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Group and Membership Correspondence

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For queries regarding membership please contact the group Membership Secretary
Sue Sharp on membership@kentiam.org.uk

Useful Information

Further useful information can be found by visiting the main IAM website at
www.iam.org/uk or the Kent Group Website at www.kentiam.org.uk
Registered charity: no.1051416.

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From The Chair

Hi Everyone

Well what a terrible time the world is having at the moment due to this dreadful Covid 19 Pandemic. So many thousands of people have died worldwide it's frightening and that's without the talk of a second and possibly a third wave due this winter.

Day to day life has changed considerably with the restrictions necessarily imposed to keep our families and loved ones safe. Looks like face masks and social distancing are here to stay for the foreseeable future!



As far as the Group is concerned all our activities have been severely curtailed with the 'lock down' that started in March resulting in all training, social activities and meetings including the AGM having to be cancelled.

It is with regret that in line with the latest restrictions on public gatherings imposed by the UK Government, as Chairman of the Kent Group of Advanced Motorists I must hereby notify all members that attendance at the 2020 Annual General Meeting in person will not be possible. Instead this will now be held by postal vote at a closed meeting on Tuesday 20th October at 8pm.

On page 9 of this magazine you will find an Agenda and Voting form, on page 10 is a Form of Proxy if you wish someone else to vote on your behalf, on page 11 is a Nomination form if you wish to stand for election and on page 12 is a Members AGM Question form. On page 19 there is the Chairman's Report and on page 22 the Treasurer's Report.

I urge you please to have your say by making use of these forms ensuring that you return them fully completed by post to Val Power our Group Secretary at :
[REDACTED] Maidstone, Kent, ME14 1X to arrive before
October 6th 2020. Thank you.

In line with IAM RoadSmart guidelines on October 20th five of the Trustees will meet - myself as current Chairman, Peter Bott Vice-Chairman, John Bowman Treasurer, Secretary Val Power and Associate Coordinator Terry Nunn to count the votes and answer any Questions submitted.- the results of which will be published on the Group website www.kentiam.org.uk.

Some slightly more encouraging news is that under recent guidance from IAM RoadSmart limited observing has now been able to resume albeit under strict guidelines with PPE mandatory for both the Associate and Observer.

We are a long way off being back to normal so please stay vigilant and safe. I hope you and your families are well and I look forward to seeing you all again once Santa has been and 2021 arrives.

Best wishes

Linda

Linda Davies
chairman@kentiam.org.uk



New Observers required

Peter Bott

Becoming an Observer is not as difficult as you may think and will keep your own driving skills up to date too. If you think that you just do not have the time please think again as it takes only a few hours a month to become one of our Qualified Observers. Full training will of course be provided. If you are interested in finding out what is involved, please contact our Vice Chairman peter.bott@kentiam.org.uk

Test passes – congratulations - well done !!

David WOOD
Jo GAMGEE
Michael HEBEL
Vanessa McDOWELL
George PROSSER
Paul GARDINER = F1rst
Suzanna BARCA
Pam MONRO
Gordon BAKER
Jan POWIS
Julie DAVIS = F1rst.

Valeries HALES
Jenny LICHFIELD
Jackie SIMMONDS
Jenny LUCAS
Ollie HOLMES
Arthur GODDEN
Milly PITT = F1rst
Jess CHARLAFF
Paul CREED
Gaetanino PARASCANDOLO
James WILSON



Life in the US

Roger Phillips

When I sat down to write this article about life on the other side of the “pond” to the UK it set me thinking. Just what are the differences between our two lifestyles? I guess that a large number of people have the stereotype image of cowboys on horseback, wide open desert spaces, endless mountains and the glitz and brashness of places like Las Vegas. Well I suppose some of that is true but you might have to go some way to find all of those things.

In reality, basic life over here is not that much different to life in the UK, maybe on a slightly larger scale. We still have to shop, usually in supermarkets, we still have cinemas, referred to as movies over here, we speak the same language, although more of that later, we still eat out although the variety of choices may well be somewhat greater, and for my particular area on the West Coast which is where I now live, climate is not so very different to the climate in the UK. Although with that said, climate is somewhat more predictable with the summers warmer, rainfall less and snow minimal. The biggest difference is that the Oregon part of the West Coast is very heavily forested and mountainous both of which give rise to the ever-present danger, particularly in the summer, of forest fires and those are frightening. These fires can often be started by lightning strikes as opposed to careless human activities. Once a forest fire takes hold it takes days, then weeks to first contain the spread, bring it under control and finally extinguish it. It also takes a tremendous amount of equipment, air tankers, helicopters, bulldozers and up to several thousand firefighters who work tirelessly 24/7 to combat the flames and save property, although sadly there is the ever-present chance there may be loss of life to contend with as well.

Coming back to the earlier remark that we speak the same language. To a certain extent that is true but as I have found out terminology has a big part to play. During the course of conversations, you might well slip in a phrase or saying that is not recognised here. A very brief example being when I had occasion to go to a bank to pay a cheque into my account. I said to the cashier I would like to pay this cheque into my account. The cashier looked puzzled and queried exactly what did I want to do. Fortunately, my local interpreter in the form of my wife came to my rescue and said what I wanted to do was to deposit the cheque into my account. Problem solved. And there have been many instances where things are said differently that mean the same thing although you can also find that an innocent English saying might very well have a very different connotation here.

Obviously driving is a very big part of life over here and pickup trucks and SUVs (sports utility vehicles) are a way of life and none more so than the pickup truck. It is probably true to say that in almost every household there is at least one pickup and if the thought was these are utilitarian vehicles then definitely think again. These pickups range in price from around \$20,000 to almost \$100,000 and can be as luxurious as any top of the line premium car.

