



Traffic Safety Roads

The Graham Feest Consultancy
Incorporating the UK Road Safety Network

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Happy New Year

Traffic Safety Roads

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by the
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Front cover picture - "Victoria on her bike at the RAC Club"

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E-SCOOTERS



One of the issues which has been commented on in most of the newsletters of 2022 was that of e-scooters whether they be those used legally through the various loan schemes operated by local authorities using an external provider or those being used illegally on the highway which have been purchased by individuals.

Many question why they should be allowed to be sold to private individuals if they cannot use them on the road for purposes of commuting but against that owners or potential owners question why the Government is so slow in bringing forward legislation which they have promised to permit their use as part of the transport strategy. Against that backdrop is the considerable frustration about how the current law is being enforced which prohibits the use of privately own e-scooters being used on the highway and those who use loan scheme machines using them illegally on the pavement.



However as the recent PACTS study “The safety of private e-scooters in the UK” for which they have just won a Prince Michael International Road Safety Award, indicated there is a lot of difference between those controlled and managed through a loan system and those which are privately owned.

The interim PACTS report is found at <https://www.grahamfeest.com/resources/latest-uploads/>

At last the DfT’s long-awaited evaluation into the ongoing trials of rental e-scooters has concluded that they could provide a real alternative to other modes of transport, including cars and this will add pressure on the Government from the privately owned e-scooter lobby to do something to make them legally usable on our road network.

Rental e-scooter trials were launched in July 2020 in 32 areas across England. It is estimated that by December 2021, 14.5 million trips had been made by users.



The evaluation, into the rental e-scooter trials was carried out by Arup, NatCen and Valtech, and examined how and why rental e-scooters are used, and by whom, as well as safety, mode shift, environmental and wider social impacts.

The finding suggest that as the trials have become more mature, users are seeing e-scooters less as a novelty and more as a convenient mode of transport that they could use to get to specific destinations.

This is reflected by the fact that the proportion of users shifting from private motor vehicles to e-scooters has been increasing over time, while mode shift from active modes has been decreasing.

It therefore concludes that rental e-scooters ‘can serve as a valuable mode of transport’, something which has been welcomed by the DfT.

National evaluation of e-scooter trials report can be found at <https://www.grahamfeest.com/resources/latest-uploads/>

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DRUG DRIVING - ROAD SIDE SCREENING ADVANCEMENTS

A new preliminary drug driving testing device, which can test for a greater range of drugs at the roadside under development is potentially promising to enhance drug driving enforcement across Europe.

It works as an antigen test and can not only test for Cannabis, Cocaine, Benzodiazepines and Opiates, but also Amphetamine and Methamphetamine.

The advantages of the new system are that oral fluid collection is very rapid, the test time is reduced to 2-8 minutes, and the device is easily transported with no other device being required to read the drug results. The device is set to increase police forces capability to test drivers for the presence of illegal drugs and facilitate the goal of bringing offenders before the courts and making roads safer.

Expectations are that the enhanced roadside drug testing system will increase drug detection in drivers.

Across Europe currently alcohol still remains the most frequently detected intoxicant with cannabis and cocaine being the second and third.

ANIMAL AWARENESS

World Animal Road Awareness is held each year on 10th October to help raise awareness of the problem of animals getting hurt on the road and sometimes abandoned without assistance or much care.

There are an estimated 630 cats hit by drivers each day in the UK and 25pc of these incidents will be fatal. However many drivers take no action if they do know they hit a cat or for that matter any animal and many would survive with a little help.

The organization - Cats Matter - has challenged UK law, or lack of to be precise and also aim to change the mind sets and spread awareness to enlighten people on the best way to help if they hit or find a cat on the road.

To find out what you should do if you hit a cat take a look at <https://www.catsmatter.org/if-you-hit-a-cat>

SUSTRANS LOOKS BACK OVER 2022

One of the most read and meaningful policies of sustrans which has stuck an accord with many during 2022 has been their concept of Local neighbourhoods a position of which we are likely to hear more of in the coming year.

They want to see it much easier for people to lead a healthier and happier lifestyle without the need for a car and so they are petitioning for transport and land-use planning systems in England to be much more integrated. New homes should be built within 800 metres, or 20 minutes of walking round trip, of public transport links and basic amenities. Sustrans believe that everyone should live within a 10-minute walk from local amenities.

