

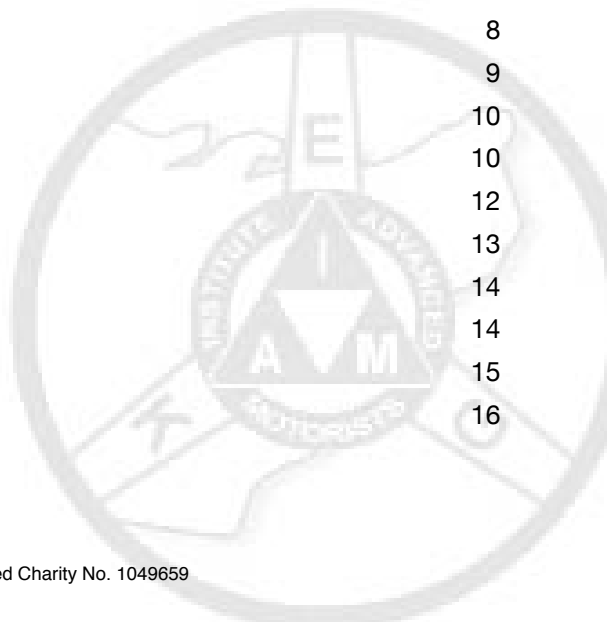
# EAST KENT GROUP

Newsletter March 2003



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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.

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.

Welcome to my first newsletter! As I sit here wondering what to write, I find myself questioning how I ended up with the task in the first place. It is still not entirely clear to me, and when I asked Richard Veitch, the previous Editor, he was unable to answer for laughing so hard. He did mention not running quick enough.....

I should introduce myself to those that don't know me. My name is Michelle, I live in Ramsgate, have 2 deranged pussy cats, (Ronnie and Reggie), that like to "help" when I'm on the computer, (and let me tell you they are no help at all). I am an enthusiastic biker, and have been to the South of France and Amsterdam in the last few years, and have plans for Spain this year. The drivers in Europe are so considerate to bikers, the English could stand to take a few lessons! My travels are not confined to bikes though. I have driven from Lands End to John O'Groats, twice now, with my Mum and her mini. You will have either read about us before, or been pestered by Mum for money. Be warned – we set off again in June!! I have also just gone through the Group's Observer Training, and will shortly embark on my first runs. I remain unclear how I got talked into that as well, and it is becoming obvious to me that I am easily swayed.

It has been a hectic few months since I became editor, including having a car fail its MOT, the new car of two weeks written off, and subsequently stolen by the Thanet District Council, a motorcycle accident resulting in broken bones and another write off, (don't worry – it wasn't my good bike!), Observer training, a new job, and a newly decorated bathroom, (although to be fair – Mum did that!). That there is a newsletter at all is amazing to me – and to everyone who kept asking me how it was coming on only to be answered with hysterical laughter, and an unconvincing, "Don't worry – it'll be fine!".

My first job as editor is to thank Richard for all his efforts over the years producing the Group newsletter, and to hope I can maintain the standard.

Second and it is with regret, I have to inform you of the passing of one of our longest standing members, John Smith. He was instrumental in making the Group what it is today and he will be greatly missed. His family have requested that

instead of flowers, anyone wishing to can make a donation to Demelza House Children's Hospice in his memory. Find out more about this worthwhile charity at <http://www.demelzahouse.org/>, where you can also make a donation online if you wish.

It was while I was suffering with my broken bones that I had the delightful experience of supermarket shopping, in a Mart Kart no less. For those who don't know, a Mart Kart is a battery operated no power, no speed wheelchair/scooter type thing. For someone who hates shopping, it added a whole new entertainment factor to the experience. Moving at the speed of an unwell snail, making screeching noises round the corners and hitting the occasional shelf while mother did everything she could to distance herself from me, (not terribly difficult, it has to be said), took my mind off the fact that my Comedy Bike, (Honda C90), is no more. Of the various different machines I tried at local stores, B & Q Warehouse in Canterbury gets my vote. It was by far the quickest; Mum even had to break out of a slow amble to keep up with me.

What really opened my eyes though was how poorly the towns cater for the disabled, and how invisible I appeared to be. I had yet to do my Christmas shopping when I had the accident, so Mum got a wheelchair from the Red Cross, and took me into town. Many a shop I peered through the window, as there was no hope of getting in, and I lost count of the number of times I was nearly slung out of the chair as we hit bad paving, holes, ruts, impossibly high kerbs.....the list goes on. People would look at us trying to get to get past them, but would they move? Oh no.

Let me tell you now that I could go on, (and on and on and on), about this and many other things that get right on my nerves. For now I will spare you. You have been warned.

Please feel free to send me any articles, letters, rants, suggestions or comments, either by e-mail to: [thanetm@supanet.com](mailto:thanetm@supanet.com), or by snail mail to: Flat 5, 13 Paragon, Ramsgate, Kent, CT11 9JX.



