

EAST KENT GROUP

Newsletter December 2007

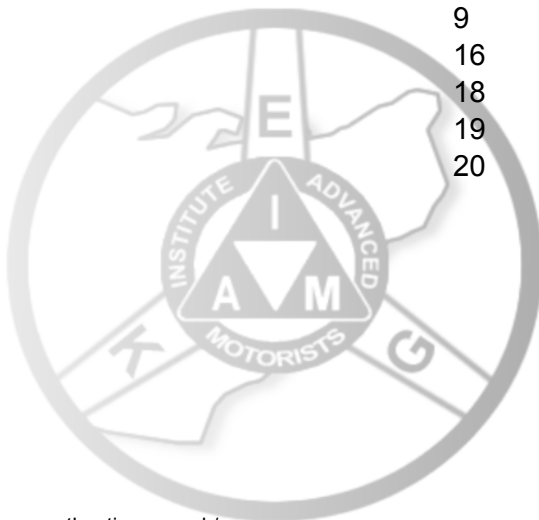
IAM

DRIVING ROAD SAFETY



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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.

I regret that I have to open this newsletter with bad news. The IAM announced the death of Christopher Bullock MBE, Chief Executive of the IAM on 19 November 2007. Christopher Bullock, 60, became IAM Chief Executive in 1994. The Press Release at the end of the magazine details his many accomplishments, but at this time all I really want to say is that my thoughts are with his wife and two sons. It is always a difficult time to lose anyone, but to lose someone before their time, very unexpectedly is particularly difficult.

I am however very glad to be able to announce the arrival of my newest nephew. Baby James David made his appearance 2 weeks early on 9 November 2007. He has been the cause of the huge waste of our time recently, but we don't mind at all. Luke, (nephew number 1), is slowly warming up to being big brother, although he did suggest at one point that Mummy and Daddy should give Baby James to Auntie. At this point they would probably be only to happy to, given that James is a very nocturnal baby, and they are both very sleep deprived, and hence incredibly ratty. Ah the joys of Auntiehood, adorable baby and lots of sleep for me!

Well we have made it to the end of another year, this one with Sheila at the helm, and will see the next year under the new (well sort of) chairmanship of Nigel. He is back for one year only. Carol Stone has also indicated that she will be standing down next year as Membership Secretary, and Richard Hazell will be standing down as Chief Observer. That means we will need some new people on the committee. Please consider putting yourselves forward to help out.

I will leave you now with wishes of a Happy Christmas and a Merry New Year, and a picture of my 2 favourite nephews!



Michelle

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

Five years as Chairman should have been enough for any sane person. Yes, I honestly felt it was time for somebody else to come forward. Sheila has very ably served for the past year. This after seven, or maybe more, years as secretary, at which she also distinguished herself.

So, here I am again, for one year only.

Talking to some IAM bikers recently, I was again reminded of some of the different approaches we and they have. One could possibly say they are a little more, er, active than we are in certain respects. This activity often takes the form of organised riding, for instance, a fish and chip run, or a Sunday morning ride. Could I put a word in for our Sunday morning activity, on the first Sunday of the month - but not January, remember. Observers, associates, those who have passed their test, and anybody else, for that matter, can come along, and have their driving assessed, in a non-threatening manner, to the Drive in Centre at the Barn, at Kingston, near Canterbury. Observers often meet at the Barn, and go out to check each other's driving, and offer each other constructive advice (honestly). As an observer, I am usually there myself. Oh, dear, that's probably put you off!

Please be especially vigilant at this time of year, as you and others may be more at risk from seasonal driving practices. May I wish you all a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year, and drive carefully.

Nigel

Chairman's AGM Report

At the end of ten years on the committee, I should like to thank them for all their help and encouragement, first whilst I was secretary and this year as chairman. I think they all do a great job and long may this continue. Vanessa has proved most able and efficient as our new Group Secretary – you had better carry on being nice to her. I don't remember if anyone said that about me when I took over from Fred!

I am very pleased that during the year Richard's job has been further split up since Elizabeth took over as Associate Co-ordinator a while ago. While he remains as Chief Observer, we now have Alan in charge of Observer training and Jane in charge of the monthly Sunday morning Drive-In. Also, at long last we have a Publicity Officer, Richard Meadows who has agreed to help when he can. Ideas to him please. Neil was telling me that he has been Group Treasurer for 18 years, which means that he was a young male driver under 30 when he started – see next month's [November] discussion. I was already entitled to a bus pass when I started. Carol, Membership Secretary and daughter Michelle, our Editor, continue to entertain us with their exploits in the Minis, along with Carol producing several different nicely wrapped raffle prizes each month – how she does it I do not know, and Michelle being our expert computer whiz – how she does that I also do not know! Nick and Nigel, Observers both, have been most helpful, the latter also bringing along presentation bottles of wine – how he chooses these, as a teetotaler, again I do not know.

Our social evenings have been very enjoyable and it would be good to see more of our membership here from time to time.

We have had three talks by different policemen or retired policemen, another by the chief immigration officer in Dover, plus one about the Enigma machine, another about a hearing aid and last month about five days on a life-raft in the middle of the Atlantic. We also enjoyed last year's Christmas social and our usual manoeuvring session, much better attended this year, was organised by Richard Hazell and helpers including Ted Willey who we are very glad to hear has made a good recovery from his op. Many thanks to all these and also to Mr. Whannell who allows us to use the H.G.V centre at Hersden each year. The John Smith Manoeuvring Trophy was won for the second time by Nigel. We also had a treasure hunt organized at short notice by John Watson – again, thank you very much.