Accordingly they are calling on the government to incorporate walking and cycling infrastructure and walkable neighbourhoods into planning law and policy in England. If successful, all new homes in the country would be built within 800 metres of amenities like primary schools, shops, bus stops and GP surgeries. With less vehicles on the road, this initiative would promote healthy living for everyone and would in turn help prevent ill-health.

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ACUSENSES

Geoff Collins, a well known figure in the field of camera technology who for many years has been deputy managing director at the automated enforcement specialists Jenoptik and moved on to take up a position as General Manager with Australian AI camera technology company Acusensus as it looks to continue its expansion into the UK.



Acusensus is behind the Heads-Up system, which uses artificial intelligence (AI) to capture and clearly analyse images captured through vehicle windscreens, which can be used to identify offences including drivers not wearing seatbelts or using a mobile phone, as well as speeding, incorrect lane use and unregistered vehicles.

In his new role, Geoff Collins will continue as Chair of the ITS (UK) Enforcement Forum, which he has undertaken for the last five and a half years.

CALL TO REVIEW MOTORCYCLE LICENCE REGIME

A review could be an outcome from a newly forming DVSA Motorcycle Strategy Group. A new report, led by the Motorcycle Action Group (MAG), shows that for every five CBT certificates issued, just one full licence is achieved leading them to urge the Government to carry out a full review of the existing motorcycle licencing regime, with claims it is impacting the safety of young riders.

At present, in order to ride a motorcycle or scooter of any type, riders must take a Compulsory Basic Training (CBT) course. This takes an average of five to seven hours to complete. For those aged 16 years, this entitles them to ride a moped. Upon turning 17 years, they can ride a motorcycle up to 125cc.

The Government says the CBT ensures riders can travel safely on their own while they practise for their full moped or motorcycle test.



There has always been a concern that many motorcyclists continually ride on L-Plates many seeing no point in taking a test as they see using a motorcycle as a short term “fix” for mobility before moving to a car. However MAG believes there are a number of reasons many new riders simply abandon riding in favour of less environmentally friendly cars.

For example, for those whose ambition is to commute on a 125cc motorcycle, there is no justification for the cost of obtaining a full licence. MAG also points to the fact that young riders wanting to get a full licence and ride larger capacity bikes cannot make the jump directly from a CBT until they reach 24 years of age.

However Roads Minister, Richard Holden MP, has confirmed to the Motorcycle Action Group (MAG) that a motorcycle licencing review may come soon.

Data shows that young riders account for 28% of all motorcycle casualties. The comparative figure for young drivers is 18%.

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SMART MOTORWAY

Another of the issues which featured in a number of the newsletters last year was on the subject of Smart Motorways and particular those with All Running Lanes (ARL) and now has come the report from the the Office of Rail and Road (ORR) who were asked to look at the safety performance of the end-to-end safety system on smart motorways.

Their conclusion was that National Highways needs to urgently improve the operation of stopped vehicle detection (SVD) technology, which is missing one in three live lane stops, the company's official monitor.

The report shows that nationally SVD is detecting only two in three (67.5%) stopped vehicles, significantly below National Highways' minimum requirement of 80%. None of the company's five regions with all lane running (ALR) smart motorways are meeting the benchmark, achieving between 59.6% and 79.6%. The required average time to detect stopped vehicles in less than 20 seconds is also being badly missed and four out of five of National Highways' regions with ALR smart motorways are not meeting this requirement, achieving between 43 and 65 seconds. In addition, false detection rates are substantially above the required maximum across all National Highways regions with ALR smart motorways. The company's specification states that false alerts may not constitute more than 15% of all alerts but performance ranged from 63.8% to 83.5% across the regions. The ORR said this creates extra workload for operators; risks reducing operators' and drivers' confidence in



the system as false alerts automatically trigger 'Report of Obstruction' messages on variable message signs ahead of alert locations); and ultimately, could lead to real alerts being missed.

On the positive side it was noted that National Highways had SVD in place on every 'existing' ALR smart motorway by the end of September 2022, 'six months ahead of its original March 2023 milestone'. However, as Highways has reported, the ORR was aware that National Highways moved the goalposts on the SVD installation target by ALR schemes that were in construction, but decided to hold it to account for the watered-down target.

The ORR said it was too early to see whether SVD was improving safety and reducing the risks associated with stopped vehicles on live lanes on ALR schemes.

AA president Edmund King said it was 'simply unacceptable' that National Highways was missing its targets to detect stopped vehicles in live lanes and check alarms highlighting that the ORR has confirmed that the radar system is not working effectively, which is a major concern for drivers. For smart motorways to be truly smart and safe then the technology behind them must be fully effective.

