

Safer Driving

*The Newsletter of RoSPA Advanced Drivers and Riders
Thames Valley Group*

Spring 2022



Delorean DMC1

- BACK** - *In May 2019 we had a Group visit*
- TO** - *Haynes Motor Museum*
- THE FUTURE** - *On 9 April 2022 we have a Group visit to Silverstone Museum, and on 4 June 2022 one to the Aston Martin Heritage Museum (see page 22 for all the details)*

Photo by Peter Caton

Using the pdf edition - quick search with hyperlinks

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Who is who on the Committee?

POSITION	NAME	E-MAIL
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Chair	Keith Pruden	chair@roadartvg.org.uk
Secretary	Andrew Storey	secretary@roadartvg.org.uk
Treasurer	Axel Thill	treasurer@roadartvg.org.uk
Membership Secretary	Victor Janvari	membership@roadartvg.org.uk
Newsletter Editor	Max Davidson	editor@roadartvg.org.uk
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Motorcycle Training Officer	Robin Carlyle	motorcycle-training@roadartvg.org.uk
Events & Social Secretary	David Tomlinson	events@roadartvg.org.uk
Group Webmaster	Colin Ashley	webmaster@roadartvg.org.uk

**NOTE: Some of the positions will change hands during the period covered by this Newsletter.
New nominations are still sought for committee positions - see article on page 3.**

Updated 18/2/22

Farewell dear Phil

It is with great sadness that I have to inform Members of the passing of Phil Parkinson on 18 December 2021. His funeral was held at West Berkshire Crematorium on 19 January 2022 and the Group was represented by Peter Caton and Tony Parish.



Phil was a larger-than-life character and a real gentleman who was always ready to help others. He was a very active participant in the Group and in making it what it is today.

He joined the Thames Valley Group in 2004. As well as being very generous with his time as an Advanced Tutor, he took an active and inspirational role with the car training team for many years and was always ready to provide his opinion and fresh ideas.

He held the Committee post of secretary for several years, having stepped into the role shortly after joining the Group. He was an Honorary Member of the Group as is his widow Sue.

Phil was a real motoring enthusiast. His main interest was in Jaguars and he owned a number of them throughout his life. He was also an active member of the Jaguar Owners Club. He is pictured here in his mid-Fifties model of a Jaguar XK140 roadster in British racing green.

Tony Parish

From the spring Chair

The Group still needs Members to do more if we are to survive long term

Following on from the successful skid pan and outdoor karting event in September last year David Tomlinson has identified and, in some cases, arranged follow up Group events for this year, but he needs somebody to take care of Members at the venue on the day.

Without event sponsors, the activities won't proceed and, as indicated in his recent Group wide email, those that do volunteer will have their entry fees paid for them. So, please contact David if you are prepared to commit a small amount of time to this.

I highlighted in the last *Newsletter* that we are short of a number of Committee positions with Viktor Janvari now responsible for multiple functions which is not tenable long term. The Group needs Members to do more if we are to survive. I know this sounds like a stuck record, but it is the truth.

In relation to my own position as Chair the situation had reached a critical stage with literally days to go before we lost our accreditation with RoSPA if the post was not filled.

Your new Chairman

Fortunately, David Tomlinson has offered to take on the role, and his application has been unanimously approved by the Committee, and he will take over from me on the 31 March.

David runs his own high technology business and is also events co-ordinator for the Group (as well as taking a very active role within the BMW motorcycle community in Oxfordshire). So becoming Chair is a significant additional commitment for him.

Our inability to attract Members on to the committee remains a fundamental issue for the Group and it is fair to say that this latest situation was a very close-run thing.

Despite earlier inaccurate predications that this is my final *Newsletter* input, I can now state with full confidence that the time has come.

I want to thank everybody who has supported me during my tenure and I wish David the very best of luck as he takes on the role of Chair.

Keith Pruden, at last your former Chairman

Should roundabouts be axed?

While driving and riding around the UK, I have noticed an increasing number of roundabouts that have become hybrid intersections. The dictionary defines a roundabout as 'a road junction at which traffic moves in one direction around a central island to reach one of the roads converging on it', as shown in this illustration from the *Highway Code*.



