

# EAST KENT GROUP

Newsletter March 2004



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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.

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

**PLEASE NOTE: There will be no session in January.**

To find 'The Barn', Kingston:

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



**Answers:**

1. Correct answer:

Open the refrigerator, put the giraffe in, and close the door.

This question tests whether or not you do simple things in a complicated way.

2. Wrong answer:

Open the refrigerator, put the elephant in, and close the door.

2. Correct answer:

Open the refrigerator, take out the giraffe, put the elephant in, and close the door.

This question tests your prudence and practicality.

3. Correct answer:

The elephant. The elephant is still in the refrigerator and cannot open the door from the inside.

This question tests whether or not you have comprehensive thinking skills.

4. Correct answer:

Swim through it. All of the animals, including the crocodiles, are attending the conference (except the elephant, of course).

**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 I.A.M. test standard, (there is no additional charge for the observed runs). Associate membership is given on the understanding that you will apply for the advanced test within the first 12 months after joining the Group.

**How does the Group Operate?**

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

**How do I join the Group?**

If you contact Mrs Sheila Redwood, 01227 462676, she will be able to give you full details, or visit our website at:

<http://www.eastkentiam.org.uk>

I can't believe we're already in March. It only seems five minutes ago it was Christmas. I spoke in the last newsletter of our planned trip to Devon for Christmas dinner. Needless to say it was not without its problems, of which you can read more about later. Mind you at least we didn't get lost.

My dad, sister, brother-in-law and nephew travelled separately. None of them have made the trip more than a couple of times, so they made the trip without a map, and only the notes I made from memory. The notes were really good, except for one roundabout where I wasn't sure which exit was the correct one. Well they took the wrong one, and travelled for nearly an hour on the wrong road. Of course, Dad tried to blame me, he who travelled without a map when he didn't know the way. MEN! Why is it so difficult to admit when you're wrong!

Christmas was great. The smallest member of the family, Luke, had by far the largest pile of presents. But on the down side, (for him), he had several 'cute' outfits to wear, that we got lots of pictures of and that he will hate us for when he is old enough to be concerned about these things.

Lately, I have been extremely busy working on the group website. It is a work in progress that I will keep adding to, (Phase 1 if you like). It will provide details on the IAM, the group, how to find us, how to join etc. It is a resource that brings us into the electronic world, and hopefully will bring more driving enthusiasts to us!

You can check it out at

<http://www.eastkentiam.org.uk>.

If you have any suggestions or comments please let me know.

Please send me any articles, letters, rants, suggestions or comments, either by e-mail to:

[michelle@eastkentiam.org.uk](mailto:michelle@eastkentiam.org.uk),

or by snail mail to:

Flat 5, 13 Paragon, Ramsgate, Kent, CT11 9JX.



Michelle

Ever thought you wanted to change the world? So have I. Often. Then I grew up. And gave up. Went back to minding my own business. And writing ungrammatical sentences. But then I lowered my sights a smidge, and decided to try to change a bit of the world. The bit that drives, or more accurately, a bit of the bit that drives.

I became the pub bore, trying to change people's attitudes to driving. For instance that it is a God-given right that they should be permitted to drive, that they never make mistakes, that they drive better when they've had a few jars, that the car in front stopped too quickly so they hit it, that the police should be out catching "proper criminals" instead of going after lawbreaking motorists, etc., etc.

But as we all know, it is extremely difficult to change attitudes. How long has it taken for the seat belt law to become generally accepted as a good thing, and drink-driving legislation as well, as opposed to merely being complied with because it is the law? Would you wear your seat belt if there were no law? Or drink-drive if there were no law? Or maintain your car if there were no MOT? I would like to think that I would be suitably responsible, because "I have seen the light." (Hallelujah! I'm writing this on a Sunday, by the way).

So if changing attitudes to driving is difficult, why not do what the law tries to do, and change behaviour? Then, so my theory goes, having changed behaviour, often the change of attitude will follow.

Driving, for me, became much more interesting and challenging when I had to conform to a system on joining the IAM, and having conformed to the system and seen that it worked, my attitude changed as a result.

Why, I've even lent my prized copy of Roadcraft to one of my acquaintances, after I found one that could read, and have had a favourable response (he bought me a pint).

Now, having come over all evangelistic, I could lend it to more people.

And have some more pints - while the car stays at home of course!

*Nigel*



**What if... you hit gravel mid-corner?**

Even the world's most advanced tyre technology is no match for seven grains of gravel in the wrong place at the wrong time...

**Countersteer to avoid**

Aim for the inside of the gravel patch, not the outside - if the gravel continues tighter into the turn, it's easier to pick the bike up, cross it more upright and get back to clean Tarmac.