The RACs head of roads policy, Nicholas Lyes said the organisation was keen to see National Highways get on top of teething problems it has had following the installation of SVD.

National Highways said that by the end of June 2023 it will aim to have met the performance specification for SVD where it is in place, 'in a way which our operators can manage'.

The ORR said National Highways appears to be on course to achieve its key safety target to halve the number of people killed or seriously injured on the SRN by 2025, compared to a 2005 to 2009 baseline but noted that traffic levels in 2021 were still affected by the pandemic. It also noted National Highways had finally achieved a national average response time of nine minutes and 49 seconds against the target of a 10-minute national average response time on smart motorways where the existing spacing between 'safe places to stop in an emergency' is more than one mile.

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SMALL GRANTS PROJECTS ANNOUNCED

The Road Safety Trust has awarded funding to four organisations across the UK through its Small Grants Programme to help improve road safety. This Small Grants round focused on taking forward initiatives previously funded by the Road Safety Trust.

The Road Safety Trust is an independent grant-giving body working to reduce the numbers of people killed or injured on our roads. They provide funding for vital research and practical interventions into new approaches to road safety.



The Open University will build on initiatives in the Mobile: Engaged compendium. It will examine officers' attitudes to, and awareness of, the dangers of handsfree phone-use, evaluating how an educational intervention might inform their interactions with distracted drivers.

The Kier Foundation will be focusing on tackling the use of mobile phones whilst driving but within the scope of professional drivers. They will examine the reasoning for breaching zero hands free policy by professional drivers and produce a video, grounded in behavioural change theory. The video will be widely available to help reduce

distraction-based collisions in fleet drivers across the UK.

The British Horse Society will look at de-escalating road rage when passing vulnerable road users. The aim is to provide mindfulness tactics to reduce anger towards vulnerable road users.

Drymen Community Development Trust will trial the installation of white lining and planters in the roadway around their Village Square in Scotland. The aim will be to achieve a reduction in speed, introduce a safer pedestrian crossing point and increasing the community space within in the village.

The grants which have been made available range from between £24k and £30k.

DRIVER RISK MANAGEMENT PERFORMANCE?

National Highways is looking to celebrate the achievements of some of the UK's best performing employers when it comes to managing driver risk, with the creation of a brand new category at the Safety & Health Excellence Awards.

This award has been created to recognise employers who have taken a proactive, comprehensive, and consistent approach to the management of their work-related road risk. Safer drivers are involved in fewer incidents, cause less damage, less wear and tear on company vehicles and use less fuel. As well as a significant reduction in on-road incidents, applicants should therefore have also delivered a range of other business benefits such as reductions in fleet insurance costs, maintenance costs, fuel spend and emissions. They may also be able to demonstrate tangible improvements in driver wellbeing and management practices.

National Highways are seeking to broaden awareness of the importance of managing work-related road risk with employers, and specifically health and safety professionals. Driving for work is one of the highest-risk activities that most employees undertake. National Highways' own Driving for Better Business programme, which is entirely free to access, shares many examples of good practice along with a library of free resources to help employers gain peace of mind that they are legally compliant, are regarded as better places to work, and perform at a higher level of efficiency than those that don't.

Details of how and where to complete submissions are available from <https://she-awards.com/award-criteria/best-driver-risk-management-performance>

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HARD HITTING IMAGERY OF ROAD CRASHES

A hard-hitting and emotive photography exhibition is set to kick off at a London gallery from 4th to 15th January 2023 at London's Oxo Gallery - OXO Tower Wharf, London - giving visitors a unique insight into the grief and suffering facing the many hundreds of people killed and injured in road crashes every day in the UK.

When Lives Collide, sponsored by Brigade Electronics, is a powerful exhibition by renowned photographer, Paul Wenham-Clarke, a Professor of Photography at Arts University Bournemouth



(AUB), depicting the real-life horror of road collisions as described by those involved, raising awareness about the risks faced by road users on a daily basis.

Paul Wenham-Clarke addressed the tragic issue of road death and injury some 20 years ago, when RoadPeace's first exhibition was held in 2002. The photographer worked with the RoadPeace and its members over a two-year period to capture the harrowing images. The exhibition then went on to tour the UK and abroad to raise wider awareness.

