Carol Gledrie	Geoff Cotter	Pass

NATIONAL OBSERVER PASS

Peter Hodge

Many congratulations to you all. Well done.

COULD YOU BE AN OBSERVER?



Please join us in helping more people pass their Advanced Test.

- ✓ ***Full one-to-one training given***
- ✓ ***Recognised IMI National Observer qualification.***
- ✓ ***The only cost is a little of your time.***
- ✓ ***The reward is maintaining your own advanced driving standard.***
- ✓ ***A friendly group of Observers.***
- ✓ ***Participation in Driver Refresher Days.***

Interested? Please contact Nigel Jenkins, Chief Observer for a no-obligation chat.

PLEASE KEEP US UP TO DATE!

You are receiving this newsletter either by email or post. We use the address details we have on file for you. If these have changed recently, do please let us know.

A GENTLE REMINDER:

Your 2026 subscriptions are due in January 2026. If you pay these by Standing Order, they should come to us automatically. If not, could you please send it to us by BACS or cheque:

Account: IAM Herefordshire

Sort Code: 20-39-64

Account Number: 63447480

Subs for 2026 remain the same as previous years:

£15 per individual

£17 per couple

Please email Chris Walden, Membership Secretary on members@advanced-drivers.org.uk with any changes to your details or questions about your membership.



Herefordshire Advanced Drivers, developing safer driving

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<http://www.advanced-drivers.org.uk> Road Safety Charity. Registered no. 1049679

