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Group and Membership Correspondence

All Group correspondence should be addressed to the Secretary:
Val Power, [REDACTED]

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.

Disclaimer: Opinions or views expressed in articles in this magazine are those of individual contributor(s) and do not necessarily represent the views of the IAM, the Committee, the Editor or policy of the Institute of Advanced Motorists.

Data Protection Legislation: Associate and full member's details and progress records are held on our files both on computer and hard copy. We also keep Contact details of other groups, region and Head Office. We hold this information in order to perform the necessary administration functions of the group and provide mailing functions for letters/magazine publications. Such information is **not** shared and will only be used by the group and **not** passed onto any other third party. If you object to any of this information being held in our databases please inform the group Membership Secretary in writing.

From The Chair

Hi Everyone

Welcome to the April 2019 edition of our magazine.

This time last year we were in the grip of the Beast from the East and twelve months later a heat wave! Still I know which I prefer although the garden doesn't seem to know whether it's coming or going.

For those that were unable to attend the Christmas Quiz night at Grove Green it was another resounding success with 80 + members joining in the fun. This year's is on December 17th so best make a note in your diaries now. As social secretary, this was Andy's first time as Quiz Master and everything went splendidly - a good time was had by all. Well done and thanks to Andy for making it happen and also to Paul who enjoyed himself arm twisting members to part with their cash in support of the raffle. As always Christine, with her able assistant Brenda, excelled herself with a mouth watering Ploughman's supper, mince pies and Christmas cake. Thank you to everyone for a great evening.



Hearty Congratulations go to **Team Regan** who won not only the Main quiz but also the Table quiz too. Well done to Neil, Sharon, Liam, Jean and Charles



Sadly due to work commitments Andy will not be standing for re-election at this year's AGM so if you would like to 'have a go' at being the Social Events Secretary I'd be very pleased to hear from you.

It has been almost a year since the **General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR)** came in to force in the UK and, in line with the recommendations from IAM RoadSmart, we will now be annually updating you with information on how we use the data you provide to us.

We process your personal data as part of your membership contract with us, to ensure you receive information on training, committee, and social events, together with newsletters & magazines (such as this one) relating to the Group and road safety.

Pictures, videos and written updates of our events (including any training, committee and social events), where you are in attendance or referred to, may also be published on social media sites such as Facebook and Twitter, as well as in Group newsletters/magazines & on Group related websites. Where these have been taken as part of a Group activity (for example a certificate presentation for associates who pass their advanced test) we will usually obtain separate consent at this time.

You have the right, at any time, to request that your data is no longer processed by the Kent Group for any of the purposes above. By doing so you will be removed from receiving or participating in those activities you object to. **Should you wish to do so**, please notify us by email (secretary@kentiam.org.uk), or complete the form below, tear it out and send it to: The Secretary Kent Group of Advanced Motorists, 11 Banky Meadow, Barming, ME16 9JX

I wish to exercise my right to object, and do not want my data processed for the purposes of:

- Receiving information on training and committees
- Receiving information on social events, newsletters or magazines
- Receiving items relating to the Group or road safety
- Appearing on, or being referred to on, any Group social media sites (such as Facebook or Twitter)
- Appearing in Group newsletters or magazines, and on Group-related websites

Signature: _____ Date _____

Name (in capitals): _____ Membership No _____

For any mini bus drivers out there the Group has received an email from Involve asking for volunteers to help their cause in supporting older people in the Maidstone area who still want to get out and about to reduce isolation. If you fit the criteria and have a few hours to spare perhaps you could help to make that happen. For more information please contact Ruth on ruth.culbreth@involvekent.org.uk or 01622 677337. More information on their website <https://www.involvekent.org.uk>

It has been my pleasure to recently present 3 Masters with Distinction Certificates to

Steve Blackhurst

Alan Andrews

Bill Major



Outstanding achievements - well done guys – we're proud of you!

