



RoADAR CHAT

The Sussex Group of Advanced Car Drivers

Group Newsletter

December 2006

Vol 2 Issue 3



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Latest News

I hope you all enjoyed a super Christmas and on behalf of our Committee I would like to wish all our Members and Associates a Happy New Year.

Now that I am driving to and from work again after my 3 months off, I have noticed how heavy the traffic is at peak times and how the long queues are, when trying to get to Lewes and home. This is frustrating some drivers, who are taking big risks to hopefully gain a few seconds. The serious tailgating and erratic unplanned overtakes over white lines is becoming more frequent.

It is not a good way to start my working week when I log on at work and read about 3 deaths on the road in East Sussex over the weekend, especially when they are all young.

We as advanced drivers should have the skills to avoid most crashes but it does not mean that we can drop our guard for a moment. When it goes wrong out there it can be split seconds between life and death so we must not drop our guard for one moment. Could I ask you all to make a resolution to introduce a minimum of one driver to our scheme this year and perhaps we can spread the message a bit further and prevent more road users suffering pain and disfigurement.

David Bradley
Chairman

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SECRETARY'S CORNER

Talking to some of the attendees at last months meeting, it seems that you like the format of this newsletter. Over 2007, I am aiming to increase the size of the newsletter so if you have any feedback on the sort of thing you want to read in here, let me know. If anyone would like to write a review of any motoring related products, please call or e-mail me for a chat.



We were due to have a review of some different hands-free solutions in this issue. After some thought and discussion with some subject-matter experts, I think that the committee would like to advise members that, wherever possible, you should pull over to use your mobile. Our speaker in March will be exploring this topic in more detail and will have an article in the next newsletter.

If you haven't already, please forward your membership renewal fees to David Soames.

This year, we would like to organize a couple of social events in addition to the bi-monthly meetings. Suggestions please?

My contact details are on the front of the newsletter

Adam Field

MEMBER BENEFITS

10% DISCOUNT ON MOTOR INSURANCE

Included with August's newsletter was a 10% discount card for Treble B Tyres in Hailsham, East Sussex.

I'd be interested in feedback from anyone who has made use of their discount card as to your opinions of the quality of service and prices at Treble B. Personally, I found them to be excellent on both fronts and have recommended them to friends and family.

In October, the committee have secured a 10% discount on motor vehicle insurance from 1 Answer Insurance in Hailsham.

1 Answer are an independent insurance broker and have qualified staff that will do all the searching for you to find the best cover.

If there are any other products or services that you think other group members would benefit from (discounted or otherwise), please drop me an e-mail or give me a call and let me know.

Adam Field

NOVEMBER MEETING REPORT

At the November meeting, the speaker was Malcolm Taylor on the subject of Air Traffic Control at Gatwick Airport.

Malcolm has 16 years experience working in Air Traffic Control at Gatwick Airport. He gave an overview of Air Traffic Control in the UK, what it is and how it works plus information on who runs it. He also showed us a newspaper clipping about a near-miss that happened when he was training someone.

It was a very enjoyable evening and a good time was had by all.



NEXT MEETING DATE

Date: 25th January 2007 (Thursday)
Venue: Sussex Police HQ, Lewes
Time: 7.30pm-9.30pm

Details: The speaker for this meeting will be Dr. Hal Sosabowski, talking about drink driving.

Directions: Sussex Police HQ is situated just off the A26 in Lewes.

Address: Malling House, Church Lane, Lewes, East Sussex, BN7 2DZ

Upcoming Meetings and Events

Date	Details
29/03/2007	AGM and Dr Graham Hole
31/05/2007	Speaker TBC
26/07/2007	Speaker TBC
27/09/2007	Speaker TBC
29/11/2007	Speaker TBC

Editors note: We hope to be able to fill out this calendar as the year progresses ☺



TRAINING OFFICER'S NEWS

The Tutor Training Course will be going ahead this month. I would like to emphasise that this is a 'pilot course' and as a result of what happens the course content may need to change. We will have to see how it goes and whether or not it is suitable for our purposes.

Once we have trained all those who have expressed an interest in becoming tutors for the group we hope to use it as a 'refresher' for our established tutors so that we will have in place an established training programme and every tutor will be using the same system.

The 'Guidelines' will be amended as necessary and 'Training Records' introduced. Although RoSPA has stated that Tutors may be either Gold or Silver, we are only using Tutors that have a Gold grade. We have a very good record and want that to continue. If there is anyone out there with a Gold grade and is interested in becoming a Tutor then please contact me.

I have recently finished reading a book called 'Mind Driving' by Stephen Haley. In my opinion it is a very good book and well worth purchasing. It should give you a new insight into good driving techniques and challenge some of your thinking. If you have difficulty obtaining a copy it can be purchased direct from the Driving Instructors Association telephone number 0845 345 5151 at a cost of £12.99.

Just a thought about 'car parking' Do you always reverse into a space when you use a car park? If not consider the advantages:-

You are reversing into a space you can see into which must be better than reversing out into somewhere you can't.

You can pull away more easily with a cold engine by driving off without having to struggle in reverse thereby reducing wear and tear on your vehicle.

