



Exeter & Torbay Advanced Motorists

Summer 2021

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The views and opinions expressed in this newsletter are not necessarily those of the Editor, the Exeter and Torbay Advanced Motorists or the Institute of Advanced Motorists.

The Editor reserves the right to edit articles for publication.

Chairman's Chat

Greetings all.

With the Covid vaccination programme well in hand – I had my second vaccination at the end of April – and conditions being relaxed, things do seem to be improving? However, the possibility of an 'Indian variant' infection could be a cause for concern, and also our usual influx of summer visitors – fingers and toes crossed!

We have had a couple of Observer Meetings outdoors to size things up [and also issue the new edition of Roadcraft] and are preparing for refresher sessions also. We currently have nine Associates on the books, as things return to normality I anticipate we will have an influx.

On the meetings front, our June one will, hopefully, be the last zoom session, we are planning for a GymCarNa event at Poltimore for July, and then practical sessions from Kenn for August and September, with our AGM in October.

AND FINALLY:

'The Paradox of our Age' from the 14th Dalai Lama, with thanks to Jeremy Leach

We have bigger houses but smaller families; more conveniences, but less time;

We have more degrees, but less sense; more knowledge, but less judgement;

More experts, but more problems; more medicines, but less healthiness;

We've been all the way to the Moon and back, but have trouble crossing the street to meet the new neighbour;

We built more computers to hold more information to produce more copies than ever, but have less communication;

We have become long on quantity, but short on quality.

*These are times of fast foods, but slow digestion;
Tall man but short character.
Steep profits but shallow relationships.
It's a time when there is much in the window, but nothing in the
room.*

Safe Driving

John Tibbs

Decrease in road deaths

The survey results come after the latest figures from the Department for Transport (DfT) revealed a significant decrease in UK road deaths due to less journeys being taken as a result of Covid-19 restrictions.

Provisional DfT casualty figures estimate (at a “statistically significant” 95 per cent confidence level) that there were 1,580 road deaths in the year ending June 2020 - a year-on-year decline of 14 per cent. Casualties of all severities, meanwhile, were down 16 per cent in the same period.

Neil Greig, director of policy and research at IAM Roadsmart, said: “While there are signs of improvement, the results of this survey are still deeply concerning and there is clearly much more work to do on education and training. Speeding consistently causes more than 4,400 casualties on UK roads each year, which is an average of 12 people a day killed or injured on UK roads.”

Forthcoming Events

The Group meets on the first Wednesday of every month (except January). Meetings start at 7.30pm.

**Kenn Centre
Exeter Road
Kennford, Exeter
EX6 7UE**

The Kenn Centre is situated off the A38 (Exeter to Plymouth road) in the village of Kennford. The Centre is clearly signposted once you arrive in the village and free parking for 40 cars is available close to the main entrance.

Subject to local coronavirus restrictions

Please keep an eye out for emails or check the Website nearer to the dates of meetings.

- | | |
|----------------------------|---|
| 7th July | Gymcarina at Poltimore |
| 4th Aug | Practical drive out sessions from the Kenn Centre. |
| 1st Sept | Practical drive out sessions from the Kenn Centre. |
| 6th Oct | AGM. |
| 3rd Nov | Presentation on the Art of Seeing. Assessing & Braking from Jeremy Harrison-Roberts |
| 1st Dec | Christmas Social |

If you have any suggestions for talks or if you can help with approaching possible speakers please contact us. To keep up to

date with news about our monthly meetings and driveouts please see our website. Details on the Contacts Page at the end of the newsletter.

Please do come to the monthly meetings, we hope to have something of interest for you and it is good to keep in touch with other members and to hear what is happening in the driving world. If you know of anything you would like to hear about please let me know. Any problems finding us ring the IAM mobile on 07522480883 for directions.

Meeting Reports

ETAM Monthly Meeting 5th May 2021

Talk by Sarah Harvey – Local examiner and motor police constable (MPC).

Fourteen members/associates joined on Zoom to hear Sarah talk about her 25 years in the police force and answer questions on advanced driving, the advanced driving test and various other topical issues such as self driven cars, smart motorways etc.

