

Dorset IAM RoadSmart



October Newsletter - 2021 (edition 78)

The Difference a Week Makes

Since the start of the pandemic, I've been taking advantage of my employer's continued working from home policy. As long as I have my laptop, a couple of monitors and an internet connection (either fixed line or mobile coverage), I can pretty much work from anywhere in the UK. However, for the last month I took the opportunity to visit my twin brother who lives in Lancashire. I opted to take Friday's and Monday's off as leave and work the middle part of the week.

This gave me the opportunity to spend some time with my brother and his family at weekends, and on the weekdays I had off, I did some DIY (almost akin to paying my way!). The trip up north also gave me an excuse to use my car which has mainly been left sitting in my garage. I'm sure that it enjoyed a trundle up the motorway. Thankfully I'd filled my car up the day before the 'panic buying' idiotic members of the public decided to drain the majority of fuel stations!

The drive up was pretty uneventful, apart from one section of roadworks, which I believe was for bridge replacement works. This saw all cars exit the northbound carriageway, queue at some traffic lights before going over a roundabout and taking the second exit to rejoin the motorway! I was generally very lucky with the weather for the majority of the time. We picked a lovely dry and sunny day (and not too cold) day to make a trip up to Lake Windermere. Rather than walking, we remained at water level – with an afternoon of kayaking and then SUPing. For those unfamiliar with the term, it means "Stand up Paddleboard". If you pop down to Weymouth beach on any sunny day of the year (and often during the winter months too), you'll see them. People normally start off by kneeling down on them. After that you can kneel up, and when you are confident you can risk it

all and stand up! There is obviously some skill required in standing up and remaining standing without rocking the board and heading into the water! The nephew, being only 9, found it suitably easy (wearing a wetsuit, I'm sure helped his confidence), I was a quick second to be standing, and my brother got there shortly after. I'm pleased to report that none of us ended up involuntarily in the water. I did see reports that Windermere had broken its banks over the last couple of days and flooded out the nearby café and National Trust buildings.

The drive back from Windermere I managed to encounter the same moronic behaviour that one sometimes sees on the top of the Ridgeway (when leaving Weymouth), and on the A35 (when approaching Dorchester from the Bere Regis direction). The same old issue of 'merge in turn', or more specifically those drivers who block both lanes. I guess in their simple minds, as they have merged in (far too early), they believe that everyone should queue up behind them, rather than making the most of multiple lanes of traffic and merging in at the end.



Taken from <https://www.carthrottle.com/post/watch-two-idiot-drivers-block-half-a-motorway-for-no-damn-reason/>

My return trip back down south was event free, apart from an accident on the northbound carriageway (a lorry seemed to have been pushing a car). This resulted in many miles of southbound traffic backing up as the drivers rubbernecked. As expected, once we were just past the accident site traffic speeds returned

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to normal. I can really see an advantage for situations like this for autonomous vehicles – no slowing down to look over, plus we all know that often minor bumps often occur in the queuing traffic too.

I know that I've written about EVs in the past, but I did see a rather concerning set of messages on the M5 southbound – “No EV charging at Gloucester services”. I'd imagine that might have caused a case of range-anxiety for a few! Mind you, I guess the same could have been said for those us with petrol or diesel powered vehicles too - due to the recent fuel delivery issues.

Matt Ames
Newsletter Editor

Test Passes - Congratulations

We welcome to the Dorset IAM RoadSmart Group as Full Members:

Full Member	Observer
Speed Azzaro	Chris Ward
Lee Brown	Chris Ward
Mayling Thirlway	Ian Lungwood

Congratulations on your recent test pass, your certificates should be in the post from IAM House (if they haven't yet arrived, they will do shortly).

Membership renewals

I am afraid it is that time of year again - or at least for our members who are registered as 'September Joiners'. If you receive this newsletter electronically and your membership is due then you should expect to receive an email shortly. For our postal members, the form should be in the envelope along side this newsletter.

As always your prompt return is much appreciated and makes my life easier.

Thanks,

Matt Ames
Membership secretary

What an RAF pilot can teach us about being safe on the road

“Sorry mate, I didn't see you”. Is a catchphrase used by drivers up and down the country. Is this a driver being careless and dangerous or did the driver genuinely not see you?

According to a report by John Sullivan of the RAF, the answer may have important repercussions for the way we train drivers and how as cyclists we stay safe on the roads.

John Sullivan is a Royal Air Force pilot with over 4,000 flight hours in his career, and a keen cyclist. He is a crash investigator and has contributed to multiple reports. Fighter pilots have to cope with speeds of over 1000 mph. Any crashes are closely analysed to extract lessons that can be of use.