**Look through the bend**

Focus on where you're going to go when you get through the gravel patch and you'll give the bike all the help it needs to actually get through.

**Keep the power on gently**

Keeping slight acceleration on takes the pressure off the front wheel and makes it less likely to wash out.

**Relax your arms**

Even if the rear end slides, it will self-correct as long as you let the bars do the natural thing of steering into the drift.

*Ride 87*

**Christmas quiz**

Here are the answers to the quiz in the last issue, as promised!

1. The next palindromic number after 15951 is 16061 so he must have travelled 110 miles, giving him a speed of 55 mph.
2. All statements contradict each other, therefore one at most can be true, which makes the other nine false. Therefore statement nine is the answer.
3. Three letters in each word are in their normal alphabetical order e.g. LMN. NOP. DEF. RST. GHI. and STU.

4. The next in the series is E. The series is One, Two, Three, Four, Five, Six, Seven, Eight.
5. When the car and lorry meet they are the same distance from A regardless of their speeds.
6. The price of the book is £2.00.
7. There was a brother and sister. The brother's son was there and so was the sister's daughter. From this, all the relationships can be deduced.
8. The bar of chocolate costs 24.5 pence and the wrapper costs .5 pence.
9. A towel.
10. A decimal point.

**Could YOU be a professional?****Answer these questions to find out.**

After answering, check below for correct answer and interpretation.

1. How do you put a giraffe into a refrigerator?
2. How do you put an elephant into a refrigerator?
3. The Lion King is hosting an animal conference. All the animals except one attend. Which one does not attend?

If you did not answer correctly the first three questions, this next question is your last chance to show your qualification to be a professional.

4. There is a river inhabited by crocodiles. How do you manage to pass it?

Don't be frustrated if you failed this test. According to Andersen Consulting Worldwide, about 90% of the professionals failed the exam. However, most pre-schoolers got it correct, thus disproving the popular theory that most "professionals" have the brains of a four-year old.

*Answers >*

And Dog lived with Adam and Eve and was a companion to them and loved them.  
And they were comforted.  
And God was pleased.  
And dog was content and wagged his tail.

After a while, it came to pass that an angel came to the Lord and said, "Lord, Adam and Eve have become filled with pride. They strut and preen like peacocks and they believe they are worthy of adoration. Dog has indeed taught them that they are loved, but perhaps too well."

And God said, "No problem! I will create for them a companion who will be with them forever and who will see them as they are. The companion will remind them of their limitations, so they will know that they are not always worthy of adoration."

And God created CAT to be a companion to Adam and Eve.  
And Cat would not obey them.  
And when Adam and Eve gazed into Cat's eyes, they were reminded that they were not the supreme beings. And Adam and Eve learned humility.

And they were greatly improved.  
And God was pleased.  
And Dog was happy.  
And Cat didn't care one way or the other.

A freshman at Eagle Rock Junior High won first prize at the Greater Idaho Falls Science Fair, April 26. He was attempting to show how conditioned we have become to alarmists practicing junk science and spreading fear of everything in our environment. In his project he urged people to sign a petition demanding strict control or total elimination of the chemical *dihydrogen monoxide*.

And for plenty of good reasons, since it can:

1. Cause excessive sweating and vomiting.
2. It is a major component in acid rain.
3. It can cause severe burns in its gaseous state.
4. Accidental inhalation can kill you.
5. It contributes to erosion.
6. It decreases effectiveness of automobile brakes.
7. It has been found in tumors of terminal cancer patients.

He asked 50 people if they supported a ban of the chemical. Forty-three said yes, six were undecided, and only one knew that the chemical was water (H<sub>2</sub>O).

The title of his prize winning project was, "How Gullible Are We?" He feels the conclusion is obvious.

*Internet*

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It's OK to talk to yourself and it's even OK to answer yourself. It's when you start going "Huh? What did you say?" that the men with the snug fitting white coats show up.

## Pre-Drive Checks

In the last Newsletter, I looked at the expectations of the Pre-Drive and Roadworthiness checks as stated in Roadcraft.

The Institute have adopted a simplified and, in my view, more sensible Cockpit check. As a high number of drivers appear not to undertake a Cockpit check, it's worth re-stating here.

### Cockpit check (ASPS)

#### **A = All doors secure**

Check all doors are firmly closed (if the dashboard instrumentation does not confirm this)

#### **S = Seat & Mirrors**

Adjust seat first and then the mirrors.

#### **P = Panels & Pedals**

Check pedals and handbrake have normal pressure and freedom of movement. Check panel warning lights and gauges are working normally.

