



Group Newsletter

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**March
2026**

Chairman's Chat

This will be my last Chairman's Chat as my two-year stint as Chairman will end at the AGM on 26th March. So what has happened in the group during my two years as Chairman?

The Cirencester group decided to merge with us, and despite the administration required by IAM RoadSmart, the merger happened in June 2024. Observers from that group joined our team of Observers and 2 members joined the GlosIAM committee.

The full refund scheme for drivers under the age of 26 who complete the Advanced Driving Course and take the test was extended to also include drivers over 60+. The scheme for 60+ drivers has been particularly successful with ten so far taking up the offer; some of whom have heard of the offer via the Older Drivers Forum. Under 26s are sponsored by Gloucestershire Fire & Rescue Service and the 60+ by GlosIAM.

A scheme was also introduced, similar to the above, for partners of existing group members. Disappointingly there has been only a very small take up. However, I can see the problem as I can't even convince my own wife to become an Associate!

The committee also decided to subsidise members who wished to further enhance their driving skills by becoming Masters. The group refunds £200 of the £325 cost. Again, a very limited take-up.

We are in the process of forging closer links to the RoSPA car/motorcycle group. The first examples being our attendance at the RoSPA meeting on advanced driving training available in Gloucestershire. This was followed by RoSPA members attending our January meeting when a talk was given by Byron Chandler, the Chief Instructor with Gloucestershire Constabulary.

GlosIAM attended a number of shows during 'my' two years. Actual real interest in Advanced Driving at these shows is usually low. However, our attendance is useful as it gives general exposure and people taking up the Advanced Driving Course or Taster Drives do sometimes refer to having seen us at a show. The Speech House show was cancelled due to heavy rain and the condition of the field. I wish the Stow-In-The-Wold show had also been cancelled as during the 6 hours we were there it was only not raining for a total of one hour and attendance was very low. The longest conversation at this show was with four young drivers; all had points on their licences and one was currently banned. However, all thought that there was absolutely nothing wrong with their driving and further training was of no interest, even when it was free!



Chairman's chat - continued

You may recall that in my first Chairman's Chat in April 2024 I highlighted the number of drivers I see that are sitting far too low in their car and can only just see over the steering wheel. I mentioned one driver seen with a hand in the middle of the top of the steering wheel and having to lean towards the centre of the car to see around her hand. I recently saw a car being driven in an even more dangerous manner – the driver was leaning her head against the side window to be able to see around the steering wheel that was set very high!

I provided a link to a document giving guidance on setting a comfortable and safe driving position & I repeat that here - [Physiomed Sitting Guide - Driving Digital.pdf](#)

In that Chairman's Chat I also outlined two things I hoped to achieve as Chairman:

- 1 To increase the number of young drivers recruited to obtain a pass of the IAM RoadSmart Advanced Driving Test.

The scheme has continued to be a success although recruiting so far for the 2025/2026 financial year is currently down on previous years. Group members can help by letting any young drivers they know be aware of the scheme – sons, daughters, grandchildren, friend's children and grandchildren, etc. Details and application form are on the group's website.

- 2 To encourage group members to maintain, or even improve, their driving skills.

I have obtained limited success here. A few members have taken advantage of a free Check Drive with a group Observer to gain an overview of their current driving standard and to obtain tips on how to maintain or even improve their driving skills. I would encourage all members to take advantage of the availability of the free Check Drive – I do.

The recent members survey showed that many members would be interested in meetings including talks on advanced driving skills. The committee will be arranging such talks later in the year. The results of the summary are summarised elsewhere in this newsletter.

You will have received notification of the group's 2026 AGM on 26th March.

Due to the then cold weather, and hence the likelihood of a low turnout, the quiz evening scheduled for 20th November was cancelled. The Quiz, in a shortened form, will now be immediately after the buffet that will follow the AGM.

It would be helpful for planning the evening if you could email me if you intend to attend the buffet. A simple, "Attending buffet" will suffice.