We are the result of hundreds of thousands of years of evolution. Our eyes, and the way that our brain processes the images that they receive, are very well suited to creeping up on unsuspecting antelopes and spotting threats such as sabre-toothed tigers. These threats are largely gone and they've been replaced by vehicles travelling towards us at high speeds. This, we've not yet adapted to deal with. Why?

Light enters our eyes and falls upon the retina. It is then converted into electrical impulses, that the brain

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perceives as images. Only a small part of your retina, the centre bit called the fovea, can generate a high-resolution image. This is why we need to look directly at something, to see detail. The rest of the retina lacks detail but it contributes by adding the peripheral vision. However, a mere 20 degrees away from your sightline, your visual acuity is about 1/10th of what it is at the centre.

Test

Try this scary test to see quite how much detail you lose in your peripheral vision.

- Stand 10 metres away from a car.
- Move your eyes and look just one car's width to the right or left of that car.
- Without moving where your eyes are now looking, try and read the numberplate of the car.
- Try the test again from 5 metres.

The test shows you quite how little detail you are able to truly capture from the side of your eyes.

That's not to say that we cannot see something in our peripheral vision – of course we can. As you approach a roundabout, you would be hard pressed not to see a huge lorry bearing down upon you, even out of the corner of your eye – obviously, the bigger the object, the more likely we are to see it. But would you see a motorbike, or a cyclist?

To have a good chance of seeing an object on a collision course, we need to move our eyes, and probably head, to bring the object into the centre of our vision – so that we can use our high-resolution vision of our fovea to resolve the detail.

When you move your head and eyes to scan a scene, your eyes are incapable of moving smoothly across it and seeing everything. Instead, you see in the image in a series of very quick jumps (called saccades) with very short pauses (called fixations) and it is only during the pauses that an image is processed. Your brain fills in the gaps with a combination of peripheral vision and an assumption that what is in the gaps must be the same as what you see during the pauses. This might sound crazy, but your brain actually blocks the image that is being received while your eyes are moving. This is why you do not see the sort of blurred image, that you see when you look sideways

out of a train window.

The only exception to this, is if you are tracking a moving object.

Another Test

If you are not convinced, try this test.

- Look in a mirror.
- Look repeatedly from your right eye to your left eye.
- Can you see your eyes moving? You can't.
- Repeat the test with a friend and watch them. You will see their eyes moving quite markedly.

You can't see your own eyes move because your brain shuts down the image for the instant that your eyes are moving. This is called Saccadic masking.

In the past, this served us well. It meant we could creep up on antelopes without our brain being overloaded by unnecessary detail and a lot of useless, blurred images. However, what happens when this system is put to use in a modern-day situation, such as a traffic junction?

Why we miss motorbikes and bicycles

At a traffic junction all but the worst of drivers will look in both directions to check for oncoming traffic. However, it is entirely possible for our eyes to "jump over" an oncoming bicycle or motorbike.

The smaller the vehicle, the greater the chance it will fall within a saccade.

This isn't really a case of a careless driver, it's more of a human incapacity to see anything during a saccade. Hence the reason for so many "Sorry mate, I didn't see you" excuses.

The faster you move your head, the larger the jumps and the shorter the pauses.

Therefore, you've got more of a chance of missing a vehicle.

We are effectively seeing through solid objects, with our brain filling in the image.

How accidents happen

Let's say you are driving along. You approach a junction and you notice a lack of traffic. You look left and right and proceed forward. Suddenly you hear the blast of a horn, as a motorbike flashes in front of you,

narrowly avoiding an accident. What just happened? On your approach, you couldn't see there was another vehicle on a perfect collision course. With a lack of relative movement for your peripheral vision to detect and the vehicle being potentially hidden by being near the door pillar, you miss it entirely.

Lulled into a false sense of security you looked quickly right and left, to avoid holding up the traffic behind you, and your eyes jumped cleanly over the approaching vehicle, especially as it was still close to the door pillar in the windscreen. The rest of the road was empty, and this was the scene that your brain used to fill in the gaps! Scary, huh?

You were not being inattentive – but you were being ineffective.

Additionally, if you didn't expect there to be a cyclist your brain is more likely to automatically jump to the conclusion that the road is empty.

Drivers:

- Slow down on the approach of a roundabout or junction. Even if the road seems empty. Changing speed will allow you to see vehicles that would otherwise be invisible to you.
- A glance is never enough. You need to be as methodical and deliberate as a fighter pilot would be. Focus on a least 3 different spots along the road to the right and left. Search close, middle-distance and far. With practise, this can be accomplished quickly, and each pause is only for a fraction of a second. Fighter pilots call this a “lookout scan” and it is vital to their survival.
- Always look right and left at least twice. This doubles your chance of seeing a vehicle.
- Make a point of looking next to the windscreen pillars. Better still, lean forward slightly as you look right and left so that you are looking around the door pillars. Be aware that the pillar nearest to you blocks more of your vision. Fighter pilots say “Move your head – or you're dead”.
- Clear your flight path! When changing lanes, check your mirrors and as a last check, look directly at the spot where you are going to manoeuvre.
- Drive with your lights on. Bright vehicles or clothing is always easier to spot than dark colours that don't contrast with a scene.
- It is especially difficult to spot bicycles, motorbikes and pedestrians during low sun conditions as con-

trast is reduced.

