

# EAST KENT GROUP

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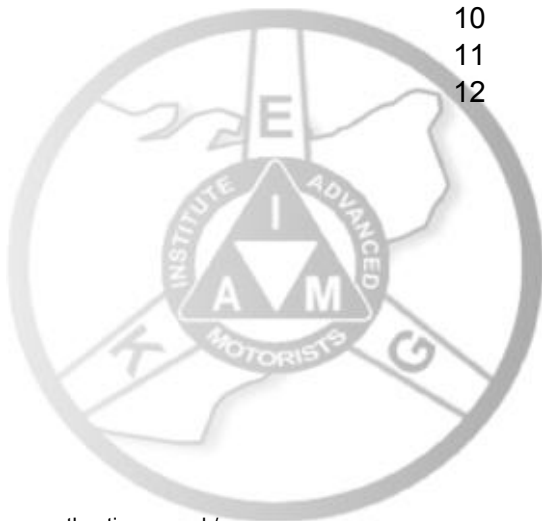
Newsletter December 2006



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**Executive Officers**

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**Committee**

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Associate Co-ordinator	Elizabeth Cooper 31 Charlton Avenue, Dover. CT16 2LZ elizabeth@eastkentiam.org.uk	01304 204405

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If you need to contact any of the above, please do so before 10 PM.  
Should the person you require not be available, please contact any other member who  
will deal with your enquiry or pass on your message as soon as possible.  
Thank you.

Well, last time I sat down to write my editorial I was on my way down to Devon for this year's Legendary Grand Tour.

It was a huge success and the total raised, this year alone, for the Children's Hospice South West tops £50,000, bringing our total so far to £121,000+. This puts us about £20,00 from our target, which will be used to construct a special messy play area in the new hospice that is currently being built near Bristol.

In addition to the LGT, we also took part in the inaugural Brewers Fayre Run, which has been dubbed the largest ever pub crawl, incorporating 13 pubs in 13 hours in the south west. I think it was more like 11 pubs in 15 hours, and involved 2 hours sat on the A30 near Bodmin, which was delightful, as you can imagine, and totalled near to 500 miles. It was extremely exhausting, but very satisfying and generated another large chunk of money for the hospice.

We returned from Devon with a new addition to our motoring family, and Jock is now the proud parent of Jock Junior, the half-mini trailer! I am hoping he will prove to more economical than the roof box we have used until now. The new engine, combined with a roof box prompt the fuel gauge to gallop to empty at an alarming rate!!

Jock has been less than grateful though, throwing up problem after problem at me, including random electrics (non-functioning stereo and horn), a dodgy earth on the indicators and now the drivers window is dropping at the front, which means I can no longer open it and hence steam up more than is useful. All this after I bought him a new set of tyres as the old ones were obviously very cheap and had about as much grip as a banana skin, and that level of sliding should be confined to a skid pan!

All that remains now is for me to wish you a Merry Christmas and save driving in the New Year!

*Michelle*

*Please send me any articles, letters, rants, suggestions or comments, either by e-mail to: [michelle@eastkentiam.org.uk](mailto:michelle@eastkentiam.org.uk), or by snail mail to: Flat 5, 13 Paragon, Ramsgate, Kent, CT11 9JX*



### Chairman's Report 2006

Well, here we are again. It gives me great pleasure to present this, my last Chairman's Report, if you see what I mean. It is a report of our year since the last AGM, various activities, ups and downs, and so on.

