



The **BEDFORD** Group of RoSPA Advanced Drivers and Riders Members Newsletter

Visit the **BEDFORD** Group online at www.roadada-bedford.org.uk **March 2017**

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March Meeting

Our Annual General Meeting

Please join us for our AGM

Agenda details are enclosed separately

Please note our new meeting venue is at the Bedford Athletics Stadium which is located opposite our former venue at the Barkers Lane Fire Station.

Join us at 8pm on Tuesday 21st March 2017 in the **Bedford Athletics Stadium, Barkers Lane MK41 9SB**. Parking is available at the Bedford Athletics Stadium.

AGM

Apologies - unfortunately we have to inform you that David Williams, General Manager at Williams Grand Prix Engineering is unfortunately unable to make a presentation at our AGM. We hope that he will be able to attend and present at our meeting in July.

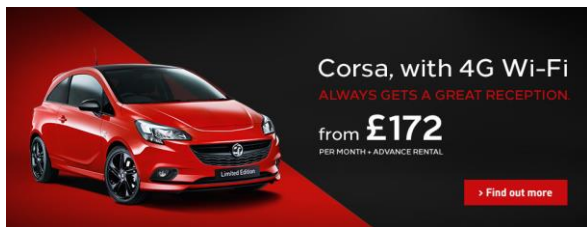
Drivers: Changes to penalties for handheld mobile phone use



From 1 March 2017, the penalties for using a hand-held mobile phone while driving will increase to 6 points on your licence and a £200 fine. For more details see: <http://think.direct.gov.uk/mobile-phones.html>

On the 1st March I felt sure from observations whilst driving that the number of those using mobile phones for a variety of tasks had decreased. Unfortunately by the next day it seemed to be back to the Pre-March 1st days.

Whilst the responsibility to drive safely and not use a mobile phone whilst driving is the responsibility of the driver I ask can an advertisement like the one below encourage drivers to use mobile phones when driving?



The temptation to use 4G Wi-Fi may be hard to resist

Almost every time I slow to stop I will see in my rear view mirror the head of the driver behind drop as they look at their phone. And if you pass a line of slow moving traffic it won't take long before you see someone on a mobile phone, texting or on social media.

Spring is here and not just the weather. I have found several ends of broken road springs on the road.



It does seem after reading a number of motoring forums that spring breakage is not such an uncommon problem. Failure it appears is more common on road springs (left photograph) where the spring is not finished with a tapered end. The spring on the right is finished with a tapered end. The engineering opinion is that the failure is more likely to depend on how the spring is manufactured / finished rather than whether it is taper finished. Quite what a vehicle feels like to drive when it has lost part of its spring I don't know and I am sure some drivers would be oblivious to any steering defects. And without lying flat on your back or removing a road wheel, would it be easy to spot a broken spring?

Electric Power Steering: Most new cars now have electric power steering fitted rather than hydraulic power steering. The quest to produce a vehicle with lower and lower CO₂ emissions has led to the introduction of electric power steering. The electric power

steering only needs engine power when the steering wheel is turned, whereas in hydraulic steering the hydraulic pump is always using engine power even when the steering wheel is not turned. There are however a number of reports of electric power steering motor failures and manufacturers refusing to replace these under warranty when the motor is identified as being burnt out. The cause of the burnt out motors it appears are due to drivers holding the steering against full lock. The electric motor is stalled, but still receiving a 'turn command' from the driver. The stalled motor draws a high current as it tries (in vain) to turn the steering rack against its maximum point of turning. When this occurs often and for extended periods, the large current flowing burns out the motor. The reality is that the fault is caused by the driver's action not a motor defect. Whilst it is not ideal to hold any vehicle on full steering lock, hydraulic steering is not affected in the same way. With a new electric power steering motor costing around £1,000 fitted, exercising mechanical sympathy when driving is the far cheaper option.

Driverless Vehicles: Are car manufacturers preparing us by stealth into accepting driverless cars? The answer could well be 'yes'. My thoughts are that much of the newer autonomous driver assistance features, fitted to new vehicles, are similar if not identical to the technology found in driverless cars.

For a look at this and the introduction of driverless cars, our speaker for May will be Daniel Auger of Cranfield University presenting on the subject of "Driverless Cars".

Newsletter Editor Vacancy: This is my last newsletter. I hope my 9 years of writing the newsletter have been interesting, entertaining and informative. Thank you for reading it. The Committee needs new members (and a new Newsletter Editor!) so please do consider joining the Committee and step forward – Please see the AGM notice.

Editor: Keith Hooson

All content is the opinion of the writer or contributor. It is not the official view of the committee of the Bedford group of RoSPA Advanced Drivers and Riders, RoSPA or any other official body connected to or mentioned by the writer.