The myth that the US has a blanket 55mph speed limit across all states is just that. A myth. Maximum speed limits across the country range from 55mph to 85mph and each state sets its own speed limits although from observations the sign posting of these limits does not appear to be as clear or rigid as in the UK with the same cavalier approach to adherence as in the UK. The freeway system of major roads is broadly equivalent to the UK motorway network but with the major difference that almost any type of vehicle can use them. It is also interesting to note that directional sign posting for the freeways is much simpler than the UK motorway network. The basic numbering structure of freeways is that even numbered routes run east to west while odd numbered routes run north to south. So, once you know which direction your destination is from your starting point you simply join the freeway in the appropriate direction and at some point, along the route you will see signs showing your destination. Simple. Mind you, depending on where you are headed your journey's end could be a very long way ahead of you.

A couple of notable differences the tourist will find when driving in the US. The first is that two states, New Jersey and Oregon, still have statutes on their books that make self service filling stations illegal, so travellers must always remember this when driving in these two states, and the penalties for infringement can be eye wateringly steep. However, just to complicate things, Oregon recently passed a law that allows counties that have less than 40,000 inhabitants to be able to serve themselves at filling stations. Or as they say over here, pump your own gas. The second notable difference is the ability to turn right on a red traffic light at most intersections, provided it is safe to do so and where it is not permitted a sign will be displayed to that effect. When I first encountered this, I did find it a little confusing but you soon get used to it and in practice it works well and does help traffic flow.

Another novel (to here) innovation that is slowly spreading is the traffic circle, better known to UK motorists as the roundabout. In an effort to keep traffic flowing at certain intersections the planners have installed these traffic circles and they have found that they actually work!!

If you are feeling hungry, then your choices for eating out are numerous, ranging from the ever-present fast food outlets to all types of restaurants and the differences don't stop there. The menu choices are varied and wide ranging. For example, if toast is part of the selection then your choices are, from white, wheat, rye, sourdough and so on. For many aspects of menu items there are choices and sometimes it seems that is rather akin to 20 questions before your meal is eventually ordered. Chilled water is almost always provided and free refills of coffee or soft drinks are always available. Finally, if you are unable to finish your meal then a takeout box is free upon request.

Housing is another area where there are some notable differences. On the East Coast brick-built dwellings are common while here on the West Coast they are much more of a rarity. Given the vast areas of dense forests the timber industry is a major factor in the economic life of the region, hence most of the buildings including domestic dwellings are of wooden construction. Homes are generally classified as stick built, meaning they are constructed on site, manufactured homes, where these are factory built in modules and transported to your chosen site and joined together to form your home, or trailers, which are generally larger versions of what are known in the UK as caravans. These are also capable of being moved and towed, (behind a pickup truck). A considerable number of stick-built dwellings here are single level, known in the UK as bungalows, although where housing developments in cities are springing up the trend now is to build two storey houses that take up less space per acre. The term bungalow is not used here.

Another feature that is often found in a lot of residential areas is the Home Owners Association, referred to as an HOA. These HOA's are where the home owners have got together to set out rules and regulations that determine the quality of life in their area. For example, they could stipulate that no property may erect a fence in their front garden, referred to as a yard, that no vehicles may be left parked on the roadway at night, or any number of other restrictions. Once set up and registered with the local authority these HOA rules carry the force of law along with any penalties that may be incorporated in the rules. There is also an obligatory monthly or annual fee that goes with these rules and that fee can be considerable depending on the facilities and or amenities the HOA provides. City and rural life are also where differences can show up with the rural areas being much less regulated and that shows in the way dwellings are dispersed with little or no apparent regulations whereas city dwellers are regulated much the same as in the UK. Now turning to leisure and the great outdoors where the scope and diversity are almost endless. For those who like a motorised outdoors there are plenty of small ATVs (All Terrain Vehicles) that can be transported in the back a pickup truck and allow you to reach well into off road terrain, and for those who like to play in the snow there are plenty of places where you can enjoy the pleasures of snowmobiles and snow shoe treks, either your own or rented ones. Mountains to climb, rivers and lakes to cruise abound and forests to wander through although forest walking needs to be taken seriously as people have been known to get lost amongst the trees for days and due to the density of the tree cover the chances of being spotted from the air are very slim to non-existent. And whilst you are roaming the great outdoors, either in or out of a National Park, be on the look out for the resident wildlife population, which is liable to include deer, bear, elk, mountain lion, while closer to home you will likely come across skunks, wild turkeys, racoons, humming birds as well as the ever present vultures circling the thermals overhead looking for their next meal.

So, to sum up, while there are obvious similarities between life on these two shores there are also obvious differences even taking climate and latitude into account. The feeling of vastness, of space, of a people who have a different approach to life with their outdoor activities including hunting and fishing and a perceived laid back life style.

On the other hand, what the UK has in abundance is tradition, history going back thousands of years and a closeness to the European countries with their diverse range of cultures and history. It is also worth noting that the mix of peoples here is very varied and you are just as likely to meet someone from England, France, any European country or indeed any country across the globe as you could in the UK because in the past the US has openly welcomed legal immigrants from across the globe. Unfortunately in today's world the US suffers from illegal immigration the same as so many of the European countries but their problem is made more challenging because they have a roughly 1,000 mile land border to police, a considerable portion of which runs across desert terrain making enforcement extremely difficult and in a country where there is already a population of 11 million illegal immigrants it is a thorny issue that no politician has yet satisfactorily managed to resolve.

