



Sussex Advanced Drivers – Newsletter

November 2024

From our Chairman (Paul Purdy)

Hi All,

As this is the last newsletter before Christmas I would just like to say a big thank you for your support throughout the year at our various events. I hope you enjoyed them. It makes all the effort involved worthwhile. I would also like to thank the committee for their hard work over the year in keeping the club and its finances on track, a great effort - thank you.

We are still looking for suggestions from the members as to the type of events they would be interested in for the 2025 season, so put your thinking caps on and we will try to arrange them. I know Duncan is still putting together some interesting lectures for our evening meets so keep an eye on the web pages.

Finally just a reminder, If you have had your car battery for a number of years it might be worth getting it checked to make sure it won't let you down at the wrong time. At this time of year they take a bit of punishing. Also get the specific gravity of your anti-freeze checked before the really cold weather hits us. If it is more than two years old it may need changing. Finally don't forget those all-important tyres, check for tread depth and tyre pressure. And yes, I will be getting all this done in the next two weeks. So safe motoring to you all.

On behalf of the committee we would like to wish you all

**A MERRY CHRISTMAS and a HAPPY
NEW YEAR.**



A few words from the Editor (Margret Preece)

Hi All,

Not so long ago I came across this quote about getting older:

‘The problem is to maintain a speed of thought that is higher than the speed of the machine’

It made me think. As we get older we sadly all slow down, in our body and also in our mind, we might walk slower and it will take us longer to take in new information and to make decisions.

How would that affect our driving? What about the much-mentioned progressive driving? Do I need to drive slower as I get older?

Of course not, at least not as long as we keep an active and alert mind, as long as when driving we always look a long way ahead and constantly scan all around the car. That way we always have time to react, and our minds will always be ahead of the dumb machine.

Provided of course that our eyesight is good enough.
Food for thought. I must book in for an eye test.

Happy Christmas,
Margret

DVSA Better driving course (Write-up from Amazon)

Recently the DVSA published a new eLearning course and a Book - Guide to Better Driving

The Official DVSA Guide to Better Driving explores the effects of mood and attitude on driver behaviour. Discussions of key topics are supplemented by practical strategies designed to help drivers manage stress in common scenarios such as driving on motorways, driving with children in the car, and approaching roundabouts. Significant updates to the text include an in-depth look at advanced driver assistance systems (ADAS) and driver safety, the hierarchy of road users, and anxiety management for learner drivers.

Key Features:

- Stay safe – understand how your thoughts and feelings can affect your behaviour behind the wheel.
- Boost your confidence – advice on coping with everyday situations such as roundabouts, motorways, junctions, and bad weather.
- Enjoy your driving – learn how to evaluate your performance and become a better driver.
- Keep legal – up-to-date information on speed limits, drink and drug driving, mobile phones, and more.

Andy Nixon, RoADAR Manager and Regional Senior Examiner sent the following letter to all members and associates:

Dear member,

As you may be aware, RoSPA is undergoing major changes to its operating and financial procedures with brand new IT and finance systems being introduced to provide an improved customer experience and improve efficiencies to our operational procedures.

As a result, and in line with new financial operating requirements, we will be changing the way we deal with membership renewals with effect from December 1, 2024.

The new systems being introduced will ensure that the membership renewal process is more reliable and efficient for both RoSPA and our members.

From December 1, we will be implementing a 60-day payment policy. Initial membership renewal reminders will be sent out to members 30 days prior to their renewal date. If payment is not received, members will continue to receive regular reminders up to 60 days past the renewal date, at which point, if payment has still not been received, the membership will be cancelled.

Anyone wishing to reinstate their membership after it has been cancelled will be treated as a new member and will be required to re-take their advanced test.

I appreciate that this is a change for our members and the large majority who pay their annual subscriptions in a timely manner will be unaffected. However, over the years, bad debt caused by delays in members paying their renewals on time (or within a reasonable time) has reduced the amount of financial support we can provide to our RoADAR community. By implementing the change, we will be able to continue offering advanced tests and membership at a low cost compared to other institutions, allowing us to support more people on the roads.

