



The Bedford Group of
RoSPA Advanced Drivers and Riders
Members Newsletter
December 2019

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**Welcome to the December 2019 issue of the Bedford Group of the
RoSPA Advanced Drivers and Riders Newsletter.**

Welcome to our new members who have joined since the last newsletter; Tiberiu Nechefor, Mark Pearce, Antonia Brown and Val Jones.

Regrettably, Ian Wade, our Newsletter Editor, has had to resign due to ill health and we wish him well. Ian has been producing excellent newsletters over the last few years covering not only the Group's news but also many articles of interest from various origins. We thank Ian for all his efforts. This Newsletter was started by Ian and he has kindly passed to me his draft so far. We are now looking for a replacement for Ian, anyone with an interest should initially contact me. It will be down to the replacement to decide upon its format.

Main topics:

So-called "smart" motorways, dangers thereof, press comments.

Chairman's Chatter including details of February meeting, a chance to question the examiners.

View from the East - Simon Birgin, RoSPA Eastern Regional Coordinator

Seasonal Greetings to you all
Stan Jones, secretary@roada-bedford.org.uk

15 December 2019

Chairman's Chatter

Steve Davy

I have just looked back at my chatter in the last newsletter and I was looking forward to a hot August bank holiday weekend. I am now writing this chatter when it is less than two weeks before Christmas and I have already scraped the ice off the car several times this winter. Today I met my first gritter of the season whilst driving. The gritter drivers go out whenever necessary to help keep us safe even on Christmas Day. This year please spare a thought, if we have the weather that many people like for Christmas, to those disrupting their celebrations to help keep us safe and well.

The Committee continues to develop plans to recruit new members and the next edition of the newsletter will contain a very interesting article by our web master, Alan Freeman, about the history of an event where the Group will have a stand to promote advanced driving and hopefully attract new members. The event takes place in Elstow on **Saturday 2nd May**. Volunteers to help on the stand would be most welcome and even if you do not attend to help on the stand, it would be very good to see as many of you as possible at the event. More details in the next edition.

Another date for your diary is an open meeting for Group Members on **20th February** at the Bedfordshire Fire & Rescue Training Centre in Kempston at 8pm. This is an opportunity for people to meet other members. We will be joined by Tony Gabb our Regional Senior Examiner and many members of the Committee and Group's Tutors will also be present so if you have any questions about advanced driving or motoring in general this is your opportunity. Even if there is not a definitive answer (and often in advanced driving there is not) we would be more than happy to discuss.

Finally I would like to express my thanks to Ian Wade who has been our excellent newsletter editor (I might have said the best we have ever had but then the new Editor may have used his editorial discretion!). Ian has unfortunately had to retire from the role for personal reasons. My thanks also for Stan Jones for stepping in so quickly to take on the role.

Keep safe. Wishing you a happy Christmas and New Year.

Steve

Committee News

Stan Jones (Secretary)

SOME DATES FOR YOUR DIARIES:

Thursday 20th February for a Members' Meeting, see Chairman's Chatter

Saturday 2nd May, Elstow Historic May Fare, Tuesday 19th May, AGM; details of these two will be in the next issue.

We have had a good intake of new members this year and we thought you should all have an opportunity to meet with other members and the committee.

In the last Newsletter we asked if any gold members would be interested in becoming Tutors. I am pleased to advise that Jenny Holliday volunteered and she has completed her training and has already been allocated her first Associate. Well done to Jenny. Martin Kidds who is an existing Tutor has volunteered for Advanced Tutor Training. Needless to say that is more complex and is yet to be arranged.

We welcome more volunteers.

Smart Motorways

ROSPA's View

1 December 2017

A report from the BBC has claimed that drivers caught offending on smart motorways could be given education rather than a punitive punishment, due to a lack of understanding of how to properly use the new style of road. Figures suggest an 18 per cent rise in the number of people caught using the hard shoulder illegally, with 1,014 tickets being issued in the past financial year.