More than 30 road crash victims and bereaved families from across the UK feature in the 2023 exhibition. These include:

PRINCE MICHAEL INTERNATIONAL ROAD SAFETY AWARDS

The Prince Michael International Road Safety Awards 2022 were formally announced on Tuesday 13th December at the annual awards ceremony Lunch in the Savoy Hotel, London.



The Prince Michael International Road Safety Award is an annual award presented by Prince Michael of Kent since 1987 for outstanding achievement and innovation in improving road safety globally and is the top international road safety award.

The winners being

- Premier Award - The EXtrication In Trauma (EXIT) Project
- Carros Más Seguros, La Liga Contra La Violencia Vial
- DocBike UK (Charity 1178486)
- Driving Change: Facilitating Self-Advocacy for Garment Factory Workers
- Dubai Auditing of Existing Roads - Innovative Action Decade
- EASST Road Safety Education Pack
- Luchemos por la Vida and Madres del Dolor:
- Safe Mobility Coalition - Mexico
- Safer Infrastructure for Cyclists and Pedestrians in Mashhad City
- Supporting Data Collection for Regional Road Safety Observatories
- The Safety of Private e-Scooters in the UK - PACTS
- The World Rescue Organisation

You can read more about any of the winners at

<https://www.roadsafetyawards.com/winners?year=2022>

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LOW TRAFFIC NEIGHBOURHOODS

I recall in the nineties a major move towards traffic calming which aimed not only to reduce speeds in residential areas but also to stop roads being used as cut throughs thereby putting traffic back on the major distribution routes which were designed for that purpose. Residents liked them and disliked them for different reasons but whatever the reason they declined in their application.

However is now the new concept of Low Traffic Neighbourhoods in some way a different approach to traffic calming but with the added persuasion of a reduction in air pollution giving rise to environmental and safety benefits and to this we might also add School Streets?

Now a study by researchers at Imperial College London have looked at three LTNs in London, to identify their impact on air pollution, traffic and the possible displacement to nearby streets thereby moving a problem to a surrounding area.

LTNs aim to reduce through traffic in residential areas, usually by the use of barriers which prevent cars from using certain streets, while leaving them open to pedestrians and cyclists. Many



LTNs were put in place during 2020, to prevent an increase in vehicle traffic as people avoided public transport during the Covid pandemic. However, they also provoked opposition, with

critics claiming that LTNs increased traffic and pollution in surrounding areas.

The researchers studied three LTNs in Islington, one of London's most densely populated boroughs, which were put in place during 2020.

The team compared pollution and traffic levels at monitoring stations inside the zones, on streets surrounding the zones, and at control sites further away, using data gathered by Islington Borough Council.

Researchers found that concentrations of nitrogen dioxide fell by 5.7% within the LTNs and by just under 9% on their boundaries, compared to the control sites. They also found that traffic dropped by over half inside the LTNs and by 13% at the boundaries, compared to the controls.

Dr Audrey de Nazelle, from Imperial's Centre for Environmental Policy, said:

"This research effectively disproves the argument that low-traffic zones will necessarily cause an increase in traffic and air pollution in neighbouring streets. In the three areas we looked at, they reduced both traffic volumes and significantly, air pollution both inside and on the edges of the zone. Alongside the other benefits of LTNs that have been shown in previous research - such as improvements in safety and an increase in walking and cycling - this makes a very strong argument in their favour.

SCHOOL STREETS

Eleven new schemes covering 15 schools will support almost 7,000 children to walk, cycle and wheel to school and improve air quality and road safety at the school gates, according to Haringey Council. It is hoped the new School Streets will replicate the success of the 23 already implemented in the borough as part of the Haringey Streets for People programme.

School Streets aim to create safe walking and cycling zones outside schools for pupils at drop-off and pick-up during term-time. Only people walking and cycling, and those with vehicle exemption permits, are eligible to enter the zone while the School Street is in operation.

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CYCLE AND PEDESTRIAN INNOVATION

Probably the first ever cycle lane roundabout has been unveiled as part of the multi-million pound improvement scheme in Salford which has been designed to help cyclists and pedestrians, particularly those with visual impairment, to safely navigate a point where two cycle lanes cross.

After extensive consultation with members of the public, cyclists and groups representing people with a wide range of disabilities and visual impairment, the roundabout was created to provide the safest crossing solution.



Councillor Mike McCusker, lead member for planning and sustainable development, describing it said

“The roundabout allows pedestrians to cross the junction safely in two short moves so they only have to be aware of one lane of cycle traffic at a time. It provides a quicker crossing for them and is safer than trying to cross a wider junction with traffic from both directions. It has been designed to accommodate people on foot or in wheelchairs or pushing buggies. Cyclists circulate round it like a ‘normal’ road roundabout so they, too, can get round this junction safely without putting pedestrians in danger.”

