

EAST KENT GROUP

Newsletter March 2008

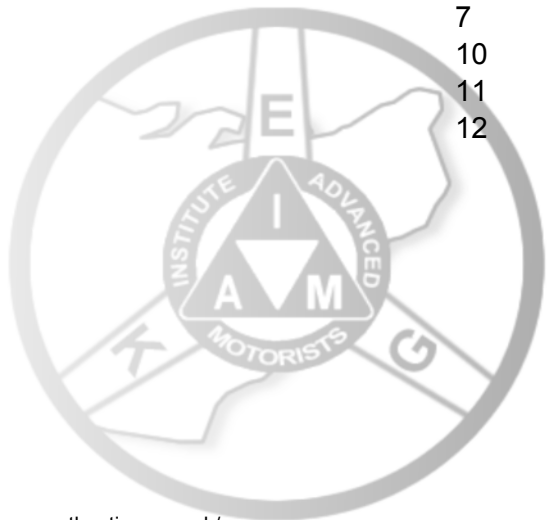
IAM

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.

Christmas is long gone and Easter is looming over the horizon. The daffodils are trying to break through and I'm thinking it may be time to dig the bike out of hibernation. Only thinking mind you, I don't want to scare the sun away! It's like mentioning a BBQ on a sunny day, or talking about the weather whilst en route from Land's End to John O'Groats; it guarantees that any nice weather will make itself scarce very rapidly and rain is all that you will see for days on end!

Mini Jock, I am sure, will be glad to shake off the salt and dirt and rest up a while before the mini season starts in earnest. Our first event of the year being London to Brighton, followed by our usual epic travels around the country.

We had an eventful start to the year, with baby James having to have an operation. Thankfully it was a common procedure and he has recovered so well you wouldn't know he had been ill, but it certainly gets you worried when you're living through it. He is now dispensing lots of smiles to everyone, although to start with he only frowned at me. I thought it might have been something I said, but he appears to have got over it now!

Moving on to EKG news now; we will lose both Richard Hazell and Carol Stone from the committee at the end of this year, which means that the posts of Chief Observer and Membership Secretary are available for application. More information is available in Secretary's Corner. Please consider applying... There are sometimes chocolate biscuits!

Michelle

*Please send me any articles, letters, rants,
suggestions or comments,
either by e-mail to:
michelle@eastkentiam.org.uk,
or by snail mail to:*

It is now about 15 months since I became Secretary for the Group and, I must say, those months have been interesting. I think I'm slowly getting to grips with the workings of the Group and I haven't yet forgotten to take along refreshments for the Committee meetings – there's always a first time though! Sheila was a hard act to follow and we miss her as she has now also given up the Chairmanship. Thinking of people standing down from various roles, we have also lost Nick Williams from the Committee and both Richard Hazell and Carol Stone are standing down from their Chief Observer and Membership Secretary roles respectively in October this year. Was it something I said folks?!!

Seriously though, we are starting our search for replacements for Richard and Carol without delay in order that we can achieve a 'seamless' transition and details can be found at the end of this article.

We have enjoyed some very different talks at our Social evenings over the last year and 2008 will again see a wide variation of Guest Speakers and events. As usual the details will be found at the back of the Newsletter (provided Michelle hasn't moved the slot!). One Speaker I must mention is Peter Rodger who will be with us on 11th September. Peter is the IAM Chief Examiner and he really does have a lot of interesting things to say, I was fortunate enough to join a meeting of Mid Kent Group last year when he spoke. He is very open to questions from Observers too.

I am always looking for suggestions for Speakers for our Social evenings and I would like to know the sort of talk or event YOU would like to see take place. Please let me know if you have any bright ideas. I think I had better stop waffling on now and get down to the most important matters –

finding a new Chief Observer and Membership Secretary.

Chief Observer –

Applications are invited for this post.

The Committee will be looking for an enthusiastic individual with a good degree of communication and organisational skills. A full job description, which outlines the responsibilities of the Chief Observer, is available from either Richard or myself. Applications in writing should be with the Group Secretary by 30th June 2008.

