



Official Provider



ROADWORTHY

JOURNAL OF THE

**NORTH-EAST LONDON AND ESSEX GROUP
OF ADVANCED MOTORISTS**



*Impression of the site of the UK's first e-filling station at Great Notley, near Braintree, Essex, due to open later this month (see page 19).
Credit: Gridserve Sustainable Energy*

AUTUMN 2020

INSTITUTE OF ADVANCED MOTORISTS AFFILIATION NUMBER 7043
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Ford pulls plug on fire-risk hybrids

On 13th October, the Daily Mail reported that Ford has issued a safety recall on thousands of its plug-in hybrid electric vehicles (PHEVs) after seven from a popular range caught fire while charging. The recall affects around 27,000 Kuga PHEVs globally, including 1,800 in the UK.

Owners can still drive the cars but have been told not to plug them in for charging until a solution is found.

A government notice said the problem can ignite vehicle components or in extreme cases the entire vehicle. Sales of the petrol-electric Kuga, pictured, have also been suspended. Ford said the seven fires happened on the continent while the vehicles were being charged but no one was hurt. Ford has offered UK owners £500 of petrol by way of compensation.





"Virtual" Group Nights

Group Nights are held on the **second Tuesday** of each month at 7.30 p.m. In view of the pandemic, these are currently held on-line until further notice using Zoom.

Invitations are emailed to group members a few days prior to the meeting and these contain a link which—once clicked—will give you access to the session. You can use the link in advance to download and install Zoom on your device, or it will run in your browser if you prefer. You can opt to participate sound only (no video) as well as via your mobile. Further information about Zoom can be found here: <https://support.zoom.us>.

If you need further help with setting up please contact us by emailing info@neleiam.co.uk. Maybe do a test run with family or friends first if you haven't used Zoom before. All sessions include a friendly breakout session so have your cup of tea and biscuit to hand. We look forward to seeing you.

Dates for your Diary

- | | |
|----------------------|---|
| 10th November | "London Air Ambulance" by Nigel Richardson, a volunteer and former patient of the service |
| 8th December | "Traffic Road Safety" by Graham Feest, Road Safety Consultant |
| 12th January | "Advancement in Car Technology", Chris Taylor, Ford Motor Company |
| 9th February | "A Day in the Life of a Paramedic", by real-life Paramedic, Eliza |
| 9th March | AGM Speaker t.b.c. |
| 13th April | Speaker t.b.c. |

As and when we are able to meet in person, our venue is now:
**St James United Reform Church Hall, Palmerston Road,
Buckhurst Hill, IG9 5NG**

Editorial

A warm welcome to members and associates.

How disappointed was I that the spring edition of Road-Worthy—my first as Editor—had to be sent out via e-mail due to problems with printing and distribution at the start of lockdown. I'm pleased to say we are now in a better position for this my second edition! Costs were of course significantly less without paper or postage, but it became apparent that the majority of you prefer a hard copy. After much deliberation, the Committee agreed to continue with a lower cost hardcopy RoadWorthy to be published each March, June and November. (*Members can however opt to receive this electronically should they prefer.*) Members will also receive monthly email updates.

Brian, our Membership Secretary, has asked me to remind members that subscriptions fall due on 4th January and the good news is that this will remain at £10. If you pay by standing order there is no action for you to take. However please read through the enclosed supplement "Membership Matters" which includes important information about your membership and the data that we collect. We are keen to keep your contact details as up to date as possible.

Rather like a lot of other people, I used my car a lot less during lockdown and used my legs. In order to keep healthy, I decided to walk 10,000 steps a day. I began to see driving from a different perspective—such extremes of driving from those who seemed to have lost confidence to those who perhaps drove a little too fast for the road conditions or were suffering some form of "road rage" - perhaps due to the stresses and strains of the pandemic. I am so lucky to be part of a network of experienced and highly qualified drivers who can give advice and guidance should I need it. Indeed, I recently took a reassessment just to check that I am still driving to the standards of an advanced motorist.

I have done little driving over the past few months, but I keep my car spotless often aided by my sphynx cat, Moomin. Sadly he died recently, but there was nothing he loved more than sitting in the car and watching me. I love this photo of him trying out the driver's seat and steering wheel for size.

