



Bedford Group RoSPA Advanced Drivers

RoSPA Advanced Drivers and Riders Accredited

Members Newsletter

May 2024

Visit the Bedford Group of RoSPA Advanced Drivers online at <http://www.road-a-bedford.org.uk>

 ROSPA is on Facebook. Join the Facebook Group at: [RoSPA Advanced Drivers and Riders](#)

OFFICERS		
Chairman	Martin Kidds	chairman@road-a-bedford.org.uk
Secretary		
Treasurer	David Worgan	treasurer@road-a-bedford.org.uk
Training Officer	(Vacancy)	
COMMITTEE MEMBERS		
Training Co-ordinator	David Chamberlain 01525 874436	training@road-a-bedford.org.uk
Webmaster	David Worgan	
Other Committee Members	Dougie Palmer, Tony Glasson, Jenny Holliday and Rosemary Whittington.	
Newsletter Editor	Val Jones	newsletter@road-a-bedford.org.uk

Welcome to the May 2024 issue of the Bedford Group of the RoSPA Advanced Drivers Newsletter.

Main topics:

Committee meeting & the future of the group

Members' meeting on Tues 18 June – guest speaker, PC Mark Fairclough - BCH Roads Policing

Recent test passes - Congratulations to David Worgan and Mary Arnold!

Snippets: The issue of confusing speed signs is raised by one of our members, and dealing with electric car fires and distractions on dashboards are discussed.

Quiz based on Roadcraft (2020) Chapter 3 – Information, Observation & Anticipation

Val Jones

May 2024

Quarterly newsletter

I am aware that I suggested a more slimline format was planned but I got carried away! You haven't had one for a while so deserve a detailed edition!

Members are reminded that the newsletter and past editions can always be picked up from our website.

Val Jones – Newsletter Editor

Congratulations are in order

For **David Worgan** who recently achieved a **Gold Instructors pass with RoSPA**

And also to our long-standing car Tutor **Mary Arnold** who achieved another **Gold at her recent retest** with her examiner Carl Mann.

Reminders

If you are waiting to be allocated a Tutor, you are advised to purchase and read the current edition of Roadcraft (2020) and The Official Highway Code (2022).

When you are allocated a Tutor, you are advised to **make contact within a four-week period**.

Drives can be arranged at a mutually convenient time. If contact has not been made within the four-week period, you may be put back on the waiting list to allow another member access.

Remember to forward details on your test passes, dates and grades to secretary@roada-bedford.org.uk to ensure we have the correct details and can celebrate your successes.

Have you been notified by RoSPA that you are due a retest?

If so, **the group offers an observed drive to members ahead of a retest**. Let us know if you would like to book an observed drive through our Training Co-ordinator? training@roada-bedford.org.uk

If we have the relevant details of your last test in our membership records, we can anticipate when a request may be forthcoming.

Snippets:

Speed restrictions near schools.

The issue of speed restrictions near schools was raised by one of our members Carol O' Brian who observed conflicting information with speed signs near a local school.

RoSPA advises that any hazard should be to be the subject to caution. Approaching schools particularly at the beginning and end of school day demand that other road users should always proceed with extreme care.



Committee update

The Committee met on 30 April after a gap of a few months.

We were kindly hosted by Martin Smith from Bedford Fire and Rescue Service at their Training Centre at Kempston.

We were pleased to welcome Dougie Palmer to his first committee meeting, in preparation for the hoped-for adoption of a motorbike section.

We reflected as always on the support of our members, the majority of whom continue to stay with us following covid and beyond. However, we will soon need new members to join the committee as we have committee members standing down at the next AGM.

Martin Kidds informed the committee he does not intend to seek nomination as Chair and Secretary, instead looking to pick up the role of Training Officer. This would be in keeping with and utilise the recent Level Three Advanced training he completed.

In addition, David Worgan also informed us he intends to step down as Treasurer and a committee member. He has fulfilled this role since 2018 with prowess, ensuring the group's accounts are always in excellent order, and will be missed. He will continue as Webmaster and car Tutor.

The question now arises as to whether we have a viable committee since we will soon have a number of vacancies. We need a Chair, Secretary and Treasurer - these are crucial roles we need to fill.

We recognise the group would benefit from new committee members to support the

development of the group. Ideally, we could also benefit from active committee members and additional tutors particularly if we can revive the Better Driving Course and recruit new members. We do have Dougie's offer of support and a potential way to grow the group through the bike section.

As we want to get things moving in a positive direction relatively quickly, a meeting was proposed to invite any members interested in joining our committee for Tuesday 11 June.

If we get a strong committee, we have every chance of continuing as a group. The alternative we may need to consider is to merge with another group or fold. Martin will consult RoSPA headquarters for advice on what happens in that eventuality.

Date for the Diary – Members' Meeting.

Group members are invited to join us for an informal session to find out more about the work of the committee on **Tuesday 18 June 2024.**

**** Guest speaker - PC Mark Fairclough - BCH Roads Policing ****

At the Training Centre, Bedfordshire Fire and Rescue Service, Southfields Road, Kempston, Bedford, MK42 7NR.

Refreshments – tea and cake!

All welcome – please RSVP to secretary@rodaa-bedford.org.uk.

BBC News Essex, April

Why electric car fires are so hard to extinguish

Story by Laurence Cawley - BBC News, Essex

Each year, Essex Fire and Rescue Service focuses on one area of "top-up" training for its crews. In recent years, this has included sessions on firefighting at height and managing hazardous materials. This year, a new course is being introduced: How to deal with electric vehicle fires. Why?

Station manager Terry Maher has recently taken on a new role within the fire service.

A hazardous material expert, he is now the service's lead officer on tackling lithium-ion battery fires.

