

## CHAIRMAN'S Intro

Welcome to the last Newsletter for this financial year. Because of the Coronavirus the AGM has been postponed until later in the year. I feel we should all be very concerned about the virus, we should do what we can to protect ourselves, but should not panic. Another year has gone by, and I hope you all had a good 2019. I have indicated that I will continue as Chairman next year. After a very wet winter, spring is on its way, which will bring

better weather for driving and for fighting the virus. The last talk we had was from Edward Preece on the subject of Speed Cameras, and very interesting it was, too. Quite a few more members attended which was good to see. May I wish you all safe driving, and do enjoy the Spring weather whatever it may bring.

**Anthony  
Chairman**

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### ESTIMATED ROAD DEATHS FROM DRINK DRIVING-2018

Provisional estimates of casualties in crashes involving at least one driver or rider over the drink-drive limit in Great Britain for 2018 show that:

- between 220 and 270 people were killed in drink-drive accidents, with a central estimate of 240 fatalities
- the reduction in drink-drive fatalities since 2017 is not statistically significant, continuing a period of stability recorded since 2010
- an estimated 8,700 people were killed or injured in drink-drive accidents
- the total number of accidents where at least one driver was over the alcohol limit rose by 4% to 5,900.

A copy of the published provisional figures can be found at:

<https://www.grahamfeest.com/resources/latest-uploads/>

### 20MPH DEFAULT SPEED LIMIT

Ministers from around the world have sent out a 'clear and unambiguous message' that the default speed limit on all residential roads should be 20mph at their 3rd Ministerial Conference on Road Safety. The declaration has a focus on speed management, promising to 'mandate a maximum road travel speed limit of 20mph in areas where vulnerable road users and vehicles mix in a frequent and planned manner'. It says that efforts to reduce speed will have a 'beneficial impact on air quality and climate change as well as being vital to reduce road traffic deaths and injuries'. There will be an exception where 'strong evidence' shows higher speeds are safe.



### Roadcraft BOLO

Please Be On (the) Look Out for news about the next release of Roadcraft which is understood to be due this year. The current versions of both driver and motorcyclist handbooks were published in August 2013. Any updates will be published on the Roadcraft website.

<https://www.roadcraft.co.uk/roadcraft/roadcraft-updates/>

It is possible to register for update news by email at the same page.

# Smart Motorways Updates by Graham Leggett

Mike's article in the last newsletter (**The safety of motorists on smart motorways, December 2019 page 2**), reported the concern being expressed about the safety of these developments, which come in three versions:

**Controlled** - people cannot drive on the hard shoulder

**Dynamic Hard Shoulder** - the hard shoulder can be opened for use

**All Lanes Running (ALR)** - the hard shoulder has permanently become a lane

According to an article in The Sunday Times Magazine on 12 January this year, 13 stretches of road have ALR, including parts of the M1, M3, M5, M6 and M25, and another eight schemes are in development. A Highways England map of the smart motorway network was reproduced on a BBC News webpage entitled 'What should you do if you break down on a smart motorway?' – at the time of writing it is available at

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-51280316>

The Sunday Times article reports: 'Highways England relies largely upon the Midas (motorway incident detection and automatic signalling) system to identify stranded vehicles. By monitoring traffic flow to set speed limits in real time, it allows Highways England staff to manage congestion and protect slow-moving traffic using a network of regional control hubs.

Midas is employed across all of England's smart motorways. However, it has severe limitations. While the technology can measure traffic flow, it is unable to detect a lone vehicle stranded in a lane after breaking down. For that, Highways England relies mainly on calls from the police or public to alert them that a motorist is in danger and the lane needs to be closed.

As mentioned in Mike's report, there is another, more advanced radar-based system that detects stranded vehicles called Stopped Vehicle Detection (SVD). Currently this is only operational on two stretches of the M25.

Under MIDAS, the prevalent system, it takes an average of 17 minutes for an incident to be noted and a further 17 minutes for the emergency services to respond.

In the Driving section of The Sunday Times Magazine, 16 February this year, Jeremy Clarkson commented: 'Because it turns out that while they'd run amok with cameras that can catch a car going too quickly, they hadn't fitted anywhere near enough cameras to spot a car that wasn't moving at all.'

Clarkson's views on smart motorways are at <https://www.thetimes.co.uk/article/the-clarkson-review-skoda-kamig-3c30dhp8f> but subject to The Times paywall. Government figures report that 26 vehicles break down each day on smart motorways. A recently aired BBC Panorama programme found that the conversion of part of the M25 to ALR resulted in 20 times more dangerous near-misses.