Membership Secretary –

Applications are also invited for this post. The Committee will again be looking for an enthusiastic person to take care of new Group Members and be responsible for the day to day administration of the Membership list, renewals and coordination between the various other Group Officers concerned with Associates and Members. A full job description is available from the Group Secretary and I am sure Carol will be happy to expand on the role herself. Applications in writing should be with the Group Secretary by 30th June 2008.

All contact details can be found on the inside cover of this Newsletter.

Keep up to date!

If you would like to be kept up to date with arrangements for our monthly Social meetings, or indeed receive any information that may be of interest to you, why not send an e-mail to events @ eastkentiam.org.uk. I will add your e-mail address to a list and send you a message with the relevant details.

Vanessa

In May we intend to run an Observer Training Course. This short course is designed to give you the necessary skills to prepare an associate for the Advanced Driving Test.

This course will lead, after passing an Observer Test, to a Qualified Observer Certificate.

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

For further information please telephone 01843 224123.

Alan Hollands

23 December 2007

Dear Editor,

I read with interest Mr Gary Nichols letter 11 November 2007 with his reasoned case for and against the familiarising of routes to IAM candidates before taking their Institute Advanced Driving Test.

Some 10 years ago after several runs with an excellent observer I it was arranged that I meet my examiner (a retired Police Road Traffic Officer!) at a Little Chef rendezvous and duly presented him with the required documentation.

After cordial introductions he suggested we move off and that for the first four to five minutes of driving he would let me settle in and would then be taking notes. I was free to make any observations or comments at any time should I wish to do so.

From remembrance it was motorway to Ashford and then he directed me through parts of Romney Marsh along seemingly endless winding lanes back to the Elham Valley area along roads and lanes never before visited and finally back to his home in Folkestone, parking in between kerbside parked cars. Thankfully I passed, he gave me a modest compliment. Phew!

This is exactly, in my humble view, as it should be. After all one never went in to a written examination knowing the answers beforehand.

I hope the debate may continue. Always enjoy the EKG Newsletter and IAM Magazine.

*Yours truly,
Denis Longley*

What Is Intelligence, Anyway?*Isaac Asimov*

What is intelligence, anyway? When I was in the army, I received the kind of aptitude test that all soldiers took and, against a normal of 100, scored 160. No one at the base had ever seen a figure like that, and for two hours they made a big fuss over me. (It didn't mean anything. The next day I was still a buck private with KP - kitchen police - as my highest duty.)

All my life I've been registering scores like that, so that I have the complacent feeling that I'm highly intelligent, and I expect other people to think so too. Actually, though, don't such scores simply mean that I am very good at answering the type of academic questions that are considered worthy of answers by people who make up the intelligence tests - people with intellectual bents similar to mine?

For instance, I had an auto-repair man once, who, on these intelligence tests, could not possibly have scored more than 80, by my estimate. I always took it for granted that I was far more intelligent than he was. Yet, when anything went wrong with my car I hastened to him with it, watched him anxiously as he explored its vitals, and listened to his pronouncements as though they were divine oracles - and he always fixed my car.

Well, then, suppose my auto-repair man devised questions for an intelligence test. Or suppose a carpenter did, or a farmer, or, indeed, almost anyone but an academician. By every one of those tests, I'd prove myself a moron, and I'd be a moron, too. In a world where I could not use my academic training and my verbal talents but had to do something intricate or hard, working with my hands, I would do

poorly. My intelligence, then, is not absolute but is a function of the society I live in and of the fact that a small subsection of that society has managed to foist itself on the rest as an arbiter of such matters.

Consider my auto-repair man, again. He had a habit of telling me jokes whenever he saw me. One time he raised his head from under the automobile hood to say: "Doc, a deaf-and-mute guy went into a hardware store to ask for some nails. He put two fingers together on the counter and made hammering motions with the other hand. The clerk brought him a hammer. He shook his head and pointed to the two fingers he was hammering. The clerk brought him nails. He picked out the sizes he wanted, and left. Well, doc, the next guy who came in was a blind man. He wanted scissors. How do you suppose he asked for them?"

