

EAST KENT GROUP

Newsletter September 2008

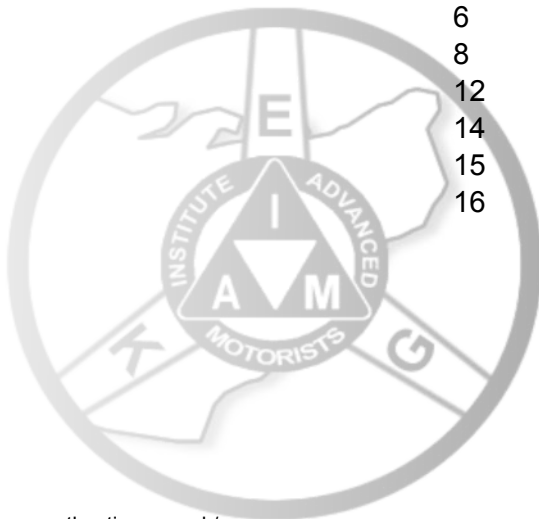
IAM

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.

Here again, and successfully back from our latest Mini adventures. Mini Jock behaved admirably on our trip from Land's End to John O'Groats, (which is more than can be said for Tom Tom), and we only went on a couple of 'magical mystery tours' (or, if you want to be really picky, got lost...).

For the first time in the ten year history of the event, one of the cars didn't make it. We were about 30 miles from John O'Groats when one of the new Minis had a computer chip malfunction, which could not be repaired at roadside. To say the classic mini contingent was smug, and laughing their selves silly would probably be understating it slightly, but hey our cars made it! That is not to say there were not problems with the classics. Far from it, they are minis after all, with far too much personality than is good for them, (or us for that matter). However, you don't need a degree in computer science or software engineering to fix these motoring classics; it's good old mechanical whatnot for these babies.

I was quite surprised that one vehicle in particular was on the event. It had been purchased a month before the event, and the new owner apparently didn't see fit to service or check the car before undertaking a 2000 mile round trip. It was he of the many problems, and he who was very nearly left at roadside on a number of occasions. Still, it apparently takes all sorts.

Then the Legendary Grand Tour. Bank Holiday weekend, 300+ minis, North Devon. The weather didn't play too nice, so the Chapelton Barton Steam Rally was cancelled, which meant we had to find an alternate ending for the Sunday run. Step forward Dartington Crystal. Very short notice and we had to work out how to park 300 odd minis in their car park. Turns out

we managed it with room to spare. The main run is on Monday, going via the Children's Hospice, the Valley of the Rocks and ending at Ilfracombe and making our presence know at a number of places in between. We had a number of challenges again, including a waterlogged field at Lee Abbey which is not helped by mini drivers wheel spinning their way up the field. So many seemed to think flooring it would help their situation, when clearly just keeping it moving at a smooth and steady pace is the order of the day. Honestly, they're like children sometimes.

Then Ilfracombe. Clearly the best thing for pedestrians to do is to try and walk among the moving minis as we try and park them. It was surprising how many people got lippy with us when we told them to move themselves, (and their children in some cases), to a place of safety behind the Marshalls. We were bright orange so they couldn't miss us. It ended up that we had to link arms to stop them coming through. You just didn't want to look over your shoulder though... Massive crowd of people determined to throw themselves in the path of moving vehicles. Still it was a very successful event, raising over £21,000 on the day, with money still coming in.

Just counting down to next year now...

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

Your Group needs you! We have an AGM soon. Make your views known! Put your ideas into action! Join our Committee!

As will be readily apparent to all and sundry, here at East Kent Group we strive continually to keep our eye on the ball, and remain unflinchingly topical. With this in mind, I have dutifully been taking in various aspects of the wider world beyond the IAM, and considering whether they may be applicable to some of the things we do. Those of us who are Observers (remember us?) may even have to modify a little of our coaching in the light of the current belt-tightening, economic downturn, and general world situation. Indeed, I believe I have now spotted a small niche, hitherto unexploited. Some of our Associates are no doubt not quite as flush as they would like, and, while being fully appreciative of the efforts of their Observers on their behalf, may nevertheless welcome a slightly modified approach. This would have regard to economy, as well as the many other factors to be considered, such as the System, Observing, Planning and Cornering, and would require a slight change of emphasis in these subjects, as well as others.