## Letter from Hellfire Corner concerning zips, and backwards and forwards.

I have spent some time thinking about zips, those relating to traffic jams, motorway contra flows and similar road situations. It seems that for any given system, there is a bottleneck, the point past which all the traffic has to flow, usually in single file. By definition, this is where the traffic is at its slowest. How fast you can get through this bottleneck depends on the size of your vehicle, and the effective width of the road at that point, and other moving obstructions like workmen, but NOT on the presence of other traffic in front of you. This is because the other traffic will have accelerated away (remember YOU are at the slowest point, the bottleneck). If there is other traffic queuing in front of you, then you are not yet at the bottleneck, keep queuing! I prefer to think of this bottleneck as like the narrowest point in an hourglass, with the traffic behind you as the sand in the top half, waiting to get through. The sand goes through the narrowest point at a constant rate, and “accelerates” away into the bottom of the hourglass.

So where’s the Zip? The zip is where two streams of traffic merge into one in the tailback, and is probably as fair a way as any to avoid too much frustration for waiting traffic, allowing each to take turns. But it does not help the traffic to get through the bottleneck any quicker, which proceeds at its own sweet pace, untroubled by those behind.

I was strolling to work the other morning, in my usual zombie-like autopilot state, along the pavement, in a reasonably busy street, past several houses with driveways. So far, so good. When, all of a sudden, to wake me from my slumber, there emerged just in front of me, from one of said driveways, a car. This would not normally register too highly on the Richter scale, but this one did get fairly close to flattening my foot.

I was of the opinion that pedestrians had right of way on pavements, but as far as I can tell the Highway Code fails to enlighten on this point.

One could argue, rightly, that I was ill-advised, nay reckless, in walking next to Her Majesty’s Highway in a zombie-like state, albeit along a pavement.

But this car came out backwards, which is par for the course these days. Surely it is much safer to reverse into the drive and come out forwards. I have always done this (pauses to polish halo). Interestingly this is only advisory in the Highway Code. A carefully-controlled and highly scientific study of my locality, (on the way home from work this time), revealed only about one car in five facing outwards, all the rest had their noses stuck to the garage doors. It just goes to show how little some people think about some aspects of their driving. If you think about the whole process from driving into the drive to driving back out again, it cannot require more effort, or concentration, or take more time, to do it backwards rather than forwards. And it is safer to come out of the drive forwards rather than backwards. And my foot stands more chance of surviving. And I should not start sentences with “And” . . .

*Nigel Cooke*

**Notice** is hereby given that an Extraordinary General Meeting of the East Kent Group of Advanced Motorists will be held in the Lounge of the Littlebourne War Memorial Hall, Littlebourne on Thursday, 10th April at 8 p.m.

This is to approve an increase of £5 in our Associate Membership fee in order to keep us in line with the I.A.M.'s increase in the Skill for Life fee. It will in fact only affect a very few Associates who need to renew their Associate Membership in order to continue preparing for the Test after their initial year.

All Members, Associates and Friends are invited to attend but only fully paid up members of the I.A.M. and of the Group may make proposals and/or vote.

By order of the Group Committee  
S. E. Redwood, Group Secretary  
13th March, 2003

## Quiz Answers – North to South

*Some people wanted to know the answers to the quiz I brought along, asking people to put the places in order from North to South.*

Reykjavik - 64.10 N, Anchorage - 61.10 N, Bergen - 60.23 N, Helsinki - 60.15 N, Leningrad - 59.55 N, Oslo - 59.55 N, Stockholm - 59.17 N - (I included these last six deliberately to confuse!) - London, England - 51.30 N, Vancouver - 49.20 N, Chicago - 41.45 N, New York - 40.45 N, Madrid - 40.25 N, San Francisco - 37.35 N, Tokyo - 35.45 N, Los Angeles - 34 N, Baghdad - 32.20 N, Kathmandu - 27.45 N, Honolulu - 21.19 N, Timbuktu - 16.50 N, Singapore - 1.17 N, Galapagos Islands - on the equator, Nairobi - 1.17 S, Tonga Islands - 20 S, Rio de Janeiro - 23 S, Alice Springs - 23.40 S, Cape Town - 33.55 S, Buenos Aires - 34.30 S, Auckland, New Zealand - 36.52 S, Hobart, Tasmania - 42.50 S, Stanley, Falklands Islands - 51.40 S - (I found it interesting that this last is about as far South as London is North)

## Part of a Report on the All-Groups Conference October 2002

The first speaker of the day was Trevor Wedge, Assistant Chief Driving Examiner of the Driving

Standards Agency, and he described the new Hazard Perception Test (HPT) part of the driving test. From 14th November 2002, all new drivers in all categories, (car, bike, LGV, PCV etc.), and instructors will be required to take the HPT as part of their theory test. It will be added to the theory test programme at all existing test centres and will take an additional 25 minutes. The theory test will therefore now be of 2 parts, both of which must be passed to get through to the practical part of the test. The existing theory test will be unchanged; 35 questions, with a pass rate of 30 required.

