

# EAST KENT GROUP

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Newsletter March 2007

# IAM

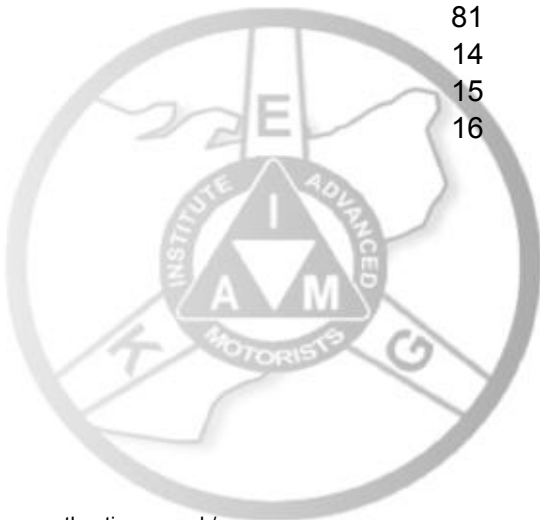
## DRIVING ROAD SAFETY



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

I want to start first off by (belatedly) welcoming Vanessa as Secretary. It wasn't until I had already sent the last newsletter to the printers that I realised I had forgotten to. By now she must definitely be wondering what she has got herself into, but I'm afraid it's too late now!!

As Christmas is a long distant memory, and Easter is looming over the horizon, I'm looking forward to dragging my motorbike out of hibernation. Mini Jock can have a rest before this year's Land's End to John O'Groats, and prepare for his leading role at the front of the convoy. I don't know what they were thinking, asking us to lead, but I am planning on letting Jock do the route finding. After all - it will be our 7th run and I am fairly certain that Jock can actually find his own way now.

I am hoping he will behave himself. His track record of the last few months has been very poor. I got him a respray and derust, a trailer that was also resprayed. I got him some lovely new alloys, with some nice new grippy tyres, as you really can't spend all your time sliding around roundabouts without starting to look like a hooligan.

How does he repay me? Well the wiper motor packed up, the electrics developed a random feature that caused my radio and horn to work as and when they felt like it. The drivers door window dropped, meaning that I could no longer open it, which is a major problem when having the window closed causes major windscreen steaming.

I have fixed each of these problems as they occur, and am now waiting with baited breath for the next new 'feature'. It's all very well having a car with character, but when they have a mind of their own they become rather like naughty children!

The big news of the moment seems to be the change in the law with regard to mobile phones. More can be read about it later, but if it can be enforced it can only be a good thing. It was only last week I saw a white van man turning right into a side road, one handed while talking on his mobile. It is not something that is an issue for me - I usually can't hear the phone over the sound of my wailing along in a very scary manner to my music.....

*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*

As your Chairman for this year I am supposed to say something in the magazine. Not being an Observer I wouldn't presume to offer advice on driving itself, merely one or two comments. I never fail to be amazed at the number of drivers who seem to have no idea about signalling, particularly when they wish to come off a roundabout. Also if they do think to signal when they wish to turn left or right or change lanes, they start the manoeuvre first and then presumably as an afterthought, give a short signal. Neither of these failings is all that helpful to the rest of us.

I have been particularly concerned about publicity and have been bleating on about us needing a Publicity Officer for some time now. However we can all do our bit by bringing up the subject of Advanced Driving whenever an opportunity presents itself. Recently I have been asking people if they have heard of the IAM – it is surprising how many people haven't – and going on from there. Obviously I take my cue and drop the subject if no interest is shown but often people do show an interest and maybe, just maybe in a year or so's time, the seed will germinate.

A few comments garnered from various sources:

Sign on back of 50 mph car – “I stop for no particular reason”.

Reaction to a complaint about prams taking up cycle space on trains – “Don't think of it as a pram. Think of it as a neonatal quadricycle.”

Several members of the WI who campaigned against cars speeding through their village received speeding fines of £60 + 3 points when a camera was introduced.

In Australia a man appeared in court charged with reckless driving after he tried to reverse 310 miles across Western Australia. He told police that his transmission had failed, forcing him to drive in reverse gear.

A lady called the AA to her home when her car would not start after she renewed the battery in its key fob. The patrolman found that its immobiliser chip was missing. The lady recalled seeing her dog eating. They sat the dog in the driving seat – and the car started.

