Bourmemouth & Dorset Advanced Drivers

June Newsletter - 2025 (edition 120)

Driving license from packet of cornflakes?

You may have guessed from the title that I was a little less than impressed with the company of some of the other vehicles I was sharing the motorway network with recently.

While most know the rules, there seemed to be an increasing amount of traffic which is happy to bumble their way down the middle lane just below the speed limit. I'm pretty sure that we have all encountered such drivers, so there is little point dwelling on them. I did more curiously spot one car which only indicated when moving left, it didn't bother when moving right – which is the reverse of what we are taught.

Finally, as was I heading into Lytham St Annes (after a sneaky detour around the south side of Preston – to avoid a hold up the M55), there was a section of roads works, and I'm sure you know what is coming next… The famous merge in turn. However, a van decided that we should all queue in one lane. Unfortunately for him he didn't quite place his vehicle well enough and I was able to nip past. The driver of the lorry behind me, I can only assume, was equally unimpressed by the van driver who was displaying to the world his below average intelligence and shortly came past too!

Whilst 'up north' I took the opportunity to nip up the Lake District and climb Scafell Pike. Thankfully I picked a lovely day and everyone was treated to some wonderful views – a far cry from the bustle and noise of the miles tarmac driven to get there. Sadly, it was all too soon time to return back to Dorset for a race on Sunday morning. The drive back down south coincided with the 2nd year of the memorial Bike Ride out for Dave Myers (from Hairy Bikers fame) heading towards Barrow-in-Furness. A wonderful selection of motorbikes were heading north bound as I was slowly heading south. I guess a bit of rubber-necking may have caused a few accidents whhich did delay proceedings for a while. Having left at roughly midday I was back home some 8 hours later.

A whistle-stop tour, but I could have hardly asked for nicer weather, plus it seemed that while I was away Dorset didn't fair too badly in the sunshine stakes either.

Stay safe & happy motoring,

Matt Ames
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New Associate Members of the Bournemouth & Dorset Group

We welcome the following new Associate members who have recent joined the Group. Observer allocatations, where known are shown below:

Darren Money	-	(pending)
David Morcom	-	(pending)
Natalya Riches	-	(pending)
Oliver Abbas	-	(pending)

IAM Test passes for the Group

Congratulations to our latest Full members of the Bournemouth & Dorset Group who have recently passed their IAM RoadSmart test (observer is listed beside them):

Richard Thomas	Neil Robson

Great driving and thanks to our Observer Team for helping you achieve your pass.

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Forthcoming Social events

3rd July 2025
Clive Greenaway will be joining us for a second stint following on from his previous visit in April. Clive is an accomplished Driving Instructor with over 50 years of experience will be talking to Group about his time in the passenger/instructor's seat.

20th July 2025
The group will have a stand at the Sherborne Classic & Supercar Show, so if you're visit the car show, why not pop along and say hello as well!
Venue: Sherborne Classic & Supercar Show in the grounds of Sherbourne Castle

August 2025
No social is planned.

4th September 2025
(tbc)

Drinks can be purchased from the bar from 1900, talk starts at 1930. Accessing Wimborne Town football club can be a bit of a fine art. Recommended access is to follow Lonsdale Road (from the B3073) through the new housing estate, and then turn left onto Ainsley Road, and park in the ground's carpark on the right.

As always the latest information about Group Social evenings can be found on our website at: https://www.bdiam.org.uk/social-events/

An IAM Journey
David Groom

I have always enjoyed driving and had a love of cars in general, having in the past either owned or driven some real stars – and also a few dogs. So it was in August 2020 having recently retired, I first contacted the IAM (the East Surrey Group as we were living in Horley at the time) thinking it might be good idea to look into this 'Advanced Driving thing' – plus I was telling myself that it was now time to seek out a few new challenges other than 'work' and this certainly seemed to fit the bill. In addition, many years before, I remembered that a [then] Reigate work colleague had been a member of the IAM which interested me at the time and something that seemed mightily impressive – in fact something, once I'd got my own more pressing commitments resolved such as studies, mortgage and getting married etc., might be a good thing for me to pursue – unfortunately I didn't.

Of course my retirement timing was less than impeccable as we were by then deep in the throes of COVID-19 and my request for a taster drive with the East Surrey Group was met by a welcoming, but fairly obvious reply, reminding me that we were in a global pandemic and all IAM groups were struggling with attempting to establish how, and when, Observers would be able to work under the stringent safety requirements for sharing cars etc. They were of course delighted to provide a free taster of the advanced driving course just as soon as possible and listed my contact details in the hope of being in touch shortly. Fast forward to March 2021 and we had sold up in Surrey and moved to Corfe Mullen, which was all part of a greater retirement plan for us both once the punitive COVID restrictions had become somewhat more relaxed. We had got to know Poole and the surrounding areas well through previous long weekend breaks away over the years and couldn't wait to get down here permanently.