For personal safety you will be able to exit a parking space more quickly.

Concentration on the 'driving task' may not always be at a premium when you first move off.

David Raine

NEWSLETTER FORMAT

At a recent meeting, several members expressed a wish to receive the newsletter via e-mail instead of a printed copy by post.

If you would like to receive future copies of the newsletter by e-mail, please complete and return the form below.

NAME: _____

POSTAL ADDRESS: _____

E-MAIL ADDRESS: _____

SIGNATURE: _____

Please return this form to: Adam Field, 30 Cabot Close, Eastbourne, East Sussex. BN23 6RT

LATEST NEWS

Stronger Penalties for Mobile Phone Use

The legislation to increase the penalty for using a hand-held phone while driving is scheduled to come into force on 27 February 2007.

The change is being made under section 26 of the Road Safety Act 2006 which received Royal Assent on 8 November 2006. The Act contains other measures to help achieve casualty reduction targets and improve safety on Britain's roads.

Details of the changes are as follows:

- The use of a hand-held phone, or similar hand-held devices, while driving has been prohibited since 1 December 2003.
- The current £30 roadside fixed penalty notice for driving whilst using a hand-held phone will increase to £60 and three penalty points added to the drivers' license.
- Provided that a phone can be operated without holding it, then hands-free equipment is not prohibited although DfT advice will remain that drivers should not use a mobile in the car at any time.

Using a phone when driving has been scientifically proven to be distracting. Those who drive poorly as the result of distraction from a conversation on a hands-free phone continue to risk prosecution for not having proper control of a vehicle - this is a specific offence under Regulation 104 of the Road Vehicles (Construction and Use) Regulations 1986. The penalties are exactly the same as for the hand-held phone offence.

Our speaker in March will be exploring the topic of mobile phone use whilst driving. Details of this meeting will be in the February newsletter.



Driving Under The Influence

December is a time of year when the police traditionally crack down on people drinking and driving and next month's speaker will be talking about the effects of drinking and driving from a doctor's perspective.

As a taxi driver in Eastbourne, I often see people who are driving under the influence or DUI. You can usually spot a DUI driver by the way they hug the nearside kerb, driving at exactly the speed limit because they think that the white car with the light on top that's driving behind them is a police car.

That's just my personal experience. A report like this wouldn't be complete without statistics so here goes.

A recent survey carried out for one of the UK's largest insurers found that almost two-thirds of British drivers believe that they are perfectly safe to drink and drive, and one in 10 believe they can drink more than the legal limit this Christmas and still be safe behind the wheel.

This flies in the face of the advice of experts who insist that even a single pint of beer or glass of wine can reduce reaction times, cause loss of concentration and impair judgement.

The survey also fed back data on the differing attitudes to drink-driving around the UK. The most dangerous area of the country for drink-driving is the North West, where 66 per cent of respondents considered it safe to drink and drive, and 16 per cent would still do so when over the legal blood-alcohol limit.

The safest region surveyed was the North East, where only 51 per cent of respondents admitted to drink driving, and 12 per cent said they would drive over the limit.

It's not just alcohol that is a problem though. It's normally this time of year when everyone is hit by a bug or cold or flu derivative. In a separate survey by the same insurance company, more than half (54 per cent) of British motorists indicated that they would be likely to take to the roads while feeling under the weather or on medication. Nearly a fifth (18 per cent) admitted their driving had been negatively affected as a result during the past 12 months.

One in ten, the equivalent of 3.3 million drivers, admitted they had lost concentration at the wheel due to an impaired reaction caused by illness or medication.

Despite the side effects, such as drowsiness, that everyday cold or flu remedies can have, a quarter of drivers admitted to rarely or never checking the side effects of their remedies before setting off, and a third of drivers said there was nothing wrong with driving while on this type of medication.

Conversely, eight in ten drivers would amend their behaviour if they discovered a medicine they were about to take might affect their driving, with a third (36 per cent) holding off taking the medicine until after having driven, and a quarter (24 per cent) not driving at all.

Drive safely this winter and look after yourselves as well as your vehicles.

Adam Field

LATEST NEWS

National Toll Plans Revealed

Initial plans for a national road tolls system have been revealed in new bill currently before parliament. The proposed Transport for London (Supplemental Toll Provisions) Bill is designed to allow further road toll schemes to be introduced in Greater London.

However, the wording suggests the government has already settled on national tolling equipment. It states that the transport minister can prevent introduction of new toll roads in Greater London that use equipment "incompatible with a national standard."

It's thought that Continental-style 'credit' charge cards will be used. The toll is deducted from the windscreen-mounted card when the car passes under a roadside reader. It's also expected that the bill will be used as the basis for the nationwide introduction of tolling expected to be rolled out in the West Midlands and North West.

When the bill is passed it will give Transport for London the ability to introduce road charging on individual roads including busy commuting routes such as the M4/A4 and M3/A3.

There are also provisions for jail terms of up to six months for 'interfering' with on-board tolling equipment and obscuring number plates. Officials will even have the power to enter individual vehicles to check the on-board equipment.

Adam Field