

EDITORIAL – Alan Yates

BYPASS JOY? | My local free paper had a full page and a half with details of the proposed **Hollingworth -Tintwistle bypass**. It seems that at last there is some movement on this contentious bypass, with a public enquiry due to start in May 2007.

Even some of the local people are getting a little excited. One person has now come to realise that the preparation work will encroach into part of his garden. There is still a lot of mixed feelings regarding the ultimate success of this 5.7 km road. Will it really keep traffic away from the centre of Hollingworth?

The present A57 will be declassified and renumbered while the proposed new road will become the new A57. Vehicle and various traffic counts estimate that over 6,000 lorries vans and cars use the road daily. No wonder some of the house windows never look clean! Think of the long term damage that this has done over the preceding years.

All this of course is only the preliminary opening shots. It is the paper part of the construction, the compulsory purchase of land and the creation of “rights” for the contractors to carry out the work required. The initial work is estimated to start in 2008 and the completion of the new road due in 2012/15. Long term thinking is therefore required. Meanwhile the area is blighted by the sheer volume of traffic. It is never quiet along this part of the A57. From early morning at around 7.15am to 7.30pm at night there is a constant queue in both directions to get through Mottram and Hollingworth. Of course the inevitable happens with vehicle breakdowns adding to the congestion.

With today’s emphasis on the environment and “green” issues, a lot of individuals and other interested parties are against the building of more roads. My own thoughts are that the areas soon regenerate and revert to the natural; after all some of the best nature reserves are along our motorway verges. Yes, at the beginning of construction, the

areas can look unsightly, but nature soon fights back. Some of Dr Beeching’s line closures are now a beautiful oasis of trees, plants and bird life. My reservation is that it only moves the problem further along the road, but at least the exit is out into more open countryside and not in the villages.

There is a group who wish to save Swallows Wood, a local nature reserve. The proposed road will be on stilts at this point. The group has been quite vociferous in its protests, even getting their name onto a web - site. I must admit that the area is a beautiful place to walk in with trees, small pools and such like.

I can see the dilemma facing people who walk there, solitude, quietness, birds all there if you are quiet yourself. But, don’t people in houses deserve some quiet times themselves? There are no easy answers to this perennial problem and it is not going to go away is it?

Related Links

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Snippets – John Holland

ZAMKNIETA TO YOU | In July of last year I questioned why the Welsh insisted on having road signs in two languages - after all we Brits travelling on the Conteenong accommodate signs in the parent language, and why not?

Now though, I find that my spleen needs venting again, and where better than in the pages of our esteemed Newsletter?

Travel in the vicinity of that sleepy Shropshire town of Whitchurch and you are quite likely to come across a sign which says "A49 do Whitchurch ZSAMKNIETA na odcinku 7.5 mil (12km)". No, Iffor-the- Terrible-isn't-it? is not on the rampage again - this times it's the Poles! Yes! Eight of these signs have been erected on the Shropshire-Cheshire border by request of Cheshire County Council to temporarily divert traffic as work is done on the A49. No, no, no, says Cheshire CC, this isn't political correctness gone stark raving bonkers at all. "On several occasions last year we found Polish-speaking drivers were failing to understand diversion signs, which sometimes caused congestion when they arrived at sections of major roads that we had closed off, and we had to reverse them out of the area. On other occasions they would drive on the footpath and thunder past a work gang, which obviously has safety implications". So that's OK then, problem solved!

Next week I shall be driving in Spain and will try out our mutual EU respect, tolerance and understanding, and, if necessary thunder along a pavement when I see a sign I don't understand.

PLAN FOR YOUR PETROL | Where and how do you buy your fuel? Do you buy indiscriminately as you

LAST LINES – John Holland

Well here we are, the end of **MAINBEAM**. Alan Yates has been editor for three years and carried the flag magnificently in that time, but now feels that he has nothing more to contribute. Sadly there have not been any volunteers to take on the task, as outside contributions have always been minimal. One exception must be those regular Quizzes provided by Tony Richardson.

There will be some form of Newsletter, with the same title on the Group's website, which is beautifully produced by Simon Smart, and this can be downloaded to give a paper edition for those who want it, and in addition, it has the facility to reproduce photographs. Simon though has only included material which Alan has collated for the paper edition, and does not have the time to source this material.

Whilst the internet is a very common tool nowadays, it is still not available to everyone, so there is another point of contact lost to the Group.

I have a very personal interest in our Newsletter, as I started it in December of 1973 and remained Editor until

need it. or do you use the same fuel station each time? Supermarket or other?

These questions were raised for me when I read a report from Arva, a company which supplies the majority of fuel cards. Arva reports that business drivers in the main use either supermarkets or one of the major oil company sites, because these outlets are generally close by major traffic routes.