His new responsibility comes as the number of electric vehicles (EVs) on UK roads hits more than 540,000. And the number is rising fast.

And while Mr Maher stresses EV fires are rare, they pose a challenge quite unlike a conventionally fuelled vehicle fire.

The batteries - the source of the fire - are often hard to reach, he says, and EV fires can create directional jet flames and vapour cloud explosions.



EV fires also create a variety of toxic chemicals both in the air and in the water run-off if firefighters use hoses to keep the flames in check.

"Our preferred approach is to let them burn themselves out," says Mr Maher.

Not all recovery companies will take damaged cars away, says Mr Maher, either because they are concerned about handling a burned EV or because they do not have the right recovery vehicles (EVs cannot be towed, because the turning of the back wheels generates power).

In one incident last year involving a Tesla, police and firefighters had to wait more than four hours for a specialist recovery vehicle to arrive.

Electric cars are also known to reignite "up to two or three weeks after the initial fire", says Mr Maher, meaning they must be "quarantined" away from other vehicles even after the fire appears to have been put out.



Mr Maher says Essex Fire and Rescue has already started recording all EV fires ahead of a possible Home Office move to make such recording mandatory © BBC

"Dealing with a petrol or diesel car fire would normally take about 30 minutes," he says. "With an EV fire we're looking at four or five hours or longer, if we've used water.

"As more and more people use electric vehicles we can expect more and more electric vehicle fires."

What exactly this means for fire services is unclear, however - not least because of the paucity of available data.



Last summer, the Office for Zero Emission Vehicles produced a guidance

paper on dealing with EV fires in confined spaces such as car parks.

The document said that while car fires were "less likely to occur" in EVs than in hybrid, petrol or diesel vehicles, this would "need to be monitored as fire risk may increase as cars age and as EVs become more affordable to a wider range of drivers".

It also recommended car parks increased the spacing between electric vehicles to reduce the risk of fires spreading between vehicles.

Mr Maher says the issue of spacing around EVs is likely to become increasingly pressing as ownership increases.



While not started by an electric vehicle, the fire at Luton Airport last year did end involve EVs

While not started by an electric vehicle, [the fire at Luton Airport last year](#) did end up involving EV, he says, and laid the bare the potential consequences of fires spreading from one vehicle to another.

He says he is in discussions with Stansted Airport about measures it can take regarding parked electric vehicles.

Riccardo la Torre, national officer at the Fire Brigades Union, says tackling battery fires is a "complex and difficult" task.

"Battery fires present another growing risk for our shrinking fire service to handle," he says.

"With the progression of greener technologies, electric vehicles are becoming increasingly common on our roads. This means more batteries, and therefore an increase in battery fires.

"Tackling these intense fires is a complex and difficult operation for firefighters. Each of these incidents requires significant time and resources. But with close to 12,000 firefighter jobs cut since 2010, our service is already seriously overstretched.

"We urgently need the government to invest in our fire service so that firefighters have the resources they need to safely tackle new hazards such as electric vehicle fires.

"We need research into battery storage and fires, and specialised training and equipment to tackle them. Battery manufacturing, usage and storage must be properly regulated to keep our communities and firefighters safe."

The Home Office said: "The government is committed to ensuring fire services have the resources they need to keep the public safe and in 2023-24 they will receive around £2.6bn."

The BBC contacted the Society of Motor Manufacturers and Traders for comment but received no response.

Driven to Distraction



Ray Massey, a motoring editor in a national newspaper, recently raised the issue of distractions caused by developments in technology in many modern motor vehicles.

We are reminded that touching your smartphone while driving can result in six penalty points on your licence and a £200 fine, unless it's secured in a properly fitted cradle. Do so within two years of passing your driving test and you will face a ban. As well as phoning, the offence covers texting, taking photos or videos and using apps.

That's because distraction whilst driving is seen as a serious road safety issue by the authorities and Department for Transport data has it as a contributing factor in 17 per cent of road accidents and 29 per cent of road deaths in 2022.

Yet despite this, car makers are increasingly forcing motorists to use iPad tablet-style touchscreens and digital dashboards to control functions of the car.

The April Edition of "What Car?" Magazine ranks 20 leading cars on their levels of dashboard distraction, with Vauxhall Corsa and Suzuki's S-Cross as the most distracting and the BMW 5-series as the least.

Its own research shows nine in ten drivers prefer physical buttons. Six in ten say touchscreens have distracted them from safe driving.

Replacing traditional knobs, buttons, and physical switches with digital software certainly saves money!

Safety rating group Euro-NCAP has announced that from January 2026 it will mark down cars that don't have physical buttons for indicators hazard lights, horn windscreen wipers and SOS alerts.

Setting the satnav can safely be done before setting off on your journey when the car is stationary and out of gear.

May 2024 quiz is based on Roadcraft Chapter 3 : Information, Observation & Anticipation

Distraction can affect observation and hazard perception, making anticipation of hazards more difficult.

What is a hazard?

1) Name the three main types of hazard:

Planning: Safer driving depends on systematically using the

information you gather from observation

2) Hence good planning depends on _____ observation and _____ anticipation of risk.

3)The purpose of planning is to put you:

- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____

.....to negotiate hazards safely and efficiently.

4) Anticipating hazards gives you extra _____

5) How can you prioritise multiple hazards?

- _____
- _____
- _____

Practice applying the three stages of planning during every journey until you do it automatically, even when you are driving under pressure (p.51).

Roadcraft – The Police Drivers Handbook 2020 - notes:

“If you use a Satnav at night, make sure it is positioned so that it doesn't obstruct your vision in the dark, and its screen doesn't dazzle you. Use the aural prompts whenever possible (Page 71). This also applies to daylight hours. Good observation and awareness of any potential hazard are a key for any road user.”