

September & October 2018



For your diary Sunday Observed Drives

Aldridge Community Centre, on the
first Sunday of each month (unless otherwise stated)
at Middlemore Lane, Aldridge. WS9 8AN

Starting at 9.30am on
Sunday 2nd September
Sunday 7th October
Sunday 4th November

Contact information:

www.iamroadsmart.com/groups/walsallam
www.iamroadsmart.com/groups/walsallam/about-us/our-community
Details also on the Walsall Group web site
<https://www.iamroadsmart.com/groups/walsallam>

Did you know under www.iamroadsmart.com/groups/walsallam/about-us/our-community back copies of the newsletter are available and details of events will be published once confirmed.

2018 Committee meetings

These will be on the **second** Tuesday of the month. Venue: Aldridge Community Centre

The remainder of your 2018 diary

Visit to Space Centre, Leicester, Thursday 13th September.

Organiser: Chris Rice. Cost: £15 each. The bus carries 15 people. Set off @ 9am from Aldridge, arrival at Leicester at 10.30am. Tour takes 2½/3hours plus tour of museum. Return at Aldridge should be around tea time. People interested to contact Chris Rice.

October 18th: Talk by Robbie Downing, re. Masters.

Venue: Calderfields Golf & Country Club. Information email to be circulated

Quiz Night / Fish & Chip Supper: Tuesday 6th November

Do you have lots of useful bits and pieces of knowledge tucked away in your brain-box ??? We need you at our next Quiz Night. This is a really great fun evening. £5 per person (includes fish & chip supper) Venue: Aldridge CA

Martin Goad's Chairman's Chat



Since the Annual General Meeting in May where I reported our busiest year that I could remember, we have settled into a busy, but less frenetic time. We were training about a dozen Blood Bikers who have mostly qualified now, with a high percentage of F1rst passes. Well done to them and to their observers. All our observers have qualified to IMI standards and are busy training associates on a regular basis.

We are always looking to add to the observer team and we have a well versed group of National Observers to train them. If you have thought about stepping up to become an observer then do not hesitate to contact Sarah Harrison, our Chief Observer, or me for a chat about what is involved.

Summer is always a busy time for promotion of the group and our work. This year in June and July we have had a pitch at Pelsall Carnival, Aldridge Fayre and at the Aldridge Community Centre 50th Anniversary open day. A big thank you to those members who have turned out to talk to members of the general public to try and get them to come along on Sunday to see us in action. Several of us gave up three of our Summer Saturdays.

It is difficult to analyse how effective these events are. We do sometimes get people coming to the next Sunday run, but more usually we get our name and logo out there and jog memories to keep drip feeding a message that might pay off some time in the future. Most people seem to come to us by recommendation from a friend or family member, so if you keep telling people about the group and IAM Roadsmart that would be great.

If you have not come along on a Sunday run for a while then please do visit. You can find out what is going on with the group, have a cup of coffee and a chat, sit in on a theory course session, go out for a run with an observer to refresh your skills or find out about observing, committee work or further qualifications. You might see a happy associate being presented with their Advanced Driving pass certificate. There is a lot more happening on a Sunday than just observers taking associates out for runs.

We have a number of events going on in the Autumn at which I would love to see you all. Have a safe time out there as the nights draw in.

Since the last newsletter

WELL DONE & CONGRATULATIONS ON PASSING YOUR TEST TO *Helen Lane*

on 8 July 2018 Observer: Martin Goad Senior: Simon Arnold

Car Treasure Hunt



On Saturday 18th August the Group held an afternoon Treasure Hunt. We started for the car park outside Aldridge Community Centre where we were given instruction sheets numbered with clues and instructions. We had to start at the beginning which happened to be Aldridge Youth theatre and progresses down Little Aston Lane collecting answers to clues including the Hawthorns Retirement Home, Fairlawns Hotel and the classic car sales at the end of the road. We needed good observation and the ability to count trees as we passed.

Clues took us through Little Aston and out along Watford Gap Road. The experience of watching Muffin the Mule as a child helped along Weeford Road. We then headed for Tamworth where we joined the Old A5. Many clues and observations on route brought us to Manor Farm, a pick you own strawberry farm, and the end of the trail. Along the way we were instructed to collect several items. We handed our sheets in for marking to Fred and his wife Di. The venue has an excellent café and we enjoyed tea, coffee and cake. The staff were really helpful and pleasant. Some members went to pick strawberries. Team Josie and Chris won and Gail and I came last as we didn't read the bit about collecting things but we got there first.

