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EDITORIAL

With the clocks going back in a couple of weeks it is worth thinking about the consequences of driving in poorer light, especially at each end of the day.

Vision becomes less distinct as dusk descends and it is always worth checking your light bulbs and keeping the lenses on your lights clean as more of your driving will be done in darker driving conditions.

It is also a sensible thing to drive on dipped headlights especially in the gloom or poor driving conditions.

SEE AND BE SEEN!

Stay safe and enjoy your driving.

DID YOU KNOW THE SEAMY PAST OF THE ROLLS-ROYCE SPIRIT OF ECSTASY?

The graceful emblem that adorns the front of every Rolls-Royce has a murky past.

Rolls-Royce is the epitome of luxury, its cars the embodiment in metal of a certain sort of class that mere mortals like us could only aspire to. But did you know that the Spirit of Ecstasy, the emblem that adorns the front of every Rolls, is the fruit of a sordid affair between a famous Rolls-Royce customer and an actress?



Those fine purveyors of automotive video at Carfection have explored the origins of the little flying lady that sits on the bonnet of every car out of Goodwood and the story is fascinating.

Over a hundred years ago back in the early 1900s, Lord Montagu of Beaulieu commissioned a mascot for his car from a sculptor called Charles Robinson Sykes. The artist based the figurine on Eleanor Velasco Thornton, an actress who also happened to be Beaulieu's mistress – hence the finger on her lips and the 'Whisperer' nickname.

The mascot quickly became a fashion must-have, and Sykes was commissioned by Rolls-Royce to produce an official statuette for the company's limousines. The Spirit of Ecstasy was the result, and she sits supreme, riding ahead of motorists 'to revel in the freshness of the air', or something like that, as Sykes explained it. Thornton died in 1915 when the boat she was sailing on was hit by a torpedo from a German U-boat – but her legacy lives on in a remarkable way.

A PARTING OF THE WAVES?

A man has returned his waterbed to the store where it was bought after he and his wife had drifted apart.

COPY DATE FOR DECEMBER SEGMENT IS
1st NOVEMBER 2018

MINI: A BRIEF HISTORY

As the all-new Mini makes its debut we take a look back through its history and ask what makes it so special.

Today's Mini is, of course, very different to that first car. Under the ownership of the BMW Group, the Mini – or MINI, as it's officially labelled – is bigger, and is just one of a family of related models. A family



that will expand with this latest generation to incorporate versions that Issigonis (who died in 1988) would never have dreamed of.

But what was Issignosis's vision, and why has the Mini enjoyed such an enduring appeal? Issigonis, born in 1906, was a talented engineer and designer who worked for Humber, Austin and, from 1936, Morris Motors Ltd. There he worked on a number of cars, including the Morris Minor. In 1955 he was recruited by the British Motor Corporation to design a family of new models.

The smaller of these took priority when fuel rationing was introduced to the Suez Crisis and development was accelerated. In August 1959 that small car was launched as the Morris Mini Minor and the Austin Seven. It wasn't until 1961 that it was renamed the Austin Mini, and eight years after that Mini became a marque in its own right.

Issigonis's design broke the mould, with its transverse-engine, front-wheel-drive layout and incredibly compact dimensions. It revolutionised the small car and became the best-selling British car in history, with a production run of 5.3 million units. Production ran until 2000.

In between, the Mini underwent numerous changes of name and engine, and detail upgrades were made to its exterior design. Different body styles were created too, but its fundamental character and layout were unchanged and it was the "standard" two-door model that had the most timeless appeal: the final model that rolled off the production line in 2000 didn't look that different to the original 1959 car.

During its lifespan the original Mini was produced at various factories by BMC, then British Leyland and finally the Rover Group. The Rover Group was bought by BMW in 1994 and development on an all-new Mini started.

At the 1997 Geneva Motor Show Mini displayed two concept cars that suggested a possible new design direction – the Mini Spiritual and Spiritual Too were three- and five-door models respectively, which aimed to re-interpret the original Mini's brief in for the 21st century.

These futuristic-looking designs were something of a red herring, but with its white roof and round headlights the retro-styled ACV30 concept car (based on an MGF and designed to celebrate the 30th anniversary of Mini's win at the 1967 Monte Carlo Rally) was a glimpse of things to come.

Continued

When BMW sold the Rover Group in 2000 it retained ownership of the Mini name, and in 2001 it launched its take on what a Modern Mini should be. The new car was built at its plant in Cowley, Oxford, and although many fans of the original Mini mocked the newcomer's larger dimensions and faux-historical design, it struck a chord and proved to be a huge commercial success. Personalisation was a key part of the car's appeal and thousands of different colour and trim options were offered. Buyers lapped it up and the average price of Minis leaving the showroom far exceeded their list prices.

Sportier Cooper models, a convertible and a quirky Clubman version with a rear-hinged side door followed, and an updated model with new engines, interior and all-new (but very similar) exterior was launched in 2006.

Mini stretched the idea of what a Mini could be when it launched the Countryman in 2010. The "crossover" model was the biggest Mini ever, and was available with four-wheel drive. Unlike the existing models, it was built not in England, but in Austria. Despite more than a few snide sneers and comments, it has become a global sales success.

Now, the next generation of Mini promises to push the concept to new limits. As well as the three-door model revealed today, spy shots reveal that a five-door hatchback and even an estate will join the range. You can expect more variants to follow.

Whether or not Sir Alec Issigonis would have approved of today's Mini, the fact that the new car will inevitably be compared with the one he designed more than half a century ago is testament to just how much that original car is loved and revered.