#### **S = Safety Belts**

Ensure Safety Belts of all occupants are correctly fastened.

It is, of course, much simpler and easier to remember but it does not go far enough. I believe it should also incorporate a daily visual examination of the exterior for damage or defects to the bodywork, lights, glass and tyres. The panel warning lights of modern cars includes a bulb check, but for those that do not, the lights should be checked regularly.

Apart from checking for defects or damage to glass, drivers should ensure that all glass is clean – windows inside and out, lenses, mirrors. Those with children, dogs or other sundry beasts should be particularly careful.

With regards to tyres, a quick visual check should enable a driver to identify any damage and pressure levels. It helps if you are aware of

what the pressures should be, and how to use an air hose to pump up the tyres when necessary. Leaving it to partners and/or parents does not help in an emergency. Driving with uneven or flat tyres is dangerous and affects both steering and braking, not to mention economy.

A final check which Observers are expected to advise new Associates about, and which all advanced motorists should be undertaking, is the Moving Brake Test. It should be carried out at the earliest opportunity, ideally on a straight level road with nothing in front, behind or either side, by applying first light pressure on the pedal followed by a firmer pressure.

Cars with an Automatic gear box are additionally expected to carry out a "Kick-Down" Test in similar circumstances to those of the Moving Brake Test, by pressing the accelerator firmly to the floor in order to ensure that the transmission will drop down a gear and accelerate away.

Although the Cockpit and Moving Brake Test checks are part of the syllabus of the National Standard, I've yet to hear either being required by an Examiner on an Advanced Test. Should it be included as part of the Test, it would help to emphasise the importance of these safety procedures.

These simple checks can be carried out by walking around the car before, and shortly after you drive off, and take but a few seconds, and could ultimately save your life and those of other road users.

They are, however, not enough on their own, and in the next Newsletter I will muse over the more detailed Roadworthiness check and equipment to be carried.

*Richard Hazell*  
Observer Co-ordinator

**NOTICEBOARD  
WE NEED YOUR HELP!**

We are looking for **volunteers** to help 'man' a stand at the Kent show this year. If anyone can help out, please contact Sheila Redwood for more details on (01227) 462676.

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Our manoeuvring evening is set to place at Hersden in June. If anyone has any suggestions for driving challenges, please contact Richard Hazell on (01303) 893339.

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**Send us your pictures!**

We are after imagery of any driving situations that can be utilised in our poster campaign for the Drive-In Centre. Please send your pictures to our Publicity Officer, Caroline Hill.  
(Details on inside front page). Thank you.

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**Distributors needed.**

If you can put posters up in your local area advertising our Drive-In Centre, please send your address and/or email details to Caroline Hill.  
(Details on inside front page). Thank you.

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This year's **Treasure Hunt** is set to take place in July. The date has yet to be onfirmed.  
Check in the next Newsletter for more details.

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**CONTRIBUTIONS****Driven to drink by fruit juices**

Over-priced soft drinks in some pubs are encouraging customers to drink alcohol and drive, a Trading Standards survey has discovered.

Officers say prices in some pubs are "hugely inflated", and does not help prevent drink-driving. Kent Trading Standards' Richard Pilborough said: "We have found many pubs are charging hugely-inflated prices for soft drinks. They are often more expensive than beer for the same quantity, despite having no duty to pay."

Kent County Council cabinet member Richard King said: "We are waging our annual campaign against drink-driving and it seems as though there are publicans out there making big profits at the expense or responsible drivers and others who choose not to drink alcohol. Many bar owners manage to be competitive with their pricing, encouraging the sensible option of not drinking and driving. We just ask publicans to give customers and drivers a fair deal."

*Thanet Adscene w/e Jan 8 2004*

**Drink Driving**

Do you, or does someone you know drink and drive? If so, there is a very interesting website covering the subject, and anyone that is tempted should look at this site first. For instance, there is an application where it is possible to enter the amount of alcohol consumed and find out how long it remains in the body.

As all drivers should know, the amount of alcohol consumed before driving should be NIL. But sadly some people NEVER learn.

"But the figures from the Friday 13 study might be more to do with human psychology than luck. People who believe in the superstition could be more anxious and drive less well making the likelihood of an accident more pronounced."

The 2002 figures show that on Fridays:

- At 9am 30 car users were killed or injured
- Between 4pm and 5pm 54 car users were killed or injured
- The average number killed or injured on any other weekday at 9am is 27 - between 4pm and 5pm it's 39

The fatal Friday evening trend seems to be a worldwide phenomenon with similar peaks from Hawaii to Tasmania.