This magazine contains Notice of the AGM which will take place at 8pm on Tuesday May 21st 2019. Please do your best to come along and vote. Our guest speaker will be Police and Crime Commissioner Matthew Scott - well worth listening to. Hope to see you then

Best wishes

Linda

Linda Davies
chairman@kentiam.org.uk



New Observers required

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 Peter Bott at vice-chairman@kentiam.org.uk

Test passes – congratulations - well done !!

Graham GRIFFITHS - F1rst
Andelys CROW - F1rst
Carlynn BINNIE
Laura WELTON
Andrew BOULDON
Michael LEE
Tony GOSTLING
Steve MARTIN
Dean SMITH – F1rst.
Graham GRIFFITHS - F1rst
Ross McCOLGAN - F1rst
Julie BOWDEN
Daniel STRINGER - F1rst
Nick MEURICE
Shane McHUGH – F1rst
Tony WOODROFFE - F1rst

Tony YOUNG - F1rst
Astrid RYAN
Hannah KNATCHBULL
James MASON - F1rst
Ian CLARKE
Louise HALL
Derek LIDINGTON - F1rst
Joanna DALLAS - F1rst
Eleanor MURRAY
Norman IBBOTSON
Julie PUGSLEY
Graeme POSSNICKER - F1rst
Josh PEARCE
Simon JONES – F1rst
David KERR-CIEMENSON - F1rst



Wives should be seen and not heard ?

A man seeing flashing red and blue lights in his rear view mirror pulls to the side of the road. Shortly after coming to a stop, a police officer approaches the car.

The man says, "What's the problem officer?"

Officer: "You were going 75 miles an hour in a 50 mile an hour limit. I'm afraid I'm going to have to give you a ticket"

Man: "No sir, I was going a little over 60."

Wife: "Oh, Harry. You were going at least 80!" (The man gives wife dirty look.)

Officer: "I'm also going to give you a ticket for your broken tail light."

Man: "Broken tail light? I didn't know about a broken tail light!"

Wife: "Oh Harry, you've known about that tail light for weeks!" (The man gives his wife another a dirty look.)

Officer: "I'm also going to give you a ticket for not wearing your seat belt too."

Man: "Oh, I just took it off when you were walking up to the car."

Wife: "Oh, Harry, you never wear your seat belt!"

The Man turns to his wife and yells, "For cryin' out loud, can't you just shut up?!"

The officer asks, "Ma'am, does your husband talk to you this way all the time?"

Wife replies, "No officer, only when he's drunk."

Ask Yourself “What if?”

Although the term 'advanced driving' covers a plethora of topics, one of the things that ties them all together for me is 'planning'. An advanced drive is a planned drive, where the driver constantly questions and re-evaluates what they are doing. Fundamental to this is the creation of a 'safe space' around you and your vehicle; thereby protecting you and also, occasionally, allowing you to protect others from their own mistakes. There are three fundamental ways that advanced drivers do this.

Looking into the distance

Whilst a truism, the principle of "you can't avoid what you can't see" is critical to driving safely. The earlier you spot something, the more time you have to plan for it and safely navigate it. Advanced drivers are taught to scan into the distance and work their eyes back to the immediate, rather than starting at the bonnet and working outwards. This way, you're always planning for what is coming up, rather than reacting to individual situations. This not only makes the drive smoother and more enjoyable, but also cuts down on fuel usage and wear and tear on the car.

Tyres & Tarmac

How often have you pulled up at a junction, or set of traffic lights, and the car behind you has stopped inches from your boot? Or, possibly you've done the same thing to the car in front? Now ask yourself "what if they break down?" or, in the case of a hill start "what happens if they roll back?" As an advanced driver you'll be taught the concept of "Tyres and Tarmac" - this advises that when you pull to a stop you leave yourself enough room so you can see the tyres, and some tarmac, of the car in front. Why? Because this way, if you have to manoeuvre, you will have enough room. This is also your 'safe space' in case they roll backwards, or the car behind you doesn't quite stop in time and pushes you forwards. It can also provide a haven for a cyclist or motorbike and, if the emergency services need to get past, allows you to pull in to the side relatively easily.

