

The last 12 months has been a very productive and positive year for Crewe & Nantwich Advanced Motorists. To begin with, following on from the previous year when four of our observer team gained the IAM RoadSmart's National Observer qualification, a further two have also acquired the qualification. The observer team are not stopping there either, we also have another of our team undergoing the training to update their status with the National Observer qualification. Plus, we have a new member to the observer team, Ian Wood, who has begun by passing IAM RoadSmart's Local Observer qualification.

Carrying on the theme of the group's observer team, I'm also pleased to announce that we've had some very successful test passes this last 12 months. We've managed to amass a total of 9 'First' passes, that's where an associate has scored a '1' in every element of the test. I'd therefore like to take this opportunity to wish all of the observer team a big thank you and well done. I'd also like to say a big "Congratulations" to those 9 associates who passed the IAM RoadSmart test with those exemplary marks.

Some of you may be aware that the IAM RoadSmart have recently revised the course for both motorcyclists and car drivers, it's been mentioned in the IAM RoadSmart magazine before now. The courses are now called "Advanced Rider" and "Advanced Driver" respectively. These have been developed over the last couple of years and back in August it was introduced to groups in the North West. With our recent successes with the Observer qualifications, our group were asked by IAM RoadSmart to host an introduction evening for the affected group's observer teams where members of IAM RoadSmart came and presented the new course material. This was quite a coup for the group and has led to us forming quite a good relationship with IAM RoadSmart, one that we should now be proud of and hope to continue.

As well as revising the course material, IAM RoadSmart has also gone through a recent rebranding exercise, bringing the organisation into the 21st century and timed with their 60th anniversary. Gone is the red logo, replaced by a more inviting cyan colour. The rebranding also involved a change of name from 'IAM' to "IAM RoadSmart". The Crewe & Nantwich Advanced Motorists group have also taken the opportunity to rebrand too. We've revised the website, styling it similarly to the IAM RoadSmart website, but also making it mobile/tablet friendly. This has made it more user friendly and easier to navigate. Thanks go to Sean Clarke, the website designer, who redesigned the site at little expense to the group.

Earlier in the year the group also appointed a "Chief Observer" position to the group. Nick Stein, one of our qualified National Observers has agreed to take on the role which will involve being a central point of contact for the observer team and ensure that the team maintain the skills learnt from the National & Local qualifications. Since Nick has taken on the role, he's introduced the concept of "Drive Time" events. These events are for the group's members and are an opportunity to meet fellow members of the group and the observer team, plus to go out for a leisurely drive and ensure that you're keeping your driving skills up to date. There have been a number of these events to date and they are beginning to grow in popularity. I'd like to thank Nick for organising these events and urge the group's members to come along and take part in the fun.

After the positive news, sadly, I have to report that this year two members of the observer team have decided to step down from observing for the group. Dave Stubbs has been a member and an observer of the group for an astonishing 28 years. Rick Appleton, another member of the observer team since 2010 has helped over 16 associates pass their test. I personally would like to thank Rick for his time helping me to pass my National Observer qualification. Dave and Rick, both respected members of the group and observer team and have given their time, freely as volunteers, to help others pass the test and this deserves a special commendation. A big thanks to both Dave & Rick.

I know that I've mentioned it in the past newsletters but I am stepping down as chairman of the group and also from the committee. It's been a great 3 years and I've enjoyed myself during this time. I'd like to thank those who have joined me in heading up the group and wish the new committee members my best wishes in taking the group forward into the future and continuing the good work.

Best wishes to all

Paul