

View from the East

March 2020



This month in the news.

So far in Cambridgeshire during the first week of “lock down” we have had 3 fatal road traffic collisions, with several more serious life-changing injury crashes. Strange, when you consider road user volume is down. The overall trend for people caught drinking and driving nationally in 2019 is static; sadly however, the number of people involved in collisions having consumed alcohol **or** drugs is on the rise. Remember, this is on the back of fewer Roads Policing Officers nationally out on our roads to catch them in the act.

In the news:

Cambridge City Centre has just seen its first proper visit by Extinction Rebellion, whereby they commenced a week-long demonstration by occupying a junction on the ring road in Cambridge forcing diversions for commuters and the local Park and Ride bus service. The pressure is on to find a way forward to maintain our ability to remain flexible in our approach to travel whilst looking after our planet. The government is consulting on bringing forward the ban on diesel and petrol cars to hit CO₂ targets. Couple this with the first of many steps to bring in mandatory speed restriction devices on vehicles by 2022, the motoring world as we know it is about to change.

ISA's (intelligent Speed Assist). In order for new cars to meet ‘European Type Approval Standards’ all cars will have to have a mandatory excess speed detection and warning system or ISA's (Intelligent Speed Assist). From 2022 all new cars will have ISA's. The GPS or speed limit recognition camera will know where you are and what speed you should be doing. If you exceed the speed limit then a visual and audible warning will be activated in the vehicle to tell you. The system will not apply the brakes, but it will reduce engine power and prevent the breach. Furthermore, all such information will be available to download by enforcement agencies such as the police. It is anticipated that this will reduce casualties by as much as 30%.

SOS. The police are beginning to receive more notifications from vehicles that are involved in a collision by the vehicle's own SOS system. This is another feature that should have been mandatory in all new vehicles from March 2018. We have had several notifications since the start of this year, where the vehicle has activated an airbag or detected rapid deceleration and alerted the emergency services via the SOS system. It is thought that the system will save



countless lives as it will enable the emergency services to pinpoint exactly where, what and who is involved, which should see the correct resources reaching any casualties quicker. Some but not all of the systems are audio capable so a police or ambulance control room operator will be able to hear what is going on in the car.

Weather or not.....

As a Police Officer we often don't get to choose what conditions we work in. We have to take it as we find it. I was called out from home at 2am quite a few Sundays ago as a result of a fatal road traffic collision in Peterborough. Unfortunately for me the scene was very challenging as this particular Sunday was in the middle of Storm Dennis. Ordinarily as a collision investigator we mark up our collision scenes with road stud markers (we went away from using paint some time ago). The camera and digital laser scanner picks up the markers really well in the dark, but then you would expect that as they are the same as the ones used on motorways and dual carriageways to show up the lanes and edge of carriageway. Having walked through the scene of the collision and built up a mental picture of the evidence I began to place out my markers. Having placed the first ½ dozen on the road surface I watched in horror as "Dennis" blew them to the kerb edge, I then had to chase them down the carriageway as they joined the flow of water at the roadside formed by the torrential rain. Thankfully the drain covers were narrow so I manage to recover them all. Much of the vehicle debris had been blown around from where it should have been so the patterns that would normally form in these circumstances were not present. Thankfully the nearby road works signage that had blown over did avail me some sandbags to enable me to wedge the scanner tripod legs firmly to the ground. Both the scanner and I narrowly avoided 7 or 8 roofing tiles crashing on the pavement adjacent to where I was set up. We were then entertained by an 8x10ft road works metal hoarding lifting off and flying happily into a neighbouring public car park. No two collisions are the same, but this one was quite remarkable for very different reasons.

Testing times.

A good smattering of tests completed in the Cambridge area up until the cessation of testing operations nationally. I am always so pleased when those that have taken up the challenge to become a better driver or rider go on to take the test. Your first step is to pass, and to pass well, which in the majority of cases is exactly what happens.

Running out of time.

I completed the Cambridge Half Marathon. This is the 2nd time I have taken up the challenge. My running began when I ran the London Marathon for the Road Victims Trust, a charity that provides support for families and witnesses who find themselves involved in fatal collisions. I had a target time of 2 hours 30 minutes, and to run all the way. I just missed it by 4 minutes but took 22 minutes out of my 2019 time.



What's Next?

I should have begun my yearly travels to come and see your groups and get to meet some of you. Sadly this is on hold at the moment. The good news is however that due to the cancellation of leave for some Police Officers I will have days to take and take them I will get around and see you all as soon as the restrictions are lifted. In the mean time can I encourage you all to consider “virtual meetings” using ‘Facebook Live’ or ‘Skype’ there are so many other platforms you could use. It is a great way to stay in touch with your teams and membership. The Cambridgeshire Group managed one such meeting last weekend with a guest speaker so it can be done.

Please take care of yourselves, stay safe and keep in touch with one another.

Simon.

Simon Burgin
Eastern Region Co-Ordinator

Resources

Please remember the free RoSPA e-newsletter covering all safety matters including road-safety for all RoADAR members.

RoSPA's premier health & safety newsletter brings you the very latest safety news, expert views and advice.

Every issue includes news on road safety, workplace, home and public safety, also details of events you will find interesting! When you sign up you'll receive access to an exclusive collection of e- books covering a wide range of health and safety topics.

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