We had a great time and must thank Sarah and Fred for planning the event. We did wonder why they disappeared together during Sunday Runs!!!!

Mike Bentley

Associate Co-ordinator Update

From Mike Bentley

Now the holiday season is behind us I expect our Sunday meetings to be busy again as there is always bit of a drop in attendance. At the moment we have sixteen associates registered with us and we hope as many as possible will be able to attend the next Sunday run on September 2nd. At the monthly Sunday morning meetings associates have the chance to chat to other Associates, our observers and support members. Also to take part in our two theory courses or go out for a drive with a different Observer.

Associates please keep me informed about your progress or any problems you may be experiencing. It is great when associates communicate and attend Sunday Drives as their progress is usually greater and their enjoyment of membership of our Group is enhanced.

Lastly passing your test can be the start of your association with our Group. Being an Observer, a helper or a member of committee would be very much welcomed by the Group. Thanks for the support from everyone in the Group.

Did you know?

It would take less than a month to get to the moon by car

That's right — drive straight up at an average of 60mph, and you could get to the moon in under a month. (probably quicker than driving on the M6 at rush hour!)

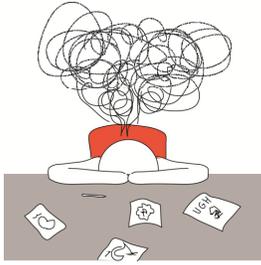
The highest total mileage clocked by a single car is 2,850,000 million miles.

That's equivalent to driving around the Earth 100 times.

The world's first speeding ticket was issued in 1902

How fast was the offending motorist travelling? A scandalous 45mph.

Advice from the IAM



Top 10 driving tips for handling stress

Stress affects us all at one time or another - whether it's down to work, home life or a tough situation you're facing. Stress can affect how we feel physically and emotionally as well as impair our judgement and our reactions, which isn't good news when we need to concentrate on something significant, like driving.

It's important to recognise how you feel and try to relax before getting in the car. So to help you stay calm behind the wheel, 'Ben' an independent charity which provides support for life to the people of the automotive industry, provided us with some tips to share with you on what to do if you feel stressed before driving.

Warning signs of stress

First of all, we need to recognise the warning signs of stress. You might feel some or all of these:



- Becoming easily irritated with colleagues, friends or family
- Feeling distracted, forgetful or moody
- Having racing thoughts
- Not being able to 'switch off'
- Becoming quiet and withdrawn
- Under or overeating
- Smoking more, drinking more alcohol or taking drugs
- Tense muscles
- Headaches
- Feeling sick
- Not sleeping well / insomnia
- Getting ill more often

Here are a few tips to do - before you get in the car stressed:

- Go for a short walk around the block to get some fresh air and unwind from the stresses of the day
- Wait until you feel calm, collected and well enough to head out on your journey. Driving itself can be stressful, especially in rush hour, so if you are already stressed this is likely to make matters worse
- Try mindfulness and deep breathing before getting behind the wheel. You don't have to be spiritual to benefit from mindfulness and meditation - anyone can meditate and it has been shown to reduce stress and anxiety. If you're new to meditation.
- If you're feeling ill from stress with headaches or sickness, make sure you feel well enough before you drive. Drink plenty of water and get some fresh air
- Write down a list of the things that are stressing you out and set yourself some time to tackle them later on - sometimes writing your worries down and making time to sort them out helps clear your mind
- Is stress causing you to struggle with addiction to alcohol, drugs or nicotine? Be aware that these could still be in your system before driving. If you're struggling with addiction or substance misuse, then it's important to seek help

Here are a few tips to do - before you get in the car stressed continued

- If you're having trouble sleeping due to stress then make sure you aren't too tired to drive. IAM RoadSmart advises if you feel sleepy whilst behind the wheel, find a safe place to pull over and stop - not on the hard shoulder of a motorway. Research suggests that almost 20% of accidents on major roads are sleep-related so don't drive if you feel sleepy.
- Tell someone you trust how you feel. Sometimes opening up about our problems to loved ones can make all the difference and they can even help you find solutions. As they say, a problem shared is a problem halved

Don't say we didn't tell you !!!

Highways England repairs project on the (M5) Oldbury Viaduct enters next phase

Repair teams are gearing up for the next phase of this mammoth scheme next month. The carriageway on the M5 southbound following extensive repair work. Highways England is calling on motorists travelling along the M5 in the Midlands next week to leave extra time for their journeys as the next phase of work on Britain's biggest concrete repair project gets underway.