Whenever there is the introduction of a new kind of road, or new rule, of course there must be adequate awareness raised, and leniency for those caught accidentally breaking the law due to a lack of awareness.

Education courses would be beneficial, and RoSPA is in favour of education for those drivers found to be genuinely mistaken when using smart motorways incorrectly. Education courses can help drivers to rectify their errors, so that they are not repeated. Any new course should be correctly evaluated to ensure that it is delivering positive safety outcomes.

However there are of course those who deliberately flout the law, that must be dealt with appropriately.

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The discussion has also reignited the debate over the safety of all-lane running motorways. These differ from dynamic hard shoulder running – where the hard shoulder can be opened at busy periods – in that the hard shoulder is a permanent running lane.

As Louise Ellman, chairman of the Transport Select Committee said, the Government must “demonstrate that all lane running schemes do not make the road any less safe than the traditional motorway with a hard shoulder”.

The situation is still being monitored.

For more information on smart motorways see www.rosipa.com/road-safety/advice/drivers/better-driving/smart-motorways/

Nick Lloyd, road safety manager

Posted: 1/11/2017

RAC's view

Published Friday, November 29, 2019

The majority of British motorists (68 per cent) say that removing the hard shoulder on ‘smart motorways’ compromises the safety of drivers.

To increase capacity on the country’s busiest roads, over one hundred miles of hard shoulder have been converted by Highways England into running lanes for traffic including parts of the M1, M4, M5, M6, M42 and M62. Smart motorways were [first approved in 2015](#).

Many hard shoulders have been removed permanently on ‘all lane running’ smart motorways and on these stretches, with SOS refuge areas spaced up to 1.6 miles apart.

A survey in the RAC Report on Motoring 2019 found that 72 per cent of smart motorway users are worried about not being able to reach these areas if they break down and nearly three-fifths (59 per cent) of those questioned think the distance between them is too far.

Only half of drivers who have driven on an ‘all lane running’ smart motorway (51 per cent) say they know what to do if they break down and are unable to reach a refuge area, meaning the remainder are unclear.

All-lane running smart motorways permanently use the hard shoulder for live traffic, while dynamic schemes only open the lane to traffic during busy periods.

Once incidents such as a breakdown or collision are identified on smart motorways, lanes are closed via an illuminated red X on digital displays.

There is also a very strong feeling among motorists about the impact of an ‘all lane running’ incident on traffic flow with 77 per cent of motorists stating that a breakdown on a live lane leads to increased congestion.

On a more positive note, more than half of motorists surveyed by the RAC (55 per cent) agree that smart motorways are a cost-effective way to increase capacity on congested motorways.

However, there is concern about Highways England’s ability to detect stationary vehicles in running lanes, and the number of drivers who don’t acknowledge lane closure signs.

The RAC is calling on the Government to ensure the latest stopped vehicle detection technology is retrofitted on all smart motorways, and for more emergency refuge areas to be built.

The organisation’s head of roads policy Nicholas Lyes said: “Our research clearly demonstrates that many drivers have some serious concerns about certain aspects of all-lane running smart motorways.

“We, and drivers generally, understand there is a need to increase capacity on our motorway network with traffic levels forecast to grow.

“However, this should only be done using the latest design features and technology so schemes are not only as safe as possible but also make motorists feel safe driving on them.

“Sadly, only a fraction of all-lane running smart motorways operating today have SOS areas spaced at intervals of up to a mile and stopped vehicle detection technology installed.”

A review into driver safety on smart motorways was launched by transport secretary Grant Shapps last month, to which he told MPs “we know people are dying” on the roads but said greater detail is required on how safe they are compared to full motorways.

AA

The AA has expressed safety concerns about a plan to remove the hard shoulder from hundreds of miles of motorway over the next six years.

A network of so-called smart motorways will be without the traditional emergency lane, while emergency laybys will be closer together.