Sarah's first station was at Tavistock and then after two years' service she was offered either Plymouth or Exeter police station to serve from. Sarah chose Exeter where she was stationed from 1998 to 2002. After getting married Sarah moved to Newton Abbot police station and has been a response PC for the last few years.

Sarah has always been interested in the traffic side of things and was interviewed for and became a motor police constable. In 2011 the traffic division was disbanded and traffic officers were transferred to general duties and traffic which after a trial didn't work. Sarah was then then recruited back to traffic division.

In 2013 Newton Abbot traffic division was closed with five main sites set up: Exeter, Plymouth, Barnstaple, Bodmin and Cambourne. Sarah transferred back to Exeter. In 2020 she joined the serious collisions team and has also been a family liaison officer since 2006. Sarah said 'It is an intense job, but I feel privileged to deal with families'.

Sarah has been involved with the 'Learn to Lie' campaign which is shown to students aged 16 – 17 who are starting out on their driving career. It covers reports on accidents, follow through from accident, involvement of emergency services to family liaison with loss of life to court process etc. (ETAM has previously been involved in the campaign shown at the English Riviera Centre in Torquay).

We asked about what happens when a road is closed following a serious collision. Sarah explained how the road could be closed for forensic examination and for access by ambulance/undertaker. The forensic officers try to work out what happened to cause the collision and provide evidence for the prosecution or coroner.

We also asked about the skills needed for police driving. Sarah said she had had a standard course then an advance course. She has also been on a tactical pursuit and containment course (TPAC) which is refreshed every 3 years along with a review of her driving and has taken part in a stinger course. Only motor police trained officers will deploy the stinger (to deflate tyres of vehicles they are trying to stop if safe to do so). Sarah said the favoured place for practicing TPAC and other police pursuit tactic is the A30, so if you travel that road frequently you may see them in practice.

After a discussion on current driving habits we asked about the use of dashcam footage and whether the police would act on videos sent in. Sarah explained that operation 'Opsnap' (available on the Devon and Cornwall Police website) is a place where we can upload dashcam footage of driving which concerns us. She stressed that the number plate of the vehicle in the footage needs to be seen

for them to follow up. The videos are reviewed, and the police can send out notice of prosecution if appropriate. Sometimes a chat with the person is enough and they are allowed to see the footage submitted. Dashcam evidence is very useful in accidents which is why there is often an appeal, especially following a fatal collision. The evening was very interesting and provoked discussion and questions. The group thanked Sarah for giving her time and expertise and some of our associates will look forward to having Sarah as their examine in the not too distant future.

ETAM Monthly Meeting 2nd June 2021

Chris Gilbert Videos with discussions led by Dennis Leworthy

Fourteen of us joined the Zoom meeting on Wednesday 2nd June to watch selections of four Chris Gilbert videos. These included commentary driving, observation and night driving. Following each video there was a discussion of the content and questions and observations made.

The first video was on commentary driving which reminded us that commentary can aid our concentration, give us a higher visible horizon and increased hazard perception. A commentary is 'say what you see, what you think and what you are going to do'. If you are new to this, you can say what you are thinking by starting to identify road signs you see and then build on that.

The second and third videos were on observation. We discussed how we can read the road by looking at the position of vehicles, observation of passengers, watching for brake lights ahead and checking for signs of people on pavements etc. The video highlighted that watching a passenger can give clues on what the vehicle in front is going to do. In this case the passenger was clearly looking for somewhere and by seeing this the driver behind can act on this information and respond to the stopping of the vehicle in front earlier.

We also talked about how we need to drive the road we can see not the road we know. Geography doesn't change but road conditions, traffic, weather etc can change. Knowing a road can give you an advantage but.....

The fourth video was on night driving. We can be thoughtful and considerate drives at night by using our handbrake at traffic lights when we are stopped so that we don't dazzle the person behind with our brake lights. We were reminded that night lights/lamp posts can give clues as to junctions etc. Driving through country lanes at night was also highlighted. If we have to pull over into a gap to let someone pass it is good practice to dip our headlights to side lights to allow the other driver to see. Too often we are dazzled as we try to work out the safe gap to pass stopped vehicles.