TYRE AGEING TO BE RESEARCHED

It is a popular question among car owners, when does a tyre become too old? Sadly, we cannot provide a definitive answer, because it depends on so many variables, including storage and usage conditions. Whenever we have queried premium tyre manufactures about age limits, the answers are, vague.



Research commissioned

Yet, the first publically-funded study into the safety of ageing tyres has been announced by the Roads Minister, Jesse Norman. This follows the death of three people, in a coach crash, when one of its front tyres failed. The post-accident investigation revealed that the tyre in question was 19 years-old.

The independent organisation, Transport Research Laboratory (TRL) has been charged with carrying out the research over the next 12 months, to check whether, or not, tyre integrity degrades to an unsafe level over time.

Unfortunately, GEM understands that the research will be applicable to heavy vehicles only and we urge that similar research is undertaken for car tyres as well, especially as the sale of dangerous part-worn tyres continues virtually unchallenged.

TEST PASSES

Congratulations to the following who have recently passed their IAM Roadsmart test:-

Alex Hughes	Pam Voller	Chris Stones
Rhys Bryant	Ana Lawther	Belen Lawther

NEW ASSOCIATES

Welcome to the following new Associates who have recently joined the Group:-

Nadine Khawaja	Laura Martin	Jessica Martin
Giles North	Philip Orense	Heather Smith
Claire Tack	John Cook	Joel Levack
Bryan Lennox	Rogério Lacerda	Duncan Thistleton

ONE UK DRIVER CAUGHT SPEEDING EVERY 75 SECONDS

Three in five speeding offences are recorded in urban areas with 30mph limits.

An investigation by insurance firm Direct Line found that, on average, more than 1,000 motorists are caught breaking the speed limit every day, with almost 1.25 million speeding incidents recorded by police between the start of 2015 and the end of 2017.

Worryingly, almost two-thirds of all speeding offences were recorded in 30 mph zones, while only eight percent were on motorways.

In 30 mph zones, speeding motorists were found to be driving at an average of 39.2 mph – almost 31 percent faster than the prescribed limit – while the average speed of those caught on motorways was 88 mph.

However, those caught speeding in 40 mph zones were guilty of the largest infractions, clocking an average of 61.4 mph – 53.5 percent faster than they should have been driving.

According to Direct Line, speeding is an important issue in road safety, with police identifying speed as a contributory factor in almost a quarter (24 percent) of all fatal accidents.

Rob Miles, director of car insurance at Direct Line, said: 'Speeding can kill, but people still drive far too fast on Britain's roads, even in areas specially designated as lower limits because of the risk to pedestrians. It is important to remember just how much difference speeding can make to reaction and braking speeds, and always account for poor weather and light as they can also affect a driver's ability to control their vehicle.'

Despite these concerning statistics, though, the research also found glimmers of hope hiding in the data. The total number of speeding incidents fell by more than 20,000 between 2015 and 2016, for example, with the greatest reductions found in 50 mph and 30 mph zones. However, this period also saw the number of motorway infringements rise by 56 percent.

UNDERSTANDING CAR HANDLING

Carbuyer tries to avoid using too many phrases that you're likely to need a glossary or a dictionary to understand. We're very aware, though, that there are certain words journalists love to use, even though not everybody knows what they mean. If a review doesn't describe what a car is like to drive, it can't truly be comprehensive. This means that at some point the word 'handling' is bound to turn up. But what does this actually mean and, crucially, how important is it to you?

This isn't a silly question at all, because the actual definition of 'handling' can be tricky to pin down. It's an all-encompassing title that covers many different individual factors, so while a review that says a car handles well is obviously a compliment, it doesn't actually tell buyers anything very useful.

The word 'handling' traditionally describes the effort and sensations you'll experience when driving a car and should really be used together with another word – 'roadholding'. This means, literally, how the car holds the road. Handling and roadholding together cover every aspect of how a car's controls feel, how much effort it takes to drive and how capable it is of staying safely placed on the tarmac.

A car with handling and roadholding that are praised by the reviewer might be termed 'fun to drive', but this phrase is rather subjective. 'Good to drive' is also tricky, as it could equally mean a car offers relaxation and comfort over handling prowess – both can be enjoyable for very different reasons. And there will always be people who take great delight in the challenge of manhandling a cumbersome and unresponsive car.

Elsewhere, we have a feature that discusses what might make a car good to drive. Here, though, we aim to take the mystery out of what reviewers mean when they discuss car handling and roadholding. We'll look at all the important factors that these topics take account of, but we won't get bogged down in so much detail that your eyes glaze over.

Here's our guide to the terms most commonly used when describing a car's handling and roadholding.

What is steering weight?

How much effort a car's steering wheel takes to turn is an important part of how a car feels. Too-light steering can make it hard to hold a straight course, while heavy steering can be tiring and may make a car seem unresponsive to your inputs. If steering is described as 'nicely weighted', then it's neither too light nor too heavy.

What are steering feel and feedback?

A car's steering is a mechanical link between you and the wheels, and the feel through the steering wheel can tell you a lot about how securely the tyres are gripping the road. In a well designed car, you'll feel a force gently acting against the steering as you steer at higher speeds. This 'feedback' can tell an experienced driver if it's okay to go faster and steer harder, or that they need to slow down and steer more gently. Ideally, steering will have lots of feel and be comfortably weighted.

Continued

What is steering directness?

Imagine a go-kart. Here, the steering wheel is connected to the wheels by a solid rod – the most direct steering it's possible to have. Passenger cars, though, use a system of gears to make steering easier to turn. Moving the wheel from fully left to fully right can take several complete turns, but on a car with nice, direct steering, you should feel a change of course with only a slight movement of the steering wheel.

