

# Bournemouth & Dorset Advanced Drivers



## March Newsletter - 2026 (edition 129)

### UK bound

Over the last month I've once again found myself down in Cornwall for a weekend, but currently I'm somewhat further north; up in the Lake District. The recent jump in fuel prices has hit me (and my wallet) hard, having covering some 450 miles since I've been up here (we won't mention the drive up or the future return trip).

While I've been in the Lakes, with the crossover to spring taking place the weather has been unpredictable as you might imagine, from days of glorious sunshine to travelling along the M6 in the snow and hail. You never can predict what may happen, but I was pleased that I still had my winter tyres on.

Whilst most of the main roads in the Lake District are a shining example of high-quality road maintenance, you don't have to have spent many seconds on the B and C roads to find yourself quickly dodging potholes. One of which I didn't spot resulted in a terrible bang from the front nearside wheel. I was expecting to see a loss of tyre pressure warning pop up on the dash and for me to be carrying out an unplanned wheel change, but somewhat amazingly the tyre survived and my alloy is still scratch free. Before anyone asks, I still need to get my tracking checked, but there isn't a noticeable change in the driving characteristics of the car. I had visions of some terrible gashes in it, so I'm considering this as a very lucky escape!

Now that the clocks have moved forward an hour we are treated to some lighter evenings, which on the whole should be good for us as motorists, but keep an eye out for some of the local wildlife which doesn't follow BST and will be bounding across the roads a bit later into the day for the next few months!

Any guesses where I'll be next month? In the meantime, get your thinking caps on the April social which

will give the opportunity for Group Members to field questions to our sister Motorcycling group, Bournemouth & Wessex Advanced Motorcyclists (BWAM). The evening has the potential for some lively and though provoking conversations, so why not come along and join in the fun?

Stay safe & happy motoring,

*Matt Ames*

*Membership and Newsletter Editor*

*Bournemouth & Dorset Advanced Drivers*

*membership@bdiam.org.uk*

### 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:

Abhishek Punia	-	(pending)
Andreea-Roxana Badosu	-	(pending)
David De Crespigny Brown	-	(pending)
Nerva Elodie	-	(pending)
Nima Cooper	-	(pending)
Trevor Foan	-	(pending)
Witold Liskiewicz	-	(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 if known at publication):

Manjuladevi Manickavagom    Martyn McCarthy

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

**email** [groupcontact@bdiam.org.uk](mailto:groupcontact@bdiam.org.uk)

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### Forthcoming Social events

#### 2nd April 2026

Talk by Justin Stringfellow & Yvonne Moors from Bournemouth & Wessex Advanced Motorcyclists (BWAM). This is your chance to ask questions on how/why motorcyclists interact with vehicles.

Time: 1900

#### 7th May 2026

(tbc)

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/>

### SUVs are more dangerous to pedestrians than smaller vehicles, say one third of Brits

from the IAM Newsroom

- 32% think SUVs are a greater threat to cyclists than smaller vehicles
- 21% think SUVs should be banned from areas with high footfall, such as city centres
- 32% support increasing Vehicle Excise Duty on SUVs

One third of Brits think SUVs (Sports Utility Vehicles) are more dangerous to pedestrians than smaller vehicles.

The research<sup>[i]</sup>, carried out by the UK's leading road safety charity IAM RoadSmart, found that 32 percent of respondents thought that the plus-sized vehicles posed a more significant road safety threat to pedestrians.

One in three – 33 percent - think SUVs are a greater threat to cyclists than smaller vehicles.

The survey, of 1,048 UK motorists shows that pedestrians, cyclists and people in smaller vehicles feel threatened by SUVs.

More than half (52%) think the occupants of an SUV are safer than those in smaller vehicles - an opinion that is backed up by Euro NCAP (European New Car Assessment Programme) ratings which bill some of them as the safest family cars.



One fifth (21%) think SUVs should be banned from areas with high footfall, such as city centres.

While no council is yet to ban the vehicles, some have started to introduce increased parking fees, including Cardiff which has approved the principle of an additional charge for residential parking permits for vehicles weighing over 2.4 tonnes.<sup>[ii]</sup>

The plan is aimed at cutting congestion and pollution and encouraging people to walk, cycle or use public transport when travelling in and around the city.