The death toll arising from smart motorway use in the last five years is 38.

As concerns were brought before parliament three years ago – and

with concerns expressed by the police as well as the public (as reported in our newsletter March 2019) - a reassessment of the programme and a halt to planned but not yet started projects pending the outcome could have been expected. It was only on 12th March that the government announced an 18 point plan to improve safety on smart motorways. The plan includes abolishing dynamic hard shoulders, speeding up detection technology for stopped vehicles and building more emergency refuge areas. see <https://www.theguardian.com/politics/2020/mar/12/government-smart-motorways-safety-hard-shoulder>

Responding to the announcement, Nicholas Lyes, head of roads policy at the RAC, commented, 'While it is welcome that the government has listened to their concerns and undertaken this review, it remains to be seen whether these measures go far enough to protect drivers who are unfortunate enough to break down in live lanes.'

## What to do in an Emergency

Whether getting the information from a BBC webpage

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-51280316>

or the Highways England page, <https://highwaysengland.co.uk/motorways/#breakdown>

it is vital to know what to do and not to do should an emergency occur: If your vehicle has a problem on a motorway with no hard shoulder:

- Move into the left hand lane and put your hazard lights on.
- Exit at the next junction or services OR
- Follow the orange SOS signs to an emergency area and call for help using the free telephone. This will tell us your location.

If you can't get off the motorway or to an emergency area:

- Move your vehicle as close as possible to the left-hand verge, boundary or slip road.
- If you feel you can get out safely with any occupants, consider exiting your vehicle via the left-hand door, and wait behind the safety barrier if there is one and it is safe to do so.
- Keep clear of your vehicle and

moving traffic at all times.

- Call 999 immediately if your car stops unexpectedly in any lane and it is not safe to get out:
- Keep your seatbelts and hazard lights on and call 999 immediately

If there is a hard shoulder on a motorway, you can use it to stop in an emergency only. If you can, get behind the safety barrier and away from your vehicle and moving traffic. Use the free SOS phone or call Highways England on 0300 123 5000 for help.

Do not put out a warning triangle in any circumstances.

All motorists should be able to make their own recovery arrangements in the event of a breakdown. We advise you to carry details of your provider with you.

If your vehicle appears to have problems or is damaged, always try to exit the motorway.

Highways England recommend, that you save their number in your phone. To have 999 on speed-dial is perhaps more important. And that most precious commodity, common sense should prevail.

For example, the BBC webpage advises not only using the vehicle's hazard lights but also its 'rear fog or side lights, especially if visibility is low.'

# TECHNOLOGY HAS A MASSIVE ROLE IN OLDER DRIVER SAFETY

A review of global research into older drivers carried out for the RAC Foundation by Dr Julie Gandolfi of Driving Research Ltd., has concluded that intuitive in-car technologies are more likely to help keep older drivers safe on the road than any system of mass retesting. Among the technologies the study found could benefit older drivers is in-car telematics which involves having a 'black box' fitted which senses and records how a vehicle is being driven – data which could highlight to older drivers their strengths and weaknesses behind the wheel. The study also outlines the potential of driver-assist technologies, such as collision warnings, lane departure alerts, fatigue detection systems and cross-traffic assistance. However manufacturers need to ensure systems are intuitive and easy to use – and warning signals are easily identifiable and do not create extra confusion or stress. By contrast, the report points to evidence which suggests it is 'extremely difficult' to devise a system of mass retesting which



produces meaningful road safety gains and other studies have shown that older drivers are for the most part safer – however when they do crash they tend not to mend so readily. The study looked at Japan as an example, where drivers reaching the age of 70 must take part in:

- A lecture
- Aptitude tests involving simulator driving, field of vision checks and night vision

capability

- A discussion session
- An on-road driving assessment

However there would appear to

**studies have shown that older drivers are for the most part safer**

be no overwhelming support for the effectiveness of these measures in reducing at-fault collisions among older drivers. Of course we can debate until the cows come home the age you fall into before being labelled an older driver. Statistics show there are 5.5 million driving licence holders in Britain aged 70 or over – 41% more than the 3.9 million licence holders in the same age group back in 2012.

The report has two key messages. One is that technology has a large role to play in keeping people safe and the other is that any information we can get which encourages and helps us make an informed decision about our ability to drive safely is to be welcomed. You can find a copy of the report at

<https://www.grahamfeest.com/resources/latest-uploads/>

## French autoroutes and breakdown insurances

by  
Graham Leggett

The Money section of The Sunday Times on 16 February 2020 carried an article entitled 'Zut alors! Insurers not up to speed with breakdowns on French motorways.' It pointed out that some breakdown cover is potentially inadequate or vague on reimbursing these breakdown costs.