The two second rule

the drive smoother, since you can ease off the accelerator if you notice things slowing up ahead You only have to drive a short distance on a motorway to see numerous instances of cars bunched together with insufficient gaps for braking. The slightest incident can then dramatically escalate into multi-car accidents as people, with no time to react, concertina together. The two second gap, measured by finding a stationary object on the side of the road (such as a sign, bridge support or gantry) and reciting the phrase "only a fool breaks the two second rule" as the car in front goes past, is a way that advanced drivers mitigate against this. Those two seconds, which at 70mph will mean you cover approx. 62m, is marginally less than the entire braking distance you'll need (75m) but is more than enough for your thinking and reaction time (21m). It comprises your 'safe space'. Consider increasing this gap slightly if the car behind you is close, so that you can manage your braking and safely bring the person behind to a stop as well as yourself. Of course, you should also double it in wet weather and increase it further in icy conditions. The two seconds also help make.

So, by using these three concepts the next time you're out on the road to create a 'safe space', together with a constant questioning mindset of "what if", you'll not only improve your drive but also go some way to making the roads more enjoyable for everyone. If you want to learn more techniques such as these, or are interested in how you can improve your driving in general, the Kent Group of Advanced Motorists runs regular sessions - including a free drive check - from our centres at Grove Green and The Barn. Find out more on our website www.kentiam.org.uk
Neil Lakeland

A smooth drive into spring

At last it's time to get your car hale, hearty and 'beach body ready' in preparation for the spring and summer

Lose weight; clear out those coats, boots, scarves and bags that took up permanent residence during the winter months. They add weight as well as taking up space, and surplus weight means wasted fuel

- Cut down on the salt; modern cars are much less prone to rust than their forbearers, but corrosion-causing salt from gritted roads can build up under the wheel arches and the suspension. Use a hose pipe to flush the wheel arches clean; if you have a pressure washer, even better. If not, try washing the arches after driving on wet roads – the mud and grit will have softened. The neighbours might think you're peculiar but you'll reduce the risk of expensive repairs
- Test your vision; the demister puts a film of grime from traffic fumes on the inside of the windscreen which can spread bright sunshine into a blinding glare. Get the screen squeaky clean with water and detergent, dry with a microfibre cloth and crystal clear vision will be restored. Don't forget the other windows; clean screens rarely mist up so you'll need the heated rear window far less – another fuel saver
- Keep hay fever at bay; most cars have pollen filters, but they need changing periodically to remain efficient. Look in your handbook to find out how to get to the filter and if it looks bad, change it now. Some very good after-market filters are available online, often with a charcoal layer to filter out pollutants as well as pollen
- Don't get hot and bothered; air conditioning is a boon as the temperature rises, but it contains a special gas which can slowly leak away. If it gets too low, the air-con will blow warm instead of cold. Test it by turning the heater control to minimum, the heater fan to maximum and make sure the air-con is turned on (i.e., not in "eco" mode). If you don't feel an icy blast after a couple of minutes, the system may need "re-gassing"; a simple job which most garages have the equipment to do

Now is a good time to spend a therapeutic Sunday morning tinkering!

Kent Group of Advanced Motorists

(Registered Charity No. 1051416)

Notice of our 41st Annual General Meeting

**which will be held at the Grove Green Community Centre Maidstone
on Tuesday 21st May 2019 at 8.00pm**

Agenda

- 1 Welcome to Guests and apologies for absence**
- 2 Minutes of Previous AGM**
- 3 Chairman's Report**
- 4 Treasurer's Report**
- 5 Elections - Chairman
 Vice-Chairman
 Secretary
 Treasurer
 Committee**
- 6 Presentations**
- 7 A O B**
- 8 Refreshments**
- 9 Guest speaker Police and Crime Commissioner Matthew Scott**

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 **21st May 2019**
8pm at The Grove Green Community Centre
and at every 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 2019

Signature

KGAM Membership Number

This is the only form which will be accepted and must be returned to
The Group Secretary Mrs V Power
at:-
11, Banky Meadow Maidstone Kent ME16 9JX before
8pm on Sunday the 19th of May 2019 or be disallowed

Kent Group of Advanced Motorists - Nomination Form

41ST ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING -21ST MAY 2019

(Registered Charity No. 1051416)

Name

Kent Group
Membership no.