In the UK on Saturdays the peak is at mid-day and 5pm on Sundays. The early evening fatal Friday trend is also reflected in the figures for cyclists and pedestrians.

"Road users should be aware of safety at all times, however these figures suggest that motorists, pedestrians and cyclists are more at risk on early Friday evenings. The fatal Friday phenomenon is probably caused by motorists switching off early, fatigue after a long week and the "thank God it's Friday" effect.

"The majority of injury accidents happen in urban and residential areas, close to junctions and close to home. We are asking all motorists to concentrate on the road ahead rather than the weekend ahead this and every Friday.

"Many motorists seem to switch off and turn on to auto-pilot when a couple of miles from home and this is when they are most dangerous. They know the roads so do not concentrate and this is when they often fail to stop. Mentally many motorists will be rushing home with too many things on their mind. This can lead to increased speeds and lack of hazard perception.

"Don't make Friday 13 an unlucky one for you or other road users"

13<sup>th</sup> February 2004

<http://www.racfoundation.org>

## CAT

A newly discovered chapter in the Book of Genesis has provided the answer to "Where do pets come from?"

Adam and Eve said, "Lord, when we were in the garden, you walked with us every day. Now we do not see you anymore. We are lonesome here and it is difficult for us to remember how much you love us."

And God said, "No problem! I will create a companion for you that will be with you forever and who will be a reflection of my love for you, so that you will love me even when you cannot see me. Regardless of how selfish or childish or unlovable you may be, this new companion will accept you as you are and will love you as I do, in spite of yourselves."

And God created a new animal to be a companion for Adam and Eve. And it was a good animal. And God was pleased. And the new animal was pleased to be with Adam and Eve and he wagged his tail.

And Adam said, "Lord, I have already named all the animals in the Kingdom and I cannot think of a name for this new animal."

And God said, "No problem. Because I have created this new animal to be a reflection of my love for you, his name will be a reflection of my own name, and you will call him DOG."

substantial number choose to drive after taking it despite research showing that the drug severely impairs driver judgement.

Almost 20% of road accident fatalities have traces of drugs in their systems.

Young drivers are twice as likely to have been driven by someone high on drugs rather than over the drink limit.

More than 90% of motorists are in favour of the police having powers to carry out roadside testing for illegal drugs and 93% would support a Government funded campaign educational campaign.

Recreational Dugs and Driving, a study produced for the Scottish Executive, revealed that cannabis was the most commonly used substance among young drug takers – most of who believed that it had little or no effect on their driving abilities.

Seventy per cent of people believe that a traffic light system of marking on the packaging of legal drugs would be useful.

More than a quarter of the 1000 respondents to a recent survey organised by a motoring magazine admitted that they take illicit drugs and drive every week, 36% said that they drug drive at least once a month and only 6% of drivers who admitted regularly taking drugs and driving thought their driving suffered as a result - 18% actually felt that drugs improved it.

The most common drug taken before getting behind the wheel was cannabis. Typical comments by drivers responding to the survey were: "After a smoke you are more relaxed and your reactions are quicker", while others commented that they were more relaxed and composed after smoking cannabis and didn't find driving so daunting.

"The argument about the rights and wrongs of the down grading of classification of cannabis is an issue for Government – the move however, should be accompanied by education and advertising.

"Many young drivers don't think about the consequences of taking drugs and driving. We have seen too many tragic consequences of such cases and it's high time that England and Wales caught up," concluded King.

*January 21 2004*

*<http://www.racfoundation.org>*

### **Fatal Friday 13<sup>th</sup>?**

Friday 13 could mean bad luck for road users with more deaths and injuries on Friday evenings than at any other time of the week. And while paraskevidekatriaphobics – people afflicted with a morbid, irrational fear of Friday the 13th – will be staying at home today (13), the quarter of people who are superstitious about the number will be extra cautious on their drive to work.

But is there any evidence to suggest that you are more likely to be involved in a traffic accident on Friday 13 than at other times? According to the RAC Foundation, while the link between Friday 13 and road accidents is tenuous, the proof of a connection between Fridays generally and having an accident is irrefutable.

The only study to look at this possible association was undertaken more than ten years ago and concluded that the risk of hospital admission as a result of a transport accident may be increased by as much as 52% on Friday 13.

Edmund King, executive director of the RAC Foundation said: "Friday and in particular Friday evening is definitely the worst day of the week for fatalities and serious injuries on the road."

Be warned, there are some horrendous photos on this site of just what can happen through drink driving, although you need not see these.

So if thinking of drinking visit  
<http://www.amioverthelimit.com> first.