POTHOLE REPAIR MACHINE FOR TIGHT LOCATIONS

A new pothole repair machine has been developed by road repair specialists Velocity bringing benefits to parts of the road network that are the most difficult to reach.



New from the wheels up, the machine is the latest iteration of Velocity’s spray-injection patching technology - a process that the company pioneered 25 years ago. The compact machine is designed to be mounted on the smallest possible chassis, enabling it to access very narrow rural lanes, as well as congested urban environments.

At the heart of the machine sits a power pack that provides energy to the high-powered blowers and hydraulic systems that enable Velocity to carry out road repairs in a fraction of the time and cost of traditional excavate-and-fill methods.

The new machine was designed in collaboration with Velocity’s customer Cormac and Cornwall Council specifically to meet the unique characteristics of the road network in the county.

With communities connected by very tight lanes that are inaccessible to larger vehicles, road maintenance and repairs is difficult. With all equipment necessary for repairs mounted on a single short-wheelbase vehicle, the machine allows Velocity to carry out maintenance on the most constricted parts of the network.

Typically operated in Cornwall by a 2-man crew, permanent repairs are able to be carried out in minutes. Ready for traffic immediately, the process minimises disruption for road users.

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SPEED ENFORCEMENT CAMPAIGN

Police forces across the country detected nearly 100,000 speeding offences during a three-week operation in October. Thirty One Police forces took part in the operation, which used a combination of education and enforcement and was co-ordinated by the National Police Chiefs' Council (NPCC).

In total,

94,612 speeding offences were recorded
86,575 of which were automatically detected
8,037 (8%) through officer intervention.

Of these,

51% resulted in the issue of a fixed penalty ticket,
44% in an educational course,
4% in a driver warning and
1% in a summons to court.

Analysis of the offences found that:

49% were committed in areas with 30mph speed limits;
68% of offenders were male;
83% over the age of 25 years.



Chief Constable Jo Shiner who is the Roads Policing Lead for NPCC, said:

“Whilst the majority of drivers stayed within the speed limit, the results show there were too many willing to put their own safety - and that of others - at risk by speeding. This is unacceptable. Speed limits and driving laws are there to protect all road users, and police officers across the country will always take action to ensure those caught committing an offence are dealt with in the most appropriate manner. Excess speed is a significant factor in fatal and serious injury collisions and therefore we will continue to target, educate and where appropriate, prosecute those who choose to break the law.”



EDINBURGH'S AMBITION FOR VISION ZERO

Edinburgh has launched a new action plan, setting out its ambitions to reach Vision Zero by 2030 and has been developed to align with objectives contained in Scotland's Road Safety Framework to 2030, published by the Scottish Government in 2021.

The City of Edinburgh Council says by adopting the same safe systems approach to road safety, its plan will create “safe and welcoming streets for all”.

The targets set out to be met by 2030, either meet or exceed those in the national framework. They include:

Zero fatalities

At least a 50% reduction in people seriously injured

At least a 60% reduction in children and young people (under 18 years old) seriously injured

At least a 40% reduction in pedestrians seriously injured

At least a 30% reduction in cyclists seriously injured

At least a 30% reduction in motorcyclists seriously injured

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DESIGN FOR NEW GENERATION GANTRY SIGNS

National Highways has launched a search for designs for a new generation of highway gantries that are more sympathetic to the environment.

The government-owned company linked the competition, which is being run by and the Royal Institute of British Architects (RIBA) to its ongoing good design initiative.

It added that it will not alter the technology within gantries and that any new designs 'will ultimately still have road safety at their core'.



The current standardised Cantilever Gantry



Super-span Cantilever Gantry



Portal Gantry

Chief highways engineer Mike Wilson said:

"This is a great opportunity for us to start to look for creative solutions aligned with our commitment to good road design. Existing designs tend to emphasise function over form; our challenge is to create innovative structures that can accommodate the required

signage and equipment that are more sympathetic to the environment. 'The competition opens up the opportunity to develop a more streamlined, elegant, and consistent visual appearance for roadside gantries to enhance drivers' experience.'

RIBA architect adviser Jonathan McDowell said:

"It is very encouraging that National Highways are actively engaging the design community in helping to improve the design of these ubiquitous but cumbersome parts of the

motorway experience - we look forward to seeing a wide range of creative and elegant proposals that take up the challenge."