Signature

CHAIRMAN

Nominee			
Proposer			
Secunder			

VICE CHAIRMAN

Nominee			
Proposer			
Secunder			

SECRETARY

Nominee			
Proposer			
Secunder			

TREASURER

Nominee			
Proposer			
Secunder			

COMMITTEE MEMBER

Nominee			
Proposer			
Secunder			

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

All nomination forms must be returned by 8pm on the 14th May 2019 to the Group Secretary
Mrs V Power 11, Banky Meadow Barming Maidstone Kent ME16 9JX

Kent Group of Advanced Motorists
Accounts for the year ended 31 March 2019

INCOME AND EXPENDITURE

	12 months to 31 March 19	12 months to 31 March 18
<u>Income</u>	£	£
Subscriptions – Full	3,146	3,478
Subscriptions - Associates	2,541	2,397
	<hr/> 5,687	<hr/> 5,875
Gift Aid	373	378
Bank Interest	435	372
Other Income	335	351
Total Income	<hr/> 6,830 <hr/>	<hr/> 6,976 <hr/>
 <u>Expenditure</u>		
Hall Hire	1,489	1,538
Magazine	551	475
Postage	726	673
Stationery and printing	246	597
IT costs	254	353
Equipment repairs	150	152
Special offer	0	124
Insurance	137	129
Training	1,194	557
Travel	376	629
Refreshments	124	109
Events and publicity	2,001	1,275
Other expenses	111	280
Depreciation	367	387
Total Expenditure	<hr/> 7,726 <hr/>	<hr/> 7,278 <hr/>
 Deficit for the period	<hr/> (896) <hr/>	<hr/> (302) <hr/>

Kent Group of Advanced Motorists
Accounts for the year ended 31 March 2019

BALANCE SHEET

	As at 31 March 19 £	As at 31 March 18 £
Fixed Assets at cost	6,375	6,006
Less: Depreciation to date	<u>(5,107)</u>	<u>(4,740)</u>
	1,268	1,266
Investments	23,320	23,889
Bank current account	1,700	964
Committee floats	70	40
Accrued Income	440	577
Prepayments	<u>222</u>	<u>185</u>
Total assets	27,020	26,921
Less: Prepaid Subscriptions	(3,059)	(2,421)
Other Creditors	<u>(1,153)</u>	<u>(796)</u>
	<u>(4,212)</u>	<u>(3,217)</u>
	<u>22,808</u>	<u>23,704</u>
General Fund		
Opening Balance	23,704	24,006
Deficit for the period	<u>(896)</u>	<u>(302)</u>
	<u>22,808</u>	<u>23,704</u>

Treasurers' Report to Members

Our year ended 31 March 2019 has closed and I duly provide a short commentary supporting the above accounts for those unable to attend the Annual General Meeting (AGM).

Can I once again thank Neil Oliver for his diligent review of our accounts. It is always helpful to get another set of professional eyes to look over and review our figures.

For the last five AGMs, I have challenged the group to reduce our retained cash by investing our surplus funds to continue to drive forwards our charitable aims. As identified in the Chairman's report we have had a very busy year so "investing" for which I report a deficit for the year of £896 (fully planned). To add some context to this position, during 2018/19 we really pushed on with improved programmes of training for both our Associate and especially our Observers. Our Local Observer training day (see training costs below) allowed us to train eight new Local Observers over a single weekend. These additional Observers will now allow us to take on even more Associates in future years – so money well spent.