Finally I must give thanks to all those who have served on the committee during the past two years regarding their support for me and their contribution to the running of the group. Without the willingness of a few members to serve on the committee GlosIAM cannot exist. If you feel you can contribute to the committee in any way please put your name forward. It need not be a long term commitment and the committee meets four times a year. New committee members with new ideas are always welcome.

Phil Tebble
Chairman



Committee 2026

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Membership News



Welcome to our new members

Guy Routh
Tim Green
Anthony McGarel-Groves
Andrew McKerlie
Steven Hawkins
Richard Dyson

Neil Martin
Trevor Lane
Barbara Connell
Marjorie Rogers
Oliver Christie
Martin Gill
Henry Holder

Group members:	195
which includes	
Associates:	31
Fellows:	7
National Observers:	21
Trainee Observers:	3

A very warm welcome to all our new members who have recently joined the Gloucestershire branch of the Institute of Advanced Motorists (IAM). We're thrilled to have you on board!

You're now part of a passionate community dedicated to improving road safety, enhancing driving skills, and enjoying the many benefits of advanced motoring. Whether you're here to sharpen your technique, meet like-minded drivers, or simply enjoy the drive, you've made a great choice.

Keep an eye on our upcoming events — there's plenty ahead!

If you have any questions or just want to say hello, don't hesitate to reach out.

We're here to support you every step of the way.

Drive well. Drive safe. Enjoy the journey.

— The IAM Gloucestershire Team

Congratulations on passing the test!



An "IAM F1RST" designation from IAM RoadSmart signifies achieving the highest level of advanced driving or riding skill recognition. It's awarded to those who pass their advanced test and score a "1" in nearly every category, demonstrating exceptional skill and safe driving habits.

Member

Caroline Jackson
Stuart Masters
Dr. Simon Fox
Tom Wilmot



An IAM 'Pass' is granted to candidates who demonstrate a solid understanding of advanced driving principles and the ability to apply them. While their observations and anticipation are generally good, they may not maintain this standard consistently throughout the test. Nonetheless, they drive in a manner that is both safe and legal, and clearly exceeds the standard required to pass the relevant DVSA driving test.

Member

Mike Preston
Sophie Mutlow
Laura Barrell
Rob Wilson
John Brunsden
Ian Jackson
Tina Jackson



Congratulations to Kirsty Meredith
on achieving her Masters
qualification with Distinction

Congratulations to Jenny Vallely
& Guy Bryan on achieving their
Passes at Masters level

Driving the roads we think we know

If you have driven in Gloucestershire for any length of time, you'll know the feeling: the challenging gradients in Stroud across the 5 Valleys, the rolling bends through the Forest of Dean, the deceptive tightening radius of a favourite Cotswold lane. These are "our" roads. We know them. Or do we?

One of the most valuable lessons within IAM RoadSmart is that familiarity can quietly erode observation. The more often we travel a route, the more our brain fills in the gaps. We stop actively reading the road and start predicting it. Most of the time we get away with it. Occasionally, we don't.

Our county offers some of the finest riding and driving territory in the UK – but it comes with its own hazards. A bend you've taken a hundred times can change character overnight. A rainstorm washes gravel into the apex. A tractor leaves mud on exit. A fallen branch narrows your line. Advanced driving is about expecting the unexpected – especially on the roads we think we know best.

System: Not Just for the Test

The System (Information, Position, Speed, Gear, Acceleration) isn't something to bring out only on observed runs. On a recent Sunday drive through the Cotswolds, one member commented that consciously applying "Information" earlier than usual completely changed their experience. A wider, more deliberate scan picked up a horse rider partially hidden by dappled sunlight – something easily missed at pace.

A common misconception is that advanced driving is about speed. It isn't. It's about progress – making safe, systematic, well-planned progress appropriate to the conditions.