The new test works like this. A series of one minute video clips will be shown to the candidate, and each clip has a developing hazard situation, filmed on the road as it actually happened. As soon as the candidate spots the hazard unfolding they press a button on the computer. Each clip has a 'time window' during which the hazard must be 'spotted' and the earlier the button is pressed the more points are scored, 5 for the best and 0 for the worst. One clip has 2 hazard situations to keep people on their toes. The pass rate will initially be set at 38 for the 15 clips, rising quickly to 44 in 9 months as training improves and people get to know what to expect. Results are given on the spot.

The rationale for the HPT came from a number of research projects where the responses and reactions of drivers in various groups were checked. 10 people a day are killed on the roads, and the test was the result of a need to make a step change in driver training and driver behaviour. Novice drivers are proven to be slower to recognise hazards, sometimes taking 2 seconds longer than more experienced drivers to react to a developing hazard situation. Their liability to accidents reduces quickly in the first few months after passing their test, but the young rely on their often quicker reaction times to compensate for their poor observation.

Other research found, predictably, that learner drivers were less good at hazard spotting than novice drivers, who were less good than experienced drivers, and the professionally trained police drivers were best overall. Also, accident free drivers were better than the 'accident involved'. However, hazard perception skills can be 'trained in' to people, and it was found that as little as 3 to 4 hours of training could get a learner driver as

good as some experienced drivers. A trial session used 750 volunteer learner drivers to test the theory, measuring their performance before and after training, 2 months later, when they had been given tuition in scanning and anticipation skills.

250 with no additional training	same result as previously
250 with 1 hour additional training	+ 6-7 points (up to novice level)
250 with 4 hrs additional training	+ 13 points (up to average experienced level)

This gave the DSA the encouragement they needed to continue with the work.

A total of 390 video clips were filmed using roof mounted cameras and cameras in left hand drive vehicles, in all weather conditions and on all types of road. They were shown to 12,000 volunteers, and 330 clips were deemed suitable for the HPT program. 20 parallel tests of equal difficulty and each with 14 hazard situations are now available for the test, and these have been trialled with a further 4000 volunteers. A road show will visit 25 venues in the UK to launch the next test and a video is available to describe the test and the sort of questions that will be asked.

Results will be monitored as the object of the exercise is to change attitudes and reduce accident liability in novice drivers. The test itself is not a positive road safety benefit, but it sets the agenda and the standard of training required. Learner drivers apply too soon for their test at the moment, hence the poor pass rate, and they do not possess the high order skills of scanning and planning that are required for modern motoring. They must learn to leave space and time to respond to danger and minimise risks.

Driving instructors will be encouraged to give additional training in these higher order skills:

- effective scanning
- anticipation and planning
- safe separation
- correct use of speed,

and the hope is that the accident rates can be reduced by one third by 2010.

*Acknowledgement and thanks to Paul Whitehead, Secretary of the Guildford Group.*

## A Second Part of a Report on the All-Groups Conference October 2002

Another presentation came from Roger Agombar, a Police Sergeant with the Metropolitan Police, who has spent some time working with the National Drug Drive programme. This is probably the most frequently discussed area of road use after GATSO's and congestion charging. The history goes back some 13 years when the first research was carried out in accident victims to establish the use of drugs in drivers and other road users. Ten years later the results of similar studies found a 600% increase in the incidence of illicit drugs in those road accident victims, and although this rise could not all be attributed to drivers, the signs were there and action had to be taken.

Although there was clearly increasing use of drugs, there was little hard evidence and no acceptable screening device. Officers were not trained in recognising the symptoms, and there was still the requirement to prove impairment to drive. Roger made a comparison with drinking and driving. In any year in the 1990's an average of 860,000 breath tests were taken, 12% showing a positive result. Therefore 750,000 people drove away, and if only 1% of those who were stopped and had been using drugs instead of drinking, 7500 drug related offences might have been discovered. Instead, only 1850 were detected. The current view of club goers, mainly teenagers and younger drivers, is that you must not drink and drive, but if you have taken drugs the police don't even know where to start to looking for evidence.

Officers from Strathclyde Police went to Los Angeles to observe experiments being undertaken there, and found a model that they could copy and implement back home. The US officers were being trained in drug recognition so they could see the signs of drug use on those they suspected of drug impaired driving; the effect on the eyes is the most obvious sign. A series of 'field impairment tests' were then developed to help establish evidence of drug affected driving. These tests are intended to get progressively more difficult as people become more intoxicated. They consist of

- Walk and count (count ten paces away and ten back again);
- Stand on one leg and count to ten;

- Estimate the passage of time (when has 30 seconds passed);
- Finger to nose with eyes shut.

Although these tests seem simple, they apparently are very difficult to achieve successfully after a few drinks or drugs; they are designed to test 'divided attention activity' skills which are needed for driving but are not present in the intoxicated. They are not 'pass' or 'fail', but officers must use their judgement as to how serious the impairment really is. Current independent research will continue to validate the testing regimes and the success of the overall scheme.