Income and expenditure

Total income for the year at £6,830 is slightly down on 17/18 at £6,976 (2%). This relates mainly to a small reduction in full members but pleasingly Associate numbers are up. With the additional Observers trained this year we should be able to continue to increase Associate numbers/income.

Expenditure for 2018/19 has increased slightly to £7,726 from £7,278 last year. Most expense lines are similar to last year, but I would like to draw out two cost lines of particular note:

Events and publicity	2018/19 £
AGM (40 th AGM in May 2018)	487
Bits for outside events	95
Outside events	243
Christmas social and flowers	436
Social speakers	740
Total Expenditure	2,001

Training	2018/19 £
Contributions to Masters	400
Local Observer training weekend	641
Observer handbooks and retest	153
Total Expenditure	1,194

Overall, we have returned a deficit of £896 for the year. However, the investment in training this year, and the increase in Observers, will allow us to train even more Associates next year.

Balance sheet

The cost of fixed assets (things like laptops and equipment) has increased by £369 to £6,375, being the purchase of a new laptop at the Barn. Depreciation during the year (representing a charge for the “wearing out” of assets) was £367. Overall our assets have a net value of £1,268.

Bank balances at 31 March 2019 stand at £25.1k very slightly up from £24.9k last year (due mainly to a £697 receipt from RoadSmart HQ on 29 March 2019) - still plenty for a rainy day. We will continue to deploy our cash funds next year in order to meet our charitable aims. “Less glorious” the other balance sheet items are analysed below:

Accrued Income (money we will receive after 31/3/19)	2018/19 £
Gift Aid (submit to HMRC in May 2019)	366
Interest receivable	39
Income due from Social account	35
Total	440

Prepaid income (subs received this year which relate partly to next year)	2018/19 £
Subscriptions in advance – Members	1,429
Subscriptions in advance – Associates	1,630
Total	3,059

Prepayments (we paid for this year but will benefit next year)	2018/19 £
Insurance	81
Events paid in advance	40
Web hosting	101
Total	222

Other creditors (costs for which we have not had a bill yet)	2018/19 £
Printing, postage and stationery	580
Refreshments	41
Hall hire	532
Total	1,153

Overall, I fully support committee that the in-year expenditure on training was money well spent, and with a general fund of £22,808 our group continues to show a very healthy financial position.

Daren Bubb FCA – Treasurer

Fast Track Local Observer Training Weekend

At 9.00 on Saturday the 9th February 2019, our Chairman commenced the Fast Track Local Observer weekend by welcoming our training team and 8 potential Observers to Grove Green. The scene was set and our weekend training session had commenced. Our intention was to train up the 8 trainees to Local Observer test standard over Saturday and Sunday morning and for all potential Observers to then sit their Local Observer (LOs) test on Sunday afternoon.

As ever, a huge amount of work went into the preparation for the weekend. Our training team of four Training Officers (TOs) would train our LOs in waiting in pairs, supported by a small support team. As with all of our successful events, we were supported by Christine who keep us admirably fed and watered. In addition to our own team, we were delighted to welcome three colleagues from Welwyn Garden City (who also took the opportunity to undertake a number of NO retests over the weekend)

So how did it go?

We won't lie, it was a long weekend and it was pretty intense this being first time round as we were somewhat finding our feet a little. However, the meticulous planning and timed agenda meant it felt like we were always in control, albeit a couple of the sessions were a bit tight for time. We have no doubt it will be a lot easier should we run a similar session later in the year.

On Saturday we kept to same pairing of TOs and trainee LOs but on the Sunday we mixed it up so our TOs got to take out all 4 pairs of trainees. There was definitely a big plus of having all of us at Grove Green for the weekend as we were able to build up some strong comradery between all of the team.

A huge thank you for everybody that was involved for generously giving up their time over the weekend.

Finally the group are delighted to welcome our **eight new Local Observers** to our team who worked tireless over the weekend for their test success Sunday afternoon.

