



# November & December 2019



## 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 3<sup>rd</sup> November  
Sunday 1<sup>st</sup> December

Log on to our website where you can find back copies of the newsletter and where details of events will be published once confirmed.

[www.iamroadsmart.com/groups/walsallam/about-us/our-community](http://www.iamroadsmart.com/groups/walsallam/about-us/our-community)

### *Committee meetings:*

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

Since the last newsletter...

### **WELL DONE & CONGRATULATIONS ON PASSING YOUR TEST**

*Arthur Adams*

On 22nd September

Observer Peter Christopher Clive Allsopp Mike Bentley  
Senior Glynnis Jeavons

*Stephen Lewis*

On 24th September

Observer Martin Goad Senior Mike Bentley

**and**

### **A WARM WELCOME TO OUR NEW ASSOCIATES**

*Geoff Hackett*

*Harry Llewellyn*

*Clifford Lavender*

*James Simcock*

*John Wyer*

# Your 2019 diary

Wednesday 20<sup>th</sup> November -

## Quiz Night + Fish & Chip supper

Quizmaster - Chris Rice.

Venue: Aldridge Community Centre.

For those of you who haven't attended one of our Quiz nights - well you have missed a brain-aching treat. Chris Rice is the Quizmaster and he sets some devious questions - so come along and give it a try this time.

**To book a place and organise your fish & chips:**

Time 7.20pm. Cost: Fish Chips & Quiz @ £6.50. Quiz only @ £3.00

Refreshments: Bring your own drinks - Tea/Coffee is available

To book your place: Contact Chris Rice by phone or text 07722720319 after 5.00pm

Closing date for entries 18/11/18



**Dear Reader:** If you do have any ideas for visits, events, talks - then please just sent an email to Martin Goad, who will be pleased to hear from you. These things take time to organise so whatever suggested can be added to next years diary

## 2020: Being planned.....

**January:** Being planned - talk by Sheila Thomas of Dudley Road Safety. She is an excellent speaker, so should be a good evening.

**Early February:** Being planned - New Year meal. Suggested for Walsall College Restaurant, which has been highly recommended. Watch this space.



*2020 is the Group's 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary !*

Dear Reader - do you have any ideas how we can celebrate this achievement ? We would be really pleased to hear from you.

## Chairman's Chat from Martin Goad



I love driving, I will go out on any errand just to get in the car and go. I am sure that many of you, as advanced drivers, feel the same. Last weekend twelve of us went down for a visit to Bletchley Park in a minibus driven by Fred Wright. Thanks Fred for a safe, smooth drive along the motorways of the Midlands and complex dual carriageways of Milton Keynes. Although it does not sound very exciting and would not make the pages of RoadSmart magazine, Fred said that it was a good drive and he enjoyed it.

As I write this in mid-October on a rare bright sunny morning I am looking forward to a weekend fishing in Pembrokeshire. The fishing is a great treat, but the anticipation of the drive for four hours along A roads in Shropshire and mid Wales is really exciting. Alright, most of our everyday driving and riding in the urban West Midlands is not always so much fun, but it has always seemed to me that one of the main benefits of taking the advanced test and keeping your skills up is that driving and riding become more enjoyable.

As an observer over many years I remember the grateful thanks of lots of associates. One young man really stands out for me. Before and after his advanced training he had a 45 minute commute to and from work each day. Although some of it was through rural Staffordshire he just regarded it as an hour and a half of wasted time each day. When I saw him after he had passed his test he told me that he now saw his commute as a chance each day to use his newly gained skills and that he was enjoying it and not seeing it as wasted time. That was the best thanks that I could get.

If anyone does ask me why they should take the advanced driving training, the first thing I say is that it makes your driving more enjoyable. Most things are more fun when you get more skilled at doing them.

## **Visit to Bletchley Park** **Saturday October 12<sup>th</sup> 2019**

Chris Rice arranged for twelve of us to visit Bletchley Park, the formerly secret but now very famous centre of code breaking during the Second World War. Fred Wright, kindly, very safely and smoothly drove us in a minibus down to Milton Keynes on a rather damp morning.

Fortunately the weather was kind during our visit as the site is spread out over a number of buildings in the grounds of the original house and there is a fair bit of walking involved. There are lots of things to see in a number of the original huts built in the 1940s and in the mansion itself.

Most people will know of the work of Alan Turing, who was based here for most of the war, as there has been a recent film of his life and lots of publicity about him. However it was fascinating to learn of the work of so many other pioneers of code breaking, high level academics, chess champions and thousands of service personnel, mostly women, who worked tirelessly to crack the enemy codes.



At its height about 4000 people were working there, all in their own highly secret worlds. Many of them did not even tell their own families until years after the war finished.

