



RoADAR Avon Group Newsletter March 2007

Editor's Piece

Hello everyone,

Thank you to everyone who got in touch after the last newsletter and for making a contribution to this one. I enjoy getting feedback from you and will print your opinions (positive or negative). This is your group and you have a right to voice your opinions so keep them coming in.

I endeavour to publish a newsletter every two months. Please can any articles be forwarded to me by **21st May**. The next Newsletter should then reach you by end of May. If you want to receive your newsletter via email then let me know. Many Thanks for your help.

Cheryl Lenny
Editor

Chat from the Chair

Spring is approaching and soon we hope to have some more very useful training by our very own Ian Tremlett for new associates, but, anyone wishing to come along will be very welcome, we all learn something new on these occasions.

The committee have been looking into the cost of skid pans, where I am sure we could all have a good laugh and pick up some extremely useful advice.

May I remind you all that the car engine must be switched off if you wish to use your mobile phone whilst in the car.

Why is the Government not introducing a ban on hands-free mobiles as well?

Drivers should remember that the police can use existing legislation if a motorist is distracted by a call on a hands-free phone. If there is an accident and the driver is using a phone, then there is a risk of prosecution for dangerous driving. The AA Motoring Trust also reminds drivers that research shows that drivers who use hands-free phones are four times as likely to be involved in an accident.

Val Clare
Chairperson

Annual General Meeting

The AGM is fast approaching and the committee looks forward to seeing you all there. Our guest speaker Emma Middleton is the Development Coordinator for RoSPA Driver and Fleet Solutions. Emma joined in June 2005 after completing a psychology degree. Emma is responsible for products and services and her aim is to increase the benefits to members which already include a 25% discount on RAC.

Come along to the AGM and have your say about the future of RoADAR. Are there things that should be done differently? It's your chance to help make some changes. See you there!

Articles about driving and riding

All letters in this publication are the views of their authors and do not necessarily represent the views of RoADAR and/or RoSPA.

Three Phrases

There are numerous catch phrases used in driving, in most of which the meaning is obvious. However, just occasionally, one comes across a simple phrase which has a hidden depth of knowledge but it may not be apparent at the time. I am going to present three such phrases which I have come across in over thirty years of being actively involved in all levels of advanced driving.

The first phrase I came across was in December 1973 when I first met Derek Van Petegem who was an advanced wing instructor at the Hendon driving school, but spent most of his time there teaching on the skid pan. After the exhilarating display which he and Dennis Johnston gave on the skid pan, I had a moment to ask Derek a question before we moved on to the next part of our tour of the driving school. The 70mph speed limit had been introduced for all roads including motorways in 1965 but, we had had the most superb high speed demo drive by Sgt Pat Forbes with an equally astounding commentary, so it was not out of order to ask the question, 'What is the art of driving fast?'. The answer in, as I came to know it well, Derek's quiet, thoughtful and modest manner was, 'The art of driving fast is knowing when to go slowly'. 'Good one', I thought and obviously something to think on. It wasn't until some years later, after much practice and further tuition that I came to realise the

full meaning of this statement. Whether you are on open roads or in a built up area, the principle is the same. Learning to drive safely on roads develops a much more acute awareness of threats. Safety on the road is increased for anyone who really applies it. Driver's who reduce their speed and risk at any time they see anything which might compromise their safety will benefit.

The second gem of a phrase came from a former Devizes instructor who worked on traffic in Devon and Cornwall called Alan Down. He kindly agreed to give me a drive which he did in my 2500 E3 BMW saloon. He got into the car and after a few moments of pleasantries started his briefing. This ended with the simple statement, 'I don't mind how fast you go so long as it's safe'. To me that was an act of great faith on his behalf, because we hadn't met before. Alan's statement meant in the 30 zones (and there were only 30's then) it was smack on the line but on the open road, so long as it is safe. It was from this statement of Alan's that I evolved the concept that in driving, everything you do has to be related to safety or else it is irrelevant and that also led to what I call the safety triangle.

