



Manchester Group of RoADAR wishes you all a very happy Christmas and a prosperous New Year

National Success for Manchester Group — Mike Beavan

Five of us from Manchester Group: Chris Gandy, Mike Beavan, Lee Davies, Sheila Entwistle and Simon Smart, travelled down to Birmingham on 26 November, arriving at the new RoSPA Headquarters at 09.30. RoADAR Chief Examiner Bob Smalley had only just arrived as we stopped to speak to him as he stood by the car park barrier. Lee cheekily asked if Bob was on advanced barrier duties. Unruffled by this Bob cheerfully took us into the building where he proceeded to brew up for us.

At reception, and throughout the day, we were well looked after by Jayne and Liz while Bob acted as a master of ceremonies before introducing the judging panel – Tom Mullarkey MBE, RoSPA Chief Executive, Erroll Taylor, RoSPA deputy Chief Executive and Frances Richardson, RoSPA Director of Operations.

Gradually, members of the four other groups arrived. (Cambridge Advanced Drivers and Riders, Merseyside Advanced Riders, Shropshire and Powys Advanced Riders and West Midlands Advanced Riders). It was good to meet them all and to enjoy the merry banter that ensued as we got to

know them. Bikers and car members got on very well indeed.

From the opening address, by Tom Mullarkey, through the very professional group presentations, an excellent buffet lunch, the presentation of awards and the final photographs, there was a pleasing air of camaraderie, very good humour and friendship.

Manchester Group was declared to be the winner of this prestigious award. The level of all the presentations was high and we were, and still are, surprised and delighted to win.

Throughout the day all group members mixed well, and we departed with a £1,000 cheque, lots of new ideas and information. This whole process has confirmed that RoADAR is a

superb and forward looking organisation with many well trained advanced bikers and drivers who are doing a great job improving standards with our unique graded tests and re-testing process.



Mike, Sheila, Chris, Lee and Simon with the cheque awarded for gaining first place at the inaugural RoSPA Awards Scheme



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Contributions to **MAINBEAM** are welcome and should be sent to the Newsletter Editor. The views and opinions expressed in this Newsletter are those of the individual contributors and do not necessarily express the views or policies of RoSPA, RoSPA Advanced Drivers and Riders or **MANCHESTER GROUP** of RoADAR

The Light Fantastic (or Fantasy) — Mike Beavan

Have you noticed lately that all lights on modern cars now seem to have changed for the worse?

We have daylight running lights (DLR) which seem to stay on with headlights at night. The DLRs appear to vary in intensity between car manufacturers, but I don't think they should, while some also activate rear lights in daytime while others do not. As more DLR systems appear, the buffoons who drive on front fog lights by day and night have increased. This means that glare and discomfort – see Highway Code Rule 114 – have also increased.

Another recent introduction is the cutting out of one DLR when the vehicle is on a curved path. I noticed this last week at night as the Mercedes following me turned left at a roundabout. As the car turned left the off-side DLR went out. Presumably this is to help illuminate the area to the left – dipped headlamps used to do this but on my Mini Cooper the cut-off on dipped beam illuminates left-hand bends less than full beam does. This did not happen on earlier cars I have had. I noticed a car turning right at a roundabout the other day with just the off-side DLR lit. As DLRS become more popular how long will it be before this is mistaken for a right turn signal on a bend near a junction with a resultant crash.

Another trend is for brake lights to be kept on at rest in the dark, even when a pause becomes a wait. Sometimes this is due to laziness or a don't care attitude to drivers stopped behind (Rule 114 again!) and sometimes it is due to the latest car design influenced by that wonderful institution the EU. Lots of cars now have electronic parking brakes; does anyone know why, when a

parking brake and a low gear stops cars running away on slopes?

Anyway, some Mercedes have a foot operated hold feature which after the footbrake is pressed once after the car has stopped holds the footbrake on, even when the foot is removed from the pedal. They have this due to their antiquated foot operated parking brake being difficult for some people to use, I am told. This system also keeps the brake lights on. I can see the reasoning behind this but surely drivers are capable of keeping the brake lights on only until they have confirmation that drivers behind have reacted to them.

I don't know! We'll have cars that park themselves next and tell you when you are too close to the vehicle in front, or about to run onto a lane marking. Oh no! I've just been told that we have all that nonsense already. As these 'wonderful' inventions increase will we be able to send the car to fill up with fuel and take an advanced test by itself soon?

