

**Bradford on Avon**



**Advance**

**Newsletter of  
Bath and District Advanced Motorists**

**“Making Bath and District a safer place to drive”**

[www.badam.org](http://www.badam.org)

Registered Charity No 1050592

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<i>[Raffle Tickets are available at Group indoor meetings from Thomas Flynn]</i>		

# Bath and District Group of Advanced Motorists

(Registered Charity No. 1050592)

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**Advance**

Issue 165

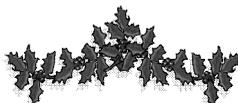
## Contents

Christmas Party	3	Congratulations	9
Editorial	4	Recent Award Ceremony	9
Next publication date	4	Chief Observer's Notepad	10
Group News	5	On the road—the motorway	10
Inter-Group Quiz	6	IAM Press Releases	11
Visit to Hicks Gate Fire Station	7	Data Protection Act	14
Trowbridge Country Fayre	7	Forthcoming events	15
Top this for a speeding ticket	8	Editorial disclaimer	16
Welcome New Associates	9		

## CHRISTMAS PARTY

 Our annual Christmas quiz and buffet  will be held at St. John's Church Hall on Tuesday 13th December. This year the quiz will again be provided by Clive Merchant who will also be asking the questions, but we need your help once more in providing the buffet.

Lists will be available at the November Group meeting showing what food and soft drink items would be welcome. If you are able to contribute, please put your name against the item(s) you will be able to bring along. If you can't be at the November meeting but would still like to supply items for the buffet, please contact Sue Phillips (Tel: 01225 849058 or e-mail [minutes@badam.org](mailto:minutes@badam.org)) by Friday 9th December. Thanks very much!



## EDITORIAL

Welcome to this edition of *Advance*. Our first news is that the advertised speaker for November is no longer able to come that month but we are very pleased to announce that Eddie Ruskin, a fairly new member of BADAM, has stepped into the breach and will be giving us a talk on 'Stroke and Driving'. This is sure to be a very interesting and inspirational talk and we look forward to seeing you at our new venue, St. John's Hall, Bathwick, in November to hear him.

St. John's Hall is proving to be a good venue for our meetings. We were concerned about the parking and, in fact, somebody told us that they were unable to park for the October meeting. However there were spaces outside the church. This involved double parking and the member who couldn't find a parking space was obviously reluctant to park in front of other cars. It is perfectly all right to double park (so long as you don't encroach on the road) in the spaces near the church as anybody who is already parked there is going to be at the meeting and, if they wished to leave

before you did, they could ask you to move your car to let them out. There are also some parking spaces on Cleveland Place (where Bathwick Street meets London Road) in addition to the parking on St. John's Road. We hope that parking issues will not prevent anybody attending meetings in the future but please let us know if you do have a problem.

We are also pleased to announce that Eddie Ruskin has agreed to join the committee. We are delighted that another of the spaces on the committee has been filled and we look forward very much to his valuable contribution to the running of the group.

Finally we look forward to seeing you at our Christmas meeting. The Christmas party with a quiz and lots of good things to eat is always an enjoyable occasion so please come to join us then. More details are on page 3.

*Clare Hogg*

*Sue Phillips*

**The next edition of *Advance* will be published in February 2017. Please submit motoring-related articles and / or digital photographs to the Temporary Editors (*who reserve the right to edit them*) by Friday 6th January at the latest. Names of authors and their home addresses should be disclosed to the Temporary Editors who will withhold them from publication on request.**

## GROUP NEWS

**Dave Gosling welcomed us to our** July meeting in our new venue of St. John's Church Hall. The meeting took the form of an Open Forum and the panel consisted of Alistair Andrews, Clive Merchant and Andy Poulton.

Clive opened the proceedings by introducing us to the new RoadSmart books for Associates, Observers and Examiners. He explained that the three books were very similar and passed round some of them so that we could see the new layout. Clive's Chief Observer's Notepad in the last issue of *Advance* 164 gave details of the books. Current Associates continue with the old system but the new books will be in use very soon. The book 'How to be a Better Driver' is to be reissued but in the meantime the old books have been given new covers to reflect IAM RoadSmart. Andy explained that there have been some changes from the examining point of view. Some categories have been merged and a new one has been introduced – the Thinking Driver. Andy also told us that candidates with automatic cars no longer have to use manual override to demonstrate its use but did have to be able to explain how it could be used.