The brief for the competition clarifies that the immediate requirement is for a standardised design for the Cantilever and Super-span Cantilever variants (pictured above). More details are to be found at <https://www.ribacompetitions.com/gantries/>

Consideration of how the design themes can be aligned to the wider family, Super-span Portal and Portal gantries, is also required but only to a level to illustrate a consistent family approach.

The competition is open to all architects and architect-led teams. It is being funded by National Highways' designated fund for innovation and modernisation. The submission deadline is midday on 24th January 2023.

National Highways said the winner is expected to be announced early in the year and will work with it to develop their design concept, with a view to it becoming the standard design for new roads and major upgrades from around two years' time.

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ADDITIONAL ROAD CAPACITY OFTEN NOT USED

Half of drivers on all lane running (ALR) smart motorways say they avoid using the now lane one, 'completely undermining' the purpose of converting the hard shoulder, according to the RAC.

In a survey by the motoring organisation of 1,904 drivers who have driven on ALR schemes, a fifth (21%) said they had frequently steered clear of the inside lane while 28% admitted to doing so occasionally.

Asked why they do this, three-quarters (77%) of drivers say they are worried they might encounter a stationary vehicle as there is no hard shoulder, while 40% are fearful of being crashed into if they had to stop.

Two-thirds (68%) of drivers said they regularly see motorists using other lanes when the inside lane is free, with a further 20% claiming to witness this sometimes and 5% very occasionally.

RAC road safety spokesperson Simon Williams said:

"Ever since the first all lane running smart motorway opened on the M25 in April 2014 there has been a considerable amount of controversy about safety which worsened significantly following several high-profile fatal collisions.

Consequently, these roads continue to be deeply unpopular with drivers who, before their introduction, had been used to having the relative refuge of a hard shoulder available in an emergency.

The second most common reason for not using the inside lane on an ALR scheme, cited by 52% of drivers, was the belief that it is mostly used by HGVs and would lead to them frequently having to overtake, while 38% said traffic in lane one is usually going much slower than 70mph.

Asked what could be done to improve safety on ALR schemes, three-quarters of drivers (74%) said they would feel safer if there were more refuge areas and a similar number (72%) would be reassured by technology that detects stranded vehicles.



On top of this our latest research worryingly shows that half of drivers actively avoid using the inside-most lane for a variety of reasons, not least the fear of being crashed into, meaning much of the extra carriageway capacity they were meant to bring is wasted."



FINES IN IRELAND

Fines for a range of road safety offences from speeding to not wearing a seatbelt increased in Ireland in October 2023 when speeding fines increased to €160 from €80. Fines for mobile phone use, not wearing a seatbelt and failing to ensure that a child is properly restrained have increased from €60 to €120. Certain fines relating to safety offences committed by learner and novice drivers have also doubled. The fine for a learner permit holder driving a vehicle unaccompanied by a qualified person has increased from €80 to €160. The fine for novice and learner drivers not displaying 'L' or 'N' plates, or tabards in the case of motorcyclists, is now €120.

Three new Fixed Charge Notices will also come into force this year. These relate to the misuse of a disabled parking permit. Illegally parking in an electric charging bay and breaching a HGV ban and entering a specified public road without a valid permit.

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THE HIGHWAY CODE IN WELSH

The Highway Code in Welsh is now available digitally for the first time. You can read it for free on GOV.UK.

The new printed version of The Highway Code in Welsh is also available to pre-order in shops and online, or from our official supplier on the Safe Driving for Life website.



ROAD SIDE BREATH TESTS DROP

Roadside breath tests have dropped to their lowest level on record. Data published shows that in 2021 just 224,162 motorists were breathalysed by Police in England and Wales - a 7% fall compared with the previous year. This fall continues the downward trend since the peak of 709,512 breath tests in 2009. A decline of 68%.

Yet, despite the slump in tests, 17% of drivers were over the limit - the highest proportion since 2003.



ARE YOU A LONDON CYCLISTS'

University College London (UCL) is looking for 100 of the Capital's cycle commuters to take part in a study.

The '100 Cyclists' project seeks to understand the factors affecting crash risk in cycling through the analysis of detailed near miss data. Participants will be provided with a GoPro helmet mounted camera to record near misses for two weeks. UCL also has helmets it can lend to participants for the project.

The data will then be analysed at UCL to identify the factors that are commonly associated with near misses.