Well I've now had my rant, do please let us hear yours in the next edition of MAINBEAM.

Cheers,

Mike Beavan

50/50 Club Draw—Recent winners

50/50 Draw, November 2011

First, number 30, Eva Farmer, drawn by Barry Sheridan

Second, number 21, Paul Medina, drawn by Jean Conway

50/50 Draw, December 2011

First, number 29, Jean Farmer, drawn by Rachel Rowley

Second, number 12, Terry Moore, drawn by Kelly Jones

Congratulations — Recent test passes



Mike Singleton—Car section retest, Gold

Paul Medina —Car section retest, Gold

Marc Phillips—Bike section, Gold

Joe Taylor—Car section, Silver



This That and T'other — John Holland

Beware the munjacs!

You may be pleased to know that the rutting season is over. I am referring to the one in the deer world of course. Sitting at my David Attenborough keyboard I can tell you with quiet authority that the season runs from September to the end of November. This is the time, so my David Attenborough Book of Animal Behaviour tells me, when the deer are at their most active.

However, before you emit that sigh of huge relief let me acquaint you with a startling piece of information; deer have been blamed for 74,000 car crashes. This number is arrived at because 42,000 such incidents have been recorded, but as so many incidents go unreported the higher number is assumed to be more correct.

The Deer Initiative is a group of charities and government agencies aimed at controlling the deer population in Britain, and are responsible for these figures, and the project leader, Jochen Langbein says that the lower figure is a conservative estimate, as most insurance companies simply claim such incidents as 'animal collision'.

In Britain the deer population has more than doubled in the last decade to two million beasts. Quite something, when we realise that in the 18th century they were hunted to the brink of extinction, but now the total population is as big as it was at the time of the Norman Conquest (David Attenborough was but a lad at the time).

This rise in numbers is attributed to the introduction of 'pretty' species, such as the munjac and the Chinese water deer early in the 20th century, which are smaller animals and breed faster than the larger species. Now the whole deer population is becoming a threat, as herds are destroying native flora including bluebells, as they chomp their way through farm and woodland habitats. Nightingales and smaller animals such as dormice are being disturbed too as their habitats, in turn, are destroyed.

Putting the clocks back, as we did a few weeks ago, has an impact (no pun intended) on the problem too. For the rush hours of dawn and dusk clash with the period when the animals are most active, straying as they do, onto roads and even motorways. Now though, the munjacs which were originally introduced from Asia as captive animals, and are less than 2ft tall, have become bolder, wandering into towns and cities to raid dustbins for food, and one estimate puts the costs in damage and injury as high as £10 million a year.

I wonder if now is the time to introduce a new traffic sign? It would be triangular with a red border and a picture of a deer sporting huge antlers, running from left to right. Pardon? Cease the clamour and speak to me one at a time! Yes, I know that we already have such a sign but that doesn't warn

us exclusively of deer, but instead, wild animals generally. This then includes, foxes, pheasants, partridge, rabbits and that poor dormouse who has already been disturbed by the rampaging deer. So if I may finish, my sign would have a plate attached to it saying "Yes! Deer!"

I came across the one on this page from my copy of David Attenborough's 'Road Traffic Signs from Africa and East Chingford'. Interestingly whilst

the Africans show a similar sign to ours for wild animals, this one qualifies the actual animal.

If you are still celebrating the fact that the rutting season is over for another year, I must tell you that the deer population is also intensively active in May. So celebrate on, but only for the next 5 months.

Keep space!



NWAA Social — Sheila Entwistle



We were very fortunate to have been treated to a night with Harry and Audrey Watson who are volunteers with the North West Air Ambulance (NWAA) Service.

Harry began the talk by telling us how he and Audrey first became involved with NWAA. For the celebration of their Golden Wedding Anniversary, instead of asking for presents they persuaded friends and relatives to donate to the NWAA Service.

NWAA were so impressed by this gesture that as soon as they received the donation they contacted Harry and Audrey to thank them and to ask if they would like to become part of the team to help raise awareness and funds for the NWAA, which they both said they would do.

Audrey contributed to the evening by showing slides of incidents that the air ambulance have attended, while Harry talked us through the photos. Some of the locations the helicopters are sent to are inaccessible by an ordinary ambulance and very often they are called to assist when it's important to ferry the casualty to hospital in the quickest time possible.