On the social side, we continued to gather here at Littlebourne every second Thursday of the month for a couple of hours of conversation, meeting and greeting new associates, guzzling tea and noshing biscuits, some with jam in the middle. Here, I must thank Glen for procuring and serving all our refreshments at these social meetings. They also served to congratulate newly qualified members and hand out their pass certificates, along with those for newly qualified Observers. This is most important, and a recognition of their commitment, knowledge and skill. After all, that's why they joined the IAM, and then, maybe, went on to become Observers. We have had many an interesting guest speaker, with our own Gary Nichols putting household items under the microscope, luckily not my household, Chris Wade with stunning photo travelogue - why can't mine be like that? Paul Berry on training police drivers, Kent Air Ambulance - bet they wish Richard Hammond had crashed in Kent! I hope we all use our high-vis jackets, courtesy of Thomas Craig, when we are stuck at the edge of the road, waiting for Eric Gowler, AA Patrolman extraordinaire, and East Kent Member, to come and rescue us. Cliff East brought his rather big and impressive Firetruck from Manston, taking the test in that would be a little challenging! Not to be left out, John and I had a go - well, John, mainly, talking about Optometrists, glasses, eyes etc.

In this 50th year of the IAM there have been some initiatives from Head Office to open out more to the public, including Drivecheck, which is an assessment of the public's driving, abilities, a sort of "IAM-Lite", and when possible, we have taken drivers out, to at least give them a little taster of what we are about - to sow the seed, we hope. With this in mind we had an Open Day at Hersden in May, when, despite somewhat unseasonal weather, a fair number of assessment drives were undertaken, Roadcraft Videos watched, and constructive and maybe instructive conversations with the public were had. There was, perhaps, a less than optimum attendance by Group Members. The Manoeuvring contest was most enjoyable - can't recall the winner, though. Many thanks to Richard Hazell and Vic Reynolds for much hard work, all the helpers on the day, and not least Mr Whannell of the HGV Centre, for the very much appreciated free use of facilities. There continues to be a demand for visits to the Skid-pan at the Kent Police HQ, and I would encourage people to go on this, as slippery, icy and snowy roads can always be a threat, despite all your ABS, EBD, 4WD's etc.

In the capable hands of Alan Hollands, the Drive-In Centre at Kingston has attracted a steady flow of people, a mixture of the Public, Prospective Members, Associates and Observers, with at one end those who just wanted to dip their toes in the water, through those who were preparing for their assessment, right up to Observers looking to further improve their skills, and it would be nice to see some more Group Members come along to join in the fun.

As ever, the day-to-day running of the Group has been largely down to Committee Members other than me, Alan and Richard I have already mentioned, and they are well involved with training new Observers, along with Ted Willey. They are grappling with the ideas of NOTS, the probably soon-to-be-introduced National Observer Training Scheme, another 50th anniversary initiative.

As ever, Neil Oliver, the Gordon Brown of East Kent Group, beavered away in the background, and sometimes the foreground, as treasurer, variously allowing and refusing expenditure according to some deeply obscure rules.

Carol Stone, our Membership Secretary, kept a close eye on all us lot, computer woes and Land's End to John O'Groats - or was it the other way round - notwithstanding. So all those who haven't paid their membership yet, please form a queue.

Michelle Stone continued to turn out a very professional Newsletter, and is always looking for contributions. So, if you feel you have something to say to all the membership, not just us here today, then an article or letter is the way to do it. If you are allergic to paper, then the website, again courtesy of Michelle, is the route you should take.

Elizabeth Cooper has tackled the sometimes tricky job of marrying up Associates with Observers, having to consider both time and location, and keeping track of who has passed, or not, as the case may be.

Nick Williams, committee member without portfolio, or committee member at large, has been very helpful, as he can pitch in without having to "fight his corner", so to speak.

Now, we have two Committee Members who are giving up their present posts - Sheila Redwood, who has been Secretary since at least 1998, when I joined, has performed sterling service, sorting out Hall-hire, speaker-sourcing, letter and email writing and replying, fielding phone-calls from all and sundry, minute-taking and sorting out agendas for meetings, along with general problem-solving, and various other things, has decided to allow somebody else the opportunity of managing all these disparate activities. We all thank her for running a very tight ship, making sure we all do the things we are supposed to, and on time. Thank you, Sheila.

I have decided that five years Chairmanship is about the realistic time limit for me, and it is time for the Group to evolve, with somebody else at the helm, who may have a different way of looking at things, and different priorities. I really have enjoyed the last five years, and look forward to continued service within the Group.

Thank you and all the best.