Those mentioned were Admiral, First Call, Euro Rescue and Rescuemycar.com, but some or all of these might have modified

or clarified their policies since publication. It also reported that Green Flag and the RAC 'fully cover' such expenses. Apart from ensuring any policy provides the cover you want (and think you have), it's also worth knowing something about how breakdowns are handled on French motorways. The driver is obliged to use the police and the authorized roadside assistance companies. The fixed charge levied depends on the day and time. The article gives the example of a weekday callout, between 08.00-18.00 hours. The charge for this is currently €126.93 (about £105), which includes up

to 30 minutes of in-situ repair work. If the vehicle has to be recovered to a service area, rest area or garage, the same amount is charged for a fully loaded vehicle weighing up to 1.8 tonnes, or €156.95 for those weighing up to 3.5 tonnes. For the definitive and up-to-date charges and how they are levied, please consult the ASFA website. This is the association of French motorway companies and the breakdown service rates are given at:

<https://www.autoroutes.fr/en/breakdown-service.htm>

## DRIVING IN THE DARK

The DVSA is encouraging learner drivers to take lessons in the dark, in a bid to cut the 'high proportion' of night-time collisions involving young drivers. Research shows that up to 100,000 candidates may be taking their driving test each year without having practised or been taught to drive in the dark despite the fact that 35% of collisions involving young drivers between 2014-18 happened at night.

The DVSA is highlighting the issue as part of a new campaign – and is calling on learners to gain the 'essential' experience of driving in the dark, whether with their driving instructor or through private practice.

Mark Winn, DVSA chief driving examiner, said:

"DVSA's priority is to help everyone through a lifetime of safe driving. It's essential that all learners gain experience of driving in the dark, whether with their driving instructor or through private practice."

### THE MOBILE MESSAGE DOES NOT BOTHER MANY DRIVERS

The findings from a report by road safety charity Brake and insurer Direct Line, revealed that 3% of drivers, equating to 1.2 million drivers across the UK, had a conversation or messaged on a handheld mobile device while driving on every journey they took in the past 12 months. The report also found that more than 1 in 6 drivers used their phone while driving at some point over the past year and it would appear that getting caught using their phone behind the wheel and facing the minimum of a £200 fine and six penalty points does not seem to have any impact.

However despite the mobile phone use for whatever purpose it found that more than eight in 10 drivers think there are more in-vehicle distractions now than five years ago and that three quarters believe that others on the road are more distracted now than they were five years ago.

## NEW FLEET OF ELECTRIC BUSES

As part of a wider £170m fund to encourage more people to take



the bus, which includes £20m to trial on-demand ride sharing services, and £30m to restore lost routes and improve services. The Government is urging councils to bid for the funding which will help pay for a new fleet of electric buses. Thus saving up to 7,400 tonnes of CO2 each year. This is the equivalent of taking 3,700 diesel cars off the road. At this stage there will only be one winner which town will become the first all-electric bus town.

Transport secretary, Grant Shapps, said: "Britain's first all-electric bus town is just the start. Helping deliver on our manifesto promise, this £170m package will also help us to create communities which are cleaner, easier to get around and more environmentally friendly, speeding up journeys and making them more reliable."

### NOT UNIQUE TO UK

A police operation in the Netherlands saw officers issue 154 fines, of which a disturbing 114 were for mobile phone offences. The action supported research from the country's Institute for Road Safety Research (SWOV) showing that an average of 63.8 per cent of drivers will pick up their phone while driving. However, for drivers aged 25 to 34 years the figure is 79 per cent. This highlights what we already know, that the use of these devices is rife throughout the world and we need a global solution and approach to tackle this major cause of distraction for all road users

## Obstructive Sleep Apnoea (OSA) and Driving

Tom Harrington LL B, F Inst. MTD has recently published an article about Obstructive Sleep Apnoea (OSA) and Driving in which he reviews many aspects of the condition.

Many drivers suffer from Obstructive Sleep Apnoea (OSA) and go through a large part of their lives unaware of the condition. Studies have shown that 20/25pc of motorway crashes are due to drivers falling asleep at the wheel and these crashes are likely to occur at certain times of the day.