Work on one carriageway of the Oldbury Viaduct, between junctions 1 and 2, is nearing completion, and from Monday (3 September) the entire operation to repair the road will transfer from the southbound to the northbound carriageway. The switching process will last around a week and to minimise disruption will take place gradually overnight to help ensure traffic can keep flowing during the day. Two lanes will remain open in each direction during the switch although motorists should leave extra time for their journeys in order to familiarise themselves with the new road layout.

They are fast approaching completion of work on the southbound carriageway and the switch to the northbound carriageway will mean a new road layout. They urge motorists to familiarise themselves with the layout and to leave extra time for their journeys as people get used to it. They appreciate it's not been straightforward getting to this stage. They were only able to fully assess the condition of the southbound carriageway once the work had started and found around 6,000 individual repairs were needed, which is 4,500 more than anticipated. To add to the challenges, they had one of the harshest winters, followed by warmest summers in years. As a result, work on this section has taken longer than expected, but they are committing every resource available to get this work done as safely and quickly as possible. They understand the level of disruption this project involves, and would like to thank motorists, businesses and residents for their patience.

At more than £100 million, M5 Oldbury is believed to be the largest concrete repair project, by value, ever carried out in Britain. At the same time, it is also thought to be the largest scaffolding project in Europe, with over 400 hundred miles of scaffolding erected, enough scaffold boards to cover seven football pitches and enough scaffold staircases to reach the top of Ben Nevis and Snowdon. Much of the work takes place underneath the viaduct and so the workforce, averaging around 500 people, cannot always be seen by the travelling public.

To keep the motorway open during the work, a contraflow system is currently in place with traffic using the carriageway with two lanes operating in each direction, along with a 30mph speed limit. Slip roads at junctions 1 and 2 will remain open once the switch takes place to ease effects on the local network. When the main concrete repairs are completed, the M5 will return to three narrow lanes in each direction so that work, including central reservation upgrades, can take place. For more information about the work at Oldbury viaduct visit

<https://www.highwaysengland.co.uk/oldburyviaduct>.



DVLA asks drivers to look again in new EYE 735T campaign

DVLA launched a national eyesight awareness campaign in July 2018. Drivers will be encouraged to take the 'number plate test' - a quick and easy way to check they meet the minimum eyesight requirements for driving. By law, all drivers must meet the minimum eyesight standards at all times when driving - this includes being able to read a number plate from 20 metres.

The campaign is reminding the public that they can easily check their eyesight by taking the 20 metres test and is pointing out some ways to quickly identify 20 metres at the roadside. It is advising that 5 car lengths or 8 parking bays can be an easy way to measure the distance. The campaign is encouraging anyone with concerns about their eyesight to visit their optician or optometrist for an eye test. The number plate test is a simple and effective way for people to check their eyesight meets the required standards for driving. The easiest and quickest way to do this is to work out what 20 metres looks like at the roadside - this is typically about the length of 5 cars parked next to each other - and then test yourself on whether you can clearly read the number plate. It's an easy check to perform any time of day at the roadside and takes just a couple of seconds.

Having good eyesight is essential for safe driving, so it's really important for drivers to have regular eye tests. Eyesight can naturally deteriorate over time so anyone concerned about their eyesight should visit their optician - don't wait for your next check-up.

and here are a few useful road signs to add to your knowledge



Otters crossing ahead. Otters are small and have minimal road sense (though, a lot more than ducks). You might see these signs next to some rivers.



Red squirrels area ahead. Red squirrels are most active at dawn and dusk, so watch for them on the road.



Slow Moving Military Vehicles

This rare road sign means 'slow moving military vehicles likely to be crossing in the road', so don't be alarmed if a Challenger 2 rolls up next to you at the lights.

Group President: Trevor Poxon MBE

Chair: : Martin Goad

Committee Member: Kath Hawker

Group Secretary: Josie Hubbard-Palmer

Committee Member - Gill Essex

Treasurer - Karl Spooner

Committee Member: Alison Kimberley

Chief Observer & Committee member:
Sarah Harrison

Co-opted Members: To be appointed

Assoc Co-ordinator: Mike Bentley
Committee Member: Chris Rice
Group Registered Charity no. 1082326

Newsletter Editor & Minutes Secretary
Sandra Wootton
email@sandrawootton.flowers@gmail.com

The opinions expressed in this Newsletter, which is published by the Walsall Group of Advanced Motorists, are those of the Editor and individual contributors and do not necessarily represent the views of the Institute of Advanced Motorists Ltd. Data Protection Act: We are obliged by law to inform members that their membership details are held on computer disc. This information is for group administration only. If any member wishes that their details are NOT to be held on computer disc, please inform the Editor forthwith.