



The **BEDFORD** Group of RoSPA Advanced Drivers and Riders Members Newsletter

Visit the **BEDFORD Group** online at www.road-a-bedford.org.uk **April 2010**

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April Meeting

The Secret Life of the Motorway Part 2

Following on from the January meeting, when we looked at the first part of "The Secret Life of The Motorway" we will continue the motorway theme by showing part 2 of this three part BBC4 series. Part 2 titled "The Honeymoon Period" looks at how we used, loved and cherished (yes cherished!) the new motorway network and all it bought to our lives as "we set out on a voyage of discovery in this new world".

This episode provides another fascinating insight into motoring history.

Thank you for your continued support at monthly meetings. We hope to see you at 8pm on Tuesday 20th April 2010 at the Training Centre of the Bedfordshire and Luton Fire and Rescue Service, Southfields Road, Kempston.

March AGM Meeting: Following a review of the last year's activities a new Committee was elected. Two members of last year's committee have stood down. We would like to thank Adrian Bailey for his work as both Treasurer and for delivering the Better Driving Course training (along with Stan). Andrew McGrorey stood down as the Training Officer and we would also like to thank him for his work in this role. On a positive note the committee has gained three new members, so we extend a warm welcome to Jo Lazzard and Bob Bethell, plus a welcome back to Steve Davy.

Committee Vacancies:

Melia Taylor has now changed role to Membership Officer and Treasurer. We therefore have a vacancy for the administrative role of Training Co-ordinator position on the Committee. We also have to replace Andrew McGrorey as the Training Officer. This role requires the volunteer to be an Advanced Tutor. Any offers of help would be much appreciated – let your Committee know if you can help.

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Our thanks go to our President, Dr Lisa Dorn, who concluded our AGM with an excellent presentation on her role as the Research Director of “a²om” (pronounced atom). a²om’s aim is to reduce the high casualty rate amongst newly qualified drivers, the vast majority of whom are 17 to 24 year olds, at the start of their driving careers. The aim is to improve driving skills whilst you are learning to drive. It is known from research that young people do not always recognise and therefore react to risk in the same way that older people do. Whilst the introduction of a separate theory test to the UK driving test, which includes “hazard perception” has to be a good thing, a²om’s aim is to take this further by combining E-learning with the traditional on-road tuition / instruction offered by Advanced Driving Instructors. The E-learning software is available free via many schools and includes two modules, “a²om Highway” and “a²om Mind” similar to RoSPA’s Advanced Driver Training. It promotes the theme “**Drive with your mind, not just your hands and feet**” from the first time you take control of a vehicle. Successful completion of the two modules leads to the award of a “Certificate of Driving Awareness” and can, with appropriate on road training lead to the award of a BTEC in Driving Science. Further information is available at: www.a2om.com/btec.

Driver Focus or Driver Distraction?

Research by the Transport Research Laboratory has highlighted (again) the increase in risk we are exposed to by driver distraction sources whilst driving. This was revealed by Dr Nick Reed (TRL Senior Research Fellow) at the latest “Driving Change Seminar”.

In the seminar, aimed at managers with responsibility for driving policy, Dr Reed said “Isolating yourself to drive is now an unusual experience because (*particularly at work*) you are connected and productive for so much more of the time”.

The research defined 6 types of distraction:

1. Things brought into the vehicle such as mobile phones
2. Vehicle systems / cockpit layout
3. Vehicle occupants, passengers
4. Moving object or animal in the vehicle
5. Activities such as daydreaming
6. External objects, events or activities.

Dr Reed said “In terms of driving, you might miss traffic lights and events that are happening in the mirrors. You look at things for less time and less often and have slower reaction times. All those things impact on your ability to drive (*safely*)”.

A study in the USA which monitored 200 vehicles over three million miles revealed 4,552 “critical events” took place during this time and that 81% of these events involved driver distraction. Other research by Psychologists Dr. David Strayer and Dr. Jason Watson from the University of Utah, using 200 volunteers to drive along a motorway in a simulator whilst using a hands free mobile phone, revealed that 97.5% of participants took almost a fifth longer to hit the brakes in an emergency situation and were shown to be less aware of traffic around them. Their results show that driving performance routinely falls while using a hands-free mobile phone and is comparable to the impairment seen in drunken drivers.

Roadcraft states: “In more than 90% of traffic accidents, human error is the cause, accidents do not just happen by chance, they are the consequences of unsafe driving practices.” **And that brings us nicely to:**

Better Driving Course. This is being run on 6 consecutive Wednesdays commencing 21st April 2010. For further details and an application form follow the link on our website home page.

Keith Hooson