

# Dorset IAM RoadSmart



August Newsletter - 2020 (edition 64)

## How much?!

At the start of this year the trustees decided to change the format of the newsletter from quarterly to monthly. In theory this gives me more work, as I have to create 12 issues rather than 4, however that is counter-acted by the fact each issue contain less content so the layout is faster to arrange. I am blessed now that the newsletter is no longer in A5-booklet format, so I don't have the issue of pages needing to be added in set of of 4x A5 sides (otherwise it is was not cost effective for the printing and the layout would go all wonky). How do you like the new look& feel and content of the newsletter? Comments and suggestions are always welcome – email me.

It does, however, mean I have to think about something, hopefully interesting, to write about each month on a (semi) car related theme. Whilst wracking my brains for what to talk about this month, IAM Surety came to my rescue as my car insurance reminder email arrived in my inbox.

With some degree of trepidation, I opened the renewal document - £425 for my vrs, an increase of about £30 from last year. This got my thinking, in the old days people's insurance used to decrease as we became older, wiser, more sensible and arguably more skilled (one would certainly hope that was the case for IAM members). However, mine seems to keep going up, yet I remain accident free.

Since the lockdown period started, I've rarely used my car (as you'll recall from last month's flat battery saga). Previously as a high mileage driver, I used to view car insurance and tax as the cheaper part of motoring; my fuel bill was the main burden. However, that has all changed - along with my revised working environment it means I rarely need to visit the office, so my primary use for having a car has changed. I generally walk if I need to pop into town or the shops, so now most trips in the car will be to visit my parents in Somerset (when safe to do so), or my sib-

lings further afield. I'm not sure if this will continue long term, but work have implied that they are happy for many of us to remain as remote workers. Fingers-crossed long may that continue.

Anyway, I'd better crack on with this newsletter so that I can get down to that really exciting task of finding cheaper car insurance quote (like for like), and the seeing if IAM Surety will match it for me. In previous years they have always made me do the leg work, and then matched the best quote. I guess for a lot of people the hassle of getting numerous quotes out weights the year-on-year increases the insurance companies like to place on us.

Curiously enough while dealing with my home insurance last month I found out that being working at home (not running a business from home) doesn't make your insurance premiums any lower than being in the office from 9 till 5 every day. Or at least that is what they say when you are trying to knock the premiums down!

Sundays for me has become cycling day. A small group of us often meet for a socially-distanced ride, normally out for a café or two for coffee (and maybe cake or a pasty). Two weeks ago, we made it over to the newish café by what we always call 'Duck Pond Farm', its real name is Each Creech Tea Rooms – we had a lovely ride in the rather baking hot sunshine. The coffee (and cake in this case) stop was more than welcome as we'd taken the non-flat route there, by heading up Whiteways and along the top. The climb wasn't too bad, so I guess that means I must be getting fitter, the descent is one you can enjoy once you know the layout of the road. However, more often than not you are likely to meet opposing traffic, so you need your wits about you unless you want to become a statistic, thankfully those 64 miles were event free! Last weekend was a total reversal in terms of the weather. We went out to Milton Abbas to the café part way up the hill in what can only be described as damp conditions, after that we headed out to Kings

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Stag before winding out way back home, generally opting to take the side roads where ever possible. We called in at Hardy's Cottage on the way back before heading back into Weymouth via Came Down. Another 75 miles ticked off. Who knows what conditions we'll have this Sunday?

Looking back at the statistics for this year (given I've only started riding since the lockdown), I've covered 1010miles, requiring 67hrs in the saddle with 51,260ft of climbing – it wouldn't be fun without the hills!

Stay Alert, Contol Lives, Save Lives

*Matt Ames*  
*Newsletter Editor*

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### **From the IAM RoadSmart Press Room** **Meet Stuart, the first Advanced Driver to qualify since lockdown was lifted**

With Advanced Driver tests underway again this week for the first time since March, the first to qualify after the COVID-19 lockdown is Stuart Reed from Stevenage, Hertfordshire.

A member of the Cambridge Advanced Motorists – CAMIAM – since July 2019, Stuart is passionate about improving road safety and has been Advanced Driver test-ready since March. He was unable to take his test due to COVID-19 lockdown restrictions.

