



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

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

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July Meeting

Lessons From Bunsfield

This month we very are pleased to welcome Peter Kendall, Emergency Planning Officer for the Hertfordshire part of the East of England Ambulance Service NHS Trust. Peter will look at the actual response from the ambulance service perspective. He will talk about the potential of a mass casualty event (circa 4,000 casualties) had the incident occurred during the working day. He will also discuss the main outcomes of a multi-agency workshop which was held four months later to examine how the agencies would have started to cope had the incident been during the working day.

We hope to see you at **8pm on Tuesday 20th July 2010** at the Training Centre of the Bedfordshire and Luton Fire and Rescue Service, Southfields Road, Kempston.

June Meeting: Robert Gifford, the Executive Director of the Parliamentary Advisory Committee for Transport Safety gave us an interesting talk on his organisation's role and his views on how safety on our roads in particular may be focussed to look even more at the cost benefit of spending on safety to save money long term. In the world of ever increasing financial constraint it is likely that safety improvements on road, rail and in the air may only "see the light of day" when they can be shown to "recover the cost of the outlay". On railways the biggest safety issue is now becoming the crashes occurring at level crossings. There could be a double safety benefit here to both road and rail users. His

presentation was delivered on the eve of the proposal by Sir Peter North to reduce the drink/drive limit in the UK. The proposal is to reduce the limit from 80mg of alcohol to 100ml of blood (a level that has been with us for 40 years) to 50mg of alcohol to 100ml of blood. In terms of cost benefit, Sir Peter's estimate is a potential reduction in road deaths of 168 persons per year in England and Wales. The Department for Transport has already announced a 27 per cent cut in road safety revenue funding and a £17.2m cut in capital grants for road safety as well as other cuts in major projects. With the financial cost of a road death estimated at £1.68M we may see this proposal becoming road traffic law.

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Happy 50th Birthday to the MOT Test

The Ministry of Transport Test (MOT Test) was introduced in September 1960 and today costs £54.85. Back in 1960, 6,970 people died on British roads, double the number of road deaths (still too high) today. In 1960 there were only 9.4 million vehicles in use, compared with 34.2 million now and of course average mileages were much lower.

Prior to the MOT test there was so little regulation in respect of car safety that cars were frequently held together as much by hope as by their rusting, pre-galvanised steel panels. The first many knew about their worn brakes or steering was when they went through a hedge and with no ABS, seat belts, airbags and crumple zones the high road carnage was not surprising.

The test for cars over 10 years old was originally known initially as the "10 Year Test" or "Ministry of Transport" test, later shortened to "MoT". The testable age was progressively reduced to three years by 1967.

MoT Statistics

On a busy day 160,000 MoT tests are conducted by 50,000 testers across 20,000 testing stations. Last year 25,252,384 Class 4 vehicles - mostly cars and motorcycles - passed. It is estimated the annual cost to motorists of having their cars MoT tested, including test fee and travel time, is between £794 million to £1.38 billion.

The failure rate is generally about 35 per cent, with some 10.1 million failing last year. In the original test it was deemed that all vehicles more than 10 years old should have their brakes, lights and steering checked every year. A far cry today from what used to be a cursory examination of just a few vehicle components.

It is estimated that if the MoT test was scrapped, the number of unroadworthy cars

would rise by 800 per cent, triggering up to 1,979 extra deaths and 12,145 serious injuries a year.

Today the list of items that must be scrutinised is comprehensive and includes tyres (condition, tread-depth), seat belts (type and condition), vehicle structure, body security and condition, doors and seats, registration plates, VIN details, spare wheel carrier, tow bars, exhaust, mirrors, wipers, washers, windscreen, bonnet catch, seats, fuel system and the horn. The vehicle emissions test was introduced in 1991. A few items still escape the test - such as the clutch, gearbox, battery and engine!

Don't feel too sorry for those that fail, however. The DfT estimates that despite the MoT, unroadworthy vehicles were responsible for up to 10 per cent of UK road accidents and around 290 deaths.

Don't Forget Your Regular Safety Checks

The MoT only means the vehicle is safe on the day it was tested. Your brake pads or tyres could be fractionally above the failure limit so they won't fail the test. But they might look very different in a couple of weeks.

And don't forget vehicles aren't the only things that gets tested and failed: 104 authorised examiners were "struck off" last year, while 159 testers were handed "failure" forms. That's less than half a per cent of testers and one third of a per cent for examiners, but maybe there is justice, after a ll.

August Meeting: As the traditional holiday season is with us, we will not be holding a meeting in August.. The next newsletter will be sent out in September and the September meeting will be held on 21th September 2010.

Have a safe and enjoyable break

Keith Hooson

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