Thanks to Dennis for sharing his advice and to those members of the group who joined in a lively discussion.

The Chris Gilbert videos can be found on YouTube if you are interested, the ones we watched are:

Advanced driving Chris Gilbert Ultimate driving craft DVD (3 videos).

Advanced driving craft Chris Gilbert ultimate driving craft night driving (1 video).

The videos were used with permission.

Claire Chilcott

The UK's oldest road is the Ridgeway dating back more than 5,000 years ago and stretching from Wiltshire to Berkshire. The first Tarmac road was built rather later, in 1902 in Nottingham, while the motorways took their time, beginning in 1958 with the eight-mile long M6 Preston by-pass which was two lanes each way, had neither a central reservation barrier nor a speed limit.

Self-driving cars could be on our roads this year

The self-driving technology – known as Automated Lane Keeping Systems (ALKS) – aims to make driving safer and easier. But insurance experts are expressing concerns. In April, the government announced that cars with self-driving technology could be on our roads later this year.

The self-driving systems referred to are Automated Lane Keeping Systems or ALKS. These are automated systems that can take control of a vehicle at low speeds. The Association of British Insurers (ABI) and Thatcham Research have questioned the government's decision. They say that the systems aren't fully self-driving, but only assist drivers. This could put drivers at risk, as when an ALKS is enabled drivers might assume that the vehicle is fully in control of itself.

What will the ALKS do?

ALKS are an example of driver assistance technology. An ALKS will keep the car in lane on the motorway at low speeds, controlling its movements for extended periods. Driver assistance technology is common in most new cars. One example is adaptive cruise control. This monitors the vehicle in front and controls the car, so it keeps at a fixed distance. Other examples include parking assistance and even blind spot warnings. But none of these systems have been classed as 'self-driving' and they were always designed to support the driver, not replace them.

For the first time, the ALKS will be classed as 'self-driving', giving drivers the choice to delegate control of their car. This means drivers risk not paying attention to the road and conduct tasks like checking their emails while the system is working.

Should ALKS be defined as self-driving?

In 2020, the government discussed whether the systems should be defined as self-driving. After a safety review, the government confirmed this year that they could legally be defined as self-driving. But only if the vehicle is GB-type approved and there's no evidence to challenge the vehicle's ability to self-drive.

Thattham Research has expressed concerns about this decision. Matthew Avery, Head of Vehicle Research at Thattham says: "Automated Lane Keeping Systems (ALKS) as currently proposed by the Government are not automated. They are assisted driving systems as they rely on the driver to take back control. Aside from the lack of technical capabilities, by calling ALKS automated our concern also is that the UK Government is contributing to the confusion and frequent misuse of assisted driving systems that have unfortunately already led to many tragic deaths. A widespread and effective ongoing communications campaign led by the automotive industry and supported by insurers and safety organisations is essential if we are going to address current and future misconceptions and misuse."

Are ALKS safe?

The government believes that the system could improve road safety by reducing human error, which contributes to over 85% of accidents. Transport Minister, Rachel Maclean, says: "This is a major step for the safe use of self-driving vehicles in the UK, making future journeys greener, easier and more reliable while also helping the nation to build back better." But there are still uncertainties around the self-driving tech.

Thattham and the Association of British Insurers (ABI) believe that there four key areas the government needs to change before they can be classed as self-driving and safe:

- The vehicle must be able to change lanes to avoid an incident. This would have to pass through legislation too.
- The vehicle must be able to stop in a safe space or “safe harbour” and not stop in a live running lane.
- The vehicle must be able to recognise UK road signs. This needs to be verified by an independent organisation.
- Data from the vehicle must be available to work out who was in charge – either the vehicle or the driver – if there is an accident.

The Transport Minister goes on to say: “We must ensure that this exciting new tech is deployed safely, which is why we are consulting on what the rules to enable this should look like. In doing so, we can improve transport for all, securing the UK’s place as a global science superpower.”

Electric car drivers are only £100 better off after three years than if they buy fuel version

Electric car drivers would save an average of just £100 after three years compared to the petrol version of the same vehicles, research has found. The analysis by Halfords found that, while electric vehicles are on average 47 per cent more expensive to buy than petrol and diesel equivalents, drivers would likely still make a saving after three years because of lower running costs.