There are two air ambulances in our area—one based at Barton Air Field and the other at Blackpool. They can reach anywhere in the region within a very short time.

As it costs over £4 million each year to operate this vital service, all contributions are very gratefully received.

When they needed to replace the Blackpool helicopter, NWAA thought they would have to wait a long time before getting the £500,000 they required but In December 2005 NWAA was able to commission a brand new aircraft thanks to the executors of the estate of the late Katie Caine from Thornton Clevellys. They were gifted the full £500,000 and to show their appreciation, NWAA named the aircraft 'Katie' in her honour.

The NWAA pilots are highly skilled ex-military helicopter pilots with experience of flying as close to the scene of incidents as possible.

The Paramedics are seconded on a 2-year placement from the NHS North West Ambulance Service then given extensive training in navigation and safety skills before being able to become air crew. They receive refresher courses throughout their 2 years.

For anyone wishing to contribute to this worthwhile charity and find out more about them, visit the NWAA web site: www.northwestairambulance.com

Road Safety Round-up — Lee Davies

BBC maps a decade of road fatalities

Using official data recorded by the police in Great Britain between 1999 and 2010, BBC News has plotted on a map every road collision that has resulted in a fatality. In all, 36,371 fatalities are marked on the interactive map which can be found at www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-15975720.

The data derives from detailed information recorded by the police at the scene of every crash, which is transferred onto a computer database. Additional data reported by BBC News, on a website dedicated to road collision data, shows that during the 12 years to 2011, the police recorded more than three million road casualties in Great Britain. More than 36,000 people lost their lives and another 373,985 were seriously injured.

A total of 7,004 bikers and their pillions lost their lives between 1999 and 2010. The data shows that despite, motorbikes accounting for just 1% of road traffic, they account for over a fifth of all fatalities; a casualty rate that is 61 times greater than that for cars.

Pedestrians are among the most vulnerable road users. Though the annual number of fatalities has reduced during the decade, the data shows that 8,242 pedestrians died on the roads between 1999 and 2010. The most dangerous time for pedestrians is during the rush hour.

BBC News cites preliminary research by South Yorkshire Police, which reveals that for every fatal collision there is a one in two chance that the driver 'responsible' has a criminal record. Researchers found that 56% of lorry drivers involved in a collision had a previous motoring offence and 41% had a criminal record.

Police chief pushes for graduated licensing

Newly qualified drivers would be banned from motorways and driving at night under changes being proposed by DCC Suzette Davenport, ACPO lead for policing, reports the Mail Online.

The changes are part of a graduated licence scheme, favoured by DCC Davenport, which would also see novice drivers face limits on how many passengers they can carry and compulsory use of the currently optional 'P' plate, which indicates that a driver has recently passed their test.

The Mail Online report says that as a result of the measures, young drivers could receive cheaper car insurance and Britain would fall in line with other countries.

DCC Davenport, who took up the ACPO post in November said: "At the moment, people learn to drive mainly in calm residential streets when it's light. They don't have much experience of driving on busy A-roads or in the dark. Yet



as soon as they get a licence they can drive on motorways at speed and carry as many passengers as they like. The vast majority are responsible but some – especially young people – take risks and drive too quickly. I am enthusiastic about graduated licences and would like to put some constraints on new drivers.

"The scheme needs further work on exactly how it would operate, but my view to Ministers is that this needs exploring."

But if the graduated licence is to be adopted, DCC Davenport will have to persuade Mike Penning, road safety minister, to change his mind. Mr Penning believes that restricting new drivers would unfairly penalise those who rely on driving to get to work or college.

Source : Valerie Elliott - www.dailymail.co.uk/news.

Proposed motorway speed increase panders to the 'Die-Hards'

Government proposals to raise motorway speed limits to 80mph would please a vocal minority of just one in five voters, according to Dr Jillian Anable, senior transport research expert at the University of Aberdeen.

Speaking to policy makers at the annual Parliamentary Advisory Council for Transport Safety (PACTS) Westminster Lecture in London, Dr Anable warned that the Government ignores the vast majority, at its peril, when aiming to change travel behaviour. She outlined some key traits that distinguish the wide range of types of drivers, and non-drivers, and explained that attempting to 'nudge' the population into driving responsibly or using other forms of transport will fail with many types.