The third phrase came last November when I re-took my IAM test with a former Devizes instructor called Andy Ware. The police driving schools in those days of the seventies and eighties particularly were well known for the standards they represented. We discussed driving and I mentioned about the common belief that a good following distance, for example in a built up area was two seconds. Also, when I have done seminars or workshops, (often with Advanced Driving Instructors present),

I have asked, 'What would be your recommended following distance in seconds assuming you were not planning to overtake?' The stock Highway Code reply was given, 'Two seconds' And then I would say, 'Yes, but with one important word missing', 'Minimum'. Because at two seconds you are going to have a hard job to avoid hitting the one in front if it does an emergency stop. Also, at police driving schools the normal recommended following distance is three to four seconds. You can pull up comfortably and nicely under control and can see much further ahead past the vehicles in front. As I said to Andy Ware, 'It's a question of always being able to pull up calmly and under control, is it not?' To which he replied that he always used to ask his pupils, "Can you stop the vehicle UNDRAMATICALLY?" The single most important word in all these phrases is 'undramatically' which means really smoothly.

When you put these three phrases together you also find them supporting the main themes which are often mentioned in terms of safety and road driving; the need to have both space and time. And these phrases together give you all of that. Space and time are qualities which are often talked about but few apply them really well. Remember - You have control!

Nigel Albright

This article has been shortened quite a bit but if you would like to read the unedited version please email Nigel for a copy at driving@ndaa.co.uk

Have your Say!

Dear Editor,

When I became Senior Road Safety Officer for South Gloucestershire you very kindly made me an honorary member and as a retired police traffic officer and a police advanced instructor I very much appreciated being given that membership.

However two contributions to your newsletter left me somewhat surprised. Firstly, the anonymous author who proudly uses his nine endorsement points as a signature. You then ask others if they are on nine points. I would have hoped that an organization that preaches safe driving would not expect its members to have any points, unless they had them before they started their training and then not to shout about it.

Another article was about having bought a Talax camera detector. A mine detector I can understand because no one knows where they might be planted and there are no warning signs, but why would a member of an advanced driving organization want to spend £100 on such a device. Surely, driving within the law is as much as anyone needs against disqualification?

Presumably The Fosseway is a road subject to the national speed limit so why shouldn't you enjoy it at full speed, 60mph, as an advanced driver.

Surely we all share a common purpose - making the roads safer and reducing the levels of killed and seriously injured casualties - that's what advanced driving is all about - not having a piece of equipment that is used not to get caught

speeding or glorying in endorsement points. Road safety is everyone's responsibility.

I trust and hope that the vast majority of your members will agree with me.

Alan Hale

Dear RoSPA members,

The comment about the nine points was written tongue-in-cheek. I apologise to anyone who took offence - let me reassure you that safe driving is paramount and our group do not glorify the endorsement of points – Ed.

Dear Editor,

Thank you for my first Newsletter as a new associate to the group.

May I make the following comments on reading the interesting and varied items.

Re: Talex speed camera detector

I am of the opinion that a driver should be alert at all times and concentrating on the road signage, speed limits in particular. The acquisition of a camera detector therefore seems superfluous if speed limits are adhered to, this being a basic 'rule of the road'.

Re: Is there a speed limit for motorcycles?

The power-to-weight ratio of an average motorcycle is far superior to the majority of their four-wheeled companions on the road. A Yamaha 'R1' (1000 cc) bike, for instance, produces in excess of 150 bhp

with a dry weight of 177 kgs! A 0 - 60 mph of under 3 seconds is achievable leaving any Ferrari, Porsche trailing in their wake!

I enjoyed the many pleasures of motorcycling from the age of 16yrs (mobility, wind in the hair - a crash helmet wasn't mandatory, easy parking etc) before learning to drive. I quickly became aware of the vulnerability of two wheels and my experience of using the roads on two wheels greatly prepared me for the transition to four - understanding gear-selection, use of clutch, positioning on the road etc. In fact, I carried forward the motorcyclists' habit of a quick glance over their shoulder before changing direction, overtaking etc. when I started driving. The temptation to use or misuse the vehicle's power at one's disposal is, in the end, the user's decision.