The Association of Chief Police Officers have accepted that the tests should be used and that training should be undertaken so that more officers can recognise the signs of drug impaired driving. 35 out of the 52 UK forces have adopted the new ideas and they are supported by the Association of Police Surgeons who has an interest in ensuring that those initially suspected and detained are medically examined to corroborate the original assessment. The future is nevertheless uncertain. We may see compulsory roadside testing as and when a suitable test is developed, but this becomes increasingly more difficult as drug users tend to use a cocktail of drugs, each one individually not likely to cause impairment to drive but the mixture a recipe for disaster and potentially undetectable.

We await the approval of impairment testing from the Home Office and the acceptance of the British Courts. As drugs become more commonplace in society, their use and abuse in drivers must become greater.

*Acknowledgement and thanks to Paul Whitehead, Secretary of the Guildford Group.*

*Sheila Redwood*

## Common Faults

Below are a number of common faults as observed by Peter Hall, our local examiner.

1. I am surprised how many candidates do not know what the National Speed limit is on Dual carriageways. Nine times out of ten, when I ask this question I get the same answer - "60". Of course, we know that the National speed limit on Motorways and Dual carriageways is 70 mph, (unless signs dictate otherwise).
2. Features 3 and 4 of the system, (Speed and Gear). I have noticed a number of candidates are still braking and changing gear at the same time, instead of treating them as separate issues. There are of course some instances when they have to be combined, i.e. negotiating a hazard at the bottom of a steep hill.
3. Lack of horn warnings at the appropriate time. A good example is the second bridge in Fordwich, Canterbury, as you approach from the Sturry direction. The view of oncoming traffic from the other side is nil. Only today, a candidate and an oncoming motorist met at the top of the bridge, resulting in one of them having to reverse in order to give way to the other. This could have been avoided with the use of the horn.
4. Some candidates are not attempting to make progress when it is perfectly safe to do so.

Richard Hazell

## Ladies Who Read

I run a reading group which meets on the 3<sup>rd</sup> Wednesday of the month at Northgate Community Centre, Military Road, Canterbury, 11am – 12.30pm. I obtain the books from the library and there are refreshments available. If you like to read and you like a chat, then I'm sure you'll enjoy our meetings.

We are not an intellectual group, our reading tastes are very catholic. We've read, amongst others: Harry Potter, Iris Murdoch, Graham Swift, George Eliot and Helen Forrester. The reading group has introduced us to books and authors we would not normally have read, and the discussions make us re-evaluate our thoughts about the books. We're a very relaxed group of ladies; we all participate in the discussions and often go off at tangents. After all, our opinions have been formed by our personal experiences, and that is what we bring to the group.

If you would like more information, please contact me on 01227 364884

*Irene Harding*

## Forensic Accident Investigation

January's Club Night speaker was PC Mark Lamb, a serving police officer with 29 years experience, who has spent the last 15 years on Forensic Accident Investigation.

It was interesting to hear that, in his opinion, cars have become almost too safe, lulling the occupants into a false sense of security. Like many other professionals who have to deal with death on the roads, he believes that the education and training of drivers is the best way to reduce the death toll.

Most drivers watch television, and each Christmas we see hard hitting advertisements on the consequences of Drink Driving. I think it would be a good idea if regular advertisements were screened throughout the year, reminding drivers of basic road skills, e.g. how to negotiate a roundabout, lane discipline on motorways etc. Perhaps you could come up with some more examples – send them to the Editor, who could compile a list.

A recent survey has indicated that nine out of ten drivers could not pass the basic driving test – surely this must reinforce the case for regular re-testing, say every five or ten years.

Currently new drivers who accumulate six penalty points within two years of gaining their licence have to undertake a re-test. Why should this apply only to new drivers? Experienced drivers with six penalty points have committed similar offences. Perhaps, instead of re-taking the basic driving test they should be made to undertake training and pass the IAM test.

*Barrie Bailey*

## Playing Card Jokers

Has anyone got any jokers from playing cards that they do not require? Nutty collector would appreciate receiving same.

*Vic Reynolds*

## The Golden Age of Motoring

Sooner or later you get to that time in life where you start to look back rather than relentlessly forward. My mind set itself on this path recently. The motoring reminiscences were seen through the old rose-tinted spectacles, or not - as the case may be.

So, here is my list of things I miss, followed by the list of things I don't:

### I miss:

Petrol at 4/10 (or 24p!) a gallon.  
Cars you can service yourself.  
Smiths instruments.  
English cars.  
Wood and leather.  
Chrome.  
Communicative steering - unassisted, of course.  
Ride comfort.  
Cars with character.  
5 Star fuel (My Jag XJ6 pinked like crazy on 4 Star).  
Light traffic density.  
Courtesy on the road.  
Marilyn Monroe (Sorry - wrong list!)