*Ted Willey*

### **Cameras 'failing to save lives'**

Police in Canada found that road deaths fell after they scrapped speed cameras eight years ago and have continued falling ever since.

The experiment in Ontario, Canada's most populous province, is further proof that the proliferation of cameras on Britain's roads are not necessary to save lives.

When Conservatives in the province scrapped the cameras in 1995, road deaths stood at 999 a year. They have steadily fallen since and are now at 881.

An Ontario Conservative spokesman said a review of speed cameras had shown they had not made roads safer.

He says: 'Speed cameras had no effect on drunk drivers, tailgaters, unsafe lane changes, sudden stoppers or vehicles with serious mechanical defects. These are the biggest killers on Ontario roads and they can only be stopped by officers on patrol'

There was an outcry in the province after it was discovered that the cameras, introduced by the Left-wing New Democratic Party, generated £8.5 million a year. Public anger about this sum helped the Conservatives win the 1995 election.

*The Mail on Sunday  
December 7 2003*

### **Fine threat for distant parkers**

***Drivers who park too far from the kerb could soon face fines, it has emerged.***

The proposals, under the new Traffic Management Act, are designed to crackdown on double parking. Councils could target problem areas and give traffic wardens the power to put tickets on vehicles parked more than 50cm from the roadside.



Paul Watters, head of the AA Motoring Trust's roads and transport policy, said the measure made sense but needed to be

enforced with discretion.

### **Consultation**

A department of transport spokeswoman said while the power already exists in London, it would only be introduced in other areas of the country in streets or districts where double-parking was causing a problem. "There's no question of this coming into effect across the whole country as soon as the bill becomes law," she said.

The transport secretary would have to approve any application for a designated parking enforcement area - and only after a period of public consultation. The spokeswoman was unable to confirm reports that fines for bad parking could cost motorists £100 a time. The bill, which will give traffic wardens powers to fine drivers who jump red light or illegally block junctions, has already attracted controversy.

### **'Doomsday scenario'**

Transport Secretary Alistair Darling introduced the jam-busting measures earlier this week, insisting that police time would be freed up by switching powers to local councils.

Mr Watters said he feared the double parking rule “might fall down in its application”.

“For the motorist it conjures up a doomsday scenario of people with tape measures which takes it to the extreme. “It’s one thing if it causes a major problem and another if it’s a minor glitch.

“We don’t want people being fined for being 50.1cm away from the kerb.

“In the old days, when traffic wardens used their discretion and weren’t necessarily expected to issue so many tickets, it would have been plain to see by the eye what was good and what was acceptable in terms of parking.”

### Interpretation

RAC spokeswoman Rebecca Bell said it made sense for people to try to tuck their cars in close to the kerb so they did not cause an obstruction and there was less likelihood of it being clipped by another vehicle.

“Fifty centimetres is almost twice a school ruler so we would think most motorists wouldn’t have a problem at all,” she said.

“But there has to be some level of interpretation of what’s appropriate to parking.”

Ms Bell said the measure would be useful if it stopped drivers parking badly on both sides of narrow city streets. But she said it might not be sensible to enforce it in rural areas with wide roads.

*Story from BBC NEWS:*

[http://news.bbc.co.uk/go/pr/fr/-1/hi/uk\\_politics/3382137.stm](http://news.bbc.co.uk/go/pr/fr/-1/hi/uk_politics/3382137.stm)

*Published: 2004/01/09 © BBC MMIV*

## DRIVING NOTES

I am a trainee driving instructor and my aim in becoming a member of the IAM, is to widen the critical input to my driving technique. The Roadcraft video made quite an impression on me by developing a sense of terminology and commentary. I made the following notes to help me reduce inappropriately retrospective instruction.

### Attitude

Situations rarely suddenly happen

Be proactive and less reactive

Early vision, early decision

Defensive driving searching for clues to the intentions of others and road layout ahead

System of car control is safe, systematic, simple and applicable

### Vehicle Dynamics

Monitored functions check

Ignition with clutch down reducing false neutrals and engine load

Cover brake for handbrake or system warning light

Running brake test for pedal take up and the affect on steering

Drive wheels for weight transfer and friction loss during acceleration and cornering

Palm technique on gear lever

Engine compression for lengthy deceleration

Consider showing a brake light for hazard ahead

Kill your speed, then gear to go before turning, giving way or cornering

Match gear to speed before bend or gradient using power and block changes

Overtaking distance and relative speed of oncoming vehicles

Accurate sense of acceleration and deceleration into clear gap without braking

## High time for England and Wales to catch up in Anti Drug Driving Campaign

England and Wales are lagging behind the rest of the UK in the fight against drugs and driving according to the RAC Foundation.