Thanks as always for your continued support in making our roads safer.

Kind regards,
Andy Nixon

Some Bedtime Reading (Philip Doyne)

I have just been to a ROSPA meeting with the Chief Executive of the office of the Sussex Police and Crime Commissioner, and he recommended this book. This link is from the Age Concern Website which I am pretty sure is genuine 😊, reading it makes you very careful.

<https://www.ageuk.org.uk/wp-assets/globalassets/lambeth/aukl-news-section-pictures/the-little-book-of-big-scams--third-edition.pdf>

It is sobering and helpful reading - sleep well - don't have nightmares!!

After you, sir? No, after you! (Duncan Hauser)

One of the elements that are used by the Advanced Test examiners is “consideration and restraint”. Does this mean that we should always let traffic in from side roads and stop for pedestrians who are waiting to cross the road away from a pedestrian crossing? What are the rules of the road and why have we been asked to abide by them?

Two interesting questions that come to mind in everyday situations.

In the first place, “consideration” is an attitude to other road users - they have as much right to the space on the road as me, even if they are pedestrians or on two wheels. As for “restraint” - unemotional, dispassionate or moderate behaviour; self-control - is the dictionary definition and can be understood as “calm and controlled in all situations” (and there are many situations that can wind us up!).

Secondly, the rules of the road provide a symmetry to the environment, and an agreed method of dealing with conflicting purposes.

For example, if I want to emerge onto a main road, I will wait patiently for a reasonable lull in the traffic flow before doing so. So many times I am taken off-guard by a headlight flash (telling me to emerge) from a driver who is totally unaware of the fact that there is no-one behind him, and I can go after he has passed.

Apart from slightly disrupting the flow of traffic and making me more cautious than usual, this seems harmless enough. But I have seen the problem caused by drivers who stop to let pedestrians cross where there is no official crossing. Other road users may be unaware of this “act of kindness” and it can result in vulnerable road users stepping out into relative danger.

So the rules are there for safety, which we risk if we decide to employ our own rules. But what if you want to cross a main road from and to a minor road at a crossroads, and the vehicle opposite is indicating to turn across your path? As far as I understand, there is no rule, and both have equal right to go first. And if you are driving past a line of parked cars on the opposite side of the road but oncoming traffic appears, who has the right of way? In both of these examples it is essential that we display consideration and restraint. We need to make some kind of mutual contact with the road user we are in conflict with, and, if in doubt, the best policy is to indicate to the other person that you are letting them go first.

So, giving someone an opportunity to move in front of you is never a good policy as they take away your forward vision and may cause you other problems, unless the traffic ahead is coming to a halt and you are aiding the traffic flow.

The Road is Paved with Silver: My ROSPA Journey. (Charlie Doyne)

I owe my recent ROSPA experience to my father, Philip—who, if you look at the bottom of this newsletter, is now the club's treasurer, largely thanks to his love of spreadsheets. After finishing university, I was on the job hunt and had plenty of free time, so when he suggested I work toward the ROSPA Advanced Driving Test, it made a lot of sense. At that point, my relationship with driving was not the best. I'd passed my driving test in 2019, but only drove short distances around North Yorkshire when I was home. If I needed to go further, I'd take the train, and any journey longer than half an hour required planning, some anxiety, and a bit of psyching myself up to get behind the wheel.

I spent the next five months working with Margret, who taught me the system of car control that we all know and love. In the week or two before my test, I decided to take a road trip around Ireland, including the spectacular Ring of Kerry. This trip was a turning point for my driving confidence; it showed me that the techniques I'd practiced with Margret on familiar roads in West Sussex transferred seamlessly to new, unfamiliar roads and long days of driving in Ireland. In the final days before my test, Margret was generous enough to schedule daily sessions, which helped me feel fully prepared.