I now feel ready to present "The Skinflint's Guide to Observing for the IAM". This Skinflint's Guide, what form might it take? Before answering that, I must offer the usual disclaimer: Do not try this on the road, it is only a bit of a laugh. Really, it is, and should be taken with several large pinches of salt. It is also, as far as I know, not official IAM policy. Yet.

So, let us look at the way we do things as Observers. I will deal with the most obvious variations first. We like to encourage our Associates to "make progress", to accelerate briskly, and to drive up to the speed limit where conditions allow. The Skinflint would view this as inadvisable on two counts: firstly, accelerating briskly uses rather too much fuel, and, secondly, driving up to the limit, especially out of town, would do the same.

The Skinflint's Guide may therefore have you accelerate imperceptibly, preferably while still in the same high gear you were in before slowing down for the previous hazard. You must accelerate just sufficiently to confuse those tempted to overtake. You could then adopt the unofficial new national "safe speed" of 39 miles per hour, as many seem to be doing these days, including cyclists, quad-bikes, lads on skateboards and those tractors with four huge wheels. This would, of course, lead to a modification of the System of Car Control, IPSGA. It would become IPSa, since you avoid the need to change gear (and the lower case "a" indicates the reduced importance of acceleration).

How else would be change things? Well, block-changes spring to mind. At the moment they are only advised after, say, accelerating briskly (now frowned upon: see above) up to the limit, or slowing down considerably for a hazard. There is an argument for making them compulsory, and we could introduce the concept of the "double-block-change". This came to me the other day when I was going all misty-eyed about the wonderful cars of yore, you know, the ones for which three forward gears were deemed to be amply sufficient. Among them were the early Fords: Consul, Zephyr, Zodiac, Thames Van, and various Vauxhalls: Victor, Cresta, Bedford CA Van, and so on. The current ubiquity of five-speed gearboxes allows the Skinflint in us to double-block-change up from first to third to fifth, just like the old three speed boxes. There are extra Brownie-points for managing to get into fifth while still in a 30 limit!

So, as you can see, there is plenty of scope for the Skinflint's approach, if you are so inclined. Despite introducing this concept, I am not so sure I will be following it too slavishly. The underlying point is a serious one: I do not feel that economy should be considered as a goal in itself by or on behalf of the IAM. If you happen to drive more economically as a by-product of driving to the System, then that is all well and good. The

IAM is rightly proud of being a road safety organisation, and this should not be diluted by jumping on every new bandwagon which happens to pass by.

Nigel

Secretary's Corner

I wonder how many of you noticed that my article for June read exactly the same as that in March. It seems I emailed the incorrect article to Michelle. I put it all down to a 'senior moment' and the new edition to the family – an 8 week old West Highland White Terrier (or terrierist as we lovingly refer to him!) Harry is now 5 months old and really keeps us on our toes, we are attending Training Classes but have been warned that the adolescent stage is fast approaching and that's when all the good work can go to pot! I'll give you an update in December.

Our 2008 AGM is almost upon us and by now all Members should have received a letter from me with the relevant AGM papers. I am looking forward to receiving one or two nominations for new Committee Members as we are in need of fresh faces and ideas. I do hope that you will be able to join us for the AGM which will be held in the Lounge of Littlebourne War Memorial Hall on 9th October when we have Geoff Pretty, our Regional Co-ordinator, joining us for the evening.

From time to time, but really not that often, we attend Open Days or other such events. We do seem to struggle to find volunteers to help on these occasions and, ideally, it would be good to have a list of people to contact who would be prepared to lend a hand if available. Not much to it – just a case of telling folks what the IAM and your local Group is all about and perhaps describing your own Test experience. Interested? Please contact me.

