

MEET THE COMMITTEE IAM SOUTHEASTERN GROUP



PHIL GROHMANN – TREASURER

Philip has been a keen motorist since passing his driving test at the age of 17 and buying his first car – an Austin 1100 – shortly afterwards.

Some years later he attended a Better Driving Course run by the local council, where he met his wife Joy (also an IAM member of long-standing) before joining the South Eastern Group Associate scheme and taking his advanced test in 1984, with the late John Hamilton as his examiner.

Shortly after this, he worked in the USA for a year, where he drove a 6 litre Dodge Charger around Florida and the neighbouring states – petrol or “gas” was cheap in those days in the States! A few years later he qualified as an Observer for the Group, but had to give this up when work and family took precedence.

When the post of Group Treasurer was advertised, Joy persuaded him to volunteer for the role, to ensure he is kept occupied during his forthcoming retirement from the Civil Service!



JOHN BIGGS – CHAIR

John Passed his test in 1996 and joined the Group as a Trainee Observer. He passed his Final Drive and qualified as a Group Observer in 1998.

In 2012 he became one of the first Observers in the Group to qualify as a National Observer under the IMI Accreditation scheme. Following that he passed his Masters Assessment with a Distinction in 2014 and is one of the two Training Officers in the Group responsible for the training of and maintaining standards of the Group’s Observers. He is also a National Observer Assessor and Masters Mentor for IAM RoadSmart and has also been a member of RoSPA since 1999. He also served as Secretary of the Group for 17 years.

Away from the Group, John is a keen football fan and keeps koi carp.



JONATHAN EATON – GROUP CONTACT

Jonathan passed his DVLA test at 17; his driving instructor was an IAM member who encouraged him to take the Advanced Test as soon as the opportunity came along.

After a mere 34 years of safe motoring in the UK and Europe, wanting to take his skills to the next level, he joined IAM RoadSmart and South Eastern Advanced Motorists, passing 2015 to fulfil that long-held ambition, thanks to the excellent SE Group coaching and support he experienced.

Rather than leave behind all the good new friends he’d made amongst Observers and Group members, he quickly wanted to volunteer to give back something to them.

Invited to join the Committee, he now acts as Group Contact, manages our Welcome Sessions for new Associates, and provides technical support for Group Nights, guest speakers and our AGMs



STEVE EWING – CENTRE MANAGER & ASSOCIATE MANAGER

Steve joined the Group as an Associate aged 18 in 1976. After passing his IAM test in early 1978, he immediately trained and became an Observer and a Committee Member, as well as becoming heavily involved in the Associate Scheme. He has continued with this throughout his many years of membership.

He is a National Observer and a National Observer Assessor. He passed his IAM Masters test five years ago, and is also a mentor for this test.

Outside of the Group, Steve very much enjoys driving, travel, and car ownership and has owned 50 plus cars so far! He is a Competitive Ballroom Dancer, and collects toy cars, and car automobilia from the 1960s, 70s and 80s.



DUNCAN GARRETT – MEMBERSHIP & WEBSITE

Duncan has had a passion for cars and driving for as far back as he can remember, but it wasn't until 2013 that he decided to join the South Eastern Group of IAM Roadsmart, passing his test in August of that year. His father had joined the IAM some 50 odd years ago, so the red badge has always been part of his driving life.

He joined the Committee soon after, taking responsibility for the website and the membership database.

He lives in Orpington with his wife. His son married just before the first lockdown, and his daughter has just started her career in Physiotherapy at Guys hospital. Along with one Cockapoo, he keeps busy and is never happier than when tinkering with a car.

He enjoys long distance walks when possible and has trekked along recognised tracks like Hadrian's Wall, Saxon Shore Way [Gravesend to Hastings], North Downs Way [Farnham to Dover & Canterbury], The Ridgeway and a few other smaller ones. The last one, following old smuggling tracks & pubs, was from the Bo Peep in Chelsfield to a pub in St Leonards, Hastings – also called the Bo Peep.



PETER GRAY - SECRETARY

Peter had some interesting sports cars in his youth and passed his IAM test in 1972 in a Triumph TR6. In those days you had to do a hill start on the steepest hill the examiner could find and an accompanying three-point turn. It was not easy with a heavy clutch and no power steering.

On reaching the age of maturity Peter felt it was time to reassess his skills and, learning of the Masters qualification, took the test and passed in 2016. He joined the SE Group that year, qualified as a Local Observer under the watchful eye of John Biggs and, shortly after, volunteered to be Secretary as the then incumbent moved on. He has enjoyed his time as a Local Observer together with assisting the Welcoming Team with the introductory talk and demo drives. In 2020 in the gap between lockdowns he achieved the qualification as a National Observer.