And finally, the driver of a lorry got that sinking feeling twice over. First a water main burst underground, causing his vehicle to sink up to its front axle as the road collapsed beneath it. Then as he and passers-by watched in disbelief, a traffic warden arrived and issued a parking ticket. When the driver protested she told him “You can appeal”.

*Sheila Redwood*

### Observer Training Course

In April or May we propose to run an Observer Training Course.

This short course, designed to give you the necessary skills to prepare an associate for the Advanced Driving Test, will lead, after a test, to a Qualified Observer Certificate.

Observers are the very back bone of the IAM so your help would be much appreciated.

For further information please telephone (01843) 224123

*Alan Hollands*

### I do wonder sometimes - funny motor insurance claims

"I was driving along when I saw two kangaroos copulating in the middle of the road causing me to ejaculate through the sun roof."

"The accident happened because I had one eye on the lorry in front, one eye on the pedestrian and the other on the car behind"

"I started to slow down but the traffic was more stationary than I thought."

"I pulled into a shoulder with smoke coming from under the hood. I realised the car was on fire so took my dog and smothered it with a blanket."

The claimant had collided with a cow. The questions and answers on the claim form were - Q: What warning was given by you? A: Horn. Q: What warning was given by the other party? A: Moo.

"On approach to the traffic lights the car in front suddenly broke."

"I was going at about 70 or 80 mph when my girlfriend on the pillion reached over and grabbed my testicles so I lost control."

"I didn't think the speed limit applied after midnight"

"First car stopped suddenly, second car hit first car and a haggis ran into the rear of second car."

"The car in front hit the pedestrian but he got up so I hit him again"

"I pulled away from the side of the road, glanced at my mother-in-law and headed over the embankment."

"The other car collided with mine without giving warning of its intention."

"I collided with a stationary truck coming the other way"

"In an attempt to kill a fly, I drove into a telephone pole."

"I had been shopping for plants all day and was on my way home. As I reached an intersection a hedge sprang up obscuring my vision and I did not see the other car."

"I was on my way to the doctor with rear end trouble when my universal joint gave way causing me to have an accident."

"An invisible car came out of nowhere, struck my car and vanished."

"I was thrown from the car as it left the road. I was later found in a ditch by some stray cows."

"Coming home I drove into the wrong house and collided with a tree I don't have."

"I thought my window was down, but I found it was up when I put my head through it."

"The guy was all over the road. I had to swerve a number of times before I hit him."

"I had been driving for forty years when I fell asleep at the wheel and had an accident."

"As I approached an intersection a sign suddenly appeared in a place where no stop sign had ever appeared before."

"I told the police that I was not injured, but on removing my hat found that I had a fractured skull."

"The pedestrian had no idea which way to run as I ran over him."

"I saw a slow moving, sad faced old gentleman as he bounced off the roof of my car."

"The gentleman behind me struck me on the backside. He then went to rest in a bush with just his rear end showing. "

"I had been learning to drive with power steering. I turned the wheel to what I thought was enough and found myself in a different direction going the opposite way."

"When I saw I could not avoid a collision I stepped on the gas and crashed into the other car."

"I was unable to stop in time and my car crashed into the other vehicle. The driver and passengers then left immediately for a vacation with injuries."

"The pedestrian ran for the pavement, but I got him."

*Elizabeth Cooper*

**Who has the right of way?**

This picture of a stand-off in the Kruger safari park, South Africa was submitted by Mr. Brian Noble.

*(Originally printed in the Canterbury edition of the Kentish Gazette)*



**Mobile phones - new survey by the IAM  
THE BIG HANG UP – WHO'S LIKELY  
TO STILL TALK AND DRIVE?**

"White van man" is surprisingly less likely to ignore this week's new laws on handheld mobile phones than drivers of typical family saloons according to a new nationwide survey by the IAM.

IAM members across the UK took part in a survey spanning two weekends (1 February – 19 February) to gauge where the hand held mobile phone drivers were most often seen and in what traffic conditions.

It is already an offence to drive while using a handheld mobile phone, but from this Tuesday (27 February) there will be a stiffer £60 penalty and three penalty points. Since 2003 there have been more than 250,000 prosecutions.

Incidents of drivers using handheld phones were noted over a 19 day period by IAM members. The survey covered all classes of vehicle, at different times of day and in different traffic conditions.

By type of vehicles, the sample was 674. Drivers of family cars were most likely to offend (145 reported incidents or 21.5 per cent of the total vehicles counted) followed by light commercials or vans (120 reported incidents or 17.8 per cent).

