



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

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

President **Dr. Lisa Dorn** BSc PhD CPsychol, AFBPS

**Bill Brady** (Chairman and Senior Tutor) 01234 768408 [chairman@roadad-bedford.org.uk](mailto:chairman@roadad-bedford.org.uk)

**Stan Jones** (Secretary) **NEW Phone number** 01234 266070 [secretary@roadad-bedford.org.uk](mailto:secretary@roadad-bedford.org.uk)

**Melia Taylor** (Membership and Treasurer) 01234 312210 [treasurer@roadad-bedford.org.uk](mailto:treasurer@roadad-bedford.org.uk) ,  
[membership@roadad-bedford.org.uk](mailto:membership@roadad-bedford.org.uk)

**Keith Hooson** (Newsletter Editor) 01234 404830 [newsletter@roadad-bedford.org.uk](mailto:newsletter@roadad-bedford.org.uk)

## **IMPORTANT: Please Note A Change of Venue for Future Meetings**

For many years now the Bedfordshire and Luton Fire and Rescue Service has supported our group and has provided us with a regular home in Kempston for our monthly group meetings and Committee meetings. The Bedfordshire and Luton Fire and Rescue Service, who still wish to support the important road safety message that we promote, have asked us to relocate our future meetings to:

**The Bedfordshire & Luton Fire & Rescue Service Fire Station at Barkers Lane, Bedford, MK41 9SB.**

The facilities will still be provided by the Bedfordshire and Luton Fire and Rescue Service to our group at no cost to us. We would like to thank The Bedfordshire and Luton Fire and Rescue Service for their much-appreciated hospitality at Kempston and for their continued support in providing us with meeting facilities at the new venue.

**Parking:** We cannot park at the fire station itself. There is however plenty of parking space available at the **Bedford International Athletics Stadium, Barkers Lane, Bedford MK41 9SB** opposite the fire station. Please take care crossing the road. Should you find parking is a problem, there is also more parking at **Aspects Leisure Centre**, Newnham Avenue, **Bedford, MK41 9LW**, which is located behind the fire station.

Upon arrival at the fire station proceed to the right of the main building towards the silver metal gates. Just before the gate on the left are double doors that open directly into the meeting room.

**October Meeting: Dr Julie Gandolfi**, a colleague of Dr. Lisa Dorn at Cranfield University, will give us a talk a presentation about her research on older drivers. I am sure this will generate some interesting debate and views on something that will come to us all or indeed already has.

We hope to see you at 8pm on Tuesday 18<sup>th</sup> October 2011 at the **Barkers Lane Fire Station MK41 9SB**

**September meeting:** A dark, wet and wintery evening welcomed us to our new monthly meeting venue at the Barkers Lane Fire Station. Facilities are as good as Kempston and we soon made ourselves at home. The

meeting was an open forum on Roadcraft and driving in general. Discussions included risks to motor cyclists and how the introduction of day time running lights may make bikers even 'less visible' to some drivers.

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The view was that in many instances too many car / van / bus drivers still fail to notice bikers and cyclists even when they have dipped beam lights on or are decked out in every 'day-glo colour' under the sun. Defensive riding is a definite must have.

There was also discussion on the potential risks faced / from older drivers and the merits / pitfalls and the logistics of compulsory driver re-testing. **Last week I saw headlines** "A grandmother led traffic police on a surreal 17 mile chase – at speeds of less than 10mph after she was spotted driving the wrong way around a roundabout." Caroline Turner (aged 76) was finally stopped after more than an hour when patrol cars formed a rolling road block and an officer got out and ran alongside her, telling her to pull over.

I am sure that the forthcoming presentaion from Dr. Gandolfi with give us further insight into our discussions.

**ANPR in action:** It's not all there to punish you! Two weeks ago I booked parking at Luton Airport. The vehicle details etc. were completed and confirmed on line, instructions advised 'upon arrival you will be issued with a ticket at the barrier with your vehicle details on it'. As I approached the barrier I was expecting either an attendant or a keypad to enter my booking details. All there was a button. I pressed the button and in an instant a ticket was printed with all booking details on it. Spooky? How did that happen? Then I saw the low level ANPR camera that had scanned my number plate, matched my booking details and printed my ticket.

### **80MPH Motorway Limit:**

There are proposals to increase the motorway maximum speed limit to 80MPH. The existing 70MPH limit was set over 40 years ago when for many vehicles 70MPH was 'flat out'. Since then car performance and top speed has increased, cars have become safer and a whole host of safety features are now becoming standard on base models. Another argument for increasing the legal maximum to 80 MPH is that 80 MPH has now become "the default legal maximum". There are also claims that the increase in speed will help the economy through speeding up travel. It would seem that the environmental impact of higher fuel consumption seems to have been sudenly forgotten. Then add to that the cynical view that as the recession means people are driving less that the revenue from fuel sales has dropped, so increasing speed limits would generate more tax revenue (through increased fuel consumption) without more mileages being driven. Then if the existing legal limit of 70MPH is now to all intents and purposes a 80MPH limit how will making 80MPH the new legal limt not then lead to the 'real world legal limit' then becoming 90MPH?

In today's world of public service cuts will there be less enforcement on our roads and we also have a government committed to ending what it describes as the "war on the motorist". Then there is the driver to consider. Car technology and safety may have improved in 40 years of a 70MPH, but has (present readership excepted) driver capability improved?

No doubt the debate will continue.



Editor: Keith Hooson