Don't forget, if you want the opportunity of a FREE SKID PAN EXPERIENCE, let me have your email details for a draw in December and I will keep you advised of Social evening events or speakers and any other interesting information.

I look forward to seeing you at Littlebourne.



MINUTES of the Annual General Meeting held in the Lounge of Littlebourne War Memorial Hall, Littlebourne, Kent on Thursday, 11th October, 2007 at 7.45 p.m.

PRESENT - At least 36 although not all signed the Register. Our Chairman, Sheila Redwood welcomed Guests, Members and Friends including John and Christine Mills of Mid Kent Group and Simon Brookes-Sykes of East Kent Advanced Motorcyclists.

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE – Trevor Pembroke, Regional Co-ordinator, Paul Gillett, Divisional Council Member, John Biggs on behalf of South Eastern Group and Lynda Stubbs, East Kent Group Member.
2. MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING HELD ON 12th OCTOBER 2006 - Proposed by Elizabeth Cooper and seconded by Nigel Cooke, it was resolved that these be approved as a correct record.
3. MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES - There were no matters arising.
4. ANNUAL REPORT OF THE GROUP CHAIRMAN – Sheila gave her report – see the December 2007 Newsletter.
5. TREASURER'S REPORT AND ADOPTION OF ACCOUNTS - These were approved, proposed by Richard Hazell, seconded by Nigel Cooke.
6. REPORT OF THE CHIEF OBSERVER – Richard gave his report – see the December 2007 Newsletter. Elizabeth Cooper, Associate Co-ordinator and Committee Member, also gave a report – see Newsletter.
7. ELECTION OF THE GROUP COMMITTEE FOR THE ENSUING YEAR –
The following have signified their willingness to continue to serve as members of the Group Committee for the ensuing year:- Nigel Cooke, Elizabeth Cooper, Richard Hazell, Alan Hollands, Neil Oliver, Sheila Redwood, Carol Stone, Michelle Stone.
The following have signified their willingness to join the Group Committee:- Jane Clark (co-opted in April 2007) and Ian Martin.

It was agreed to take the aforementioned en bloc, proposed by Nick Williams, seconded by Gary Nichols and they were duly elected, again proposed by Nick Williams, seconded by Gary Nichols.
8. ELECTION OF OFFICERS OF THE GROUP COMMITTEE –
The following were elected, again en bloc, proposed by Nick Williams, seconded by Gary Nichols:-
Chairman - Nigel Cooke, Group Secretary - Vanessa Norley, Group Treasurer - Neil Oliver
9. APPOINTMENT OF HONORARY AUDITOR - Mr. Barrie Beeching has signified his willingness to continue as Hon. Auditor for the ensuing year. This was agreed, proposed by Vanessa Norley, seconded by Elizabeth Cooper.
10. ANY OTHER BUSINESS - There was no other business.

The meeting closed and after the presentation of certificates, etc., and a break for refreshments, Sheila introduced our guest speaker, Mr Stephen Horton, Road Safety Operations Manager, Kent Highway Services..

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

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING 2008

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN by order of the Group Committee that the 31st Annual General Meeting of the East Kent Group of Advanced Motorists will be held at 7.45pm on Thursday 9th October 2008 in the Lounge of the Littlebourne War Memorial Hall, Littlebourne to enable the Trustees of the Group (Registered Charity No 1049659) to present their Annual Report and Accounts for the year ended 31st May 2008 for approval by the Group Full Members and to conduct an election.

Secretary: Vanessa Norley
Address: 2 Barn Tye Close
Guston
Dover
CT15 5ND

All Group Full Members, Associates and Friends are invited to attend but only Group Full Members (ie current Full Members of both the IAM and of the Group) may vote. A member entitled to vote at the General Meeting may appoint a proxy to vote in his stead. A proxy need not be a Group Full Member.

CURRENT OFFICERS

All Officers retire annually and may offer themselves for re-election.

Nigel Cooke Chairman

Not standing for re-election.

Vanessa Norley Secretary

Offering to stand for re-election.

Neil Oliver Treasurer

Offering to stand for re-election.

