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From the Editor

The first car I ever drove was one made



by the Standard Motor Company and, though a different colour, looked similar to the picture above.

It had only three gears but this did not matter to me at all as my first lesson was all uphill, so I only used one! I was twelve years old.

My father was a big fan of driving and had himself learnt how to drive at the age of fourteen. Given that we lived on a large hilly tea estate in India with private,

though unpaved, roads, I guess he was happy to teach me as soon as I was tall enough to simultaneously look through the windscreen and reach the pedals.

Now, living in a more urban environment, I have not been as indulgent a father. It was only a few weeks ago that I took my children (aged 15 and almost 13) for their first driving lesson.

In case you did not know it, those of us who live in Kent have the advantage of being able to easily reach a driving school for children aged over 11 (and taller than 4 ft 8 or 1.42m), with the advantage of having a large covered shopping mall attached!

What did I like about it?

- Their cars have manual transmissions so children learn how to change gear;
- The road layout is comprehensive, permitting cars to reach over 20mph

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while also having “Give Way” signs, mini-roundabouts and other prototypical road scenery.

- There are several cars on the road at one time and while each is being driven by a Learner, some have had more practice than others. This reflects the reality of varied levels of driving expertise that one encounters on public roads
- As the cars in use are all the same model (though of different colours and with rally car style numbers painted on the side enabling dotting parents to photograph or video the correct vehicle), the next lesson will be in a near identical vehicle. In addition, their number plates contained just two registrations (11 and 61) indicating they were less than 18 months old.

And what could have been better?

- The standards of driving instruction

for a first lesson were clearly varied. My 12 year old son was taught how to change gear while my 15 year old daughter was not. Of course, I was not in the car, and beyond seeing him stalling more times than her, am in no position to say whether this was a justified variation.

- It was an expensive trip out: not only did the lessons cost £30 each, my wife spent a few hours doing considerably more than just browsing at the Bluewater shopping centre.

As Advanced Drivers, we know that education prevents accidents, which is why I think early training for my children is a good investment. I may make the next lesson cheaper by not taking my wife!

Safe driving,

Ravi Savur



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From the Chairman

Dear Kent Group members,

Website:

Our website is: www.kentrospa.org.uk.

Here you will find:

- All planned forthcoming events
- Discounts, e.g., a 5% discount on bookings to a Florida Villa in Orlando valid for bookings made before 21 May 2013.
- Unfortunately, you will no longer find an MPG calculator on the web site. Due to an upgrade of the Flash software, the MPG calculator no longer works as it conflicts with Internet Explorer. We are trying to find a workaround but if this is not possible, will put a link on our site to another MPG calculator.

Police Shadowing:

As you know we have had a very strong and fruitful relationship with Kent Police Roads

Policing Unit for the last 12 years. We have been fortunate to be allowed to go out on patrol with the traffic officers. Those of you who have been out with them will know it is an eye-opening, often exhilarating, experience.

Unfortunately the Kent Police Force restructured in November last year and adjusted the role of Traffic Response officers to include potentially more general and confrontational policing away from strategic roads. As a consequence, the Kent Police Policy group has dictated that our 'ride outs' will not continue.

This is sad news but we are pleased that many members have had the opportunity to join patrols.

Membership Subscriptions:

Our membership subscription has been stable for some time now. In fact, when we looked at other groups across the RoADA network, we find that almost all have increased membership subscriptions, and

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Kent RoADAR

Kent ROSPA Advanced Drivers

we provide more services and activities than most other groups.

The cost associated with a new member is the greatest (membership packs, postage, induction, allocation of a tutor, etc.) and as you know we do not charge for any tuition.

The committee have thus had to make the difficult decision to increase the joining fee for new members to £30, with effect from the AGM in October. Annual membership renewals will become £25 though the young member fee will remain unchanged at £15.

This will enable us to keep up with the rising costs of postage, paper, fuel bills, venue and buffet costs, etc.

I am sure you realise it still represents excellent value for money.

Refresher Drives:

As you will know if you keep up your national RoADA membership you get a free re-test every 3 years. If you keep up your group membership you are similarly able to

have a free refresher before your re-test. We can allocate a tutor near you to go out on drives with you and help brush up your skills before your test date. Please give us advance notice when you get notified of your re-test.

Group Clothing Web Shop:

This is a reminder that we have a Group Clothing Web Shop with a clothing supplier.

There is a good selection of high quality clothing for all Associate and Full members. We have recently added some new products such as a beanie hat, a *hoodie*, and lightweight and heavy-duty motorway standard high visibility ("*hi viz*") jackets.