Over the years many versions of the roundabout have been built. One such example can be found in Swindon (the so-called Magic Roundabout). When I was studying in Swindon, myself and fellow students used amuse ourselves watching the carnage as drivers from 'out of town' attempted to navigate the Magic Roundabout at rush hour. There is another Magic Roundabout in Hemel Hempstead.

Roundabouts may have worked well for many years where traffic flow entering and leaving them was low, or where each entry and exit had similar volumes of traffic. However, as road traffic increased, especially where one route entering and leaving a roundabout became congested, they started to become bottlenecks. In the last 20 or so years many large roundabouts have been fitted with traffic signals.

The logic here is that roundabouts with signals control the traffic entering and leaving and increase the flow across the intersection. But if the intersection is, as shown in the picture above, why not just remove the roundabout and go back to a crossroads with traffic signals? In some cases that is indeed is what has happened.

Bicester roundabout is to be removed and replaced with a new crossroads junction with signals in anticipation of a growth in traffic. The American journalist, H.L. Mencken once said, '*For every complex problem, there is an answer that is clear, simple and wrong!*'

In order for it to work the desired objective of an intersection needs to be understood during its design phase. For example: *Enable* increased volume of vehicles using the intersection. *Allow* vehicles to transit the intersection with less

delay. *Reduce* the number and or severity of vehicle accidents. *Improve* safety for pedestrians and or cyclists.

Priority these days tends not to be given to motorised vehicles and the delays experienced by their users. This is at a time when the Government's key justification for spending in excess of £100 billion on HS2 is that it will reduce journey times from London to Birmingham from 1 hour 21mins to 52 minutes, a saving of just 29 minutes. How many people each day will that benefit?

With the shortage of HGV drivers and the blockage of the Suez Canal by the *Ever Given* container ship in March 2021 for a week, it became obvious to all of us that, with 12 per cent of global trade, one million barrels of oil, and eight per cent of the world's natural gas passing through the canal each day, we relied on timely deliveries. So why are motorists and their journey times given such a low priority unlike global trade and that one short rail journey?

Now back to roundabouts. Not only has the last 20 years seen a trend to put traffic lights on them but also in more recent times a few roundabouts have been built that are confusing hybrid solutions. Take, for example, the Handy Cross roundabout (the main exit from the M40) at High Wycombe. The main M40 motorway intersection roundabout is intersected by a four lane route that cuts through the centre of the roundabout. Drivers approaching the intersection are faced with a myriad of sign posts, road markings and traffic signals that they need to interpret in order to negotiate the intersection successfully.



The control of traffic at roundabouts and or intersections by using traffic lights may improve road safety, as does reducing all traffic speed. However I am concerned that the enjoyment of taking a journey in a car, or on a motorbike, is rapidly disappearing before our very eyes. Going, or *actually gone*, are the days when we would just say, *'I'm going for a drive!'*

During the 2021 lockdown I travelled in and out of central Reading most days (a journey of about five miles). There was almost no other traffic on the road. A journey of five miles under these circumstances should take between 10-15 minutes. However it was taking between 25-30 minutes each day. *Why?* The answer is because there are 21 traffic signal junctions on that route that are incapable of relating to the volume of traffic. We don't need so called ALR Smart Motorways. We need Smart Intersections with signals that react to the volume of traffic.

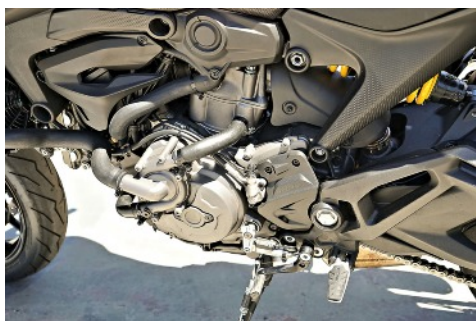
Neil Callan

Still naked and a real Monster!

Ducati created the naked bike back in 1993 with the launch of the original Monster, a stripped-back, (*aka naked*) sport bike that was built for everyday riding and, more importantly, fun. That formula has more or less gone on unchanged for almost 30 years, but with the introduction of a totally reworked Monster, that changes, and it improves it for the better.



