



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

Visit the **BEDFORD Group** online at www.roadad-bedford.org.uk **Oct 2009**

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

Bill Brady (Chairman and Senior Tutor) 01234 768408 chairman@roadad-bedford.org.uk

Stan Jones (Secretary) 01234 782071 secretary@roadad-bedford.org.uk

Adrian Bailey (Treasurer) 01234 826466 treasurer@roadad-bedford.org.uk , membership@roadad-bedford.org.uk

Melia Taylor (Training Co-ordinator) 01234 312210 training@roadad-bedford.org.uk

Andrew McGrorey (Training Officer) 01234 346907 andrew.mcgrorey1@btinternet.com

Keith Hooson (Newsletter Producer) 01234 404830

October Meeting

Quiz Night

A chance to shine as part of a team in our general knowledge quiz. Yes there are bound to be a few driving questions in the quiz, but its all about having a bit of fun. Members on the teams will be decided on the night.

8pm on the Tuesday 20th October 2009 at the Training Centre of the Bedfordshire and Luton Fire and Rescue Service Southfields Road Kempston.

Our usual meeting room is no more. Parking and the way in to the venue is as before, but walk past our usual lecture theatre venue until you reach the end of the corridor then turn right (at the T-junction!) to our new meeting room.

The September Meeting: An interesting and open forum meeting based upon "Roadcraft – The Essential Police Driver's Handbook". Discussion started with the recent traffic chaos caused by the roundabout work after the August Bank Holiday Weekend on the A6 at Cowbridge. The Highways Agency claimed it was caused by drivers failing to keep the junctions onto the roundabouts clear so that when the contra-flow lights changed those who had right of way onto roundabouts were faced with no access onto the roundabouts. We noted that the day after the chaos some temporary yellow box junctions had been painted on the roundabouts. Others claimed that the phasing of the temporary traffic lights

did not leave enough time for traffic to clear the roundabouts before the lights changed.

We had many views on the **MLOC**: The Middle Lane Owners Club and their actions on motorways. The big hazard here is that if you come across one of the **MLOC** cruising at 60mph or less as you are safely travelling at 70mph in lane 1. You are then forced to make the potentially dangerous manoeuvre of having to go from lane 1 to lane 3, via lane 2 and then back again to lane 1. Whilst undertaking is illegal, advanced drivers know that a car is most stable when travelling in a straight line rather than taking a right, left

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.

manoeuvre to get around the “Middle Lane Hazard”. Those who attended will know that the personal views of the safest way to tackle hazards may not always be the same as the official line!

We were also reminded of the dangers of blind spots (for all road users) via the French Highway Code which uses the more apt description for blind spots: “Les Angles Morts” – “The Angles of Death”.

Staged Accidents: There are still reports in the press and on the radio about staged accidents. A collision is caused by a driver, usually a rear end shunt caused by an inappropriate overtake just before a roundabout. The overtaking driver pulls back in quickly and sharply in front of you and then slams on their brakes causing you to rear end shunt them. The main purpose of the action is not to get the rear end of the overtaking car repaired, but for the occupants of that car to then submit third party claims against the driver that hit them for multiple (fake) injuries and for injuries to multiple passengers (who are not always in the car at the time of the collision).

Sometimes two cars can “work as a team” to stage the accident. Often there may be little you can do to avoid such staged incidents, however paying attention to what is happening around you, anticipating others and using your observation skills should help to minimise the chances of this happening to you. The most common road traffic accident is a front / rear collision. The more “safe space” you can create around you the safer you are likely to be.

Winter Can't Be Far Off: We are having amazing October weather, but it won't last forever. Sunny autumn and winter days often means the sun can be quite low in the sky for a significant part of the daylight hours. Anticipate the weather conditions and you are likely to be safer on the roads.

At the moment overnight condensation is appearing on cars: Clear all windows and your lights of condensation before driving off. If we do get ice remember you are driving a road vehicle not an ocean going liner. So again clear all windows of ice before driving off – don't drive around with “portholes of vision” windows.

Dirty lights seriously reduce the illuminate levels of your lights. Clean them before driving.

Tyre pressures will drop as temperatures decrease. Check your tyre pressures and check tyres for tread depth, cuts, bulges and sidewall damage. Don't forget the spare tyre too.

Don't forget the “**POWDER Checks**”

Petrol (or diesel or lpg). Do you have enough for the intended journey?

Oil (and other fluid checks; Brake fluid, Clutch Fluid, Power steering fluid, Automatic Transmission Fluids, Electrolyte levels)

Water (screenwash – increase the concentration of screenwash as temperatures drop and coolant levels)

Damage (walk around the the vehicle and check it for damage)

Electrics (Lights, wipers, heated screens)

Rubber (wiper blades and tyres – condition of and pressure of tyres).

A 10 minute check should keep you legal and your vehicle roadworthy.