Roger Phillips

A Road Safety Initiative

Terry Nunn

My visit to the Road Safety Experience at Rochester called to mind many years ago of another road safety initiative that was also the only one of its kind in the country. This was a model traffic area in Lordship Recreation Ground at Tottenham in north London. Covering four acres it had three quarters of a mile of roadway with road markings, traffic lights, crossroads, pedestrian crossings and even a miniature police box.



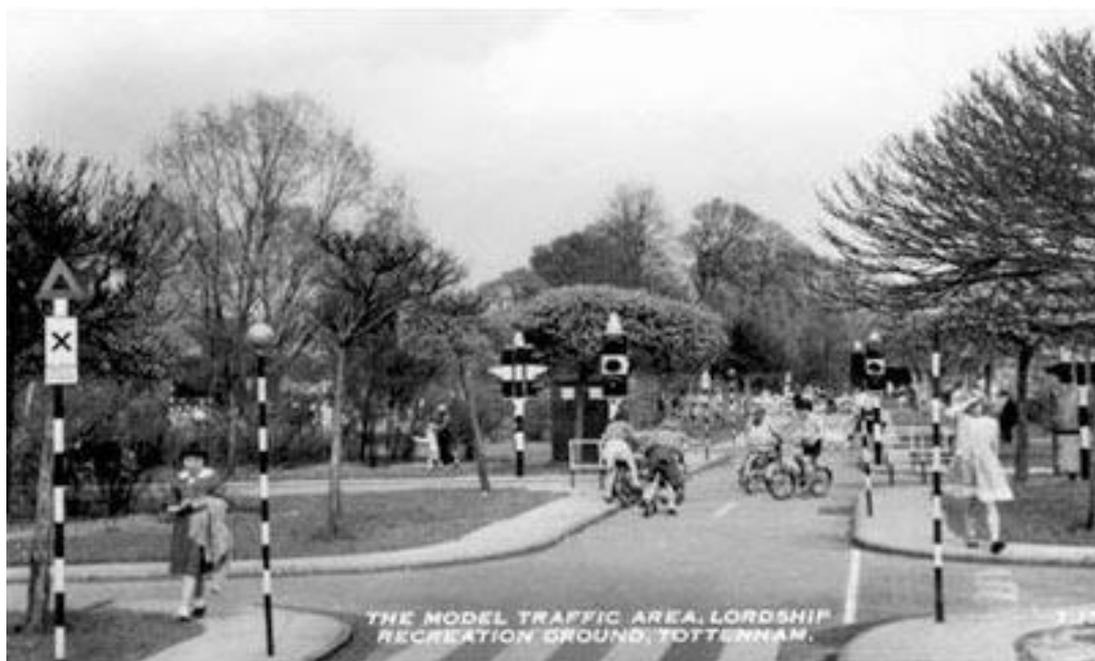
It was opened with great ceremony on 27 July 1938 by Leslie Burgin, Minister for Transport amid wide press coverage, including Pathe News. In his speech Mr Burgin said "Your kiddie of today, playing about with something that is a very instructive toy, is going to be the cyclist, the motor-cyclist, the van driver, the car owner of tomorrow. And if kiddies can learn road sense in the same way as a kiddie learns a language, so that it becomes an instinct, well then we have that much gained when they reach adolescence and later years."

The initial plan was for the Model Traffic Area to be the first of many partnerships between local and national government to promote road safety. Unfortunately it had to be closed for the duration of the war resulting in no further area being built.



When the area was reopened in 1949 by the Mayor of Tottenham, I was among the children demonstrating our road safety proficiency. On this occasion it was filmed for BBC Children's Newsreel. Over the following years the area was used less, fell into disrepair and became subject to vandalism.

Local residents raised funds, some from the local council and the National Lottery for the roads and pavements to be repaired with modern road signage. In 2010 another opening ceremony was held. On this occasion it was opened by an 82-year-old lady who had used it when a young girl.





As a footnote the first opening ceremony can be viewed on the Pathe News website – type in model traffic area. When the second opening was filmed by BBC Children’s Newsreel my family did not have a tv. Some weeks later I recall a friend whose family did have a tv telling me he had seen me the evening before in the weekly Newsreel. Others and I have tried tracking down the Newsreel but alas it is not in the BBC archives so appears to be completely lost.

Terry Nunn

Repair by Hammer

When her car broke down a woman called out a local mechanic to repair it.

He lifted up the bonnet, looked at the engine, whacked something with a hammer and said “try it now”

To her amazement the car started straight away. “That’s incredible” she said “ You’ve been here less than a minute and you’ve managed to fix it “I’m so grateful”

The mechanic replied “All part of the job Madam – that’ll be £200 please”

The smile vanished from the woman’s face “How much? How can you charge £200 when all you did was hit something with a hammer?”

“I can write you out an itemised bill if you like” he said “I should think so too” she replied

The mechanic wrote out the bill and handed it to her it read

Hitting engine with hammer	£ 10.00
Knowing where to hit it	£190.00”

Kent Group of Advanced Motorists

(Registered Charity No. 1051416)

Notice of Annual General Meeting to be held by a closed meeting on Tuesday
October 20th 2020 at 8.00pm

Agenda

1. Minutes of Previous AGM in 2019
2. Chairman's Report 2020
3. Treasurer's Report 2020
4. Counting of postal votes and elections
5. Election Results to be declared on the Website
6. Members Questions – answers will be on the Website

Postal Voting Paper

To cast your vote please **circle** either Yes or No beside the names on the list below.