COMMITTEE MEMBERS

Committee Members retire annually and may offer themselves for re-election.

RETIRING AND STANDING FOR RE-ELECTION

Jane Clark

Nigel Cooke

Elizabeth Cooper

Richard Hazell

Alan Hollands

Ian Martin

RETIRING AND NOT STANDING FOR RE-ELECTION

Carol Stone

Michelle Stone

(Michelle will remain as Editor Newsletter/ Web and will take an Ex-Officio role)

EX-OFFICIO

Richard Meadows

Publicity

Observer Training Course

In September 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

A PHYSICIST WRITES...

(July 2008)

I have no particular theme in mind this month, so I will offer you some random thoughts in order to clear them out of my cluttered-up brain:

Urban roads are littered with official devices supposedly intended to impede traffic even if only briefly, notably bottle-necks and square pillow-humps. But bottle-necks work only if two vehicles arrive simultaneously so that one forces the other to stop. How is this consistent with considerate and courteous driving?

As for pillow-humps, these are placed in the centre of the lane, positively inviting you to take them symmetrically without slowing down. But think what this does to your tyres: the sloping sides of the hump severely deform the inner shoulders of all four tyres, around most of the circumference.

How can such treatment not be causing progressive internal damage? Having realized this, I now try to run one pair of wheels over the body of the hump (slowing right down, of course), which compresses the two tyres just in one line across the tread. Then at the next hump I apply the other wheels. But I can't shake off the feeling that drivers behind think I'm crazy.

Cat's-eyes are designed to be self-cleaning: every time a tyre goes over them, the rubber housing wipes the surface of the glass. But what about ones that are located between double white lines? Naturally these cat's-eyes are never run over by a wheel. If when driving at night you notice that a line of them are reflecting back at you less brightly than they ought to be, surely it is your public duty to move towards the middle of the road and give them a polish up?

From many hours spent browsing the titles in second-hand bookshops with neck bent at right-angles, I am able to read upside-down print (especially capital letters) fairly easily. But this does have disadvantages when I am driving. If I arrive at an upside-down NO ENTRY at the end of a road or a traffic lane, I find it hard sometimes to decide whether it applies to me or not!

Similarly, when I am walking up to a carriageway crossing where they have helpfully painted LOOK LEFT (for traffic), I notice that I'm influenced just as much by the inverted LOOK RIGHT on the opposite side. Oddly enough, though, back in the driving seat I find that a SLOW in the oncoming lane looks more like MOLS to me (as it probably does to you).

In fact, the human brain has evolved so as to be able to recognize and respond to a huge range of patterns and shapes. As I

explained some time ago, much of this brain-work happens subconsciously, before the images that your eyes pick up are finally transformed into the picture that you consciously 'see' in front of you. To put it another way, you don't always have full control over what your attention focuses on. Catching sight of of a new model of auto for the first time, for example, you might be unable to take your eyes off it. But what I want to complain about is something more specific: vehicle lighting.

I have no problem with 'normal' lights that are either roundish or vaguely square, as long as they are not too small or bright or dim. Side and rear lights that are particularly faint cause me to concentrate hard on them, though this is probably just as well, or I might lose track of them in the darkness. Small and bright headlamps, on the other hand, attract my gaze when I'm trying hard to avoid looking at them.

But there's worse: recently, much against my will, my attention has been caught by lights of more unusual appearance, both front and rear. They include triangles, rings, thin lines (both straight and bent) and lights with dots or intricate shapes within them.

These are all things that the brain reacts strongly to. It's the eye of the car-buyer that they catch first, of course. But once they have done that job successfully and have been launched on the road, they get to work on me! I find them intensely distracting and annoying, and I am surprised they are permitted.

Last November I mentioned that Peter Rodger, IAM Chief Examiner, had given me a straight answer to a question on amber traffic-lights. You may have seen the Q and the A later in the Advanced

Driving magazine. He explained that regardless of the instructions in the Highway Code, in simple terms all that the actual regulations say is: when amber appears, stop if you can do so safely, or drive on if you can't. But then as a sort of footnote he wrote: "When approaching a green light ... the longer you can see it is green, the sooner it will go amber. So there isn't much excuse for crossing amber."