### I don't miss:

Rust.  
Poor fuel economy, road holding, performance and brakes.  
Column gear-changes.  
Static seat-belts.  
No seat belts at all.  
Really agricultural diesels.  
Suicide doors.  
Twin carburettors.  
Bond minicars.  
Isetta Bubble-cars.  
Toughened windscreens.  
Short service intervals.  
Whining axles.  
Smokey exhausts. (You should see my car! - Ed)  
Mild steel exhausts.  
No synchro on first.  
Sealed-beam headlights.  
Dicky dynamos.  
Sticky starter motors.  
Unintentionally intermittent wipers.  
Oil patches on drive.

Ahh! The Golden Age of Motoring.

## Can you get your car into your garage?

Got a friend who's an architect? Ask them what criteria they use for height clearance for up-and-over garage doors in the open position.

Several properties I have viewed recently, some brand new and some 10 years or so old, have up-and-over garage doors with a bare clearance of around 6ft 2ins, (I'm still used to proper English measurements and can't get on with those foreign fiddlymetres). Now, I drive an Isuzu Trooper 4 x 4 with an overall height of just about 6ft, so getting into one of these garages is a bit dodgy to say the least.

Contemplating the purchase of a new 4 x 4, I find that most of the latest models have an overall height of about 6ft 1 or 2ins, and that's not including the luggage rails that now appear to be standard non-removable items on some 4 x 4's.

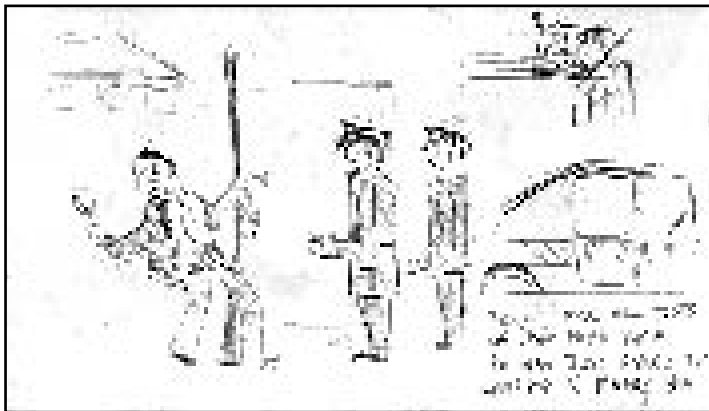
I haven't looked at MPV's, so don't know if they cause the same difficulties. I know some multi-storey car parks have some pretty tight headroom clearances.

With the ever increasing number of 4 x 4's on the roads these days, isn't it about time that architects woke up to the fact that their garage door design falls a bit short, (no pun intended? - Ed), of modern day requirements? Putting your car in your garage saves a bit on the insurance premium too, so there's a definite cost saving factor in this as well.

Perhaps this is something that HQ could take up with RIBA. No doubt the response would be that it would cost the house purchaser more for an additional course of bricks, and the door manufacturers cry would be that the new design was "non-standard", and would also add to the cost. It probably wouldn't if it became the new standard!

*Vic Reynolds*

*Another artistic contribution from John Redwood, inspired by the discussion at the February meeting, in relation to 'field impairment tests' for drug affected driving.*



*"Those new tests - we don't need them. He has just asked the lamp post to marry him!"*

20th December 2002

## **DARK VISORS - DARK DAY**

The British Motorcyclists Federation, the UK's most influential rider group, has today criticised the Government's decision not to allow the wearing of anti-glare dark visors by motorcyclists.

After a three year campaign to afford motorcyclists the level of protection from glare enjoyed by car drivers, the BMF, a long-standing member of the British Standards Committee for eye protection, see this as yet another discriminatory move against motorcyclists and a triumph for the pseudo safetycrats.

The 140,000 strong BMF received overwhelming support from riders for its campaign to legalise the wearing of darkened visors, (a fact accepted by Transport Minister David Jamieson) but still the Minister deferred to the delusions-of-safety pundits who seem to consider motorcyclists unable to make decisions for themselves.

Unlike car drivers, say the BMF, the rider cannot be shielded from glare by a fixed sun-visor so a darkened visor (to the same 18% limit as everyday sunglasses) would have given the required protection.

The BMF's stance was that as modern helmet visors are quickly detachable, a spare clear visor could be carried for night time use and enforcement could have simply been based on the already accepted 'hours of darkness', lighting-up times definition.

The eighteen experts, including ophthalmic opticians, who sat on BSI committee PH/2/5, all supported an 18% level but would have accepted 25%.

Said BMF spokesman Jeff Stone: "This decision is bad news, and worse still, goes against the unequivocal support of the specialist BSI

committee. When government ignores the views of experts and favours the unfounded opinions of do-gooders, it makes you wonder what's going on." We will not let this one go. We've worked long and hard on this and will continue to do so."

Commenting on the timing of the announcement Jeff added: "This government has gained a reputation of trying to avoid controversy by delivering bad news at selected times, this looks like another one - just in time for the Christmas holidays!"