The new Ducati Monster is powered by a liquid-cooled L-twin engine of 937 cc that produces 111 BHP at 9,250 rpm and 93 Newton metres of torque at 6,500 rpm. The figures do not show large increases compared with the bike it replaces, the Monster 821 cc, but the power statistics do not tell the complete story.



The main improvement is due to a loss of weight. The 2022 Monster now weighs 166 kg, a 14.5 kg reduction from its predecessors. In fact, despite its larger cylinder capacity, the Monster's new engine is 2.5 kg lighter than previously. And what an engine! It revs freely and makes the kind of sound you that will make you smile.

The increased cylinder capacity helps to reduce the revs at which the engine reaches peak torque. This makes it easier to ride the

Monster at lower speeds (and decibels) around town.

The engine is paired with a six-speed sequential transmission that appreciates (needs) firm shifting of the gears. The hydraulic, wet-plate clutch does not especially like to be slipped but, thanks to the standard Ducati Safety Pack system and its up-and-down quick shifter, you are not going to be using the clutch all that often anyway.

Ducati opted to ditch the Monster's classic steel trellis frame in favour of a lighter cast-aluminium spar frame. The frame change gives a 5 kg weight saving, and a new glass-fibre-reinforced-polymer rear subframe saves an additional 2 kg. This weight

loss is especially noticeable during cornering when the frame still remains remarkably stiff.

Further improving cornering ability are a fixed 43mm upside-down fork and a rear shock absorber that is adjustable. This set-up is simplicity itself from the high tech solutions you will notice on a Ducati Panigale or a Ducati Multistrada, but it does what is necessary without any fuss.

The brakes are by Brembo, and in typical Ducati fashion, the feel at the lever is excellent and the brakes provide plenty of stopping power and fade resistance. Part of this is down to Ducati's standard anti-locking system, but it is also helped out by further weight reduction in the 17-inch wheels (1.75 kg), which cuts down on the unladen weight. For your safety, you are provided with all the latest aids and a digital instrument panel.



The new Monster has some subtler changes too that make more comfortable than its predecessors. These include lower foot pegs and a slightly higher handlebar that is positioned closer to the rider. Ducati has also decided to keep the Monster slim-waisted with an extra-narrow seat, making it much easier for shorter riders to put their feet on the ground when stopping.

The standard bike has a 'stand over' height of just 80 cm, and if that is not low enough for you, Ducati offers a lower seat and a lowering spring kit that drops the bike's stand over height further to 76 cm.

On the road, the new Monster is a pussycat and is as enjoyable as ever, with great power and proportions that make it easy to filter through traffic. It is pure joy too on a winding country road. It should do at least 150 miles from its 14-litre tank before refuelling.

The Monster feels more civilised than previous versions, but that, along with the lighter weight and the short and the tall friendly dimensions, means that it should appeal to more riders, including new ones.

Some might wish for a louder exhaust and the ability to make more tweaks to the suspension, but as the bike is at the moment it is close to being near perfect. The 2022 Ducati Monster and Monster Plus are available now, with prices starting at £10,745. The warranty can be extended for four years. Servicing is required at 18,000 miles.

The Monster Plus has everything the standard bike has but adds a body-coloured passenger seat cover and a small fly screen. Ducati's latest version is different from its forebears in several ways, but at its heart, it is still a true Monster that offers a comfortable and enjoyable riding experience for a lot less than some competitors. It looks quite stunning in a fiery red with black wheels, but take a trial run and judge for yourself.

The Examiner

Can you use aids during a test?

During an e-mail exchange with one of the Group members the question was raised with regard to the use of the many additional aids that are currently being fitted to vehicles and whether or not they should be used during an advanced driving test.

It would seem logical that as an organisation existing for the sole reason to try and reduce accidents, RoSPA are pro any safety aids that may reduce death and injury on our roads.

As an examiner I have received no guidance on the use or not of the various systems available during the test. So I will give you my personal view as far as space allows.

My first expectation would be that each candidate would have a good overview of the various systems fitted to the vehicle that they are using for the test.

It would perhaps be beneficial to mention in the cockpit drill, if safety features that come on automatically when the vehicle starts, are to be switched off, with some justification as to why that system is not being used. One such system may be a lane departure system. When travelling on a quiet motorway for example, if you try to change lanes without signalling the vehicle inputs a resistance against the steering as it believes that the driver may have fallen asleep. This can be a bit disconcerting and, as we are aware, a signal is not always necessary, only if it benefits another road user.

