

Kent Group of Advanced Motorists



Newsletter June 2020

Hi Everyone

Some good news at last - the steroid drug Dexamethasone has been found to reduce the risk of death among coronavirus patients with severe respiratory complications, non-essential shops have been allowed to re-open, rules for those 'shielding' are to be relaxed, and under the support bubble system some grandparents will be able to hug their grandchildren for the first time in three months. Hot off the press from HQ is that limited IAM Motorcycling activities are about to resume whilst of course adhering strictly to social distancing but nothing for car groups yet. Alas it is not all good news sadly new outbreaks of the virus are reported in China, South Korea, the United States and New Zealand. Please continue to be vigilante and stay alert at all times!

This article from Phil Mason of our outside events team:

It is now about nine weeks into lockdown and I have driven my car four times totalling 35 miles including a journey over to Coxheath to donate blood. (I joined the 50 donations club, hooray !!) However, in the same time I estimate I have walked nearly 200 miles shopping for food and getting my daily exercise. I like to keep off road as much as possible and where necessary stick to minor roads around Bearsted which are often single carriageways without pavements such as the Pilgrims Way or Thurnham Lane. So how do I keep safe when other road users do not drive at sensible speeds?

Concentration, Observation and Anticipation are just as important as I am wandering along at 3mph enjoying the views as they are at 30mph in a car. Even at walking pace I am constantly Taking in Information as far ahead as possible, looking across the bends to get an early view of oncoming traffic, over the shoulder checks for what is coming from behind, listening out for that engine noise, tyres, voices, bells (rarely used by cyclists). Asking myself; is that tractor I can hear in the field or coming down the road? Then Using that Information to Plan my journey and where helpful Indicating my intentions to other road users. Sounds very much like the TUG we all know so well.

Appropriate Positioning is also vital to minimise danger. Taking into account all the information gathered, where is the safest place to be walking to avoid becoming a casualty? Most of the time I am on the right hand side walking towards oncoming traffic but I use the width of the road to get an early view on oncoming vehicles often moving to the left for a right hand bend so I can be seen. Drivers / Riders without Advanced training are not always thinking 'what if' and hug the verge. So adapting Advanced Driving principles works well for me as a pedestrian and have kept me safe over the years.

Whether you are driving, riding, cycling, on a horse or just walking, remember your acronyms, COA, IPSGA, TUG, and LOV, keep safe and enjoy your journeys.

Thank you Phil – excellent advice!

Some Brits stranded abroad by the corona virus are put on an emergency flight home. Their plane takes off and reaches its cruising height of 30,000 feet. The pilot comes over the Tannoy and says 'ladies and gentlemen welcome aboard, sit back, relax and enjoy the flight - I'm working from home today'

Credit to Barry Cryer

Locked-down by our Associate Co-ordinator Terry Nunn:

I don't suppose any of us ever expected to be a prisoner in our own homes, but lockdown imposed that on us. My wife and I soon developed routines of how we would cope – without getting on each other's nerves! Being categorised as vulnerable it was important to have enough supplies in hand to keep us going for some time. Shortly before lockdown was imposed we'd had our usual delivery from Tesco. However, as time went on it became a major concern as to when the next delivery slot would become available. Fortunately, slots cropped up at regular intervals but the number of items was restricted to 80, no matter the size or weight.

There were some major panics when they were unable to supply me with beer! Generally, some came just as I was down to my last can.

A week or so into lockdown the battery in my watch decided to give up, so I had to resort to my presentation watch. Guess what? After about another week the battery in that also gave up. That caused me to have a daily workout – that is working out what day and time it was. Around this time, I finished the novel I had been reading but couldn't go to the library to change it. I decided to read a book that had been sitting on my shelf for some time - the plays of William Shakespeare. I think it will last me the rest of the year!

The good weather allowed work to be done in the garden. We also have an extended garden shared with neighbours where I undertake the regular grass cutting.



Not being able to socialise meant more telly watching than usual. But what to watch? It was inevitable there would be a lot of repeats, (really) old films which I'd seen many times before but didn't mind watching again. This included several westerns and believe it or not a collection of Fred Astaire and Ginger Rogers musicals.

I'm not one for soap operas but I could not help but watch the daily update from Downing Street. I have every empathy for Boris and his ministers who, like everyone else, had no experience of the situation with which they were confronted, having to take emergency measures to control the situation. Needless to say, the media as usual started trotting out the experts who had contrary views.

It is right that we have a free press who can take the government to task but I was appalled at the journalists' aggressive attitude to ministers and their advisers. They all asked a variation of the same question which would be the only one to be featured in their respective organisation's bulletin. The questions became far more intelligent and meaningful when the public were allowed to ask questions. There should have been more of them!

Two months into lockdown I had to go on a major excursion. Not having driven in that time I needed petrol for the mowers, so it was off to the local garage a couple of miles away. I say it was a major event as in addition to the petrol can I had to remember to check the car, take face mask, plastic gloves, bank card. To give the car a bit of a run I came back "the long way round". It was strange and rather eerie driving again on roads devoid of traffic.

A week later it was the same procedure for a trip to the bank. I thought how strange – two months ago I would likely have been arrested for putting on a mask to go into a bank.

We joined the weekly Thursday evening clap for the NHS. It was good to see the neighbourhood around us joining in, although communication with them was mostly by a nod and a wave. We had chats with those who live opposite with the roadway providing the social distance between us.

Hopefully, all this isolating will soon be less severe. I must get on with my book to find out what Titus Andronicus is up to.

PS. Are all those Scots people still trying to find Loch Down on the map?

Another excellent article Terry – many thanks!

3 lads get into a taxi – the driver notices that they are drunk so he starts the engine and then turns it off again saying "we have reached your destination" 1st lad pays him and the second one says thank you. The third one says "next time slow down you could have killed us all"

Remember : *don't drive home from the pub – especially when you walked down there!*

Best wishes

Linda Davies

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