Some questions had been submitted in advance and others were taken from the floor and a range of topics was covered. Two questions on hills were raised: who has priority on a single track hill? – the answer is the vehicle going up; and how to tackle Brassknocker hill – not too low a gear and not too much braking.

Automatic cars are now able to select the correct gear so there is no need to set a low gear manually.

A question arose about how to deal with a bend which suddenly tightens into a hairpin bend. Alistair gave a very counter-intuitive answer which prompted a good discussion during the break. Anybody who would like an explanation should approach Alistair as an attempt to discuss it here is likely to be misleading.

Making smooth gear changes was the next topic when an Associate asked about the need for counting 1,000, 2,000 during a gear change. It was explained that this is to synchronise the rate at which the gear lever is moved with the use of the clutch and accelerator in order to match engine speed with road speed.

Solid white lines were then raised as an issue. The solid white line marking a bus lane can be crossed at times when the bus lane is not in use. Solid white lines at the edge of the road which end in a T-bar must not be crossed (they usually mark areas where you may not park) but those without a T-bar are merely marking the edge of the road.

Andy then went on to cover some of the questions which he asks candidates who are doing their Masters test. The first was 'In what ways does a driver show his intentions?' and the answer was: use of indicators, hand and arm signals, horn, hazard lights, flashing headlights, brake lights, reversing lights and position of the

vehicle (chassis language).

Next came a question on Stopping distance. What factors influence Thinking and Braking distance? Thinking distance is affected by speed, anticipation, alcohol/drugs, concentration and expectation of what is to happen. Braking distance is affected by weather, speed, gradient (up or down a hill), the condition of the road and the condition of the vehicle.

On a Masters test overtaking is not essential but it is necessary to keep in touch with the vehicle in front so that if an opportunity arose the candidate would be able to overtake. This then gave rise to further discussion of the

importance of keeping a two second gap behind the vehicle in front and not a lot more as other vehicles might then push in in front, at a roundabout for example.

The discussion then went on to approaching traffic lights, almost all of which now have magnetic field proximity detectors which determine when the lights will change. Failure to get close enough to traffic lights may not activate the detector so they will not change and leaving too long a gap behind the vehicle in front may make them change against you as the detector doesn't register your vehicle in time.

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## INTER-GROUP QUIZ—Tuesday 13th September

At our September meeting we hosted the annual Inter-Group Quiz with three teams taking part. Unfortunately Bristol Group had to withdraw at the last minute and so the contest took place between Weston and Mendip, Taunton and Bath groups. Most of the 'audience' also formed themselves into three groups so that they could participate in the quiz themselves. The Bath team consisted of Peter Huntington, Susie Jameson and Roger Smith.

Refreshments were served before the quiz started and also in the course of one of the rounds, a Picture round. The other rounds covered History, Sport, Geography, Natural History, Cars and General Knowledge with a Joker (scoring double points) to be played on one round. Interestingly all six teams chose to play it on the

General Knowledge round.

The contest started off very close between the three 'official' teams but as time went on Weston and Mendip group drew further and further ahead and finished with a score of 59 points. Bath came second with 46 points and Taunton group third with 40 and so Bath relinquished the trophy which they won last year to Weston and Mendip.



Chairman Dave Gosling with the winning team from Weston and Mendip with their trophy.

Many thanks to Ray Robbets for setting the quiz and to Thomas Flynn for scoring. Next year Weston and

Mendip group will be hosting the quiz and we shall send a team hoping to regain the trophy.

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## VISIT TO HICKS GATE FIRE STATION—Tuesday, 9th August

Dave Gosling organised a visit to the new Avon Fire & Rescue Station at Hicks Gate in August which was very well attended by about 25 members and friends. They were met by the Crew Manager who explained about Health and Safety in relation to the visit and who conducted the tour of the Station, explaining in some detail what goes on at a fire and rescue station.