Dr Anable said: "The vocal minority who seek a higher speed limit on motorways are the Die-Hards: passionate and knowledgeable about cars in general, and with a strong emotional and physical attachment to their own car. These drivers – predominantly but not exclusively male – believe they are superior drivers, and that their car reflects their status, intelligence and wealth.

"Any restrictions on their driving – such as car parking regulations and charges, pedestrian and cyclist priorities, or speed limits – are seen as infringements of their freedom. Such drivers believe that climate change is not their responsibility and are not willing to use any alternative forms of transport.

"The macho attitude of the Die-Hards is heavily ingrained in our culture, through advertising, film, sport and music, so appears disproportionately represented. In fact, more than half of all drivers travel at speeds of around 70mph or lower on motorways, and if the speed limit were to be raised, many would feel pressurised into driving faster.

"Speed differentials would also increase if the speed limit was set at 80 mph. Lorries and buses would travel at much lower speeds, causing bunching and sudden braking and increasing the risk of collisions. This would lead to slower journeys overall."

Understanding System — Nigel Albright

Nigel Albright, outgoing GAP rep for the South West, kindly gave permission for MAINBEAM to publish his excellent article on 'The System'. The article will be presented in two sections, this being the first. The concluding part will appear in the next edition of MAINBEAM.

It is said that when Lord Cottenham first looked at police drivers in the 1930s he found that those who approached the subject methodically were safer than those who did not. That may be so. But if nothing else it will have confirmed Cottenham's existing views that driving safely on the roads was best done in a methodical and systematic way. His book, 'Motoring Without Fears' written in 1928 already had the essence of System in it.

The first police driving school, Hendon, was started in 1935 but it was some two years before Lord Cottenham was invited by the then Commissioner of the Metropolitan Police, Lord Trenchard, to be what was euphemistically called, 'civilian advisor' to, in effect, take over at the school and offer his ideas. The long and short of it was that within 18 months Cottenham's systematic approach had taken the safety level in the Met from 1 in 8,000 miles to 1 in 38,000; a staggering improvement by any standards and so the Cottenham system, as it became known, became the fundamental basis of police driver training in the UK and, ultimately, is what we still see in Roadcraft today.

I believe it is important to understand System rather than just apply it because that is the way it is, which is the way I started. I also feel that is particularly pertinent for tutors because they have to answer questions from associates and, if they don't have the answers to 'why?' it just becomes pedantry and the whole thing falls apart. So there has to be a valid reason behind why we do this or that. And whatever it is it has to be related to safety because that is where this all started back in Cottenham's day.

WHY HAVE A SYSTEM? The first questions to ask are why have a system? Why be methodical and, what are the advantages? The answers are very simple. Firstly there is the apparent experience of Cottenham himself when initially looking at police drivers. But actually where ever you go whether business or pleasure you will generally find you learn a systematic way of doing things. That is perfectly normal. In fact for most things when the basics are firmly understood they generally form a natural or logical sequence of their own, mainly because it has been found that if you do this before that it doesn't work so well. Also, having a method makes a lot of sense because it removes uncertainty and therefore reduces stress. Here we have a method or system which is run through, a bit like a check list, on the approach to any 'hazard' on the road. I use the word 'hazard' very deliberately. In the early Roadcrafts a hazard was anything which might cause a driver to change direction (therefore position) and/or speed. The key word is obviously, *might*. And that goes back to what Derek Van Petegem, a former Hendon Advanced Wing and skid pan instructor said, that the key word is 'consider'. Consider how relative each part of the System is to that particular hazard. You don't actually need to apply all features in all circumstances, but you do need to check then off just in case.

RIGID OR FLEXIBLE SYSTEM? This leads naturally to the point that the important thing is not to consider System as a rigid and inflexible way of dealing with situations on the road. Yes, in its learnt form and to get the basics into a student, it was done very much in rote form. But

how else? The 1994 Roadcraft made a great thing about flexibility, but I feel that was largely a device to make it more acceptable on the bookshelves. Certainly previous editions of Roadcraft did tend to give the impression of being regimented. However, flexibility needs a firm foundation or, in the words of another former Hendon Advanced Wing Instructor, Sgt. Pat Forbes, 'Flexibility comes later'.

Obviously once one understands the basics well then there is also a better understanding of when and how they can be flexed whilst still staying within the parameters of applying them soundly.

