

# EAST KENT GROUP

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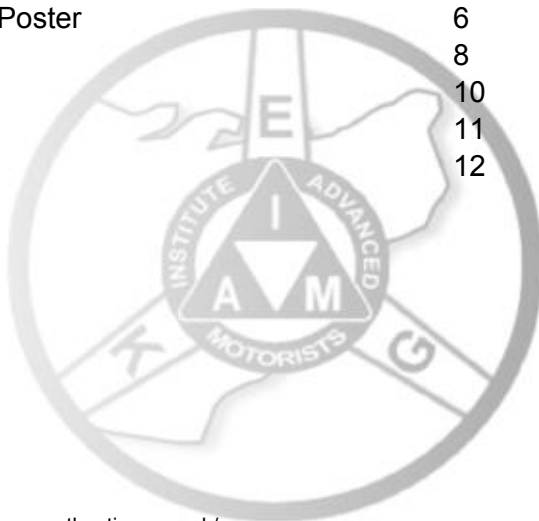
Newsletter March 2006



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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.

As you can see by the spiffy new logo on the cover the big news this year is the 50th Anniversary of the IAM.

All the groups are working to promote the IAM as never before by holding a series of events to raise public awareness.

Our own event is being held in May:

"The public are invited to an open day at the vehicle testing station, at Hersden, on Sunday, 21st May, 2006. The event starts at 10.00 am and ends at 3 pm. The idea is for visitors to undergo a driving experience similar to our own manoeuvring course, and then perhaps consider applying for membership of the Institute.

Obviously we would like as many members as possible to be in attendance to help out with setting up the course, directing our visitors and, naturally, to answer questions about membership.

I am hoping to get some publicity for the event from the media but members are encouraged to talk to friends and work colleagues in an effort to persuade them to come along."

*Vic Reynolds*

Included in the centre spread of this edition of the magazine is a poster promoting our event. I have also put a copy up on our website if you need to download and print off more. [ <http://www.eastkentiam.org.uk> ] in the newsletter archive. Please distribute this where you can and promote our event.

As we come creeping into Spring, I look forward to getting my Mini back. Where is it? I hear you ask. Well, it is down in Devon, lapping it up in luxury as it turns out in a new workshop with a wood-burning stove.

The reason? I'm getting a new engine put in. Bye bye 998cc's, hello 1300cc's. I got hold of a 1300 Metro engine, with 35,000 miles, one lady owner for £50. Now it is with my trusted Mini Man, also known as the lunatic who responsible for the North Devon Grand Tour - 300 mini convoy.

How have I coped without my trusted Mini? Never fear! I stole my sister's! Her's is a black and white Mini Cooper, still disguised as a cow after the last Grand Tour. It is quite unruly you know, and has this need to wheel spin at the slightest provocation. I may be slightly heavy footed with this much peppier Mini, but the practice will serve me well when I finally get my Mini back!

And on a more serious note may I now direct you to Richard's article.

We still need YOU.

*Michelle*

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

It's that funny time of year again. You must have noticed: the days are getting longer, just like they did this time last year. Christmas and New Year revelries are but a distant memory.

The SAD (seasonally affectively disordered) people are coming out of hibernation. Geordies are back in diaphanous t-shirts. And I am ready. Unlike last year. Last year I wasn't ready, it was summer before I realised it. This year? I'm one step ahead. Already booked my midsummer place at Stonehenge, cleaned my lawnmower, done my Christmas shopping, put the cat out, washed my other pair of socks etc., etc. Yes, I am READY.

Ready for what? DFP. that's what. DFP? er, er, Disgusted from Peterborough? Dilbert For President? Could be an improvement. Nope. Driving for Pleasure is what I mean. You know, actually going out in the car because you want to, with no particular place to go (I feel a song coming on!). Increasingly difficult in our poor little overcrowded, concrete bedecked, drought-ridden county. So go on, enjoy yourself.

For me, the B-road, the ducking and diving B-road, not the Stone Street straight B-road, holds a peculiar fascination. It often has that nice blend of openness, emptiness and bendiness encouraging a flowing style and using lots of road, and hopefully no verge. I am to be found, usually on a Sunday morning, before, after or instead of church (sorry, Sheila), winging my way contentedly along, gratuitously burning fossil fuels and contributing to global warming with no guilt whatsoever. Or maybe only a bit of guilt.

You know, I could be close to becoming a biker with that attitude. Enjoying myself, on the road, very novel. I am at that age where I would have to be born again to be a biker, and, lacking any degree of religiosity, reincarnation is a bit of a non-starter for me.