Steering responsiveness

Steering responsiveness combines steering weight and directness. Responsive steering will react immediately to your inputs, with the car obediently acknowledging any deliberate movement of the wheel. This can also improve how the car feels; responsive, feelsome steering will give you a real sense of confidence when driving the car on challenging road.

Brake feel

The brakes are arguably even more important than the steering when it comes to keeping a car in control. These days, with power-assisted braking systems, brake feel is a rather less distinct than it once was, but the two desirable characteristics of responsiveness and progressiveness remain all-important. Responsiveness is where you want the car to respond immediately to the effort you put into the brake pedal; progressiveness refers to how you want the car to slow gradually with light brake pressure, or rapidly if you push the brakes really hard. Progressive brakes won't suddenly 'snatch' when you don't expect them to.

Stiff or soft suspension?

The way a car's suspension is set up is determined by how heavy it is and how its designers expect it to be driven. 'Sporty' suspension usually has stiff springs that are designed to prevent the car from bouncing after the shock of a bump in the road, but can give a jiggly, uncomfortable ride. Soft springs will cushion bumps more effectively, but too much softness can cause a slow bouncing phenomenon that can lead to nausea and fatigue. A well designed suspension system will strike a good balance between the two.

What is body lean?

A car's suspension system is designed partly to give passengers a comfortable ride, but mostly to make sure that all four wheels stay in contact with the road when they need to. Physics dictates that a car often won't stay perfectly upright when cornering, and the angle of lean is usually greater in tall, softly-sprung cars. If a car leans only slightly in a bend, the suspension is controlling the body well. The heavier or taller a car, the stiffer the springs need to be to reduce this leaning motion – and this may have an effect on ride comfort.

Grip

This roadholding term describes just how well the car remains stuck to the road in corners. Imagine you're on a rollercoaster. The forces you experience on a white-knuckle ride are an exaggerated version of those you experience when cornering quickly in your car. Your tyres and suspension work together to help the car 'grip' the road – the more 'grip' you have, the higher the cornering forces your car can withstand before you risk sliding off the road. *Continued*

What is understeer?

This describes the phenomenon of a car ploughing straight on when you're steering hard to the left or right, usually at higher speeds. It's a sign that the car has exceeded its capacity to grip the road. When understeer occurs, easing off the accelerator will usually lessen the effect and bring the car back on course. The majority of modern cars will naturally understeer; it's a benign characteristic that can be avoided by correctly judging your cornering speed. However, applying the brakes or lifting off the accelerator abruptly while cornering heavily could cause understeer to turn into oversteer – as described next.

What is oversteer?

This describes what happens when the rear tyres have a less firm grip on the road than those at the front when cornering, causing the rear of the car to sway out of line and potentially cause a spin. Modern cars are designed to minimise the risk of this occurring – although enthusiastic drivers often praise cars that can be provoked into controllable oversteer. Although a car prone to unexpected oversteer would be described as having poor roadholding, the ability for deliberate oversteer to be easily controlled is regarded as a positive handling attribute.

Weight distribution and weight bias

A car's engine is usually its heaviest component and most models these days have theirs mounted at the front. Some manufacturers take pains to ensure that other heavy components are distributed in such a way that the car's weight is spread evenly between the front and rear tyres, which is seen as beneficial to handling and roadholding. A car with more weight towards the front will be prone to understeer, while a car with a rearward weight bias will be more likely to oversteer.

'Predictable' and 'safe'

If a car begins to understeer or oversteer only when very heavily provoked, and does so in a manner that's easily rectified, it can be termed as having 'predictable' or 'safe' roadholding. When the phrase 'predictable handling' is used, it usually refers to the ease with which oversteer or understeer can be overcome and the car brought back on course.

Ack: Carbuyer 06/04/2017

WILL SMART NUMBER PLATES CATCH ON HERE?

The days of the traditional car number plate could be coming to an end – a company in the USA is producing digital number plates which not only display registration details, but make it easier to track cars, pay tolls and even settle parking charges.

Called the Rplate, it is being produced by Reviver Auto, a company based in Foster City, California. It is radically different from the conventional metal number plate which dates back to 1893, when it was produced in Paris to comply with a local police ordinance.

Registration became compulsory in Britain from January 1, 1904. The first plate – A1 – was registered to Earl Russell, who apparently camped out overnight to make sure he was at the head of the queue.

Continued

UK registration plates stay with the car, but in the US they are issued by individual states and follow the driver - and are often produced by prison inmates.

The design and colours vary from state to state and, in many cases, the plates are quite ornate. Arizona's plate features a cactus, for example. Drivers can also pick from an array of logos promoting anything from local wildlife to raising money for breast cancer projects.

In comparison, the Rplates are rather dull, with a choice of black lettering on a white background or vice versa, although they can still be tweaked to include a logo, but what they lack in beauty they make up for in utility. Using technology similar to a Kindle, the display can be customised to show other information in addition to the registration.

If a car is stolen, a message flashes on to the plate immediately. The smart plates are also likely to be used with self-driving or autonomous cars – using “geofencing” technology to warn fleet managers should the vehicles stray outside their prescribed area.

For American drivers, the plates enable a lot of the bureaucracy to be done online via a dedicated website rather than traipsing to the local Department of Motor Vehicles. The first batch of plates, fitted to 24 Chevrolet Bolt electric cars, was delivered to Sacramento City council in late May.

Costing \$699 (£522), with a monthly service charge of \$7 (£5.23), the plates will initially be made available in California, and then Florida, Texas and Arizona.

The technology is also being marketed outside the US. The plates are being tested in Dubai, where they will be used to contact the emergency services after a crash, display an alert if the car is stolen and even communicate with other vehicles. The DVLA says there are no current plans to introduce digital number plates in Britain although Jim Fitzpatrick, who was a road safety minister in the last Labour government, thinks there is a possibility they could come to the UK.