In 2024, Paris tripled its parking charges for heavier cars after the mayor argued that SUVs are dangerous and bad for the environment.<sup>[iii]</sup>

One third of those polled (32%) support increasing Vehicle Excise Duty on SUVs, given the greater wear and tear on the roads and higher levels of emissions coming from these vehicles.

Research by Imperial College London in 2025 concluded that in the case of a crash, a pedestrian or cyclist hit by an SUV is more likely to be severely injured or killed than if they were hit by a smaller car.<sup>[iv]</sup>

The odds of being killed increased by 44 percent for adults, and by 82 percent for children and cyclists due to the higher front end of an SUV, meaning that the victim is more likely to be thrown into the road instead of being carried on the vehicle's hood.

Despite the risks, sales of SUVs show no signs of waning; as of 2023, SUVs made up 48 percent of new car sales globally, up from 15 percent in 2010.<sup>[v]</sup>

In addition vehicle sizes are ballooning; Autocar magazine compared the average weight of new cars in its weekly road tests in 2016 and 2023 and found an increase from 1,553kg to 1,947kg – a rise of nearly 400kg.<sup>[vi]</sup>

Modern SUVs often exceed the standard UK parking space size of 2.4m x 4.8m, which has remained largely unchanged since the 1970s.<sup>[vii]</sup>

IAM RoadSmart Policy and Standards Director Nicholas Lyes said: "Huge cars were once associated with the USA, but car spreading is alive and well in the UK.

"Many drivers will have noticed that fitting a car into a space has become tighter compared to 20 years ago and may also hold their breath if they see a large oncoming SUV on a narrow country road. Despite the fact that these cars are growing, both in size and popularity, our roads and parking spaces are not significantly wider and something needs to give.

"Arguably, it is not the vehicle most at play but the driver who should be in control and have a greater spatial understanding of their vehicle. By doing so, this should foster more careful driving, particularly on rural roads and in busy urban environments.

"However, with demand for bigger cars showing no sign of abating, we believe improvements to vehicle design such as mandating bumpers and hoods from materials that reduce injury severity, and pedestrian automatic emergency braking. External airbags should also be explored to mitigate against the size and weight of the vehicle.

"While cities may opt for charges or hiking parking fees to discourage use, our view is that safer vehicle design and enhanced driver education can make the biggest difference."

### References:

[i] IAM RoadSmart February 2026 Opinion Panel

[ii] BBC: <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/articles/c04gpp4w0rdo>

[iii] BBC: <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-europe-68196828>

[iv] Imperial College London: Do sports utility vehicles (SUVs) and light truck vehicles (LTVs) cause more severe injuries to pedestrians and cyclists than passenger cars in the case of a crash?

[v] IEA. SUVs are setting new sales records each year – and so are their emissions. Paris, 2024. Available: <https://www.iea.org/commentaries/suvs-are-setting-new-salesrecords-each-year-and-so-are-their-emissions> [accessed 19 Nov 2024]

[vi] Autocar: <https://www.autocar.co.uk/car-news/new-cars/average-weight-new-cars-rises-nearly-400kg-seven-years>

[vii] The AA: <https://www.theaa.com/break-down-cover/advice/parking-space-size#:~:text=What%20is%20the%20standard%20size,cars%20pass%20on%20narrow%20roads.>

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### IAM RoadSmart responds to AIA Annual Local Authority Road Maintenance (ALARM) survey from the IAM Newsroom

Responding to the AIA's Annual Local Authority Road Maintenance (ALARM) survey, IAM RoadSmart Director of Policy & Standards Nicholas Lyes said: "The embarrassing state of our local road network is fast becoming a national scandal. Around one in six local roads are effectively on life support with less than five years of structural integrity remaining. What was once deemed an irritant with expensive consequences, poorly maintained local roads now represent a real road safety hazard. Our research suggests drivers are taking risky actions to avoid hitting potholes, while for those on two wheels, they can cause serious injury or worse. We need a long-term approach that invests in proper surface maintenance, rather than the all too often 'patch and dash' repairs that crumble at the first sign of bad weather."

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