The fire crew working on an RTC drill



Lots of questions were asked and an opportunity was given to handle some of the equipment under the supervision of the officers. At the end of the evening tokens of appreciation were presented to the firemen by Dave Gosling and Don Escott.

After being shown the appliances and what they all do, it had been arranged to do a RTC drill and this was carried out in a manner that even some of the least technically minded among the group could understand.



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## TROWBRIDGE COUNTRY FAYRE—Saturday 10th September

We attended Trowbridge Country Fayre again this year but unfortunately the weather did not favour us. The morning was very wet and although it did brighten up in the afternoon attendance was well down on previous

years. Whilst we had some interesting conversations with visitors we did not succeed in recruiting any new members.

However it was an opportunity to try out our new gazebo which Clive

Merchant and Don Escott had purchased shortly before the event. The new gazebo is larger than the old one and there is room for the display



Don Escott, Clare Hogg and Clive Merchant with the new gazebo showing the display boards under cover.

stands under cover which was invaluable on such a wet day. Clive and Don erected it, with help later from Pat Hemmens, but doing that in the pouring rain was a difficult task. On future occasions we must ensure that more people are available to help right from the start.

Clare Hogg arrived later still to help man the stall and was there to assist with the dismantling but more help at the start would have been greatly appreciated.

You might notice from reading reports of events we attend that it is the same few people who help at each of them. Please support your group by turning out to spread the word of advanced driving.

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## TOP THIS FOR A SPEEDING TICKET

Two British traffic patrol officers from North Berwick, east of Edinburgh, were involved in an unusual incident while checking for speeding motorists on the A1 Great North Road.

One of the officers used a hand held radar device to check the speed of a vehicle approaching over the crest of the hill and was surprised when the speed was recorded at over 300mph. The machine then stopped working and the officers were not able to reset it.

The radar had in fact locked onto a NATO Tornado fighter jet over the North Sea, which was engaged in a low flying exercise over the Borders district. Back at Police Headquarters the Chief Constable fired off a stiff complaint to the RAF Liaison Office.

Back came the reply in true laconic RAF style. "Thank you for your message, which allows us to complete the file on this incident. You may be interested to know that the tactical computer in the Tornado had automatically locked onto your hostile radar equipment and sent a jamming signal back to it. Furthermore the Sidewinder air to ground missile aboard the fully armed aircraft had also locked onto the target. Fortunately the Dutch pilot flying the Tornado responded to the missile status alert intelligently and was able to override the automatic protection system before the missile was launched."

[Thanks to Graham Jamieson for supplying this article.]

## *We Welcome New Associates*

<b>John Baginski</b>	[Observer: Pat Hemmens]
<b>Katharine Barker</b>	[Observer: Robin Harris]
<b>Alison James</b>	[Observer: Frank Gould ]
<b>Daniel Laws</b>	[Observer: Val Czerny]
<b>David Ransom</b>	[Observer: Robin Harris]
<b>Jonathan Rendell</b>	[Observer: Terry O'Sullivan]
<b>Jenna Tong</b>	[Observer: Frank Gould]

## **We Also Congratulate**

### *IAM Test Pass*

<b>Roderick Flower</b>	observed by Pat Hemmens
<b>Jayne McBride</b>	observed by Thomas Flynn
<b>Adam Nash</b>	observed by Robin Harris

## **RECENT AWARD CEREMONY**



Richard Dzien received his test certificate from Chairman, Dave Gosling, at the September meeting.

## CHIEF OBSERVER'S NOTEPAD

Over the past few months many of you have been asking if it is possible to have a little extra training.

Whether you have got 'a little rusty' or you feel that you may have forgotten things you were taught so many years ago, we could all do with a little top up now and then.

We all know that with the passing of time little habits start to creep into our driving. The process is so gradual that we don't notice it happening.

So with this in mind over the past few weeks Alistair, Ray and myself have been working on an idea to offer extra training to any fully paid up member of BADAM.

Dave Gosling introduced the idea at October's meeting.

