



# **Exeter & Torbay Advanced Motorists**

**Autumn 2018**

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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.

We now seem to have got over the heatwave, although there is the possibility of a repeat performance 'later'!

For our last meeting we re-ran an observation drive from 4 years ago, it was most encouraging to note that differences that had occurred since then were noted – well done to those who attended. Our next meeting will be the first of our indoor sessions, a presentation by a representative from the Devon Air Ambulance Trust.

October is our AGM month, our area manager Shaun Cronin will be attending, to give us an update on what is going on with IAMRoadSmart.

The November meeting will be a 'Motoring Memories' presentation, which I am sure will be of interest.

December will be our Christmas social, as last year this will be in our usual venue, refreshments will be provided, but we will ask you to bring a plate to share, more on this in due course.

I am hoping to re-instate the weekday driveouts, so presently aiming to have one from the 'Hog & Hedge' at Whiddon Down Services towards the end of this month [August]. I will email before the event as previously.

And finally – Alternative Definitions

Adult: a person who has stopped growing at both ends and is now growing in the middle.

Cannibal: someone who is fed up with people.

Committee: a body that keeps minutes and wastes hours.

Handkerchief: cold storage

Secret: something you tell to one person at a time.

Skeleton: a bunch of bones with the person scraped off.

Wrinkles: something other people have, similar to my character lines.

*With acknowledgements to SPA News.*

## **Safe Driving**

John Tibbs

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# **Monthly Meeting Reports**

No reports have been received since the GymCarna in May.

June, July and August were practical drives, including Meg's mystery tour and observation drives.

Group members who attend these are asked to consider writing a report in the absence of a Social Secretary.

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Airbags move at up to 4500 miles per hour and deploy within 40 milliseconds of a crash. They are designed to deploy at an impact speed of 19 miles per hour.

Engineers in Germany have created a "Brain Driver," which is a car that can be driven with thoughts alone. A Brain Driver's headset consists of 16 sensors that monitor electric signals from the brain

Toyota is the world's largest car manufacturer. Each day it produces about 13,000 cars. Ferrari, in contrast, produces a maximum of 14.

# Greetings from the ETAM Skills Co-ordinator

Greetings all

John Badley is preparing for his National Observer Assessment under Dennis's guidance. We also have a couple of Masters who are interested in becoming Local Observers. Phil Burrows will be moving away in the near future, my thanks to him for persevering with Associates in the Torbay area.

As mentioned elsewhere I am hoping to re-energise the weekday drive-outs, I am looking to arrange something later in the month.

We had some interest at the Powderham Show in June for Assessment Drives, at the moment none of the potential candidates have signed up for the Advanced Driver Course. We have also attended various other car show events in the area – Mount Edgcombe [strictly out of our area!], Paignton and Hennock in co-operation with the local Mazda MX5 Owners Club, some enthusiasm for the cars but not IAMRoadSmart!

I will be attending a new show in September – The Humber Country Fayre at Luton, near Newton Abbot, the organiser sounds enthusiastic to have us!

We will be looking at re-vamping our summer season driveouts from Kenn, do let me know if you have any ideas for routes etc?

Safe Driving

John Tibbs

# *Welcome*

We extend a warm welcome to the following Associates who have joined the Group since the last newsletter

Ian Wiliamson  
Walter Stephens  
Freda Richardson  
Chris Patten  
Melle Chidgey

Honiton  
South Molton  
Exeter  
Exeter  
Tiverton

Claire Chilcott,  
Group Contact

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# *Congratulations*

**Exeter & Torbay Advanced Motorists – Test Passes**

**Masters, Observers, Associates**

**August 2018**

**NONE ADVISED TO SKILLS CO-ORDINATOR**

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# 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.

**5h September**      Talk by Devon Air Ambulance

**3rd October**      AGM with guest speaker Sean Cronin,  
IAMRoadSmart Regional Manager

**7th November**      Clive Yeates will be giving a talk on his driving  
experiences

**5th December**      Christmas Social

As the Social Secretary role is currently vacant the committee are trying to arrange talks for 2018/19. If you have any suggestions please contact us and if you can help with approaching possible speakers.