Wishing you compliments of the Season!

Jennifer MacLellan (Editor)



Chairman's Chat - May you Live in Interesting Times

Despite this phrase being widely attributed as a Chinese curse, there is no known equivalent expression in Chinese. However, it struck me as strangely appropriate, given that many recent pandemics, including COVID-19, appear to have emerged from that country!



At times, it seems that such infectious diseases are Nature's way of keeping a check on the size of the human race, having greatest effect amongst communities where huge populations have congregated. Cities such as London have evolved around the concept of large clusters of high-density offices in which throngs of staff work cheek-by-jowl, commuting daily by crowded public transport. The lunchtime meal is often a communal affair, or purchased from nearby restaurants or sandwich bars. Similarly, away from work, recreational pursuits are often communal affairs: cinema, pubs, theatre, footie matches, concerts, gyms and clubs (yes, even advanced driving groups) bring potentially infected people into close contact with a myriad of other humans to which their ailment can be passed.

Like it or not, being in Tier 2 lockdown is a significant way of reducing the spread of COVID-19 to a rate that will not overwhelm the NHS and helps buy time until a vaccine can be developed or found to combat the illness.

Nevertheless, this year has been a challenge for NELE's committee and Observer corps. The rules of the initial lockdown in March meant that we had to stop all in-person activities including observed runs, social gatherings and recruitment exercises. In July, the situation eased, so after some swift work purchasing PPE for the team, observed runs could restart, subject to strict COVID protective measures. Over half of our observers did so immediately; others were in vulnerable categories and so could not participate. Making best use of the opportunity, two associates completed their preparation and then booked and passed their advanced tests, one of them with a F1rst – well done, Alex and Ben!

Sadly, we now learn we are to go back into lockdown, so observed runs remain on hold. Existing associates will potentially need extra guidance to get back up to speed when runs can restart and they can approach test standard. Until that's done, our observers will not have capacity to take on new associates, resulting in a regrettable backlog of new associates.

Needless to say, our observers will be more than happy to recommence activities once the guidelines permit, but are still available by 'phone or e-mail should associates want advice or guidance on their driving.

To enable our monthly social meetings to continue, albeit virtually, NELE's committee thought it appropriate for us to purchase a 100-seat conferencing Zoom licence, which has enabled us to continue featuring interesting speakers and as much tea, coffee and biscuits as members want (as long as they have supplies in their own kitchens). Zoom has proved surprisingly easy to use, and provides the convenience of a live presentation in one's own home without the overhead of a drive to and from the venue. (We might be keen drivers, but London traffic is rarely on the list of favourite routes!) I hope to see more of you joining us virtually on the second Tuesday of each month.

We also use Zoom for committee meetings, which continue to ensure that we are ready for changes in circumstances as and when they emerge.

We are determined to give NELE every chance to survive the privations that we are all experiencing. In addition to *Roadworthy*, we shall keep members notified by regular updates about the observing situation, together with any news snippets that require timely distribution. You may have noticed that the format of these has changed recently. They can now be read easily on mobile phones and tablets as well as PCs, thanks to the adoption of more up-to-date distribution tools.

I have recently been giving some thought to how we might harness technology to provide guidance on advanced driving whilst observing activities remain in lockdown. I'm considering two possibilities:



-Introductory sessions on advanced driving skills for new associates awaiting allocation – possibly also useful for others wanting to refresh their skills.

-Initial coaching for potential observers – there is much that can be done over Zoom to explain the process of becoming an observer and help develop the necessary skills.

Look out for details of these in the coming months.

I'm keen to consider what other activities we can undertake to help members make the most of their enforced lockdown – feel free to contact me at chairman@neleiam.co.uk.

Meanwhile, I hope you will all take the occasional opportunity to get out of London to remind yourself that driving can be a COVID-safe activity to unlock the countryside with its promise of the return of normality – and the end of interesting times.