It took me a long while to get to that point so perhaps I can shorten the agony trail just a little bit for those coming after. I have to say that this is my evolved understanding of System, not one which was taught to me. However it is based on time spent studying with police driving instructors back in the hey-day of police driving standards which was the middle 1970s.

THE KEY BUILDING BLOCKS We know that in the original Roadcrafts the recommendation was that System was applied when approaching any hazard and a hazard was anything which might cause a change in position or speed. And we also know the key word here is *MIGHT*; the possibility of.

That gives us our first clue about understanding System and it is that that there are only two things which a moving vehicle can do for the driver to either enhance or degrade his (or her) safety; that is change position (laterally) and/or speed. That is all. There is nothing else you can do with a moving vehicle. That being so then position and speed have to be the basic building blocks of a methodical or systematic approach.

The next question to ask is why put position before speed? The answer again is simple enough. It is that you can very often resolve a situation by changing position without subsequently changing speed, but it generally doesn't work the other way around.

Once this is understood then, in essence, the rest falls fairly naturally into place.

Having put the basic building blocks into place the next point to consider is when putting them into practice what other considerations have to be made? Well, if you knew that on your route there would be no other people or drivers around then you could just do it regardless. However, because that is not the case it is necessary to check that what you wish to do is safe or, at least is not going to cause inconvenience to other road users, whether to the front, the sides or behind. So this is obviously where using the mirrors comes in and why they need to be used before changing position or speed, whence the original Mirrors and Course Selected (with appropriate signals if necessary) followed by Mirror, Signal, Speed.

INFORMATION At this point it is worth briefly mentioning where the INFORMATION bit comes into this. In my view where the '94 Roadcraft went badly wrong is that the Information Phase became an integral part of System and that messed the whole thing up. In the 2007 version the information part now runs parallel with the System, which is quite different.

Understanding System (Continued) — Nigel Albright

The idea of receiving and giving information on a rolling basis is simple and effective, but don't let it get out of hand; still use it in conjunction with the sequence of the System, or else the whole thing falls apart.

SIGNALS Having decided on the course needed and checked what the conditions are all round, it may be necessary to tell others what you intend to do which brings us neatly to signals. Now there are one or two points to make about using signals.

To apply a signal well we need to understand what it is intended to do. Firstly let's look at being on the receiving end of signals. Question; What does a flashing indicator tell you? Now put that into a workshop and see what answers come back. The right answer is that the only thing it tells you is that the bulb is working. That's all. What it also says is, don't assume. Assumptions can be dangerous if acted upon too readily. Keep assumptions as possibilities until you are quite sure they are valid. You are at a T-Junction, waiting to emerge into the main road and turn right. From your right approaches a vehicle (or motorcycle if you wish) which has its left hand indicator on. What action do you take? The answer, of course, is that you wait until you actually see the vehicle being steered into the curve, then you know it is safe to go. But not until then. Even some professional driving instructors make this mistake.

Now to the application of signals. What purpose do they fulfil? Stupid question, I know. But it's what I call a Stupid Important Question. Obviously, in the first instance they inform of intentions. To do so the signal must obviously be on for a suitable period of time before executing the action, to allow others to see and understand its (probable!) intention, otherwise it performs no function.

When I took The BSM High Performance Course the Course Manager wanted the signals 'on' approximately three to four seconds before the action that goes with them. That is generally considered enough time for the average motorist to see and react (if necessary) to the signal. I still use that general guideline. Not always practicable, I know. Mini- roundabouts are but one example, but the 3-4 seconds is good to aim for.

The other thing it makes you do is think and plan which in itself can be an aid to safety. It means to in order to do this properly you have to be very aware of all that is going on around you.

Now, some may say that, 4 seconds or so may be a bit long but what it also does is clearly separate signal from the action. I do an exercise with associates in which they will need to move from this nearside lane to the offside lane to prepare for a right turn at the roundabout ahead. I tell them I want them to do is put the signal on approximately three to four seconds before starting to move to the adjacent lane. And what happens? Almost in every case there is a steering input simultaneously with the signal being put on. For most people there is a definite and almost automatic link between the two; the signal and the action. So that is an important exercise which makes the point. What it also demonstrates is the general tendency to signal AS the manoeuvre is being performed which is a useless exercise since the driver is telling others what they are already doing. It's what I call a *Reflex Signal* and one to keep well away from. On motorways, for example, you can very often see the vehicles closing the lane separator before the signal is applied and it's not uncommon to see a vehicle lane changing with other vehicles all around it, without any signal being

applied!