We have called this 'MAT' (Modular Additional Training) and it can be done on a one to one basis or if we get enough interest in a particular topic it can be done as a group

session. Modules can contain a single subject or a mixture – it is what you want.

If you feel you need a little help, contact Ray, Alistair or myself. We will also be leaving a clipboard out at the back of the hall during group meetings.

### Being an Observer:

There is a growing interest in advanced driving and with the number of people from the general public coming to us for training I am in need of more Observers. If you feel you would like to offer something back to the group by becoming an Observer please contact me; my contact details are inside the front cover of this newsletter. Being an Observer is an excellent way of keeping up your own driving standards.

Clive Merchant.

Chief Observer.

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## ON THE ROAD—THE MOTORWAY—by Susan Date

"I love motorway driving," Rita was animated. "All this space. Out of my way, Idiot, the outside lane is for nifty drivers and I want to see how fast I can go. Get over! He won't budge and I am driving as close as I dare, he should realise I want to pass. I'll flash my lights – MOVE - no good. I know, I'll slow down, then get up to him so fast that he thinks I am going to hit him. Isn't it lucky I have such

control of my vehicle! Good that worked! Away we go."

She was on the way to visit a relative sharing the driving with a friend, Paul.

"This is a mistake!" Paul thought as his left foot went through the floor boards yet again. "Perhaps I should offer to take over? ... Oh dear! Whoops!" Somewhere from behind came a screech of brakes.

He hadn't travelled with Rita before and was surprised at her style, she seemed such a quiet, attentive person in everyday life, totally unassuming and usually intelligent.

"We are in a fifty miles an hour limit area." He commented looking for the roadworks.

"Oh yes, one should follow these things, I suppose. I'd better obey – though there is no one working so it won't do any harm if I go a wee bit faster."

"Fifty miles an hour is the maximum legal speed."

"Right!" She moved into the middle lane, narrower because of the roadworks. Cars passed her on the right.

"Well if I have to keep to the speed limit I don't see why others shouldn't!" She moved back into the outside lane and drove at forty eight miles per hour. "You have to make allowances in case the speedo is wrong. You see I am setting a good example now. No, no that's not fair – Oh did you see that? He overtook me on the wrong side. I'll teach him." She raced ahead, Paul reminded her of the speed restriction and she slowed again. He noticed that she assumed all the other drivers

were male, regardless of their flowing hair or obvious make-up.

Now they were tucked in behind a huge lorry though too close to be seen in its mirrors, Paul had relaxed slightly when there was a blast of the opening of Beethoven's Fifth. Rita's body heaved from side to side, only one hand on the bottom of the steering wheel while she tried to locate her mobile.

"Hello Henry, how's things? (This is silly - I can't see) What, no, that was not to you, I'm on the motorway and the lorry in front is blocking my view. I'll overtake. (Oh silly man) No, not you, Oh the man behind just hooted instead of letting me in. I was taught not to use the horn on the motorway and I had indicated. Anyway I'm in now. What did you say?"

Paul's nerve broke. He suggested it was his turn to drive. She had overtaken the lorry and now swerved across it to stop on the hard shoulder. Paul didn't protest, he calmly got out, left the door open for her and climbed into the driver's seat.

They arrived safely at their destination; I cannot comment on the condition of those who had experienced her driving.

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## IAM PRESS RELEASES

**Preparation for winter**—this advice is from Richard Gladman, head of driving and riding standards, and it was published in October 2016.

**Keep the windscreen clear.** Try to get scratches, abrasions and chips fixed as colder temperatures can worsen the damage. Keep the wind-

screen washer topped up with a more concentrated screen wash mix to ensure it doesn't freeze in action and make sure you have de-icer.

**Check your tyres.** 1.6mm may be the legal limit but anything under 3mm will see a potential fall off in grip and braking performance. If long-term cold weather is forecast, and you can afford it, invest in a set of winter tyres approved by your car manufacturer. Don't follow urban driver myths of reducing the tyre pressure to get more grip – it simply doesn't work.

**Set up a pre-winter check list.** List things that need to be checked such as the car battery, bulbs, wiper blades and electrics. You don't want to be stranded in a cold car in the middle of the night waiting for the recovery team to get you up and running again.