Paul Gillett (Chairman)

Cornering



It is hoped that this article may assist group associates preparing for their test by consolidating information with that provided by their observers

The art of cornering embodies all the facets of The System of Car Control. A corner will be either acute (of less than 90°) (*rarely*) or a gradual bend (greater than 90°). It will be either open (with good visibility) or closed (with limited or no visibility). Approaching the bend, the advanced driver will scan and pan in order to form a judgement of the road ahead. This process should be continuous so that as much information as can be achieved is obtained to refine the proposed course of action. Every clue should be analysed - hedge lines, trees, telephone poles for example, or even the roofs of buildings. In short any topographical or other visible feature needs to be assessed. This will enable the advanced driver to adjust his/her speed of entry into the bend.

The ideal technique is to relate progress to the limit point (also known as the vanishing or convergence point). The limit point is the furthest point at which you have an uninterrupted view of the road surface or, more simply, the last part of the road surface visible before it disappears round the corner.

The natural line to follow through a bend is effectively the racing line; that is cutting the corner sharply, and favoured by many young drivers. However, the advanced driver will appreciate that this may be a recipe for disaster and will position him/herself to the opposite of that line, towards the centre line for a left hand bend, or to the nearside for a right hand bend. In each case such positioning will provide maximum vision into the bend.

Entering the bend, the advanced driver, provided that his initial assessment was accurate, will find that the limit point will remain stationary, indicating a correct approach speed and, hopefully, selection of the appropriate gear, probably third or second according to the severity of bend. Drivers of vehicles with automatic gearboxes are not exempt from the manual selection of a lower gear depending on the circumstances!

It is important to emphasize that the limit point should be related to the verge or kerb, if there is one, and not to the hedge, which will be set back from the road. When the limit point begins to move away, is the moment to apply power before taking any steering off, and to work swiftly up to the selected cruising speed. Remember that increasing speed in a leisurely manner is time wasted: work up to your intended speed briskly, giving more time for observation and planning.

There is always the inherent danger that the bend will have a double apex and the limit point will come rushing back towards you. Much will depend upon the driver's judgement, both initially upon the severity of the bend, and the speed selected.

In cornering, therefore, the technique should be its division into three phases: braking, maintaining and accelerating. You should not accelerate or brake in mid-corner, which will allow the best speed to be carried through the corner with all available tyre grip dedicated to countering lateral forces.

A thought to ponder: there is no such thing as "too slow" into a corner; merely slower than you needed to be with more in reserve than you required. If you make a conscious decision to be slightly slower than you think you need to be, maintain smoothness throughout the corner, and simply notice the process (what you see and what you feel): the sub-conscious mind will quickly assimilate useful information on entry speeds, (you can call it gaining experience), and your judgement will improve.

Conversely, there is very definitely such a thing as being too fast into a corner. The real fact of life that matters is the question, "Can I stop the car within the distance I can see to be clear?" If you cannot do so you have no business driving that fast in any event.

Steering into a bend also merits consideration. When entering a corner push the wheel with the hand opposite the turn, *viz.* the right hand for a left turn. The wheel should be pushed through the 12 o'clock position rather than pulling it towards the 6 o'clock position: the pushing arm has more control because the wrist stays in a firm position. The opposite wrist becomes bent and will not provide smooth control. Pulling can be effective for small steering inputs.

The balance and stability of the vehicle are paramount, the more so with increases in speed. When the car is travelling straight ahead and the steering wheel is turned, its momentum is to continue in a straight line in accordance with Sir Isaac Newton's chief invention. The front wheels have now to compete with that momentum by creating an alternative force applied through the front tyres, and that counter-force must exceed the straight ahead force. Therefore, if that counter-force is applied gradually the car will corner most effectively. It is easy to think that you are turning smoothly when in fact you are turning on a smaller, tighter and jerkier radius that you need to. Don Palmer, the well-known limit handling coach, advocates 'hinting' at a corner in advance by a very slight movement of the wheel in the desired direction. The result will be an appreciably improved response.

Iain Wyness

Group Associates

WELCOME to the following new NELE Group Associates:

| NAME | FROM |
|------------------|--------------|
| Grant Browning | Canning Town |
| Olivia Gibson | Southgate |
| Henry Gibson | Southgate |
| Joan Guyver | Romford |
| Mark Hoile | Wood Green |
| Hamza Khan | Romford |
| Teodora Militaru | Poplar |
| Gary Milton | Manor Park |
| Joseph Heath | East Ham |

Arrangements are in place for group associates to apply for an extension of your membership (IAM and NELE IAM) at renewal time. More information can be found in the enclosed supplement "Membership Matters".