A new series of television ads warning of the dangers of taking drugs and driving is launched today (21) in Northern Ireland. The launch comes a week before a change in the law to reclassify cannabis to a class c drug.

For more than a year, the Scottish Executive has been running a high profile campaign on the same subject. But, as the number of drug drive cases increases, Government departments responsible for road safety in England and Wales - the countries with the largest concentration of motorists - have not committed to such high profile campaigns.

The RAC Foundation is calling on the Government to urgently review this position and alert drivers to the hazards of combining driving with illegal and some over the counter and prescription medicines.

Edmund King, executive director of the RAC Foundation said: "We are delighted that these new ads will be running to combat the shocking statistics that a quarter of drivers killed in road accidents in Northern Ireland over the past three years had traces of illicit drugs in their blood. The RAC Foundation discussed the problems of drugs and driving and potential campaigns with policy advisors three years ago. It is good to see the plans coming to fruition."

"It is now imperative that the motoring public in England and Wales is subject to the same education and warnings of enforcement - particularly when relaxing the law on possession

of cannabis may lead to more people driving after taking it."

Although it will remain a criminal offence to possess cannabis under the new proposals - carrying a theoretical maximum sentence of two years - it would become a lower police priority and anyone caught with it would be given a caution, a warning or sent a court summons later rather than being arrested.

In the view of the Foundation, this might lead to an increase in the number of people attempting to drive while under its influence as users become more confident that they are a lower police priority - those in possession for personal use would have little to fear from the police.

"The legal criterion on impairment to drive will, of course, remain unaltered following the re-classification.

"At the moment, police officers have no effective roadside technology to detect drugs. They have to rely instead on recognition tests, observation and experience. If the problem gets worse then they may struggle to cope. Hence it is vital that the change in classification is combined with a very high profile, multi-media campaign. Many motorists are surprisingly ignorant of the dangers posed by drug driving," added King.

The RAC Foundation has been calling for such publicity for several years and the Scottish Executive has already funded an extensive multi media campaign and circulated a series of leaflets and adverts to clubs that might attract drug drivers.

Previous RAC Foundation research has uncovered:

Some estimates suggest that at least 1.5 million people in the UK regularly smoke cannabis. A

## **“Wrong Gear” Contributing To Safety Camera Misery Says IAM**

New research shows that three-quarters of all of drivers in built-up areas are breaking the speed limit by mistake, simply because they're in the wrong gear, according to the Institute of Advanced Motorists (IAM).

The IAM and BBC Radio 4's Today programme commissioned MORI poll research\* to establish the scale of the problem and at the same time analyse contributory factors.

The IAM/BBC poll, conducted in December, is thought to be the first to focus on the causation of speeding offences by addressing aspects of driver behaviour.

The poll took into account the nature and engine size of the vehicles. Data gathered will help show what practical steps individual drivers at the wheel can take to curb their speed and so stay within the limit.

Motorists who greatly exceed the legal speed limit were not the focus of the survey. Instead the number of drivers committing “marginal” speed violations were explored.

“Quite often, otherwise safe drivers are on the wrong end of the camera because of a moment of inattention. A typical scenario is a flash and a fine, with immediate points on the licence, because a driver has let his or her speed ‘drift up’ by perhaps just a few miles an hour,” said IAM Chief Examiner Bryan Lunn.

Drawing on a survey base of 1000 participants, MORI took a typical 30 mph urban driving situation and asked: Do you ever find the car tends to “creep” above 30mph without you realising it? 74% said yes.

Then pollsters asked drivers of manual cars which gear they are normally in if they are doing a steady 30mph. Nobody questioned was allowed to just say “top gear” – the MORI team were told to probe further for a specific answer.

The vast majority of respondents (79%) have modern, five speed gear boxes. To do a steady thirty miles an hour, the majority (54%) of the drivers surveyed thought that they should be in fourth gear.

“Driving habits mean people want to change up the gearbox as quickly as possible without thinking too much about it,” said Mr Lunn.

“The IAM believes that drivers in manual cars could prevent themselves going too fast inadvertently by using the interim gears – especially third gear - more often and for longer in urban driving. Thirdgear is not just ‘on the way to top’.”

Mr Lunn said advanced driving technique is “speed for the hazard, gear for the speed.” In other words, simply moving up the gearbox to fourth or even fifth automatically in a typical built-up situation, because that's what you've always done, may lead to an accidental speed camera violation.