On Gloucestershire's roads, smoothness pays dividends:

Early braking avoids unsettling the vehicle

Correct positioning improves vision and safety margins

Decisive acceleration clears hazards efficiently

Vehicle sympathy reduces wear and tear

The result? A more relaxed ride or drive, less fatigue, and often surprisingly brisk progress without drama.

One of the great strengths of IAM RoadSmart Gloucestershire is its community. Whether you joined last month or twenty years ago, there's always more to learn – and to pass on.

Advanced driving isn't just a badge; it's a mindset. And like any skill, it sharpens with use.

A Final Thought

Next time you head out on your "usual" route, try this: imagine you've never ridden or driven it before. What can you see that you normally overlook? What clues is the road giving you? What's changed since yesterday?

Gloucestershire's roads are a privilege. Let's continue to enjoy them – skilfully, responsibly and with the quiet professionalism that defines IAM RoadSmart members.

Become an IAM Observer – Help others drive with confidence

Are you a skilled and passionate driver who wants to make a real difference on the roads? We are always looking for experienced drivers like you to become Observers – volunteers who mentor and guide others on their journey to becoming safer, more confident motorists.

As an Observer, you'll be part of a proud tradition of peer-to-peer learning, sharing your knowledge, enthusiasm, and support with Associates working towards their advanced driving qualification. It's a rewarding way to give back, stay sharp behind the wheel, and help create a culture of safety and respect on our roads.

GlosIAM Member Survey

2026 Results

The survey was conducted in order to ascertain member preferences for Group meetings and activities.

49 members responded of which 32 had previously attended a Group meeting and 16 that had not done so.

Questions

What Days of the week appeal to you for Group meetings:

10.6% Any Day, 12.8% Thursday were the highest counts.

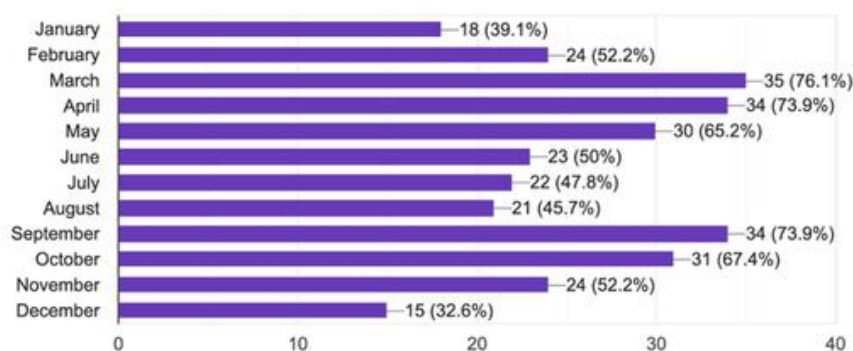
If the event was at a weekend, Morning, Afternoon, Evening?

50% Morning; 32.4% Afternoon; 35.3% Evening.

Which months of the year would you prefer to meet?

Which months of the year would you prefer to meet?

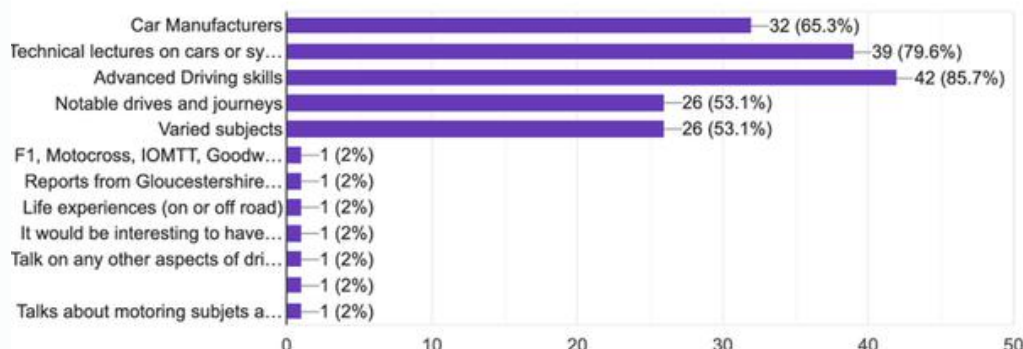
46 responses



What Evening Talk Subjects would you be interested in?