He said: “If technology advances in one part of the world, manufacturers will try to export to it to any countries where they have a market. Drivers will find out about these things and will want them. They will see it saves time, makes it easier to pay tolls and makes motoring safer.”

Edmund King, the AA's president, is sceptical whether they would offer much to UK motorists. He said: “One of the uses of smart number plates in California is to use them to pay ‘road tax’ on your car without having to get the physical sticker to put on your plate. In the UK we already have ‘smart’ tax discs – in that they no longer exist, and the majority of drivers just re-tax on-line which works well. “We also have ‘smartish’ number plates when it comes to stolen cars, as any car on the stolen register is automatically flagged up to the police as ‘stolen’ using automatic number plate recognition (ANPR) technology.

“I guess that showing other drivers that the car is stolen could be interesting, but it might lead to vigilantes taking the law into their own hands. “But the main sticking point that would put the UK off smart number plates is the cost. At an eye-watering \$699 plus \$7 per month, most UK drivers would respond with GET L05T.”

THE WAY IT WAS!

I was recently sent an old motoring book by Group member Philip Knight (thank-you) and have extracted below (for those of us who can remember that far back) the average running costs of a car in 1961. How things have changed!

Running Costs

These figures, calculated by the Engineering and Technical Department of the Royal Automobile Club, are based upon current list prices and present-day cost of running and maintenance (as at January, 1961). They are intended only as a guide. The sole reliable method of obtaining an accurate analysis of running costs is by keeping a strict record of expenditure over a given period.

The basic costs taken into consideration in compiling this table are as follows:

Road Fund Tax

£12. 10s. 0d. per annum for all cars.

Insurance

Calculated on average tariff rates Class I. District C. (Full particulars of insurance for your car should be obtained from your insurance broker or company.)

Driving Licence

5s. per annum.

Depreciation

Based on average new car prices and assuming an economical life of 80,000 miles at 10,000 miles per annum

Interest on Capital

Calculated on new car prices if invested at 2½ per cent

Garaging

Based on average charges throughout the country according to the size of car.

Subscription to Motoring Organisation

£2. 2s. 0d. per annum.

Petrol

4s. 8d. per gallon.

Oil

Based on average consumption throughout the life of the car.

Tyres

Estimated tyre life of 20,000 miles.

Servicing

General servicing every 500 miles.

Repairs and Replacements

Based on the total cost of repairs economical life of the car.

Continued

STANDING CHARGES.	1300 to 1600cc	2300 to 3000cc
Pence per mile		
(a) Tax	0.30	0.30
(b) Insurance	0.62	0.92
(c) Driving Licence	0.006	0.006
(d) Depreciation	2.20	3.86
(e) Interest on Capital	0.46	0.87
(f) Garaging	0.62	0.75
(g) Subscription	0.05	0.05
10,000 miles per annum	4.256	6.756
5,000 miles per annum	6.32	9.67
15,000 miles per annum	3.58	5.794
20,000 miles per annum	3.233	5.313

CAR INSURANCE PRICES LOWEST IN FOUR YEARS

Changes to personal injury claim regulations are thought to be behind the drop.

The cost of comprehensive car insurance cover fell considerable in the second quarter of this year, according to a new survey.

The drop of 11 percent was the biggest single annual price fall for car insurance since 2014. The reason for the dramatic decrease in price is thought to be down to expected changes in the Ogden Rate – a rate used to calculate the amount for personal injury compensation. The move is being introduced in a bid to reduce the number of whiplash claims.

Average costs for insurance premiums is now £752 according to Admiral Group's Confused .com. The data was compiled by advisory company Willis Towers Watson, who put it together based on price figures compiled using anonymous data from all enquiries submitted on the price comparison website.

It turns out that the latest price decrease is in fact the fourth such dip in a row since average prices peaked at £847 last summer.

'The end is in sight for the rollercoaster that has been car insurance, which has blighted drivers with accelerated prices. Car insurance is now £752 and a whopping £95 (11%) cheaper than it was 12 months ago, putting the true impact of the Ogden rate discount into perspective,' said Confused .com via The Guardian.

Changes the Ogden Rate were first mooted early last year, but insurers hit back claiming they would be faced with hefty bills as a result of the decreased rates they would have to charge.

But following a rethink from the government in the way the rate will change, insurers have been able to work with the change, and offer lower prices.



Group Night Diary

Meetings are held at the Small Hall, Crofton Halls, York
Rise, off Crofton Road, Orpington, BR6 8PR
Doors open 7.15pm for 7.45pm start

11th December 2018
The Christmas Quiz
(including buffet)

12th March 2019
56th AGM
(with Guest Speaker Mike Quinton,
CEO, IAM Roadsmart)

11th June 2019
(To be advised)

If you would like to organise a Group Night or have any suggestions for a Speaker, then please contact a member of the Committee.

Their details can be found on page 24.

Want to Drive on the Skid Pan?



Following the group's successful "Skid Pan Experience" at the Essex Skid Pan, Kelvedon recently, we will be booking another date later in the year.

There are some names already on the list for the next event, so if you want to go, get your name down early to avoid disappointment.

The visit will start with a briefing on what you will be doing including safety instructions. There are 10 places and there will be 2 instructors who will give a demonstration on the skid pan and then you will be able to drive with the instructor and practise what you will have been shown; to create a skid and to be able to keep control, hopefully !!!

The cost is £55 each and you will be using the skid pan cars which are both front and rear wheel drive.