So, I can't be a biker, and have to content myself with four wheels. Actually, three at the moment, in the Lotus. And no indicators. And a leaking roof. And a flat battery. And a jammed bonnet release. And the brake lights don't work. And the MOT's due . . . ah, the delights of the open road.

Happy motoring

*Nigel*

## “BE ALERT”

### WE NEED MORE LERTS

There can be no doubt that the continued success, both of the IAM and the East Kent Group of Advanced Motorists, depends on the availability, and quality, of trained Observers.

Only thus can we ensure the continued throughput of Associates, thereby promoting safes and better driving on the roads.

Through personal and family commitments and circumstances, ill health and other varied reasons, we find ourselves unable to keep up with the demand created by new Associates, and have returned to maintaining a waiting list for allocation. We, therefore, **NEED MORE OBSERVERS**.

So, who make up this fine body of Observers, what do they do, how did they become Observers, what is expected of them?

Our Observers are volunteers who, having passed their Advanced Driving Test, wish to pass their new found skills on to others, and whilst in the process of so doing, keeping their own driving standards up to par.

How can **YOU** become an Observer? If you enjoy driving and meeting people, you are expected to undergo a period of training over 6 half days over six weeks, one “Classroom” session followed by a “On the Road” practice session. This is followed by by short Tests of 10 questions each on “the Highway Code”, “Roadcraft” and “Documentation and Administration”.

You will then be allocated an Associate in order to build up 10 Observation hours with the support of a Senior Observer, before undergoing a Practical Test on your ability to communicate Advanced Driving Skills.

On successful completion of this Training Course, you will be presented with a Certificate confirming your Qualification.

Many members balk at the thought of the time commitment, but other than the 6 half days over the 6 weeks required for the training, the only expectations are that you should undertake a minimum of 10 Observation hours per annum, which can easily be translated into only 1 Associate per year, and undergo a Re-Test every three years to ensure maintenance of standards.

The IAM’s 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary celebrates the contribution we have all made to safer driving on our roads, so why not take up the opportunity to become an Observer and make your contribution count.

The issues involved in the training are by necessity serious, but the process itself can be fun and enjoyable.

We are due to start a Training Course on the 26<sup>th</sup> March 2006, and if you are interested, please let me know.

If you would like to discuss this further, contact your Observer or, alternatively, either Alan Hollands, Ted Willey or myself.

Look forward to hearing from YOU.

*Richard Hazell  
Chief Observer*

# **LAM50** **FIFTY YEARS OF** **DRIVING ROAD SAFETY**

## **East Kent Group of Advanced Motorists**

Invites you to join us on

**Sunday 21st May 2006**

**Between 10.00 am and 3.00 pm**

At the vehicle testing station, Hersden, Canterbury, CT3 4HB.

Visitors will be able undergo a



driving experience similar to our own manoeuvring course, and perhaps consider applying for membership of the Institute.

Members will be in attendance to answer any questions about membership and advanced driving.

For more details contact:

**Chief Observer**

Richard Hazell  
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Hawkinge. CT18 7BP

Tel: 01303 893339

E-mail: [richardh@eastkentiam.org.uk](mailto:richardh@eastkentiam.org.uk)



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**As part of the IAMs 50th Anniversary during 2006, we are introducing a new facility - Weekly Driving Tips from the IAM.**

Issued: Friday 13 January 2006

### **ICE ON THE ROAD**

The recent tragedy in North Wales that saw four cyclists killed, including a school boy, is a chilling reminder of the danger of ice on the roads at this time of year.

Every motorist should take heed of the fact that when driving conditions are poor, it is crucial we adjust our driving style and increase our hazard awareness.

Anybody who has been on the wrong end of a skid knows just how terrifying it can be – and not just for the driver, but for passengers and other road users.

Even on a fine day when the road surface seems normal, ice can remain where trees and walls shade the road, where gradients are not warmed by the sun, or where wind sweeps across an exposed hilltop or bridge or where cold air gets under a bridge. Black ice occurs in patches, so it is very easy to be lulled into a false sense of security after driving for some miles along a road that seems normal. The only advice must be to drive very cautiously when the temperature is low enough for black ice to be a risk.

It is the driver's responsibility to ensure that they're travelling at an appropriate speed for these conditions. You need to be confident that you can stop in the distance you can see to be clear, bearing in mind that when you apply the brake pedal you are able to stop in that distance. We should anticipate the road surfaces and the effect that they can have on braking or steering.

The question is to ask is this: dry, wet, ice or otherwise, can you honestly stop in the distance you can see to be clear?