The opposite of this maybe when a test candidate asks if they can use a speed limiter, for example. Clearly, used correctly, this should ensure that they never exceed a given speed limit, not through their judgment but due to the vehicle technology. In such a case as this I would give credit for the driver being able to use and operate the system effectively. I would also ask at some stage during the test that a period of driving is undertaken without this aid in order that I can ascertain if the candidate is able to keep to a speed limit through their own skill and judgement.

Above all, please be aware of the distraction caused by changing some of these systems when driving, particularly through the infotainment system. I recently had a candidate (not from this Group) who decided that while following and waiting to overtake a lorry in Lane 2 on the motorway, that he would play with the infotainment system in order to change the driving mode for a quicker overtake once he was able to get into Lane 3.

This was, in my view, totally unnecessary, as the power of the vehicle, even in economy mode, was more than ample to pass a truck and if it wasn't, then the overtake should not have been considered viable. It was also very distracting from the task in hand and a potential driving offence. It made for interesting debrief!

Enjoy your driving and stay safe.

Mark Smith

Observation Post

Who has the right of way?

During my first driving lesson, my uncle (a Class 1 Metropolitan Police driver) asked me when I should give way to pedestrians. I said, '*At zebra crossings.*' He said, 'Always.' It was my introduction to the duty of care.

I sometimes ask Associates when they talk about having '*the right of way*' where they got that idea from. The only people who have a right of way on the roads are pedestrians, horse riders and cyclists (except on motorways where they are specifically denied use). The rest of us are granted permission in the form of a licence which can be withdrawn if we fail to keep the rules.

The new *Highway Code* regulations came into force on 29 January 2022. The Code was published digitally at the same time; hard copy versions will be available at some time in April. The biggest changes relate to the duty of care we owe to one another on the road.

The hierarchy vulnerability

Road users are now specifically categorised in terms of their vulnerability. The bigger you are, the more responsible you are held to be for the safety of others. Large goods vehicles, buses and coaches have the greatest burden here. Cars are next, then motorcyclists and scooters.

Cyclists, horse riders and pedestrians take their place with those on foot (those who have a right of way) as the most vulnerable.

There is a great deal of sense here and in general terms nobody will want to argue with the classification spelt out in the new regulations.

Pedestrians

Pedestrians are still expected to use the Green Cross Code and to keep an eye out for traffic. They still have to take care.

However, at uncontrolled crossings, other road users should give pedestrians priority not just when they have put a foot on the carriageway, but if they are waiting to cross. We must give way – even if we are turning into a side road from a main road. This will mean a disciplined use of the mirrors, so that we can give clear signals to following traffic if we are going to have to slow or come to a halt.

Horse riders

Horses are unpredictable – they can kick off at the least provocation. They are also big, so in accidents the trouble is commensurately large.

We must treat horses and their riders as carefully as we do pedestrians. In some senses, we might be even more careful. The rider may have looked over her shoulder, the horse probably won't have.

Cyclists

Years ago a judge said that every cyclist was entitled to a wobble. Bike tyres are thin, brakes are comparatively weak and ill-maintained road surfaces are not kind to cyclists.

Cyclists have been given new instructions about care to be taken at junctions – particularly about not passing vehicles on the nearside when turning left. Where it will help their safety, they may take a more central position to aid with their visibility to other road users.

When we overtake cyclists, we must give them plenty of room. This is specified as 1.5m (five feet in old money). Imagine the amount of air that buffets cyclists if a car or lorry passes them at 50mph; think of those narrow tyres and the potholes in their path. We have a duty of care.

At junctions we must give way to cyclists. Whether they are turning or going straight ahead, we must allow them to complete their manoeuvre safely. We need to remember that we may be obscuring a cyclist from the view of other road users.

At roundabouts, we must not try to overtake a cyclist in his lane. Hold back. We are reminded not to cut across the path of other road users. Horse riders and the drivers of horse-drawn vehicles are also vulnerable here.