Indulgently, I lifted by right hand and made scissoring motions with my first two fingers. Whereupon my auto-repair man laughed raucously and said, "Why, you dumb jerk, He used his voice and asked for them." Then he said smugly, "I've been trying that on all my customers today." "Did you catch many?" I asked. "Quite a few," he said, "but I knew for sure I'd catch you." "Why is that?" I asked. "Because you're so goddamned educated, doc, I knew you couldn't be very smart."

And I have an uneasy feeling he had something there.

'Active' traffic management is good for news for drivers says IAM Motoring Trust

4 March 2008

To anyone sitting in a long tailback, the hard shoulder can look like an underused and expensive luxury. But in an emergency it is a place of refuge for broken-down vehicles, and a life-saver when police, fire and ambulance crews use it to reach an accident ahead.

"Ideally busy motorways should be widened but in the real world of tight government spending the IAM Trust is happy to support greater use of hard shoulder running as an interim measure. The key for us is the 'active' in Active Traffic Management (ATM)", says Neil Greig, Director IAM Motoring Trust, "in new road layouts drivers like to know that someone is controlling the traffic ahead and around them in the best possible way".

The results from the ATM trial are clear. Congestion is reduced, accidents and emissions go down and public support is high. Safety concerns have been resolved by the use of technology and the provision of refuge areas. ATM is not a cheap solution to growing traffic congestion (more than £100 million for a few miles of motorway), but the Highways Agency has demonstrated that computer-based traffic monitoring, linked to command-and-control technologies, can be deployed to improve journey time reliability whilst not compromising safety or journey time reliability.

Focus on helping older drivers to drive safely not compulsory tests

7 February 2008

"Older drivers are among the safest on the road and represent a much smaller risk than drivers less than 25 years. Therefore, it is hard to justify the imposition of compulsory medical or driving tests at the age of 70 on road safety grounds," says Neil Greig, IAM Trust Director.

"The focus should be on one-to-one professional assessment to help ageing drivers to understand when and where it may be best not to drive, based on their abilities – and to support them and their relatives in deciding themselves when they should stop driving."

According to the IAM Trust, research and accident records of older drivers suggest that compulsory driving tests would be a totally disproportionate response to the scale of the problem, as the reduction in the number of accidents would be minimal. Research also shows that most older drivers do know when the time comes to stop driving – and they do stop. Equally, family doctors are now much more aware of their role in advising older patients about their fitness to drive.

**Keep fit for cars: losing weight in 08
Put the car on a 'low-fuel' diet to slim
fuel bills**

7 January 2008

"Lean and mean motoring is one answer to rising fuel costs," says Neil Greig, Director of the IAM Trust. "A 'low-fuel' car diet for the New Year can offset recent price rises by slimming down your fuel bills by as much as 10 per cent. A trim and fit car is best able to manage the demands of winter motoring. Just apply the elements of all good weight-loss regimes."

- Set a target
- Plan how you'll achieve it
- Measure your progress

Set an MPG target

How many miles can you squeeze out of each gallon of fuel? Find out the official MPG figure for your car; few of us achieve this figure in everyday driving, so it's a good challenge.

Make your car a lean, mean, green machine

Excess weight, wind resistance and rolling resistance all guzzle precious fuel. To achieve optimum weight loss, take out everything that is unnecessary for your journey. Remove roof racks or storage boxes to cut wind resistance and check tyre pressures regularly to minimise rolling resistance.

Don't get steamed up

Use some detergent, kitchen roll or a cloth, to get the inside of the windows squeaky clean. Clean windows are much less likely to mist up, so you'll need your fuel-hungry air conditioning or heated windows less.

Scrape and save!

Running the engine for 10 minutes to clear frosted windows easily uses a litre or more of fuel before the car even leaves the driveway: a can of de-icing spray or good scraper is a better option.

It's cool to be hot

Cars use much more fuel when the engine is cold so warm it up as quickly as possible. Reverse into your drive or parking space while the engine is warm and efficient. Then you can drive straight off in the morning, rather than manoeuvring back and forth with a cold, inefficient engine.