Drivers of sports and high performance cars were least likely to commit the offence, with only 42 reports (6.2 per cent). The other categories were 4x4s, (85 reports or 12.6 per cent) other commercial vehicles (69 reports or 10.2 per cent) large/executive cars (111 reports or 16.5 per cent) and small family cars (102 reports or 15.1 per cent).

The survey also revealed that drivers are more likely to use the handheld mobile while in free flowing traffic (334 incidents) rather than stationary or semi-stationary traffic in heavy congestion (78 incidents). Drivers not affected by the morning and evening rush hours were more likely to pick up the handheld phone with 220 reports compared to peak morning rush (95 reports).

"The message must be 'switch off before you drive off' and that applies just as much on the school run as it does to white van man," said IAM Chief Examiner Peter Rodger.

"You are four times more likely to crash when you are on a mobile phone. And the IAM has for several years advised caution when using hands-free kit as an alternative: crucially, your attention is still divided," he said. "The consequences of distraction - be it a crash or a fine and points - are just as devastating whether by a hands-free or hand held phone," he said. The North West was the region with the highest incidence (with nearly 30 per cent of the total reported incidents) while in London and the South East, just 20 per cent of incidents involved vans, slightly below the national average.

*26 February 2007  
Issued by the IAM Press Office*

**Mobile phone law and you  
DON'T THINK "HANDS FREE" MEANS  
"SCOT FREE" WARNS IAM**

Drivers who think they can "beat the ban" on hand held-mobile phones when new laws becomes effective later this month by simply buying hands-free kit for their cars are still putting themselves and their passengers at risk.

That's the warning today (Wednesday 7 February) from the IAM, the UK's largest independent organisation dedicated to road safety and driving standards.

Under the Road Safety Act, from Tuesday 27 February, motorists using hand-held phones at the wheel will face a stiffer penalty - £60 - and three points on their licence.

"Inevitably some drivers will think that they should buy a hands-free kit and the problem will go away," said Peter Rodger, IAM Chief Examiner. "That would certainly suit the manufacturers. But drivers should be aware that they are potentially buying trouble - even when you are hands free, research has shown that you are four times more likely to crash because your concentration is split," he said.

"If you do have to use a hands-free kit, keep your conversations short and simple and you should be aware that there are other laws you can be prosecuted under if you are involved in a crash.

"The best advice is to switch off before you drive off - and if you really can't do that, be prepared to stop and find somewhere legal and convenient to return that missed call or check your messages.

"Driving with a hand-held mobile phone is anti-social. Nobody calling you should expect you to risk your life - and your licence - to talk to them on a hand-held phone while you are at the wheel," he said. "So hands-free does not mean you will get off scot-free. No call is that important that you should risk your life, or that of your passengers."

Three years ago the IAM launched a sticker campaign cautioning "Don't talk to Phoney Drivers".

Mr Rodger said that a full question and answer briefing on mobile phones is available on the IAM website, iam.org.uk, together with other driving tips and advice.

*7 February 2007*

**THE MOBILE PHONE LAW -  
QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS****1. What does the ban mean?**

It is a specific offence to use a hand-held phone when driving. A hand-held device is something that "is or must be held at some point during the course of making or receiving a call or performing any other interactive communication function." A motorist can regard driving as meaning a vehicle with the engine running. In simple terms you can use a mobile as long as you don't hold the phone and you can't use a hand-held phone if the engine is running.

**2. How much is the fine if you get caught using a hand-held mobile when driving?**

Currently motorists will receive a fixed penalty of £30. This will become £60 and 3 penalty points on 27 February 2007.

**3. What happens if you take the matter to court?**

Motorists can take the matter to court where the maximum fine is £1000. (£2,500 for drivers of goods vehicles). Penalty points will also be imposed in courts from 27 February.

**4. Can I use a hands-free phone while I'm driving?**

Yes, but you can only use it if it can be operated without holding the phone. Therefore mobile phones should be placed in cradles which are attached to the dashboard. Pushing buttons is permissible.

**5. Can I stick the phone on to the dashboard?**

Technically yes, because the law states that you must not hold the phone when making and receiving a call. However, the IAM Motoring Trust urges drivers not to think of methods of replacing the cradle as they could make their driving more dangerous.