When completed post to The Group Secretary 11, Banky Meadow Maidstone Kent
ME16 9JX to arrive before Monday the 6th of October 2020 or be disallowed

Please note that there are two Nominations for Treasurer you may only vote for one

I membership no vote as follows:

Chairman	Linda Davies	Yes	No
Vice-Chairman	Peter Bott	Yes	No
Secretary	Val Power	Yes	No
Treasurer	John Bowman	Yes	No
	OR		
	Daren Bubb	Yes	No
Committee members	Avice Harms	Yes	No
	Mike Ingram	Yes	No
	Phil Mason	Yes	No
	Terry Nunn	Yes	No
	Neil Regan	Yes	No
	Alan Rowe	Yes	No
	Sue Sharp	Yes	No
I accept the Chairman's Report		Yes	No
I accept the Treasurer's Report		Yes	No

signed date

Kent Group of Advanced Motorists (KGAM)
Charity No: 1051416 Form of Proxy

I (name)

of (address)

.....

.....

hereby appoint (name of appointee)

to vote for me and on my behalf at the
Annual General Meeting of the
Kent Group of Advanced Motorists
to be held on the
20th October 2020 at 8pm

and at any adjournment thereof

This form of proxy to be used in respect of all
resolutions put to the meeting

As witness my hand this day of 2020

Signature Membership Number

This is the only form which will be accepted and must be returned by post to

The Group Secretary [redacted] to
arrive before Monday the 6th of October 2020 or be disallowed

Kent Group of Advanced Motorists - Nomination Form

KGAM ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING - 20th October 2020

(Registered Charity No. 1051416)

	<u>Name</u>	<u>Kent Group Membership no.</u>	<u>Signature</u>
CHAIRMAN			
Nominee			
Proposer			
Seconder			
VICE CHAIRMAN			
Nominee			
Proposer			
Seconder			
SECRETARY			
Nominee			
Proposer			
Seconder			
TREASURER			
Nominee			
Proposer			
Seconder			
COMMITTEE MEMBER			
Nominee			
Proposer			
Seconder			

Members disqualified by law from acting as a Charity Trustee are not eligible to serve on the Group Committee (Rule 3.3).

This is the only form which will be accepted and must be returned by post to:

The Group Secretary 11, Banky Meadow Maidstone ME16 9JX
to arrive before Monday the 6th of October 2020 or be disallowed

Kent Group of Advanced Motorists Annual General Meeting

October 20th 2020 – Members Postal Questions

I
of
.....

Wish to ask the following questions at the Group AGM :-

.....
.....
.....
.....
.....
.....
.....
.....
.....

Signed Group Membership No

This is the only form which will be accepted and must be returned by post to:

The Group Secretary 11, Banky Meadow Maidstone Kent ME16 9JX
to arrive before the 6th of October 2020 or be disallowed

With the hope that I will become a grandfather sometime in the not too distant future I absolutely recognise the need for us to stop abusing our planet for the good of future generations. As a preamble to this article I support the concept of electric cars, I just think that until the challenges of range and charging are sorted out then these impracticalities make them a retrograde step in motoring from where we are now.

Currently we pop into a petrol station, fill up with fuel and 5 minutes later we are back on the road for another 400, 500, 600 miles, whatever range our vehicle does. Although I have no doubt technology will develop regarding electric vehicles, I am not sure whether we will see the unfettered convenience currently afforded us by the combustion engine.

Given Las Vegas has around a gazillion electric lights I find it slightly counter intuitive that me switching off my TV at night rather than leaving it on standby, with its little red light, really makes that much of a difference, but nevertheless I duly do. I currently try and limit my driving when there is a real alternative. I decided to catch a train to my client in Oxford the other day although living in the sticks I had no option but to drive to the train station. All in all it was a lot slower, way more expensive and I still had to get taxis round Oxford.

Beware the statistics

We all know the line “there are lies, damn lies and statistics” (evidently mistakenly attributed to the British prime minister Benjamin Disraeli).

Much like the claimed MPG of petrol cars the true range of electric cars is of similar fantasy. My neighbours friend recently had to do a trip to Eastbourne, supposedly well within the range of their electric car. However, the weather was awful; lights on, windscreen wipers on, heater on, radio and sat-nav on. The reality was the true range in **actual** driving conditions was nowhere near enough for the journey despite what it says in the manual. Not sure how breakdown recovery turn up with a top up can of electricity?

The favourite argument for electric vehicle is that supposedly something like 98% of all journeys are really short and well within the current range of most electric cars. That is fine but what about when we want to do the other 2% of journeys. As such, our family cannot go all electric at the moment as we must have an alternative if I need to make an urgent trip to my parents in Doncaster.

So do we have a clear plan to go all electric – apparently not?

Green is good and so in typical style we once again find governments making environmental knee jerk edicts that sounds great on paper but in reality, it feels next to impossible to deliver.

Plant like plant 6 billion trees in Britain, is a laudable target but if you plan on planting these in the middle of our protected parkland how do you get them there without carrying them on the back of millions of lorry journeys pumping out millions of tonnes of CO² and how do you dig the holes to plant them without diesel powered tools – so what’s the plan?

Getting more people into electric vehicles is at the heart of this government's efforts to tackle climate change given transport accounts for 23% of the UK's CO² emissions. Setting a target of only electric new cars from 2040 is laudable but simply flawed when it is not support by a robust roadmap as to how to make it a reality – so what’s the plan?

Without a well thought out end to end plan simply means this government has simply left future governments to face the music when things do not quite pan out as expected. These are the sorts of things that are going to make it a little tricky:

1. A lot of change is required to support electric vehicles

There are now an ever increasing number of electric cars on the market but currently only about 1.1% of new cars sold in 2019 were electric. This is coupled with the fact that the market for used electric vehicles hardly exists meaning the long-term residual value of your electric car is currently a little unclear.