UCL is particularly interested in people who use Cycle Superhighways 4, 7, 9 or 11 for all or part of their route.

If you are interested in taking part please register your interest by email: 100cyclists-study@ucl.ac.uk



CYCLING THE WRONG WAY IN A ONE-WAY STREET

Allowing cycling in both directions on one-way streets does not pose a safety risk and should be made mandatory in all but exceptional cases, according to a new study.

In the first large-scale research of its kind, crashes were examined on more than 500 streets over 22 years in London, both before and after contraflow cycling was introduced, and it was found that it did not increase cyclist crash or casualty rates.

The introduction of cycling against the flow of traffic has often proved controversial because it was perceived to be unsafe, but the University of Leeds study says it is a safe, low-cost intervention which evidence says can improve the cycling experience and increase participation.

The finding have prompted other highway authorities to get in touch with the researchers from across the UK.

Traffic Safety Roads

DRIVING TEST - NOT EASY?

Data from the DfT, analysed by the RAC Foundation, shows that in the 12 months to the end of March 2022, there were 50,875 practical tests taken that were someone's sixth try or more.

Of these tests, 40% (20,346) resulted in a pass.



This compares with a pass rate of 49% for all 1,538,314 tests taken during the same period. The pass rate for first tests was also 49%.

Learners aged 60 and above were behind the wheel for 290 of the tests taken by candidates with a minimum of five previous failures. Their pass rate was 27% for men and 19% for women.

Steve Gooding, director of the RAC Foundation, said:

“One loud and clear message this data reveals is that however hard some people find it to pass their test, becoming a qualified driver is so important to them that it is worth the money, time and energy involved in battling on to secure their licence.

The data might also be of some reassurance to those who suspect the practical test is too easy - for some that's clearly far from the case.”

MOTOR SCHOOLS ASSOCIATION OF GB



The Motor Schools Association of Great Britain (MSA GB) is one of the longest established national bodies for driver trainers in the world, having started back in 1935 just before the introduction of the driving test, it is the senior trade association for driver trainers in Britain. The association provides members with information both electronically and in print.

Now it is about to re-organise and from March 2023 divide into four areas as defined on the adjacent map. This structure replaces its current regional organisation.

Each of the areas will have a Director who will be part of the MSA Board.

The MSA will hold its Annual General Meeting and Conference at the Holiday Inn Glasgow Airport on Friday and Saturday 10th & 11th March 2023 at which point the new structure will be ratified.

MUSIC AND DRIVING

A survey of 1,004 motorists, commissioned by the UK's leading independent road safety charity, IAM RoadSmart, has revealed that two-thirds (69%) of motorists believe that having loud music on while driving can be distracting. The survey also revealed that (36%) of motorists believe that listening to music while driving has an impact on how fast they drive.

Meanwhile, two thirds (62%) of respondents said that they turn off music when confused or stressed.

Traffic Safety Roads

LOWERING THE AGE IN EUROPE

The European Commission is coming under pressure from the road transport industry to lower the recommended minimum age of professional drivers in all sectors to 18, with training allowed from aged 17.



While collisions involving HGVs are fewer in number than those involving cars, they are more deadly due to the size and weight of the vehicles with HGVs are more likely to kill other road users than non-goods vehicles.

The EU is currently reviewing the rules for driver licenses across all vehicle categories, with updated legislation expected to be proposed at some point this year.

ETSC has gathered data on collision involvement among young drivers in general as well as statistics from countries including Finland, Germany and Poland that already allow 18-year-olds to drive the largest vehicles, under certain conditions. The available data clearly shows that the youngest drivers are more often involved in collisions.

ETSC says the minimum driving ages for all vehicle categories should not be lowered further and the lorry driver shortage should be addressed through improvements to working conditions, not by targeting youngsters.

GIG RIDERS AT GREATER RISK

Motorcyclists delivering hot food who pick up jobs through digital platforms are more likely to be in a collision where their bike is damaged or someone is injured than those directly employed by restaurants, finds research co-authored by Heather Ward, from UCL and co-chair of ETSC's Road Safety Performance Index programme.



Freelance delivery riders are also more likely to report that time pressure from their employer means they are more likely to speed (56% versus 39%) or ride through red lights (21% versus 12%). They are also more likely to report being distracted by their phone, through which they accept jobs (57% versus 21%).

Food delivery is surging in popularity, with many takeaway services using motorcyclists or cyclists,

both of whom are amongst the most vulnerable road users.