- Keep your windscreen clean – seeing other vehicles is enough of a challenge without a dirty windscreen. You never see a fighter jet with a dirty canopy.
- Finally, don't be a clown – if you are looking at your mobile telephone then you are incapable of seeing much else. Not only are you probably looking down into your lap, but your eyes are focused at less than one metre and every object at distance will be out of focus. Even when you look up and out, it takes a fraction of a second for your eyes to adjust – this is time you may not have.

Cyclists and Motorcyclists:

- Recognise the risk of being in a saccade. High contrast clothing and lights help. In particular, flashing LED's (front and rear) are especially effective for cyclists as they create contrast and the on-off flashing attracts the peripheral vision in the same manner that movement does. There's nothing wrong with leaving these on during the day. (Especially if they are rechargeable).
- The relatively slower speed of bicycles means that they will be closer to a point of collision if a vehicle begins to pull into their path. Turn this to advantage – when passing junctions, look at the head of the driver that is approaching or has stopped. The head of the driver will naturally stop and centre upon you if you have been seen. If the driver's head sweeps through you without pausing, then the chances are that you are in a saccade – you must assume that you have not been seen and expect the driver to pull out!
- Recognise that with a low sun, a dirty windscreen or one with rain beating against it drivers are likely to have less of a chance of seeing you.
- Take a cycle training course – this will teach you where you need to be positioned on the road, how to use your eyesight to make sure drivers pay you attention and other useful techniques that can minimise dangers.

The full article can be downloaded which includes further insights <https://www.dropbox.com/s/elegi6k9amk8spw/1211%20Road%20Survival%20Guide%20Final.pdf?dl=1>

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Dorset Group of Advanced Motorists (Registered Charity Number: 1050941)

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NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN by order of the Group Committee that
the **ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING** of the
DORSET GROUP OF ADVANCED MOTORISTS

will be held at **7.00pm** on **Tuesday, 16th November 2021**
at the Dorchester Bowls Club, Sandringham Centre
Armada Way, Dorchester DY1 2TN

to enable the Trustees of the Group (registered charity number 1050941) to present their Annual Report and Accounts for the year ended 31st August 2021 for approval by the Group Members and to conduct an election.

All Members, Associates and Friends are invited to attend but only fully paid up Members of the Institute and of the Group may vote.

Current Officers:

All Officers retire annually and may offer themselves for re-election

Ian Lingwood	Chairman	offering to stand for re-election
Jane Percy	Secretary	offering to stand for re-election
Chris Ward	Treasurer	offering to stand for re-election

Group Trustees:

Philip Hughes	Trustee	offering to stand for re-election
Matthew Ames	Trustee	due for re-election 2023
Andy Temple	Chief Observer	due for re-election 2023

Positions Vacant:

Public Relations
Events

Note: The total number of Trustees, including Officers, must not exceed twenty.

Dated: 19th October 2021

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New crash statistics reveal e-scooter casualties for the first time from the IAM RoadSmart Newsroom

The UK's largest independent road safety charity, IAM RoadSmart, is calling for the Government to make up its mind now to drive down injuries on UK roads caused by e-scooters.

The plea comes after Department for Transport's (DfT) latest findings in: Reported Road casualties Great Britain, annual report: 2020 revealed for the first time that there were 484 casualties involving e-scooters, of which one person was killed, 128 were seriously injured and 355 slightly injured.

These findings come after e-scooter firms were given the green light to start trials on UK streets in July 2020, sparking a surge in e-scooter usage. This decision was made in light of COVID-19 and social distancing regulations, which meant people needed to get around without resorting to buses and trains.

However, the results of these pilot schemes have been delayed again and again, meaning a full review of the status of this new form of transport is yet to be established.

Neil Greig, Director of Policy and Research at IAM RoadSmart, commented: "By delaying yet again the results of the pilot schemes we have another Christmas looming where people will be buying and using a totally unregulated form of transport in the UK.

"The pilots were launched in July 2020 and are now not due to finish until March 2022, plus the time required after that for analysis and legislation – this has taken far too long in our opinion. In the meantime, the police should make it absolutely clear that anyone caught riding an e-scooter outside private land or a trial area will have their vehicle seized immediately.

"E-scooters may have a role to play in the future transport mix, but this can only happen once their legal status has been made completely clear and that cannot happen soon enough."