This is a difficult time for us all but we are always delighted to welcome new group associates! As you know, observed drives have for the time being been suspended due to government advice and restrictions, and guidance from IAM RoadSmart. They will resume as soon as we are advised it is safe to do so. In the meantime, there is a lot you can do to work towards your driving goals as follows.

If you have not yet been allocated an observer, take time to read through 'Advanced Driving, the essential guide' issued with your course pack along with the current edition of the Highway Code. Put the information into practice prior to your first observed drive. Make a note of any questions that arise from your studies ready for your first run. A more technical book (not essential reading) is 'Roadcraft', the Police Drivers' Handbook. There are also DVDs on advanced driving available on the internet.

If you have been allocated an observer and commenced training then, in addition to the above, review your Log Book and observer comments, and continue to practice. These will help you develop your skills whilst waiting for your observed drives to recommence. Remember also that your observer remains available to you should you have any questions.

Associates are encouraged to join our group meetings (see page 3), which include friendly breakout sessions. These currently take place virtually using "Zoom" and are attended by our members, and also some of our committee and observers, (again see page 3).

5-minute interview with Terry Vincent, NELE IAM's Observer of the Year!

What made you take your IAM Test, and when did you pass?

I had been interested in becoming an advanced driver for some time. However, my job as a service engineer involved a lot of driving around the country. Come the week-ends, I didn't have much enthusiasm to do more driving. On retirement I found I had a bit more time on my hands and so – after 50 years of driving – I finally had the opportunity.

I signed up initially with the Chelmsford group and once I started on the course and began to learn aspects of driving that had never entered my head, I became absorbed by it and passed the test 10 years ago. My observer was extremely encouraging and suggested I consider becoming a RoSPA member and I have since passed three RoSPA tests over the years, achieving a Gold on each occasion.

What led you to become an observer?

A chance meeting with Eric Saunderson (my ex GP) at a local gym ultimately led to my becoming an observer, and to also take the Masters test. Eric also helped me to become an observer. I'm glad I took the plunge as I really do enjoy it, and find it rewarding. I feel that I am giving something back and it also helps me maintain my driving skills. Being an observer as I see it, the end game is to get group associates to know their car and how to use it, introduce them to new driving skills and most importantly to be fully aware of their surroundings, and with a bit of luck get them to read the Highway Code.



What car do you currently drive and what would be your dream car?

My current car is a 2006 Vauxhall Vectra Elite 2.2 Automatic which I have had from new, now with over 100,000 miles on the clock. It's comfortable and overall a pleasure to drive, and so far very reliable, touch wood. I also drive a Vauxhall Nova 1.2 Merit, (my wife's car); we have also had that from new, now 31 years old. As you can tell we are not ones for changing our cars very often!

I would say that I get more fun out of driving the Nova than I do with my own car; we get lots of comments about it from people.

Sadly it is having to go as we are planning to move and probably won't be able to garage it.

I've never wanted a dream car, I don't like sports cars, I'm more of a chauffeur than a boy racer!



What is your ideal night out and if you could invite anyone for dinner (living or not), who would it be?

My ideal night out is actually a night in, and if it were ever possible I would invite my parents over for a chat about what my siblings and myself have been up to for the last 47 years.

If you won the lottery, what would you spend it on?

I don't do the lottery, so there is no chance that I would win it. I am happy with my lot, and winning squillions can also be a curse.

If you could only offer one tip to an associate, what would it be?

As an observer we give lots of tips all the time, but when beginning with a new group associate I look them straight in the eye and tell them that I'm here to help them, but they have to do the work. I then hope that they realise that without that commitment it isn't going to happen.

What does a group associate need to pass their advanced test?

I have had two group associates fail the test but pass on a second attempt, one of them then achieving a F1rst. I have had one or two quickly throw in the towel when they realised the commitment required from them!

