



## NEWSLETTER

Visit the **BEDFORD Group** online at [www.road-a-bedford.org.uk](http://www.road-a-bedford.org.uk) May 2017

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### May Meeting

#### Driverless Cars

Our speaker on this subject will be Daniel Auger from Cranfield University. This is a joint sponsored meeting and we will be joined by members of BCS. As numbers are restricted please advise Alan Freeman if you intend to come by **sending an e-mail to [info1@road-a-bedford.org.uk](mailto:info1@road-a-bedford.org.uk)** Please do come and show support for the speaker on this interesting subject.

Please join us at 8pm on Tuesday 16<sup>th</sup> May 2017 in the **Lecture Room, Bedford Athletic Stadium, Barkers Lane, Bedford MK41 9SB**. Parking is available.

The newsletter this month is a much shortened version as our Newsletter Editor Keith Hooson resigned at the AGM following many years of producing detailed and interesting articles. Full reports and election results of the AGM can be found on our web site. We are looking for someone to take over this responsibility. Also we have not been able to fill the Training Coordinators role, which I have been controlling in the period since Kate left. Therefore Paul Millbank, our Training Officer has agreed to take on that administrative role.

We have just had an influx of new members and we are trying to get everyone allocated a Tutor as soon as possible.

Looking ahead, our speaker at our next meeting in July will be Dave Williams who will be talking about his experiences of managing formula 1 teams.

As a part of continuous training, our Tutors have received details from our Training Officer about a conference for Tutors to be held in September. Remember all our Tutors have been tested by RoSPA within the last three years. Also please do not lose sight of the fact that they are all volunteers.

Driving tests are due to change from 4th December this year. These changes are designed to make sure new drivers have the skills to help them through a lifetime of driving.

**Drive for work?**

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The following question was put to RoSPA.

*My employer provides me with a vehicle that has hands-free capability and it is expected that I make and receive calls when driving between appointments. Where would I stand if I was involved in a collision?*

**A:** About 150 people are killed or seriously injured every week in crashes involving someone who is driving for work purposes. A substantial body of research shows that using a handheld phone or hands-free phone whilst driving is a significant distraction and substantially increases the risk of the driver crashing. Unfortunately, using a hands-free phone may be legal but it does not significantly reduce the risk because the problem is caused by mental distraction.

If you are involved in an accident you might be charged with 'failing to have proper control of your vehicle' or, in more serious incidents, with 'careless driving'. If your employer expects you to use your phone as standard working practice, they might also be culpable. RoSPA has a driving for work policy guide that says that staff should never make or receive calls, send or read texts or emails or surf the internet on a mobile phone, or any similar device, while driving.

*The problem is where the conversation takes you. The mental distraction takes you away from concentration on the road and the task in hand. Some years ago a major company I worked for introduced using the phone whilst driving a gross misconduct offence. Disappointing that more companies do not accept the dangers of using a mobile phone whilst driving.*

### **Courting Disaster (extracted from 'Care on the Road')**

A 19 year old delivery driver who sent a text while leading police on an 80-mph chase has been spared jail. She messaged a friend 'I'm being chased by police' as she ignored

demands to pull over during a five-and-half mile chase in Stoke on Trent in January. Police were responding to reports of a van crashing into a garden wall and driving off. She was handed a suspended prison sentence and banned for two years after pleading to dangerous driving and failing to stop following an accident. She also lost her job.

A woman who opened a taxi door which knocked a cyclist into the path of a van and led to his death has been fined £80. The 26-year-old was killed outside Leicester railway station last July. The woman, 56, admitted to opening a vehicle door so as to injure or endanger another person. Cycling UK are calling for it to be classed as a more serious offence as there are around 500 cyclists a year injured in this way. *Comments: The cyclist should have followed rule 67 of the Highway Code. The taxi passenger should have looked before alighting and the driver could have warned of the oncoming cyclist using the taxi mirrors.*

### **MEETINGS**

I hope as many of you who are able will attend our meetings. As detailed above, just for the May meeting, send an e-mail to say you are coming and how many. It is the only time we get to talk to you. Although I will not be at the May meeting I hope many of you will attend and we also look forward to seeing you at the July meeting.

Stan Jones (Group Secretary)

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