Says Mike Waters, head of market analysis for Arva, "Even though the number of supermarket sites are on the increase, this move is being outstripped by the closure of oil company sites. This highlights further the need for drivers to plan where they intend to buy their fuel, rather than make 'distress' purchases, in order to avoid filling up at the more expensive forecourts."

LET THE CAR TAKE THE STRAIN | 'Advanced Drivers' will be as archaic as lamp-lighters by 2030 if what I read comes to fruition.

The prediction is that by that time cars will be driverless. I understand that already we have cars that can drive about 100 miles before human assistance is necessary. Professor Sebastian Thrun a car designer says that by 2010 he expects this to go up to 1,000 miles. "By 2030," he says, "we should be able to deploy this technology on the open highway and reliability will exceed that of humans."

As one who is happy to confess to naming my first car (I called it 'Bessie' actually, so what?), I find it hard to hide a smirk to learn that even in that highly exotic world of technology the boffins have given two of their cars names too - one is 'Junior' and the other 'Stanley'. Ahhhh, cute!

Alan took over, and it was the first 'real' monthly newsletter produced by any Group in the country. I always insisted that the title, **MAINBEAM**, appeared like that, in capital letters, and a capital 'N' was used when writing of our Newsletter, a trend which I note with pleasure, has been continued.

I know that Alan feels very guilty about retiring from the role, but all of us on the Committee have tried to reassure him that this is perfectly acceptable; how can we do otherwise anyway, when nobody else wants to take on the commitment?

Do look at the website if you have that facility, and remember that many libraries now offer that service. There is no guarantee that it will be changed with the current monthly regularity, but if anyone has the slightest urge to contribute something then I am happy to act as a conduit, and put them together to send to Simon. Send me your words, either in the post or as an email, but please, no phone calls saying, "Why don't you write something about - " which has occurred in the past.

This, That and T'other – John Holland

CLEAN SWEEP | Probably one of the least exciting items on your car are the windscreen wipers. For owners of Vauxhall cars though, an element of excitement has entered their lives with the latest technological achievement of that manufacturer.

Meet 'Flatblade'! This is wiper which has no joints in it, has an aerodynamic design which incorporates a spoiler and spring-loaded rails, which, it is claimed, keeps an even pressure across the screen for the entire length of the blade. Sleeker than other wipers, and it has a higher resistance to wind lift even at higher speeds, and reduces wind noise by up to 50%. So it's goodbye to jerking, squeaking and smearing wipers, but only if you drive to one of a range of Vauxhall models. The new wipers cost £23.50 a set.

Is there no end to motoring technology?

SATNAV AGAIN | Forgive me if I go on about Satnav again this month. Last month I know did go on a bit about my new 'toy', but this month I feel, not just less self-indulgent, but quite superior in my contribution to the 'Green' issues. This is because I have read that satellite navigation could help to reduce the damage we drivers are doing to the environment. Satnavs (as we technocrats call it), already informs of the quickest or shortest routes, but a Swedish development is now based on environmental efficiency.

A team at the Lund Institute of Technology based their system around 22 local streets and factored in three types of cars and classified the streets according to their width, speed limit and traffic flows in both peak and off-peak hours. An average fuel saving of just over 8 percent was recorded compared with journeys planned by other methods.

And you thought I was just enjoying myself.....

GAINING KNOWLEDGE | A well-established symbol of all that is British is the London black cab isn't it? Well, apparently it one that is in danger of disappearing, for the entry into the business of being a 'cabbie' has diminished over recent years, and the blame is put on the effort required to gain 'The Knowledge', that skill of finding a route from A to B, which traditionally can take between 3 and 4 years to learn.

Now one well-know London cabbie, Tony Norris is trying to recruit new taxi drivers within ComCab, a company who have set up a training school in White City. Owner-driver Tony, now 55, who has been a cabbie for many years acknowledges that the training in the past has been difficult, and this is reflected in the 40 percent drop in applications compared to previous years, according to reports in the trade press.

Sorry to harp on again, but is there anything in the previous item that just might help here?

PAYBACK TIME FOR ROADKILL | Last month whilst I was driving along a quiet country road in Yorkshire a blackbird flew out of a hedge and straight

into the front offside wing of my car; in my mirror I saw that it had died instantly.

Now I read that the unfortunate victim is just one of an estimated 10 million birds which are killed on the roads each year, along with the one million animals, which has reached such a proportion that it attracted the BBC to make a TV programme called 'The Roadkill Chef'. Add to these numbers the 3 million pheasants, 800,000 rabbits, 25,000 urban foxes and 50,000 deer together with countless numbers of squirrels and badgers and the carnage reaches astronomical proportions.