Currently it takes most UK drivers anywhere between one and 15 years to change their vehicles, so many of us may not be thinking about buying an electric car any time soon. In 2019 we saw a slight dip in sales from previous years, but new car registrations stood at 2.3m in 2019 and vans 0.37m. Currently the United Kingdom is home to some 38.9 million vehicles, around 32.5m being cars.

The fundamental flaw at the moment – charging on the go

Currently most garages have around 8 to 12 petrol pumps. With say 8 pumps, during a busy period, if each motorist takes say 5 minutes to top up and go then that represents about 100 motorists per hour. Bearing in mind many people only top up a small amount each time reduce that to say 3 minutes and its 160 motorists. I suspect there are peaks at filling stations both before and after work.

For arguments sake let us take a midpoint of 125 motorists per hour.

So if technology improves such that an electric can gets a sufficient charge in say 30 minutes, those same 125 motorists during a busy period would need 62 charging stations vs 8 petrol pumps.

As of 2019, the UK has 8,385 as at the end of 2019 (interestingly, down from around 40,000 in the mid-1960s)

So in the short term we are still going to need all of the petrol stations on the road and at the same time find space to put in new charging stations that potentially need to accommodate 8 times as many cars at any moment in time.

That is a lot of infrastructure unless we can change out ways and make sure we do most of our charging up from home.

So how do we charge them at home?

Currently the infrastructure for charging is pretty poor and a huge step up will be needed requiring an exponential increase in charging points.

Assuming we can now charge our vehicles on the go with our new charging stations, what about when we get home. Statistics are a bit more flaky on this one but around 50% to 60% of motorists apparently have a garage or other form of off road parking. This leaves around, lets say, 40% who rely on other parking, typically in the street. Based on 32.5m cars around 13m are parked on the road. How do we intend for people to charge these cars at night when they return home at the end of the day? Extension leads hanging out of the 5th floor flats – probably not?

There needs to be a plan as to how around 40% of motorists are going to charge their cars around their home? Based on lack of announcements this sort of fundamental detail does not appear to have been considered but this is a huge national infrastructure project and based on previous national projects it will obviously be rural areas that come out worst off.

2. Limited choice

The number of vans on the UK's roads is increasing faster than any other type of vehicle, in part because of the rapid growth in online shopping. Small e-vans are already available and the choice on offer is only likely to increase.

It is difficult to compare prices for diesel and e-vans. However, it can be significantly more expensive to lease an electric version of a popular van, than a diesel one. This is likely to mean that electric vans remain unaffordable for many small firms and self-employed delivery drivers for some time.

There is more choice for those looking for a new car, but electric vehicles are disproportionately aimed at the higher end of the market. Few all-electric models are available for less than £20,000 and buying a new Tesla Model 3 starts around £42,000. Considering Jaguar, the E-Pace starts at £29,090, the F Pace at £41,530 and the I-Pace starts at a whopping £60,995.

Prices are likely to continue to fall and operating an electric vehicle tends to be cheaper than a petrol or diesel equivalent (at the moment). But the higher upfront costs may stop many drivers from buying electric vehicles for the foreseeable future, even when a vibrant second-hand market emerges.

3. Backing the right technology

There are rapid developments in battery and charging technology, but this is causing deep uncertainty with manufacturers in particular which charging technology will become the gold standard? This is a particular problem for people living in apartment blocks, or houses without a private parking space. Should they expect charging to be available at bollards or lamp posts along their street?

Perhaps home charging will not be as important as it is now. Should drivers use facilities at petrol stations, their office or in empty supermarket car parks at night? Other options being explored include induction pads embedded in major roads, which charge cars as they drive over them. However, such technology need developing quickly as 2040 is only 20 years away.

This uncertainty about which approach will become most common slows down private sector investment in charging infrastructure. It also makes the role of local authorities more difficult. Acting too soon could mean betting on the wrong horse. Waiting too long could encourage more people into hybrid vehicles, which are less dependent on charging infrastructure, but still use fossil fuels. This could potentially be a classic case of Betamax vs VHS (one for us oldies!)

4. Who will pay for the infrastructure?

Switching from petrol stations to charging infrastructure is a huge undertaking, particularly as there will be a very long period when both are required. In reality it is likely that this will fall to the private sector to build, operate and maintain charging infrastructure in the UK, the cost of which ultimately comes back to us as motorists. Don't be fooled that the electric revolution will come cheap by assuming charging our cars will be done on super cheap electricity.

Charging is currently slowly changing: BP and Shell have taken over market leaders Chargemaster and Newmotion, and Tesla is actively rolling out its own charging network at motorway service stations. However, if profit margins are low and entry set-up cost really high the likelihood is that businesses will be reluctant invest heavily until there is a clear understanding of how they get paid.

Fast forward to a time when we have ultimately replaced most of our 32m cars in the UK with all electric vehicles, this will have a phenomenal infrastructure underpinning it that would have cost £billions to set-up.

So where is the electricity coming from?

Say by some small miracle we pull it off and there are a swathe of charging points all over the place. The next big question is how do we actually produce enough electricity to charge everything. It seems to be universally recognised that our national grid does not have anywhere near this level of spare capacity than up to 32.5m millions all electric cars would place on it. So who is paying to upgrade our national grid. Currently around 50% of our power is generated from fossil fuels so unless we can accelerate our production of sustainable electricity, we risk having an army of electric cars powered by electricity generated from fossil fuel – not very Green. And yes, the upgrade likely comes at a cost of £billions and somebody has to pay

So brace yourself for a big bill!

As we know, nothing in life is free so its pretty obvious who is bearing the cost of this electric revolution, the humble motorist. So far we have the cost of the establishing the infrastructure, change to the national grid and a huge amount of research and development for which manufactures will be looking for payback.

