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**...and in case there might be more
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EXCLUSIVE: Kent's Louise Cook, Britain's top female rally driver tells how to stay cool on the ice



SNOW PATROL

Keeping you up to date with winter news

As the winter of 2010-11 lingers on, Kent's Louise Cook, Britain's leading female rally driver, has provided us with some techniques for driving on the ice that is likely to be a feature for some weeks to come.

Clear all your screens including the side windows. When driving in ice, you may have to use your side windows to follow the road like sometimes we do in

rallying. Make sure your windscreen washer is full and contains washer fluid to avoid it freezing in cold conditions, you really need to up the concentration to avoid a frosty screen. Keep the heater on the windscreen, a wind chill factor at 50mph is ridiculous and any water will freeze on the spot, if the glass is warm it will slow the freezing process down considerably.

Make sure you can be seen
Clean your lights, not for you to see but so others can see you!

Check your tyres
No matter how expensive or technical your car is there is only one thing keeping it on the road. Check you have enough tread for snow clearance and pressures are inflated enough to keep a good contact patch. Most people do not take into

account the pressure temperature relationship. In minus conditions, the pressure inside the tyre will be lower than normal and the lack of grip will mean it generally will be more difficult to heat up. So check your pressures and make life easier for yourself.

The Pirouette
Think more ballerina than boxer. If anyone has seen rally "in car footage" it looks like a Sunday drive, but the car is doing 100MPH through a forest on an unmade road. It is because rally drivers know that delicate ballerina touches do not upset the car and keep up the momentum without the risk.

Traction
To pull away use the accelerator really gently, in some cars, you may get away with no throttle at all, then when the car moves, gradually increase the throttle but keeping just below the point of wheel spin so that the car keeps the energy moving



forward rather than being wasted.
Plan ahead plan ahead plan ahead
Anticipate the road and the surface, make sure you react in good time. If you are looking too close to your bonnet it may already be too late. In rallying we look at the horizon to find a tree line and anticipate the road. If it is half a mile away, that is even better because you have more time to plan. If you see a hill do not slow down so much that you cannot cruise up it. Also, remember hills have two sides and the speed for going up is not the right speed for coming down an icy hill, so slow the car down at the peak to keep safe on the decent.
Speed
Keep your speed relative, so many times in ice people crash and state "I wasn't going that

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After the youngsters attended an Eleanor Busk day, (founder member of the library) in the summer at Westerham Library two pupils from Churchill school, Dasha Bobkova and Kelvin Chan, were the winners of a drawing competition - to produce a portrait of Eleanor Busk. Eleanor's, grand daughter Claire Laird Turner chose the winning pictures and along with librarians Cheryl Fraser and Michele Hudson presented the winners with book tokens.
The commemorative plaque outside Westerham Library has now been painted with gold lettering, at a low cost by James Harper funeral directors.
This was organised by Westerham Parish Council and paid for by Claire Laird Turner. Photos supplied

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that fast". You do not have to be going fast to go beyond the grip of the tyre in these conditions. Tightening corners can be the worst and sharp degree corners that require a lot of front end grip to make the car steer round. So really look ahead and think about the corner, if you know the road try to picture the corner shape before you get there and figure if you will need more steering mid corner, if so, SLOW DOWN!



Braking
A rolling tyre will work better than a stationary one. If you lock the brakes and the car starts to skid then come off and go back on gently. You can try the cadence technique of pulsing the pedal with your foot. Remember big pulses will still lock the wheels, so try to feel the grip.

Do not look for things to hit
The human brain is an amazing device with a million instinctive reactions. A big one in driving is hand eye coordination. You may have great hand eye coordination but this could mean you are more likely to get in trouble. If you look at the tree you will hit the tree. You must focus on the road and where you want to go, not where you don't. I know it is hard to remember when you panic, but I bet you have all drove down a road and seen one lonely lamp post within a 200m space and a car has hit it, well now you know why, that's negative suggestion for you :o)

Chillax
I know it is easier said than done but

as soon as we panic our brain does not function that well. Our survival instincts kick in and they actually can without knowing ironically try to kill us. When we panic our muscles become tense. A relaxed muscle can operate smoothly and progressively, just what we need in demanding grip conditions. Remember if you do not do anything aggressive to the car it will not do anything aggressive back, it really is an extension of the body.

Know your car
Front wheel drive (FWD) cars and rear wheel drive (RWD) cars have slightly different characteristics on ice, so take the time to find out what you are driving. The shafts going to the centre of the wheels lets you know, you may be lucky to have four wheel drive (4WD), which will help, but still has a limit of grip. If you go into a corner too fast all cars tend to push on in a corner going wider and wider, so get your speed right. A FWD will tend to push on more under acceleration because the front wheels can lose grip. A RWD car can lose back end grip if we accelerate too quickly which may see the back trying to get round the corner before the front as can 4WD. In all situations it is best to smoothly react. Smoothly ease off the throttle and compensate with the steering. If we brake at this point all four wheels may lock and the car becomes a sledge that will not change direction. If we have

misjudged the corner and have to brake, try to be soft, smooth, relaxed and minimise the danger.

Being geared up
If you rev too hard in a lower gear it can create wheel spin and also make the car too responsive to any throttle movements. By going up a gear the car will become more stable and less likely to break traction, who knows you may even save some fuel :o)

Seesaw
If you get stuck in some snow you may be able to use a rocking technique. You can edge forwards then back and gradually build momentum. Make sure you rock as far as you can each way to get the momentum going, then once she is going aim for a cleaner spot before stopping.

Be practical
Always carry a rope. A £10 rope could save you a £250 recovery bill. It is amazing what 5 humans can pull, likewise you could use another car to tow the car, but obviously take care!

Letter to the Editor

I wanted to write and thank all the helpful residents on the A25 in Oxted on Saturday 18th December, who were assisting poor motorists like myself to negotiate the slope just after the traffic lights at the back of Morrison's. They were very kindly digging and pushing cars up the incline I was able to make it to the A22 where I did in fact have to leave my car overnight, and started walking along the Caterham bypass to Whyteleafe, fortunately again some very kind people on their way back to Farleigh Common from a works do, in a 4 x 4 stopped and took me the rest of my journey and saved me a three mile walk home. My faith in human nature has certainly been restored this past week can't thank these people enough.

Denise Pickard
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