He achieved a F1RST on his test, meaning he achieved a top score in all categories of his assessment.

Stuart said: "I love driving. I have been driving for 33 years and I have always been keen to improve my skills on the road.

"I am delighted to have passed and to be able to call myself an Advanced Driver. I feel much more confident and aware of the risks we face every day as motorists which I feel is particularly timely as the roads are gradually becoming busier each day.

"I'd like to thank my Observer, Mike Wilding, for the support he has given me and his great attitude towards driving safely."

Now Stuart is a fully-qualified Advanced Driver he has the scope to further his IAM RoadSmart journey to become an observer. This would mean he joins a network of thousands of volunteers nationwide who, through the coaching they provide, contribute towards the UK's largest independent road safety charity's mission, to reduce the number of people who are killed or injured on the roads.

Commenting on Stuart's achievement, Advanced Driver examiner John Atkinson said: "This has been the longest period in my life when I haven't been behind the wheel of my car or riding my motorcycle. Since returning to the roads I have noticed my confidence levels have dropped and I feel some skills are a little rusty removing some of the enjoyment.

"My Advanced Motorist skills and confidence levels soon returned with some practice but it made me realise that not all motorists have this experience to fall back on and that now is the time more road users should be considering advanced coaching. It is great to be welcoming another member to IAM RoadSmart."

Chairman of CAMIAM, Howard Sherriff, said: "All of us at CAMIAM are delighted that Stuart was the first to take the Advanced Driver test since lockdown, particularly as he was test ready when the lockdown started.

"As drivers return to a more normal life it important that good driving standards are achieved. Advanced driving requires knowledge, skills and experience. Many drivers may have lost confidence in their abilities behind the wheel by not driving over the past few months. This is a good time to think about improving their driving skills and experience by becoming an IAM RoadSmart member."

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## From the IAM RoadSmart Press Room Meet Heather, the first to take a Mature Driver Review since lockdown was lifted

With COVID-19 lockdown restrictions easing the UK's largest independent road safety charity, IAM RoadSmart, has conducted the first Mature Driver Review since lockdown began.

Heather King, from Leek Wootton, Warwickshire, was reviewed by Advanced Driver, Clive McNaney, this week.

As the UK population ages, more drivers are now aged over 75 than ever before. Statistically, mature drivers are responsible for fewer motor vehicle collisions than younger drivers. However, it can be many years since a more experienced driver has had any kind of review of their driving.

Clive said: "We gain a great deal of experience through our driving years, but we also pick up some bad habits. The idea behind the Mature Driver Review is to assess the level of safety of a driver and identify any areas where this could be improved with a few helpful hints and tips. 'Eco-friendly' driving can also be introduced. The review is conducted in a friendly and non-pressured environment.

"There is no pass or fail it is about unlocking any new skills or reminding drivers of skills they may have forgotten over the years and giving them the confidence to remain on the roads safely. I have reviewed some very safe and able drivers in my time undertaking these reviews, and I have met some lovely people who truly care about their driving and the safety of their passengers. Hopefully they have all enjoyed the experience."

Commenting after her review, Heather said: "I am really pleased that I have done the assessment. I was nervous, however, Clive put me at my ease straight

away which made the whole experience as pleasant as possible".

IAM RoadSmart is passionate about finding the best ways to keep drivers safely behind the wheel into their mature years. Heather's review came through its partnership with Warwickshire County Council, one of a number of local authorities who work with IAM RoadSmart.

Warwickshire County Councillor Jeff Clarke, portfolio holder for Transport and Planning, said: "We're delighted to be working with IAM RoadSmart to provide and promote these driving assessments, which are free in Warwickshire, for eligible mature drivers and we're pleased to see the great response from Heather.

"If you, or a friend or relative living in Warwickshire feel you may benefit from this valuable opportunity then please get in touch. We want all our older drivers to drive safely and with confidence."

IAM RoadSmart provides Mature Driver Reviews for any older driver who wants to ensure their confidence behind the wheel is well matched to their safety on the roads. For further information and advice on issues related to older drivers visit [www.iamroadsmart.com/olderdrivers](http://www.iamroadsmart.com/olderdrivers)