There has been a big drop in Associates joining us during this last year, so in addition to giving ideas to Richard as mentioned previously, see if you can introduce Advanced Motoring to friends, acquaintances or even total strangers you might meet for the first time, perhaps just by talking about the last social evening or some driving experience you or he/she had. I often do. And if while training for the Test, your Observer mentions becoming an Observer yourself, think about it – you might be good at it, and of course, this is essential to keeping the Group going.

Finally, I have thoroughly enjoyed my time as Group Secretary and as Chairman for this last year, and look forward to welcoming our next Chairman, whoever he or she may be. Thank you.

Sheila

Chief Observer's Annual Report

11th October 2007

It has been another busy and challenging year on the Associates and Observers front.

Associates

As The Associates Co-ordinator has stated, for the period between April 2006 and March 2007, we achieved 3 more passes than in the corresponding period in the previous year.

Although for the period April 2007 to date we have a considerably lower figure, it does not reflect the amount of work undertaken, as we have experienced considerable delays in Tests being allocated, and even now have a number of Associates awaiting their Tests,

This has been a problem for some time for both East and Mid Kent Groups, which both the Chief Executive and Chief Examiner have now acknowledged, and are addressing, thanks largely to the Mid Kent Group and our Secretary, Vanessa Norley.

In addition to the Observed drives, we have had 11 Drive-Checks, mostly undertaken by Senior Observers up to now, whilst we are getting used to the procedures involved. These are one-offs which are undertaken in addition to the Observed Drives allocated to the Observers involved.

Our "drop-out" rate is still too high, with 23 non-active Associates, and whilst some of the reasons given are due to their personal circumstances, too high a number just give up because "it's not their thing", or a Test failure, or even having to wait too long for a Test, thereby losing their interest or enthusiasm.

Observers

We currently have 25 Observers, made up of 7 S.O.'s, 13 Qualified Observers and 5 Trainees.

Ted Willey again came top of the list with 5 Passes, with Nigel Cooke, Philip Plant and Richard Hazell with 3 passes apiece.

An area for concern that requires closer scrutiny is that of the number of runs and hours that is taking us to get an Associate through the Test.

For the period April '06 to March '07, the average number of Observed Drives was 8.75, an increase of 1.50 runs over the corresponding period of the previous Year, and the average number of hours has gone up to 14, an increase in the region of 3 hours.

For the 6 months of the current Year, the average number of Observed Drives per Test has increased to 10, and the average number of hours to 16.25.

Whilst these figures are affected by four Associates who have needed 20 plus hours to get through the Test, we must remain watchful lest we get into the realm of the 2 hour Observed Drive, which is in excess even of the time required for a Test.

The ideal to work to is that of the one hour Observed Drive, including the Briefing and De-briefing.

It is a sad aspect of voluntary work that people come and people go, and certainly a proportion of our Observers are such transients. My concern relates to the number of Driving Instructors who, having qualified as Observers, find their time taken up by an increase in their business, with a consequent loss of Observing availability.

Observer Training

As a consequence of last Year's pilot scheme, I acknowledged that the burden of the dual roles as Chief Observer and Training Officer was too much for one person, particularly since the Qualification requirements. The Committee agreed to appoint Alan Hollands as Deputy Chief Observer with particular responsibility for Training. Again as a consequence of the Pilot Project, Alan has telescoped the Training into 1 and a half week-ends, i.e.3 full days, with an emphasis on Advanced Driving Skills. We have only had one such course, and we are still working on refining the process.

Our concern, again, has been the relatively high number of Driving Instructors who have undertaken our training, with limited availability subsequent to qualification.

For the future, Alan is planning an all day refresher course for current Observers, with emphasis on Advanced Driving Skills.

Drive-In

Jane Clarke has taken on the responsibility as the Drive-In Co-ordinator, and reports that on average it is attended by 10/11 people. It is attended by Observers, trainees, Associates, interested members of the public, and at least one occasion, by an Examiner. Of course, as soon as Jane reported these figures, we enjoyed a very busy morning with 17 attendees. It's not just about driving of course, it is also an opportunity to meet with other members and chat about driving issues.

The Drive-In is also very useful as a public relations resource, and it would be terrific if those members who want or require a refresher were to make better use of it. Tell your friends and anyone you meet about it. If interested, Jane can provide you with posters. It is, of course, acknowledged that it is a resource for sinners rather than for those who attend church on a Sunday morning.

Finally

I have notified the Committee of my intention to stand down as Chief Observer as from October 2008. I am firmly of the opinion that one's effectiveness decreases after 5/7 years in this role, and the time is right to pass the role on to another committed person. By giving early notice of my intention to stand down, I am trying to give the Committee the opportunity to define the role anew, and to give members the opportunity to express an interest and/or recommend an interested individual. So, if you are interested, or are aware of someone who could be, please approach any member of the Committee.

It remains for me to thank Alan, Elizabeth and Jane for sharing my burden, and for theirs and the Committee's immense support over the last twelve months.

*Richard Hazell
Chief Observer*

Associate Co-ordinators Report 2007

As of 30/09/07, we have 30 Active associates and 23 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.