It was now June and one sunny Monday morning we were, correction I was, driving home on the long uphill stretch of the Lower Blandford Road towards Broadstone from Tesco Fleetsbridge, keeping to 40mph so that I would be 'observing' the posted speed limit – or so I thought! A couple of weeks later, and to my surprise or more so abject shock, I found a Fixed Penalty Notice from the Central Ticket Office of the Dorset Police nestled in with the bills and junk mail, stating that I had exceeded the speed limit on that very piece of road in contravention of a Local Traffic Order. How could this be, I thought? Ah well, in fact the road that I had driven along many times before and which had always been a 40mph stretch of public highway, had been cunningly changed to 30mph a week or so before and my so called observing skills, hadn't picked that up. There were no repeater signs either but I guess that was an excuse, not a reason, and hardly any mitigation.

So there I was faced with the option of either payment of £100 and a 3 penalty point licence endorsement, or

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payment of £120 and attendance at a Driver Awareness Course (DAC) in lieu of the points. Clearly this second option was that preferred and so I applied for a place on the next DAC. After a period of several months due to the continuing effects of COVID restrictions, I received confirmation of my place on a course to be held in November, where I was to be present and correct at the Hamworthy Club at 08:30 that morning. There was clearly a large number of attendees participating who presumably had been 'stored up' due to the previously imposed restrictions – in fact the car park was quite full with us offenders as was the large function room being used.

It was a half-day course led by two senior Dorset Police driving instructors, both of whom made us feel welcome and comfortable. The subject matter was delivered by way of a series of presentations, talks and participant interaction (pay attention Groom!) which made for an enlightening and informative session – plus the fact that the time flew by pretty quickly. We covered such things as how to recognise and avoid hazards, potentially dangerous road and highway situations and awareness of the applicable speed limit on different roads and in various surroundings. It also focused on the reasons why drivers might speed and the dangers and consequences associated with them. In addition, the course aimed to reinforce knowledge of the Highway Code.

I made notes – in particular I recall writing down 'COAST' Concentration, Observation, Anticipation, Space and Time … the last two I thought sounding like something from an early Dr. Who episode! I also recall them talking about Saccadic Masking (somewhat advanced?) and coming out with phrases like 'Eyes on Highbeam' … which I obviously remembered if not fully understood at the time. We also went away with a small well-presented booklet, summarising the principal topics covered in the session.

Clearly the course was intended to prompt self-reflection, which it did in my case. I found myself asking the question, what did it all really mean in the context of being a 'Better Driver'? I was determined to find out more and the morning at Hamworthy reminded me that, having settled into Dorset life, it was time to start on the 'new challenges' route again – this time without the imposition of COVID thank goodness.

I made contact with IAM Roadsmart and in early January 2022 I received confirmation of my local group (then Bournemouth Advanced Motorists) together with the promise of a Course Logbook and contact from the Group itself. I would also need to buy a copy of the new Highway Code – shock horror as mine was decades old!

The rest, as they say, is history, and I was fortunate to be assigned Martyn McCarthy as both my initial ADC Observer and then National Observer Coach and Trainer (I was in fact one of the first to undertake the new N.O. syllabus), which no doubt contributed to making my learning and qualification journey as rich and enjoyable as possible.

I know I arrived at the advanced driving table somewhat later in life, but I have thoroughly enjoyed progressing along the path of becoming a National Observer and the rewards and benefits that role can bring to both Associate and Observer, and of course to the wider road-using community at large.
Going full-circle, and although I couldn't know at the time, I guess that I was actually lucky not to have seen that changed speed limit sign on the Lower Blandford Road the year before or who knows, I might never have had the kick-up-the-pants through attending the Police DAC, to apply to the IAM in the first place! I would say that all's well that ends well in that case.

June 2025

Record numbers of cyclists send footage of dangerous driving to the police as more than half of motorists admit they don't know how much space to leave when overtaking
from the IAM Blogs

- The Highway Code was updated in 2022 recommending that drivers give cyclists at least 1.5 metres of space (about the width of a compact car) when overtaking cyclists at speeds of up to 30mph
- 58 percent of motorists don't know the correct distance to leave when overtaking a cyclist
- Video footage submissions to the police have doubled since 2021

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- Cycling UK is the UK's cycling charity. Ride with us for happier, healthier and greener lives.