“Drivers often quote fuel consumption as a reason for choosing the higher gear – and of course, it's a factor on a motorway or fast dual carriageway. But in an urban situation, a combination of third gear and a light throttle will mean you have optimum control of the car's speed and still save fuel,” he said. “In fact too high a gear puts a needless strain on the engine, which is not fuel efficient.”

*Issued: 2 January 2004  
<http://www.iam.org.uk>*

**Road Characteristics**

Bright dazzle through to loss of contrast at night  
 Local patchy road conditions and tyre adhesion  
 Reduced width with verge chewing, debris and puddles over pot holes  
 Road signs, rumble strips, corner and marker posts  
 Fresh horse droppings and skid marks!

**Observations**

Concentration, commentary and hazard prioritisation  
 Mirror again to check reaction to signal  
 Split vision at roundabouts, scanning ahead, planning to stop, looking to go  
 Exiting vehicles on the roundabout circuit providing opportunity to enter smoothly  
 Cyclists looking behind preparing for manoeuvre  
 Long shadows of vehicles around a sharp and blind bend  
 Consider horn to note presence in addition to mirror, position, speed and look  
 Overtaking engagement distance, mirror and position to check its ON  
 Straighten bends when safe to do so  
 Position to increase vision and be seen from behind vehicles and on bends  
 Chase limit point, maintaining speed with foot in the bucket  
 Power through and pick up the view

*Peter Cartwright  
 Associate member 2004*

**Mini Tales**

December was here, soon be Christmas! It was time for the annual trip down to Devon, (well one of them anyway), this time for the North Devon Mini Register Christmas Dinner. This has now become a family affair, Michelle and I began by allowing Dave, my husband to come. Then Lisa, my other daughter, complained about being left out, so she and her husband Nigel had to come as well. You can appreciate that this wasn't a job for poor old mini, and we needed something bigger, i.e. a people carrier, especially as now there is my grandson Luke. The main difference this year (or last, should I say) was that mini was going down for its refurbishment. So while Dave, Lisa, Nigel and Luke went in the P.C. Michelle and I went in Mini, so we could all return in the P.C. Or that was the plan anyway.

As usual in the Stone family, things didn't quite go according to plan! Mini decided to break down at Dargate. So of course instead of doing the sensible thing and staying at the service station, where we checked the water and filled it up, we decided that all would be well and pressed on. Needless to say all wasn't well and we conked out again by the old Duke of York on the Thanet Way. We called the AA who were very busy. This was at just gone 4.30. They said they would try to have someone with us within half an hour otherwise they couldn't say. So we waited, and they weren't there in half an hour. We waited some more, and eventually a very nice man turned up some 2 or 3 hours later.

It turned out to be a leak in a pipe behind the radiator. A mini radiator is on the side, not in front and since it was pitch dark and chucking it down with rain, the very nice man declined to try and fix it. To be fair he had done one recently in far better conditions and it was a difficult job that he swore then he would never do again let alone in the conditions of that night.

He told us we were entitled to a one way relay, so obviously I said that we wanted to go to Bideford, which took him back a bit to say the least. He then had to arrange a transporter for us, which of course was another long wait, although he did take us to the services before he went so we could use the facilities!

So we waited. Some 5 hours after we came spluttering to a halt the transporter finally turned up, and the guy seemed a bit grumpy. It turned out that he had had to come from Dartford to collect us and because we were a little way off of the road and he didn't know the area, he had a job finding us.

Once he had the car loaded up he worked out his route and told us he could take us as far as Taunton Dean, which is on the M5, and that he would have us there by 1.30am where another transporter would take us on to Bideford. We arrived at Taunton Dean bang on 1.30; what a nice man! Just as he was about to phone and check where the other driver was, he pulled in behind us. What timing! They swapped Mini from one vehicle to the other and we were off again. We finally arrived at the Riversford Hotel at 2.45am, one of our slowest journeys, ever. (On the upside, Mini's fuel consumption was fantastic!! – Michelle)

The next evening was the dinner; it was great to see all of our friends again although they all were quite taken aback by the tales of our journey down. Terry the guy that runs NDMR always does some awards and this time Michelle and I got two.

One for the most accident prone, as when we were down last December Michelle was on crutches after being knocked off her motorbike, then in March I fell down the stairs and broke my shoulder and a vertebrae in my spine.

No one thought I was going to be able to do Lands End to John O'Groats, but I did, and then of course last November I broke my nose. We were awarded a first aid kit! Then to cap it all, after our escapade from the night before we were awarded a mini on a tow truck (see pics) for our dedication in choosing to get down to Devon at all costs!