As an observer, you quickly get a sense of what kind of driver the group associate is going to be. Some people get in a car and become a part of it. Others just don't; they lack confidence and are not able to grasp the basics - Advanced Driving isn't for everyone. The pressure of the test can make some drivers nervous leading to silly mistakes, poor driving skills or end up doing something dangerous. But there is such an overwhelming sense of achievement for both the group associate and the observer on achieving a pass or even better a F1rst!

CONGRATULATIONS to the following Advanced Drivers who passed the IAM Test recently, and to their Observers:

| NAME | OBSERVER |
|---|------------------------------|
| Alexander Pye (FIRST) Ben Allworthy* | Terry Vincent Steve D'ath |

**despite treacherous weather conditions!*

CONGRATULATIONS also to NELE Webmaster Pete Minvalla (right) who has now qualified to join our team of observers.

Interested in becoming an IAM observer?



NELE currently has 17 observers; 8 are IMI National Observer qualified and 9 IMI Local Observer qualified. Just as soon as lockdown restrictions are lifted, we intend to expand our observer base to meet the current level of demand.

If you love driving then why not share your passion by becoming an IAM observer? Observing is a thoroughly rewarding and enjoyable way to help make our roads safer by coaching and mentoring drivers of all ages to be the best that they can be. As an observer, you will provide one to one observed drives which can fit in around your commitments. We can keep you as busy as you wish to be with associates keen to start their courses just as soon as it is safe to do so.

Our observers will tell you that the pleasure and satisfaction of hearing that your latest associate has passed their advanced test is a wonderful feeling and the gratitude and thanks you'll receive will make you feel ten feet tall.



If this sounds like something you would like to find out more about then our Chairman, Paul Gillett, would love to hear from you. His contact details are on the back page.

Whether to become an IAM observer, or to join us on the committee, we would particularly like to hear from you. Lady drivers particularly welcome!

Recent Group Meetings

February Meeting—Tax Care and Toy boys *Mike Murfitt*

At the February Group Meeting **Mike Murfitt**, an Estate Planning Consultant for Co-op Estate Planning, made a presentation to the group entitled "Tax, Care and Toy Boys" which also included advice on lasting powers of attorney and funeral planning. Mike highlighted that estate planning is more than just writing a simple Will and—whether the Will is for yourself or a family member—it is about making sure that what the Will maker wants to happen after their death actually occurs.



A write up can be found in the summer edition of RoadWorthy which was emailed to Members in June but can also be found on our website: www.neleiam.co.uk.

Mike kindly offered to make himself available to discuss without cost or obligation any of the above areas and provide advice and guidance. Should you wish to contact him he can be contacted by phone on 07702 601861, or by e-mail michael.murfitt@coop.co.uk

September Meeting—Quiz Night

The group held its first on-line quiz night with our chairman Paul ably hosting the event with questions not just on motoring but also general knowledge, history, geography and fun facts! A big thank you to Chelmsford Advanced Motorists for doing all the work in preparing the questions. We were all winners in a way—not only did we learn some extremely interesting facts (well, I didn't know that Greece has 158 verses to its national anthem!) but we had a chance to improve our motoring knowledge. For those of you who missed the quiz, here's your chance to check your knowledge on motoring. We have added some extra questions just for fun. *Answers overleaf.*

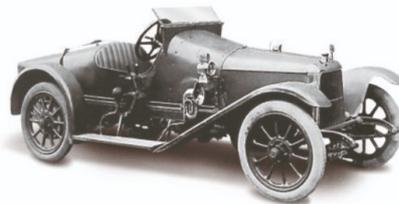
IAM Advanced Driving:

1. Fill in the words for the mnemonic 'OAP'
O A P
2. What are the three aspects to effectively gathering information and communicating with others?
T . . . U . . G . .
3. What is the term used for changing gear without engaging intermediate gears? (for example from 5th to 2nd)

4. If a gear change is required as part of an overtake, you should plan to avoid doing it whilst A the V being O
5. What colour studs are found on a motorway between the right hand lane and the central reservation?