You can order direct from the suppliers at your leisure. All items are available in a variety of colours and sizes (except the baseball cap where one size fits all), and sport an embroidered RoADAR logo badge with the group name, typically on the left breast.

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The hi viz clothing has the group web address across the back and RoADAR logo on the left breast.

You can access the web shop from the menu tab on the left of our website home page under Group Clothing Web Shop.

Have a browse to see what is on offer, and enjoy your shopping!

Diamondbrite body treatment:

Jewelultra, the makers and distributors of “Diamondbrite” car bodywork and interior treatment have given the Kent Group a discount on their products when purchased direct or through their franchise operators Autovaletdirect who can be reached at: www.autovaletdirect.co.uk.

The normal price of the “Diamondbrite” treatment is £228 and as a Kent Group member you need to pay just £175.

Note, though, that this does not include any preparatory work which may be required on your car body or interior, e.g. touching up

paintwork, removing scratches from the bodywork or stains from upholstery, etc.

“Diamondbrite” has a lifetime guarantee from the date of application on both new and used cars.

See www.jewelultra.co.uk/diamondbrite for details. They manufacture a whole range of high quality car cleaning products that can be purchased direct or via their on-line store. Similar discounts are being set up if you order any after care products.

When booking your treatment or making your purchases please quote the following code: AD1ROSPA

You must also show your current Kent Group membership card or quote your RoADAR membership number to the Autovaletdirect technician

John Corcoran

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From the Training Team

The Training Team and the Tutors continue to work hard for the Group.

This year we have seen our first Test failure, but in fairness the Associate contravened the Road Traffic Act twice, so the result is justifiable.

It just goes to prove that passing the test is not a certainty. Having said that, we have more passes at Gold standard than at Silver. This is testament, not only to our Associates, but to our Tutors too.

During the first part of this year, we have run four Associate Inductions and one Tutor Training Seminar.

We also have four trainee Tutors at present.

However, we have unfortunately lost six Tutors this year so we are keen to have

more join the Team. If you are interested in being a Tutor, please contact me.

Also, if you are coming up for test or re-test, may I wish you all the best.

Happy and Safe Motoring,

Ray Davies

Training Officer



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From the Government

Consultation on New Penalties to Tackle Careless Driving

Full document available at:
<http://www.dft.gov.uk/consultations/dft-2012-25/>

Responses due by 5 September 2012

The government plans to introduce new penalties to tackle careless driving as well as to increase the amount of a fixed penalty notice (from the current £60, that has existed for 12 years, to £90).

Under the law today, a police officer can either issue a fixed penalty notice or prepare a court file for prosecution. There is almost nothing in between (though a few police forces offer a *voluntary* training course, paid for by the offender, for some offences such as speeding).

The new fixed penalty notice and remedial training will only be offered in situations witnessed by a police officer if there are no victims, no collisions, and no public

complaint.

Examples of offences which may be covered include *tailgating, remaining in lane two or three when lane one is empty, being in the wrong lane on a roundabout, inappropriate speed and wheel spins.*

Dartford Tunnel Charge Increase Deferred

With over 1,300 protests to the earlier planned increase in charges, the first increase (of 50p for cars) has been deferred to October 2012 (after the Olympic period). The second increase (of a further 50p for cars) will be implemented at the same time as the planned new free-flow charging technology at the crossing in October 2014.

The discount offered to those using the DART-Tag system will remain and the cost of the discounted crossing charge for local residents will increase proportionately.

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From the Press & Internet

Canadian Speed Controls

Speed controls being used in Canada .. How's this for effective speed control?



This is an actual speed control device that is currently in use. It is MUCH cheaper than speed cameras, radar guns, police officers, etc.

People slow down and actually try to "straddle" the hole.



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Pretty clever -- especially when they move them around every day.

Isn't art wonderful?

Courtesy: *Judith Faragalla*

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Confusing Road Sign?



Courtesy: *Peter Glenn*



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From our Members

What it's like to have an accident

It was a damp cold February day and I was driving back to Ashford travelling along the A20 just through Charring near the crematorium.

I was following a Land Rover at safe distance and my speed was about 40mph. There was a white van behind me (yes, those white van men get everywhere!).

I have travelled that road many times and today was no different.

As I approached a slight hill I saw a dark people carrier at the entrance of the crematorium. I saw it move a few feet and then stop at the junction to join the A20.