For the year 1 April 2006 to 31 March 2007, we achieved 28 passes, which is 3 more than the previous year. For the period from 1 April 2007 to date, we have had 9 passes and we have quite a few associates waiting for test dates, so hopefully, the annual total compared to last year will be increased

I would like to take this opportunity to thank all the Observers, especially Richard Hazell, for the help and support that I have received from them during the past year.

Test Passes

| | |
|---------------------|-----------|
| 01/04/05 – 31/03/06 | 25 passes |
| 01/04/06 – 31/03/07 | 28 passes |
| 01/04/06 – 09/10/06 | 16 passes |
| 01/04/07 – 30/09/07 | 9 passes |

Elizabeth

Income and Expenditure Account for Year Ended 31 May 2007

See over page

Neil

EAST KENT GROUP OF ADVANCED MOTORISTS (Registered Charity No. 1049659)
 INCOME AND EXPENDITURE ACCOUNT
 FOR YEAR ENDED 31 MAY 2007

| | 2007 | | 2006 | |
|------------------------------------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|
| | £ | p | £ | p |
| Income | | | | |
| Subscriptions: | | | | |
| Group Full Members | 1,550 | 00 | 1,635 | 00 |
| Group Associate Members | 1,314 | 00 | 1,585 | 00 |
| Group Friends | 12 | 00 | 6 | 00 |
| | <u>4,176</u> | <u>00</u> | <u>4,826</u> | <u>00</u> |
| Profit on Raffles & Socials | | 174 | 53 | 184 |
| Sales from Group Shop | | 217 | 00 | 51 |
| Outside Events | | 13 | 80 | 0 |
| Drive Check | | 5 | 00 | 0 |
| Donation | | 5 | 00 | 0 |
| Gift Aid | | 427 | 86 | 1,083 |
| Bank Interest | | 411 | 48 | 296 |
| | | <u>4,130</u> | <u>67</u> | <u>4,842</u> |
| Total Income | | <u>4,130</u> | <u>67</u> | <u>4,842</u> |
| Expenses | | | | |
| Postage | | 364 | 25 | 351 |
| Newsletter Production | | 402 | 50 | 456 |
| Stationery | | 268 | 42 | 208 |
| Room Hire | | 306 | 00 | 282 |
| Group Insurance | | 51 | 45 | 114 |
| Publicity | | 139 | 94 | 99 |
| Associate and Observer Training Expenses | | 625 | 80 | 593 |
| Speakers' Expenses | | 100 | 00 | 77 |
| Equipment Depreciation | | 411 | 32 | 358 |
| Group Shop Cost of Sales | | 165 | 55 | 39 |
| Sundry Expenses | | 138 | 92 | 206 |
| | | <u>2,974</u> | <u>15</u> | <u>2,787</u> |
| Total Expenses | | <u>2,974</u> | <u>15</u> | <u>2,787</u> |
| Surplus for Year | | <u>1,156</u> | <u>52</u> | <u>2,054</u> |

BALANCE SHEET
 AS AT 31 MAY 2007

| | 2007 | | 2006 | |
|--------------------------------|--------------|---------------|--------------|--------------|
| | £ | p | £ | p |
| Fixed Assets | | | | |
| Equipment (At Cost) | 2,053 | 09 | 1,802 | 45 |
| Accumulated Depreciation | (1,198) | 35 | (787) | 03 |
| | <u>855</u> | <u>74</u> | <u>1,015</u> | <u>42</u> |
| Current Assets | | | | |
| Stocks | 301 | 66 | 428 | 83 |
| Prepayments and Accrued Income | 102 | 42 | 110 | 79 |
| Deposit Account | 9,000 | 00 | 7,471 | 83 |
| Current Account | 142 | 99 | 280 | 85 |
| | <u>9,547</u> | <u>07</u> | <u>8,292</u> | <u>30</u> |
| Current Liabilities | | | | |
| Sundry Creditors | 0 | 00 | 52 | 43 |
| Subscription Paid in Advance | 0 | 00 | 10 | 00 |
| | <u>0</u> | <u>00</u> | <u>62</u> | <u>43</u> |
| Net Current Assets | | <u>9,547</u> | <u>07</u> | <u>8,229</u> |
| Net Assets | | <u>10,401</u> | <u>81</u> | <u>9,245</u> |
| Capital Account | | | | |
| Opening Balance | | 9,245 | 29 | 7,190 |
| Surplus for Year | | 1,156 | 52 | 2,054 |
| Closing Balance | | <u>10,401</u> | <u>81</u> | <u>9,245</u> |

Reception for the IAM

Vanessa and I ventured to London on the evening of the 14th November, for a reception for the IAM in the Houses of Parliament. Herewith my impressions, subject to permitted editorial practices in respect of chronology and certain emollient influences, as I am sure you will understand.

London, here we come: IAM meets Houses of Parliament. Hopefully a happy combination. We turn left out of Charing Cross, wade through the m \acute{e} l \acute{e} e of commuters, wanderers, drifters, tourists and paper-sellers, chance our arm with the insistent, urgent, London traffic. We find our way along Whitehall, glimpsing a greenly-lit Big Ben in the middle distance. Five to seven. Should be OK, the invitation says: "Tom Brake will host a reception for the Institute of Advanced Motorists. The Terrace Pavilion, from 7pm, admittance by this invitation only".