Please let Chris Ashford have your name by e-mail, telephone, text or post to:-

"Sunbeams"
41 Broad Oak Lane
Bexhill-on-Sea
East Sussex
TN39 4LG

E-mail to: chris.ashford@btconnect.com

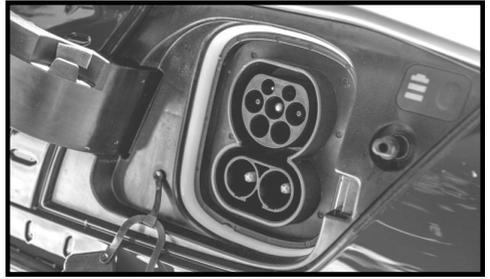
Phone: 01424 844524 Mobile: 07768 555125

Book now to avoid missing out !!

ARE EMERGENCY SERVICES UNPREPARED TO HANDLE ELECTRIC CARS?

The IMI wants those dealing with battery cars to be prepared.

We're hearing a lot about electric cars these days. The future? A fad? We don't really know yet. But one thing we should be certain on, but aren't, is whether emergency services are safe to work with them.



The Institute of the Motor Industry (IMI), has called for vital training for those dealing with electric vehicles on the roadside. Its calls come after a recent incident involving a Tesla Model X which burst into flames after it had been recovered by emergency services, highlighting the need for special preparations and procedures when working near stricken electric cars.

IMI recommends that a Licence to Practise is introduced for those working on electric and hybrid vehicles, and is urging roadside and emergency services to ensure that their workforces are prepared in such a way.

"In the most recent case, a Tesla battery caught fire again, even after fire services had put the initial blaze out and the vehicle was in storage. As motoring technology advances, it is vital that any professional coming into contact with these vehicles has the best possible training," said Steve Nash, Chief Executive at the IMI. "Of course, there are risks when dealing with petrol and diesel fuelled vehicles - electric vehicles aren't inherently more dangerous. But the reality is that technicians and emergency services have had a lot longer to understand the risks of petrol and diesel fuelled vehicles. These professionals are currently operating in an unregulated space and we firmly believe that our proposed Licence to Practise, supported by accreditation schemes, will deliver a higher level of competency, skill and safety for technicians and motorists alike."

"As we advance towards a zero emission future, the technology that roadside technicians and emergency services will be coming into contact with on a daily basis will change – with high voltage electrics becoming commonplace. But those who aren't properly trained or equipped will be at risk from serious injury or potentially fatal shock. And it's important to remember that emergency services don't make a choice about what vehicles they deal with," he added.

"We have lobbied the government to act now to ensure that a regulatory standard or license to practice is introduced for anybody likely to deal with these vehicles. We have put forward detailed proposals for such a regulatory standard and how it can be administered and enforced."

HUMOUR IN UNIFORM

A shoplifter in a supermarket was thwarted when assistant Gladys Pugh picked up a labelling machine and attacked the man who ran out of the shop.

Police are now looking for a man with a price on his head.

ESSENTIALS EVERYONE NEEDS TO KEEP IN THEIR VEHICLE

Whether it's summer or winter, there are some key items you'll need in your vehicle all year around to help you stay safe on the road. Richard Gladman, IAM RoadSmart's head of driving and riding standards, writes about the essentials that you should always keep in your vehicle.

Note: If you have friends and family who are unaware of advanced driving techniques, please share these tips with them to help them stay safe on the road.

- ◆ It's always best to keep an ice-scraper and can of de-icer in your vehicle as the British weather is so unpredictable, and can be sunny one day and frosty the next
- ◆ Carry an empty fuel can with you. Don't carry a full or partially full one as this is a fire hazard and if it has recently had fuel in it, flammable vapour may still be present
- ◆ You never know when you'll need a first aid kit, so keeping one in the boot of your car is always handy for either yourself, or another road user if you're first on scene at an accident
- ◆ If you've broken down on the side of the road, the last thing you want is to be cold and unable to see your way around the dark. That's why we advise drivers to always keep a torch and set of batteries in their vehicle, along with warm clothes, a blanket and a high visibility jacket. And don't forget food and drink to stop your energy levels from dropping - bottled water is a must
- ◆ The battery on your car can go flat at any time, whether you're popping to your local fish and chip shop or picking your vehicle up from the airport car park after a wonderful sunny holiday. Make sure you keep a set of jump leads in your car so you can start your engine with help from another vehicle
- ◆ Keep a spare pair of sturdy shoes with a good grip in your car. You'll need these to turn the wheel brace when changing a tyre, or to push your car if you've broken down, or even just to change shoes if there's a sudden weather change
- ◆ An item that's often overlooked is the reflective warning triangle. This gives you extra security for a number of reasons such as breaking down in the dark. Put it out in accordance with the rule from the Highway code 274 which advises to "put a warning triangle on the road at least 45 metres (147 feet) behind your broken down vehicle on the same side of the road, or use other permitted warning devices if you have them. Always take great care when placing or retrieving them, but never use them on motorways."
- ◆ A lot of us use our satnavs to travel to unfamiliar places, but what if your battery dies and you can't find the charger? Or if it takes you the wrong way? The best thing to do is to refer back to your trusty road atlas, so don't forget to purchase an up-to-date copy every year and keep it in your car. A good rule of thumb is to take a look at your road map before you set off, to get an idea of the direction you need to travel in. Find yourself a place to aim for, or motorway signs to look out for

Continued

- ◆ Last but not least your mobile phone. Switch it to silent and place it in the glove box to avoid any temptation to touch it, but it will be there ready to use when and if you need it

Richard says: "A journey can be a pleasant experience with the right planning. But it can turn into a nightmare if circumstances change and you do not have the right tools for the job with you. Getting stranded either in suddenly changing weather conditions, breakdowns or road closures will be made more bearable if you can let people know where you are, and survive in relative comfort and safety until you can get safely where you're going."