And what about lost fuel duty? Currently around 65% of the cost of fuel is fuel duty (plus don't forget the VAT) which is estimated to raise £28.4 billion in 2019-20. So if 1% on income tax equates to about £5.5bn, the loss of fuel duty equates to around a 5% increase income tax – clearly that is never going to happen so expect some form of vehicle tax so the government can recoup its £28.6billion.

So the bill includes.

- Costs of aborting of converting petrol stations
- Charging infrastructure
- Upgrades to the National Grid
- Loss of fuel duty
- Currently really high entry cost of electric vehicles

Don't be fooled into thinking that electric motoring is going to come cheap, motorists are going to have some hefty bills to pay! The current position where running an electric car on super cheap electricity will soon become a thing of the past.

5. And finally don't be fooled - Electric cars are not zero-carbon

Although electric vehicles do not pump the usual gases out the back of the car they are by no way a zero-carbon solution. – they still come with serious environmental costs including:

- 1) Sourcing the materials to produce the batteries
- 2) The manufacturing and distribution of electric vehicles continues to be a positive carbon producer.
- 3) Cars need charging. Currently 50% of our electricity is sourced from fossil fuels so until we have zero carbon electricity production the electricity we use to charge our cars has a carbon footprint

Sourcing the minerals used for batteries, dismantling batteries which have deteriorated, and building and delivering vehicles to customers worldwide all involve substantial CO² emissions.

Electric vehicles are undoubtedly a crucial part of the UK's attempts to drastically reduce transport's emissions yet there are fundamental flaws in the government's proposal to put a blanket ban on all non-electric vehicles.

Although many of us love a bit of peace and quiet now and then, in my heart the near silence of an electric care will never replace the beautiful burble of a naturally aspirated V8. However, when it comes to it I will embrace the electric revolution although at the moment there seems to be a huge amount of work to do to get ready and as far as I can see I am not convinced there is a clear master plan to pull it

Daren Bubb

A few things have arisen in recent times closely connected to my travels but I couldn't decide which one to deal with first. So I've opted to throw the incendiary into the melting pot in the hope that it will prompt some reaction and spark some debate.

I have had the need since September to make regular visits to my aged Mum in Welwyn-Garden-City (a stones throw from IAM HQ coincidentally) making extensive use of M25 north of Dartford Crossing. On far too many occasions I have been caught up in delays caused by multiple vehicle collisions. The worst section regularly affected is J27 to J23 parts of which are designated 'Smart' motorways, with no hard shoulder for emergency use. The cavalier attitude and non-compliance of RED X lane restrictions is worrying. 38-44 tonne LGVs and minibuses with speed limiters should never be in lane 4 even without red x restrictions. RED X's aren't a new invention. They're mentioned in the 2007 last major revision of The Highway Code yet I see reports and comments in various media that people have never heard of them and don't understand them. We're long overdue for some re-education campaigning by authorities, so what's the best way to raise the profile?

Which brings me to comment on the Panorama programme on 27 January about allegedly unsafe Smart Motorways. A questionable piece of journalism, regarding both content and presentation, prompted by 38 people being killed over the last four years. Tragic that it is, 5 people a day were killed over that period on UK roads; do the maths **7500!!** The Panorama programme at no time made any comment about the appalling driving standards presented on dash-cam footage and in commentary.

Unless one indulges in dangerous sports or pastimes the most potentially / inherently dangerous activity most of us do is drive on the Queen's highway. Yet we pass a test in our late teens and until the day we die, or relinquish our licence, there is no legal requirement to have our driving standards reassessed. Every road death is an unnecessary waste of a life, but I don't believe roads per se are dangerous, more that the way road users use them and flouting the rules of the road is the fundamental basic problem that the powers that be shy away from adequately addressing. What do we Advanced drivers and riders think?

On a different tack I did a recent Dover-Calais crossing during storm Jorge, which was a bit lively but he turned out rather wimpish compared with Ciara and Dennis a few weeks before. I've never been a good mariner but the modern ferries do handle seas very well these days. The outbound leg was seriously delayed, not due to sea state, but because the scheduled ferry hadn't been refuelled and freight had to be transferred onto our vessel. FLOWER check? FUEL - enough for the journey! Schoolboy error. However the return leg was delayed more so. I don't know if our booked ferry actually sailed at all as we were directed onto the 20.00hrs **which departed at around 23.30!!** I resisted the temptation to respond to the P&O boarding control staff member who commented on our late arrival at check-in at 20.48 hours.

We sat in a cosy restaurant with our travelling companions monitoring sailings and our 20.55 ferry didn't even figure on the radar. Better than sitting on the dock-side especially in Calais Port as there is precious little option to remain in car. At least Dover Port provide a facility where travellers are able to sit in comfort and food and beverages. Approaching Dover the captain announced a further delay in docking as another vessel was in our berth. Ironically there was an adjacent empty berth and only one other vessel in port. To cap it all after an efficient disembarkation and onto the A20, signage approaching Folkestone advised the M20 was closed between J11 and J9. The diversion signs were a nonsense but I simply turned off and picked up the A20 at Sellindge and experienced the as yet unfinished huge new M20/J10A roundabout at Ashford with further diversions around the town.

The weather and delays were a nuisance but the wine cellar has been suitably restocked [and may last until our next jaunt in June - subject to any corona virus restrictions] and we enjoyed the company of our travelling companions who we've known for around 40 years.

I hope this submission may prompt further response and comment from readers to bolster future magazine issues. We will lose it if we don't use it and contribute to content. Safe motoring to all.

David Ibbott,

TV Chefs love them or hate them?

Mike Ingram

Whilst being on lockdown I guess we've all been missing a few things and perhaps experiencing some new ones.