We march purposefully along, past the ever-present dawdlers with cameras and guidebooks, past the vast, imposing buildings of Whitehall. Past the Cenotaph, wreaths slightly dishevelled now, lonely and unregarded in the evening light. A TV political correspondent rushes past, intent on urgent matters.

Ah, here we are: St. Stephen's Entrance. Quick chat with the copper on the gate: "This way, Sir". Through to the security cabin. Several more coppers and copperesses, chatting about the weather, latest TV, what they are doing tonight, etc. "Please remove your coat.....and your jacket.....and your pens." More chat about the weather. ".....and pencils.....and combs." Stand here to be frisked. Do my impression of a scarecrow. All OK. Phew!

Through the big, imposing door: great vaulted ceilings, stonework, paintings on the walls. Division bell ringing. Where do we go? This way? That way? Dunno. Uniformed man points us ahead - along echoing, tiled floors, fifty foot and more of space above our heads. More men, more uniforms, pointing us on our way. This way, that way, left, right, right again, left, long corridor. Past sundry doors with sundry receptions. Obviously, none of them as important as ours.

"IAM reception? This way, please." Hang coats here. First left, onto the Terrace, overlooking the slate grey Thames. Hospitality tent: a hundred, maybe a hundred and fifty people. The great and the good. As expected, all the IAM big guns are there: Peter Roger, Christopher Bullock, are engaged in conversations. Nigel Mansell (he isn't any taller than I am!) ten feet away. He doesn't recognise me, obviously hasn't got his glasses on. MP's are here as well: Bob Marshall-Andrews dashes past, Lembit Opic, according to Vanessa, stands chatting in a group. Mingle and circulate, lubricated by ever-helpful glass of red. Spot some familiar faces, Roger Vickery and Maureen Curtis from Mid-Kent Group, Charles Tassell from EKAM. Chat about the meaning of this reception, the meaning of life, etc. Grab a canap \acute{e} - just the one - can't be getting too porky, can we! Buttonhole members from other groups. Nice to chat, see how they do things, the similarities and differences, the problems they have. How do they motivate their members/keep their observers in order/organise their associates? Do they do one-to-one or run structured courses for associates? All the same old problems...."Have another canap \acute{e} , another glass of red - oh, yes, please! After all, I'm not driving tonight - let the train take the strain."

I'm standing near the podium and mike. Up strides a young bloke: "Good evening, everyone. My name's Tom Brake," I paraphrase somewhat: "I thank you all for coming.....nice to see such a turnout.....I passed my IAM test and I have the greatest admiration for the IAM.....the standard of the test.....and I would like to introduce David Kenworthy, Chairman of the IAM." The Chairman stands up, welcomes us all, relates an anecdote or two, discloses he is here to introduce Nigel Mansell, who will present Drivecheck certificates for those participating MP's, ten in all, if I recall. Now, that's the way to encourage Drivecheck, give everyone a certificate for it.

Nigel M stands on podium (he's taller than me now), says a few kind words, suffers a few official photographs, smiles all round. David K prepares to hand out first certificate to first MP and announces first MP's name. Looks round expectantly. Nigel M looks round expectantly. We all look around expectantly. First MP is obviously a little hard of hearing. Ah, well, number two on the list. No response. Two aurally challenged MP's. Well I never. Whispers are whispered, certificates are shuffled. DK tries a different tack: "Is there an MP in the room?" It would seem there are two members present of the ten. They receive their certificates a little self-consciously from NM with the obligatory congratulations, obligatory photos and obligatory applause.

Formalities over, we all mingle and continue to discuss this and that. I manage a word or two with DK. It seems one of the aims of this parliamentary exercise, the second one, apparently, is to raise the profile of the IAM, albeit ever so slightly, among those who matter. Is this succeeding? Who can say. From little acorns....etc., etc. Maybe we well have

another one of these, IAM pennies permitting. Another voice at the mike, an MP and active IAM member, name inexplicably erased from my memory, says hallo, and makes the usual encouraging noises. So, we have friends in parliament, well, two, anyway. One name I know, and one I don't.

Getting late now. Maybe time to say our farewells and bow out. "Carriages at 9.45", Tom Brake had said. Some of the visitors have already slid unobtrusively out the door. Nigel Mansell long since raced away (geddit?). Head Office contingent still working the remaining stalwarts. I, and they, haven't stopped talking all evening. Haven't sat down all evening. Haven't really eaten all evening. Hunger pangs getting worse. Expected four-course banquet didn't materialise. Where's Vanessa? Still gamely chatting away. Not looking too wilted at all. However, we really must be going. If we don't dawdle we should get the 10 o'clock from Charing Cross. Otherwise it's another hour. And I can grab a sandwich in the station. Should have change from a tenner. Say goodbyes, look around for promised goody-bag, promised but not delivered. Most unlike the IAM.

Grab coat, back down corridor, shorter than it was before. Floors less echoing, paintings less impressive, ceilings seemingly lower as we make our way out into the cool night air with no security stops. Big Ben? Smaller and less impressive. Whitehall still crowded, but less so. Traffic? Ditto. Wanderers and drifters? More ditto. Tourists? Nope. Paper-sellers? On yer bike!

Into the station, into the kiosk, into the train with sandwich and ten minutes to spare. Settle down on surprisingly crowded train

with PDA in one hand, and sandwich in the other, and try to record the events of the evening. And as you see, failing miserably.