There were so many highlights of the visit, but for me it was two things that stay in the memory. One was a short video showing how the German operators had to set up the enigma machine before sending or receiving a message. There seem to be so many permutations that it looks impossible to crack the codes.

(A picture of the code breaking machine - The Bombe. The fore-runner to the modern day computer!)

The other was a short film about the detection and capture of a German U boat and the retrieval of code books that allowed the German naval codes to be broken after a 9 month hiatus. It involved three sailors from a destroyer swimming to a sinking submarine and two diving into the dark, flooding interior to hand out secret documents to the third. The two seamen did not get out when the submarine sank during their search, but what they found probably shortened the war. Such courage and sacrifice. It was a truly moving visit and I can thoroughly recommend it to anyone who has not been.

**A very big thank you to Chris and Fred**

Note from Editor Sandie:

Again, a huge thank you to Chris for organising the day out. I really do think a visit to Bletchley Park is a must for all teenagers, whose knowledge of World War II seems to be getting more and more vague, especially the sacrifice of that generation.

A visit would also show them the evolution of computers and how far everything has come since World War II. These days young people, in fact nearly all people, just switch on their computers/laptops/anything with a computer, and take it all very much for granted.



A picture of one of the huts the codebreakers worked in

## Driving through autumn: tips from IAM RoadSmart

It's now officially autumn so we're going to take a look at some of the hazards you may come across. Follow these tips, to make sure you are safe whilst driving throughout autumn.



- ! Check your battery before the winter arrives. In winter we often place a strain on the battery with lights, heated screens, seats and the air conditioner to demist and keep us warm. If there are any sign of your car battery struggling now, it's likely to let you down as it gets colder.
- ! Prepare for darker mornings and evenings. You'll be doing a lot more driving in the dark when autumn hits, so ensure you're confident whilst driving in the dark
- ! That low winter sun can be an issue so keep a pair of sunglasses in the car and also make use of the sun visor too. If you are dazzled, slow down immediately
- ! Now is the time to check your antifreeze levels. The good thing about antifreeze is that it contains additives that prevent corrosion and rust, and during the summer it helps keep the engine from overheating
- ! Top up the windscreen washer with de-icing additive - the colder it gets the stronger the solution needs to be.
- ! Check your windscreen wipers. If they begin to blur the front/rear window or begin making an awful squeaking noise, it's time to replace them with new ones
- ! Have a look at your car headlights. It is dangerous for you and for the other road users if your lights do not work properly. Changing a bulb is often a complicated job these days so do it at home and not at the roadside



Leaves or pine needles on the road can turn into a mushy film which obscures potholes, road markings and increases stopping distance. Anticipate problems when you approach woods and trees and slow down until the road is clear

! Watch out for animals. October through to December is considered the highest risk of deer collisions in the UK, so take notice of any wildlife signs that you come across and take care

! There may be more distractions over the next few months with events taking place, such as Guy Fawkes night. There may be fireworks going off so ensure you're alert for any scared animals that may run into the road. Also, Halloween is approaching, so you'll have some ghouls and ghosts walking the streets so be sure to look out for them

### *Don't forget:*

As the temperature drops, your car is a nice cosy place to be when it is working properly - sound preparation will help your journey go smoothly.

Frosty mornings and falling leaves might be picturesque but they can cause all sorts of problems, particularly for two-wheeled road users. Give motorcyclists and cyclists more room and anticipate their actions.

Drivers also need to stay alert for blocked drains and localised flooding at this time of year. Your aim should always be to have a clear view of the changing seasons around you, and for other road users to be able to see you.

## *Smart Motorways*

On Tuesday 15<sup>th</sup> October our members and friends were offered the opportunity of listening to a talk on Smart Motorways by our member Jill Vincent - Wilson. It was well attended, showing that this was a subject of interest. You may remember that Jill recently gave us a talk on Emergency Life Saving Skills.



There are three types of motorways :

- *Dynamic* where the hard shoulder is temporarily opened up to traffic.
- *All Lane Running* where the full width of the road is useable with emergence refuge areas alongside.
- *Controlled* with three or more lanes, a hard shoulder and variable speed limits.

Congestion costs the country £3 billion a year so Smart Motorways have been designed to reduce this congestion by keeping traffic moving and reducing the domino effect. Speed change signs, a red number in a red circle, are shown above each active lane. These can be used to reduce traffic speed even 30 miles from any congestion.

A red X above a lane means that lane is closed and you must not enter.

On an 'All Lanes Running' Motorway there is an Emergency Refuge Area every 1.5 miles.

Jill asked us to take a look at the Highway England website. This contains lists of smart motorways, background information, rules and regulations and how to drive safely on a smart motorway.

