



RoSPA Advanced Drivers and Riders North Wiltshire Group

www.northwiltroadar.co.uk



Patron: Her Majesty the Queen

April 2010

Newsletter

Secretary:

Mrs. Monica Graham
114 Marines Drive
Faringdon, Oxon. SN7 7UG
Tel: 01367 242377
secretary@northwiltroadar.co.uk

Dates for Your Diary

Monthly meetings are all held at
Liddington Village Hall opposite
the church.

Monday 10th May,
7.15pm for 7.45pm
Meeting: Mohammad Shafie from
Swindon Borough Council

Monday 14th June,
7.15pm for 7.45pm
Meeting: speaker TBA

Monday 12th July,
7.15pm for 7.45pm
Meeting: speaker TBA

Saturday 24th July
Calne Bike Show

Monday 27th September
Bike Tutorial evening

**Do you have a Topic you would
like discussed, or know of an
interesting speaker? Please
contact Monica!**



One of the main aims of our group is to provide advice and training to our members to help them to improve their driving and riding abilities. The committee have recently been discussing ways of improving the training that we offer to both our Associate members and those that have already passed their RoSPA Advanced Driving/Riding test but are looking to increase their skills further. One of the ways we may be able to do this is by offering more classroom sessions, for example covering areas from Roadcraft and the Highway Code.

Members of the bike section have held this kind of meeting in the past, and are planning to resurrect this approach with a Tutorial evening in September. We are considering doing something similar for car drivers.

Would you be interested in this? We could perhaps devote some of our group meetings to technical discussions. We have set up a poll within the Forum section of the web site. **Let us know what you think!**



New Leaflets!

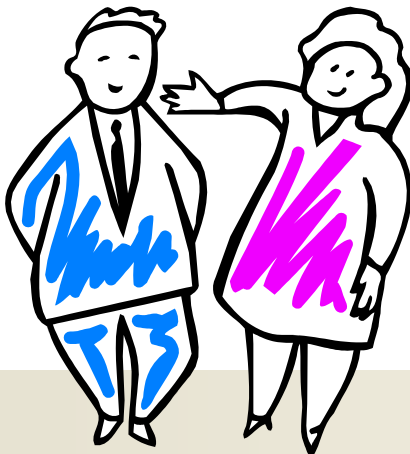
We have recently produced a new style promotional leaflet for the group. These will be available at all future meetings and events. Don't forget to pick some up and help promote the group by displaying them where they'll be noticed!

Forthcoming Meetings

Monday 10th May, 7.15pm for 7.45pm:
Mohammad Shafie, Congestion and Casualty Reduction Manager from Swindon Borough Council will be giving a talk entitled "Network management plan and its impact on growing congestion and road safety."

Monday 14th June, 7.15pm for 7.45pm:
Unfortunately our previously advertised speaker will no longer be able to attend. A new speaker will be announced next month.

Monday 12th July, 7.15pm for 7.45pm:
Speaker TBA



Events

Saturday 24th July: Calne Bike Meet:
Once again this year we will be supporting the Rotary Club of Calne's Motorcycle meet. This is the largest free bike event in the area and this year marks its 10th Anniversary. **Would you be able to help man our stand?** Please contact Monica if you can help.

Monday 27th September: Bike tutorial Evening: This will be an evening presentation held at Liddington Village Hall. The theme will be Observation and the idea is to inform and generate healthy discussion between the bikers. The majority of bike tutors will be present to answer any questions.

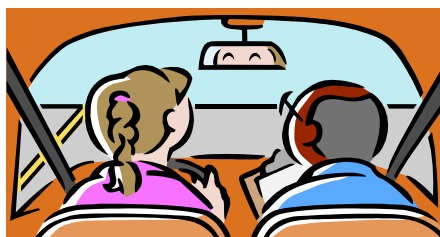
Bike Ride-outs: Regular Bike Ride-outs take place on the 3rd Saturday of each month. Check the Motorcycle Discussion section on the Web Site Forum for more details.

Welcome!

It has been a busy month with the following new members joining us. Welcome to them all!

