

CHAIRMAN'S Intro

Well we are certainly entering a very interesting time to be a driver, with cars that drive themselves, Trucks connected using Wifi, learner drivers soon to be on our motorways, cyclist being prosecuted for doing wrong, it's a bit like the worlds gone mad.

Being old and set in my ways, I view all this reliance on computers and wifi with a very large dose of scepticism, just to prove my point, whilst writing this, my PC gave a loud bonging noise notifying me that my Wifi signal had dropped out, not a great problem to me, I just had a cup of tea and hey presto it was back. Not sure that I'd fancy being near one of these truck "chains" when that happened.

Is the technology really that reliable now? Another point is that there was a massive campaign a few years back to stop Continental Trucks, which carried heavier payloads using UK roads, as the roads were deemed "unsuitable for 44 Tonnes".

3 modestly small trucks of 17 Tons all running in close proximity to each other, I make that 51 Tons on 12 wheels.

Then take a scenario where all three trucks leave say Leeds, to go to Lewes, but to different addresses, do they then need drivers to take them the final few miles, its gonna be interesting.

I feel much the same about driverless cars, some may say I

have an axe to grind, as I earn my incredibly modest living from teaching people to drive, there needs to be computer systems that are crash proof running these things.

If the technology is there for totally crash proof computers, I want one now.

As for cyclists, well I will leave that rant for another time.

If all of the above makes me sound like a grumpy old man, that's because I am now officially a Grumpy Old Man, having recently reached the three score year milestone.

As for learner drivers on motorways, this can only be a good thing; training drivers to use what are our fastest and busiest roads; we can ignore the scaremongering from TV etc, that instructors will take incompetent and dangerous learners on motorways.

Having been in the industry many years and knowing many Driving Instructors, and Trainers, I can safely say, that they all have this one thing in common; they all want to go home at the end of the day for their tea, so they aren't going to risk taking people on motorways unless they are sure that the learner can deal with it.

I really enjoyed working with my predecessor Dave Bradley, setting up the Treasure Hunt for members back in July, which those who took part in seemed to thoroughly enjoy. Numbers were as usual a bit

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low, which is a shame as a lot of work goes into organising this and other events for you all.

I can only think that maybe we are not putting on the events that the members want, so I hereby put out a heartfelt plea to you all. Let me know what you want and I will do my utmost to make it happen.

Pete Hodd Chairman

It's not the winning that counts!

By Kathy Blythe

What's Beddingham in East Sussex got to do with anything? Well, that was the ultimate answer to Sussex Advanced Drivers' Group Treasure Hunt, which took place on a warm (ish) but definitely overcast evening of Thursday 27th July.

So, whilst the privileged few sat awaiting our arrival, we drove up and down and on and off the A27, practicing many right turns as we did so (good job it wasn't commute time). Driving in and out of some very beautiful Sussex villages such as,

meant to be looking for the clues such as *'It supplies the power for Pavarotti and friends'* and *'An agricultural purveyor of commestables on the A27'* and *'He sells intoxicating beverages between two thorns'* and so on.

Who won? You may well ask. Well it wasn't my team, that's for sure, because we failed to complete the lines of the crossword each time we found the answer to a clue so it wasn't until we reached journey's end at the final clue *'You will find us in a hostelry where harvesters rest after a day in the fields cutting corn. Come and join us.'* that we discovered our 'well thought out' answers wouldn't fit the boxes!!

Ah well, there's always next year and you bet we'll be much better prepared with our winning strategy and strategically placed diversion signs!!

Written by a driver who lost but who has definitely mastered awkward right turns and avoidance of distractions!

Instead of our usual evening meeting at St John Ambulance HQ in Hollingbury, Brighton, we met in the car park of County Hall, Lewes and rose willingly (albeit some of us doubtfully) to the challenge set by our Chairman, Pete Hodd to seek out the treasure.

Four cars with six members plus partners and friends were dispatched at timed intervals into the wilds of the East Sussex countryside whilst the chairman and our previous chairman and their partners enjoyed a meal and, no doubt, a few private jokes and bets over who would win the coveted prizes of two bottles of wine and a box of chocs!

Glyndebourne, Glynde, Firle, Selmeaton and Alciston, we admired the gorgeous houses and frequently forgot we were



Recent Successes

Congratulations to the following that have passed their test and/or retest during the past few months:

Frank Miszler and Ed Feldmanis retained their Diplomas;
Gold passes were achieved by Alan Quayle, Julia White,

Tracey France, David McKnight, Nigel Lofting; Silver achieved by Philip Price; There may be others who have recently undertaken tests/retests whose results I have not been advised.

Please let me know of any test results so that our records can

be kept up to date. Please also advise of any other changes, ie addresses, telephone numbers, emails etc so that we can make sure you receive your newsletters and any other relevant information.