Nigel

Subaru Drive Day

For my birthday this year I was given a "Drive Day" with Subaru UK and ProDrive at their Warwick test circuit. The allotted date, in July was perfect; dry, sunny and warm with a gentle breeze as we arrived at ProDrive's gatehouse. There were about sixty other lucky boys and girls there, all eager to get to have a go in some of Japan's finest exports...

ProDrive have an ex-RAF airfield as their test facility, recently brought from Lucas who used it for the same ends. The old runway has been divided up by earth banks to provide separate circuits. The perimeter track is their fast "A" road mock up, complete with pot holes, adverse camber and differential surfaces, just like the real thing!

The day was very well organised. After parking our own cars, we were whisked to the hospitality suite for a bacon roll and safety talk. We were then divided into six groups and rotated round the activities. We had different instructors for each activity. Generally they would demonstrate first and then let the punters have a go!

First off were the two "off roading" sections using Subaru Foresters and then Isuzu something or others - these were the big cab cum pick-ups favoured by builders and the like today. In a previous life I used to drive earth moving machinery and I was surprised to find that the old skills were still there, namely keep the revs down and watch well ahead for potholes etc and work

out your route to avoid them in advance. The piece de resistance was climbing a 30% ramp in second gear at tick over in the Isuzu – talk about torque!

Next was the short fast circuit in the 220 bhp Impreza WRX. The lady instructor I went with was an ex – Metropolitan Police instructor (I can't imagine many villains getting away from her). This was very fast and very intensive. After six laps of blindingly quick cornering, acceleration, braking, gear changing and intense concentration I had sweat trickling down my back and more adrenalin coursing through my veins than was decent! You would not believe how fast these cars can go round bends until you are in one! The skill is in steering, gear changing and braking with smoothness and anticipation before you get to the hazard...where have I heard that before? The only limits were the drivers abilities; you could rev or speed the cars as fast as you dare, though if the instructor felt that you were being reckless, it would be "game over" there and then; not that this happens very often evidently.

Pro Drive earns their living from development work on all sorts of motoring related projects. Subaru, Mazda. Aston Martin and many other automotive companies use their skill and expertise in developing new technologies. ProDrive will field their own F1 team next year, I understand. I had not realised that practically all the F1 cars are designed and built here in blighty. We still seem to be able to produce brilliant engineers and scientists, but are pretty useless at harnessing these folks in making mass produced cars here any more!

We had a look at a specially modified Impreza equipped with a computer controlled, hydraulically operated system

that acts on the suspension and differential, enabling the car to go so fast round the bends that the lateral "G" forces frequently makes even the hardened test drivers go green at the gills. A certain Mr J. Clarkson was recently given a demonstration of this "hush hush" bit of kit by one of their drivers and threw up before he'd completed one lap! This technology is just one of the many developments undergoing trials there.

After lunch we had our pictures taken sitting in one of the Subaru Impreza World Rally Cars. These cost around £250,000 each and strangely we were not allowed to drive these 500bhp beasts....

We then had a go on the skid pan. This has sections of cobbles and very smooth tarmac which was kept permanently wet and very slippery. Unlike the Kent Police facility, this one did utilise a sort of "baby walker" frame around the car. We were given Subaru Legacy's fitted with their "ESP" system. This can detect a skid developing and brakes the wheels independently to stop the skid from becoming totally uncontrollable. Well, up to a point... We tried the skid pan first time around with the ESP on, and were invited to put on exaggerated, silly amounts of steering input to provoke a skid. The ESP coped very well with this. With the ESP "off" the car became totally uncontrollable with the same amount of steering abuse just about immediately. I know the IAM has some concerns over this sort of technology encouraging bad driving habits, but I came away from that demonstration very impressed indeed.

Next was a chance to put the Twin Turbo 3 litre Legacy through its paces on the long, fast perimeter test track. These are real "wolf in sheep's clothing" vehicles; incredibly fast and handling very well

indeed. I'm surprised that more Police Forces don't use these on motorways etc; they would catch up with pretty well anything.

We then got to the bit I had waited for; to drive the 280bhp Impreza STi. I have one of these myself and being a responsible driver stay within the law and drive sensibly, but I had long relished the thought of going "all out" in one under track conditions. I was not disappointed!! The first demo lap with the instructor was conducted at about twice the speed I'd have thought possible. I was genuinely slack jawed at the cornering abilities of the car. My six laps were done at a pretty creditable pace, each getting successively faster as I gained confidence in the car. I was nowhere near as quick as the instructor, but then he would be, wouldn't he?

Last off was one mind-bendingly fast lap, courtesy of one of the instructors, in an RB320 (bhp) Impreza Sti, one of a limited production run of 320 named in honour of the late Richard Burns who drove for Subaru and died tragically of a brain tumour aged 34. This car did, by my reckoning, about sixty laps of the circuit and had to have its tyres replaced half way through. I was speechless after my turn. Enough said.

My only whinge is they did not do any pre-briefing in the class room using the good old wipe board. I'm sure that this would have improved our understanding and performance and enjoyment on the track. Well done Subaru and ProDrive and thanks to my wife, Jane, for buying the "experience" for me.

Martin Male

Discussion on the Government's Transport Committee Report and New Drivers

It is clear that the problems of new drivers and in particular young drivers causing death & serious injury is becoming a big issue for us all. (See the news every weekend!!)