We were fortunate that we managed to get our daughters regular slot for home deliveries that we've never had before. What a relief to have essentials like red wine delivered alongside luxuries like carrots!

I guess perhaps we have also missed the opportunity of other treats like being able to go out to a restaurant for a meal. However, am I the only one that was getting fed up with the TV chefs or indeed chefs in general? How is it that they seem to think that these days peas only need about 30 seconds of cooking before being served up to you effectively like bullets, and of course this seems to apply to all other vegetables that now seem to have to be 'fashionably crunchy' rather than what my generation might describe as 'cooked'.

Also, why do they need to smother everything in salt, presumably so you get very thirsty and have to drink more of their overpriced drinks! And of course the other 'modern twist' seems to be that they then want to serve you your food of an odd mix of holders ranging from pieces of wood, slate, glass and anything else that they can think of to get it from the kitchen to your table. Haven't they ever heard of PLATES!

Now plates have been around for about 1000 years, invented in China (hence why we call it china) and the design has stood the test of time very well. It is flat with a raised edge. This helps to keep your food in place and stops it from falling off, together with the gravy, although you now might only get a minuscule amount of what they now call Jus!

How about playing a game of room 101 and getting rid of the lot of them?

Anyone else got something they might want to get rid of?

Mike Ingram

My report to you starts with the the Covid 19 Pandemic as our Group activities have been severely curtailed with the 'lock down' that started in March resulting in all training, social activities and meetings including the AGM having to be cancelled.

A small Working Party comprising of myself as Chairman, Peter Bott as Vice-Chairman and Terry Nunn our Associate Coordinator was set up to advise the Group Committee on the complexities of how to proceed during the Pandemic and my thanks go to Peter and Terry for giving up so much of their time. Virtual meetings were held between us using zoom which proved to be a very useful tool. Committee meetings continued as usual but by email as not all members were familiar with zoom. To ensure that we kept in touch with members a monthly newsletter was sent out, personal contact was made with Observers by phone and email with Peter also setting up a couple of Observers meetings using zoom for those that wished to participate.

At present we have 47 active observers, 11 Training Officers 2 of whom are awaiting National Observer re-tests, 20 National Observers, 16 Local Observers 4 of whom had started National Observer training. There are 6 Trainee Observers, 2 started training in March but due to the virus no further training has been possible.

In July we were advised by IAM RoadSmart that so long as Government strict rules were adhered to the Group could return to observing but only on a one to one basis with both parties having to wear PPE. The observers were canvassed and 19 agreed to return with others understandably preferring not to at this stage especially if their own loved ones were shielding or in self isolation. My thanks to them all for their continued loyalty to the Group which is greatly appreciated.

Before the virus Lockdown our Outside Events Team had been out and about all over the County as usual in all weathers flying the KGAM flag and attracting Associates for our courses. Some of the events attended by them were:-

Classic Motor Show Deal
Cats Protection League Bredhurst (3 days)
Vintage car rally at the Rare Breeds Centre
Police Open Days Maidstone (2 days)
Kent County Show Detling (3 days)
Cars on the Green Bearsted
Classic Motor Show Whitstable
Classic Motor Show Herne Bay
Kingston Fete

The team continues to promote the Kent Group at every opportunity generating an amazing 135 contacts which led directly to 21 new Associates. Well done Guys and thank you!

I had hoped that the remake of the Session 4 DVD using drone clips would be finished this summer but sadly the Lockdown put paid to that too.

On the 27th of October 2019 the Group enjoyed an outing for Sunday Lunch at the Hilltop Hotel Stansted near Brands Hatch. My thanks go to our host Daren and his team for an excellent menu and amazing service which was thoroughly enjoyed by all that attended.

At Grove Green for our social evenings we have welcomed:

Graham Feest Road Safety expert

Mike Ingram chaired a fun quiz evening

The Kent Air Ambulance

Lt Ewan Bandall from the Army Tigers Parachute Display Team

Magistrate Susan Shaw spoke of her Adventures in Peru

Christmas Quiz Night chaired by Paul Fletcher & his wife Janet ably assisted by Andy Wyles. Seventy five attended an excellent evening and Christine & Brenda excelled as always with a scrumptious buffet.

Jack Deans gave us a lesson on presenting Court Evidence

and once again Lester Parsons had us in stitches several times. For your information Lester is now a very proud Grandad after his daughter Isobel gave birth to a beautiful little girl named Poppy. Mum, baby and Grandpa are all doing well.

I had mentioned to you over the last couple of years that Littlebourne needed to increase the number of members attending the social evenings held there which regrettably did not happen. They have now there been discontinued.

Elizabeth worked so hard to arrange some really interesting speakers and on behalf of the Committee I would like to thank her for all her efforts

Sadly then the pandemic struck and all social activities had to be cancelled

Currently our membership stands at approximately 650 and my grateful thanks to Sue Sharp who continues to do a grand job.

Terry Nunn our associate coordinator has seen his workload double as training was stopped and tests were cancelled at the drop of a hat. Now opening up again using the one to one method all the existing associates need extra help as well as new ones hoping to start. Never a dull moment - thank you Terry

As well as the Observers and Lecture Team members so many other people deserve a mention and a big thank you for the time they give up:-

Christine whose legendary culinary delights keep us fed and watered throughout the year at Grove Green

Our catering manager at The Barn, Colin Merritt, always has a smile and a welcoming cuppa waiting. Sometimes even chocolate biscuits if we've been good!

Avice Harms our hardworking minutes secretary and

Neil Regan on the signing in desk

Our Centre based courses continue to be run by a dedicated team of Course Coordinators Cynthia Merritt, Sue Sharp, Penelope Irving, Chris Brockies and Dee Goodwin

They work closely with our Course Leaders and National Observers Peter Bott, Trevor Cobb, Phil Mason, Steve Blackhurst, Roger Pinnock, Neil Lakeland & Steve Poille to ensure that Sunday mornings run smoothly.