General Motoring Questions

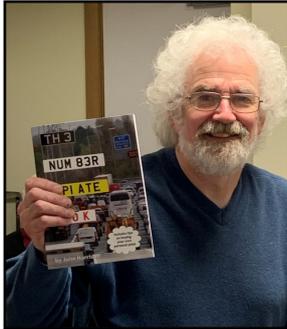
6. If your car has the registration GWL 775S, what year was it first registered?
7. What is the minimum disqualification period for a drink/driving offence?
8. When were UK car tax discs abolished? (month and year)
9. Can you drive a vehicle not capable of reaching 25 mph on a dual carriageway?
10. What do green road studs denote?
11. If you park on a 30 mph road, how far should you be away from a junction?
12. And ... just for fun ... which car manufacturer's first model was known as the Coal Scuttle due to its resemblance to one?



Answers:

1. Observation Anticipation Planning
2. Take Use Give
3. Block Changing
4. Alongside the Vehicle being Overtaken
5. Amber (or Yellow)
6. 1977
7. 12 months
8. October 2014
9. Yes, but you must show a flashing amber warning light (unless indicated otherwise)
10. The edge of the main carriageway at lay-bys and slip roads
11. 10 metres (32 feet) facing the direction of the traffic
12. Aston Martin

October Meeting (1) - A Tale of Celebrity, a Celebrity Affair, an Astronaut, the luck of an Historian ... and of Number Plates *John Harrison*



John's interest in car registration partly stemmed from a book written by Noel Woodall, the father of auto numerology, who had spotted number plate BB4 and was interested to know who it belonged to. In order to establish whether any customer had a personalised number plate, Mr Woodall wrote to all garages in the AA book, as well as to embassies and local authorities who had mayoral/civic vehicles and "Car Number Galaxy - Celebrities" was his first book. Noel Woodall became the first ever cherished number dealer.

John told the group that he had attended a NELE IAM group meeting many years ago when a member of the Police Special Escort Group did a presentation. They had responsibility for taking various celebrities and members of the Royal Family through the London traffic. One of the photographs shown at the presentation was taken during Yuri Gagarin's visit to Britain when he was pictured with a car with the number plate YG 1. This struck a chord with John who had seen the number in Noel Woodall's book.

"The Number Plate Book" (ISBN 978-0-4775) by John Harrison is available from bookshops or post free from John at 175 Hillyfields, Loughton, IG10 2PW. Cheques payable to "John Harrison"

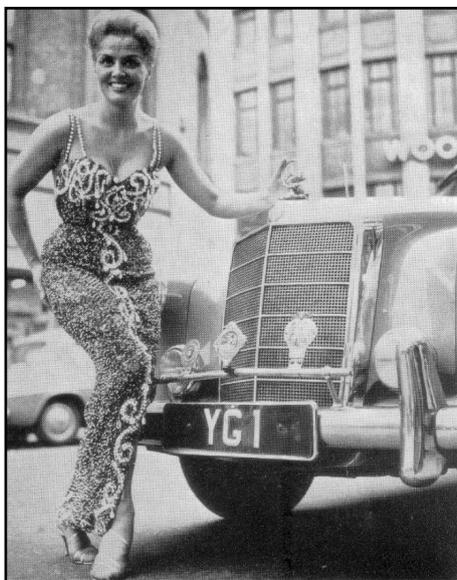
It transpired that Yana (Pamela) Guard, a singer popular in both the UK and America in the 50s and 60s, had presented him with a set of plates. When he saw this John was unsure whether this was a true story or a publicity stunt on the part of Yana who at that time led a very glamorous life. She eventually fell from the limelight and ended up in a more routine role working at Boots the Chemist. Between 1955 – 1962, if you wanted a number that had been on a vehicle which had been scrapped, you could apply to have the number reissued to you for £5. Early numbers with perhaps two letters and one or two numbers that you see on the road today will mostly be these £5 reissues. Unfortunately, the Ministry of Transport put a stop to this as it was not cost effective.

Yuri Gagarin, the Russian Cosmonaut, came to the UK for his first and only visit between 11th – 15th July 1961. He had a busy schedule which included a visit to Manchester and so John was uncertain that Yana and Yuri would have had time to meet in this short period. John wrote about this in his newsletter on vehicle registrations '1903 and All That' (new subscriber's welcome), 1903 being the year that the Motor Car Act introduced vehicle registrations. He went on to research whether the story could possibly have been true. The National Archives did not help other

than to reveal some interesting history as to whether it was appropriate for Yuri Gargarin's visit to go ahead along with a lot more information on vehicle registrations.

