

# Bournemouth & Dorset Advanced Drivers



## January Newsletter - 2026 (edition 127)

### 70 years of the IAM

The National body started as the Institute of Advanced Motorists in 1956. Founded by a group of motoring enthusiasts who wanted to promote a better standard of driving, not initially in Dorset though. The first local group started off life in Nottingham.

Some 13 years later the first Motorbike Group started in Kent. 10 years ago the Institute of Advanced Motorists underwent a rebranding exercise to be known as it still is today: IAM RoadSmart. Most local groups have retained reference to their origins and have 'Advanced Drivers' or 'Advanced Motorists' in part of their name.

Looking back at my own time with the IAM I've been a member of local groups since 2000, which equates to most of my working life while in Dorset. However, tonight I find myself sitting in a hotel room in Hatfield, while last Friday night I was again away from home but then it was Camborne in Cornwall. In both cases the drives were undertaken on Friday afternoons/evenings in less-than-ideal weather conditions. Thankfully (touch wood for the return trip tomorrow) no flooded roads were encountered, but I know that many in Dorset have been affected by the recent storms. I've also been on the group's committee since 2002 - isn't this a nice segue way...

The Group's AGM take place on 5th February, where we are always on the lookout for new members to join us. If you'd like to join the committee and help shape the way the Group operates in Dorset then we'd love to hear from you.

*Matt Ames*

*Membership and Newsletter Editor  
Bournemouth & Dorset Advanced Drivers  
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### New Associate Members of the Bournemouth & Dorset Group

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

|                   |   |           |
|-------------------|---|-----------|
| Alistair Pickburn | - | (pending) |
| Brian Willbourn   | - | (pending) |
| Ian Thomsen       | - | (pending) |
| Valentin Gravil   | - | (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):

|                  |              |
|------------------|--------------|
| Jake Downey      | Wendy Hawkes |
| Roxanna Tibuleac | Alex Money   |
| Richard Girdler  | (unknown)    |
| Ruben Oliveira   | Nigel Bailey |

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

Finally, a special mention for Alex Money who has recently passed his Masters, coached by both Neville and Jason.

### New National Observer joins the team

Congratulations to our latest National Observer Nick Denley who qualified on Saturday 10th January. Nick joins our team of Observers and will mainly be based in the Poole area.

If you would like to become an Observer, please contact Sue, we are especially looking for observers based in the west of our catchment area (ie., West Dorset).

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### Forthcoming Social events

#### 5th February 2026

The Groups Annual General Meeting (AGM) will take place.

Time: 1900

#### 5th March 2026

(tbc)

Time: 1900

#### 2nd April 2026

Justin Stringfellow, Chair of Bournemouth and Wessex Advanced Motorcyclists will be talking the Group, bring a motorcyclist point of view to Advanced Driving and Advanced Riding.

Time: 1900

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/>

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### Through the eyes of a new Group Member

Peta Steadman Bee

I was delighted when Nick agreed to be a guinea pig for this article & can't thank him enough for his time & reflections on his journey to a very well deserved Pass with Distinction.

Nick has been interested in driving over many years and his decades of motoring also included some very fast and at times, hair raising experiences off road as a co-driver in National & International Rally events such as the RAC.

More recently Nick enjoyed the Mature Driving Course with Alan Thomas who suggested he would also enjoy the IAM course too and having done some research into it, Nick decided to apply.

His one comment regarding the pre course preparation was that with his experience, he didn't feel he got much out of the Zoom session however the references he was given were helpful.

Nick is someone who gives his full commitment to any undertaking & I quickly realised when we met for our first drive, that he had already done some homework having purchased (amongst other publications), a copy of the most recent The Highway Code, RoadCraft & he'd watched a number of Reg Local YouTube videos about too!

I quickly discovered that Nick was pretty hard on himself wanting to improve each week. I came to expect that he'd turn up with a question about some aspect of the practical course or wanting to know the rationale behind something he'd read in the course manual.

I asked him whether he thought we had the balance right between the practical time behind the wheel and theory and if he had any suggestions & he thought the flexibility we had time wise in each session was very useful.

Asked to elaborate on some highlights, Nick said that he knew after our first session that it was going to be ok. He realised that he was going to be required to do a lot more thinking and at the beginning he was a bit short of 'band width'.

Nick commented that he quickly realised that there was a challenge with so much information to take in & comment on, especially in built up areas and the requirement to stay focussed on what was happening in the close distance. He realised he needed to develop his vision & awareness of what was happening in the distance and in between. Initially the commentary & correct application of The System was a challenge but one he found added interest to his driving & readily adapted to.

I asked Nick if anything stood out that he now did as a matter of course that he hadn't done previously. He mentioned the 2 second rule & the fact that now he wouldn't dream of only looking in one mirror!

Final comments ".....driving is harder than it used to be because I can't not drive to an advanced standard" "(driving).... is more challenging & I know that's

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what it's supposed to be. The Test isn't the Goal, it's a Marker"

I asked him for his opinion having completed the course and he said that it had caused him to 'completely change the way I drive & it is one of the best things I've done in a very long time'.

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### **Masters Distinction: the past, present and future** Alex Money

After 2 hours, battling the storm, I made it back to Poole with 9 mile to spare.

Learning to drive in 2023 and then upgrading my licence in 2024 to include manual transmission has shown me that some skills can't simply be taught — they have to be gained through real experience. I'm grateful to everyone who has invested their time and guidance in helping me become a safer, more confident driver. As a National Observer, I'm committed to passing that same support on to others.



Between volunteering as a Scout Leader, serving as a National Observer, and working two jobs — one in the Civil Service and another providing ad hoc security on weekends — life stays busy. But the most rewarding part of both volunteering and working in public service is knowing that I'm not contributing to someone's profit; I'm contributing to my community. Giving back is what makes the effort worthwhile.

Living with epilepsy, autism, anxiety, depression, and learning difficulties has shaped who I am, but it has never limited what I'm capable of. I've heard people tell me I wouldn't achieve much — teachers who underestimated me, colleagues who assumed my disabilities

defined my abilities.

Yet every step of the way, I've proven that those expectations were far too small. I've worked hard, pushed through challenges, and shown that determination can outshine doubt.



I'm still on that journey, still showing others that disability is not a barrier to ambition. If anything, it's a reminder that strength comes in many forms — and that people's perceptions often say more about their own limits than mine

### **Career & Training Timeline**

- 2023 – Passed my automatic driving test, supported throughout by my instructor, Vlad, whose guidance was invaluable.
- 2024 (Early) – Received my F1RST test results, assessed by Chris Smith.
- 2024 (Mid) – Passed my manual driving test, again with support from Vlad.
- 2024 (Late) – Achieved National Observer qualification, presented by Mac, and have since gained multiple passes and F1RST results.
- 2024 (Late) – Completed my Advanced Riding Course.
- 2025 (Late) – Began assisting with speakers to help strengthen the group's social and community engagement.
- 2026 – Awarded my Masters qualification with distinction.
- 2026 (Spring) – Planning to undertake Advanced Riding for Masters.
- 2026 (Late) – Exploring progression either by becoming an Approved Driving Instructor (ADI) or transferring within the Civil Service to train as a Driving Examiner, depending on how my career develops.

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