- Cycling UK enables and inspires people from all backgrounds and abilities to experience cycling's joys and benefits. We speak up for all who cycle to make sure it's a safe and easy choice for everyone to travel, explore and have fun. For more information, visit: www.cyclinguk.org

Record numbers of cyclists are reporting close passes to the police as more than half (58%) of motorists admit they don't know about the 1.5 metre rule.[i]

The numbers of cyclists submitting video footage of poor driving to the police have doubled from 7,249 in 2021 to 15,779 in 2024, according to a Freedom of Information request from road safety charity IAM RoadSmart.

Forty-three police forces were approached in England and Wales and asked how many pieces of video footage showing a close pass of a cyclist by a motorist were submitted as part of Operation Snap. The initiative, which streamlines footage submitted by members of the public reporting driving offences, was introduced in 2017 but was not rolled out to most police forces until 2021.[ii]

Of the 43 forces asked, 20 provided data, with some forces only initiating Operation Snap recently. In 2021, 14 forces reported close passes from video submissions; by 2024 this had increased to 20.

Avon and Somerset Police received the most complaints about close passes, with 3,501 people submitting footage in 2024.

The data also showed the number of reports leading to a Notice of Intended Prosecution being served had risen from 38 percent in 2021 to 54 percent in 2024.

Bedfordshire Police showed the highest prosecution rate in 2024, with 90 percent of all reports leading to a Notice of Intended Prosecution, followed closely by Avon and Somerset Constabulary and Cambridgeshire Constabulary.

The Highway Code says drivers should leave at least 1.5 metres of space when overtaking a cyclist at speeds of up to 30mph, with a larger gap at higher speeds. Cyclists may have to move out to avoid potholes or debris on the road – passing closer puts lives at risk and drivers could be charged with careless or dangerous driving, which could result in an unlimited fine, disqualification, or imprisonment.

Worryingly, separate research from IAM RoadSmart, which provides Advanced Driver and Rider training, shows that more than half (58%) of 655 motorists polled in the UK are not aware that the correct distance to give cyclists is at least 1.5 metres. Almost a fifth (18%) incorrectly think that just one metre of space is the recommended distance to give cyclists when overtaking.[iii]

A third of motorists (34%) report that they often see other drivers or motorcyclists performing what they would consider a close pass risking the safety of the cyclist.

Shockingly, almost one fifth (17%) reported that they often see drivers or motorcyclists overtaking a cyclist on a blind bend, risking their own lives as well as others.

The research shows that the dangers to cyclists are putting many off pedalling; one third (34%) don't ride a bike because they think it's too dangerous, while another 15 percent think drivers are too aggressive.

Changes to the Highway Code were made in 2022 to better protect vulnerable road users like cyclists, pedestrians and horse riders.

According to the Department for Transport, 87 pedal cyclists were killed in Great Britain, while 3,942 were reported to be seriously injured and 10,970 slightly

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injured in 2023. Per mile travelled, cyclists are among the most vulnerable of road users. Between 2019 and 2023, most pedal cycle fatalities occurred in two-vehicle collisions involving a car.[iv]

IAM RoadSmart active travel spokesperson Harriet Hernando said:

"It is extremely concerning that more than half of motorists don't know how much space to give a cyclist when overtaking. Passing too closely to a cyclist can be intimidating and dangerous, especially if they need to move out to avoid a pothole.

"It is small wonder then that record numbers of cyclists are installing cameras and submitting footage of dangerous or careless drivers to the police. While it is heartening to see that prosecution rates have increased, it would be better if it didn't reach that stage and motorists weren't doing it in the first place.

"That's why we're launching No More Close Calls, a campaign to put an end to close passes. When overtaking a cyclist, always look beyond them to judge your ability to get past safely leaving at least 1.5 metres of space when overtaking at speeds of up to 30mph and give them more space when overtaking at higher speeds. By hanging back two or three car lengths, you'll be able to see further up the road and look out for oncoming traffic. Never overtake on a blind bend, or where road markings show double white lines. If it isn't safe to overtake then don't try and squeeze past – shaving seconds off your journey isn't worth it if you end up taking someone's life. Go to IAMroadsmart.com/closecalls for more information."

Duncan Dollimore, Head of Campaigns at Cycling UK, said:

"Cycling is a great way for people to get around. It's cheap, healthy and a positive for our environment. Since changes were made to the Highway Code in 2022, to better protect vulnerable road users like cyclists and pedestrians, we've not seen the big safety impact we'd hoped for, and this research reveals the reasons why.