A visit to Warrington gave John the opportunity to also visit the Manchester Transport Museum. There he found a table with magazines on sale and – keen for reading material – he picked up a copy of 'Diecast Collector' as it had an article on Vauxhall models which he collected. It also had an article from a John Kinchen about Dinky Toy gift sets! In it, he mentioned that he had known Yana and that she had given him some of the Dinky gift sets described and John was subsequently able to get in touch with him. As a result of this, John was able to confirm that Yana had managed to see Yuri Gargarin and had presented him with the plates from her car and then had a replacement set made. The story was true! John kept in touch with John Kinchen for a couple of years but sadly he later died and John read in "Model Collector" that his collection had been auctioned for a considerable sum despite the fact that he had been living a bachelor life in a tiny flat full of dinky toys!

So, as Yuri Gargarin had been carried in a car with a false set of number plates for his visit, John then considered whether this had happened on any other occasion. The National Archives files revealed that indeed it had when President Eisenhower visited London on an Official State Visit on 27th August – 2nd September 1959 when he was driven in a car with the registration number USA 1. The files said that two sets were unofficially produced - one USA 1 for an open-topped car and one USA 2 for a closed car to ensure that there was a car suitable for the weather! The arrangements were very ad hoc.



Yana eventually sold YG 1 to Eileen Howard, owner of Yates Garage, Hampton-on-Thames, when it was last known to be on a Mercedes-Benz E320. Should you be interested in the plate, it can be purchased from Regtransfers (the biggest number plate dealers in the country) for £175,000. Credit is available if you cannot afford to pay for it all at once!

John had originally given this presentation to The Society of Automotive Historians in Britain many years ago. This resulted in a letter in the Daily Mail notes and queries column from the Society's Secretary referring to John's presentation.

And the love affair? Yana fans have advised John that there was a liaison between Yana and George Formby. George had his own number plates GF 1 and GF 2, and one guesses that maybe she followed his lead and acquired the registration number plates YG 1.

John kindly answered a few questions from members, and Paul thanked him on behalf of the group. Bearing in mind that John had given the presentation previously, and in the way that only a George Formby fan would fully appreciate confirmed that it had "turned out nice again, didn't it?".

October Meeting (2) - Confessions of a Crash Recovery Driver *Jim Carruthers*

Jim is a Crash Recovery Driver and with extensive experience of driving different cars in quick succession with little time to look at the Handbook!

Ideas that work well:

- **Auto Stop-Start** A brilliant idea, especially when in traffic. Great for saving fuel too!
- **Park Assist Cameras** are another boon. Reversing is not everyone's strong point and so this enables you to see behind and with lines to check the angle to save you hitting the kerb. Great for tight spaces!
- **Paddle Shift Gear Levers** Sceptical at first, but they aid safety and are easy to use and ensure you can keep your hands on the wheel.
- **HUD (Head up Display)** With this, there is no need to take your eyes off the road, easy to see and you can also keep at a good speed.

Ideas which are good but need improving:

- **One-foot driving** Auto braking on e-cars. These can be found on electric cars – take your foot off the accelerator and the car automatically brakes. Unfortunately, on BMWs, they are a little bit sharp in that you bring your foot up and you stop. The power needs to be reduced a bit so that the system does not grab the brakes.
- **Lane detection** This has recently been discussed by IAM RoadSmart – some of the designs are not brilliant. The new Vauxhall Corsa for example is sharp, and grabs the wheel to pull you back into the lane. They can however be great for safety.
- **Obstacle Detection** A lot of cars will say "car close" as there is a sensor and camera. Brilliant idea safety wise, but as the pictures can all appear different, the dashboard needs standardising.

"What were they thinking?"

- **Electronic handbrakes** When you lift your foot off the brake and put it on the accelerator, the car should take the handbrake off and stop. These work in the same way on an automatic, but on a manual—particularly early models—it is difficult not to roll back. Not good for safety.