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 07522 48 08 83 for directions.

# Stay Safe with Simple Tyre Checks

Recently I attended the annual Tyre Safety Month Briefing in Coventry hosted by the UK charity TyreSafe, featuring guest speakers raising awareness about tyre safety. It provided a great opportunity for all who attended to learn more about correct car care and maintenance, essential for our safety in any vehicle.

The event highlighted how for many of us, our tyres are not something we think about on a regular basis, and even experienced drivers and riders aren't guaranteed to know how to carry out basic checks.

When we consider that our tyres are the **only parts** of our vehicle in contact with the road, the dangers of having unsafe tyres become much clearer. Moreover, when we realise that staying safe when accelerating, braking, cornering and steering is dependent on only a small area of road contact, it is suddenly alarming to think about how little attention we may give to our tyres.

The audience was asked at the briefing what they believed the most dangerous month was, for tyre-related incidents. Obvious choices were months like October when the weather turns colder and wetter, or January in the dark mid-winter. However, according to data from the Department for Transport, we are in it! Yes, somewhat surprisingly, July is the month when tyre-related incidents are at their most frequent.

One-third of all tyre-related incidents occur in the summer months and TyreSafe believe this could be due to many factors, including changeable weather and a variety of different road conditions. The summer holidays also mean busy roads are full of less experienced drivers, venturing out in cars weighed down with family members and luggage.



These drivers often do not realise that their heavily loaded car needs different air pressure settings in the tyres, and is an important factor to consider before any journey.

The dangers of part-worn or ‘used’ tyres were also explained, something I previously knew little about. As tyres are arguably the main safety feature on our vehicle, there was a strong recommendation to buy only new tyres that we know would be safe. Taking a risk on our lives to save a few pounds on our tyres isn’t worth it, especially when we consider that each year in the UK on average 1,000 road casualties are caused by tyre-related incidents.

I found the whole day extremely interesting and left feeling much more confident about how to look after and check my tyres properly. Then, last weekend I visited a good friend of mine who is expecting a baby, and spoke about what I had learned. After mentioning she knew little about tyre care, we went over to inspect her car tyres and I demonstrated how I’d been shown to check tread with a 20p coin. To our shock, the tread on both her back tyres did not meet the UK legal minimum limit of 1.6mm, and was well below the outer band of the coin!

The fact that the first car I looked at following the event had illegal tyres really made me wonder how many other cars are on the roads like it, with drivers unaware of the danger they are in.

TyreSafe note that potentially one-in-four of the 37 million vehicles on UK roads has illegal or poorly maintained tyres. It only takes a minute for us to check, and could save us and many others from a serious and possibly fatal, incident.

So, how do we check our tyres before we head out onto the roads? We can follow three simple steps using the acronym ‘**ACT**’:

- Check the **air pressure** of the tyres – the recommended pressure can be found in the owner’s manual, fuel filler cap or

inside the door and air can be topped up at most service stations.

- Check the **condition** of the tyres looking for lumps, bulges or cuts and have a tyre professional look at anything of concern immediately. Remove any small stones or objects from the tread, however, if you are unsure whether an object has penetrated through the tyre then take it to an expert to inspect before attempting to remove it.
- Check the **tread** by placing a 20p coin into the main tread grooves of the tyre, in at least three locations around each tyre. If the outer band of the 20p coin is hidden, the tread depth is above the legal limit of 1.6mm. However, if the outer band of the coin is visible then the tyres may be unsafe and illegal.

Following these easy steps will help ensure our vehicles can properly brake, accelerate and corner on the road as well as helping to prolong the tyres' life and reduce fuel bills and CO2 emissions. It will also ensure we avoid a hefty fine and points on our licence, if caught with illegal tyres.

Checks should be carried out by car drivers at least once a month and by motorcyclists at least once a week – and always before long journeys.

