



# RoADAR CHAT

The Sussex Group of Advanced Car Drivers

Group Newsletter

April 2011

## Chairman's Welcome

Dear Member,

Thank you very much for attending the March Meeting at which Chris Gilbert was our Guest Speaker. His talk was well received and attendance of the evening very positive. It was good to see the room buzzing and I hope that the event has encouraged you to continue your quest for your own driving development.

Our next Guest Speaker is Graeme Lake from East Sussex Highways. His talk on Traffic Regulation Orders should address some of the points raised by a number of members with regards to Training. So, please attend! Graeme's talk will follow straight after the AGM in May. I promise you he will not disappoint.

Some members raised points relating to training and social activities, for which I am grateful, as it allows us to review how we operate as a group. Please, keep your suggestions flowing or even better get actively involved.

Finally, may I remind you that as a member you do not have to wait until your re-test to have your driving reviewed. As a Group we are very fortunate to have a healthy number of very capable Tutors who will be more than happy to assist you.

I hope to see you at AGM. Safe driving,

Frank Dahmen  
Acting Chairman

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## **NEXT MEETING & AGM** **26/05/2011**

**Graeme Lake from the Highways Agency  
who will talk to us about Traffic Regulation Orders.**

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## **Lighting failure and Duck tape.**

Early January saw us take off to Cornwall in the motorhome. The reason for the trip was to help our youngest son move into his new flat, and prove I wasn't a wimp about cold weather camping (in a motorhome of course). All was well until the first phone call from said son to inform us the removal truck wouldn't start that morning in Newquay and consequently the company had put on a smaller wagon that could only accommodate half his belongings. Can you see the way this story is starting to go?

The new flat was in Plymouth, we were in Plymouth, he cut a deal with the removal company who refunded to him some money, and suddenly I was in the removal business with trusty motorhome! January you may recall was somewhat wet and cold and wearing grooves in the road between Newquay and Plymouth was not part of my plan.

All went well until the second trip, leaving Newquay at about 17:30hrs, in the dark of course, I noticed a flash in front of me. I'd just negotiated a mini roundabout which had caused a bit of a bump as the lane was too narrow for me to negotiate it cleanly. It was windy and I noticed the street lights were shaking a bit so I put the flash down to a combination of those circumstances. After a short while the street lighting ended and at that point it became rather dark ahead! All interior panel light indications were normal, and fortunately my main beam lights were OK, however, the dipped beam headlights had failed.

We made it to a safe place to park, at son's suggestion this happened to be a McDonald's car park, (he's not stupid) and awaited the arrival of Britannia rescue. Britannia man couldn't do anything except tape up the front headlamps with some not very good tape to try and reduce the glare from my main beam lights. You may recall that I still needed to get back to Plymouth that evening. A sixty mile drive with constant flashing headlights from disgruntled Cornish drivers eventually got us to our destination.

The following day a faulty relay switch was diagnosed and a new one fitted, all seemed well. Off we went to complete the final part of the removal, and on the return trip to Plymouth after having the dipped beam lights on for about thirty minutes they failed again.

When I bought the motorhome new three years ago I'd been reading the relevant motorhome magazines prior to my purchase and one of the tips I'd taken on board was to always carry a roll of Duck tape in a tool bag. This I had done, and was able to make a better job of reducing the glare from my main beam lights, which I now had to travel on again. The job must have been so good that I didn't get flashed once, and probably made the vehicle look like something from the blackout during the war!

The problem is still not resolved but the van is going into the garage for investigation this month, which will also coincide with its first MOT.

Two lessons for me here, a good use of Duck tape, and what a good idea from Britannia Man. We're off to Cornwall again in April, with a new roll of Duck tape of course!

Safe Driving

**Malcolm Taylor**

# Training Officer's Report

## Roll of honour

Duncan Hauser Re-test Gold; Manny Naveira Re-test Gold; Bob Thorpe Re-test Gold; Julia White Re-test Gold.

Sid Perry Bronze (Tutor Bob Thorpe) John Foulkes Bronze (Tutor Julia White)

Denise Woods Bronze (Tutor Kevin Rodbard) Congratulations to all of you.

These results are the ones I know about. Please can you inform me when you have taken or re-taken your test. At least let your tutor know your result. They have spent time helping you prepare for your test and this should be done as a matter of courtesy. Whilst on the subject of tests it has been brought to my attention by our examiners that they have tested candidates who were not in possession of a current copy of Roadcraft and therefore were not fully informed, which resulted in a lower grade being achieved. Questions are asked by examiners on the contents and understanding of Roadcraft during your test. You have been warned. Also some associates who have joined the group are yet to make contact with their tutor. If there is anyone out there still waiting to be allocated a tutor then please contact me so this can be rectified.