*Nigel*

**Observer Co-Ordinator's Annual Report  
12th October 2006**

The last twelve months have been very busy, ground breaking and consequently very interesting.

To celebrate the Institute's 50th Anniversary, we held an Open Day, the Institute introduced the "Check Drives", and we have held 2 Training courses, the current one being run in conjunction with a Pilot Scheme, working towards the introduction of a National Observer Training Scheme involving a Trainee Observer Development Portfolio.

The Open Day included free "Drive Checks", incorporated our annual "Manoeuvres" session and we enjoyed the attendance of a Ministry of Defence Fire Engine, with a centralised driving seat. In spite of truly awful weather conditions, we provided 8 "Drive Checks" of which 3 followed up with signing on to the Skills For Life Scheme. Obviously, the weather conditions affected attendance, but the lack of Group membership support for the event was still disappointing and frustrating for those who worked hard, both in preparation and on the day, to make the Open Day a success.

The introduction of the "Drive Checks" involved quite a lot of preparation and paper work, to ensure the process was properly understood and followed through. Although it was quite useful on the Open Day, the rate of "take-up" since then has been disappointing. This disappointment has been compounded by HQ, who have seen fit to introduce a new "Drive Check" Form including Driving Licence and Eyesight checks which would appear to contradict current policy in operation.

The training has proven to be quite a heavy commitment. We are currently embarked on our second Training Course this year, due to both the need for more Observers, and the Pilot Scheme for a National Training Scheme. It would appear to me that the National Training Scheme could well lead to a National Vocational Qualification judging by the emphasis on the volume of Core Skills Units to be accredited. Consequently, the Pilot Scheme has had implications in terms of time commitment for the length of the Training course (having been raised from 4 to 7 weeks duration), for the volunteer Trainee's, the Trainers involved and Senior Observers acting as Mentors, 3 out of the 4 being the Trainers already involved. As a result of this Year's activities, it has at times felt like full-time employment, and whilst there is a need for a National Standard, it should be born in mind that Observers carry out their function as a hobby, i.e. as a leisure activity, not as a full-time activity. There is also concern at the "drop out" level of Trainees, a proportion of which do not appear to be prepared to undertake the amount of reading and preparation required. This had led us to agree to consider the recruitment process for the next Training Course. The positive outcome of the Training Courses has been the high calibre of those qualifying.

We currently have 6 Senior, 12 Qualified, 1 Group and 7 Trainee Observers, making a total of 26.

The Drive-in continues to be a very useful resource, usually attracting between 11 and 15 people on the first Sunday of every month. It continues to be attended by new Associates (particularly those awaiting allocation of an Observer), members, Trainees and occasionally interested members of the public. We are, however, disappointed that members of the group are not taking up the opportunity to have refresher checks, bearing in mind that only by regularly practising advanced skills can we truly call ourselves Advanced Drivers and make a contribution to increased "Road Safety".

In conclusion, I again would like to thank members of the committee, and particularly Elizabeth Cooper, Ted Willey and Alan Hollands who continue to share, and halve, the work load and responsibility, for their invaluable support, and to all the Observers and Trainees for all their hard work and commitment.

*Richard*

### **Associate Co-ordinators Report**

#### **Associates**

We currently have 38 Active associates and 11 current Non-active associates. They have decided, in most cases, that studying for the test was not for them. Where possible, we have been able to allocate associates to observers within a short time of their joining but the observers have not always been in the same area as the associates so occasionally this has been a problem.

#### **Test Passes**

01.04.01 – 01.03.02	23 passes
01.04.02 – 31.03.03	39 passes
01.04.03 – 31.03.04	34 passes
01.04.04 – 31.03.05	38 passes
01.04.05 – 31.03.06	25 passes
01.04.02 – 09.10.02	21 passes
01.04.03 – 09.10.03	18 passes
01.04.04 – 09.10.04	26 passes
01.04.05 – 09.10.05	14 passes
01.04.06 – 09.10.06	16 passes

For the year 1 April 2005 to 31 March 2006, we achieved 25 passes, which is a drop on that obtained in the previous year. The main reason for this is the number who did not complete training and the problems with test delays due to examiner problems earlier in the year. For the period from 1 April 2006 to date, we have had 16 passes and we have quite a few associates waiting for test dates, so hopefully, the annual total compared to last year, should be beaten.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank Richard Hazell for the help he has given me during the year.