Aaron Newman (car)
Allan Barnard (bike)
Gregory Wells (bike)
Kenneth Wilson (bike)
Malcolm Benbow (car)
Nicholas Leatherland (bike)
Paul Hearne (car)
Paul Silverwood (car)
Sandra Lawer (bike)

North Wilts RoSPA Driving Day



Our recent driving day was a huge success and many people have commented on how much they enjoyed the day. Invitations to attend were extended to those involved with the Under 17 Car club and the following report was written by **Jennifer** and **Alex Stone**.

The North Wiltshire RoSPA group recently invited the parents of Under Seventeen Car Club members to join them for a day's driving. As it is the members who usually have all the fun at the U17 Car Club, I decided to take advantage of this opportunity and accept the invitation.

We gathered at a Sainsbury's car park in Swindon, where we met our partners for the day. As I had never done a driving day before, I had no idea what to expect. However, everyone was very friendly and I was paired with Gavin, who had come all the way from Cambridgeshire. I elected to drive first and once we had chosen our route (Route 2 — 1½ hours) from the choice of six available, we set off.

We talked about our driving activities and what we expected to learn from each other's driving. As neither of us knew the area we were relying on the route directions being accurate. Our route took us through Marlborough, Wotton Bassett and some beautiful

countryside. We passed three white chalk horses and enjoyed a variety of road conditions from quiet country roads to towns busy with Saturday morning shoppers.

Before long, it was time to change over drivers, so arriving back at Sainsbury's we swapped cars and chose Route 3 for our next adventure. In contrast to the first session, this route consisted mainly of country roads with the main hazards being cyclists and horses. As passenger, I could enjoy the scenery much more on this journey and I had to keep reminding myself that I was supposed to be observing Gavin's driving style. During the drive, we noticed that we had been followed for some time by a Jaguar with two occupants who were also doing the driving day. In true movie style, we managed to shake them off, but unfortunately this turned out to be because we took a wrong turn thanks to my navigational abilities! Or was it because I had been taking in the scenery a little too much?

After swapping stories over a pub lunch, we paired up with new partners. Mine was Monica, who I knew from the U17 Car Club, where she promotes RoSPA at many of our club meetings. Once again, I drove first and we headed off to Newbury. Here we experienced some extremes of weather from torrential rain to brilliant sunshine. We then drove through some lovely country lanes and relied on Monica for directions as I hadn't a clue which way we were supposed to be going. No getting lost this time!

After 1½ hours, coffee was calling, so it was back to Sainsbury's for a caffeine fix before Monica took over driving. She knew the area and with no need to provide directions, I could enjoy the scenery and spotted lots of pheasants and hares, but sadly no deer.

Our driving ended at 5pm. After a very enjoyable day of driving on both urban and country roads in a variety of weather conditions I learned many things. The main technical point I will take away is the need to look as far ahead as possible. But I will also remember the day for being in the company of a group of people who really enjoy and care about their driving. I would certainly recommend it to anyone!

Jennifer and Alex Stone



Merchandise

Don't forget that we have a stock of merchandise available for purchase through the group. For more information visit the Merchandise page of the web site.

www.northwiltsoadar.co.uk



Congratulations!

Congratulations to **Kevin Hugo** who recently passed his car re-test with a Gold grade. Also to **Monica Graham, John King and Chris Mawer** who have all recently qualified as Approved Car Tutors for the group.

April Meeting Report:

Geoff Gregor, RoSPA Motorcycle Examiner

Geoff began the evening by admitting that he had invited himself to speak to us, so that he could share his interpretation of the requirements of the RoADA motorcycle test and dispel some myths.

Geoff began his police career, in Gloucester, in the era of the BSA Roadmaster and cork helmets. He was ordered to teach himself to start the bike (the choke flooded over his enormous gauntlets) and then ride, protected only by his standard police uniform. Bringing us up to date, he candidly explained that he has sold his car, not seen his second wife for a number of years and is currently in a bigamous relationship with a BMW GS. He has been involved in highly successful RoSPA motorcycle schemes in Greece and Turkey.