Would you be interested in attending evening talks on these subjects?

49 responses



GlosIAM Member Survey

2026 Results

Would you be interested to drive out to local venues to meet socially?

Mixed responses but many thought this a good idea for a couple of times during May - September.

Would you like the Group to arrange visits to places of Motoring interest?

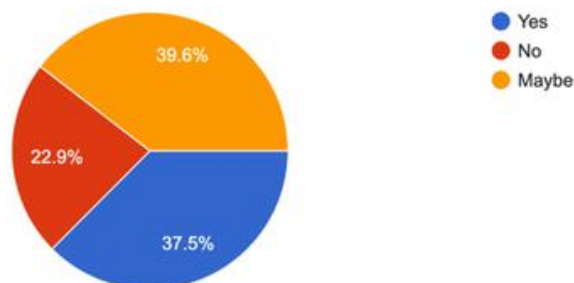
There was significant interest in skid pan events and notable car manufacturers.

Would you attend a local skills day once or twice a year to improve your driving skills? (A drive with an Observer or Masters Mentor)

Significant interest.

Would you attend Drive Events where you share a car with other Advanced drivers to discuss techniques?

Would you attend drive events where you share a car with other Advanced drivers to discuss techniques
48 responses



Do you have any other comments or request?

Suggestions were to have some online meetings, particularly in the winter

To advertise events more widely on Facebook

To meet with Observers to discuss coaching techniques

To have a pre-booking system for Taster drives for visitors.

ADAS systems and Autonomous vehicles discussions

Make a greater effort to greet our members and to get to know them.

A big thank you to everyone that responded. It has given the committee excellent material to work on.

Rod Harrison. Data and Media Manager.



Richard Bradley

My journey with IAM

Roadsmart Pt.2

My Masters Driving Course

Whilst I was on a high from passing my Advanced Driving Course with a F1rst, I decided to challenge myself even further by taking a Masters course almost straight away whilst what I learnt from Advanced course was still fresh in my mind.

I was very pleased to be allocated Carolyn as my Mentor for this course. I was warned at the beginning that this course would not be easy and quickly found out that this was true.

One of the things that I found was that I had to drive a lot faster where appropriate but within the speed limit. We soon discovered that I needed to drive my automatic Mustang in "Sports mode" on national speed limit roads and this transforms the car into what you would expect from a Mustang. But I was to drop it back into the normal "Drive mode in towns and villages.

I was also encouraged to perform an overtake on single carriageway roads, but as you can imagine the Mustang soon exceeds the speed limit!

Although I did not find the course to be easy, I put in a lot of practice between lessons and made a positive improvement with each one. By the time that I completed the course of 6 lessons, I was as test ready as I was going to be. Carolyn was an excellent mentor and went out of her way to ensure that I could drive at Masters standard and not just to be able to pass a test. I cannot thank her enough for this and I now feel a far more confident and proficient driver.

Carolyn therefore put me in for my Masters test, which was to be in North Somerset. This was deliberately chosen to be an area not familiar to me. I was very soon contacted by the examiner, Mr. Robbie Dowling and we arranged to meet at Sanders Garden centre on the A38 near Burnham on Sea on the 4th November.

On the morning of the test Robbie soon put me at ease and we proceeded with the test by driving down minor and often narrow roads towards Glastonbury. From there, we went in the direction of Street and eventually back to Sanders Garden centre via a circular route. The test was about 90 minutes long and I managed to keep up a commentary throughout.

After parking at the garden centre, Robbie immediately informed me that I had achieved a very respectable pass.

Conclusions

I must admit that I have really enjoyed my experience so far with IAM and I only wish that I could have got involved with them when I was younger. But I am still in relatively good health and have an active mind, so I think that I have a lot to offer IAM. The main thing is that I am enthusiastic and am willing to learn.