This seems to be advising that on a long green I should slow right down, just in order to be ready to stop short if it changes! Might not following drivers view this as being obstructive? Let's consider a better-defined scenario: suppose I'm coming up to a familiar junction, and there are clues telling me that green will change to amber a second or so before I reach the line, assuming I keep my speed up. Knowing this, should I slow down and prepare to stop (if I can do so without being obstructive), or should I press on?

Your response to that one may not be in my favour ... OK then, if the lights happen to be red as I approach the next junction then maybe I shall be able to make up some of the time lost, by slowing down early and keeping some momentum (in other words, doing what Peter Rodger seemed to be advising, but on a different colour). Because if I can manage to arrive at the line just after green appears, I shall gain a substantial and perfectly legal head start on myself (and others) — and, if you think about it, I shall save some fuel too.

I see that a theme has gradually emerged this month after all: looking, seeing and reacting!

Peter Soul

Thames Valley Group of Advanced Motorists

How's my driving?

Why are safer cars more dangerous? Are we too confident at the wheel for our own good? In a new book examining the mysteries of the modern highway, Tom Vanderbilt finds the road to hell is paved with good intentions.

For those of us who aren't brain surgeons, driving is probably the most complex everyday thing we do. At any moment, we are navigating through terrain, scanning our environment for hazards and information, maintaining our position on the road, judging speed, making decisions, evaluating risk, adjusting instruments, anticipating the future actions of others - even as we may be sipping a latte or thinking about last night's TV. A survey of one stretch of road in Maryland, USA, found that a piece of information was presented every two feet, which at 30mph, the study reasoned, meant the driver was exposed to 1,320 'items of information' per minute. Because we seem to do this all so easily we tend not to dwell on it. Driving becomes like an involuntary reflex. We just do it.

Driving, for most of us, is what psychologists call an 'overlearned' activity, something we are so well practised at that we are able to do it without much conscious thought. That makes our lives easier, and it is how we become good at things. 'Once something becomes automated, it gets executed in a rapid string of events,' said Barry Kantowitz, a psychologist at the University of Michigan who studies the way humans interact with machines. 'If you try to pay attention, you screw it up.'

The more overlearned an activity becomes, the less cognitive workload it imposes. If, while driving, we were to really process every potential hazard, carefully analyse

every motion and decision, and break down each manoeuvre into its component parts, we would quickly become overwhelmed.

Too little workload has its own problems. We get bored. We get tired. We may make errors. We lapse into 'highway hypnosis' (those moments when we realise, with a mixture of wonder and horror, that we cannot remember what we have been doing for the past few moments). Most driving rarely requires our full workload. So we listen to the radio, look out of the window, talk on the phone. In the case of one fatal crash, the driver may have been operating a laptop computer as he drove. The problem with driving is that we never know for sure when things are going to change very quickly, when that nice empty road is going to turn into an obstacle course. We may also be unaware of just how much workload our secondary activity is consuming.

'Let's say you're driving on a straight road,' Kantowitz said. 'It's relatively easy. I could ask you to do arithmetic at the same time and it wouldn't mess up your driving. If you're driving on a curved road, especially if it's a sharp curve, that takes more attention if you're to keep the car operating safely within the lane. If I ask you to do mental arithmetic on a curve you'll do it more slowly and you'll screw it up. Or if you do it well, you'll screw up the driving.'

'My basic belief after almost 40 years of studying this stuff is that people can't time-share at all. You only get the appearance. It's like speed-reading. You think you can read really fast but your comprehension disappears. In general, we're not built for time-sharing.'