**6. Will I still get stopped by police if I am using a hands-free phone when driving?**

If you are stopped by police and you are using a hands-free phone while driving, you can face prosecution under other motoring laws. The police can charge you with driving without due care and attention, not being in proper control of the vehicle or even dangerous driving. If there is an accident and you are using a phone you may well be charged with these offences. If someone is killed in an accident where any part of the phone is being used, the driver will almost certainly go to jail.

**7. Why is there no ban on hands-free mobiles as well?**

Drivers should remember that the police can use other legislation if a motorist is distracted by a call on a hands-free phone. If there is an accident and the driver is using a phone, then there is a risk of prosecution for dangerous driving. The IAM Motoring Trust also reminds drivers that research shows drivers who use hands-free phones are four times as likely to be involved in an accident.

**8. If the Government has banned mobile phones, then why did they not stop people tuning in the radio and talking?**

Many people find using a phone much more intrusive to their concentration than talking to a passenger or having the radio on – it seems harder to ignore the phone conversation. There are many reasons that might explain that, but the effect is the important thing – it distracts too much.

**9. Can I make and receive calls if my phone is in a cradle?**

You can push buttons on the phone while it is in a cradle or on the steering wheel or handlebars of a motorbike, as long as it is in the cradle and you don't hold the phone. However, The IAM Motoring Trust urges drivers not to use even hands-free phones as they are four times as likely to be involved in an accident.

**10. Can you text and use the internet on your phone while driving?**

The use of mobile phones for these purposes is prohibited if you hold the phone. You can push buttons on a phone while it is in the cradle as this does not breach the new regulation. However, police may use their powers to stop you under other laws. The IAM Motoring Trust urges drivers not to do this as it could be distracting. Research has shown that drivers who use hands-free are four times as likely to be involved in an accident. Looking at the phone to send or read a text message is obviously not looking where you are going, and risks prosecution for dangerous driving.

**11. Can motorists use navigation equipment, personal digital assistants (PDAs) or other computer equipment that sends or receives data?**

In theory yes – providing it is not a hand-held device. The Government guidelines state that use of devices other than mobile phones is only prohibited if the device performs an interactive communication function by sending and receiving data. If the device does not perform this type of function, you can use the device without breaching the regulations.

**12. Are 2-way radios banned?**

The use of 2-way radio equipment when driving is not included in the offence. The IAM Motoring Trust urges motorists that there is still a risk of distraction and prosecution under other motoring laws.

**13. Can I use a hand-held phone when I am stationary in traffic?**

No, the regulations state that driving includes time when stopped at traffic lights or during other hold-ups, so you can't use a hand-held. However, if there was an accident on a motorway, for example, and you are sure you won't move, then you could turn the engine off and then use the phone legally.

**14. Can I use my hand-held mobile if it is placed between my ear and shoulder?**

No, because you will be holding the phone and breaking the law.

**15. Can I use an earpiece kit if my phone is not in a cradle?**

Technically yes. The IAM Motoring Trust would never recommend using this though because it would be tempting to pick the phone up and then you would be breaking the law. It could also easily fall on the floor and then you are distracted from driver by trying to pick the phone up. You can use an ear-piece kit if the phone is placed in a cradle and you don't hold the phone when receiving a call.

**16. Should motorists turn off mobiles when driving?**

The best way to avoid making or receiving calls in the car is to turn the phone off. However, this is not always practical for everyone. It is safer to let the phone ring and return the call when safely parked. However, motorists should remember that the car engine needs to be switched off to make or take the call. Passengers in the car can use their phones.

**17. Can I make emergency calls?**

There is an exemption for making 999 calls to the emergency services where it is unsafe or impractical to stop.

**18. Who do the regulations apply to?**

The regulations apply to drivers of all motor vehicles, including, cars, motorcycles, goods vehicles, buses, coaches and taxis. They also apply to anyone supervising a learner driver, while the learner is driving.

**19. Will cyclists be prosecuted for using a mobile phone while cycling?**

No, but police do have the powers to deal with careless or dangerous cycling.

**20. Are employers guilty of an offence if their employees use a hand-held phone while driving?**

The regulations apply to anyone who causes or permits any other person to use a handheld phone while driving. Under Department for Transport guidelines, they consider that employers would not be liable just because they supplied a telephone or because they phoned an employee who was driving. However, employers would probably be liable if they required their employees to use a hand-held phone while driving and might also be liable if they failed to forbid employees to use such phones on company business.

Increasing concern about corporate manslaughter and the likelihood of the Health and Safety Executive becoming involved in cases where a business driver has a fatal accident means that many companies are becoming tough on drivers who use mobile phones. Some are even banning the use of hands-free phones by employees.