Overall the accelerated training weekend was pretty intense but did feel more beneficial than our usual one-to-one training which takes place over a longer time period. We will of course formally review the weekend but it is difficult to see it as anything other than a veritable success.

Daren Bubb

Coping with worry

Theresa: Doctor, I get so nervous and frightened during driving tests is there anything you can give me?
Doctor: Just try not to worry about it you'll pass eventually.
Theresa: But I'm the Examiner!

Fast Cut to the Chase

Whenever it comes on tv I try to watch it once again and preferably from the beginning. I watch it again from the beginning to get involved with what's going to come after one hour and five minutes and will last for the 10 minutes and 53 seconds. What you may ask? Well Frank Bullitt gets into his Mustang, glancing in his rear-view mirror he sees a Dodge Charger coming into view from behind a trailer. He starts up the Mustang and, wow, it's started. Yes, it's the famous and arguably the best ever, movie car chase around the streets of San Francisco in the 1968 film "Bullitt".

When we went to San Francisco we just had to drive around some of those streets although, I hasten to add, not at the speed driven by Steve McQueen as Bullitt.

OK, there are inconsistencies such as the number of hub caps that fall off as he speeds round corners or jumps over junctions. The chase starts in the Fisherman's Wharf and ends outside the city in the area of Brisbane, a route that is geographically impossible to take place in real time. But that's all part of movie magic to which is added the throaty throb of the Mustang and the riff of saxophones of background music.

Of course, there are other great movie car chases. The 1998 "Ronin" ranks high but is spoilt by the editing in of the actors who clearly are not driving. There are many others that give us the thrill of the chase. There is a good one in "The French Connection" with its over ground chase of a subway train in the midst of busy New York traffic and pedestrians. I'm sure the favourite of many is the three Mini Coopers in "The Italian Job" – the original 1969 version, not the awful 2003 remake – where they go hither and thither and do the seemingly impossible in various Italian landmarks. "I've just had a great idea", remember "You're only supposed to blow the bloody doors off".

A chase has been the staple of many a film since the earliest days of cinema. Typically, it has been the goodies chasing the baddies on horseback in westerns or the wonderful and very funny Keystone Cops in those early silent comedies.

How did it all come about? Inexperienced writers or directors would pad the film with unnecessary dialogue, which bored the audience and prolonged the time before the exciting chase scene. Studio executives, aware of this and not wanting their audiences to get bored gave instructions to "Cut to the chase" so the film would get to the thrilling action scenes without unnecessary delays.

On a more serious side car chases are often captured on news broadcasts or tv programmes using video footage recorded by police cars and helicopters. The debate is whether these programmes encourage people to drive fast and dangerously to evade police or are a news item that should be made known to the public at large. Quite often, though, they show the "thrill" of the chase but not the harrowing aftermath that follows many of them.

So, back to the movies, where a car chase is staged under controlled circumstances to entertain. Staging a car chase sequences requires numerous takes and destruction of several vehicles (whether intentional or mishap. It is common to use older vehicles are that are 1–2 generations behind the current models on the market, (usually those in tv series) as are bought low cost.

There are exceptions, if a high-profile is used and/or if the vehicle manufacturer pays for product placement in a film production, such as in James Bond films.

The consensus among historians and film critics is that the first modern car chase movie was Bullitt which was far longer and far faster than what had gone before, with cameras placed so that the audience feels as though we are inside the cars – in some shots Steve McQueen can be clearly seen at the wheel.

Keep your eye on the tv schedules and wait for “Bullitt” to come on again, settle down and wait for that 10 minutes plus of high-octane action. By Terry Nunn

Beware of road hogs

Eddie was driving down the road and met a car coming the other way. Although there was room to pass easily, he forced the oncoming car to slow down and wound down his window and shouted 'Pig'. Astonished, the other driver looked in his rear view mirror swore at Eddie and that was when his car hit the Pig.

