



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

Visit the **BEDFORD** Group online at [www.road-a-bedford.org.uk](http://www.road-a-bedford.org.uk) **May 2011**

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## May Meeting

We have been unsuccessful in being able to secure a speaker for this month.

**This month we will show two dvds.**

**(1). "Police, Camera, Action – The Liver Run".** Filmed from a back up Police car, a Rover SD1 Met Police Cars take a liver for transplant from J7 of the M11 to the Cromwell Hospital in central London covering on a busy Friday afternoon 29 Miles in 35 minutes. Hair raising and skillful driving.

**(2) Driven to Distraction.** A programme highlighting how drivers and multi-tasking do not do anything for road safety.

We hope to see you at 8pm on Tuesday 17<sup>th</sup> May 2011 at the Training Centre of the Bedfordshire and Luton Fire and Rescue Service, Southfields Road, Kempston

**April Meeting:** We showed an interesting Horizon programme based around improving research on what actually happens to an occupant in a car crash and how this research along with other technologies like GPS is being used to try and design a car that you cannot crash and/or making a vehicle that protects its occupants so well that "no one will die in a car crash". The programme followed research in the USA as well as Volvo's "crash testing facilities". The technology is not fully there yet for mass production and release on the general public and then there

will always be the problem of how does the driver reacts when the vehicle decides that "**it knows better**" and takes over the driving. One thing that I always find puzzling in such programmes when it is stated that the overwhelming majority of accidents are caused by driver error / driver distraction is just how many programmes on "driving safely" seems to still persist in interviewing experts in their (driver safety) field whilst they are driving and by default must be suffering distraction!

**RoSPA Advanced Drivers and Riders  
Blog: Well Worth a Visit.**

*All content is the opinion of the writer or contributor. It is not the official view of the committee of the Bedford group of RoSPA Advanced Drivers and Riders, RoSPA or any other official body connected to or mentioned by the writer.*

Following on from last month's newsletter mentioning the blog I have eventually tracked it down to its own satellite website which can be found at:

<http://roadarbloggers.wordpress.com/>

There is actually a lot of information on this website regarding advanced driving and riding as well as the "blogging". You can of course also post your response to the blogs there too.

### Madness or Common Sense?

Thanks to Alan Freeman for sending me information on a proposal in Portsmouth to switch traffic lights to a constant flashing amber:

Motorists won't have to wait at red traffic lights at quiet times in the future if a new plan gets the go-ahead. All the lights at a junction could be switched to flashing amber – most likely in the middle of the night. Drivers would be expected to proceed with caution, rather than waiting for the red light to change. Highways staff at Portsmouth City Council are applying to the Department for Transport for permission to trial the scheme. If all goes to plan, the new lighting rules could be introduced in the city within a year.

'It can be extremely frustrating if you are on the road at 2 or 3 o'clock in the morning and forced to stop at a red light when no other cars are around,' said Barry Rawlings, senior traffic systems engineer at Portsmouth city council.

A similar system already operates in Spain and France but motoring organisation the AA casts doubt on whether it would work safely in Britain.

See more about this at:

<http://www.metro.co.uk/news/859070-traffic-light-change-in-portsmouth-could-see-amber-meaning-go>



Thanks to Ann Essen for the above photograph

### MOT Test Frequency Changes

My view on this one is **TOTAL MADNESS.**

Under proposals MOTs would only be required for new vehicles after four years instead of the current three years rule. Yet 21.6% of three year old cars fail their first MOT test. Most of these vehicles will be fleet or recent ex-fleet vehicles. Vehicles that in theory should be 'well maintained company fleet cars'

Add to that until a vehicle is 10 years old a retest would only be needed every two years. In July last year the AA reported that 37% of vehicles failed their MOTs. Technically if your car fails an MOT it must have been driven un-roadworthy on the public highway .... That is driven illegally.

Cars may be more reliable and better built than they were in the 1960's when the MOT test was first introduced, but it would seem that regular checks (service and MOT plus at least a weekly driver check) are still essential.

Editor: Keith Hooson