In parallel with its ongoing campaign, the BMF will also be encouraging manufacturers in the development of photo chromic light-sensitive visor materials, but see this as a long term solution, whereas dark visors would have given immediate benefits.  
ENDS

*Issued by Jeff Stone: t: 0121 709 1040 f: 0121 705 8784 e: [jeff.stone@bmf.co.uk](mailto:jeff.stone@bmf.co.uk) Details on this and other BMF activities can also be found on our website: <http://www.bmf.co.uk>*

*7<sup>th</sup> August 2002*

## **DRIVERS GETTING THE MESSAGE**

Drivers will be getting a 'Watch Out For Motorcyclists' message with their road tax renewal notice thanks to the BMF.

Concerned that the leaflet, 'Watch Out For Motorcyclists', produced by the Department for Transport earlier this year, was not reaching the everyday motorist, the BMF suggested that a copy be sent out with every road tax renewal notice. This has now been agreed by David Jamieson MP, the Under-Secretary of State at the Department for Transport.

The mail-out will run for one year so ensuring that everyone of Britain's twenty-seven million registered vehicle keepers receives a copy.

Part of the Government's 'Think!' road safety initiative, the leaflet points out that motorcyclists suffer disproportionately in road accidents and therefore advises motorists to:

- Accept that motorcycles make quicker progress in heavy traffic and that any hostile reaction against them is dangerous
- Check mirrors regularly
- Allow more room in wet or greasy conditions
- Take extra care at junctions, especially when turning right
- Avoid overtaking when approaching a junction
- Check behind when parked before opening a door

Welcoming the move, the BMF say that this is a practical and relatively low cost way of reaching drivers. "The 'sorry I didn't see you' phrase is still being used far too often for comfort" said BMF Chief Executive Simon Wilkinson. "Anything that helps address this has got to be a good thing and we're pleased that the Minister has seen it this way" he added.

*Details on this and other BMF activities can also be found on our website: <http://www.bmf.co.uk>*



## Are you streetwise?

Learner drivers will soon have to pass a hazard perception test along with their theory test. How would you do?

Can you spot a potential accident waiting to happen? This question will soon be put to all learner drivers as part of their driving test. The hazard perception test takes the form of an interactive 'journey' on a PC, with the learner clicking the mouse whenever they spot a developing hazard. If the learner doesn't spot enough hazards within a given time, they will have to retake both the hazard perception and theory tests.

All in all, this should make for safer roads. Younger, new drivers may have quicker reaction times than older, more experienced drivers, but research has shown that experienced drivers are much better at spotting risks in time. The best way to learn how to spot potential hazards is through experience behind the wheel, so practical tuition will be required before learners take a theory test — which is not always the case now.

But just what constitutes a potential hazard? Well, pretty much anything that could cause a driver to have to change speed, change direction or stop — it needn't necessarily be on the road itself. To see how good you are at hazard perception, take a look at the picture above. You should be able to spot at least six hazards (there are ten in total).

*Acknowledgement: AA magazine Autumn/Winter 2002*

1. The traffic lights could change from green to red; you should reduce your speed in anticipation.
- 2 & 3. The driver in the parked car on the left could pull away without indicating or properly checking the road; or they may unexpectedly open their car door and get out of the vehicle.
4. The children playing beyond the parked car may run out into the road to retrieve their ball.
- 5 & 6. The bus can pull out at any time, or passengers leaving the bus may step out into the road in front of you.
7. The large hedges could be obscuring a concealed entrance from which another vehicle may emerge.
8. The car indicating its intention to turn right may try to get across the road in front of you, even if there is not enough time for it to do so safely.
9. Note that the streetlights are just coming on, indicating dusk extra caution is needed as this is a prime time for accidents. The clock on the dashboard indicates 3:50 so there may be schoolchildren making their way home possibly getting off the bus (who may not be paying complete attention to road conditions).
10. There is a car travelling quite closely behind you (visible in the rear view mirror). There could be a problem if you brake suddenly or don't properly indicate your intentions. Remember that hazards don't necessarily have to occur in front of you.

ANSWERS

## How NOT To Pass Your Driver's Test

1. Turn the radio on. When the tester goes to turn it off slap his/her hand.
2. Rev the car really high, turn to the tester, and say with an evil look, "Buckle up!"
3. Knock over every cone while doing manoeuvrability. In the middle of it, get out and check to see if you have hit every one.
4. Come dressed in a suit. Before the examiner gets in the car, ask him/her to put a piece of plastic wrap down so he doesn't dirty the seat.
5. When the examiner tells you to stop, step on the gas. Tell him/her that you thought it was the brake.
6. When the examiner tells you to stop, pop the hood clutch and say, "Oops."
7. Get in the car; look down at the pedals, and say, "Now which one is the gas again?"
8. After the examiner gets in the car, pop the hood, and get out and check the oil.
9. Fill your car with beer bottles.
10. The whole time driving, talk about how Aunt Gertrude smells like mothballs.
11. Tell the registrar that you are taking the remedial test.
12. In the middle of driving, put your arm around the examiner.
13. Swear at everybody on the road.
14. When you stop at a light, start revving the engine while looking back and forth between the person next to you and the light.
15. Beep your horn at everything.
16. Break off your rear-view mirror and then ask the examiner to hold it up.