Points to ponder

I am often bemused [and occasionally amused] by some of the Ask The Experts queries published in RoadSmart. It may be flawed to presume the letters are submitted by Advanced Drivers but even if they are qualified drivers it does beg the thought You Should Know the Answer To This!

A classic example was published in the most recent Winter 2018/19 edition. *'I'm still confused by the red 'X' signs on the motorway. Do we have to vacate that lane immediately, or within a prescribed time period or distance?'* The enquirer clearly hasn't consulted The Highway Code pp102. Motorway Signals Which states; *'you **MUST NOT** proceed further in this lane'*. I interpret this as a very clear and unambiguous instruction. This would also have been preceded with a white diagonal arrow on a gantry indicating 'change lane' [in direction shown]. I have witnessed far too many 'professional' drivers, driving unprofessionally, ignore this advice. Scary if a 44 tonne truck is pounding down a lane at 60mph when there is an obstruction ahead. It could be you or me in the firing line.

Another letter in the same publication made reference to speed limits which reminded me of a slightly bizarre occurrence when I was driving with some of our colleagues to IAM HQ in Welwyn-Garden-City in January. On the M25 north of the Dartford tunnel, travelling in lane one [pretty much on our own] at a very judicious and constant speed courtesy of cruise control, we gradually gained on a vehicle in lane two which clearly wasn't exceeding the 70 mph limit. However, approaching every gantry [I never realised how frequently these were on the Essex/Herts stretch] there happened to be an enforcement camera sign. This resulted in the driver applying the brakes and losing a couple of mph, which prompted me to move out to overtake [potentially four lane changes] and almost when I was alongside the driver recovered their original speed. This was not a one-off, perhaps when the driver was spooked or paranoid about enforcement cameras and thought he was driving too quickly, but countless times at fairly frequent intervals given the number of gantries which all had the signs. As for the lane discipline issue I'll leave that for another time.

I received a DVLA alert on 30 November 2018 flagging up changes to a number of HWC rules prompted by the need to address some of the automated vehicle technology that now exists. I am not aware that the Official HWC has actually been republished [last edition 2015] to address this. Even that didn't reflect the changes to LGV speed limits on single and dual carriageways that were amended on 17 April 2015. And this is the bible we refer to for current information!!

.....and have they stopped fitting 56mph limiters on LGV's?

What do we think about Daytime Running Lights [DRL's]? A double edged sword and a mixed blessing! I've spoken to more than a few drivers who have assumed [which makes An Ass of U and Me] that they have rear lights illuminated with these systems. Most vehicles do not. With many, if not all modern vehicles, panel lights illuminate when the ignition is turned on which is one less driver prompt that it's dark outside and road lights should be employed. Automatic light sensors are one way of addressing this but even then in foggy conditions they may not be sensitive enough to activate headlights.... we are all familiar of course with rule 226, see also rules 114 and 236.

It would be interesting to enliven a debate on such matters and our Editor [AKA Chairman] would I'm sure welcome some submissions for publication, so do join in. Safe driving. Regards, David Ibbott

Re assessing my skills

They say that time flies when you're having fun. Well, three years of being a National Observer has certainly gone by quickly and, before I knew it, I was up for re-assessment.

Working, as I do, in a profession that embraces Continuous Professional Development (CPD) and requires me to annually submit a declaration, I am used to the concept of checking knowledge and updating skills. However, with this being my first reassessment drive, I approached it with some trepidation.

Thankfully, I needn't have been concerned.

Comprising two elements - a role play situation where I needed to teach the assessor an aspect of advanced driving (in my instance, this was correct gear use) and then a commentary drive so the assessor could check I was driving to an advanced level - the entire session lasted approx. one hour. Throughout it all, constructive feedback was given and helpful suggestions made. At the end, the debrief included some elements I may want to consider developing in future. All in all, it was an entirely enjoyable experience, which will benefit both my future observing and driving.