We all had a great time and thoroughly enjoyed ourselves, but finished up sitting and talking till gone 1.00am. All these late nights are just too much. On Sunday we all had breakfast together and began to sort ourselves out for the journey home. Terry got Mini started and drove off in it, ready to take it to his workshop to dismantle it and sort it out. When it has been put back together and re-sprayed it should look like new.

Talking of new mini's it will be ready for this year's Lands End to John O'Groats, so I will be after everyone for sponsorship again!!! We will be supporting Demelza House again and Mini will be a blank canvas for sponsorship logo's if there is anyone out there who would like to get their company name on the car in exchange for sponsorship.

Okay, enough now. Happy motoring. I will leave it to Michelle to tell you what happened on Christmas day...

*Carol Stone*



Christmas Day. Everything was going well. We had eaten dinner, pulled a multitude of crackers and were now ready to hit the X-Box Lisa received for Christmas. We'd got it all planned. Midtown Madness – a driving game where you can cause mayhem in either Paris, (zut alors!), or Washington; a bottle of Sambuca and some hazy rules with regard to a drinking game.

But alas, the one woman disaster area that is my mother decided to find some bones she had not yet broken and rectify that situation. So, whilst carrying Luke downstairs for his bottle she slipped on the bottom step, and while protecting him left her ribs completely exposed to the unforgiving stairs.

I was completely impressed by the Ambulance service that seemed to appear within minutes. I had been all set to accompany Mum to the hospital, when typically of me, came over all unnecessary, so Lisa went instead.

A couple of hours later, Mum returned. She can now add to her inventory of injuries broken ribs. Luke was completely fine though, so that was ok.

The drinking game took place on Boxing Day instead. We were rubbish.



*Michelle Stone*

**SOCIAL EVENINGS  
January - Canterbury  
Fire Service**

The talk provided by 3 of the team was very enlightening. They spoke about fire safety in the home which is a core part of their job, along with fire fighting. While offices are now generally very safe, it is when the office workers head for home that problems arise.

Changes in lifestyle mean that what were previously a major cause of fire, i.e. chip pans,

smoking, electric bar fires, aren't any more. However, candles, double glazing and lack of smoke alarms are now the worst offenders. Double glazing prevents smoke escaping, and in a number of cases the occupants may already be dead before the Brigade has even been called. New houses are notoriously difficult to get into, but it's ok, they've got bigger hammers!

Everybody should have smoke alarms fitted, and there is absolutely no excuse not to since "Local firefighters from Kent Fire Brigade will be in your area offering free 10 year smoke alarms and home fire safety advice." Contact the Community Fire Safety Team on 01622 698360, or visit <http://www.kent.fire-uk.org>.

**Did you know?**

A little known fact is that Fire Engines actually get smaller the faster they go. The crew all breathe in on particularly tight gaps which enables them to get through unscathed. (It is a technique I used to use a lot – in my less advanced days).

**February – Nigel Stevens**

Another extremely entertaining and very well attended evening, courtesy of Nigel Stevens, a Traffic Policeman with a diverse and amusing collection of stories.



We were told that he could talk for England, if we just gave him a topic. Well, that was certainly true. Like Lester Parsons before him, he had us in stitches for most of the evening, discussing his experiences training to be a Class 1 police driver, mishaps whilst on the job and responding to questions and queries from the floor.

We had to convince him to stop, in the end only because it was getting so late. I am unable to do justice to the quality of the evening, writing about it now. Let's face it, you should have been there.

*Michelle Stone*

### New Associates since December 2003

Mrs Cathleen Purcell  
Mr Gerald Smith  
Miss Hannah Ludlow  
Mr Robert Ludlow  
Mr Robert Maynard  
Miss Alison Heath  
Mr Mark Ashford  
Mr Grahame Burney  
Mr Malcolm Aspell  
Miss Rachel Bowen  
Alan Smith

### Events Data

**Littlebourne WMH -  
Second Thursday - 19.30pm**

#### 11 March

David Adley, Police Dog Handler – trained in detection of Drugs and Explosives.

#### 8 April

Quiz night. Put your thinking caps on!

#### 13 May

Mr.John Markwell - talking about RAF Nimrod.

#### 10 June

Manoeuvring Evening. Hersden.

### Test Passes

Period: 17.11.03 - 30.01.04

Date	Associate	Observer
Caroline Acors	17.11.03	Nick Williams
Lorraine Mackie	22.11.03	Barrie Bailey
Brian Oram	10.01.04	Barrie Bailey
Toby Wheeler	17.01.04	Trevor Brown
Susan Fagg		Paul Johnson
Peter Burton	24.01.04	Ted Willey
Cathleen Purcell	24.01.02	Ted Willey
Julian Brazier	30.01.04	Richard Blackford

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