Signals can also be used to ask, which is often overlooked, '*Please may I have the space to move from this outside lane to a position in front of you in the nearside lane?*' Again it may not work 100% of the time but then there is no 100% rule for anything. If it works 51% of the time, it works. But the other thing is getting the cooperation of another driver is far more empathetic and gives you an opportunity to give a really good courtesy signal in response. Then everyone works happily together; a much better way of going about things.

The other thing about signals is their planning. I like the old Roadcraft saying that driving plans are based on what you can see, what you can not see and, what you may reasonably expect to develop in the circumstances. And that equally well applies to signals.

SIGNAL BEFORE BRAKES? The next question to ask is why put the signal on before starting to reduce speed, aka using the brakes. The answer to that one is also quite simple. If you see brake lights it can mean more than one thing, so there is definite ambiguity; there could be a hazard ahead or, the car in front might be slowing down for a left or right turn or, the driver in front might be slowing to do a turn themselves. However when you see a signal come on you can anticipate that a reduction in speed will often follow, and you can plan more definitely on that basis. There are those who advocate showing braking lights to indicate that the vehicle is actually slowing down, and then following that with a signal, for example. But I don't feel that is a sound way of going about it and it sets up the wrong mindset in the pupil. So, for a number of reasons, and as a guideline, let us have the signal on approximately three to four seconds before the reduction in speed starts.

THE SPEED BIT When doing workshops I often ask what the stages are in reducing speed because for many the first inclination is to say, 'use the brakes'. Well yes and no.

The first stage happens when one relaxes the throttle and that means that we are using what I call *engine compression braking*'. The amount of effect will depend on the gear already engaged. Now saying this could lead to some interpreting it to mean 'grab a gear before starting to reduce speed'. No. That's not what is meant. What it means is that the amount of braking effect will depend on *the gear already engaged*. And observation and planning is integral with this. In any case, if you have the right gear for the conditions then so much more can be done by just flexing the throttle and actually using the brakes is just an extension of this.

That's the first stage. There are three. So what's the second? The second is *cover the brake*. Don't touch it, just cover it – in case. If you don't actually need it then fine, just move the foot back to the throttle. But, by covering the brake you are being ahead of the game and greatly reducing the thinking time, which normally also involves the movement of the foot from the throttle pedal to the brake pedal, which is time consuming.

The signal therefore, should be 'on', around 3-4 seconds before starting to reduce speed, not the braking.



Fancy a Free Drink? — DfT Designated Driver Scheme Announced

The Department for Transport (DfT) has announced that designated drivers will be rewarded in more than 8,000 pubs and student union bars across the country as part of the THINK! Christmas drink drive campaign, which was launched on 6th December by Road Safety Minister Mike Penning.

This year's THINK! Christmas drink drive campaign will include radio advertising, posters in pubs, online search activity and targeted Facebook advertising to remind drivers of the personal consequences of a drink drive conviction. THINK! have also teamed up with Coca-Cola's Designated Driver campaign to offer drivers across the country free soft drinks at venues this Christmas as part of the Driver Friendly campaign.

THINK! campaign activity will be aimed at young men aged 17 to 29, who are consistently over-represented in drink drive casualty figures.

Mike Penning said: "The number of drink drive deaths has fallen by more than 75% since 1979, but drink driving is still devastating lives with around 250 people killed in collisions where a driver was over the limit last year.

"Our THINK! campaign makes it clear that drivers who get behind the wheel over the limit risk losing their licence as well as facing a fine and even a prison sentence.

"We are also teaming up with Coca-Cola and pub chains

across the country to reward designated drivers as part of our Drive Friendly initiative, as well as reminding people of the consequences of getting a drink drive conviction.

"No one wants to spend their Christmas in a police cell. My message is clear: don't drink and drive."

Jon Woods, General Manager, Coca-Cola Great Britain and Ireland said:

"The holiday period is coming around quickly and everyone is beginning to make their plans. With the majority of adults preparing to visit a pub or bar over the festive period we are proud to be partnering the Government's THINK! Initiative to reward responsible drivers. Designated Drivers provide a fantastic service by helping their friends and family get home safely at the end of a night out. That's why we think it is so important to recognise and reward them. To do this we will be offering a free Coke or Diet Coke to drivers, ensuring they have a good night too and to encourage others to do the right thing."