Since the 1950s, when car fatalities in the United States were approaching their zenith, the insides of cars have been made radically safer. But in an oft-repeated pattern with safety devices from seatbelts to airbags, the actual drop in fatalities has not lived up to the early hopes. Consider the 'chimsil'. The term is slang for 'centre high-mounted stop lamp' (CHMSL) - the third rear brake light that became mandatory on new American cars in the 1980s and on European cars in the late 1990s. Decades of research had shown that high-mounted lamps improved reaction times, and a trial that equipped some cars in taxi fleets with the lights indicated that certain types of crash, particularly rear-end collisions, could be cut by 50 per cent. Studies now estimate that the chimsil has 'reached a plateau' of reducing rear-end crashes by 4.3 per cent. This arguably justifies the effort and cost of having them installed, but the chimsil clearly has not had the effect for which its inventors had hoped.

Why do these changes in safety never seem to have the predicted impact? The most troublesome answer, one that has been haunting traffic safety for decades, suggests that the safer cars get, the more risks drivers choose to take.

This idea was most famously, and controversially, raised in a 1976 article by Sam Peltzman, an economist at the University of Chicago. Describing what has since become known as the 'Peltzman effect', he argued that despite the fact that a host of new safety technologies - most notably, the seatbelt - had become legally required in new cars, the roads were no safer. Drivers, he contended, were trading a decrease in accident risk with an increase in 'driving intensity'. As Peltzman pointed out, car fatalities per mile still decline at

roughly the same rate every year now as they did in the first half of the 20th century, well before cars had seatbelts and airbags.

Economists have a clichéd joke: the most effective car-safety instrument would be a dagger mounted on the steering wheel, aimed at the driver. The incentive to drive safely would be quite high.

Cars keep getting objectively safer, but the challenge is to design a car that can overcome the inherent risks of human nature. As societies, we have gradually accepted faster and faster speeds as a necessary part of a life of increasing distances, what Adams calls 'hypermobility'. Higher speeds enable life to be lived at a scale in which time is more important than distance. Ask someone what their commute is, and they will inevitably give an answer in minutes, as if they were driving across a clock face. Our cars have been engineered to bring a certain level of safety to these speeds, but even this is rather arbitrary, for what is safe about an activity that kills tens of thousands of people a year? We drive with a certain air of invincibility, even though airbags and seatbelts will not save us in roughly half the crashes we might get into.

We have deemed the rewards of mobility worth the risk. The fact that we are at the wheel skews our view. Not only do we think we are better than the average driver, but studies show that we think we are less likely than the average driver to be involved in a crash. The feeling of control lowers our sense of risk. On the road, we make our judgements about what's risky and what's safe using our own imperfect human calculus. We think large trucks are dangerous, but then we drive unsafely around them. We think roundabouts are more dangerous than junctions, although

they are safer. We carefully stop at red lights when there are no other cars, but exceed the speed limit during the rest of the trip. We drive at a minuscule following distance to the car ahead, exceeding our ability to avoid a crash, with a blind faith that the driver ahead will never have a reason to suddenly stop. We have reached the point where cars are safer than ever, yet traffic fatalities cling to stubbornly high levels.

We know all this, and act as if we don't.

This is an edited extract from 'Traffic: Why We Drive the Way We Do (And What It Says About Us), by Tom Vanderbilt Submitted by Jane Clarke, originally published in Times Magazine

IAM supports garages last chance to give motorists effective consumer protection

28 August 2008

The IAM has thrown its support behind a 'good garage scheme', the latest in a long line of industry initiatives to protect the consumer from rip-off garages. But it has warned that this must be the garage trade's final chance to get its act together.

For many years, consumer organisations and government reports have highlighted garages that prey on motorists' limited mechanical knowledge and inadequate consumer protection laws that cost motorists millions of pounds a year.

Previous voluntary schemes from the industry and ratings from motoring organisations, have failed to protect the consumer from determined rogue traders. While many in the garage trade work hard to improve quality and image, there remains a substantial minority that

continues to get away with shoddy work, overcharging and plain incompetence.

The IAM has criticised previous schemes because they have lacked the solid backing of the motor trade, the "teeth" to make sure consumers get a good deal, and a guarantee of easy redress.

The Motor Industry Service and Repair Code of Practice is the first scheme to contain robust measures for quality control and enforcement of new industry standards. In a crucial difference to previous schemes, an independent panel will regularly review the results of the new scheme to ensure standards are improving.