Plans for smart motorways 'blatantly ignore' safety concerns, say MPs

The speed limit past roadworks will also be increased from 50mph to 60mph as part of the introduction of "digital roads".

The system, in which the hard shoulder will be taken away from 400 miles of motorway, will be safer because emergency laybys allowed vehicles to pull off the motorway, separating them from fast-moving traffic, according to Highways England.

Its chief executive, Jim O'Sullivan, told the Times: "With the volume, speed and size of modern cars, the refuge areas are safer than the hard shoulder. You will not get a car or truck drifting into the emergency refuge area whereas they can and do drift into the hard shoulder.

"We are now well into smart motorway operation and the statistics we have are reliable. They are telling us that the safety record on smart motorways is arguably better than what we see on conventional motorways."

One in 10 deaths on motorways occur on the hard shoulder, according to Highways England, and usually happen when vehicles hit stationary ones from behind.

However, motoring groups have raised safety fears. "We support road improvements to remove pinch points and improve motorway capacity but not if it compromises road safety," said Edmund King, the AA president, which has been campaigning for laybys or emergency refuge areas (ERAs) on smart motorways.

ERAs would be safer than a hard shoulder if motorists could get to them, said King, who warned it was potentially more dangerous to exit an emergency layby than a hard shoulder as it was difficult to get up to speed.

The lack of hard shoulder also meant it took emergency vehicles longer to get to incidents due to traffic filling all lanes. King said: "Renaming smart motorways as 'digital roads' doesn't mean the system still won't crash. We are happy to embrace technology but more physical emergency laybys would reassure drivers and make our roads safer."

GEM

GEM Road Safety Charity

Registered in England 326857

About GEM

Road Safety has been at the heart of everything that we do since our formation as the Company of Veteran Motorists way back in 1932. Over the years we recognised the need to do more to promote our aim of reducing death and serious injury on the roads, not just among our members, but within the wider community and we therefore decided to establish our own registered Road Safety Charity in 1985.

We have and continue to support numerous road safety projects across the UK that all have one thing in common – keeping people safe on the roads.

How can we help you?

The GEM Road Safety Charity exists to contribute to improving the safety of all road users throughout the country by making grants and providing financial assistance to support innovative projects that have regional or national significance. We welcome applications from registered charities, road safety organisations, universities and groups with a clearly defined and well planned project.

A Response to the Tailpipe article in the September Newsletter

In the September edition of the newsletter, Ian made some comments about wanting the Committee to make RoSPA more relevant to young drivers and reduce the number of deaths and serious injuries to young people. The Committee has asked me to respond to this article.

The Bedford Group of RoSPA Advanced Drivers and Riders is a small part of RoSPA Advanced Drivers and Riders. In turn the RoSPA Advanced Drivers and Riders is a tiny part of RoSPA. The Committee therefore feels that we are a very small part of a larger Community and it is not possible for us as a very small group of volunteers with other commitments outside of the Group to make a significant impact.

Indeed there are many highly qualified professionals at RoSPA and in local authorities who are much more qualified and able in general driver education than we will ever be. We specialise in one particular aspect of road safety; to provide training and support to drivers who wish

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to improve their driving and hopefully take their advanced test to become safer drivers.

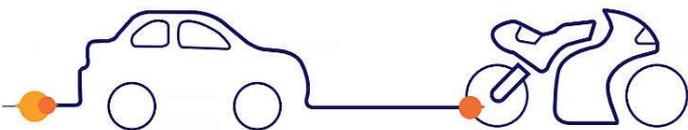
Despite all the horror stories we read about in newspapers and online or see on television, the number of young people (aged 17 to 24) dying in road traffic collisions in Great Britain has declined from around 600 per year in 2008 to 279 in 2019. There are many reasons for this around a slight reduction in the number of young people in Great Britain and improved safety features in cars (even the annual UK GDP can influence the number of fatalities) during this period but I would like to think that improved driver training and initiatives such as the MORE course across Bedfordshire that I have spoken of previously about in previous editions of this newsletter have also played their part to make young people aware of the risks around driving. More information about road traffic casualties can be seen at https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/834585/reported-road-casualties-annual-report-2018.pdf

I am not saying that promoting road safety to young people is not very important, just that the Committee may not be the best people to do this.