"The majority of people who drive, simply aren't aware how much distance to give to people who cycle when overtaking. This is why it's crucial to educate all road users of their responsibility to protect those most vulnerable. Our recent campaign, 'My ride. Our right' specifically calls on the government to address this oversight by better promoting the new Highway Code. Only then can we foster more respect on our roads."

References, please see: https://media.iamroadsmart.com/pressreleases/record-numbers-of-cyclists-send-footage-of-dangerous-driving-to-the-police-as-more-than-half-of-motorists-admit-they-dont-know-how-much-space-to-leave-when-overtaking-3392546

Drive and ride in harmony

Sharing the road can be challenging, but with mutual respect and understanding, drivers and cyclists can coexist safely. Here are some essential tips and legal guidelines to help make our roads safer for everyone.

For Drivers

- Respect Minimum Passing Distance: The Highway Code advises drivers to give cyclists at least 1.5 metres of space (about the width of a compact car) when overtaking at speeds of up to 30mph, with larger gaps at higher speeds. This distance ensures cyclists have enough room to manoeuvre safely and helps prevent accidents.

- Be Patient and Aware: Cyclists may need to avoid obstacles like potholes or drains. Be patient and wait for a safe opportunity to overtake. Always check your mirrors and blind spots for cyclists before changing lanes, turning, or opening your car door.Clearly signal your intentions early to give cyclists time to react.

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- Avoid Harsh Braking: Sudden stops can be dangerous for cyclists, especially if they are riding close behind your vehicle.

- Dutch Reach: The Dutch Reach is a simple yet effective car door opening technique designed to prevent "dooring" accidents, where cyclists are hit by car doors. By using the hand furthest from the door to open it, drivers and passengers are forced to turn their bodies, naturally prompting them to check for approaching cyclists or pedestrians.

- Road classification system: In a significant move to bolster road safety, the UK Highway Code has introduced a new Hierarchy of Road Users. This initiative prioritizes the most vulnerable individuals, placing pedestrians, cyclists, and horse riders at the top of the hierarchy. The new ranking system acknowledges the heightened risk these groups face in collisions, aiming to reduce accidents and improve overall safety on the roads.

- Two by Two: Yes, cyclists in the UK are allowed to ride two abreast. This practice can enhance safety, especially in larger groups or when accompanying children or less experienced riders

For Cyclists

- Stay Visible: Wear bright or reflective clothing and use lights on your bike, especially in low-light conditions. Make eye contact with drivers where possible to ensure you are seen.

- Follow the Rules of the Road: Obey traffic signals and signs, just like any other vehicle. This includes stopping at red lights and giving way where required.

- Use Cycle Lanes: Where available, use designated cycle lanes. They are designed to offer a safer space for cycling.

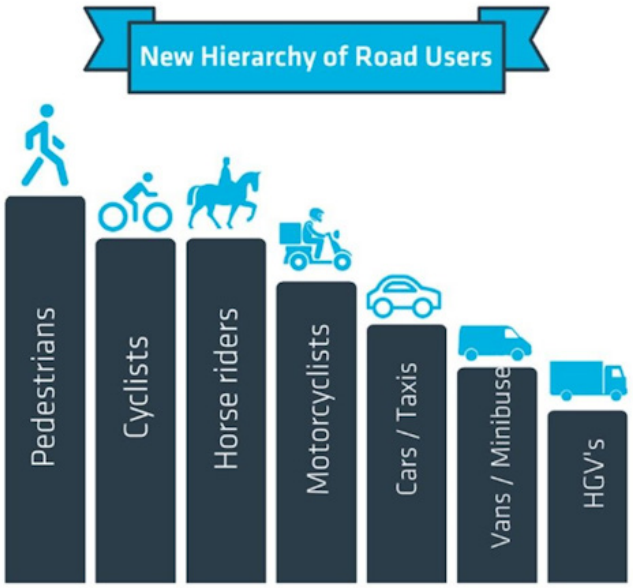
- Signal Your Intentions: Use hand signals to indicate turns or lane changes. This helps drivers understand your movements.

- Ride Predictably: Avoid weaving between vehicles or changing lanes suddenly. Maintain a steady line and speed.

Shared Responsibilities

- Stay Alert: Both drivers and cyclists should avoid distractions. Keep your focus on the road and your surroundings.

- Be Courteous: A friendly wave or a nod can go a long way in fostering goodwill and understanding on the road.
- Understand Each Other's Needs: Cycling has a valuable part to play in the transport and leisure system and cyclists should be treated with extra care and consideration. By driving patiently and respectfully, you help keep everyone safe and make roads more pleasant for all users.



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