When roads are slippery, use the controls – brakes, steering, accelerator, and clutch – smoothly and gently to avoid going into a skid.

Issued: Friday 20 January

### **When backwards is best**

In a car park, do you reverse into a parking space and drive out, or drive in and reverse out? The next time you are in a car park, have a look around and see how many people reverse into the space. You will probably find that most people actually drive in and reverse out. There is no doubt this may be safer/more convenient if the spaces are angled, when you have to load/unload items from the boot or if it would cause inconvenience to other road users.

On the other hand, reversing into the space provides you with several advantages. The first of these is that it is safer to reverse into somewhere you can see into (the parking space), rather than reverse out, into somewhere you can't (the line of moving traffic). Many people find that it takes them a few minutes to settle into "driving mode" when they start their journey. Therefore it doesn't make sense to undertake a potentially high risk manoeuvre such as reversing when you are not concentrating fully. It is also easier to control a car going forwards, rather than backwards when the car is first started and the automatic choke is activated. The reduction in wear and tear on you and the car is useful too – plus the fact you can pull away immediately while the engine is cold, rather than labour it doing a reversing manoeuvre.

From a security point of view, reversing close to an object such as a wall can make it more difficult for thieves to access your boot. If you need to exit a parking space quickly for personal security, driving out provides you with better acceleration and improved vision.

Over the next week why don't you try reversing into a parking space? You may find it helpful if you have electric mirrors, to lower your left (nearside) mirror as this will provide you with a guide to your lateral position. Another option where all the spaces run in parallel rows is to line your car up with the space in front and reverse back in a straight line. This should automatically position you in the centre of the space.

Issued: 27 January 2006

### **BRAKES TO SLOW, GEARS TO GO**

This week's initiative to offer an advanced driving scheme to "white van man" was greeted by everybody – except, predictably, the people it was aimed at.

Nobody likes to be told that possibly they could improve their driving. And when the news broke, White Van Men took to the airwaves from their cabs to protest. They claimed they were being picked on – and that there are plenty of other drivers who are equally poor (mini cab drivers, 4 x 4 owners for example).

But despite this initial hostile reaction to Transport Secretary Alistair Darling's initiative, common sense tells us that there is some excellent thinking here.

First of all, any driver education has to be welcome. There is no such thing as a perfect driver, and we can all gain from refreshing our skill at the wheel, without exception.

Mr Darling has pledged a £1.3m fund for Safe and Fuel Efficient Drivers (SaFED). Saving up to £500 of diesel per vehicle should appeal to white van drivers, even if the road safety or environmental benefits don't.

Interestingly, one of the key course techniques is better use of gears. By avoiding over revving and missing out unnecessary gear changes, drivers can not only reduce fuel consumption, they can also cut down wear and tear on the transmission.

Those of us taught to drive years ago were conditioned to move our way up and down the gear box systematically – 4, 3, 2 and 1. But that's because vehicles in those days had inferior brakes and we needed to bring the cars to a halt by using the drag of the transmission.

These days, we recommend "block changing". Use the brakes to slow down, then, when the speed is right, choose the gear that is best for that speed. So you may move from fourth, say, straight to second, after you have finished braking. Brake pads are cheaper to replace than clutches. You can also block change to move up, skipping intermediate gears. So remember – "gears to go, brakes to slow".

Issued: Friday 3 February 2006

### **UNDER PRESSURE? DON'T IGNORE YOUR TYRES**

We all know that tyres are among the most unfashionable items on the car. But that doesn't mean that we should ignore them.

We do so at our peril. Those few square inches of rubber that keep us in contact with the road may only be the size of a

credit card. But rain or shine, that is all that comes between the car and the tarmac.

There's an old saying: the brakes stop the wheels, but the tyres stop the car. It stands to reason that they can't do that job properly if you ignore them. Yet a recent survey showed that is precisely what we do: seven per cent of motorists admit that they only check their tyre pressures and the tread depth once a year.\*

\* source: RAC Foundation

Under-inflated tyres wear far more quickly than they should. Tyre technology means that they are far better engineered than they need be. But that also means that they are expensive things to replace and why run the risk of a blowout in the meantime?

Industry experts claim that a twenty per cent reduction in pressure can shorten a tyre's useful life by up to 30 per cent. Tyre waste is a major environmental headache. And checking that the pressure is correct for the car (including the loading) can also make a considerable impact on your fuel bill over the course of the year. The extra drag of neglected tyres will mean that each fuel tank is three per cent less efficient. That wasted fuel means more CO<sub>2</sub> in the atmosphere. Don't be tempted to add a few pounds per square inch. Over inflated tyres can cause poor vehicle handling, reduced stability in braking, cornering and reduced grip.

