



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

Visit the **BEDFORD Group** online at www.road-a-bedford.org.uk *Sept 2011*

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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. Please assemble there and we will let you in.

September Meeting: Roadcraft Questions and Discussion

An open forum meeting to discuss Roadcraft and how that links in with advanced driving. Bring your questions along and share your experiences with the group.

We hope to see you at 8pm on Tuesday 20th September 2011 at the **Barkers Lane Fire Station MK41 9SB**

July meeting: There was a last minute change to the publicised meeting after I had posted last month's newsletter. We were pleased to

welcome Ian Wilson, Hertfordshire Police Force ANPR Officer.

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.

Ian gave us an overview and in-site into the work of ANPR Team. **ANPR** is the acronym for **Automatic Number Plate Recognition**. This is a system of mass surveillance that uses optical character recognition to read the license plates on vehicles. They can use existing closed-circuit television, road-rule enforcement cameras, or cameras specifically designed for the task. They are used by police forces and as a method of electronic toll collection on pay-per-use roads and cataloging the movements of traffic or individuals. ANPR cameras are linked to databases such as the DVLA, Motor Insurance Bureau and The Police National Computer. When a roadside or in vehicle ANPR camera registers a vehicle registration number with a warning flag against it or it is not registered as being taxed or insured the Police are alerted to a potential offence.

Vehicles can be stopped and seized following such alerts and arrests and prosecutions often follow. In Hertfordshire around 5,000 ANPR incidents were dealt with last year. In the UK around 450,000 registration plates are read and cross referenced every day. This adds up to around 32 million ANPR scans in England everyday. Records are kept for 2 years and then destroyed. An ANPR camera costs around £10,000!

Crews across the UK Police forces, who move around with on board ANPR cameras are known as **Interceptors**. Their work and role in Bedfordshire has been recently televised in the BBC 1 TV programme "Traffic Cops". They have the highest arrest rates stemming from the instant access they have to vehicle and driver information.

Are You Staying Legal? Altered and/or non-standard number plates can cause reading

problems for ANPR cameras. Such number plates are not legal for UK on road use. Whilst some number plates may be altered for 'customising reasons,' others may be altered to avoid recognition by ANPR and speed cameras. The law specifies the format and style of a number plate for use on the public highway in the UK: A summary is available at: http://www.regtransfers.co.uk/main/car_numberplates_regulations.asp

The common number plate format of 4 characters, a space and 3 characters from August 1983 onwards or 3 characters, a space and 4 characters issued from February 1963 to Sept 1983 was chosen to make reading and recall (e.g. after a road traffic incident) easy. The same format (3+4 numbers) was also chosen for ease of recalling telephones in the major UK cities around the same time.

Number plates layouts altered to spell names or numbers like '5' altered to look like 'S' are illegal and could land the owner with a fine of up to £1,000. The DVLA can even recall the number plate – All UK number plates belong to the DVLA not the car owner – legally they are all loaned to us by the DVLA.

Insurance: Your motor vehicle insurer (or in the case of company owned vehicles your employer) is required to register your insurance with the Motor Insurance Bureau. You can simply check that your vehicle is registered as being insured by checking your vehicle at <http://ownvehicle.askmid.com/T>

If your vehicle isn't on the Motor Insurance Database or the details shown are not correct contact your vehicle insurer without delay before the ANPR interceptors stop you for a roadside chat!

Editor: Keith Hooson