When it comes to our cars, a tyre safety check is one of the most important checks we can carry out and yet so many of us don't do it, or don't know how to. Let us change that today and show our family members and friends as well - helping everyone to stay safer on the roads.

Anjuli Cooper,  
IAM RoadSmart Marketing Team

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My sister bet me I couldn't make a car out of spaghetti. You should have seen her face as I drove pasta.

Who earns a living driving their customers away? A taxi driver!

# Powderham Show

A few of our members attended the Powderham Show in July. There was some take-up on our free assessment drive offer, and also some interest in our Highway Code quiz.



# Roads Research Reveals Surprises

From the longest and oldest to the deadliest and most troublesome, a list of 15 of the most eye-opening bits of road trivia has been revealed.

Millions of Brits take to and rely on the UK's roads every day but a surprising number will have little or no knowledge of their history.

Motoring giant LeaseCaruk has researched some of the most surprising facts and figures to do with driving and roads in a bid to educate and inspire the country's road users.

The UK's oldest road is the Ridgeway dating back more than 5,000 years and stretching from Wiltshire to Berkshire. The world's first tarmac road was built in 1902 in Nottingham – what is now Radcliffe Road.

According to The Guinness Book of World Records, the worst ever traffic jam to date was on April 5, 1985, when there was a 40 mile hold up on the M1. It snaked all the way from junction 1-18 leaving hundreds trapped on their cars for hours.

Australia's Highway 1 is the longest road in the world, stretching more than 9,000 miles. The most dangerous road in the world is in Bolivia. The North Yungus Road, a 35 mile stretch between La Paz and Coroico is also known as Death Road as the single lane track is estimated to take the lives of around 300 drivers each year.

The UK Highway Code will be 87 this year. First published in 1931 and costing just one penny, this edition contained just 18

pages of advice (it runs to 145 pages today) and did not mention mirrors.

The UK's first motorway opened in 1958 and stretched for just eight miles – this was known as the M6 Preston Bypass. The first pedestrian killed by a car in the UK was Bridget Driscoll, 44, of Croydon in 1896.

When the M1 first opened on November 2<sup>nd</sup> 1959 it was a death trap. There was no noted speed limit, crash barriers, central reservation or even lighting.

Potholes account for a third of mechanical issues on UK roads costing British motorists and estimated £2.8 billion each year. The total road length in Great Britain was estimated to be 245,400 miles in 2012. This means that if you could lay all those roads out in a straight line into space you would go past the moon which is 238,855 miles from earth.

Taking DIY to the ultimate extreme, in 2014 a businessman from Bath built his own toll road through fields to avoid delays caused by work on a route near to his home. Hoping to recoup the cost of the road he began charging drivers £2 per journey.

Japan issues one of the world's hardest driving tests. Learners must be over 18 and the test is taken on a simulated course. A fail can result before the driver even gets in the car – if they don't bend down low enough to check underneath for cats.

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## Membership

Carolyn Cleasby has now taken on the role of membership and will be your point of contact from now on. Please continue to use the membership email address listed on the contacts page.

# Life Saving Road Safety Innovations Investigated

Every now and then a practical demonstration has a far better impact than a highly detailed engineering report packed with facts. Ramming two cars into street lamps to show how a simple change of construction can save lives is an example of this. One of the lamp posts is a conventional steel design, found on roads and motorways around the UK; the other is aluminium, passive safety post that's slowly becoming more common across the network.

In the first collision, with the original lamp, the driver and passengers would all have died, while in the other, they would have walked away unscathed with nothing but a dented bonnet to show for their impact with the new, safer, cutting-edge design.

Britain's roadside infrastructure is heading towards a major upgrade in terms of tech and safety. To find out what highways agencies and various tech companies have in store for us, Auto Express visited the Traffex Seeing is Believing road safety conference at Bruntingthorpe, Leicestershire.