DRIVERS FACE FINES OF UP TO £40 FOR IDLING ENGINES

Nottingham City Council has become the latest local authority to propose 'anti-idling' measures to reduce air pollution.

Similar schemes have already been adopted by Norwich, Wirral and Reading councils plus the London boroughs of Camden and Southwark, and take the form of an on-the-spot fine for drivers who leave their engines running while idling.



Leaving a car's engine running 'unnecessarily' has been an offence since 1986, and councils were given the power to combat it in 2002. Fines are £20, doubling to £40 if not paid within 28 days.

While a car produces fewer pollutants when idling than it does while moving, there's still an environmental impact. The RAC recommends motorists shut off their engines if they're planning on being stationary for more than two minutes. The impact of an idling engine is worse as there's less airflow around the back of the car, allowing harmful gases to collect in one place rather than dissipating over a wider area.

A study by King's College London outlines the danger of local air pollution. It found that introducing measures to combat it in the London borough of Waltham Forest, such as road closures at peak times, green space and anti-idling operations, would give children born in 2013 an extra seven weeks of life.

Nottingham's proposals to limit idling come as part of a larger air quality consultation, which also includes projects to retrofit clean exhaust technology on buses, replace heavy vehicles such as bin lorries with electric equivalents and bring in cleaner, more efficient taxis.

Councillor Sally Longford, Nottingham council's portfolio holder for energy and the environment, said: "The good news is that Nottingham is now on track to hit the government's clean air target by 2020 – but we don't want to rest on our laurels. Clean air is too important to the health of our city, and there is more we could be doing to reduce air pollution.

"Anti-idling is one of the additional proposals we are investigating to further improve the air in our city, but additional legislation would have to be put into place first."

WORD SEARCH ~ HALLOWEEN

Hidden in the grid below are the names of 24 different words associated with Halloween.

They may read horizontally, vertically or diagonally, but always in straight lines.

H	U	E	D	J	E	X	F	L	P	A	T	B	N	L
V	A	G	S	K	E	L	E	T	O	N	E	O	O	U
U	D	U	A	C	O	S	K	M	V	U	K	N	R	O
P	C	E	N	W	R	N	P	C	V	W	S	E	D	H
N	H	I	E	T	I	E	Y	O	A	V	A	S	L	G
H	X	R	R	L	E	E	A	O	O	C	C	K	U	L
T	E	Z	B	R	L	D	N	M	T	K	S	G	A	A
W	E	O	I	Y	S	K	V	O	U	S	H	Z	C	N
T	G	E	R	J	Q	H	V	Q	T	V	O	B	L	T
K	C	I	T	S	M	O	O	R	B	S	A	H	D	E
S	A	U	B	X	V	W	K	B	L	N	B	G	G	R
F	J	E	I	D	K	L	A	H	S	P	Z	M	K	N
W	I	Z	A	R	D	T	Y	H	W	W	Y	C	O	M
S	G	N	A	F	W	O	E	R	I	P	M	A	V	T
W	I	T	C	H	N	E	P	Q	G	W	O	C	W	C

BANSHEE	CAULDRON	GOBLIN	SPOOK
BAT	EERIE	HAUNTED	TOMBSTONE
BONES	FAIRY	HOWL	VAMPIRE
BROOMSTICK	FANGS	LANTERN	WEREWOLF
CAKLE	GHOST	SCREAM	WITCH
CASKET	GHOUL	SKELETON	WIZARD

JUST BELT UP! WHY BACKSEAT DRIVERS WIND UP 75% OF US...



Flinching when the driver is “too close” to the vehicle in front, pointing out the speed limit and stepping on an imaginary brake pedal - they're among the giveaway signs you have a “backseat driver” in the car. Three out of four motorists say there is nothing more annoying than a passenger who displays exaggerated emotion or frequently offers unwanted “help” or advice, a study has found. Criticising the driver's decision-making, gasping loudly at any slight braking movement and insisting on giving directions also feature in the top 20 list of irritations.

David Carter spokesman for Accident Advice Helpline, said: “you usually find backseat drivers are the people who would prefer to be in control of the car, rather than sitting in as a passenger, but making comments and reacting to what is happening on the road while in the passenger seat can be a big distraction for the person driving. “There is a higher risk of an accident or near-miss if the driver is having to fend off unhelpful feedback' while trying to concentrate on the road.”

In a study of 2,000 motorists, researchers from OnePoll.com found nagging partners are the biggest backseat drivers, followed by mum and dad.

Just under half of those polled have been in an argument with someone in the car due to their interfering comments and 5 per cent have accidentally jumped a red light while remonstrating with an annoying passenger.

A quarter of people have missed a turning after being distracted, while other major irritations include advising on which lane the car should be in, telling the driver when to move at the traffic lights, interfering with the music or fiddling with the heating controls or air con - and disagreeing with the sat nav.

Mr. Carter said, “We can all recognise the signs of backseat driving and should be more aware of their impact on driver's emotions and levels of concentration.”

Ack: Metro 07/06/18

GOING TOO SLOW AND CHANGING LANES IS MORE DANGEROUS THAN SPEEDING

Let's face it – we are living in the 21st century and cars are no longer requiring 61 metres or more to stop from 62 miles per hour to a full standstill. That means we are basically able to drive at faster speeds than before, without having troubles with emergency braking.

So, why are the roads still not a safe place to be – literally, anywhere on the planet? Yes, speeding is still a major factor, but slowing down and changing lanes could be even more dangerous, according to some recent researchers. Specialists even say that the strongest predictor of an accident is the difference with the prevailing speed of traffic.