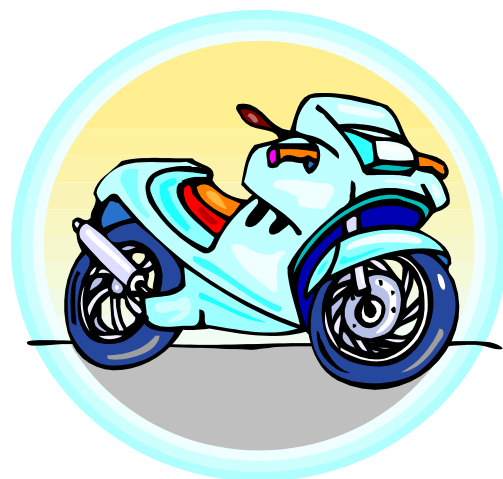
The RoADAR Test: Geoff emphasised that, on test, he regards it as essential to obey the law, including all road signs and speed limits and that he does not tolerate infractions.

POWDER Pre-ride check: A helpful examiner may invite the candidate to demonstrate without getting hands dirty. Take at least 5 minutes to do the check justice, avoiding lengthy weekly maintenance check (see Roadcraft for difference). Geoff likes to see *sparkle*, even in pre-ride checks:

- **Petrol:** Options: petrol gauge (accuracy?), trip meter, open cap and look. Make sure it's full for the test.



Geoff Gregor, RoADAR Motorcycle Examiner, with Nick Carrington, North Wilts RoADAR Chairman



- **Oil:** Is it checked hot or cold? Consider including driveshaft or chain maintenance in the oil section.
- **Water:** The header tank is the important part: Is it dry? Is the coolant colour suitable? Are there any leaks?
- **Damage:** Do a quick look round on the ground as you approach the bike; liquid or bits of bike on the ground are an early warning of a problem. Be particularly careful to check mirrors, extra lights and screens which often vibrate loose.
- **Electrics:** Go to the instrument pad, turn on the ignition, and point out the lights you expect to come on when you turn the key. Identify lights which will go off when you start the engine. Mention horn, this is not normally tested in town. Lights: avoid leaping about, stretch hand round and see reflection. Brake light: test by both hand lever and pedal. Test brake light again with lights on, if faulty, indicator may glow. Operate indicators and hazard lights, if fitted.
- **Rubber:** Tyres must be legal. Bikes: minimum 1mm round whole circumference. Tell examiner the normal front and rear tyre pressures. Rub hand lightly round side-wall to check for splits and nails. Indicate how you would check clutch and brake fluid levels.

The Ride: Geoff explains a (simple) route, normally 40 to 45 miles, including pointing it out on a map. The brief is precise and invites the rider to demonstrate skills and to comply with Roadcraft and the law, including all traffic signs. The candidate expected to 'make progress' appropriately within the law.

The Debrief: Geoff will tell candidates if they have passed immediately. The debrief is important and required because even travelling, on occasion, very close behind a candidate to observe the actions of hands and feet or to gauge deceleration, the examiner cannot see or sense everything. It essential that the examiner clarifies the reason for various actions during the test. It's important that the candidate can describe incidents and how the system was applied. Once this has been clarified in some detail, the grade can be awarded.

Question and Answer Session:

Can a RoADA test be failed? Yes, result is fail, bronze, silver or gold.

How is a failure achieved? Candidates will be failed for, amongst others things: failing to give way, crossing 2" of a double white line or missing a stop sign. After an incident leading to a failure, Geoff normally allows test to be completed, so that the fault can be considered in the context of the rest of the ride. .

How is a bronze pass achieved? Either: no knowledge of system or occasional use of system. (Difference may emerge during debrief).

Do you permit filtering? Filtering is *overtaking slowly*. Traffic must be stationary or travelling *very slowly*. Some car drivers think it is illegal – this is rubbish, the bike is narrow and manoeuvrable. Safety is paramount. If unsafe, don't filter.

Overtakes: Is it acceptable to exceed the speed limit briefly to overtake a car travelling at 56 mph in 60 mph limit, or lorry on motorway travelling at 60 mph. This appears to be a safer option than edging past at the legal limit? Geoff follows RoSPA policy: if the speed limit is exceeded, candidate is likely to fail.