Tim Shallcross, IAM Head of Technical Policy and Advice said: "The IAM will sit on the independent assessment panel and we will be working at the heart of the scheme to protect consumer's interests and make sure it genuinely delivers the quality, honesty and value that motorists deserve. But, if the motor trade fails to deliver on its promises, the government must fast-track legislation to enforce statutory measures to solve the problems, once and for all."

Parents - Prepare your Child for the New Journey to School

26 August 2008

Around 600,000 children will switch from primary to secondary schools this September – but the challenge facing parents should be more than fitting kids for new shoes, but kitting them out for the new journey between home and school, says the IAM.

Around 3000 children will be killed or seriously injured on the road this year, and a change of school is a major danger point for older age groups between ages 11 and

15. In spite of high-profile reporting of violence among children, those aged between five and 14 are five times more likely to die in a road accident than be killed by criminal assault.

“Many children switching to junior or secondary schools will have begged parents to let them start the new term walking or cycling on their own,” says Neil Greig, director of the IAM Motoring Trust. “Those starting sixth-form colleges may now be using mopeds, motorcycles or cars.

“The change of journey, the new friends and different after-school clubs all put the lives of children at risk.

“Parents can help children by using the last few days of the summer break to practise the route to school together, without the distraction of friends. Help the child identify dangers along the new route and pick safe crossing points now, and they will be better equipped when term begins.”

To help parents educate their children and establish safer road drill before the start of term the IAM Motoring Trust has published a safety guide which highlights dangers specific to different age groups and advice on how to address them. The guide can be downloaded free from www.iamtrustchildssafety.org.uk

IAM release information on foreign road traffic law

15 August 2008

Driving outside the UK just got a bit easier, as the IAM (Institute of Advanced Motorists) has published a one-stop, definitive guide to traffic laws when driving abroad to help motorists avoid unnecessary stress, fines and prosecution.

A survey of motoring clubs across the world uncovered a number of ways motorists could become unstuck owing to a wide variety of laws and priorities among different countries. For example, in the UK, there are no specific requirements to carry additional safety equipment. However, if you plan to travel in Belgium, you may be expected to carry a first aid kit, fire extinguisher, reflective jacket and a warning triangle.

Neil Greig, Director of the IAM Motoring Trust said: “Driving abroad can be an unnerving experience - getting pulled over by a foreign police officer for not complying with laws you were unaware of can be a rather intimidating. Checking out local laws before you go will help you to be prepared.”

The IAM website now includes details on drink drive limits, use of seatbelts and child restraints, safety camera detector prohibitions, and the requirement to hold safety equipment in your vehicle such as reflective jackets, spare bulbs, warning triangles and first aid kits.

Mr Greig added: “In ‘holiday mode’ you may not expect to break down or be involved in an accident. But, research shows you’re actually three times more likely to be involved in an accident when abroad. Being fully prepared will help take some of the stress out of a bad situation.

UK drivers driving their own car abroad should buy the equipment before travelling. We advise people hiring a car abroad to check the equipment is provided by the hire company as it will be the hirer who gets the fine.”

To view this guide please visit <http://www.iam.org.uk/DrivingAbroad/>

CARS AND DRIVING TRIVIA

On average there is about 3,000 feet of electrical wiring in every car.

If you drove at 100 mph for four years you would still not cover every stretch of road in the USA.

Car airbags explode at 200 miles per hour.

Since the 1970's microchips have doubled in power and halved in price. If the same thing happened to cars then a Rolls Royce would do 100,000 miles to the gallon and would only cost you £25 for a brand new one!

British Petroleum makes a profit of £3,800.00 per second!

On average a human being spends two weeks of their entire lives waiting for traffic lights to change.

In 1916, 55 percent of the cars in the world were Model T Fords, a record that has never been beaten.

In 2003, 17,013 people were killed in alcohol-related crashes in the United States. This amounts to one death almost every half-hour.

The city with the most Rolls Royce's per capita is Hong Kong.