To put it in context, a car going 5mph slower than the surrounding traffic has a greater chance of causing an accident than one going 5mph faster.

Continued

That's why some regions in the world have laws that restrict the use of the left lane. Some states in the US, for example, advise motorists to keep right if going slower than the surrounding traffic, while some are even stricter, saying the left lane is used only for turning or passing. Much like advice in the United Kingdom, where the Highway Code restricts traffic to left lanes unless overtaking.

Some people argue that as long as they are respecting the speed limits, they don't have to move over, but recently US police officers have started issuing tickets to people driving slower than the traffic in the left lane.

Another good example is the German autobahn, where drivers use the right lane for travelling most of the time and the left lane only for passing or driving faster than the traffic. Despite the areas with no speed limits, the accident rates are surprisingly low there.

Can we all agree that the left lane is for passing? If more people understand how this works, we will have far fewer traffic jams and, most importantly, fewer road accidents.

COURTS REPORT

- ◆ A driver, who was banned in 2001 for dangerous driving, mowed down a pensioner and filmed himself speeding along a motorway at up to 140mph. The 38-year-old was found guilty of causing serious injury to a woman, 71, at a crossing in Sutton Coldfield. He was jailed for seven-and-a-half years.
- ◆ An 81-year-old driver who crashed into a group of cyclists as he tried to overtake them at 60mph on a country road has been banned from driving. He crashed into Yeovil Cycle Club in the village of Mudford in November. Footage from bicycle cameras show the driver clipping a cyclist, causing several to flip and land on their heads. He was disqualified from driving for two years and ordered to pay a £20 victim surcharge.
- ◆ A lorry driver, aged 26, who tried to crush a man three times before driving away has been jailed. In June 2016 he spotted another man who he knew from a row over a dog. After the other man stopped his car and got out, the lorry driver drove at him, hitting him and pinning him between the vehicles. He then reversed and drove forward again, crushing his victim, before driving over his legs as he drove away. He denied grievous bodily harm after the incident in Kent, but was found guilty and jailed for 15 years.
- ◆ A 91-year-old woman, thought to be Britain's oldest drink-driver, has ended her driving career after she crashed while over the limit. She drove her car into bollards and a lamppost in Colchester, Essex. She was given a 14-month ban from driving, but when the ban expires she pledges to give up driving for good.
- ◆ A drink driver escaped jail despite four convictions in three years after she blamed her behaviour on an abortion and dyslexia. The 31-year-old was at the wheel with her phone in her hand and a bottle of wine in the footwell. A breath test showed a reading of 120mg, with the legal limit being 35mg. She must complete 150 hours' unpaid work, pay £200 costs and was given a five-year driving ban.

ROAD SAFETY CHARITY CALLS FOR 'GRADUATED' DRIVING LICENCES **Brake says allowing learners on motorways is not enough.**



A road safety charity is calling on the government to introduce a 'graduated' licence for new drivers, despite new legislation that now means learners can drive on motorways.

The charity Brake says the move is a 'step in the right direction', but it claims that a more comprehensive overhaul is needed if the country is to prevent the 'tragedy' of young driver deaths.

Under Brake's recommendations, new drivers would embark on a 12-month learner period, after which they would take an initial test. Upon passing that test, the organisation suggests that drivers should be allowed to drive independently, but with restrictions such as a late-night curfew.

Some countries have already introduced such a system, with Finland's 'two-phase' licence being one of the best known. Under Finnish law, a driver's first licence is valid for two years. After a minimum of six months, drivers can then take extra tuition and sit a second test to gain a full, unrestricted licence.

According to Brake, the UK's adoption of such a scheme would improve 'stagnant' road safety improvements and prevent up to 9,000 road casualties every year.

'While [allowing learner drivers on motorways] is a small step in the right direction, a total overhaul in the way in which we learn to drive is urgently needed,' said Joshua Harris, Brake's director of campaigns.

'Young people are disproportionality at risk on our roads – they represent seven percent of the driving population but they're involved in a fifth of all road deaths – and this is ultimately down to inexperience. Training on motorways is important, but with just four percent of crashes taking place on these roads, the changes fall well short.

'Brake urges a graduated driver licensing (GDL) system, which includes a minimum supervised learning period and restrictions for newly qualified drivers and is proven to work. A government report stated the public health benefits of GDL are indisputable and could prevent up to 9,000 casualties annually.'

SNOOKERED?

I'm not feeling well says the patient to his doctor, do you think it might be my diet?

What have you been eating ? asks the doctor.

Billiard balls, says the patient. Two reds for breakfast, three blues for lunch and five browns and a pink for dinner.

I think I see the problem says the doctor. You're not getting enough greens!

DRIVERLESS CAR FIRM TO GATHER DATA ON LONDON STREETS AHEAD OF POSSIBLE TRIAL

A UK-based artificial intelligence and autonomous vehicle firm has been given the green light to deploy data-gathering cars on the streets of London as part of plans to create a driverless car service.

FiveAI says it will spend 10 months using human-controlled cars to gather data on the roads in Bromley and Croydon – and the behaviour of road users such as drivers, cyclists and pedestrians – to help inform the development.

The firm is designing a shared autonomous service aimed at people who currently drive some or all of their daily commute, and hopes to have a supervised trial of automated cars on London roads by next year.

FiveAI co-founder Ben Peters said: “For our service to eventually operate in London, we have to learn about the road layout, topology and traffic flow.

“As with any vehicle on the road, safety is paramount and that’s why all of our vehicles will be driven by fully trained safety drivers.

“We believe that autonomous vehicles will be many times safer than human drivers, and this data-gathering phase is a vitally important step towards making that a reality. By supporting London’s transport objectives with a shared driverless car service, FiveAI can play a crucial role in reducing congestion, emissions, incidents and the cost and time of journeys to benefit all Londoners.”