Gwyn Davies
(membershipsecretary@mail.com)

HAVE YOU EVER CONSIDERED BECOMING A TUTOR?

(Those Who Can, Teach)

I would imagine that many of you reading this newsletter are either preparing for your advanced driving test, or have already passed it, with the help of a tutor. Tutors are the lifeblood of our Group. Indeed, without tutors we would not be able to help any associates pass their advanced driving test and there would be no reason for the Group to exist at all. It may surprise you then to know that there are currently only 16 active tutors in the Group, covering the whole of East and West Sussex and some parts of Surrey. And we have a growing waiting list of people wanting to join our Group and take the advanced driving test.

So if you have passed the RoSPA advanced driving test at the Silver or Gold level, your Group needs you! Please consider volunteering to become a tutor.

All we ask of our tutors is that they commit to helping at least one associate per year. Some of our current tutors do more, a lot more. That is because they find the experience of helping someone improve their driving, who perhaps comes to them lacking in confidence behind

the wheel, so rewarding. The times and days of the week that you make yourself available for tutoring are up to you; you fit them around your lifestyle and circumstances.

If you are a little apprehensive about volunteering, do not worry. We will provide you with training and guidance before assigning you your first associate. As an added bonus, tutors do not pay annual membership fees to the Group. (You will still have to pay your annual fee to RoSPA, which covers the cost of your 3-yearly retests.)

If you are interested in becoming a tutor, then please contact the Training Officer, Ed Feldmanis, on edgarfeldmanis@me.com.

Editorial

There have been recent reports of a breakthrough in fuel technology which could drastically reduce the emissions produced by your engine and also save you fuel. The company claims that by introducing small amounts of Hydrogen additive to an engine they will reduce harmful emissions by 80%.

Driverless lorries on UK roads?

The UK Government has recently announced that it will permit driverless lorries on UK roads by the end of 2019. An automated system created by the Transport Research Laboratory will enable trucks to drive much closer, serving to reduce congestion and increase fuel economy because of reduced air resistance. The trial is based on three lorries in convoy. The front one will dictate the speed and braking of all three. The driver of the leading lorry will steer and communicate with the rest of the convoy by wireless tech. Transport Minister Paul Maynard hopes that any saving in transport costs will be passed on to the consumer. He said, "but first we must make sure the technology is safe and works well on our roads, and that's why we are investing in these trials." There are however safety concerns. Blocking of motorway slip roads being one of them. Obstruction of road signs or cars getting between the lorries are others, and hacking of the technology is a real risk.

The Benefit of Zip-Merging: or Why drivers who merge at the last minute are right:

Ever been infuriated by the sight of cars passing you in the outside lane while you wait patiently in the queue for a lane-closure ahead?

You're not alone, but that doesn't necessarily make you right.

Indeed, many argue those 'queue-jumpers' are actually helping the flow of traffic by zip-merging, even if that might not be their intention...

What exactly is zip-merging?

Zip-merging originated from America as a traffic flow measure that drivers are supposed to adopt when a motorway lane or dual lane closes leaving only one lane available.

It is intended that drivers merge at the point of the lane closure instead of indicating early and merging as soon as possible.

Should people zip merge?

Studies reveal that zip-merging reduces crashes, speeding and congestion.

In 2008, a study by Ken Johnson, a state work zone engineer in Minnesota, found three primary benefits of using zip-merging, which can be summarised as follows:

- A reduction in the difference in speeds between the two lanes: without the urgency to move over, the traffic is travelling at roughly the same speed in both lanes, making the merge easier and safer.
- The length of queue is reduced by up to 50%, which is critical in areas where you

find junctions and slip roads.

- When nobody has a perceived advantage, the potential for 'road rage' is reduced significantly.

The UK government seems to agree, although this is a little grey.

The Highway Code says, "You should follow the signs and road markings and get into the lane as directed."

"In congested road conditions do not change lanes unnecessarily.

"Merging in turn is recommended but only if safe and appropriate when vehicles are travelling at a very low speed, e.g. when approaching road works or a road traffic incident. It is not recommended at high speed."

What's the issue with zip merging?

When motorists encounter a lane closure on a motorway or dual carriageway, the majority of drivers follow the etiquette of moving over early, but this creates one long, slow line of traffic and a near-empty outside lane.

While motorists on the inside lane might think they're doing the right thing, it can be more beneficial to continue using the open lane until the last minute, utilising all of the available road and then 'merging in turn' at the point at which the road narrows to a single lane. However, many drivers find it annoying to watch fellow motorists using the outside lane

as they sit stationary on the inside.

But if we remove good old-fashioned British queuing etiquette from the equation taking all emotion out of the scenario, the plain and simple fact is that two lanes of slow moving traffic are better than one.

So if cars use all of the space available to them on both lanes, it should result in the line of congestion disappearing, or at the very least reduced.