Perhaps the irresponsible rider of a 'superbike' is no different from the driver of a 'supercar' - both are an unnecessary menace to fellow road users. Suffice to say that the 'biker' will always come off worse in a collision.

Re: Mobile phones

Is our government serious about the tackling the dangers of using mobile phones 'on the move'? As with many inventions humanity seems to find a way to use them irresponsibly e.g. the Internet. I would recommend that Police Officers be given the authority to stop offenders and destroy their phones on the spot. By all means issue a three-point penalty ticket and collect the fine as well. Let's treat these idiots with the contempt they deserve!

My personal gripe:

Are modern cars now built without a handbrake?

I feel that I'm not the only driver who has noticed that in a queue waiting at traffic lights, for instance, there are many cars whose drivers are waiting with their foot on the brake pedal. Thanks to the introduction/addition of high level brake lights I'm treated to the possibility of being dazzled by the car in front. This is particularly irritating/distracting on a dark, rainy night when the effects are magnified. There is at least one benefit of waiting behind a pre 'P' reg 'old banger' - you'll only have to put up with the glare from two normal brake lights! Does anyone have an explanation?

Trusting that my views are not too radical!

Best regards,

Marc Appleyard

**RoADAR Avon Group
New Associates for 2006/7**

Welcome to the following new Associates who have joined us since the last newsletter:-

*William Weatherill
Caroline Handley
Neil Moloney
Pradeep Karki
Steve Smith
Rob Jones
Mike Page*

All the best in your aim to passing your test and becoming a safer driver! We look forward to meeting you at the next meeting! If your name is not there please let us know for the next time.

Test Passes

Congratulations!!

Congratulations to *Ray Champion* who has passed his RoSPA re-test in both the car and LGV and achieved an excellent Gold grade in each. Well Done!

Have you recently passed your test at Bronze, Silver, Gold or Diploma level? Please let us know as we have no way of finding this out except by you telling us. Also, please remember to let your Observer know too! I will mention test passes and who your Observer was in the next newsletter. Thanks.

Volunteers wanted

Would you like to help us at this years **Bath and West Show** between 30th May and 2nd June? We hope to have a stand to advertise the RoSPA Avon Group and welcome potential members. Please volunteer if you would like to help before the 1st May. Volunteers will be provided with a free polo shirt. Contact Mark on 0117 951 8008 or email: Secretary@roda-avongroup.org for further details.

Skid Pan

Are you interested in having a try on the Skid Pan located at Castle Combe? It sounds like great fun to us and it would give you the opportunity to learn some new driving techniques at the same time. The cost to you would be at a maximum of £85.00 per person. Event dates to be confirmed. If you are interested then please contact James on 07917 810560 or email:events@roada-avongroup.org

Events Diary

Wednesday 9th May 2007 at 7.30pm

Annual General Meeting

B.A.W.A. Southmead Road, Filton,
Bristol, BS34 7RG.

Refreshments: Buffet and non-alco drinks will be available.

Guest Speaker: Emma Middleton,
Groups Development Officer.

Notice of Annual General Meeting of the Avon Group of RoSPA Advanced Drivers and Riders.

The following members will be seeking election to the Committee of RoADAR Avon Group:-

Val Clare (Chairman)

Mark Chamberlain (Secretary)

Mike Fairey (Treasurer / Membership Secretary)

Paul Gould (Training Officer / Associate Coordinator)

Cheryl Lenny (Newsletter Editor)

James Maggs (Events Coordinator)

Ian Tremlett (Police Liaison)

Membership of the committee is open to any full member of the Avon Group. Nominations for any of the above roles

must be made to the Secretary no later than Friday 27th April.

The AGM is open to all members and any interested parties but only full members may vote.

For a map please see the Avon group website. www.roada-avongroup.org

How to contact us:

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