Fuel consumption for the first mile with a cold engine is heavy and fuel efficiency plummets with repeated short trips. Combine short errands into one longer journey or, for the occasional local trip, leave the car at home and enjoy the benefits of walking or cycling.

Less weight on the accelerator

A heavy right foot is the biggest fuel waster— keep the pressure light! Driving smoothly and sticking to the speed limit dramatically cuts fuel consumption – and you won't need to worry about those safety cameras.

Measure your progress

If your car has an MPG monitor, start using it. Or jot down the odometer reading on the back of the receipt when you fill up. You'll soon build up a picture of how well you're doing. And by saving fuel, you're also cutting emissions that cause global warming. So resolve to make 2008 your 'low fuel' year.

Driving Tip Number 7

15 February 2008

Ignore the Yellow at your Peril

Parking restrictions have never been popular with motorists – for obvious reasons – but recently, it feels as though they have got more complicated.

This year will see penalty charge notices (PCNs) that no longer have to be placed on the windscreen, for example.

On-street parking infringements will soon be detected by camera - CCTV - and a penalty notice sent by post to the vehicle's registered keeper.

As the technology has got more sophisticated, the clarity has got worse: these days, not every yellow line has to display a time plate showing the restriction.

In Controlled Parking Zones (CPZs) (commonplace in many London boroughs and most UK cities) the general parking, waiting and loading restrictions are displayed at points of entry to the CPZ, usually at major junctions. Inside the CPZ, time plates need only be displayed where the restrictions differ from those shown on the CPZ entry plate.

This means you need to be alert as you approach your proposed parking space – not expect to be able to pop out and read the plate restrictions once you have secured your slot.

Double yellow lines do indicate no waiting at any time, so they remain straightforward. But a single yellow line is trickier: it can be used to indicate waiting restrictions much longer than the normal working day. In some places, single yellow lines are used

to indicate 24 hour waiting restrictions – but only seasonally. In such cases there must be a time plate showing the restricted hours.

As if parking wasn't awkward enough, certain London boroughs assume that every driver who wants to park has a mobile phone and a credit card. The days of "feeding a meter" with humble coins are seem to be going!

It's a good idea to check the parking restrictions on line before you set off to your destination, if you can. A quick visit to the relevant local authority website might save you a lot of wasted petrol and frustration – as well as the price of a Penalty.

One eyed monster

18 January 2008

Dark afternoons and wintry nights have seen the reappearance of the "one eyed monster" – vehicles with only one headlight operating.

It's not just commercial vehicles that suffer from this problem, though they do seem to suffer more than private cars - perhaps because they have more than one driver and nobody takes responsibility for checking the overall condition of the vehicle, or simply they are in use more.

Having a headlight out is dangerous in two ways: not only can the driver of the vehicle not see properly in an unlit road with only half the usual light available, but the defective headlight means that other road users will have difficulty spotting the vehicle properly (or in some cases, knowing even what it is).

In a rear mirror, the "one eyed monster" might be mistaken for a motorbike. And at an urban "pinch point", where you are trying

to negotiate parked vehicles, it is difficult to gauge the width of the oncoming car with one headlight not working, increasing the possibility of a low speed "scrape".

Where speed picks up, a misjudged overtake is more likely to result in a more serious collision if you cannot see the overtaking vehicle early enough, because it has no headlight on one side – especially if the offside (right) headlight is the one that does not work.

Defective headlights are not the only problem of course: lights not functioning properly at the back of a vehicle raise different problems.

A brake light not working will make a rear end shunt more likely as the driver following takes longer to realise that the car ahead is stopping.

It is an offence to drive a vehicle with defective lighting. And the lighting section of the MoT covers all exterior lamps required by the vehicle lighting regulations.

Nine times out of ten, defective lighting is simply a matter of replacing a blown bulb.

Yet checking your bulbs are still OK takes only a moment. In slow moving traffic, you can see if you have both headlights working by studying your reflection off the car in front.