*Internet Source*

## YIZZITT

- Why is it - That the Good Lord only gave us two hands when, for most jobs, you need at least three?
- Why is it - That a towel gets dirty when all you do is use it to dry yourself when you have just washed yourself clean? (Ladies are convinced that most men wash their hands on the towel anyway!)
- Why is it - When you are driving along, following a 'heavy' down a narrow, winding road, and are unable to overtake, as soon as there is a straight stretch there is always a vehicle coming the other way? And when it has gone past the road is once again narrow and windy?

*Vic Reynolds*

## What if... there's something in the road?

The more benign an object in everyday life the more hazardous it seems to become in the middle of the road.

### THE HOUSE BRICK

The rules concerning house-brick avoidance apply to all inanimate objects.

**Problem:** The brain's tendency is to stare at any hazard it hopes to avoid. This stems from a time in our evolution when the things we needed to avoid were liable to make unpredictable last-minute movements. This is where a house brick differs from a snake or scorpion.

The problem is, the largest determining factor in where a motorcycle goes is also where the rider is looking. There is a conflict of interests. If you stare at the brick it appears to pull you towards it.

**Result:** You stare at it even harder.

**Solution:** To break the house brick's spell you must detach your gaze and focus on the road ahead. It doesn't matter where. The house brick is a small thing; the road is wide —there are any numbers of lines you can take to miss it. As you are doing this a part of your brain will register alarm. 'Where is the house brick?' 'Has it jumped into my path?' Ignore it.

### THE PLASTIC BAG

**Problem:** The plastic bag presents two main risks - one, that it will be swept up and cling to your visor like an octopus, obscuring your vision; two, that its handles will fasten round your brake lever, the bag will inflate and you will be thrown over the handlebars. Luckily, because there is no solution to it, the latter scenario is much rarer than the first.

**Solution:** Air pressure stuck the bag to your helmet and air pressure keeps it there. Slow down if it safe to do so. Do not release a hand from the bars but turn your head to try and use the pressure to dislodge the bag.

If that fails do not waste time trying to peel the bag off with your gloved hands. Wind pressure flattens

the plastic as if it were cling-film. Instead, flip your visor open firmly and lean swiftly in behind your bike's screen — the bag will be carried away. Close your visor and continue on your way.

*Ride 87*

## Let's get technical

On my usual drive to work last year sometime, I passed through a section of carriageway where the speed had been reduced from 70mph to 50mph. Many drivers disregarded the 50mph limit and passed me by since I was of course travelling at no more than the limit. I wondered about how much time these drivers had really saved by not slowing for the distance of the temporary speed limit. I did not concern myself with this too much at the time as it may have distracted me from driving but it was a question I wanted answered so returned to it later.

Answering this question would require the use of some maths and some estimation. I hope that the mention of maths hasn't deterred too many of you from reading on. The equations needed will be familiar to anyone who took A' level maths at school and are commonly referred to as the "vusat" equations after the variables involved; final velocity ( $v$ ), initial velocity ( $u$ ), distance ( $s$ ), acceleration ( $a$ ) and time ( $t$ ).

It is usual to use the SI units when working with the vusat equations so distance will be measured in metres ( $m$ ) and time in seconds ( $s$ ). The compound measure of velocity is therefore measured in metres per second ( $m/s$ ) and acceleration, (the rate of change of velocity), is measured in metres per second per second ( $m/s/s$ ). Simple calculations show that 50 mph is, approximately, equivalent to 22.35  $m/s$  and 70mph equivalent to 31.29  $m/s$  where one mile is taken to be 1609.3 metres.

At this point the time 'lost' by not travelling at 70mph can be calculated using the familiar "speed equals distance over time" formula. However, this would not take account of the distance required to gently decelerate to the temporary speed limit and then gently accelerate afterwards.

To consider the periods of deceleration and acceleration the vusat equations are the

mathematical tools to use. It is possible to calculate an acceleration, or deceleration, when the initial and final velocities are known, as well as the distance covered during the change in velocity. We already know the velocities, but a little estimation is required for the distance covered. Estimating that gentle deceleration from 70mph down to 50mph would take at most 0.3 miles, (483 metres), this motion would take 18 seconds. This would give a deceleration of approximately 0.5 m/s/s. The braking distances given in the Highway Code assume a deceleration of approximately 6.5 m/s/s.

If acceleration from 50mph to 70mph takes a little further, at half a mile, this takes 30 seconds. Note that the estimations for acceleration are deliberately cautious. If the distance in practice is shorter, then the time advantage to those not slowing down is even smaller.