The number of road fatalities is on the rise in the UK. In 2016, there were 1,792 people killed on our roads, a four per cent increase from the previous year and the highest number recorded by the Department for Transport since 2011. While road accidents come in many forms, any mitigation and prevention is a step in the right direction. Upgrading lamp posts and street signs to 'passive' versions will help reduce fatalities and injuries from vehicles that have lost control.

"Passive safety systems have been around for years. The first passive sign post was developed in Finland back in 2002," says Ian McDonald, national sales manager at Pole Products.

“We’re working closely with Highways England and Transport Scotland to drum up more support for passive safety technology. We’re already seeing it around high-speed roundabouts and some high-speed roads, but it’s important that local councils adopt this technology,” McDonald says. He goes on to explain the three stages of passive safety. The first is No Energy, which doesn’t slow the car down, but breaks on impact. The idea is that drivers will be able to bring the car to a stop themselves.

The second is Low Energy, where the street lamp, post or road sign slows the car slightly, but still allows the driver to remain in control. The third, High Energy, is aimed at bringing the vehicle to an immediate stop by absorbing much of the energy of the crash.

“Today, we’re showcasing the Low Energy lamp posts,” explains McDonald. “The aluminium construction allows the car to drive through the lamp post, helping the driver to maintain control.” The Low Energy post looks identical to a steel one, except the bottom has a plastic housing on which the post sits. When struck, the post will simply pop out of the housing, distributing the force of the crash elsewhere.

As a comparison, a traditional steel lamp post has been lined up. A Jaguar S-Type is accelerated (remotely) towards the steel pole at 60mph and the impact is violent and noisy. The Jag half flips in the air while the pole bends and whips at its rear. The car then spins off the road, a total wreck. On closer inspection, McDonald and his safety technicians conclude: “This would have definitely been fatal. The intrusion and crash damage is severe.” The roof is squashed and the interior mangled.

Next up is the passive safety pole. Again, a vehicle is accelerated at 60mph towards the pole. This time, the Vauxhall Vectra simply drives through the pole. The lamp post flings into the air, snapping off from the plastic mount and landing on the ground, but the car continues in a straight line.

“This is the impressive bit,” says McDonald. “As you can see, even without a driver the car maintained its course. Were there to be a driver in the car, he or she could have brought it to a standstill quickly.” The damage on the Vectra is minimal. But demonstrations like this hopefully drive the point home for councils to start investing in better roadside infrastructure.”

It’s not just drivers who need protection, though. Roadworkers are at risk from aggressive, inattentive motorists. Highways England data shows from July to September 2017 there were 3,500 incidents involving vehicles and highway workers, 150 of them serious. Four roadworkers were injured, as were two drivers. There are even courses now teaching roadworkers conflict resolution management and self-defence. “One of the big dangers to roadworkers is exposure to traffic,” says Karl Simpson, in charge of innovation and business improvement at Kier Group – Highways.

Any motorway works will have hundreds of cones lining off traffic, but these don’t do much to stop a car or lorry that’s out of control. Highways England has teamed up with Kier Highways to purchase two trucks featuring 60 feet sections to protect workers. Whether the truck is stationary or being driven at low speed, the three 20-foot metal blocks act as a barrier between the traffic and workers. Any potential impact would hit the lorry, which is built specifically to withstand crashes and guard the workers. “Each truck costs £350,000, but that’s nothing compared with a serious injury to a roadworker or a fatality,” says Simpson.

One of the most hazardous jobs for roadworkers is placing temporary road markings. At present, two crew members do this on foot, with one tarring the markers and the other placing them on the road by hand. But British roadside construction firm WJ Group has created another truck to take the danger out of the task.

“We spent millions developing this truck,” says WJ Group managing director Wayne Johnston. “It’s a prototype, but we hope



to see it on the roads soon.” The truck features a hydraulic pressing machine that places the green studs on the road. All the operator has to do is to feed the machine, while the driver keeps a straight line and steady speed. “The operator is protected by a cage, so even if a car strikes the truck, they’ll be safe,” says Johnston.

WJ Group is also innovating the central road markings. It’s created a new, dotted central reservation marking that’s not only more visible thanks to specialised reflective particles in the compound, but also grippier and less prone to aquaplaning.