The THINK! drink drive campaign runs from 1st December 2011 to 1st January 2012. <http://think.direct.gov.uk>.

Designated drivers should ask at the bar about how to take advantage of the buy one, get one free offer on Coca-Cola or Diet Coke at participating venues from 9th December 2011.

Councils Given Go-ahead to Redraw the Map

Local Transport Minister Norman Baker has announced that local authorities will be given greater control over how their roads appear on maps and satnav systems to better help them direct traffic. At present, if a council wants to change the classification of one of its roads - for example downgrading an 'A' road to a 'B' road - it has to have this approved by the DfT.

From April next year local councils will be able to set the classification of all the roads under their control, without the need for Whitehall approval. This will help them make clear to drivers which roads are most suitable for through-journeys, potentially reducing congestion on local routes and cutting unnecessary bureaucracy both locally and nationally.

Norman Baker said:

"This reform will cut out pointless form filling that has been around since the 1960s and lead to more local decision making. It will mean councils can better control traffic in their area by ensuring 'A' roads are placed where they want traffic to run and lower the category of a road in places they want traffic to avoid.

"Having consulted on our plans, we have learnt that councils and residents' associations all agree this is the right way to go forward."

The everyday operation of the system will be entirely in the hands of the local council. Central government will only deal with contentious cases via an appeals system where there are serious disagreements about a council's decision. To ensure that motorists continue to get a consistent road network when they cross from one county to another, a council will need to consult neighbouring authorities before implementing cross-border changes.

Local authorities will be required to send a formal record of any changes to its road network to the DfT but the reporting system will be streamlined, with the current eight forms replaced by one.

As part of the consultation, the Department also took the opportunity to examine whether there might be better ways to link the management of the system with satnav technology. Further work will be carried out and an update provided in the new year.

Tony's Quiz — Tony Richardson

HIGHWAY CODE

1. What causes skidding and how is it corrected?
(Highway Code Rule 119)
2. What are the precautions to take when parking on a hill?
(Highway Code Rule 252)
3. In the event of a breakdown, how far behind your vehicle should you place a warning triangle?
(Highway Code Rule 274)

ROADCRAFT

1. What is meant by scanning?
(Pages 24 & 25 Roadcraft)
2. What are the benefits of keeping your distance from the vehicle in front?
(Page 29 Roadcraft)
3. What is the correct seating position at all times?
(Page 78 Roadcraft)

For the answers, please refer to the latest edition of the Highway Code and Roadcraft on the pages indicated. Remember—you may be asked one of the above questions on your next Sunday visit!

MOT Changes, 1st January 2012

The Vehicle and Operator Services Agency (VOSA), the Government agency responsible for the MoT vehicle test, have announced that they are adding a number of new mandatory tests from 1st January 2012. These new testable items have been included mainly because of the increased number of electrical safety systems fitted to modern vehicles and also to harmonise the test across the EU.

The following items will now be included in the test:

Electronic parking brake

Electronic Stability Control

Warning lights

As well as electronic parking brake and ESC warning lights (where fitted) the MOT test will also include checks for the correct function of the following, where fitted;

- Headlight main beam warning light
- Electronic power steering warning light
- Brake fluid level warning light
- Tyre pressure monitoring system warning light
- Air bag warning light
- Seat belt pre-tensioner warning light

Steering & suspension

The new test will include a check on the presence and correct function of the steering lock where fitted as standard.

Lighting

Anything that obviously reduces the light's intensity or change its colour will become a reason for failure Headlight requirements are

updated to take account of the particular characteristics of High Intensity Discharge (HID) lamps.

Electrical wiring and battery

Trailer/caravan electrical socket

Tyres

Tyre pressure monitoring systems fitted to vehicles first registered after 1 January 2012 must be working correctly and not indicating a malfunction.

Supplementary restraints

The vehicle will fail the test if any airbag fitted as original equipment is obviously missing or defective.

Speedometer

Seats

It must be possible to secure the driver's seat fore and aft adjustment mechanism in two or three different positions.

Doors

Towbars

Exhaust

A catalytic convertor fitted as original equipment but missing will be a reason for failure.

Fuel system