The IAM recommends that you check your tyres for wear, damage and pressure at least once a month. If you pick up a nail, or damage the sidewall on a pothole or a kerb, you may be able to save the tyre before it's ruined.

For more information, please visit the IAM website: [iam.org.uk](http://iam.org.uk).

## **About Us**

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

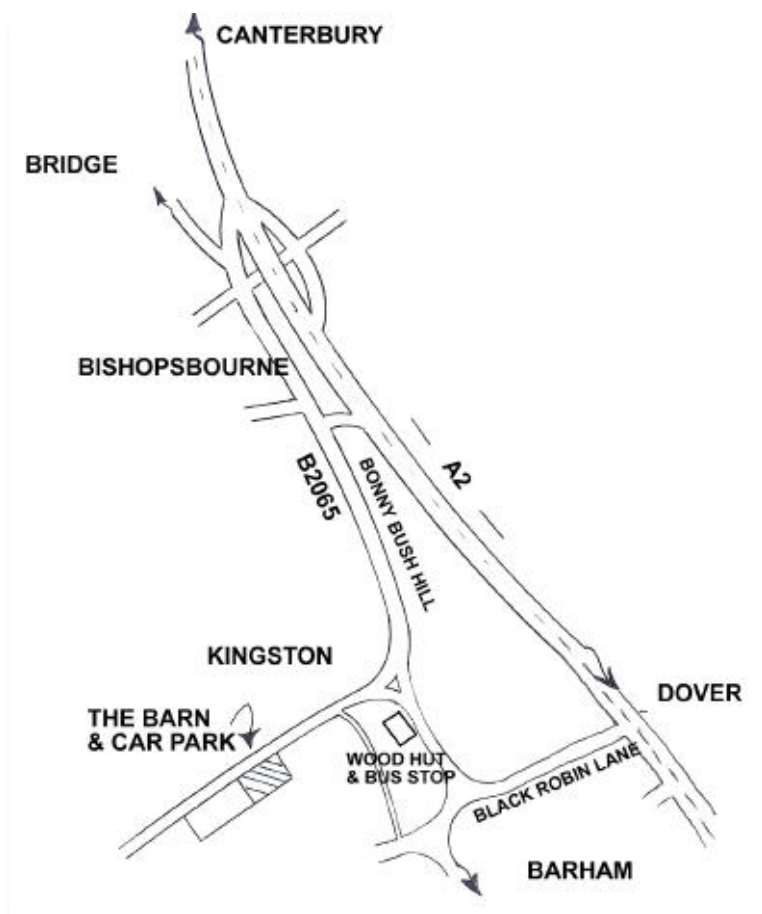
If you contact Mrs Sheila Redwood, 01227 462676, she will be able to give you full details, or visit our website at: <http://www.eastkentiam.org.uk>

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

PLEASE NOTE: There will be no session in January.

To find 'The Barn', Kingston:

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



**New Associates since the last update**

Mr Menbahadur (Men) Gurung  
 Mrs Lorraine White  
 Mr Richard Young  
 Mr Ian Davison  
 Mr Paul Allen  
 Mr David Young  
 Mrs Elizabeth Camp  
 Mr Andrew McAllister  
 Mr Timothy Frost  
 Miss Shari Stewart  
 Mr Andrew Holder  
 Mr Brian Doorne  
 Ms Janine Yong

**Members**

Mr Clifford East

**Events Data**

Littlebourne War Memorial Hall  
 - Second Thursday - 19.30pm

**9 March** - Thomas Craig - ICU-UCMe.  
 This is an initiative to raise the awareness  
 of all drivers as to the need to have, in their  
 vehicles, high visibility garments.

**13 April** - Open Evening

**11 May** - Eric Gowler of the AA

**21 May** - Sunday 50th Anniversary event at  
 Hersden

**8 June** - Cliff East - MOD Fire Training

**12 October** - AGM - Dr Steve Ladyman MP

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

19.12.05 - 04.02.06

<b>Associate</b>	<b>Date</b>	<b>Observer</b>
Helen McNeil	19.12.05	Domenic De Paolis
David Garioch	04.02.06	Paul Johnson
Matthew Stockill	04.02.06	Ted Willey

Congratulations to all associates, and also to Jane Clarke on passing her Observer Test, and Philip Plant on passing his Senior Observer Test.

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

Final Copy Date for June Submission - 11 May 2006

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.