“Our central reservation markings are five times more visible than standard markings,” says Johnston. “The dotted pattern allows water to drain far quicker, instead of remaining on the surface. This makes them better and safer, especially for vulnerable road users like motorcyclists. They are also grippier.” The firm is said to be trialling the tech with Highways England.

Technology isn’t just automating putting out road markings, though; it’s also helping keep workers safe when picking up litter from the UK network. An incredible 550 sacks of rubbish are collected from the road and roadside each day, costing taxpayers £8million a year. To speed up the process, and keep workers off the road and out of harm’s way, cleaning specialist Barber has developed the Road Rake.

This green machine is dragged behind a van on the roadside. As it goes over trash, bits of broken tyre and even debris from accidents, a system of conveyor belts and metal spinners gobbles up all of the rubbish. The Road Rake is still on trial for now, like most of these innovations, but as we’ve seen, if councils have the foresight to invest in them, they could radically improve safety on our roads and for our roadworkers.

# Small Cars Carry Biggest Risk

Owners of Smart cars are the most likely to have their vehicles vandalised, with one in every hundred falling prey to damage such as door scratches and graffiti each year.

In fact, its bad news for small cars in general as the second most commonly vandalised brand was Mini with one in every thousand cars succumbing to vandalism. Next on the list was Alfa Romeo followed by BMW, Mazda, Peugeot. Saab, Fiat. Mercedes and Citroen – showing that vandals don't appear to be too picky. Remarkably though, it's not the UK's best sellers that suffer.

Ford, Volkswagen and Vauxhall make some of the country's most popular cars, yet do not claim as much as less popular brands.

The findings come from an analysis of motor insurance claims by Churchill Car insurance who say that on average a claim for vandalism is made every 22 minutes. The increasing complexity of modern cars means these claims are more costly than they used to be too – the value of claims has risen by more than 40% in the last five years.

Cosmetic damage is the most frequent type of vehicle vandalism claim, making up 15% of claims. It's followed by damage to the front bumper and front door, which make up 12% each. The firm also found that claims peak during Halloween, when pranksters are rife.

Steve Barrett, head of car insurance at Churchill said 'A moment of anger or mindlessness on the part of a vandal can cause victims long lasting stress and as our research shows, a large amount of money'.

# Potholes Costing Drivers £1 Million a Month

*Pothole claims for first four months of the year equal to all claims in 2017 as roads become “national embarrassment”*

An ‘epidemic’ of potholes is causing £1 million of damage to vehicles every month, according to new insurance data. Figures from the AA, extrapolated across the whole of the UK insurance market, indicate 4,200 drivers have claimed for pothole damage since the start of the year. The company’s director of insurance, Janet Connor, said the UK’s roads had become a “national embarrassment”, as “local council budgets have been squeezed” so much “they don’t have the resources to keep their roads up to scratch.” Connor added that the £1 million a month figure was likely to be the tip of the pothole iceberg, as the damage caused frequently “doesn’t justify making an insurance claim... so the claims we are seeing are clearly much worse than that.”

The AA estimates when drivers do make an insurance claim, payouts average £1,000. The company said it had seen a growing number of claims in which cars had been left “severely damaged and undriveable”. The AA said it had seen the same number of claims from January to April this year as it had for the whole of 2017.

The Department for Transport earmarked an extra £100 million in pothole relief in March this year, but experts say Britain’s roads are facing a funding shortfall of £556 million each and every year. Previous data released following a series of Freedom of Information requests showed local councils had paid out £43 million in compensation to drivers and cyclists following pothole strikes.

## *Companies urged to dig up pavements*

Earlier this month, utility companies were asked to dig up pavements and verges instead of roads when laying new underground equipment, after the Transport Secretary sought to address Britain's pothole-ridden roads.

Chris Grayling said the Department for Transport (DfT) would ensure that telephone, electric, gas and water companies will "have to look first at laying the utilities under the pavements rather than under the roads."