**21. Do you think hands-free kits are too expensive?**

There is a wide range of hands-free kits on the market and consumers have a choice as to how much they spend. The IAM Motoring Trust says that if a motorist is not prepared to spend the money on the

hands-free kit, they should turn the phone off while driving. However, if you are caught using a hand-held mobile twice then that would have easily paid for the hands-free kit.

**22. What are the insurance implications if motorists are caught using mobile phones when driving?**

In theory, an insurance company could refuse to pay for damage to your own car if you were breaking the law at the time of the accident (this could include using a mobile telephone).

The effects on your insurance if you have an accident could include loss of no claim bonus which would result in an insurance premium increase by at least 50 per cent.

Some insurance companies increase premiums for drivers with penalty points. From 27 February this means that breaking the mobile phone law will not only cost a fine and points, but could also increase your premium.

A number of convictions, such as drink driving and dangerous driving may result in cover being refused or a significant financial penalty being applied.

**23. The police do not bother to enforce the law, and many, many people break it – I see them on every journey. Do I really need to comply?**

That is your choice. But The IAM Motoring Trust would point out that in the first year of the law 77,000 drivers were caught and fined. The three points will hurt drivers more than a fine, and we know that with the points will come a whole new enforcement approach.

**Driving tip February 2007**

Drivers who “tailgate” – drive too close to the car in front – are a menace. They probably don’t realise how intimidating their habit is. The most benign interpretation is that they are simply trying to indicate to the driver in front that they want to get past. That’s all very well, if the person in front has somewhere to go – but that isn’t always possible. Other lanes may be busy too, and it isn’t always an option to remove yourself instantly from the path of the tailgater.

Yet statistics tell us the single most common crash in the UK is the classic rear end shunt. So what can we do to avoid it?

The easiest thing to do is remove ourselves from the problem. Aim to change lanes on the motorway or dual carriageway, but only when it is safe to do so. Clearly indicate your intention to pull over. That way you can let the tailgater get past you, even if he or she is driving too fast for the conditions and/or breaking the speed limit.

Don’t be tempted to impose the speed limit on somebody who is clearly hell bent on breaking it.

And if you choose not to let the tailgater past, there is a danger that he will try to “undertake” you, posing an additional risk for other road users.

We are often asked what can you do if you’re being tailgated in a 30mph zone on a single carriageway?

Pulling over here may not be practical either. But do not be intimidated into speeding up just because somebody is right on your back bumper. Instead, create an additional stopping distance between

you and the vehicle in front so that you when you do brake, you can do so smoothly. Think of yourself as adding a little “buffer” zone for the tailgater, whether he appreciates it or not.

When the time comes to brake, you can do so gently, giving a clear signal of your intention via your stop lights. The more time your stop lights are on, the more time the tailgater has to register that and pull back.

**UK's Newest Road Safety Organisation****IAM and AA Motoring Trust combine to form new road safety organisation**

The IAM Motoring Trust is a new, independent road safety organisation that will be the research and advocacy arm of the Institute of Advanced Motorists (IAM).

The IAM Motoring Trust is taking forward the work of the AA Motoring Trust, which ceased operating on 31 December 2006.

As part of the IAM charity, the IAM Motoring Trust will be funding an ambitious five-year programme of safety and transport policy research aimed at protecting and promoting the interests of all road users.

The IAM Motoring Trust intends to contribute vigorously to the national transport policy debate and to be a genuinely independent voice for responsible motoring, motorcycling and the safety needs of all road users.

Contact details can be found on the IAM website or IAM House, 510 Chiswick High Road London W4 5RG.

**A Seasonal Quiz for St Patricks Day**

- 1 What holiday is celebrated on March 17th?
- 2 A three leaf clover is called a \_\_\_\_\_.
- 3 What are the tiny green men from Irish legends called?
- 4 What three things are granted when you catch a Leprechaun?
- 5 What do you find at the bottom of the rainbow?
- 6 What do the Irish often eat with corned beef?
- 7 Wearing green on the 17th of March may keep you from getting \_\_\_\_\_.
- 8 Capital city of the Irish Free State.
- 9 Ireland is often compared to which gemstone? (the \_\_\_\_\_ Isle)
- 10 This day was named after Saint \_\_\_\_\_ former bishop of Ireland.
- 11 St. Patrick's day is famous for its use of the what color?
- 12 On St. Patrick's Day, we watch the St. Patrick's Day \_\_\_\_\_?
- 13 Which American city was the first to celebrate St Patrick's Day?
- 14 A yummy cereal with hearts, moons, stars, clovers, horseshoes, pots of gold, rainbows and red balloons.

