

CHAIRMAN'S Intro

Dear All

Another month has passed and we are nearing the AGM.

We need you all to attend

As a number of the committee members are standing down and to keep the Group going we urgently need volunteers to step forward to fill those places.

I have been a member for many years and I would not like to see the group fold.

Apart from that concern, we are approaching the Spring and Summer months which should

make your driving more enjoyable, but does lead to other problems such as coping with low sun.

Also it would be good to consider some driving activities for our meetings. If you have any good ideas, then please let us know.

Have a good Spring and see you all at the AGM

Best Wishes and
safe Motoring
Anthony

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Doing The Test

submitted anonymously

OK, so you've spent hours practising on your own and with a tutor and now you're thinking of taking the **The Test**.

I was asked to share my experience and this is what it was like for me.

On the test day, I was more than apprehensive.

The examiner chatted to me about life ... *and Brexit!* ... which put me at ease.

Then, it started. We did a walk round the car and he asked me to talk about the Drivers Checks, then some questions about the Highway Code.

"Tell me about the pattern and distribution of studs on the motorway" ... er!

"You're driving a newish Audi, so it must be fitted with ESC. How does ESC work and what would you do if you went into a skid?"

"Tell me about aquaplaning".

"I won't formally test your knowledge on Road Signs and Markings but as we are driving, identify any of the less common ones because the test route I have chosen will have some!", "Oh, and with regard to a driving commentary, just talk to me from time-to-time about the changing conditions and what you are seeing and doing".

No pressure then.

Clearly, this was going to be trickier than riding a bike.

I asked some questions about the style of driving he expected and he explained that some stretches would require accelerator sense and others would involve driving at speed to make good progress with tapered braking to overcome hazards. Hmmm.

We went through the cockpit instrumentation and checks and then I started up and after a

rolling brake test we were almost immediately over the A23 and onto rural roads with multiple changes in speed restrictions and junctions and horses and cyclists and a tractor, parked cars and delivery vans and pedestrians and concealed vehicles emerging. I thought that I was going to have an accident around every bend, and there were lots and lots and lots of bends. Then we started the ascent to Devils Dyke, a testing and tricky road requiring a lot of skill and judgement. I had practised this a lot of times but it's surprising how the same road changes every time with just the weather. The examiner was really great in suggesting changes in gears and speed and encouraged me to be more confident in the

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Letter to all Members from The Chairman

Dear Members

The Group's AGM is to be held on Thursday 30th May 2019.

A formal notice will be issued in due course but this is an advanced notice to let you know that there are three posts on the committee that will become vacant as that time. These are the **Chair, Training Officer and Group Secretary**.

Without your help, RoSPA ADAR Sussex Drivers group will close and all monies held in the group will have to be returned to RoSPA, subject to the Charity Commission requirements. This would be such a pity since our funds include a substantial legacy left by one of the founder members of the group, which we rely on to support the work of the group in keeping our roads safer.

Please do give serious thought to helping the group survive by putting yourself forward for one of these roles.

The Training Officer role requires someone who is already a tutor willing to become an advanced tutor. If you already hold the diploma or you are an ADI then you can be an advanced tutor automatically. We can consider funding your training and we will give as much support to you as possible.

The Group Secretary's role could potentially be broken down into three main tasks so, if you feel you could take on a smaller role, we would most certainly consider that.

We were very fortunate last year that the group was saved by a longstanding member of the group and two associates taking on the roles of Chair, Treasurer and Website Manager, the events manager taking on the role of Vice Chair as a second role and a fifth member taking on a supporting role. It has been hugely beneficial having new faces bringing fresh ideas to the committee discussions.

Without your help we cannot continue.

Please reply to Kathy.blythe@btinternet.com indicating what **YOU** can do to help and also to confirm **whether or not** you will be attending the AGM on 30th May (7.30 for 8pm start) as our guest speaker is Katie Bourne, Sussex Police and Crime Commissioner.

We do not want to waste her time or embarrass ourselves by a poor turn out so if there is insufficient interest we will cancel her attendance.

With kind regards

Anthony Platts

Chairman

My Road to Advanced Driving

By Neil Worth

Having spent much of my working life in the company of police officers I have always been impressed by the skill and abilities they demonstrate as drivers. When I was much younger, in the days of police houses and village Bobbies, I even received a few lessons in car control from my friend and local officer.

Fast forward a few years and I'm the road safety officer for GEM Motoring Assist; an organisation whose mantra is Care, Courtesy and Concentration. GEM aims to encourage all road users to reduce the risks they face – and the risks they pose – when using the roads. In the last couple of years we part-funded the Police Foundation's [RoadCraft Online](#) learning platform, and our 'Blue Light Aware' resource has certainly proved a winner among all emergency service organisations.

So when the opportunity arose to do some advanced training through my local RoSPA group I jumped at the chance. Why? Firstly it's something that has always interested me and secondly, probably more importantly, the skills and knowledge gained from becoming an advanced driver add professional credibility to what I do every day. Although it sounds like a cliché, my journey started before

Christmas in 2017 with a few introductory sessions in West Sussex where I learnt the how's and why's of advanced driving, got stuck into my (now well-worn) copy of RoadCraft and started looking at how the 'System of Car Control' works and really helps you plan your driving. I was enjoying the driving until I was a passenger in a car that was involved in a collision, which as you can imagine knocked my confidence a little bit.