Grayling cautioned that existing works including burst water mains would frequently involve roads being dug up, but he said the mindset had to move away from one of "patch and mend; fix and repair".

The UK's roads are currently experiencing unprecedented levels of decline. One study found one in eight local roads faces closure within the next year, amid a "tidal wave of deterioration" made worse by the cold weather in February and March. Grayling told the Times that as "you get far fewer holes appearing in intact roads than roads that have been regularly dug up", he considered that "one part of the solution is having fewer roadworks". He added that utility companies would have to show they had considered digging up pavements or verges before being given permission to dig up roads.

Utility companies would not be able to dig up pavements on both sides of the same road at the same time, but Grayling's plans met with resistance in some quarters. Stephen Joseph, chief executive of the Campaign for Better Transport, told the Times pavements are currently in a "terrible state", adding: "Unless Chris Grayling is prepared to make much more money available for pavements, he will simply make an already big problem a whole lot worse."

## ***Pothole breakdowns double***

The Transport Secretary's comments arrived as Britain's ravaged roads were shown to be behind the number of cars breaking down after a pothole impact doubling over six months.

Analysis of breakdown data found the proportion of cars breaking down following a pothole impact rose from 1.2 per cent in the final quarter of 2017 to 2.3 per cent in the first quarter of 2018. The figures, obtained by the RAC after analysing its callouts, found 5,540 drivers broke down in the first quarter of 2018 after their cars sustained damage likely to be attributed to pothole strikes, up from 2,841 in the final quarter of 2017. Broken alloy wheels, damaged shock absorbers and snapped suspension springs were among the faults that prompted callouts.

The first three months of 2018 saw the third-highest proportion of pothole-related breakdowns on record, with the RAC attributing the increase to recent cold weather conditions in February and March. David Bizley, the organisation's chief engineer, said: "Anecdotally, few would disagree that the harsh cold weather experienced over the last three months has led to a further deterioration of road surfaces." Bizley explained that while pothole breakdowns in the first-quarter were "not as high as we had been expecting", the organisation predicts as the cold weather hit late in the first quarter of the year, the RAC is "likely to see more vehicles suffering pothole damage in the second quarter of 2018 compared with recent years." Commenting on road-funding trends, Bizley added: "We know that many local authorities will be even more stretched in the new financial year and therefore having to deal with the effects of very poor weather in February and March will be a very unwelcome hit on their maintenance budgets for the next 12 months."

# Did you Know?

The Ministry of Transport was formed in 1919 and given authority to classify highways and allocate funding for road maintenance (Ministry of Transport Act 1919). It created a classification system for the important routes connecting large population centres or for through traffic, which were designated as Class I, and roads of lesser importance, which were designated as Class II.

Shortly after this, the numbers started to appear in road atlases and on signs on the roads themselves. The numbers of the roads changed quite frequently during the early years of the system as it was a period of heavy expansion of the network. The Trunk Roads Act 1936 gave the Ministry direct control of the major routes and a new classification system was created to identify these routes.

With the introduction of motorways in the late 1950s, a new classification M was introduced. In many cases the motorways duplicated existing stretches of A-road, which therefore lost much of their significance and were in some cases renumbered. There was no consistent approach to this renumbering – some retained their existing number as non-primary A roads (e.g. the A40 running alongside the M40), others were given "less significant" numbers (e.g. the A34 in Warwickshire became the A3400 after the M40 was built) and the remainder were downgraded to B or unclassified roads (e.g. the A38, which has been replaced by the M5 between Tiverton and Exeter). Occasionally the new motorway would take the name of the old A-road rather than having its own number. The most notable example of this is the A1(M).

# Contacts

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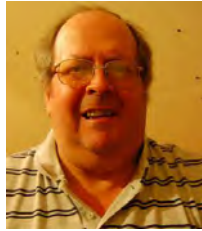
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Rob Adams  
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Tony Spiers  
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**Deadline for contributions for the next newsletter:  
18<sup>th</sup> November 2018**