The need to clarify their legal status is further stressed by safety concerns revealed in a recent survey

by IAM RoadSmart, which received over 1,850 responses. Indeed, the survey uncovered that the safety of pedestrians and cyclists was the most important consideration (94%) for formulating new legislation on e-scooters.

The DfT's latest report also revealed that between 2004 and 2020, serious injuries of cyclists (adjusted) rose by 26% and fatalities increased from 134 to 141 (5%). However, this is because pedal cycle traffic has also risen between 2004 and 2020, at a rate faster than serious injuries.

And in the period from 2015 to 2020, an average of 2 pedal cyclists died and 83 were seriously injured (adjusted) per week in reported road casualties.

Neil added: "While there are signs of improvement, with cycle traffic increasing at a faster rate than serious injuries, it is important to recognise that cyclists are one of the most vulnerable road user groups. Cyclists are harder to spot for drivers on the road, and they are not protected by a metal cage in the same way car users are.

"The most common factor allocated in pedal cyclist versus other vehicle collisions was 'Driver or rider failed to look properly', underlining the critical importance of observation and anticipation in ensuring we can all share the roads safely."

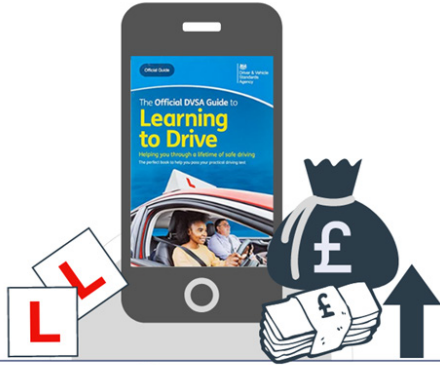
Cost rated as the biggest reason why young people are stalling on driving from the IAM RoadSmart Newsroom

Passing your driving test was once seen as a rite of passage for most youngsters. But with the number of young people getting behind the wheel now declining, research conducted by the UK's largest independent road safety charity, IAM RoadSmart, has indicated why many young people aged 17-24 have put the brakes on learning to drive.

Of 1,000 young drivers surveyed, cost concerns were rated as the biggest reason for why young people had been put off learning to drive at first. Equal top concerns (29%) were the price of lessons and the cost of running car, closely followed in second spot (28%) by the cost of taking the driving test itself.

Neil Greig, Director of Policy and Research at IAM RoadSmart, commented: “Our research shows that among young people the cost of learning to drive is a major deterrent to getting that license which would open up many more job opportunities and increase their personal mobility.”

Cost rated as the biggest reason why young people are stalling on driving



*Research from IAM RoadSmart

“No doubt, the increase in numbers going into higher education, and the rise of cheap taxi-hailing mobile applications have also fuelled the driving decline. Many young people lack the financial confidence to commit to running a car, especially when relatively cheap alternative forms of travel are available.”

The survey also revealed that fear of driving had put off 26% of respondents from learning to drive, with longer waiting lists for tests only being an issue for 20%. Finding the right car and the time to take lessons were also mentioned by respondents, but only 14% felt they didn’t need a car to get round. One in ten were actually put off by family or friends recommending they shouldn’t learn to drive.

Neil added: “It is worrying to hear that so many young people are so scared of driving that they have delayed seeking a license. Getting behind the wheel feeling stressed can affect concentration and performance, making Britain’s roads a more dangerous place than they need to be. We can all play our part by cutting learner drivers some slack as they work to gain the valuable driving experience that will make them safer drivers in the long run.”

Interestingly, the survey also explored which alternatives would make young drivers consider giving up driving a personal car. Improved public transport was the prevailing sentiment, with 30% of those surveyed stating that free bus travel would make them consider exchanging their keys for a bus pass. Also, 27% disclosed that cheaper rail fares would persuade them to give up driving their own vehicle, whilst 22% said modern forms of public transport like trams would prompt them to ditch their car.

Neil concluded with a warning for those stalling to get their licence: “Public transport use is still down after the pandemic so it has never been more important to consider the positive impact a driving license could have on your lifestyle and your employment prospects.”

Which of the following, if any, put you off learning to drive at first?

Cost of Lessons	29%
The cost of running a car once you had passed	29%
The cost of the tests	28%
Fear of driving	26%
Waiting lists on tests	20%
Finding / buying a car for after I had passed	20%
Finding the time	19%
Feeling like you didn’t need a car to get around	14%
Recommendations from family / friends not to drive	11%

Boost your skills, knowledge and confidence on the road

Whether you want to conquer your fears on the road, you want to get the best out of your vehicle, or you simply want to advance your skills and become one of the most qualified drivers and riders on the road, our courses can help you achieve your goals.

IAM RoadSmart courses are delivered by qualified experts who provide consultative, tailored 1-2-1 advice, in a confidential, supportive environment.

Visit <https://www.iamroadsmart.com/special-pages/all-our-courses> to get your friends and family started.