**20/25pc of motorway crashes are due to drivers falling asleep at the wheel**

Accidents that involve sleepiness or Sleep Apnoea are often more serious because there is no attempt by the driver to brake or take avoiding action. Therefore, the fatality risk is greater. Research has shown that Sleep Apnoea sufferers have a seven times greater chance of being involved in an RTA. Among the skills necessary for safe driving are concentration and alertness, ergo, it's essential that anyone with Sleep Apnoea should seek medical assistance as early as possible. This article has an overall look at OSA, and its diagnosis and examines what sleep apnoea is. It looks at drivers who are at risk, the Harmonization of National Rules and finally, a conclusion is given.

A copy of this article can be found at

<https://www.grahamfeest.com/resources/latest-uploads/>

# THE ROLE OF THE BUSINESS DRIVER

IAM RoadSmart says there is “a worrying lack of progress” in driving down the number of work-related traffic incidents in its latest white paper, “The Role of Business Drivers” which is in support of its overall manifesto published in 2019.

The number of collisions involving people driving for business has remained static, at one in four of all incidents, over

the last decade. In 2009 there were 5,442 serious and fatal crashes in Britain involving an at-work driver; in 2018 the figure had risen to 5,506 and IAM RoadSmart is calling on the Health and Safety Executive, drivers and their employers, government and police to do more.

The document also reveals that nearly half of business leaders

polled (49 percent) expect their employees to answer their phone at any time, including while driving for work, and one in six UK employees who drive for work say they had been involved in an incident due to a phone call from a colleague.

You can find a copy of this document at

<https://www.grahamfeest.com/resources/latest-uploads/>

**nearly half of business leaders... expect their employees to answer phones ...while driving for work**

## MOTORWAY RED X PROSECUTIONS

Highways England is still sending warning letters to drivers who illegally drive under red X signs on smart motorways, six months after a change in the law which allowed camera evidence to be used for prosecutions.

Four years ago Highways England confirmed that it would seek a change in the law to crack down on the dangerous

breakdown in a live traffic lane and are crucial to safety on smart motorways.

In June 2019, after both a change in the legislation and Home Office type approval for the relevant equipment, it became possible to prosecute drivers based on camera evidence and Highways England confirmed at the time that the new powers will be used in late

Transport Minister George Freeman told MPs that he was unhappy with Highways England’s reliance on sending thousands of letters and had brought in legislation to allow automated detection of red X offences using camera equipment and to enable the police to prosecute. A Highways England spokesperson has said that since the police began using cameras as part of the enforcement of Red X signals they have been phasing out warning letters, and he went on to say, “The discontinuation of warning letters, is happening as part of a phased national roll-out programme”.

No details as to which areas are now using the technology for prosecutions or why some police forces are not doing so was given. Highways England has repeatedly declined to confirm whether any prosecutions have been brought and declined to clarify whether it had any information on the issue but did say.

“Highways England is not responsible for the enforcement of traffic legislation. Any questions around enforcement and prosecution must be directed to the relevant police force for each area.”



practice of drivers using lanes closed by a red X symbol on an overhead gantry. The signs are used when there is an obstruction such as a crash or

summer ‘after a period of testing’. Then in September it said that cameras would ‘soon’ be used to detect people driving in lanes that have been closed with a red X.

# EMERGENCY VEHICLES

Whilst watching one of the numerous emergency/blue light shows on the TV recently an accident nearly occurred at a crossroads with a set of traffic lights. An emergency vehicle went through the red stop lights with sirens blaring and a car with right of way on a green light had to stop for it. The car then started to proceed again when another emergency vehicle did the same thing and had to take avoiding action to miss the car. OK, so maybe the car driver should have been paying more attention to his situation and driving, however, he was on a green light and maybe he thought the situation had resolved itself, he was certainly not expecting a second emergency vehicle despite its

siren going in such quick succession.

The lesson is that there could always be more than one emergency vehicle, so take extra care, be **BLUE LIGHT AWARE**.

For those of you that may not have seen the short blue light aware video it can be seen at :

<https://www.bluelightaware.org.uk>

The new version of blue light aware is being launched on Tuesday 31st March and is a result of nearly two years of hard work with input from more than 200 members of the emergency services.

This must be compulsory viewing for all of us.

On a separate note, as this is Mike's final production of our newsletter, I would like to thank him personally for all his efforts over the past few years.

Malcolm Taylor  
Committee member

# Editorial

I have been producing the Sussex RoSPA Newsletter since May 2015.

Initially I had enough material to produced 6 copies a year but more recently, because of difficulty finding new, sufficiently interesting, material, that has been reduced to 4 copies a year. I missed a period in late 2015 to part way through 2016 when I had a heart valve problem. I had a pacemaker fitted and subsequently surgery to replace a heart valve. In addition, in September last year, just days before I published the newsletter the power source for my computer self destructed and I lost a number of files, including all the work on the September Newsletter. That taught me to be more rigorous with my backups. I have enjoyed producing the Newsletter for you, and I hope you have all enjoyed reading it. However, some of my medical issues are catching up with me, so I have decided it is time to step back. This is the last Newsletter that I will edit. Graham Leggett has volunteered to take on the role from the AGM. I wish him well in the role of Newsletter Editor.