When the big day arrived, I found myself waiting in a Sainsbury's car park to meet my examiner, Richard Hornsey. I had a bit of good fortune at the start: when Richard saw my driver's license, he immediately recognized my Yorkshire village and mentioned he was also from Yorkshire. I thought I might have just earned a bit of luck, but he quickly assured me that our shared roots would have no influence on the test results.

The test began with a POWDER check outside the car, which was a surprise since I'd always done it from inside. Nonetheless, it went smoothly. Starting off in Haywards Heath, we hit a fair bit of traffic. This wasn't ideal, and I had a couple of less-than-perfect moments at mini-roundabouts that rattled me a bit. There were also theory questions to answer while driving. The first, about tire tread depth, was simple enough. The second question, however, was on stopping distances at 60 mph. My answer in meters was a wild guess, but fortunately, Richard only knew the answer in feet, so he couldn't tell me exactly how far off I was.

As the traffic cleared and we moved onto the national speed limit roads, I found my groove, making smooth progress and applying ROSPA principles consistently. Richard later said this was what promoted me to a Silver award—an outcome I was extremely chuffed with.

I'd like to thank Margret for all her time and expertise in getting me here. Looking back, the whole experience transformed my approach to driving. From needing to mentally prepare myself for any longer journey to handling the Irish roads with ease, the journey to Silver has paved the way for a new, confident relationship with driving.

DRIVING WITH POOR VISION (Graham Feest Newsletter)

Last year, six people lost their lives due to drivers or riders with uncorrected or defective vision according to the latest statistics from the Department for Transport (DfT), where motorists failed to meet the required visual standards. However as a word of caution – they may well have failed the legal requirement of being able to read a number plate at 20 metres – that does not necessarily mean they could not see the person or vehicle which they hit. An example of where the current laws about eyesight and driving don't really add up.

The police are currently conducting a national campaign to encourage drivers to get their eyesight tested every two years. They say that over the past decade the issue of 'uncorrected or defective eyesight' has been linked to 62 fatalities and 2,648 casualties on UK roads.

A study conducted by Vision Direct analysed data on collisions, failed driving tests, and weather conditions to identify the high risk areas for road collisions in the UK

Driving When Tired (Graham Feest Newsletter)

The Scottish Government and Road Safety Scotland have launched a campaign reminding drivers about the dangers of driving while tired, urging them to plan ahead and take appropriate measures.

A recently published report identified fatigue as a contributory factor in 17% of all fatal collisions in Scotland; however, experts estimate the real figure is even higher, with up to 20% of all collisions involving driver fatigue. Despite this, around one-in-seven drivers admit to getting behind the wheel while feeling tired.

Sleep Action, the UK's leading sleep charity, has backed the campaign, calling on drivers to acknowledge the risks of fatigue, and familiarise themselves with the steps they can take if they feel tired at the wheel.

The campaign stresses that sleep-related collisions are around 50 per cent more likely to result in death or serious injury due to the high-impact speeds typically involved. The campaign also emphasises the importance of planning ahead to avoid driving tired and advises drivers to take regular breaks and stop for a rest and have a coffee if they do feel tired at the wheel.

Pothole Damage Compensation (Graham Feest Newsletter)

The data shows that the chances of making a successful claim for pothole compensation are very limited, as 76% (13) of the 17 councils that paid drivers any compensation for pothole damage refused more than three-quarters of the claims they received in 2023

Older Drivers (RAC Newsletter)

There has been much talk in the media in recent weeks about older drivers, arising from two nasty crashes involving drivers over the age of 90 and the problems associated with those suffering from or developing dementia.

Medical practitioners will advise people not to drive or even tell their patients not to, but it rarely goes any further and it is down to the individual to comply or ignore – which asks the question as to whether there should be a legal obligation for doctors to have the authority and power to ban someone from driving and report that to the DVLA.