I slowed down a little. I could still see the people carrier and it was stationary.

As I got closer to the junction I could see the driver looking at me. Suddenly there

was a massive bang. I hit my brakes and came to a standstill.

My whole body started shaking. I turned my head to see the people carrier on my right extremely close to my car door. A few seconds later I realised that I had been hit.

I managed to turn the ignition off. As I tried to open my door, a woman opened my passenger door and asked if I was okay. She said "Sorry we hit you."

I could see people trying to open my door but it was stuck. I could hear people talking and crying. I was unable to move, turn or do anything. It was at this point that the lady in my car said an ambulance was on its way.

I was getting cold and still shaking all over. I could not feel my back or legs and I knew something was wrong with me. Trying to get out of my seat was not an option as I seemed to be frozen to the seat and the shaking was getting worse.



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I have no idea what the time was or how long I was there. I was drifting in and out of consciousness. In the distance, I could hear voices telling me things would be okay and I would be fine.

I felt a sharp pain in my hand but could not move at this point. I could see a yellow coat beside me. I was still shaking and then I heard a voice saying "I have to hold your head." And then, " Please try not to move." The man did tell me his name but I can't remember it. I was getting really cold and could feel sharp pain alternating between both arms. Little did I know that the voices belonged to paramedics who were trying to get a needle into a vein so that they could give me pain relief – apparently my veins had shut down in shock! I can however remember feeling cold and sleepy.

A voice behind me said "We need to get you out of the car but you have hurt your neck so we have to help you."

In layman's terms, this meant having to

be trussed up like a turkey!

I could feel a hard thing round my neck and was still hearing voices. A lady was talking to me and I can remember saying to her that I was going on holiday soon.

Someone told me that the fire crew had arrived. Fire crew! Why?

I then heard the man behind me say that they would have to extract me from my car and my first thought was "No, please. Not my car!"

I tried to move but my legs would not respond and I had no chance of moving my head as it was trussed up. I could occasionally feel rain on my face. It felt like hours had passed.

In my semi-conscious state, I saw the fire crew protecting me with plastic and boards and could see what looked like a saw coming towards my face. On hearing a scary sawing noise, I started to panic.

All I could hear was voices and none of them made sense to me at the time. In

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fact, the fire crews had placed a board in front of me so that glass from my car's windscreen would not shatter, fall on, and potentially hurt me, and the plastic sheet was additional protection they used.

I could see a big saw out of the corner of my right eye. They were trying to open the car door but couldn't so had to force it open. Within seconds I felt searing pain on my right side and then heard a crushing sound. Despite trying, I couldn't see what was happening but the man behind me reassuringly said that he would stay with me and not to be scared while the roof was cut off so I could be freed. At this point I think I blacked out for a while.

The next thing I recall was hearing glass breaking and feeling the car moving. My arm and hand were hurting and I was getting really cold. I wasn't really listening to what someone I couldn't see was saying. It is a weird feeling when you can't reply or see what's happening and I

was beginning to get scared.

What I do remember clearly was seeing yellow coats and then being told I was to be tipped backwards but not to worry, I was safe. I was physically sick and felt a tube in my mouth within seconds.

The medics somehow slipped a board down behind me and strapped me to a spinal board. I was out of my car but still not too sure what had really happened.

It felt like hours had passed and I was lying in the rain. I felt cold rain on my face, and my right arm was wet too – little did I know this was blood!

I heard someone saying "We have to use blocks to support your head and neck" and then a little later, perhaps the same person said "Your daughter and partner are here." I couldn't speak and knowing that my family had arrived and had seen me being cut out of my car was no comfort to me. All I could think about then was whether they were upset at what



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they had seen and hoped they were okay. Unfortunately I could not turn my head or body to see them as I was strapped down with blocks ensuring I could not move my neck.

I felt a sudden movement as I was carried into the ambulance. I could hear voices but nothing was sinking in.

I also had some of my clothing cut off so they could gain access to my veins. "Sharp scratch coming," said someone. The next thing I remember was waking up, looking at bright lights, unable to move and still shaking.

It seemed like hours. In fact I had been lying in the local hospital emergency unit for almost nine hours.

I was wheeled off for an X-ray and an hour or so later I was rushed off for an MRI scan.

On my return from the scan I was given drugs via the drips in my arm and hand. I began to wake up fully and heard my

daughter and partner talking. I could also hear doctors talking.

I started to cry. I have no idea why. The news came "You have been cut out of your car as someone had crashed into you. We have x-rayed you and we have the results of an MRI scan."