*Elizabeth*

#### **Income and Expenditure Account for Year Ended 31 May 2006**

See over page

*Neil*

EAST KENT GROUP OF ADVANCED MOTORISTS (Registered Charity No. 1049659)  
 INCOME AND EXPENDITURE ACCOUNT  
 FOR YEAR ENDED 31 MAY 2006

	2006		2005	
	£	p	£	p
<b>Income</b>				
Subscriptions:				
Group Full Members	1,635.00		1,490.00	
Group Associate Members	1,585.00		1,367.00	
Group Friends	<u>6.00</u>	3,226.00	<u>12.00</u>	2,869.00
Profit on Raffles & Socials		184.39		166.13
Sales from Group Shop		51.98		34.00
Outside Events		0.00		1.60
Gift Aid		1,083.10		0.00
Bank Interest		296.75		254.62
<b>Total Income</b>		<u>4,842.22</u>		<u>3,325.35</u>

<b>Expenses</b>				
Postage		351.28		331.08
Newsletter Production		456.00		396.00
Stationery		208.96		236.63
Room Hire		282.00		244.00
Senior Observer Test Fees		0.00		70.00
Group Insurance		114.44		281.50
Conference Expenses		0.00		48.00
Publicity		99.78		20.84
Associate and Observer Training Expenses		593.77		418.56
Speakers' Expenses		77.00		25.60
Depreciation		358.38		59.73
Group Shop Cost of Sales		39.41		27.38
Sundry Expenses		208.32		122.87
<b>Total Expenses</b>		<u>2,787.34</u>		<u>2,282.19</u>

**Surplus for Year** 2,054.88 1,043.16

**BALANCE SHEET  
 AS AT 31 MAY 2006**

	2006		2005	
	£	p	£	p
<b>Fixed Assets</b>				
Equipment (At Cost)	1,802.45		1,802.45	
Accumulated Depreciation	<u>(787.03)</u>	1,015.42	<u>(428.65)</u>	1,373.80
<b>Current Assets</b>				
Stocks	428.83		352.01	
Prepayments and Accrued Income	110.79		124.54	
Deposit Account	7,471.83		5,069.78	
Current Account	280.85		1,043.88	
Cash in Hand	<u>0.00</u>		<u>14.00</u>	
	<u>8,292.30</u>		<u>6,804.21</u>	
<b>Current Liabilities</b>				
Sundry Creditors	52.43		777.60	
Subscription Paid in Advance	<u>10.00</u>		<u>10.00</u>	
	<u>62.43</u>		<u>787.60</u>	
<b>Net Current Assets</b>		8,229.87		5,816.61
<b>Net Assets</b>		<u>9,245.29</u>		<u>7,190.41</u>
<b>Capital Account</b>				
Opening Balance		7,190.41		6,147.25
Surplus for Year		<u>2,054.88</u>		<u>1,043.16</u>
<b>Closing Balance</b>		<u>9,245.29</u>		<u>7,190.41</u>

## Driving On Our Roads? What Does The Future Hold?

Environmental issues have never been higher on the agenda than today and with this has come concerted pressure on the motorist. Deemed as one of the most highly polluting sources of pollution, the question has now fallen on how to shift people away from their cars. Initiated by the Stern Review, a number of additional schemes have either been introduced or are currently being planned, leading to the question of what does the future hold for the motorist?

The Stern Review stated one overriding conclusion, that the world must act now on climate change or face devastating consequences. Unfortunately it also appears that this action is going to lead to devastating consequences for motorists. Various proposals in the Stern Review were suggested, including introducing a fuel-price stabiliser, meaning when fuel prices they will never be able to fall again, and per mile road charging.