Another successful Tutor Training Day was held on Saturday 9<sup>th</sup> April 2011 at our usual venue of the Wellshurst Golf and Country Club. David Taylor, one of our examiners, selflessly gave up his Saturday to run the day which this time contained on road training and coaching practice. This was well received by those who attended. Many thanks again, David.

I will be standing down as Training Officer at the AGM this year so if there is anyone who would like to take over this role then please contact me and I can appraise you of the responsibilities of the post.

It seems that the minimum eyesight requirements for reading a number plate for a driving test are to be reduced to 17.5 metres from the present 20 or 20.5 metres. As most collisions occur at road junctions because people do not look properly, I cannot see how this will improve the situation.

Whilst on the subject of health and fitness to drive, I will soon be getting the letter from the DVLA containing the health questionnaire for me to complete so I can continue to drive. Yes, I will answer it truthfully but does everybody? Why we cannot ensure that people are fit to drive by requiring a full medical (including an eye test) to be undertaken by every applicant for a driving licence and further checks at least every ten years when the photocard licence has to be renewed I do not know.

All drivers who drive lorries and buses for a living have to do this so why not all of us? What about the cost I can hear some of you saying and who will pay? Who pays for the carnage on the roads anyway?

Overheard by a group of pensioners in a Day Centre discussing their medical problems over a cup of tea:-

"Do you realise my arm is so weak I can hardly hold this coffee cup?" "Yes, I know" said another. "My cataracts are so bad I can hardly see to pour it." "I can't turn my head because of the arthritis in my neck" rejoined a third. "My blood pressure pills make me dizzy" commented the fourth and added "I suppose that's the price we pay for getting old." "Well, it's not all bad" said the first "We should be thankful that we can still drive."

Here is something for all you 'legal eagles' to think about. According to a recent court case, a 58 year old woman, who crashed her mobility vehicle into a garden wall in Durham whilst twice the drink drive limit, has been banned from driving for three years but cannot be stopped from using the mobility vehicle as no licence is required for it. What puzzles me is if you do not have to have a licence for the vehicle how can you be prosecuted for being over the drink drive limit? Is it me?

David Raine

Training Officer

## UPCOMING MEETINGS AND EVENTS

Date	Details
26th May 2011	Highways Agency – Traffic Orders
28th July 2011	Treasure Hunt
29th Sept 2011	The Work of Sussex Road Policing Unit



**Directions:** Sussex Police HQ is situated just off the A26 in Lewes. the address is Malling House, Church Lane, Lewes, East Sussex, BN72DZ

### Talk to the Sussex Branch of RoADAR by Chris Gilbert

On Thursday 31<sup>st</sup> March 2011 our guest speaker was Chris Gilbert the writer and presenter of “The Ultimate Driving Craft” DVDs. We had a very good turnout of members who listened avidly whilst Chris reminded us that we all, from time to time, allow ourselves to let our visual horizon slip, notably when we are tired and/or bored with the monotony of a long drive; when we get into a detailed conversation with a passenger or get distracted with the radio, CD, etc. He explained that simply by engaging in a short period of commentary driving we would refocus on our driving and our visual horizon would once again be on “main beam”.

Chris showed extracts from police driver training DVDs, which emphasised, amongst other things, that by giving advanced notice of a planned manoeuvre, commentary driving can help the instructor say “no” and abort a planned course of action, when in his/her judgment such a manoeuvre would be dangerous.

Chris also showed extracts from the DVDs he has himself produced to demonstrate commentary driving; the limit point and safe cornering techniques. View online at:

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dvXbmR1Rjv0> and <http://www.driving4tomorrow.com>

Finally we saw riveting footage, originally filmed in 1988 and since entitled “The Liver Run”, when a liver destined for a transplant patient had to be taken by the Police on a road journey from Stanstead Airport to The Cromwell Hospital in central London. View online at:

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qTN5X4JZFjU> **Please note you do have to press the ‘Control’ button on your keyboard to operate the link.**

**Advanced Notice:** our next meeting is the **AGM on Thursday, 26<sup>th</sup> May**. We will also have a guest speaker who will be Graeme Lake from the Highways Agency who will talk to us about Traffic Regulation Orders. The meeting will commence at 7.30pm at our usual venue, Police HQ in Lewes – all members and guests welcome.

The July meeting (Thursday, 28<sup>th</sup> July) will be a Treasure Hunt with a difference – we will meet at 1930hrs in County Hall car park, Lewes (note change of venue) and then proceed ON FOOT!! Don’t worry we will finish the evening at a local hostalry so you will get to sit down – eventually! Do put it in your diary – it should be a fun evening!

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