And if when you park, you are by a window (reversing onto a drive, perhaps) you can use your mirrors to check that the brake light and red tail lights are all working properly. If in doubt, have somebody watch as you test them.

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?

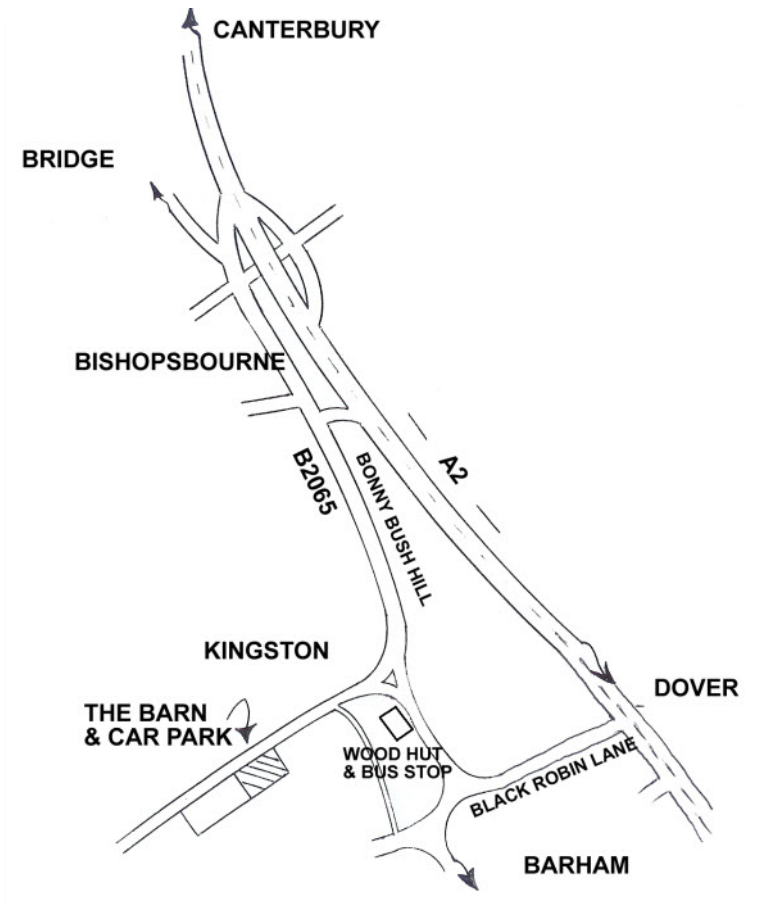
If you contact Mrs Vanessa Norley, 01304 215168, she will be able to give you full details, or visit our website at: <http://www.eastkentiam.org.uk>

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

Kate Johnson
 David Paine
 Jennifer Lichfield
 David Stanley
 Tonny Svendsen
 Jamie Baker
 Stephen Green
 John Miller
 Richard Shepherd
 George Bird

Members

Annette Linton
 Paul Norford

Events Data

Littlebourne War Memorial Hall
 - Second Thursday - 19.30pm

13th March - Presentation of DVD
 'Ultimate Driving Craft'

10th April - Nick Williams – Speed
 Awareness Courses

8th May - VW Buggies Evening

12th June - Manoeuvring Evening Hersden

10th July - Treasure Hunt (to be confirmed
 – may take place on a Sunday)

14th August - Group 'chat' evening with
 refreshments (to be provided by the Group)

11th September - Peter Rodger IAM Chief
 Examiner

9th October - TBA (AGM)

13th November - TBA

11th December - TBA

Test Passes

Period:

14.10.07 - 26.01.08

Associate	Date	Observer
Simon O'Connell	14.10.2007	Vanessa Norley
Don George	17.11.07	Richard Meadows
Caroline Tracey	19.12.2007	Trevor Cobb
Brian Doorne	07.01.2008	Graham Bailey
Stephen Manning	19.01.2008	Richard Hazell
Alan Michael Spong	26.01.2008	Ted Willey

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 December Submission - 8 May 2008

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.