



A MODERN IAM – AS TOLD BY A TEENAGE DRIVER

This month IAM chief executive officer Sarah Sillars has given up her usual spot in Insight. Instead we have 17-year-old advanced driver Eloise Peabody-Rolf talking about driving from a teenage perspective.



I am not an average young driver or an average IAM member, to be honest I don't really fit in either group. I'm 17 and seven weeks after passing my DVSA driving test, I became an IAM member. I'm really proud of this achievement - how did I manage it?

I have been a member of the Under 17 Car Club (U17CC) for the past six years and therefore gained a huge amount of pre-licence experience in a safe environment.

The club's instruction methodology had prepared me well as I ventured out

onto public roads. What did I find most challenging? The sheer volume of traffic, impatient and distracted drivers, how narrow some country roads were and multi-lane roundabouts!

I was disappointed to find the general attitude towards a driver with L plates was often so inconsiderate.

There seems to be a universal view that younger drivers equal danger and with the stats on young driver accident rates, that's not surprising. I was lucky enough to be part of the U17CC team invited to run the young driver's workshop at the 2015

IAM Annual Conference, where it was a pleasure to meet many of you. Although many members were very accepting, there seemed considerable surprise that 17-year-olds can be and are advanced drivers.

U17CC members progress through its structured grading system, so when the opportunity to take the advanced test was offered, I jumped at the chance. It was daunting as it was rather short notice, however I managed to squeeze in some observed drives with Terry Simpkin, one of the U17CC instructors who's also a national observer, and was delighted to pass.



It was sad to find when I told my (non U17CC) friends of my achievement, very few had heard of the IAM, and thought that the test was perhaps like Pass Plus.

When I explained what the test involved, most couldn't understand why I bothered as I was already 'on the road'. To many of them driving is seen as a convenience, simply to get from A to B, rather than a skill to be mastered and enjoyed.

I've since given the matter a lot of thought - I wish there was an easy answer to what needs to be done to encourage young drivers to want to improve their driving skills.



I appreciate the number of young people who are lucky enough to get the opportunities I've had are small, however I would love to see (non-commercial) schemes such as U17CC and the 'Pathfinder' programme the Charitable Trust runs with their proven benefits, far more widely available.

I believe road safety should be taught from an early age, included in the national curriculum. Also learning to drive should be not simply learning what's required to pass the test, as this doesn't prepare newly qualified drivers adequately - no wonder they have accidents.

Coming into the IAM, I believe the organisation has so much to offer young drivers and riders.

However young people need to be made aware of the IAM and it be made more accessible to them. Ways need to be found to bridge the 'generation gap', to encourage existing members to engage with young people, and vice versa.

It needs to offer young people a chance to take advantage of the experience and passion for driving IAM members clearly have, and to develop, enjoy and be proud of their driving skills without being too daunting.

As for me; I am very proud to be a member of the IAM and look forward to continuing my development as a driver. I also want to encourage my friends to share my passion for driving and road safety.

With every good wish to you all for 2016!

Eloise

SPECIAL OFFER DEAL FOR YOUNG DRIVERS



If you have children or grandchildren who are under 17 you might be interested to know there are places available on driving tuition courses offered by the Under 17 Car Club (U17CC) coming up this Easter.

U17CC's Pathfinder project is open to 'rising 17s,' and over five days aims to deliver them the key attitudes and skills for advanced driving. Actively supported by Gloucestershire Advanced Motorists and the police, Pathfinder has space during Easter break (4-8 April) exclusively for the children and grandchildren of IAM members. Each place costs £170. To find out more visit this website: www.under17driver.co.uk



ARE YOU USING SOCIAL MEDIA?



If so, *like* our Facebook page (facebook.com/InstituteofAdvancedMotorists) and *follow* us on twitter (@IAMgroup) to keep up to date with what we've been up to – and let us know what you've been doing too.