**Dress appropriately for the weather.** It may be surprising but too many drivers dress for their journey based on a working car heater. If it breaks or you are stranded you can easily be caught in the cold.

**Start to plan for the really bad weather** with a survival kit in the boot: spare clothes, a torch, mobile phone charger, some emergency rations such as water and chocolate and a tow rope and shovel to help yourself and others.

**Last winter Mark Lewis**, then director of standards, gave specific advice on driving in ice, fog, rain and wind.

**Ice:** Make sure you have cleared your windows and side mirrors before starting your journey and use the

heater settings to remove mist and condensation. Avoid using hot water to pour over your windscreen as it's more than likely that it will freeze up again. Never apply heat to a door lock as most modern locks now have plastic components.

If you're driving a manual vehicle, avoid using high revs and set off gently in second gear. This will improve control and reduce the risk of wheel spin. If you're driving an automatic vehicle, select the 'winter' mode (if there is one) which will automatically lock out first gear and reduce the risk of wheel spin – if unsure, refer to your handbook for more advice.

If your car loses grip you should take your foot off the accelerator and point the front wheels in the direction you want them to go. All steering and braking inputs must be as gentle as possible in icy conditions. Front-wheel-drive vehicles are generally better in icy conditions, but if your car is a rear-wheel-drive always take it extra slow and steady when changing direction.

Increase the distance between you and the vehicle in front, especially in slippery conditions. The same applies to when you're approaching a junction or a sharp bend – drive at a steady speed that allows you to stop well within the available distance.

Even when frost thaws, ice will stay around areas that are often shaded or near bridges that are exposed to wind-chill. Consider how you drive through these micro-climates and be

prepared to slow down if you need to. If road conditions are too slippery, simply avoid starting your journey.

**Fog:** Give your car windows a good clean, including the section beneath the windscreen wipers. Dust, tar, tree sap and grime build up fast, particularly at this time of year.

Keep your windscreen washer topped up with screen wash to rinse off any debris while you are driving – dirty windows tend to mist up quickly, making it more difficult to see.

Remember to switch on your dipped headlights and don't rely on them switching on automatically. If visibility is less than 100 metres, switch on your fog lights, but turn them off once visibility improves.

Always drive so you can stop on your own side of the road and within the distance you can see to be clear. Patches of fog will not always be of the same density and may get thicker again – be prepared to slow down.

At junctions stop and listen to get as much extra information as possible about oncoming vehicles, but remember that thick fog can deaden sound and make judging speed even more difficult.

A combination of fog and darkness can make it extremely difficult to see. Keep an eye out for vulnerable road users including pedestrians and cyclists, particularly on side roads and other areas of poor visibility.

If you experience a breakdown when visibility is poor and you're on the hard-shoulder or a side road, make

sure you and your car are always as obvious as possible to other road users. Keep the dipped headlights switched on and wear a high-visibility jacket to help other vehicles spot you while you wait for help.

**Rain:** Before setting off, check for any weather alerts, traffic updates or planned road closures that may affect your journey. Only travel in extreme adverse weather conditions if it is really necessary.

Check that lights and windscreen wiper blades are clean and working properly. Also check the tyre pressure and tread depth to ensure the best possible grip on wet surfaces.

Plan your route in advance and try to avoid any roads that are prone to flooding, even if it extends your journey.

Heavy rain often leads to damaged road surfaces and puddles can hide deep potholes – look for clues such as loose chunks of tarmac.

In heavy rain, don't forget to switch on your dipped headlights so other motorists can see you easily. Reduce your speed when travelling in the rain to decrease your stopping distance. This will also help you pass through large puddles and potholes smoothly, without spraying other road users or risking aquaplaning.

Torrential rain may interfere with the electrics of a vehicle causing a breakdown. Prepare for the worst by keeping your mobile phone charged and with the number of your breakdown service provider already saved

on it. While you wait for help keep your bonnet closed as soaking the engine will only make it worse.

**Wind:** Plan your journey beforehand and check for any travel disruptions that may affect you. If you can, avoid driving through country roads which are more likely to be exposed to fallen branches and debris.