Then the shock really hit me. Do I have a broken neck? Why can't I feel anything in my back and legs? Where's my car? Why can't I move?

The surgeon spoke to me and explained that I had damaged my neck, rather a bone in my neck. "You are lucky not to have a broken neck" he said, further explaining that a piece of bone had been sheared off a vertebra in my neck and that I would need some treatment, an operation and physiotherapy, so would be kept on a ward until they knew more.

After quite some time, I was able to go home battered bruised and still not being told exactly what happened.

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It was plain and simple: someone pulled out of a junction and hit me sidewise. The police said I hit the brakes at the point of impact. The impact speed was about 43mph and who was sharp on the brakes? Me!

The lady who got into my car was the others driver's wife and she was keeping me calm. The other driver told the police he didn't see me but this did not make me feel better.

Once at home on crutches, and feeling rather sorry for myself, anger set in. I had lost my car, my daughter saw her mum being cut out of her car. Why was I injured and the other driver fine? Why me? So many questions.

The other driver called the hospital several times to see how I was and, once I was at home, he sent me flowers. He also offered to take me out for dinner to say sorry, perhaps hoping this was going to make me better!

In fact it made me unhappy and perhaps more angry. Was it a cheap trick trying to make me happy with flowers? Even my own family don't give me flowers so why should I expect them from someone who hurt me.

Then for the insurance. Hmmmmm! Insurance companies! What was rather an insult, as I consider myself to be a good safe driver, was when I received a letter from the insurance company stating that it was my fault. After a few weeks this was dealt with as the accident had witnesses and the other driver admitted it was his fault.

Now though the worst is over, I still have flashbacks, hearing glass cracking or feeling cold and numb. It's an experience I would never wish on anyone.

I have been told, now don't laugh, but the accident happened outside my local crematorium! There were two paramedics, an ambulance and its crew, three fire crews, four police officers, a

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breakdown company, and the road had to be closed for quite some time. My family was watching as was the other driver and his family who had just left the crematorium after dealing with a death in their family.

I never did take that offer of a meal with the other driver and I don't think I would. One of the hardest decisions I had to make was should I prosecute the other driver. Gut feeling said yes but my heart said no. After all that I went through, I finally decided not to, as the other driver had lost a family member and was leaving the crematorium: how could I make him feel worse?

As far as I could see, and still can see, it was an accident whether he saw me or not; and he is really sorry. He was grieving and I don't think it would be fair on him or his family.

And now eight weeks on, while I am still receiving treatment for my injuries and not yet back at work, my son has suffered

a motorbike accident. All my own unhappy thoughts of my accident disappeared as I calmly explained to my son why he needed the blocks and a neck collar.

A last few words. If I had been a novice driver then the car would have spun and could well have rolled over; so I thank ROSPA for making me a safe driver.

Also, thanks also to the emergency services from me, and now from my son.

Cas Gosbee



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Driving Marshall Mayhem

WALKtheWALK Charity. London.

MoonWalk Night, 12th / 13th May 2012

Two members from Kent ROADAR enthusiastically volunteered their driving services to the WalktheWalk, "Moonwalk for Breast Cancer" Charity overnight on 12th and 13th May 2012.

Peter Hunt and Julie Phillips straight-lined a clear-weathered night of networking, navigation and nockers to provide support to walkers popping out their Playtex for the good cause.

Thousands of people yomped the 26 mile course around London; starting and finishing at Hyde Park, witnessing the spectacular north and south Thames night sights of the best of London.

There were a few casualties so Peter was able to put his paramedic expertise to

good use; from tripping over flagstones to exhaustion but all to be expected by A Few Good Women.

The Male of species didn't let the females down; hairy chests were donned with pink fluff, glitter and flashing, cerise neon along the course (and unfortunately – much to the dismay of Julie – it didn't include the Metropolitan Police Traffic Officer parked up at Battersea Park).

More than £2,000,000 was raised for the Charity in one night! See <http://www.walkthewalk.org/Home> for further news and updates. I also hope it tempts more Kent RoADAR drivers to volunteer for the Charity's 16th Birthday next year.

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Being a Moonwalk Driving Marshall is a really important role for this event to help keep participants safe, transported and supported throughout the night. London is not a nice place to be after dark and there were times and areas of the route both of us considered needed more safety cover for which the walkers were grateful for and where YOU could help!

.... And finally, here's an action shot of Peter with something very questionable sticking out of his nostril.



Julie Phillips