I have found everyone that I have met in IAM to be friendly, supportive and professional.

I am an active member of a number of classic car clubs and also a very large Ford Mustang group with an active Facebook presence. So far, I have been unsuccessful in persuading members of these groups to take an Advanced Driving Course with IAM RoadSmart although they have been interested in what I have achieved.

I will have to keep working on them, but I think that most of the members consider themselves to be very good drivers in the first place. All that I know is that most Mustang drivers are faster drivers than I am!



Overcoming test nerves



Feeling nervous before your IAM RoadSmart advanced driving test is completely normal. In fact, most candidates feel it – even experienced drivers. The key is turning nerves into focus rather than letting them become panic. Here's a practical approach to managing test nerves effectively.

1. Reframe the Test

Remember what the IAM RoadSmart advanced test actually is:

- It's not designed to trick you.
- It's not about perfection.
- It's about demonstrating safe, systematic, and progressive driving.

Examiners want you to pass. They are assessing whether you drive to advanced standards consistently – not whether you're flawless.

Instead of thinking:

"I must not mess up."

Think:

"I'm going to show how I normally drive."

2. Trust the System (IPSGA)

If you've trained properly, you already know the system of car control:

Information → Position → Speed → Gear → Acceleration

When nerves spike, simplify your focus:

- Talk yourself quietly through IPSGA in your head.
- Concentrate on the process, not the result.

Process thinking reduces anxiety because it gives your brain a task.

3. Use Controlled Breathing (Seriously, It Works)

Before you meet the examiner:

- Inhale for 4 seconds
- Hold for 4 seconds
- Exhale slowly for 6–8 seconds
- Repeat 4–5 times

Longer exhales calm your nervous system and reduce adrenaline.

You can even do one slow breath at a junction if you feel tension building.

4. Normalise the Examiner

Many IAM examiners are former police advanced drivers or highly experienced observers – but they're also just people who care about road safety.

Have a short friendly chat before setting off. It:

- Humanises the situation
- Breaks the "authority" tension
- Makes the drive feel more like an observed session

5. Don't Chase Perfection

Even advanced drivers:

- Occasionally hesitate
- Misjudge a gap slightly
- Miss a gear smoothly but imperfectly

A small mistake rarely fails a candidate.

What causes problems is:

- Losing planning
- Rushing after a mistake
- Letting one error snowball

If something isn't perfect:

Mentally park it. Reset. Move on.

Examiners assess the whole drive.

6. Day of the Test

- Arrive early.
- Avoid caffeine overload.
- Get a short walk beforehand to burn off adrenaline.
- Remind yourself: you already drive to this standard.
-

7. A Powerful Mental Shift

Instead of seeing it as:

"A test I might fail"

Try:

"An advanced drive with a knowledgeable passenger."

That single mental reframe often reduces nerves dramatically.



Meet Sue, our Membership Secretary

The Role of the Membership Secretary

The Membership Secretary plays a vital role in keeping our group connected, organised, and welcoming to both new and existing members.

Often the first point of contact for the public, the Membership Secretary responds to enquiries from prospective members received by email, phone, or through our website, ensuring each enquiry is answered or passed to the most appropriate committee member.

They also act as an important link between our group and IAM RoadSmart HQ, forwarding relevant information to the right people within the committee. For example:

- Enquiries about New Associates, Free Taster Sessions, and Refresher Sessions are passed to the Associate Co-ordinator.
- General enquiries are directed to the Chairman.

Another key responsibility is maintaining accurate and up-to-date membership records. This includes:

- Monitoring the membership status of our local members with IAM RoadSmart and sending friendly reminders if their membership has expired.
- Keeping a current list of all paid-up members of the Glos IAM Group by checking the group bank statements each month for subscription payments and issuing reminders where necessary.