Electric cars are seen as a major part of the UK’s push to reach net-zero carbon emissions, and the sale of new petrol and diesel cars will be banned from 2030. However, critics have warned that the higher cost of electric vehicles could prove prohibitive for many drivers, although the hefty upfront price tags would be expected to come down over time as more second hand models enter the market.

Halfords analysed the biggest-selling electric cars which have a petrol or diesel equivalent, assuming an annual mileage of 10,000.

Among the biggest savings after three years were £800 for those who bought an electric Mini Cooper Classic and £1,650 for a BMW i3, despite costing nearly £10,000 and £4,000 more upfront than their petrol or diesel counterparts. However, owning an electric Vauxhall Corsa would leave drivers £1,581 worse off after three years than a petrol Corsa, according to the analysis, although this cost would come down with further years of ownership.

Andy Turbefeild, head of quality at Halfords, said: “Intuitively we know that electric vehicles can be better value than their nearest petrol and diesel equivalents, but we wanted to make it as easy as possible for people to see it for themselves.” He added: “We’re not suggesting that people should buy electric because of the long-term savings, but if people are delaying purchase because of the upfront cost, this should give them pause for thought.”

Halfords has launched a calculator for those looking to compare the cost of electric vehicle ownership, including data for 102 electric, petrol, diesel and hybrid models. In some cases, electric vehicles were more expensive on a total cost basis, although Halfords said there are “numerous” examples where going electric is more economical.

A recent survey by energy regulator Ofgem suggested that more than a third of households are unlikely to buy an electric vehicle in the next five years. Some of the most common reservations included the price of buying a vehicle, the availability of charging points across the country and the range of batteries. Only 13 models of electric vehicle are currently available for less than £30,000, the Public Accounts Committee recently said as it warned that urgent improvements are needed to infrastructure to meet the Government’s 2030 target.

Analysis by the Policy Exchange think tank has suggested that chargers need to be rolled out at five times the current rate in order to provide proper coverage by that date. Last week the regulator

pledged £300 million to improving the charging infrastructure and providing 3,500 new points.

Electric car comparison

Make, model and price; petrol/diesel equivalent and price; difference; saving or cost after 3 years

EVs which cost less after 3 years:

BMW i3 - £33,025; BMW 1 Series 118i - £28,955. EV is £4,070 more. Saving - £1,650 after 3 years.

Mini Cooper Electric - £25,500; Mini Cooper Classic - £15,645. EV is £9,855 more. Saving - £799 after 3 years.

MG ZS Exclusive EV - £25,495; MG ZS Exclusive - £17,795; EV is £7,700 more. Saving - £758 after 3 years.

EVs which still cost more after 3 years:

Peugeot 208 Allure EV - £26,725; Peugeot 208 Allure Puretech - £16,130. EV is £10,595 more. Cost is £1,550 more after 3 years.

Vauxhall Corsa EV - £26,640; Vauxhall Corsa SE - £16,000; EV is £10,595 more. Cost is £1,581 after three years

Peugeot 208 GT EV - £30,680; Peugeot 208 Allure - £19,645; EV is £11,035 more. Cost is £850 more after 3 years.

Learner driver licence points

Following a Freedom of Information Request, the leasing firm found that of the 65,000+ learners with points, 10,639 have between 7-9 points before they pass, while 1,803 have 10 or more. 12,442 learners as a result, could face having their licences immediately cancelled upon passing their tests –for new drivers, if you acquire more than six points in your first two years of driving, your licence is automatically revoked.

Perhaps most worrying at all is that 80 male 16-year-olds already have penalty points – the legal driving age in the UK is of course

17. The most dangerous group was that of 20-year-old males, with 627 of them having seven penalty points or more.

Overall, 52,802 men already have points on their provisional licence, compared to just 12,252 women – a difference of 40,550 people. What’s more, 10,668 male learners have seven or more penalty points on their record, compared to just 1,673 women.