Research shows that 20% of 17/18 year old drivers drink & drive; 7% of teenagers drive & use drugs; Four 17/18 year olds are killed or seriously injured every day; 32% of teenagers admit being a passenger with a drunk/drugged driver!!!

The Transport Committee Proposes the following:

- A 12 month minimum learning period- No full licence until 18.
- A structured training syllabus, involving a logbook, with mandatory instruction and ADI sign-off.
- Mandatory hazard perception training.
- All car tests to be taken in a dual-controlled car.
- Extending car tests to include motorway driving if necessary.
- 12 months post test, restricted stage with zero alcohol and no passengers aged 10-20 between 11pm/5am

Many other parts: e.g.

- Gathering of better statistics.
- Mandatory Professional development of ADI's
- Raising the entry standards for ADI's
- RE-evaluation of Pass + scheme
- Mandatory minimum of tuition hours with ADI
- A classroom learning setup for learners, looking at consequences
- Better law enforcement of existing and proposed laws (Imperative)

- Asking Motor Insurance industry to come up with more innovative schemes to encourage parents to give supervised practice

Group Views re Government's Transport Committee Report and New Drivers

- 1) The vast majority felt this was a good idea although it could prove costly to new drivers.
- 2) The Group was split as to whether or not this was a good suggestion.
- 3) This would need to be 'on the road' training.
- 4) Could prove problematical if being taught by parents or similar non-professional.
- 5) Unanimously agreed this was a good suggestion.
- 6) The restrictions proposed could increase the numbers of cars on the road although it was agreed that there should be some sort of restriction, maybe on engine size. The idea of mandatory 'P' plates was popular.
- 7) Where the remaining proposals were concerned, the Group agreed with the suggestions made although felt that ADIs should sign off learner drivers as being proficient rather than having a mandatory minimum number of hours tuition.

The Group also felt that some sort of 'Attitude Test' would be beneficial.

The observation was made that there are currently more restrictions on Motorcyclists than car drivers.

It would appear that Log Books, when used, appear to be ignored by Examiners although learner drivers do find them useful.

14 The Gap,
Canterbury,
Kent
CT1 3NN
11th November 2007

Dear Editor,

I attended the social evening on 8th November 2007 when Nick Williams led an interesting and lively discussion about the recent proposals for new and (especially) young drivers by the House of Commons Transport Select Committee (for further information about this topic, see *Advanced Driving*, Winter 2007, page 14).

One of the topics discussed was the training that new drivers receive and that they are shown, more often than not, the test routes that driving examiners' may use. Divulging potential test routes, or at least parts of test routes, is a normal practise for driving instructors and it enables new and inexperienced drivers to become more familiar with roads along which they may have to drive during the test; this is a tremendous confidence booster, especially for nervous drivers. I'm sure that all of us can remember back to when we took our basic test and our instructor helped us in this way. My youngest son, Chris, has just passed his basic test (under the expert instruction of Nick Williams) and he has told me that knowing where he may be taken during the practical test was of great benefit to him. He passed first time!

To keep the discussion flowing at the meeting, I informed the audience that when I was the Group's Chief Observer, I became aware that the Group's local examiner was informing some Associates what his test route was. As a result, I can recall one Associate that drove around the test route several times in order to become

fully familiarised with every road sign, every junction, every pothole and all other potential hazards. Is this the action of a confident driver with above average driving skills? I think not! The purpose of the advanced test is for the examiner to assess how well a candidate observes all types of potential hazards, plans his or her driving and negotiates hazards safely and skilfully, regardless of whether they know the roads or not. When the examiner is satisfied that a candidate has successfully demonstrated advanced driving skills, they pass and are rightly proud to join the growing number of advanced drivers. Candidates should be able to drive safely and skilfully along any road at any time and to have rehearsed and memorised the test route is surely counter-productive in demonstrating their skills as an advanced driver. Knowing a road well is, of course, beneficial to any driver, but an advanced driver is not just any driver. Test candidates are not novice drivers about to take the basic driving test, but are experienced drivers who have volunteered to demonstrate that their driving abilities are above average. One of my many Associates was greatly concerned that he may have to take his advanced test in Ashford; not because he disliked Ashford, but because he didn't know the roads. I managed to convince him that if he could pass the advanced driving test on unfamiliar roads, then he was worthy of the pass certificate (he passed). The point that I'm eventually getting to is that I, as the then Chief Observer, considered that prior knowledge of a test route was not appropriate for candidates who have put themselves forward to have their advanced driving skills scrutinised by a qualified expert (the examiner). I therefore asked the examiner not to reveal his route any more. I also asked Observers not to reveal the route to their Associates.

Well, my comment raised a few disapproving responses from the audience at the meeting. I haven't been an Observer for about 3 years, so I may be out of touch with more modern methods of Observing and what the examiner is looking for; I don't however think that much has actually changed with the preparation techniques and the administering of the advanced driving test. Maybe attitudes have changed. It became clear (to me, anyway) that Associates were being shown the test route. Observers who have taken the IAM test locally will know the test route because they have driven it under test conditions; but this doesn't mean that they have to reveal it to their Associates.