Last year, the company was part of a consortium that was awarded a grant of more than £12 million by the Government to develop software for an autonomous car system, a project known as StreetWise.

FiveAI said the data gathered during the scheme will be used solely for its driverless vehicle technology and processed and stored in full compliance with the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR).

It said the cars will be clearly branded and identified with an “obvious array” of sensors to ensure full transparency.

Interest in driverless car programmes has increased rapidly in recent years, with Google-founded Waymo and several major car manufacturers including Ford and BMW testing autonomous vehicle technology systems.

ROAD RAGE

A father, who worked away from home all week, always made a special effort with his family at the weekends. Every Sunday morning he would take his daughter out for a drive in the car.

One particular Sunday however, he was so full of cold that he really didn't feel like driving at all. Luckily, his wife came to the rescue and decided that for this week she would take their daughter out.

They returned just before lunch and the little girl ran upstairs to see her father. "Well" the father asked, "did you enjoy your ride with mummy?"

"Oh yes Daddy" the girl replied, "and do you know what... we didn't see a single b*****d!"

TOP 10 DRIVING TIPS FOR HANDLING STRESS

Stress affects us all at one time or another – whether it's down to work, home life or a tough situation you're facing. Stress can affect how we feel physically and emotionally as well as impair our judgement and our reactions, which isn't good news when we need to concentrate on something significant, like driving. It's important to recognise how you feel and try to relax before getting in the car. So to help you stay calm behind the wheel, Ben, an independent charity which provides support for life to the people of the automotive industry, provided us with some tips to share with you on what to do if you feel stressed before driving.

Warning signs of stress

First of all, we need to recognise the warning signs of stress. You might feel some or all of these:

Becoming easily irritated with colleagues, friends or family

Feeling distracted, forgetful or moody

Having racing thoughts

Not being able to 'switch off'

Becoming quiet and withdrawn

Under or overeating

Smoking more, drinking more alcohol or taking drugs

Tense muscles

Headaches

Feeling sick

Not sleeping well / insomnia

Getting ill more often

Here are a few tips to do before you get in the car stressed:

- ◆ Go for a short walk around the block to get some fresh air and unwind from the stresses of the day
- ◆ Wait until you feel calm, collected and well enough to head out on your journey. Driving itself can be stressful, especially in rush hour, so if you are already stressed this is likely to make matters worse
- ◆ Try mindfulness and deep breathing before getting behind the wheel. You don't have to be spiritual to benefit from mindfulness and meditation – anyone can meditate and it has been shown to reduce stress and anxiety. If you're new to meditation, try the Headspace app free trial or a lesson from the Free Mindfulness Project
- ◆ If you're feeling ill from stress with headaches or sickness, make sure you feel well enough before you drive. Drink plenty of water and get some fresh air
- ◆ Write down a list of the things that are stressing you out and set yourself some time to tackle them later on – sometimes writing your worries down and making time to sort them out helps clear your mind
- ◆ Is stress causing you to struggle with addiction to alcohol, drugs or nicotine? Be aware that these could still be in your system before driving. If you're struggling with addiction or substance misuse, then it's important to seek help

Continued

- ◆ If you're having trouble sleeping due to stress then make sure you aren't too tired to drive. IAM RoadSmart advises if you feel sleepy whilst behind the wheel, find a safe place to pull over and stop – not on the hard shoulder of a motorway. Research suggests that almost 20% of accidents on major roads are sleep-related so don't drive if you feel sleepy (ref: <http://think.direct.gov.uk/fatigue.html>).
- ◆ You can check your mood with the anxiety / stress checker tool on Ben's website to see how you're feeling and if you need some extra support
- ◆ Tell someone you trust how you feel. Sometimes opening up about our problems to loved ones can make all the difference and they can even help you find solutions. As they say, a problem shared is a problem halved

If you need more advice about how to handle stress, read Ben's top tips on managing stress.

If you feel you can't cope, call Ben's free and confidential support line on 08081 311 333 or use its webchat by visiting www.ben.org.uk. Or you can contact The Samaritans on 116 123 or visit its website www.samaritans.org

AVERAGE SPEED CAMERAS 'BETTER AT IMPROVING SAFETY THAN FIXED UNITS'

Most UK drivers believe that average speed cameras are playing a greater role in improving road safety than traditional fixed ones, a new survey has revealed.

Seventy-nine per cent of 2,172 drivers interviewed by the RAC think that average speed cameras are more effective at slowing traffic, compared with just one in 10 who felt that traditional fixed devices were more accomplished at improving safety levels.

When questioned whether or not they believed one type of camera to be fairer than the other, 46 per cent replied that it wasn't a question of fairness but that they were both there to improve road safety. Despite this, 25 per cent thought that average speed cameras were fairer on the driver, with just seven per cent saying the same of fixed cameras.

RAC road safety spokesman Pete Williams said: "We know that some drivers can be very cynical about speed cameras, with a significant minority having told us they believe they are more about raising revenue than they are about road safety.

"Interestingly, these latest findings show there is now a strong acceptance that they are there to help save lives and prevent casualties on the road.

"Our research suggests the growing use of average speed cameras in motorway roadworks and increasingly on sections of A-road is reinforcing the road safety message, as they are extremely effective at slowing down drivers."

Motorists appear divided on the subject of speed cameras as a whole, however, with more than a third – 37 per cent – of those questioned believing that cameras are intended to improve road safety, 36 per cent saying they are there to both improve road safety and increase revenue and just over a quarter – 27 per cent – saying that their primary function is to raise money from drivers.

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