Gusts of wind can unsettle vehicles – grip your steering wheel firmly with both hands. This is particularly important when planning an overtake.

Remember to give vulnerable road users including, cyclists, motorcyclists and pedestrians more room than usual. They are more likely to be blown around by side winds – always keep a safe distance.

As you approach a bend ensure you are able to stop on your own side of the road in the distance you can see to be clear – you never know what's around the corner. If large debris is obstructing the road ahead, be prepared to make a U-turn and use another route.

Keep an eye out for gaps between

trees, buildings or bridges over a river or railway – these are some of the places you are more likely to be exposed to side winds. Ensure that you maintain enough room either side of your vehicle so you can account for it being blown sideways.

Driving in windy conditions can be quite challenging, so it's important that you concentrate on the road at all times and take particular care when driving through narrow roads or over bridges. Also, keep an eye out for where you will suddenly go from a windy section of the road to a sheltered one – sudden loss of strong winds can be just as unbalancing, so be prepared.

[These press releases from IAM RoadSmart appear every week and can be found on the website at: <https://www.iamroadsmart.com/media-and-policy>

Go to Tips and blogs, and then to Tips and you will find all sorts of advice on different aspects of driving and riding. It is well worth taking a look.]

**Data Protection Act, 1984.** We wish to remind members that the Group holds, on computer files, details of members' names, addresses and IAM membership status. The above Act enables any person whose name is recorded in such a way to request, in writing, its removal from that file. However, any such deletion would seriously affect the smooth organisation of the Group. Note, we do not share this data with any other organisation. Please see the back page for information about the way in which we use photographs taken at group meetings in *Advance* and at publicity events. If you do not wish your photograph to be used, please follow the advice given there.

# Forthcoming BADAM Events – 2016-2017

## **NOTE NEW VENUE FOR OUR MEETINGS**

*[All indoor evening events will take place at St. John's Church Hall, St. John's Road, Bathwick, Bath, BA2 6PT, commencing at 19.30, doors open at 19.00.]*

**Updates on all future events will be posted on the BADAM website.**

**Tuesday, 8th November.** The Associates' Session will follow a talk by Eddie Ruskin on 'Stroke and Driving'.

**Tuesday, 13th December.** Christmas evening – buffet and quiz. Please see page 3 of this issue for more details including about how you can help by contributing to the provision of refreshments. As always, this should be a fun-packed event and all will be very welcome.

*Please note there will be no separate Associates' Session on this occasion.*

**Tuesday, 10th January.** The Associates' Session will follow a viewing of part of one of Chris Gilbert's Ultimate Driving Craft DVDs on Commentary driving. Some of this was filmed in our local area.

**Tuesday, 14th February.** The Associates' Session will follow a talk by Examiner Andy Poulton on a topic related to Advanced Driving.

**Tuesday, 14th March.** Group Annual General Meeting. Full details will be in the February 2017 edition of *Advance*, issue 166, and on the website.

*Please note there will be no separate Associates' Session on this occasion.*

**Tuesday, 11th April.** The Associates' Session will follow another visit from Lewes Hambrey, optometrist, of the Young Clinic in Shepton Mallet. Lewes will again be considering some case studies of vision problems affecting driving.

**Tuesday, 9th May.** The Associates' Session will follow a talk by Sarah Couchman of The Life Project, Bath, which helps children and adults with learning difficulties. Sarah will be appealing for volunteer drivers to assist the Project.

**Tuesday, 13th June.** The Associates' Session will follow a presentation on a motoring-related topic.

***It is a requirement of their training programme that, whenever an 'Associates' Session' is scheduled (see above), all our Associates, together with their Observers, should attend each of these essential and informative sessions.***

### **PLEASE NOTE**

The views expressed in this Newsletter are those of the authors and are not necessarily shared by the Committee of the Bath & District Group of Advanced Motorists, nor by the Institute of Advanced Motorists.

Due acknowledgement is made whenever material is taken from other sources.

BADAM keeps names and addresses of members on computer to assist in Group administration. This information will not be passed outside the IAM.

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