The point was made by one member in the audience that motorcyclists in East Kent who are about to take the advanced motorcycle test are told what the test route is by the examiner. This is very sensible, considering that the examiner and candidate are not sharing the same vehicle and that it is conceivable that the two may become separated during the test. At least by knowing what the pre-determined route is, the motorcycle test candidate will be able to find the examiner. For car drivers, the examiner is sitting next to you and so it is highly unlikely that he will leave the vehicle (unless you know different!).

Examiners who conduct car tests have set routes because it is a way that they can examine candidates under "normalised" conditions. The route will have a fixed length, have the same junctions, roundabouts and road types and is therefore the same practical experience for all candidates. Of course, the driving conditions on the set route will never be the same for each test candidate because there are so many other variables, such as the weather, the abundance and types of

vehicles on the road, road works, pedestrians, incidents being attended by the emergency services, etc. So, why not let car drivers know the test route in advance if there are so many variables that mean that the route could never be exactly the same on different test runs? That's a very fair question, but prior knowledge of the route, with its fixed hazards, removes one of the variables when driving along unfamiliar roads. So, can the observational skills of a test candidate really be assessed in a non-prejudiced way? Inevitably, when a test candidate drives along the test route, he or she will recognise familiar parts simply because they live and work in the local area; this is unavoidable.

If a test candidate memorises a test route and for some unforeseen reason (e.g., a diversion caused by a flooded road) the route is not followed exactly as learnt, then they may fail. Consequently, the disappointed candidate may cite this deviation from the expected test route as the reason for their failure. Associates need to be prepared for any driving situation and their ability to demonstrate their skills in unfamiliar situations is a mark of an advanced driver.

When I used to take Associates on observed runs as they prepared to take the advanced test, I would intentionally take them along parts of the test route, but I would deliberately not tell them this fact. I would take them to the starting point of the test (Margate Police Station) to ensure that they knew where to meet the examiner. Beyond that, it was down to the candidate to demonstrate to the examiner that his or her driving skills were of the standard required by the Institute of Advanced Motorists to gain the privilege of being an advanced driver.

I may be way off the mark with my comments, so let the debate commence!

Gary Nichols

Blue lights help cut seasonal drink-drive temptation – IAM Trust

Issued: Friday, 30 November 2007

“Highly visible police activity is as important as ever to remind UK drivers that drinking and driving don’t mix,” says Neil Greig, Director of the IAM Motoring Trust, in welcoming the start of the police Christmas anti drink-drive campaign.

“News bulletins showing flashing blue lights and police breath testing drivers are a powerful reminder to the majority of responsible drivers not to be tempted to drive after drinking, for example, taking the car home from the station after drinks after work.”

The vast majority of drivers now believe drinking and driving to be socially unacceptable. But in the long run-up to Christmas, daily routines can change, sometimes unexpectedly. Festive occasions with colleagues, friends and family can place those who would not normally drink and drive in tricky situations. Many of us will face these dilemmas but it’s crucial to decide firmly at the outset either not to drink or to leave the car where it is.

The wrong decision can bring instant justice, as the police can haul you into court the next day for a fine and a year’s driving ban, and if you cause a fatal or serious accident, a prison sentence. Then there are the less formal penalties, such as the huge inconvenience of being carless, the possibility of losing your job and the social stigma of a criminal record. Finally, once

you get back on the road again, you face many years with sky-high insurance costs.

The IAM Trust’s advice is simple, says Greig, “If you drink, don’t drive; if you are driving, don’t drink. And always refuse a lift from someone you know has been drinking.”

Other points:

- even one drink can reduce your determination not to drive
- at parties, drinks measures will be more generous than those served in pubs
- you face being breathalysed if you are involved in a road accident, even if it is not your fault
- as you make your way home without the car, remember that a high proportion of road accidents involve pedestrians who have been drinking
- drinking heavily the night before can put you over the legal limit the morning after

Footwear for driving

2 November 2007

News that film star Brooke Shields crashed her car because her high shoes got stuck sounds a bit far fetched.

But even here in the UK, apparently women are risking losing control of the car because they are insisting on driving while wearing high-heeled shoes.

A survey by an insurance company showed that apparently 65 per cent of women want “better guidelines” about what to wear in the car.

Like many things, the Highway Code (the new version is out now) is a source of good advice and includes this:

- ensure that clothing and footwear do not prevent you using the controls in the correct manner.

But I think it's fair to say that not every female driver has a copy of the Highway Code in her handbag.

The footwear issue though is just one of the possible hazards at our heels.

For example, a loose tin of drink, or an apple rolling around in the driver's footwell might be something we ignore to start with. But either of those could potentially end up lodged under the clutch pedal, or worse still, the brake pedal. Then when the driver needs the controls, they are not available.

And also on the footwear theme, flip flops are popular in summer, but again, not really very pedal friendly for drivers: they may not have the high heel problem, but they are looser than our usual footwear and are more inclined to slip off the pedal.

A patch of petrol or diesel on the ground can get picked up when we get back in the car after paying for fuel – potentially making soles slippery.

And older vehicles quite often have worn rubbers on the pedals which are worth a look. If you can see metal showing through, that's too shiny for comfort and the rubbers should be replaced. A combination of damp shoes from an autumnal downpour, and "shiny" pedals are putting you and other road users at risk.

Christopher Bullock MBE

Issued: 20th November 2007

The IAM (Institute of Advanced Motorists) regrets to announce the death yesterday (Monday 19 November 2007) of Christopher Bullock MBE, Chief Executive of the IAM.

Christopher Bullock, 60, became IAM Chief Executive in 1994.