Thankfully there were no serious injuries but, having attended many collisions through my work as a special constable, I could now add the experience of being inside a car when the airbags deploy (but one I don't want to repeat).

That little hiccup behind me, I was soon back behind the wheel, spending hours learning and practising the new techniques I had been shown. After months of training my tutor said she thought I was ready to book my test, which I duly did with great excitement. Next was a call from the examiner to introduce himself and make the arrangements for the day which arrived far sooner than I realised.

The morning of the test dawned bright and clear; perfect conditions for driving. I met the examiner in a local supermarket car park and after

an eyesight check we were off. The test route took in some rural roads (where making use of the limit point was vital), a busy dual carriageway and also some narrow city streets. The whole process lasted about 90 minutes. Although I passed, my nerves did get the better of me which led to a few silly mistakes and cost me a higher grade. That said, the examiner's feedback on the day and the written report that followed were encouraging and gave me a few pointers on how I can keep improving, which I fully intend to do.

So was it worth it? Definitely yes! My experience with everyone from RoSPA that I've met over the past year is that they are all dedicated to getting the best out of drivers and riders and enhancing their skills... which all comes back to safer driving. By applying the 'System' to my driving I have found myself looking much further ahead, adopting different positions on the road and making best use of my, and my car's, capabilities to make progress in a smooth, safe and comfortable way. It hasn't always been easy, particularly when trying to unlearn things and get out of bad habits – gear and brake overlap springs to mind! My message to anyone thinking about becoming an advanced driver? Take the plunge and go for it - you won't be sorry!

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car's handling at speed. Suddenly we were back onto the A23 heading north and taking the A273 to Burgess Hill to test how I managed successive multiple roundabouts using the system of car control. We drove back to Hickstead

Service Area and I had to reverse park into a tight bay. It wasn't over just yet. The examiner de-briefed me for what seemed an age when all I wanted was it just to be over. Why couldn't he just get out of the car and say "You've failed"? Suddenly I woke up. The nightmare was over and

it had all been in my mind. The reality had been so very different. The examiner was friendly, the test was straightforward and I remembered his first comment, "I just want you to pass. All you have to do is drive the way you have learnt".

Calling All Associates

As an Associate member of this group working towards your advanced test, you benefit from up to 20 hours of free tuition. If you went to an approved driving instructor for this type of help, it would cost you upwards of £25 per hour. That works out at £500, which puts the amount the group charges you in joining fees into perspective.

Your tutors are not allowed to accept any money for assisting you. Further, they receive no reward from the group other than a waiving of their annual membership fees and an invite to a tutor dinner for them and their partners, if they can make it!

More importantly, they give freely of their own time.

Given that some of our tutors also happen to be ADIs (but better trained in advanced driving than the average ADI) and for them time really does mean money, you can appreciate the sacrifice that they make.

For all of us tutors, the only real reward we seek is a thank you and to know how you fared on test. So please, as a matter of courtesy, make a point of contacting your tutor once you have taken your test. Let them know how you got on. Tell them about what went well. And let them know whether your examiner identified any shortcomings in your drive.

This is important as your feedback helps us to improve our own coaching in order to better help those who come after you.

And while you are at it, why not put what happened down on paper (well type it electronically on your computer) and send your finished article to the newsletter editor, Mike Murphy.

michaelmurphy483@btinternet.com.

Everybody in the group is in the same boat, either preparing for an initial advanced test or a retest, and the information in your article could prove of great help and interest to others.

Ed Feldmanis Training Officer

Public Support Growing for Mandatory Re-Testing

Public support for regular and mandatory retesting of drivers has grown from 53% to 66% since the Duke of Edinburgh's recent crash.

Two thirds of motorists now support the idea of compulsory driving re-tests.

A majority suggest that they should take place once licence-holders are 70 or over.

These findings were identified by Buyacar.co.uk which began

canvassing opinion on mandatory re-testing before the Duke's incident. The findings show that it is not just elderly drivers who would benefit by re-testing. Three in five respondents thought that every motorist should be re-tested every ten years. However a majority thought it should be linked to age, with a range of options evenly split between the ages of 70 and 90.

Call to Raise Fixed Penalty for Speeding

A recent poll commissioned by Alison Hernandez road safety lead for England's Police and Crime Commissioners, has found that 80 per cent of people backed tougher penalties for offences such as speeding and 85 per cent wanted to see more strict enforcement of traffic laws. She is proposing that the minimum fine be raised from £100 to £130.

Seatbelt Use Surveys: Great Britain - 2017

The Department for Transport has since 1988 commissioned surveys on seatbelt use.

In 2017, 98.6% of drivers were observed using a seatbelt, 93.1% of front seat passengers and 90.7% of rear seat passengers.

In spite of the small percentage of failures to use a seat belt, it still represents hundreds of thousands of people putting themselves at risk.

In 2017, more than a quarter of the 787 car occupants killed in crashes were not wearing seatbelts, according to Department for Transport data.

The Smart Motorway Debate

The Police have now joined the debate on the safety of SMART MOTORWAYS, claiming that it will make it more difficult to catch 'dangerous' drivers.

They have warned that the lack of an emergency lane makes it impossible to pull over problem drivers, if they have committed an offence or need to be given some advice.

Programme for Meetings 2019

Date	Speaker	Confirmed/TBC
Thurs 30 May	AGM + Katie Bourne Sussex Police & Crime Commissioner	Confirmed
Wed 4 September	Graham Feest Road Safety Consultant	Confirmed
Wed 4 December		TBC

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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