Taking a deeper look into each proposal uncovers fundamental flaws. Artificially setting prices has never made economic sense and furthermore, the fuel price stabiliser would simply have the effect of desensitising people from changes in the fuel price. Consider a huge rise in fuel prices which subsequently fall but this fall is not reflected in the price. People become used to this new higher price and when they see that it stays at this level for many months they become used to it, never lowering their consumption, even if fuel prices then begin to gradually rise.

Then there's per mile road charging. As it stands people are charged on a per mile basis - the further one drives the more fuel

they use and the more they pay. Is this not a ploy to generate even more revenue and prepare for a time when cars no longer run on fuel? If everyone was to suddenly switch to electric cars the government would lose a vital source of revenue. Per mile road charging could fill in the shortfall, brought in under the umbrella of concern for the environment.

A couple of new road charges have been brought in. The first, to be introduced in Richmond-upon-Thames, is that homeowners will be charged a fee to park their vehicle outside their homes, the value of the charge depending on the type of car they own. Residents' parking restrictions, initially introduced to help homeowners park outside their homes, are suddenly being turned against the very people they were meant to help.

The London Congestion charge has already risen to £8 a day from its original £5 a day, and proposals were unveiled recently to charge so-called "gas-guzzlers" £25 a day to drive into Central London. An extortionate amount by anyone's standards.

However, something has to be done to protect the environment so what's wrong with making a start and pricing polluting motorists and vehicles off the road? It's certainly hard to argue against the fact that some cars do pollute large amounts of greenhouse gases and they should be discouraged. But isn't the real fact to emerge from all this that the car driver is simply an easy target? Infrastructure is already in place whereby large additional taxes can be introduced whilst many people have little choice but to use their car, meaning that the revenue generated from these taxation schemes will be significant. Even the Stern Review

undermines its argument against the motorist by producing figures showing that transport is responsible for 14% of all the emissions of greenhouse gases in the UK. Transport that includes car travel, lorries, buses, trains, ships and aircrafts. In addition, the argument is that economic growth will suffer if we fail to act now. This simply neglects the effect of imposing huge taxes on motorists, seriously inhibiting people's ability to travel to work and help the economy, and this is all without even mentioning a certain rapidly growing country -China.

*By Charles Cridland*

About the Author: Charles Cridland founded YourParkingSpace.co.uk, a site where you can offer your driveway or garage for rent, or find long-term parking spaces for rent.

## **About Us**

### **How can the Group help me?**

The Group offers observed runs to Associates on a one-to-one basis in their own cars. Your driving skills and attitude to all aspects of motoring and road use will be closely monitored by an Observer (a full Group member who has already passed the advanced driving test). Your Observer (who is a volunteer) will give you practical guidance, constructive advice, and support to help you to pass the advanced test.

### **How much does it cost?**

The Skill for Life package which includes Associate Group Membership, the IAM Book "Pass Your Advanced Driving Test", the Advanced Test and the first year's membership of the IAM when you pass, costs just £85. As an Associate member, you will benefit from the Group's activities and have as many observed runs as you need to attain the IAM Test standard, (there is no additional charge for the observed runs). Associate membership is given on the understanding that you will apply for the advanced test within the first 12 months after joining the Group.

### **How does the Group Operate?**

The dates, times, and meeting places for your observed runs are arranged directly with your Observer. The Group itself meets socially at 7:30 p.m. on the second Thursday of each month at the Littlebourne War Memorial Hall, (4 miles east of Canterbury on the A257), OS Grid Reference TR208575.