Government statistics indicate that female learner drivers have significantly fewer points across every point category, and that continues after passing. A 2019 study from Confused.com showed that 79 percent of motoring offences are committed by men, despite both sexes completing largely the same number of miles each year.

Average speed cameras on motorways get approval from drivers

UK drivers are in favour of average speed cameras on motorways despite the majority admitting to breaking 70mph limit. The majority of drivers say average-speed cameras are the best enforcement solution across the motorways, dual carriageways and roads with the 60mph national speed limit, favouring them above fixed cameras.

Current policy is that average-speed cameras are installed on areas when road works are in place, but the RAC’s annual report on motoring found that 58 per cent consider average cameras are the best enforcement solution on 60 and 70mph roads, with just 18 per cent saying fixed cameras are best, and only 12 per cent favouring mobile police speed traps.

Support for average cameras comes despite 56 per cent of the same 3,068 surveyed motorists admitting they broke the speed limit on

motorways, with 39 per cent saying they did so to keep pace with traffic, and 31 per cent judging that travelling over 70mph was safe. Some 36 per cent of drivers say they never break 70mph limits; this was the lowest rate of compliance, with 63 per cent sticking rigidly to 60mph limits, a similar proportion adhering to 40mph and 30mph rules, and 55 per cent not breaking 20mph limits.

Three per cent of those who admitted to speeding on motorways said they had travelled at over 100mph, while four per cent said they had hit 91 to 100mph. 27 per cent said they had reached between 81 and 90mph, and 66 per cent admitted to going up to 80mph. On 40 and 50mph roads, 46 per cent say limits should be enforced with average speed cameras, while 29 per cent prefer fixed units. Fixed cameras gain the most support on 20 and 30mph roads. The RAC's report claims that drivers find it too difficult to stick to an average of 20 or 30mph on roads with those limits.

Another trend to emerge from the report was widespread scepticism over infotainment touchscreens. Some 51 per cent consider screens to be more complex than physical knobs and buttons, while precisely half deemed touchscreens distracting.

Car lights were also an area of discontent, with 77 per cent considering modern headlights so bright they risk causing accidents, and 58 per cent saying they were regularly dazzled by oncoming lights, even when those lights were on dipped-beam.

Mobile phone use behind the wheel was considered the most pressing matter for police enforcement, with 55 per cent wanting more action on this; 24 per cent said officers should target motorway middle-lane hoggers, too.

More than a thousand drivers still on road despite having 12 points or more

Figures published by the DVLA indicate that a total of 1,278 drivers who are still driving currently have at least a dozen points. The information was made available after a Freedom of Information (FOI) request by the Liberal Democrats.

It also indicated that there are 1,024,489 drivers in the UK who have points on their licences, with 68 the highest number of points held by a single driver. Liberal Democrat transport spokeswoman Sarah Olney said the UK Government should examine whether the right systems are in place to tackle problem drivers. “For the safety of everyone driving on our roads, it’s important that repeat offenders and dangerous drivers are kept off the roads,” said Ms Olney. “It’s possible that there are mitigating factors in some cases which justify these drivers hanging on to their right to drive. But if we are honest, if you have racked up a dozen points, you are probably a bad driver. The UK Government should examine whether the right systems are in place to put the brakes on problem drivers. With fewer drivers on the road than ever before, now is the time to consider what can be done.”

The average age of a car driven in the UK is now the oldest it’s ever been

The average age of cars on UK roads has now hit a record-breaking high, Society of Motor Manufacturers and Traders’ (SMMT) figures reveal. At 8.4 years old it’s the highest since records began in 2000, with almost 10 million vehicles from 2008 and earlier still in action. The average car was built in 2011.

This news follows a massive drop in new car sales due to the effects of the coronavirus pandemic, with the number of new cars

hitting the road falling 29% to a 28-year low in 2020. It also comes as the country is gearing up towards the ban on the sale of new petrol and diesel cars from 2030, with drivers being encouraged to shift to newer and more environmentally friendly electric vehicles (EV).

The SMMT says: “While this [the current age of UK cars] is testament to the durability and quality of modern vehicles, an ageing fleet risks stalling the UK’s attempts to reduce emissions.” A car built in 2020 emits an average of 112.8g/km of CO₂, which is 18.3% better than a model registered in 2011, according to the SMMT. The industry body stresses vehicle renewal is essential if the UK wants to meet its net zero target, with “both conventional and alternatively fuelled vehicles having a significant role to play in this transition”.