Conclusion

The crux of the issue comes down to education, or a lack of, about what is the correct driving practice.

If all drivers were taught the same, to use all of the space available on the road, then some drivers would no longer feel aggrieved when motorists try to cut in front of them, as indeed other drivers would no longer adopt a queue-jumping mentality in the first place.

A wider acceptance of zip-merging therefore requires a change in driving habits, and it could be argued this falls to the government to better highlight it, driving schools to teach more universally, more accurate signage along roads or all of the above.

Errol Taylor appointed as new chief executive

The Royal Society for the Prevention of Accidents' Board of Trustees is delighted to announce the appointment of Errol Taylor as the charity's new chief executive.

Errol, who has been leading the organisation in an interim capacity since November 2016, joined RoSPA in 2004, initially heading up RoSPA's commercial activities.

98% surge in Drug Driving Charges

Back in March 2015 new road-side drug screening devices were introduced, together with new driving limits for a string of prescription drugs.

The result of this is that nearly four drivers are being taken off the road every day for drug offences.

"This change in law has enabled us to prosecute thousands more dangerous drivers who may have previously escaped detection yet still presented a very serious threat to other road users," said National Police Chiefs' Council spokesman Chief Constable Anthony Bangham.

"Far too many people still attempt to drive under the influence of drugs. We are better prepared to catch them than ever before and will ensure that they face the full penalty of law."

Conviction rates are at 98%, the same as for drink driving, after changes to the law allowed police to use "drugalysers" to test for

cannabis and cocaine at the roadside.

They can also test for other substances with blood tests at police stations, without having to first gather evidence that the driver was impaired, as was previously the case.

Matt Lloyd, Confused.com motoring expert said, "There is however, another area for concern around the level of awareness amongst drivers when it comes to how certain medications can affect a person's driving ability," While illegal drugs such as heroin, cocaine and cannabis are obviously included in the drug-driving laws, there are a string of far more innocuous remedies that could see you banned

Over-the-counter drugs including codeine, for example, could see you banned. While many other drugs could potentially cause problems because they induce drowsiness.

"This is particularly alarming given the current time of year, especially as more than a third

of motorists admit to suffering from hay fever, with many resorting to medication to help combat the symptoms - despite the potential risks of drowsiness and reduced concentration levels,"

Confused.com's Lloyd said.

"Our advice is simple, before taking any medication people should always read the safety leaflet before driving.

Or if unsure they should ask the pharmacist or err on the side of caution and don't drive, as road safety for themselves and others should be a top priority for any driver."

Here's the Government's full list of legal medication that can result in a drug-driving charge:

- amphetamine, eg dexamphetamine or selegiline
- clonazepam
- diazepam
- flunitrazepam
- lorazepam
- methadone
- morphine or opiate and opioid-based drugs, eg codeine, tramadol or fentanyl
- oxazepam
- temazepam

Motorists having their say on the new driving test

One in three motorists believe that changes to the practical driving test, set to be introduced on December 4, will not improve safety on the nation's roads.

According to a poll of 2,000 UK licence holders, almost half are unhappy about the addition of a new pulling up on the opposite side of the road parking manoeuvre that replaces the 'reverse around a corner' and

'three point turn'.

An experienced driving instructor said, "The three point turn will soon become a 'lost skill' that has taught learners how to control the biting point of the clutch whilst having to monitor their surroundings at all times.

Many are unhappy that there's no inclusion of teaching better road etiquette- with issues such as not tailgating, middle-lane hogging, or phone use at the top of the list of bad behaviours. This could help minimise stress levels.

Percentage of drivers who wanted the following skill or behaviour added to the test:

Skill/Behaviour	%
Motorway driving	73
Night time driving	66
Tailgating	65
Middle lane hogging	52
Indicating etiquette	52
Improved cyclist awareness	49
All weather driving	47
Selfish parking	36
Thank you wave	20
Financial knowledge	18

Source: Confused.com

Programme for Meetings 2017/18

Date	Speaker	Confirmed/TBC
28 September 2017	"Fancy a Cuppa?" David Robins	Confirmed
30 November 2017	Talk followed by Out and About Night Driving Ed Feldmanis	Confirmed
25 January 2018	The Advanced Driving Test Dave Taylor	Confirmed
29 March 2018		TBC
31 May 2018	AGM + Presentation	TBC
26 July 2018		TBC
27 September 2018	Children's Road Safety Keith Baldock Brighton and Hove City Council Road Safety Officer	Confirmed

Group Secretary's notes:

All meetings are held at:

St John Ambulance, 16 Crowhurst Road, Hollingbury, Brighton, BN1 8AP

Start time: 7.30 for 8pm

To ensure you are kept informed of news and extra activities arranged for the group, please could all members and associate members let us know of any changes to your contact details so that we can update the group's database.

Kathy Blythe: kathy.blythe@btinternet.com

Sussex RoSPA

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