Straight-lining bends. South Wales police used to have a policy of straight lining bends, using the other side of the road. It is impossible to check the surface over the whole width of the road and there were deaths. The policy now is to straight line on own side of the road.

Geoff described two personal incidents which have modified his views on safety:

The speed and sun-dazzle incident: This occurred during a police motorcycle course before sun-glasses were permitted and when “going like rockets” was encouraged. On the Devizes to Pewsey road there is a right-hand bend followed by a left-hand bend on a rise. At the top, and travelling fast, Geoff was blinded by the sun. The off-side cylinder of the bike hit the bank on the far side of the road and the police BMW R1100RT was written off. The course was suspended and Geoff failed.

The RoADA test incident: A person Geoff was testing collided with an oncoming car when positioning for view on a left-hand bend. This has made a lasting impression on Geoff, because there was no apparent reason why it occurred.

Are all RoADA Examiners Policemen? To date, yes. However, soon there will not be enough police motorcyclists to fill the role. (There used to be 30 police motorcyclists in Bristol alone).

How many times is it acceptable to get lost during the test? The test is not designed to be a map-reading exam. The examiner will be tolerant and may overtake at a suitable moment to encourage the candidate back onto the route.

How is consistency between examiners achieved? Consistency is achieved only through their police background (where they are tested every 3 years) and recent briefing. RoSPA does not yet have a system for the re-assessment of examiners. Stu Bullock is working with RoSPA HQ on ways to improve consistency.

RoSPA Motorcycle Diploma Course: Geoff commented that he had volunteered for and successfully completed a RoSPA Motorcycle Diploma Course in order to understand what diploma candidates had learned and were expected to achieve when he re-tests them 3-yearly.

RoADA Examiners Report Form: Geoff explained that he makes full use of the text box where he is able to make his own comments. He just looks at the ride. He keeps all previous reports and might look at the areas recommended for improvement to ensure that they had been dealt with. He would avoid looking at the previous grade.

What happens if the candidate gets ahead? The pre-test brief will tell the candidate not to disappear into distance, if separated. The examiner will wait for a traffic light to change. The examiner will not play catch-up.

Do you need to apply the brake light entering a speed limit? Treat the examiner as if not there. Don't try to ride without showing brake lights. If there are other road users, consider whether showing a brake light would help them. If using indicators, ensure they flash at least 3 times, so that they can be seen.

What do you feel about the use of intercomms during motorcycle training? Intercomms are a distraction. It is not possible to concentrate on riding when listening to coaching. Radios should be used only to give directions.

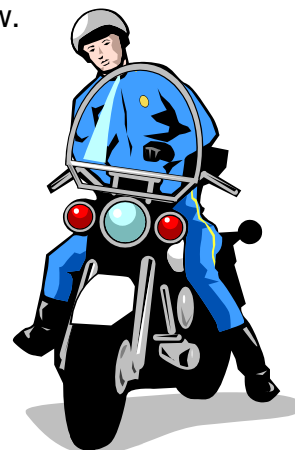
What do you feel about the use of satnavs vs speedo? Escorting a slow, wide load along a motorway (which involved holding up following traffic); Geoff had been so distracted by looking ahead that he failed to notice that it had turned off at the previous junction. He regards satnavs as a distraction. He does not use a satnav for the route or as a speedometer. He amplified his statement by reminding everyone that "avoidably distracted" = careless driving (includes smoking, eating and drinking). Causing death by careless driving carries a maximum penalty of 5 years in gaol.

Please comment on putting feet down when stationary. Advanced motorcyclists are expected to multi-task with the right hand (throttle and hand-brake), enabling the right foot to be down and the left foot to change the gear to neutral at suitable moments. If the road camber indicates, consider putting the left foot down. Geoff would consider putting both feet down on a loose surface.

Extreme positioning. Geoff recommended avoiding extreme positioning to the left or right of the road. It is unsafe and not needed for view.

He concluded by saying "**Have a reason, not a rule**"

Paul Molyneaux



We are always looking for more articles, ideas and news for the newsletter. Have you been somewhere interesting recently that would make a good story? If you attend any group events then take a camera and send us your pictures!