[www.gov/highwaysengland.co.uk/smart-motorways](http://www.gov/highwaysengland.co.uk/smart-motorways)

## *Advice - what to do if you have a crash*



Having a crash can be one of the most stressful parts of driving. At this time of year with the sun low in the sky leading to tricky light conditions, and cold damp weather making the road surface treacherous, we always see accident rates increase. If you know what to do in the immediate aftermath of a crash, it can take some of the pain away. Below are important questions such as whether you must call the police and when you need to give insurance details.

### ***Use your mobile phone***

Nearly all of us carry a mobile phone, which is handy for taking pictures of any damage. Always carry a pen and paper in the car too. It's useful for taking other drivers' details and making notes of what happened while they're still fresh in your mind. Most importantly, stay safe at the roadside. Having a crash frequently puts us in a dangerous situation.

### ***Stop but stay safe***

No matter how little damage is done you must stop at the scene if you have a crash. It's the law. The 1988 Road Safety Act says drivers can be fined and in extreme cases even imprisoned if they don't pull over. If your car is still driveable, find somewhere safe to stop. Then turn the engine off, engage the parking brake and put the hazard warning lights on. Make sure you get all occupants out of the car. If another driver involved in the accident fails to stop, try to note down their registration number. Report them to the police immediately.

### ***Sorry might be an expensive word***

If it's your fault, you may be aching to say sorry to anyone who'll listen - it's human nature, after all - but try to resist. In the eyes of the law, saying sorry isn't technically considered to be an admission of guilt but it could be used against you by another driver and may have an impact on an insurance claim.

### ***Get the details***

Make sure everyone involved in the accident is in a safe place. Then swap details. You are obliged to give your name, address and car registration number. If you're not the owner of the vehicle you must give their name too. You don't have to give your insurance details unless anyone is injured, but it might make settling things smoother if you do. Get other people's insurance details just in case. A car crash is a high stress moment and with all that adrenaline coursing through your system, you might not feel bruises or whiplash injuries until a couple of hours after the event.

### ***Make notes***

Ask different people to describe what happened in an accident and you'll probably get different answers. It can be difficult to recall exact details a couple of hours afterwards. That's where a mobile phone comes in handy.

Take photographs of any damage to your car and others. Do a sketch too of what happened, where cars started and finished and the sequence of events. And note down what time of day it was, what the weather was like and which direction you were pointing in. All of these might be relevant and help when talking to insurers.

## **Call the police**

First thing: Is anyone injured? If they are, calling an ambulance is the priority. If you're in a motorway layby, use one of the emergency phones as the rescue services will be able to locate you instantly. You should then call the police if the road is blocked. Also ring the police if you suspect there's something dodgy going on and you've been a victim of a 'crash for cash' scam, or you believe one of the other parties is under the influence of drink or drugs.



Whatever the state of the road, you must report the accident to the police if you cause damage to another vehicle that isn't your own, another person, an animal or property. The law says you should also give your name and address: "To any person having reasonable grounds for so requiring." If you don't have your insurance certificate on you, you have to produce it at a police station within 24 hours of the crash.

*Acknowledgement: Many thanks for Green Flag for these words of advice*

## **Editor Sandie's chance to have a moan**

*(well I had this space remaining !!!)*

Where did August and September go? Those months went by in a blur. Whether we like it or not winter is coming with the usual dismal days and nights. However, beware, dear reader, this is usually accompanied by: Cyclists dressed in dark clothing without lights on their cycles! You don't usually see them until they are very close to you. Cars without side-lights on in the even the darkest of days. Indeed recently I have seen several cars driving at night without any lights on - I am sure they have much better eye-sight than me. Fortunately (for you) due to lack of space, I cannot continue moaning about my other favorite subjects: lack of indication (I am sure indicators are not fitted to vehicles these days) and blinding white headlights - great road illumination for those drivers but frightening for us poor on-coming drivers. So ends my moan., for the moment - but give me chance !!!

**and finally ....**

**Happy Christmas  
&  
safe motoring in 2020**

**Group President: Trevor Poxon MBE**

**Chair:** : Martin Goad  
120 Hednesford Rd, Brownhills  
tel. no. 01543 371516  
martingoad@mail.com

**Group Secretary:** Josie Hubbard-Palmer

**Treasurer - Ann Humble**

**Assoc Co-ordinator:** Mike Bentley

**Chief Observer:** Josie Hubbard-Palmer

Group Registered Charity no. 1082326

**Committee Members:**

Kath Hawker  
Sarah Harrison  
Karl Spooner  
Chris Rice  
Alison Kimberley

**Newsletter Editor & Minutes Sec**

Sandra Wootton  
Email: sandrawootton.flowers@gmail.com

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