Mike Murphy (Retiring Editor)

## Raising the Speed Limit on Motorways

There has been a lot of talk over recent years about raising the speed limit on motorways to 80mph something which the majority of the road safety lobby is not in favour but it does find support amongst much of the public.

The motorway network is becoming somewhat complex with its hard shoulder running at peak times along with all lane running for the entire time.

We now have an increasing range of speed limits through motorway roadworks with what was the maximum of 50mph at times being increased to 60mph.

Around 25% of the motorway network is now smart motorway/all lane running and there is currently a halt on any new schemes.

So will those motorways which still have a hard shoulder and where it is considered safer to travel at 80mph see a rise in the speed limit Well It would seem to be probably 50/50, erring perhaps towards no in the next five years.

## Understanding What is Happening in Crashes

The first thing we hear at any road safety conference is the fact that whilst we are doing very well in terms of reducing the overall number of people being injured on the roads, the actual death rate has not moved for a number of years and this seems to be very much the picture around the world.

We do seem to focus on the number of killed and seriously injured but is that a true reflection on how well we are doing. In many crashes

more than one person is killed and injured and maybe therefore we need to focus much more on stopping the crash in the first place and relating the number of injured people against the number of crashes.

I hope very much that if we do increase the number of police officers in the coming year or so



that we will see more emphasis and training on information gathering, so we can gain a greater understanding about what is happening in crashes.

With the impending Roads Policing Review perhaps this can be part of the focus.

## Group Secretary's notes:

Hello All

We have difficult times ahead and have had to make some difficult decisions, for everyone's health and safety. Reluctantly we have decided to postpone the AGM which had been scheduled for 14 May, we will advise you of the new date once we can see far enough into the future. It will not and cannot be cancelled.

The next group meeting is planned for 2 July; let's hope the worst will be over by then but we are not making any plans, we will advise you in due course. For now, stay safe and take all possible care. And drive safely.

Kind regards

**Margret  
Group Secretary**

Before all this happened I had written the following message, obviously now a plan for the future. But please still consider if you can become more involved in running the Group; once we resume normal operations we will need volunteers if the Group is to survive.

Hello All

As you will have read elsewhere, this is Mike Murphy's last newsletter, he is stepping back for health reasons. We shall miss him and his very informative offerings. And we wish you well, Mike. We are lucky to have found a replacement in Graham Leggett who we hope will be elected at the AGM.

This raises an eternal question – do we have enough volunteers to help administer the Group. This year we shall also need a new Treasurer and are looking for someone to step forward. Could it be you??

Like all charities, it is just a small number of people who are assuring the smooth running of the Group's business. Many of them have been involved in various capacities for a great many years. They would quite like to step back – but who is there to take over?

At our last committee meeting we gave this some thought: if you volunteer for one of these roles it will have a time limit of 2 years attached, after that you are free to walk away unless you yourself decide to carry on for a further period. Or maybe you could change roles with another committee member. The choice will be yours.

It would be nice to have a pool of people on the committee who are new to it and are there to learn about the running of the Group but as importantly to help with fresh views and opinions. Let's assume they are there for a year, after that again they can walk away or they can take over a vacant role and make a more definite contribution. Once more the choice would be yours.

Plainly speaking, we need volunteers to help run the Group in various capacities, please consider if you could spare a little time. It sounds corny, but it would be for the common good.

Thank you and hopeful best wishes,

**Margret  
Group Secretary**

PS: Obviously and as already said above, the AGM is postponed, all other Group meetings are "to be advised" up to the end of the year.

However, to wet your appetite, we have some speakers who have confirmed their willingness to visit us:

Neil Worth, GEM (whose booked talk at the AGM will be postponed).

Jackie Quinn, Brighton and Hove Councillor: The Life of a Councillor

Colin O'Neill, RoSPA Examiner: Meet the Examiner

**To ensure you are kept informed of news and extra activities arranged for the group, please could all members and associate members let the Membership Secretary know of any changes to their contact details so that we can update the group's database. [membershipsecretary@mail.com](mailto:membershipsecretary@mail.com)**  
**Margret Preece Group Secretary [margretp@clara.co.uk](mailto:margretp@clara.co.uk)**

### Sussex RoSPA

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