Mr. Bullock led the IAM as it grew in size and influence; it is now the largest single organisation dedicated to road safety and by far the largest provider of advanced driving tests.

Mr. Bullock was also Managing Director of IAM Fleet, Drive & Survive and IAM Fleet Ireland which together make the IAM the largest provider of risk management and company driver training services.

Before joining the IAM Mr Bullock had a long career in Shell which he joined after leaving the University of Sussex with a BSc with honours in Physics and Mathematics in 1968.

While he was with Shell International he held various Marketing and Public Affairs positions in the UK and overseas.

During the 1980s he was responsible for Shell's charitable giving - at that time the largest corporate donor in the UK - and for sponsorship of environmental, arts and other community organisations. This included founding Age Resource, which aimed to harness the benefits of an ageing society and is now the "younger arm" of Age Concern.

Mr Bullock was seconded in 1991 to the then Department of Energy and before taking up his role at the IAM, he was for two years the Director of Public Affairs at the TAC (Tobacco Advisory Council). When he was awarded his MBE earlier this year, Mr. Bullock said that he saw the award as recognition of the valuable and growing work of the IAM. In particular, he said the honour acknowledged all those who through the IAM dedicate their time and expertise to helping people improve their driving and motorcycling, and to saving lives on the road.

Mr. Bullock lived in Fulham, West London. He is survived by his wife Linda and their two sons Nicholas and George.



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?

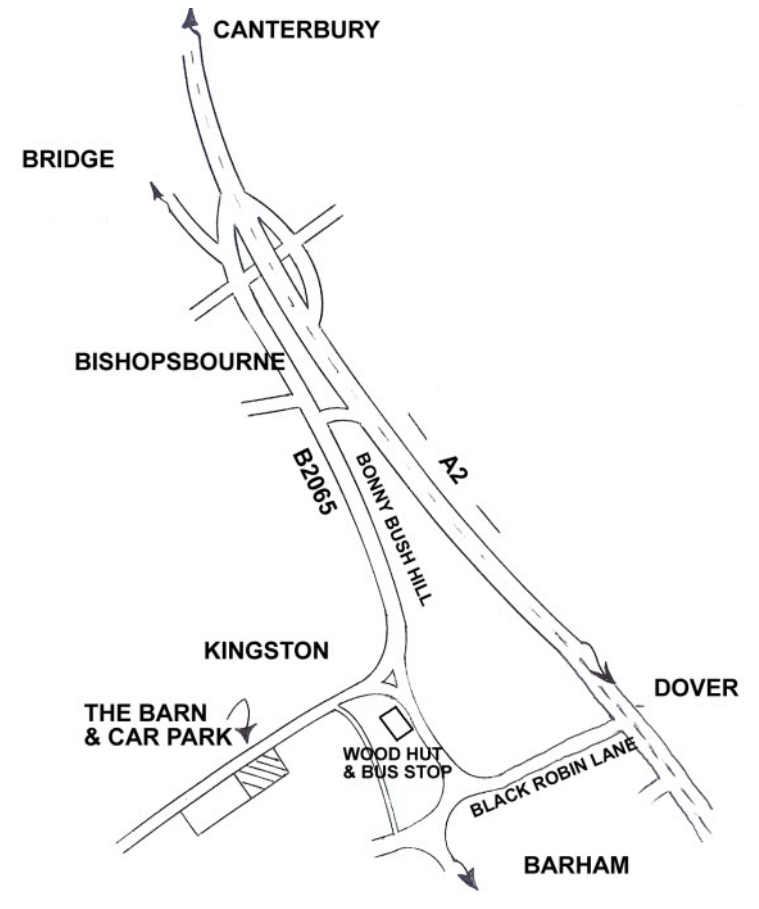
If you contact Mrs Vanessa Norley, 01304 215168, she will be able to give you full details, or visit our website at: <http://www.eastkentiam.org.uk>

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

PLEASE NOTE: There is 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

Edith Johns
 John Ellis
 Katherine O'Donovan
 Angela Payne
 Christian Brewer
 Stuart Thompson
 Alan Spong
 Leslie Claydon
 Robert Knowles
 Paul Harriman
 Rebecca Lancaster
 Colin Clive

New Member

Peter Rothschild

Events Data

Littlebourne War Memorial Hall
 - Second Thursday - 19.30pm

13 December - 'Magic as you like it' by Clyde Clayton

10 January - Christine Grange - first female Police Traffic Officer in Kent 1974.

14 February - Quiz Night

13 March/10 April – [TBC] Peter Rodger, Chief Examiner

13 March/10 April – [TBC] Nick Williams on the Speed Awareness Courses he has been involved in

8 May – VW Buggies evening

12 June – Manoeuvring evening

July – [TBC] Treasure Hunt, hopefully a joint arrangement with EKAM

Test Passes

Period:

13.08.07 - 29.10.07

| Associate | Date | Observer |
|---------------------|-------------|-----------------|
| Michael Potts | 13.08.07 | Nigel Cooke |
| Howard Matthews | 13.08.07 | Nick Williams |
| Nirav Patel | 19.08.07 | Ron Sims |
| Christopher Berry | 06.10.07 | Richard Hazell |
| Christopher Tuthill | 29.10.07 | Richard Hazell |

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

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 The Editor claims no liability for correctness of information, printing or typesetting errors.