Neil Lakeland continues in his role as the Group's GDPR manager and his help in so doing has proved invaluable

and Neil Oliver who once again kindly reviewed this year's accounts

Graham our Website & Social Media Co-ordinator and resident Photographer continues to do a magnificent job. He continually blogs our many test passes which promotes just how successful our group is. – thank you Graham

Due to Covid 19 so far this year 50 tests were taken, 7 failed and 43 passed 10 of whom were F1rst. Our pass rate is now 86%. Congratulations to all those Associates. Well done team my thanks to all the Observers and Lecture Team members for making the roads of Kent a much safer place!

Finally my thanks to the Group officers Vice-Chairman Peter, Val our Group Secretary, John our Treasurer, and to all the Committee members a special thank you for all your support over the last year working with you has been such a pleasure.

Stan Hawkins Certificate - After thirty plus years of dedicated service to the Group John Mills has decided to hang up his hat to spend more time with Christine. In recognition of all the many years of service that John has given to the Group the Committee have awarded him the Stan Hawkins Certificate. Congratulations John very well deserved and thank you - don't be a stranger!

Chairman's Award – This year my award goes to a person that continually beavers away tirelessly in the background often without the recognition deserved – Elizabeth Cooper. Apart from organising the Social Events at Littlebourne, did you know that Elizabeth also organises the Alternative Course pairing up the Observers & Associates and keeping track of their progress? Well she does that too! Thank you Elizabeth

Situations vacant – can you help please?

The Group currently has these positions to fill :-

1. Lecture Team Members: for details contact Mike Ingram on 01634 666296 or ingram121@yahoo.co.uk
2. Social Events Secretary: for details contact Linda Davies on 01634 406579 or chairman@kentiam.org.uk
3. Magazine/newsletter Editor: for details contact Linda Davies on 01634 406579 or chairman@kentiam.org.uk
4. Course Coordinators for the Sunday morning sessions: for details contact Val Power on 01622 728212 or secretary@kentiam.org.uk
5. Outside Events Team Members: for details contact Phil Mason on 01622 736188 or outside-events@kentiam.org.uk

If you can spare a few hours a month to help with any of the above it would be really appreciated. Thank you

Kent Group of Advanced Motorists
Accounts for the year ended 31 March 2020

RECEIPTS AND PAYMENTS	12 months to 31-Mar-20	(Restated) 12 months to 31-Mar-19
	£	£
Receipts		
Subscriptions - Full	2,820	3,091
Subscriptions - Associates	1,736	3,224
	<u>4,556</u>	<u>6,315</u>
Gift Aid	349	404
Bank interest	407	431
Other income	219	160
Total receipts	<u>5,531</u>	<u>7,310</u>
Payments		
Hall hire	1,922	1,486
Magazine	510	513
Postage	1,228	709
Stationery and printing	502	196
IT costs	296	249
Equipment repairs	218	0
Special offer	0	0
Insurance	145	139
Training	1,099	940
Travel	404	376
Refreshments	232	119
Events and publicity	1,510	1,906
Other expenses	194	111
Sub-total	<u>8,260</u>	<u>6,744</u>
Asset purchases		
DVD player and cables	80	0
Laptop for The Barn	0	369
Sub-total	<u>80</u>	<u>369</u>
Total payments	<u>8,340</u>	<u>7,113</u>
Net (payments)/receipts for the year	(2,809)	197
Cash funds last year end	25,090	24,893
Cash funds this year end	<u>22,281</u>	<u>25,090</u>

STATEMENT OF ASSETS AND LIABILITIES

	As at 31 March 20	(Restated) As at 31 March 19
Cash funds	£	£
Deposit account	21,727	23,320
Bank current account	484	1,700
Cash floats	70	70
Total cash funds	22,281	25,090
Assets retained for the charity's own use	Original Cost	31-Mar-20 Current value
Details	£	£
New projector	310	0
Grey metal cabinet	162	18
Microphone for the lecture team	60	6
Projector for The Barn	312	101
Cabinet for The Barn	151	51
Laptop for The Barn	384	138
Laptop for Grove Green	434	227
Cupboard for The Barn	171	95
Laptop for The Barn	369	296
DVD player and cables	80	76
	2,433	1,008

The Treasurer wished to simplify the accounts to enable other non-accountants to hold the role in the future.

So, the accounts have this year been presented on a 'cash' basis which means that they only include what happened in the 12 months in question.

The use of 'cash basis' is permitted by the Charity Commission for small charities (<£250k income) like KGAM. IAM RoadSmart Group Rules do not specify the basis for the accounts.

The change has been supported by the previous Treasurer, Daren Bubb, who has restated the approved previous 2018/19 year's accounts on a cash basis: thank you Daren. For anyone who is interested, a paper by Daren can be provided by email explaining the change in more detail.

Neil Oliver has kindly completed checking of the new accounts, including the transition to the 'cash' basis. Thank you Neil.

The transition to the cash basis and these accounts have been approved by your Committee. They allow much more focus on where group income and expenditure are changing creating the opportunity to respond as appropriate.

In summary the group income is down on the previous FY as fewer Associates joined our courses. Expenditure is up: this included purchase of stamps for the Magazine and membership communications in the current FY prior to the price increase in the spring. Some triennial First Aid training took place in the year. The group also undertook two more Observer training events, one at Grove Green and our first at The Barn. Some letterhead and leaflet printing took place; these only occur every few years as stocks are exhausted.

John Bowman