Steve Davy, Chairman

VIEW FROM THE EAST – OCTOBER 2019

PC Simon Burgin (sburgin@ROSPA.com)
Forensic collision investigator
RoSPA East of England Region Co-ordinator

**This Month**

A day in front of the lens for me again in October with Rav Wilding from BBC's Crime Watch. He had been asked to do a motorcycle safety video in partnership with BMW and Police Bikesafe, hence my involvement.

We had a great day out on the roads in the sunshine observing Rav and offering advice as we went along our route. Observations and positioning being the main areas to be improved.

He really enjoyed his day and we all got a great deal out of it. I'll add the link to the video when it goes live in my next newsletter.

Motorcycle test have begun to tail off as we head into the winter months. My advice to all of my two wheeled friends, is don't throw a blanket over the bike and forget about until April. If you find yourself at a loose end on a sunny dry Sunday morning wheel it out and go for a gentle bumble on a familiar route to keep your skills up.

Ahoy shipmates

Before you hit delete, no I am not writing for the wrong newsletter!

The first frosty mornings are upon us as temperatures have fallen below zero for the first time this Autumn.

I have marvelled at many driver's ability to drive and navigate a motor vehicle whilst peering through the tiniest of portholes carved into the frozen windows. Who knew we had so many sailors living in Cambridgeshire. As a daily commuter on a motorcycle I am all too aware of my vulnerable status as stated in the Highway Code, which has now doubled in my opinion, as other road users cannot be bothered to throw an old sheet or stick a frost cap on top of their car at night so they can have trouble free travel the following morning.

As I am sure many of us have experimented with various solutions to a regular winter problem, my favourite is still to cover the car, better still put it in the garage (I would if my BMW RT was not in there), failing that scrape the windows – hot water poured over is the worst thing you can do, and even de-icer just does not quite cut it. Get out of bed 10 minutes early so you have time to do it properly. Make sure your screen wash is topped up with 50% solution to stop it freezing. Carry a bottle of water if you do not have heated washer jets so you can manually clean your screen.

Drink and Drug Driving campaign.

By the time I write my next newsletter the UK will have started the annual Christmas Drink Drive campaign, which will run through to January.

Whilst the inevitable press releases from Police Forces across the UK will put out a positive message of "fewer drivers caught drink driving" please remember this is on the back of fewer Roads Policing Vehicles on the road. The real concern is the rise in those people being arrested or hospitalised and prosecuted for drink driving having had a collision.

So many party goers spend weeks and hundreds of pounds planning their night out, but forget the most important part – how to get home safely at the end of a great night!

Group Visits

I have managed to get out and about in the region, and have met many of you, and given you an insight into my world as a Forensic Collision Investigator, the feedback from you has been great and I am so very grateful for the opportunity to share my knowledge and experiences. If you would like me to come and talk to your group please do get in touch.

Resources

Please remember the free RoSPA e-newsletter covering all safety matters including road-safety for all RoADAR members.

RoSPA's premier health & safety newsletter brings you the very latest safety news, expert views and advice.

Every issue includes news on road safety, workplace, home and public safety, also details of events you will find interesting! When you sign up you'll receive access to an exclusive collection of e-books covering a wide range of health and safety topics.

Don't miss out, sign-up via <https://www.rospace.com/safety-matters>

Catch up with some of you soon. Simon

Tailpipe



"No, I didn't park it there. It's a smart car; so it has a mind of its own. Apparently, it doesn't like being away from me all day."

(Artist unknown)