The Membership Secretary also helps coordinate member activities by managing bookings for Better Driving Seminars, sending reminder emails a week before the event with details of the venue and timings, and keeping records of attendees at group events.

In short, the Membership Secretary helps ensure that communication runs smoothly, members stay informed, and everyone feels welcome and involved in the Glos IAM Group.





Future Events



AGM, Buffet & Quiz

26th March 2026

19:30

Churchdown Community Centre rear meeting room
Parton Road, Churchdown, Gloucestershire, GL3 2JH

Better driving seminar

& drives

Saturday 11th July 2026

9:30 - 14:00

Churchdown community centre
rear meeting room

Please visit our website for more information

www.glosiam.org.uk/our-courses/introduction-to-advanced-driving-seminar/



***** Unfortunately, it has become necessary to cancel the 'Better Driving' seminar that was scheduled for Saturday 28th March. We apologise for any inconvenience this may cause. The next seminar will be on Saturday 11th July.*****



More exciting events are on the way!

We'll be announcing them soon via email and on our Facebook page, so keep an eye out and don't miss out.

Facebook.com/GlosIAM



When did you last read yours?

Recommended books, apps & online



E-learning - Roadcraft

If reading is challenging, like with dyslexia, or if you prefer to learn by listening, a voiceover feature is available.

Developed in collaboration with the police, the emergency services, and driving instructors, the Roadcraft e-learning course is essential learning for emergency responders preparing for the demands of operational driving and anyone looking to become a better, safer driver.

Featuring a digital version of the best-selling Roadcraft book, the course is supplemented with end-of-chapter assessments, mock tests, and exclusive video content.

<https://www.safedrivingforlife.info/shop/roadcraft-elearning>

Test your knowledge

Highway code and Roadcraft - let us know how you get on! Answers at the end of the newsletter

1. When may you stop and wait in a box junction?

- a. When oncoming traffic prevents you from turning right.
- b. When you're in a queue of traffic turning left.
- c. When you're in a queue of traffic going ahead.
- d. When you're on a roundabout.

2. In the 'hierarchy of road users', who has the least responsibility for the safety of others?

- a. Car drivers.
- b. Horse riders.
- c. Pedestrians.
- d. Cyclists.

3. You're following 2 cyclists as they approach a roundabout in the left-hand lane. Where would you expect the cyclists to go?

- a. Left
- b. Right
- c. Any direction
- d. Straight ahead

4. What colour are the reflective studs between a motorway and a slip road?

- a. Amber
- b. White
- c. Green
- d. Red

5. How should you use anti-lock brakes when you need to stop in an emergency?

- a. Keep pumping the footbrake to prevent skidding
- b. Brake normally but grip the steering wheel tightly
- c. Brake promptly and firmly until you've stopped
- d. Apply the parking brake to reduce the stopping distance

6 Following a collision, a person has been injured. What would be a warning sign for shock?

- a. Flushed complexion
- b. Warm, dry skin
- c. Slow pulse
- d. Rapid, shallow breathing

7. What should you do when you're approaching traffic lights that have red and amber showing together?

- a. Pass the lights if the road is clear
- b. Take care because there is a fault with the lights
- c. Wait for the green light
- d. Stop because the lights are about to turn red

8. You're driving along a quiet motorway. Which advanced driver assistance system (ADAS) is most likely to help you?

- a. Traffic jam assist
- b. Automotive night vision
- c. Intelligent speed assist
- d. Lane departure warning

9. What should you do when you park at night on a road that has a 40 mph speed limit?

- a. Park facing the traffic
- b. Leave parking lights switched on
- c. Park near a street light



That's all for now folks

Quiz answers

Spring is a season of fresh starts, and it's a great time to reconnect with fellow members and enjoy driving in the beautiful Gloucestershire countryside. Thank you for your continued support of the Gloucestershire IAM RoadSmart Group—we look forward to sharing many enjoyable and safe miles together in the months ahead.

1. a
2. c
3. c
4. c
5. c
6. d
7. c
8. d
9. b