- **iDRIVE/Merc equivalent** In theory an intuitive system to let you find what you need. In practice, these need standardising as they encourage drivers to take their eyes off the road!
- **Infotainment systems** With the new Honda City E, it has cameras for wing mirrors, and the whole dashboard is the entertainment screen. From the driver's position, you can see some icons (such as Bluetooth) which may need to be accessed by the driver but cannot be reached. What do you do if there is no passenger?

Questions from Members. Jim responded to members' questions.

- **Start buttons** were of interest, Jim highlighting that on the Kuga, every year and every model has the start button in a different place.
- **Keyless cars** could also prove problematic when collecting a number of different cars on the same day, particularly if the key is left in the car.
- **Handbrakes** With Mercedes, the game can become "**hunt the handbrake**" as some have foot brakes with the release underneath the dashboard and you pull it out. In the more recent Mercedes, the handbrake comes on automatically when you put the car into 'park'. And the handbrake can be a tiny little button to the right of the steering wheel! If you have five or six jobs to do, the variations can be extremely vast.

The Effects of Coronavirus on the Road *Vic McDonald*

During the COVID-19 pandemic there have been several effects on our motoring world. Obviously, most of us have been driving much less, certainly in respect of "pleasure" motoring, which was effectively barred for some time. And so we were using our cars only for "essential" journeys, unless we happen to be government advisers who need an eyesight test, or professors in need of female company.

As one would expect, fewer and shorter journeys resulted in fewer accidents. West Midlands Police reported a 65% reduction in crashes during the Lockdown period. Predictably and unfortunately, rates climbed again when restrictions were eased and traffic levels increased. Another unfortunate fact is that pedestrian and cyclist fatalities increased. Greater Manchester Police reported cyclist deaths up 47%.

Fewer car journeys made resulted in more cars left parked for longer periods, which led to a large increase in theft of and from parked vehicles. Catalytic converters are a great favourite with thieves: armed with a hydraulic jack, a power saw and some determination, they can remove the cat., often in broad daylight, in two or three minutes. Apparently, supermarket car parks are a prime hunting ground. The thieves turn up wearing face masks and with the number plates of their vehicle obscured. A typical cost of replacement is around £1,000, and there's a good chance of that being stolen as well. The converters are stolen for the precious metals they contain, mainly rhodium, platinum and palladium. One ounce of rhodium costs about £9,000; for comparison, gold is currently about £1,200.

A neighbour had the cat. stolen from her Honda in a car park. A week later the replacement was stolen from her own driveway. She has now had a gadget fitted to the car which is designed to make it difficult for the thieves to get at the cat.

Some reports claimed that driving behaviour deteriorated during Lockdown. Cases of tailgating and aggressive driving were quoted. I personally have not seen any examples of this but perhaps our readers would like to get in touch with any comments?

And finally.... the below article from the 'Daily Mail' 12 September makes interesting reading!



Impression of site at Great Notley, near Braintree, Essex credit IAAF

Recharge your Batteries at the First E-Filling Station

“The Heady blast of petrol fumes has long gone, the oily rags and diesel spillages on the forecourt consigned to history. For this, according to its creators, is the electric car filling station of the future—and the first one opens later this year.

The station, in Braintree, Essex, will allow drivers to plug in their cars and go off and shop, rest or have a bite to eat while their vehicle charges.

The 2.5 acre site will have 30 chargers, all of which will be rapid versions that can power up a vehicle in around 20 to 30 minutes. The site, which will open later this month, will have a two-store building with shops and a waiting area for motorists.

Gridserve, the company behind the project, says the station will be run on solar energy and battery storage. Founder Toddington Harper said the forecourt was designed to ‘update the petrol station model for a net-zero carbon future’. He added: ‘Many more people want to buy electric vehicles but are worried about how to charge them.’

‘We will help solve that challenge and deliver the confidence people need to make the switch. This will be the most advanced charging facility in the UK, and possibly the world. Drivers will be able to charge their vehicle ... using 100 per cent renewable energy.’

The facility will be able to charge 24 cars at once in less than half an hour and it is hoped that as battery technology improves, this time will be reduced.

NELE IAM Committee

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The views expressed in this newsletter are those of the individual contributor and not necessarily those of NELE IAM or IAM RoadSmart unless so stated.

Comments, ideas, suggestions and perhaps some motoring humour most welcome!

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