Now GEM Motoring Assist (you may remember it as the former Guild of Experienced Motorists, says that so many people are upset by the accidental slaughter of wildlife that they want to make amends, and they are going to do this with a new scheme called Friendly Fines for Fallen Fur and Feather. Chief executive of GEM, David Williams, does however stress the point that no driver should brake or swerve to avoid wildlife occupying the piece of road ahead of the vehicle, acknowledging that excessive speed on country roads can cause the untimely death of these creatures. To substantiate their idea, GEM are donating £1 to the Mammals Trust, for each new member signing up to GEM over a two month period.

Excellent sentiments indeed, but they do nothing to dispel the old, old question of excessive speed. I don't consider my speed was excessive when that blackbird met his demise, although I was enjoying 'a bit of a rattle' along that road.

Have you got any thoughts on the subject? Bet you have, but expecting to see them on these pages is another matter!

KNOW THE FEELING? | The following is paraphrased from 'Newslink', the Newsletter of the Motor Schools Association:

A driving instructor, due for his check test had carefully prepared for the appointment, checking his teaching plan, preparing a route and cleaning the car inside and out. The day before the test was due, he decided to buy a new tuition suction mirror, and decided to fit it that very evening, and did it from the passenger seat, adjusting it to perfection.

Early next morning, giving himself a nice early start he prepared to set off for the test centre - except that his cart wouldn't start. The battery was completely flat to the degree that even the clock had stopped. Then it dawned on him - when fitting the mirror the night before, he had used the interior light and then forgot to switch it off.

Telling this story, John Lepine the MSA general manager finishes by saying, "I know (this is true), for I was that plonker!"

Keep Space!

IS IT THE END? — Lee Davies

THE END OF RoADAR BY 2030? | Cars that can drive themselves - like Kitt in Knight Rider - will be common in less than 20 years, say scientists. US researchers say vehicles equipped with GPS positioning and artificial intelligence will be safer than cars driven by humans. Researchers from Stanford University in California have already developed a vehicle they called Stanley, reports Sky News. See also [Page 2](#)

It used sensors, lasers, cameras and on-board computers to navigate a 132-mile course through the Nevada desert. Now they are designing Junior,

a modified VW Passat that will be able to steer itself through a busy city.

Modern cars are already stuffed full of robot-like gadgets to help deal with hazards. Cruise control, lane-departure warnings, GPS, blind-spot sensors and cameras to help you parallel park are commonplace.

Boffins believe it is a relatively small step to link all the technology and hand control of your car over to the computer.

"By 2030 we should be able to deploy this technology on the open highway, and reliability will exceed that of humans by orders of magnitude," said Professor Sebastien Thrun.

MAINBEAM EXCLUSIVE!

MAINBEAM has learned that in an attempt to further reduce the appalling number of casualties on Greater Manchester's roads, GMP is to introduce the acclaimed National Speed Awareness Course from April this year. The course will allow the Police to divert low-end speeding motorists to education as opposed to the Fixed Penalty System.

The National Speed Awareness Course has been put in place to give offenders who drive in excess of the speed limit the opportunity to attend a driver re-education course on the effects and dangers of speeding. The scheme offers a driver an option of attending a Speed Awareness Course as an alternative to the Fixed Penalty System of a fine and 3 penalty points endorsed on their licence.

It is well documented that speed, or inappropriate speed contributes to a significant percentage of all crashes and a higher percentage of more serious crashes. It is estimated that in a year excessive and inappropriate speed kills around 1,200 people and injures over 100,000 more; this is the largest contributor to casualties on the road.

Any driver who is detected driving at the speed identified as suitable in the force area and who has not previously attended a course within a 3 year period, will be offered a course in the area where the offence is committed. It will also be possible to attend a similar course elsewhere in the country as the Association of Chief Police Officers has recommended all forces should offer this alternative to motorists – the course is already available in around 12 counties in the UK.

The Course is delivered by specialist Department for Transport Approved Driving Instructors and

involves a mixture of driving theory, which combines the latest thinking on defensive driving techniques with modern training methods and practical on-road driving. The course cost of around £85 is payable by the driver.

After attending and successfully completing the course, the driver/rider will be notified by the relevant Police Authority that no further action will be taken for this particular incident. The date of course completion is recorded and held at the DVLA on a National Database. If the driver/rider is involved in another speeding offence falling under the same criteria within 3 years of the course completion date, a second course will not be offered in lieu of proceedings.

Once a driver/rider has accepted the offer to attend a course, but then fails to attend or successfully complete, the Service Provider is compelled to notify the relevant Police Authority. The case would then be referred to the Crown Prosecution Service and ultimately be dealt with by the Magistrates Court.

What do you think? Should speeding drivers be given a re-education course rather than 3 penalty points and a £60 fixed penalty – or are they being let off the hook? After all they have just driven past a blue background speed limit repeater and camera sign, and failed to observe a brightly coloured safety camera! Or maybe they should be forced to join RoADAR (Manchester Group) - would that be a punishment?! I'm sure our new editor will welcome your thoughts!