Gig riders are three times as likely to report damage to their vehicle in a collision, at 25% versus 7% for employed riders. They are nearly twice as likely to report an injury, either to themselves or someone else involved in the collision, at 11% versus 6%.

Researchers found that the increased safety risks gig workers face and the additional risks they take are down to several factors. These include companies paying less attention to the safety and well-being of riders and paying them per delivery rather than for time worked, placing them under pressure to carry out more deliveries. Riders also report being incentivised to accept deliveries and ride in wet and icy conditions.

Traffic Safety Roads



ELECTRIC VEHICLES TO PAY ROAD TAX

The RAC doesn't expect changes in the road tax system to dampen the demand for electric vehicles "given the many other cost benefits of running one".

The chancellor's Autumn Statement announced that electric cars, vans and motorcycles will pay road taxes from April 2025. At present, they do not do so, a move designed to encourage uptake but the RAC conclude that it is "probably fair" that owners of electric vehicles start paying road tax. The motoring organisation has also moved to alleviate fears the new taxation could curb consumer enthusiasm.



DfT figures show 327,000 plug-in vehicles (PiVs) were registered in the UK for the first time in 2021, a year-on-year rise of 77%.



TRAINING EXERCISE WHICH WENT WRONG

A fire authority has been fined after a firefighter was trapped underneath a car in a training exercise, breaking his legs in more than a dozen places.

A firefighter was setting up a simulated road traffic collision with colleagues when the incident happened.

The crew had attempted to put a car on its side to perform a 'roof flap' procedure in which the roof structure is removed to allow greater access. Hydraulic spreaders were used to raise the car off the ground. When the spreaders had reached their widest and had tilted the car as far as possible, the crew tried to push the car the remaining way on to its side. While doing this, the car fell back down towards them, hitting the firefighter and trapping him underneath the car chassis, causing serious injuries to both his legs,

including fractures to his left fibula and tibia, an open fracture and dislocation to his left ankle, and 12 fractures to his right leg and foot hospitalising him for two weeks.

An investigation by the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) found the authority had not assessed the risks posed by the activity and therefore failed to implement a documented safe system of work.

The Fire Authority pleaded guilty to breaching Sections 2 (1) of the Health and Safety at Work etc Act 1974 and was fined £600 with £7,304 costs on 7th December 2022.

HSE inspector Clare Maltby said:

"All organisations have a duty to risk assess their work activities and implement appropriate safe systems of work. This is a reminder to all fire authorities that pre-planned drill exercises should be assessed and the hazards identified and the risks controlled."



NEW WELSH GOVERNMENT ROAD SAFETY STRATEGY

The Welsh Government is to develop a new road safety strategy, with a focus on the Safe System approach and an aspiration to achieve Vision Zero. The new strategy promises to include new ways of thinking about and understanding of road safety, incorporating latest international thinking.

The announcement follows the publication of a report, reviewing the existing Road Safety Framework in Wales, covering 2013-2020. Which concluded that the new strategy should build on the successful collaboration between Welsh Government, local authorities, the police, Public Health Wales and other road safety stakeholders.

Traffic Safety Roads



DELIVERING THE SAFE SYSTEM APPROACH

The Graham Feest Consultancy organise a number of Conference Style Events around the UK each year and have just added Cardiff to the list for 2023 with more to follow.

The all important underpinning theme for 2023 will be based on “Delivering the Safe System Approach” which will, we understand, be central to the New Road Safety Strategic Framework.

With the support of the Sponsors, HCC Solicitors, Clearview Intelligence and Geveko we are please to confirm that despite the current cost of living rise, the price of these events will remain the same as this year and delivered on the basis of High Value at Low Cost.

The Graham Feest Consultancy is an accredited Training Provider for CIHT which support the requirements for CPD



Dates and Venues for 2023 arranged to date include

Monday 30th January 2023 The Holiday Inn, Coventry
Monday 27th February 2023 The Queens Hotel, Cheltenham
Monday 5th June 2023 The Vermont Hotel, Newcastle
Monday 25th September 2023 The Guildhall, Hull
Monday 2nd October 2023 The Radisson Hotel, Perth
Monday 23rd October 2023 The Lenardo Hotel (formerly Jury's), Cardiff

Although some of the actual details have not been published as yet for these events you can book you place for any of the above by going to <https://www.grahamfeest.com/gfc-events/delivering-the-safe-systems-approach/> linking to the event you wish to book and then completing the form.

Happy New Year