For comparison, let's assume a fictional speed restriction is in place for a distance of one mile. At 50mph (22.35 m/s) travelling the one mile will take  $1609.3 \div 22.35 = 72$  seconds. So the whole 1.8 mile motion (0.3 miles slowing down, 1 mile at 50mph and 0.5 miles accelerating) takes  $18 + 72 + 30 = 120$  seconds = 2 minutes.

But how long would the 1.8 miles have taken to travel at 70mph? Again, using  $\text{time} = \text{distance} \div \text{speed}$ , the 1.8 miles would be covered in  $1.8 \times 1609.3 \div 31.29 = 92.57$  seconds. Therefore, by not slowing down for a speed restriction that lasts for one mile, a driver could save 27 seconds.

The 50mph speed limit up the A249 Detling Hill lasts for approximately one mile so our mathematical model approximates this "real life" road. However, our fictional road didn't include the speed camera that is on Detling Hill. Including a working camera in the model would mean that the driver who saved himself 27 seconds would soon receive a black and white photograph of his car, three points on his licence and a £60 fine. Ignoring the 'free' photograph and the increased insurance due to the penalty points leaves him paying £60 for 27 seconds. One final calculation shows that this equates to £8,000 an hour. Is speeding really worth it?

*A.N.Onymous*

## Obituary – John Smith

It is with great sadness that we have to report the death of John Smith, who died peacefully in his sleep at the age of 81. John was one of the founder members of our group, then called Canterbury and East Kent Group, which he helped set up in 1976.

As a bomber pilot during World War II, he and his crew made 32 trips over Germany, resulting in him being awarded the DFC. For the greater part of his working life he was a chemist for Boots, retiring from the Deal branch at the age of 65 and subsequently moving to Herne Bay with his wife Hazel, to be near his two daughters.

John was responsible for steering the development of the group from the time when he was a founder Observer, through to its present position of high standing in the Institute. This alone is a record to have been proud of, one which very few, if any, can surpass and he devoted such hard and selfless work at all times in the interest of the group. During this long reign he has been in the Chair on numerous occasions and, as Chief Observer, was responsible for all the groundwork necessary in the planning and organising of a team of Observers who have always received his unqualified support at all times. Moreover, he set yet another record for the number of Associates who passed the test through his expert guidance.

He will be greatly missed as an active member by all those who had the pleasure of working with him, both on and off committee. He always conducted himself with unfailing kindness, courtesy and good humour, and earned the respect of every one of us.

To Hazel, Jennifer, Hilary and the rest of the family we send our condolences. John, your friendship and loyalty to the group will be greatly missed, what happy memories we have of committee meetings in Shepherdswell and Hazel's wonderful biscuits!!

If anyone wishes to make a donation, cheques should be sent to Demelza House Childrens Hospice.

*Pam Head and Ray Pittet*



## New Associates since December 2002

Mr Louis King  
 Mr Victor Reynolds  
 Mr Clive Hawkins  
 Mr David Broadhead  
 Timothy Gniedziejka  
 Mr Harry Venables  
 Mrs Catherine Sturgess  
 Miss Rebecca Harris  
 Mrs Jacquie Gaze  
 Mr Colin Carr  
 Mr John Clark  
 Miss Vanessa Hogarth  
 Mr Peter Waldren  
 Mr Toby Wheeler  
 Mr Alan Jeffery  
 Caroline Hill

## Events Data

### Littlebourne WMH - Second Thursday - 19.30pm

**April** - P.C. Peter Hall, one of our Examiners from Margate will be coming again to do a 'Question & Answer' session. He first came two years ago we had a good evening then. Come along with your questions for him.

**May** - Hazard Awareness & Perception. Following on from the discussion at the February meeting, we will see for ourselves this new part of the Drivers Test.

**June** - Manoeuvring evening at the H.G.V. Test centre in Hersden. Plenty of room and lots of fun last year.

**July** - John Adams, Pfizer. Talking about his role in Academic Liaison. (Moved from February).

## Test Passes

**Period:** 08.08.02 to 12.09.02

Date	Associate	Observer
15.08.02	Patricia (Paddy) Brown	Ted Willey
20.08.02	Janet Newington	Trevor Groves
29.08.02	Geoffrey Clarke	Ted Willey
30.08.02	Michael Matthews	Barrie Bailey
30.08.02	Robert Ryan	Richard Blackford
04.09.02	Trevor Batchelor	Adam Ambrose
08.09.02	Patricia Whitmore	Paul Johnson

**Period:** 30.11.02 to 08.02.03

Date	Associate	Observer
30.11.02	Christopher Brown	Barrie Bailey
01.12.02	Barry Brasier	Ted Willey
07.12.02	Katherine Brazier	Richard Blackford
15.12.02	Benjamin Tavener	Ray Pittet
23.12.02	Leslie Hoare	Ron Sims
03.01.03	David Broadhead	Richard Hazell
03.01.03	Mark Rawlings	Trevor Groves
04.01.03	Peter Munns	Gary Nichols
11.01.03	Lydia-Jane Dimmock	Paul Clark
08.02.03	Louis King (Motor Home)	Paul Clark