### **How do I join the Group?**

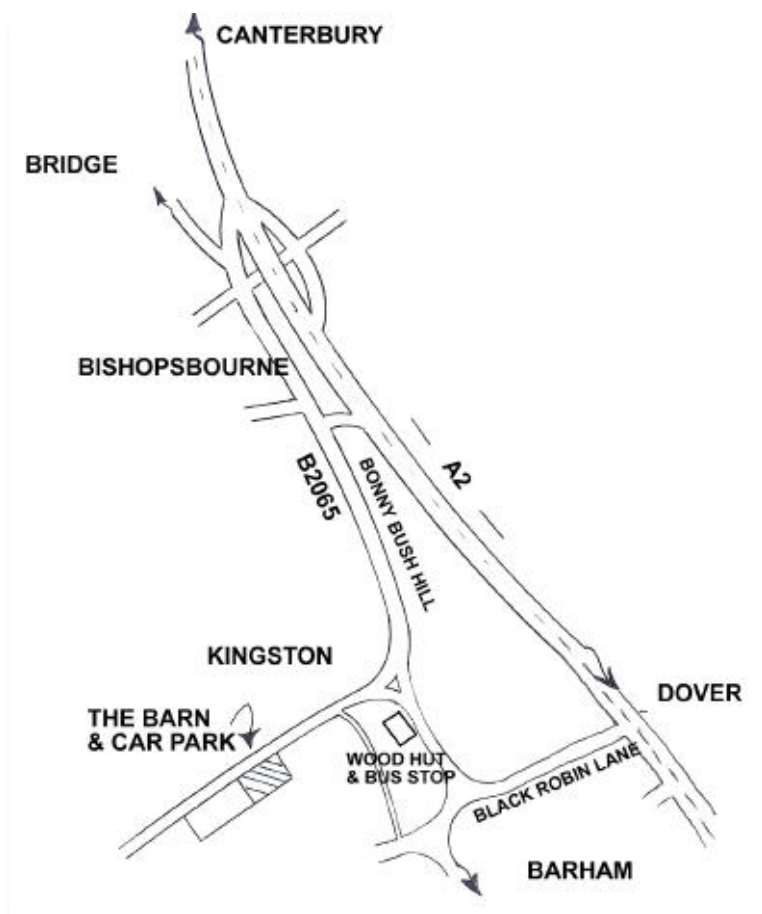
If you contact Mrs Sheila Redwood, 01227 462676, she will be able to give you full details, or visit our website at: <http://www.eastkentiam.org.uk>

The sessions are run the first Sunday of every month, from 10 am – 12 noon.

PLEASE NOTE: There will be no session in January.

To find 'The Barn', Kingston:

- Leave the A2 – Canterbury to Dover Road – at the junction signposted "Bishopsbourne Kingston and Barham".
- Take the B2065 signposted "Kingston, Barham and Elham".
- At the bottom of "Bonny Bush Hill" turn right by the bus shelter into "The Street".
- Pass "Church Lane" on the left and The Barn and adjoining car park are within 200m on the left.



**New Associates since the last update**

Sharon Smith  
 Stephanie Evans  
 Samantha Reed  
 Peter Maxted  
 Trevor Cobb  
 Anita Berry  
 Christopher Berry  
 David Jewel  
 John Hemmons  
 Kieran Chakravorty  
 Stewart Johnson

**Events Data**

Littlebourne War Memorial Hall  
 - Second Thursday - 19.30pm

**14 December** - Our Christmas social

**11 January** - Graham Bailey - Paramedic

**8 February** - Steve Birkett,  
 Chief Immigration Officer

**8 March** - To be confirmed

**12 April** - To be confirmed

**Test Passes****Period:**

06.08.06 - 21.10.06

<b>Associate</b>	<b>Date</b>	<b>Observer</b>
Larry Klatzko	13.08.06	Nick Williams
Lorraine White	27.08.06	Jane Clarke
Janine Young	02.09.06	Richard Blackford
David Glanville	18.09.06	Eric Gowler
Anthony Baker	05.10.06	Ted Willey
Julie Pierce	21.10.06	Richard Meadows
David Pierce	21.10.06	Ron Sims

If you haven't been mentioned in the Test Passes and you think you should be, please contact Elizabeth. Thank you.

Final Copy Date for March Submission - 8 February 2007

Any views contained within this publication are not necessarily the views of the Editor, EKG or the IAM.  
 The Editor claims no liability for correctness of information, printing or typesetting errors.