Earlier this month the Government announced more than half a million EVs are now being driven across the country. But there is still a long way to go to meet the target of all new cars and vans being zero emissions by 2035. Mike Hawes, SMMT chief executive, said: “With the pandemic putting the brakes on new vehicle uptake in 2020, the average car on our roads is now the oldest since records began some 20 years ago, as drivers held on to their existing vehicles for longer. The technology is changing, however, albeit slowly. Despite massive growth last year, just one in 80 vehicles is a plug-in electric car – while nearly 10 million petrol and diesel cars dating back to before 2008 remain on our roads. Encouraging drivers to upgrade to the newest, cleanest lowest emission cars, regardless of fuel source, is essential for the UK to meet its ambitious climate change targets.”

Despite new car sales dropping in the UK, SMMT data shows light commercial vehicles (LCV) were the only type to increase in numbers, up 1.7% over the past year to 4.6m. Rising demand for delivery vehicles throughout the pandemic has contributed to this increase. However, heavy goods vehicles fell 3.1% to 589,445 units, while bus and coach numbers fell most

significantly, by 10.7% to 73,609. The number of cars on the road fell just over 0.2 % to just over 35m.

Highways England tests new 'anti-ageing cream for roads'

Drivers could soon benefit from a new type of treatment for roads which aims to prevent them from deteriorating and reduce the need for maintenance. The first road in the country to be resurfaced with the new material – brought about by Highways England in partnership with Total and Tarmac – is the bustling section of the A43 near Silverstone in Northamptonshire.

England's motorways and major A-roads are currently expected to be resurfaced every 10-12 years due to cracks caused by weather and heavy traffic, but it's hoped the new asphalt mix will extend this lifespan. The material is bound together by a new bitumen which is more resistant to elements such as water, sun and air as it oxidises at a slower pace. This keeps the road surface flexible for longer and prevents damage from forming.

Mike Wilson, Highways England's chief highways engineer, said: "We're always looking for innovative ways to help us keep England's motorways and major A-roads in good condition. The ultimate priority for us is safety so we invest in new technology and materials to keep those using the roads safe. Longer lasting roads means fewer roadworks, less disruption for motorists and a more sustainable network for everyone."

More durable road surfaces could also reduce the costs and carbon emissions caused by roadworks. Brian Kent, technical director at Tarmac, said: "What we have in this case is essentially an anti-ageing cream for roads – just as these products are designed to reduce and prevent the signs of fine lines and overall ageing of the skin, the new bitumen being trialled on the A43 will

protect the road surface. It not only has the potential to offer improved value for money to the public purse, but it also contains properties to increase the overall lifespan of roads.”

Rick Ashton, market development manager at Total, said: “These life-long binders will ultimately lead towards our vision of net zero carbon by 2050 by reducing roadworks, saving manufacturing, transport and installation energy and the associated emissions.”

While the new material has previously been tested in the laboratories of Total, at Tarmac’s site in Bedfordshire and on sections of the roads in the Netherlands, the A43 trial is the first time it has been used with high traffic levels in the UK. Technical experts from Total will test the performance of the new sticky and waterproof material against an equivalent control section before it’s used anywhere else in the country.

Did you know?

From 1909 to 1927, Ford built more than 15 million cars. Initially, the Model T took 12 hours for assembly. With the help of the assembly line technique, this amount of time was cut to 8 minutes for each car in 1913, and finally in 1927, during the last years of the production of the Model T, the factory was delivering a completely assembled car in just 24 seconds.

Electric cars are not a new phenomenon. Thomas Davenport is credited with building the first practical electric vehicle — a small locomotive.

The title for the longest car in the world is taken by a custom-built limousine by California car guru Jay Ohrberg. The car is 100 meters long and is recorded by the Guinness World Records as the longest car ever built in the world. Surprisingly, the car has a swimming pool and a helicopter pad as well.

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**Deadline for contributions for the next newsletter:
18th August 2021**