Yomper Yates Limbers up for Another Walk

Alan Yates will lead a 5 to 6 mile walk in Marbury Park on Sunday 25th March 2007. The walk will include a visit to Great Budworth Church and will take about 3 hours to complete.

In common with other Group social activities, the walk is open to all Members, Associates and guests. Older children are most welcome if they can walk the distance but unfortunately animals cannot be allowed on this walk.

The walk will start at 10:30 from the car park at Marbury Country Park. From there we will head towards Budworth Mere then through the Country Park along part of the Trent and Mersey canal, passing Marston Hall before visiting Great Budworth church if there is no service being held.

Trainers are acceptable along with some wet weather gear. Bring some food and drink since there won't be an opportunity to buy food or refreshment.

Marbury Country Park is situated to the north of Northwich and near to Comberbach. It can be

accessed from the M6 at junction 19, then B5391 through Pickmere, then right onto the A559. If coming from M56, leave at junction 10, then left onto the A559. In both cases, follow the signs for Anderton and Marbury Country Park. For those used to OS maps and GPS settings, it is Explorer 267 or Landranger 118; OS National Grid Ref: SJ652764.

The car park at Marbury is £2.00 a day.

The walk will be at your own risk and is NOT covered by Manchester Group insurance.

I shall be in the car park from 10:00am and will park near the Pay and Display machine and dressed in shorts, as last time.

Please come along and enjoy the day.

Contact details are:

Phone: 0161 336 4747 (before 9 am.)

e-mail: nalas01@tiscali.co.uk

British Summer Time begins that day, so remember to set your clocks forward an hour!



Views of the Trent and Mersey canal from Marbury Park



Tony's Quiz – Tony Richardson

Tony's Quiz, March 2007

1. Recently the Government increased the penalties for using a hand-held mobile phone whilst driving. What are the new penalties and how does the law apply?
 2. What is meant by the Limit Point?
 3. What Components make up the stopping distance of a vehicle?
 4. What does a single broken line with long markings and short gaps in the middle of the road indicate?
 5. What documents are required to enable a vehicle to be legally driven on the road?
- objective, such as pursuing a vehicle in front, that they are no longer capable of assessing driving risks realistically. It is associated with a greatly increased accident risk. (Page 7 of Roadcraft)
3. **Q** When can you legally switch on your rear fog lights?
A When visibility is seriously reduced - less than 100 metres. Otherwise they can dazzle other road users and obscure your brake lights.
 4. **Q** What is meant by the two-second rule?
A Allow at least a two - second gap between you and the vehicle in front on roads carrying fast traffic. The gap should be at least double on wet roads and increased still further on icy roads. Remember that the only space you control is the space in front of the vehicle.

Answers to Tony's Quiz, February 2007

1. **Q** There are 5 phases of the ROADCRAFT system – which phase runs through every other phase?
A The Information phase.
2. **Q** What is “red mist”?
A A mental and physiological state which drivers experience when they are so determined to achieve some non - driving
5. **Q** Some traffic lights have an advanced stop line ahead of the normal stop line – what is the reason for this?
A To allow cyclists to move away from the lights just ahead of the normal traffic flow.

Social Calendar 2007

Forthcoming Manchester Group Evening Social Events, 2007

Unless stated otherwise, social events will be held quarterly at **Woodley Civic Hall**, Hyde Road, Woodley, Stockport, SK6 1QG. The meetings will be held on the dates shown, starting at 8pm and finishing around 9.30pm.

Tuesday 10th April 2007. Speaker to be arranged.

Tuesday 10th July 2007. Our Guest Speaker on 10th July will be **Beverley Bell**, the North West Area Traffic Commissioner, who will give a light-hearted overview of her work. As the only female Traffic Commissioner in the UK, Mrs Bell will explain her daily dealings within the male orientated LGV and PSV transport industry, with some serious and humorous tales of her experiences .

Tuesday 9th October 2007. Speaker to be arranged.

Group Walk in Marbury, Sunday 25th March 2007

Sunday 25th March 2007. Alan Yates leads a walk in Marbury park. See [Page 5](#) for details.

Skid Pan Training, Saturday 16th June 2007

The Group have booked a skid pan training session at Staffordshire Police Skid Pan, New Road, Hixon, for **Saturday 16th June** with 12 places to fill. Candidates will be allocated on a first-come first-serve basis. Each candidate will be required to sign an indemnity form before being taken out on the skid pan.

If you are interested, please email me at: treasurer@safedriversandrider.com.

FIFTY - FIFTY DRAW, February 2007

First: Number 12, Frances Hinks - drawn by Bob McGrouther.
Second: Number 38 Eva Farmer - drawn by Michael Hesketh.



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