In many respects diagnosed medical conditions do perhaps need better regulation, particularly where cognitive ability to manage and control a vehicle is impaired, but there will always be the argument about at what age does someone in general terms become unfit to drive. There is an estimated 5 million drivers holding a licence who are over 70 years of age, and of those just over 500 are aged over 100. This of course does not mean that they are actively driving but many are still working and reliant on their vehicle well into their seventies and eighties. That said, if they are not competent or their ability to drive safely presents a danger to themselves and others, they clearly should not be driving.

New research reveals that 80% of motorists support the idea of standardised voluntary driving assessment for those over 60, a proposal supported by the Road Safety Trust and the Older Driver Task Force although many would say that it should kick in at 70 when the licence becomes renewable every 3 years. However there has been talk about that being raised to 80; so we have a good bit of contradiction going on.

The new study found that over half of respondents (59%) believe this would help drivers evaluate their ongoing road safety. Nearly half (47%) would be willing to undertake such an assessment themselves.

Additionally, 38% of participants think that the assessment could help reduce insurance cost for older drivers.

Furthermore, 36% feel that the assessments are increasingly relevant as more older people continue to drive.

However, opinions are mixed, with 33% of respondents suggesting that older drivers should not be on the road at all.

Meanwhile, 22% expressed concerns that those needing the assessment most might avoid taking it.

This was underlined by 9% saying they would never take such an assessment. 7% believe older drivers should simply continue without needing evaluations.

There is no doubt that as the population ages there will be more calls for action but let's face it this is not a vote winner, and any Government will not be keen to take such action without a very strong mandate from the people and after all who wants to give up their licence?

Growing Concern over Road Rage (RAC)

New research by IAM RoadSmart reveals that Gen Z (*those born in 1997 to the present day*) and Millennials (*those born between 1981 and 1996*) are responsible for beeping their horn the most.

More than half (63%) of motorists aged 17-34 have sounded their horn to express anger at the behaviour of another road user in the past year, adding to concern about increasingly aggressive drivers.

Of the 2,000 people surveyed by IAM RoadSmart, one in six (66%) said they are more concerned than last year about aggressive drivers.

Gen Z and Millennials are the angriest age group, with 63% of those aged 17-34 admitting to sounding their horn with fury, compared to just 42% of those aged 70 and over.

More than eight in ten (81%) of those surveyed have been tailgated - which is a contributory factor in 1 in 8 collisions in a 30mph road in the past 12 months. Three-quarters reported being tailgated on a motorway or dual carriageway, with men more likely to fall victim than women.

Middle lane drivers are also a source of wrath, with 63% confessing to have undertaken, or seen someone undertake a lane hogger, risking points on their licence or a £100 fine. More than eight in ten (83%) strongly support the use of cameras to detect and prosecute tailgaters.

According to the research, traffic is a hugely aggravating factor in road rage incidents, with a third (31%) admitting to beeping their horn to get the driver in front to hurry up in a jam. More than half (63%) are more concerned about traffic jams than they were 12 months ago.

Department for Transport figures show that car volumes are broadly consistent with pre-pandemic levels, however weekend vehicle use appears to be higher. This indicates that it is congestion on leisure rather than commuting journeys that is causing frustration

8 Surprising Things that can Affect the Cost of your Car Insurance (RAC)

From your postcode to your marital status, some surprising factors can influence your insurance provider's decision when it comes to working out your premium.

Your postcode

Living in a built-up area will increase your chance of accidents through sheer probability, as there will be more vehicles on the road.

If you live in an area with a high crime rate, you could see the added risk to your car reflected in your premium costs since vandalism and theft may be more common.

In classic UK fashion, the weather might also throw a spanner in the works... If you live on the coast or near a river prone to flooding, your insurance payments will consider the cost of potential water damage.

Where you park (RAC Newsletter)

You could choose to park your car overnight in a garage, however, there are still some risks involved.

Insurance providers could deem garage parking a risk as there's a possibility you could damage your car on entry or exit.