The first product Motorola started to develop was a record player for automobiles. At the time, the most known player on the market was the Victrola, so they called themselves Motorola.

<http://www.comedy-zone.net/triviazone/history/cars-and-driving.htm>

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 "Advanced Driving - The Essential Guide", the Advanced Test and the first year's membership of the IAM when you pass, costs just £99. 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 War Memorial Hall, 58 High Street, Littlebourne, Nr. Canterbury, Kent. CT3 1ST.

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:

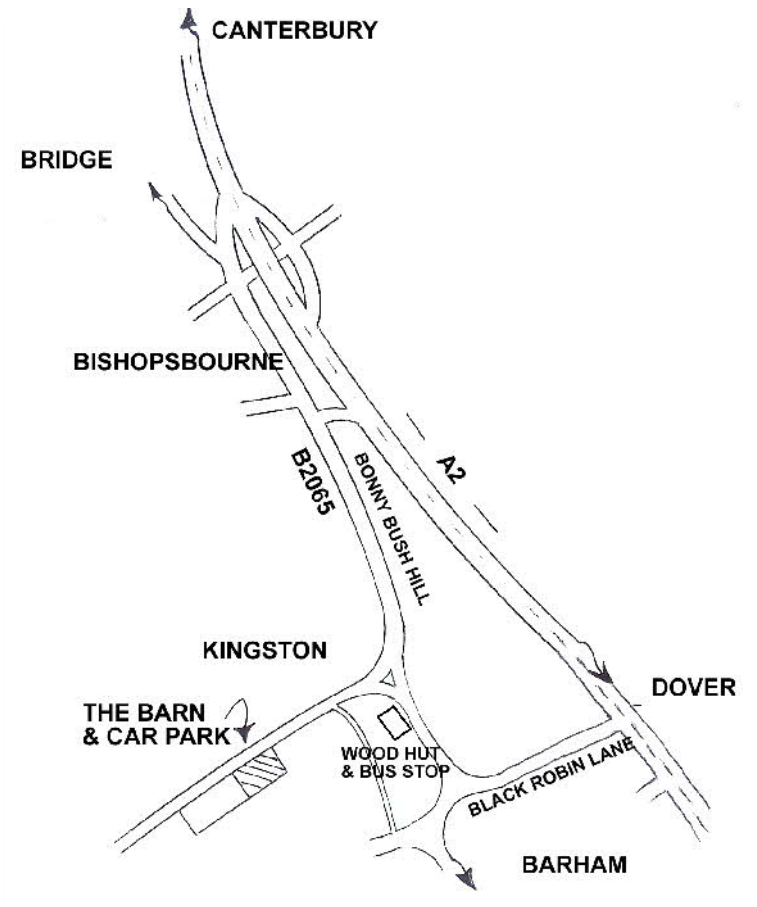
<http://www.eastkentiam.org.uk>

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

William Holloway
 Craig Cliff
 Thomas Grant
 Harry Debling
 Martin Bellis
 Peter Denham

Events Data

Littlebourne War Memorial Hall
 - Second Thursday - 19.30pm

11th September - Peter Rodger IAM Chief Examiner

9th October - AGM Followed by talk from Geoff Pretty our present Regional Coordinator

13th November - Trevor Dickenson, IAM Staff Examiner

11th December - John Pearce – Retired Senior Detective with Kent Police – ‘Murder comes Gift Wrapped’ – a story from John’s personal experiences.

8th January 2009 - TBA

12th February - Professor Cyril Isenberg - The Magic of Bubbles

Test Passes

Period:

16.05.08 - 11.07.08

Associate	Date	Observer
Dale Goodrum	16.05.2008	Richard Blackford
Robert Kennedy	16.05.2008	Ted Willey
Stuart Thompson	01.07.2008	Nick Williams
George Bird	05.07.2008	Nick Williams
John Miller	07.07.2008	Richard Hazell
Victor Johnson	11.07.2008	Richard Hazell
Stephen Green	11.07.2008	Ron Sims

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 - 20th November 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.