If you're considering whether to become an Observer, but are slightly daunted by the thought of the assessment or reassessment process, my advice would be not to worry. The initial training is carried out by a team of training officers, who'll coach you through the techniques in the same way the observers did with your advanced test. The assessment process is supportive; telling you what you have done well and also areas where you can still improve. Plus, by continually checking your skills every three to five years, you can be confident that, regardless of how long ago it was you passed your original advanced test, you're still at the required level.

Neil Lakeland

Social events

Social Evenings at Grove Green Maidstone ME14 5B – 8pm

April 16th - Jack Deans Finger Prints & Murder part 2

May 21st - AGM + guest speaker Police & Crime Commissioner
Matthew Scott

June 18th - Graham Feest Road Safety Consultant

July 16th - Lester Parsons IAM Roadsmart Examiner

Social Evenings at Littlebourne Nr Canterbury CT3 1ST – 7.30pm

April 11th - Paddle Steamer Medway Queen (Heroine of Dunkirk)

June 13th - Kent Mining Museum, Betteshanger

August 8th - Guide Dogs for the blind

Fish and Chips at The Pilot

It was a bright sunny afternoon back in September last year when we all met at The Pilot at Dungeness. As you may well know the Pilot is famous for its fish and chips and we were all keen to find out if all we had heard was true.

Dungeness is a bit of a barren landscape, with only a light house and PowerStation for things to see, along with the odd steam whistle and puffs of smoke as a train from Hythe and Dymchurch steams past behind the



the Romney, Railway restaurant.

We were all sat down and keenly awaiting our we weren't whether you had the skate, huss or scampi

for those who wanted, mushy peas every meal was piping hot and generously portioned and as for the desserts they were as good as the mains! In fact there was more than one person who used the famous line from Charles Dickens' Oliver Twist "Please Sir, can I have some more?????"

by 1.30pm dinners, and disappointed, cod, plaice, with chips and

All in all, a lovely afternoon, great food and great company and people left saying they'd be back for more.....

Andy Wyles

Driving with technology

Mobile communications and GPS systems used as sat-navs are becoming very common in cars. Whether you are connecting your Bluetooth to blast tunes or looking for the nearest Waitrose, these have become a fundamental part of the daily drive for many of us.

This week's tips give advice on using technology to complement your driving, from IAM RoadSmart's head of driving and riding standards Richard Gladman.

- Whilst a sat-nav aids in getting you from A to B try to not become reliant on it. It is important to pay attention to road signs and the road ahead, in case there's a diversion sign that the device may not have picked up
- Get to know your sat-nav before you set off and always programme it when stationary. Many people trust their sat-navs not to get them lost but you also need to know about roadworks, diversions and places to stop. Keep an old fashioned map to ensure that you limit the chances of going completely off track
- Create your playlist before you start your journey. Taking your eyes off the wheel to look or adjust your music can often prove to be hazardous. It only takes a few seconds distraction to cause an accident. Remember to also keep your music down in some circumstances; your hearing can keep you safe, so be prepared to turn the music off
- Don't make or take calls when driving and never text or engage with social media on your smartphone. Through extensive research it has been shown that making calls, even hands-free, affects concentration and slows reactions when driving
- Some vehicles have the ability to create a Wi-Fi zone allowing internet access. This should be used as a luxury for passengers whilst ensuring they do not distract you as the driver. For instance a computer screen reflecting in the dark is a dangerous distraction

"The latest driver assistance systems can be the perfect back-up to cover our occasional human failings but are no substitutes for concentration. The driver must always remain connected to what is going on around them. Multi-tasking is a myth and all too often that glance away can become a complete switch-off to an emerging risk. No text, tweet, check in or status update is worth crashing for!

Old Bangers

Jill's car was old and unreliable and she called John for a ride every time it broke down. One day John got yet another one of those calls.

"What happened this time?" he asked.

"My brakes went out," Jill said. "Can you come to get me?"

"Yeah, all right, where are you?" John asked.

"I'm in the drugstore," Jill responded.

"Okay, and where's the car?" John asked.

Jill replied, "It's in here with me."