Parking your car on a driveway will reduce the chances of being hit by a passing motorist but still gives a criminal access from the street.

Although there are some simple things that could put off thieves. Using a motion-sensor light that overlooks the driveway and putting down noisy gravel as your driveway surface are both good deterrents.

Neither of these would directly impact the price you pay for insurance but could prevent you needing to make a claim in future by reducing the risk of your car being damaged or stolen.

Your job

Occupations associated with high stress levels are considered a 'higher risk', so whilst a senior position may indicate responsibility, some insurance providers may charge high-powered professionals a costlier insurance premium.

If your job involves a lot of driving, you can also expect to pay more for your car insurance.

Salespeople or delivery drivers who spend more time on the roads are more likely to be involved in an accident and their premiums will be higher in order to cover this additional risk.

Mileage

The more you drive your car, the more likely it is that you'll end up in an accident – it's a basic principle for car insurers.

However, some insurers might charge drivers who cover fewer miles than the average driver, as they could be viewed as being accident-prone and lacking in confidence.

If you're not sure how many miles you drive a year, check your previous MOT or service certificates where it will be shown.

It may well be worth looking into low mileage or pay-as-you-drive insurance, as this can work out cheaper depending on how much you drive.

Your age

Statistics from road safety charity Brake show that drivers aged 17-19 only make up 1.5% of UK licence holders but are involved in 9% of fatal and serious crashes when driving.

Learner, young and new drivers are less experienced on the roads, and this means they are more likely to find themselves in a car accident, increasing premiums. Specialist insurance like learner driver insurance and black box insurance could help lower costs.

Many car insurers consider drivers over 75 years of age as being 'higher risk' and so many older motorists may also see their premium costs increase.

This is despite the fact that older drivers tend to use the road less often than other motorists and are more likely to avoid driving during busy time.

Modifications

Modifications to the performance or appearance of your vehicle can seriously impact the cost of your car insurance.

Expensive speakers and in-car entertainment systems are a huge draw for potential thieves and are likely to bump up costs.

However, not all modifications will result in a price hike. As immobilisers will make your car more secure and rear sensors reduce your chances of a prang while parking, you can expect to make a saving on your premium by fitting them.

Remember to declare all modifications to your insurance provider to avoid any difficulties when making a future claim.

Your marital status

If your husband or wife intends to drive your car, you could add them as a named driver. By sharing the driving, you limit the amount of time any one person spends behind the wheel and therefore spread the risk of accident between more people.

If your other half has a history of no claims, you can sometimes benefit from an even cheaper premium.

Adding a more experienced driver as the main driver of a car rather than an added driver to get a cheaper premium is known as fronting. This is illegal – you could see your insurance invalidated and the more experienced driver could face a criminal conviction.

Your driving history

When applying for insurance, you're usually asked about any claims you may have made over the past five years. These will heavily influence the cost of your premium.

Providers will take up to five years of no-claims bonus into consideration when discounting your premium. Non-fault claims should also be declared to your provider.

Your driving experience is the most heavily weighted factor in calculating the cost of your insurance. This includes things such as speeding offences, which suggest that you take less time assessing the road and are therefore more likely to be involved in an accident.

Non-motoring offences can also affect the cost of your premium and you may require specialist insurance for cover.



This is your committee

(Please don't hesitate to contact any of us if you have a query).

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Group Secretary's notes:

All meetings are held at:

Scaynes Hill Millennium Hall, Lewis Road, Scaynes Hill, Haywards Heath, RH17 7PG

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 their contact details so that we can update the Group's database.

Edward Redman (Group Secretary - secretary.sussexadvanceddrivers@outlook.com) or Margret Preece (Membership Secretary – margretp@clara.co.uk)

Future Events

All events start at 7.30pm with light refreshments, for a prompt 8pm start

15 January 2025	Potholing for Beginners
14 May	AGM, Speaker: Duncan Hauser
16 July	DocBike
TBA	Sussex Wildlife Centre

Sussex RoSPA

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