**About Us****How can the Group help me?**

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

**How much does it cost?**

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

**How does the Group Operate?**

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

**How do I join the Group?**

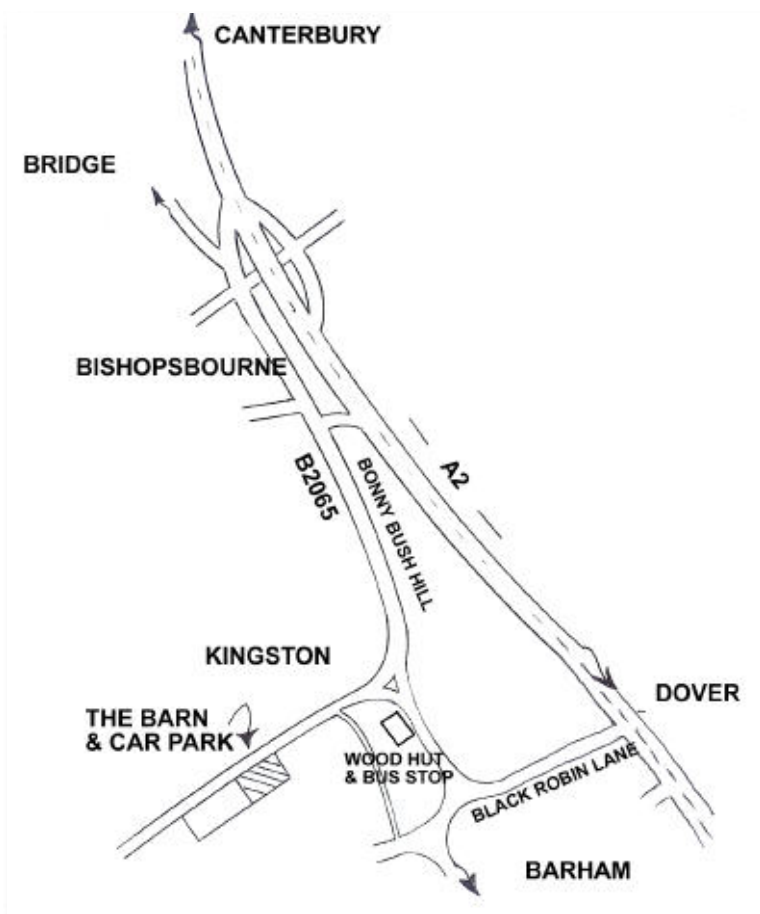
If you contact Mrs Vanessa Norley, 01304 215168, she will be able to give you full details, or visit our website at: <http://www.eastkentiam.org.uk>

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

PLEASE NOTE: There is no session in January.

To find 'The Barn', Kingston:

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



**New Associates since the last update**

Victoria Smith  
 Howard Matthews  
 Edward Ludlow  
 Nirav Petel  
 James West  
 Stephen Manning  
 Michael Potts  
 Ian Montgomery  
 Harriett Norford  
 Graham Green  
 Susan King  
 Robert Miller  
 Kathryn Hull

**Events Data**

Littlebourne War Memorial Hall  
 - Second Thursday - 19.30pm

**8 March** - Lyn Kolsteren from BUSK  
 (Baha Users Support Group –  
 Baha = Bone Anchored Hearing Aid).

**12 April** - Chris Gilbert, retired Hendon  
 Police Sergeant

**10 May** - Cliff East - Site visit to Manston

**14 June** - Manoeuvring Evening, Hersden

**Test Passes**

**Period:**

21.10.06 - 20.01.07

<b>Associate</b>	<b>Date</b>	<b>Observer</b>
Dean McInerney	21.11.06	Richard Hazell
David Jewell	23.12.06	Alan Hollands
Melanie Bowen	20.01.07	Nick Williams

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 - 10 May 2007

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

**Answers:** 1. Saint Patrick's Day, 2. shamrock, 3. Leprechauns, 4. wishes, 5. pot of gold, 6. cabbage, 7. pinched, 8. Dublin, 9. Emerald, 10. Patrick, 11. green, 12. parade, 13. Boston, 14. Lucky Charms