Some of these challenges are increased as electric bikes become more common. Overtaking in town is going to be less frequent. A rider falling off an electric cycle is just as vulnerable as a conventional pedal cyclist. She may be travelling rather more quickly too.

So what's the problem?

If we remember the hierarchy of vulnerability, there shouldn't be any problem. We simply need to exercise our observational and anticipatory skills in a consistent and disciplined manner.

The *Highway Code* does recommend that cyclists and pedestrians wear light or reflective clothing (including body, arm and ankle bands), but it is widely unheeded. 'Wear something light at night' and 'Clunk, click – every trip' may have been forgotten or consigned to the bin because Jimmy Savile was the voice of the two campaigns. Yet they were good slogans, and I (for one) would like to see a revival. Very few drivers now don't belt up; but plenty of cyclists ride with dim reflectors rather than working lights, without bells or other audible warning instruments, and in dark clothing that in winter obscures them for much of the day. Pedestrians, too, often seem to be dressed for covert operations with MI5. The duty of care is a mutual one.

Nonetheless

The *Highway Code* is the rule of the road. And whatever criticisms we may have, it places on us a duty of care which is legally enforceable. Remember, we don't have a right of way. We only have a licence or permission which may be withdrawn.

If we find ourselves caught infringing the law, the police officer and the court may listen to our rant about the stupidity of the rule we have broken. It will have no effect; they will apply the law as it is. Make sure you are up to date with the *Highway Code* – online now and from April in hard copy.

Keep yourself and others safe and go well!

Paul Sheppy

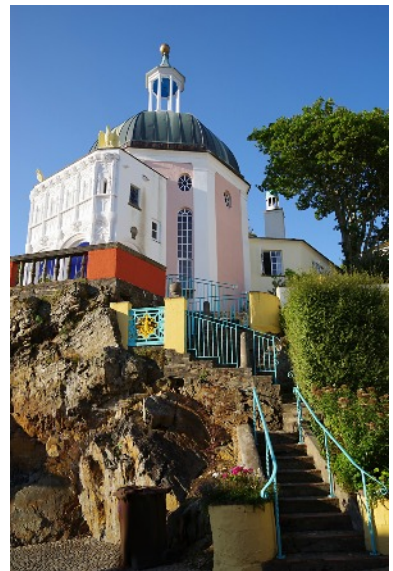
Oh, to be a prisoner here!

Last August I visited Portmeirion again with a new camera and lens, and over the course of our holiday I took several hundred photos. Here is just a small sample.



You may wonder why, if Portmeirion is such a tourist hotspot, there are no people to be seen? For the photographer that is one advantage of staying in one of the cottages during the summer. It is still light after all the day visitors have left and the guests have the run of the place to themselves.

The first picture shows the Living Chess board immortalised in *The Prisoner*. Beyond the chess board the lawns take us up to the Bristol Arcade, so called because this was once the facade of a bank. When that was demolished, the facade was carefully dismantled and brought to Portmeirion where it was reassembled to preserve its heritage. Above and to the right we see the Rotunda, the office of the Head of The Village (Number 2 in *The Prisoner*). Next we see the Rotunda viewed from Battery Square, which is just off to the right of the Rotunda in the first picture. The steps with the blue painted handrails are a common feature around The Village as it is built on a rocky hillside.





Moving up the stone steps, seen on the left of picture 1, takes us to the Fountain Garden in the next photograph.

Later, when darkness falls, The Village takes on a magical appearance. Below left we see the Fountain Lake (*seen from above*) now mirror smooth, reflecting the illuminated building behind, and to the right, the Rotunda again.





Back in Battery Square, if you walk past the steps to the Rotunda you will see more steps which this time take you up the steep hillside to a building called Chantry. This is one of our favourite places to stay as it is large enough to accommodate our whole family and also has magnificent views across The Village.

If you turn left at this point you will find some steps leading back down to the Chess Board area. Cross that and you will be able to find our next location, another pool which is a favourite with young children who are permitted to paddle there. After hours, however, we find it like a mill pond reflecting the buildings beyond. If you go there and turn to your left, you will pass the Campanile (the bell tower) and return to Battery Square.



Across The Village from Chantry (*seen earlier*) a network of paths takes you up into vast woodlands, but if you look back as you start your walk, you will get the more extensive view of The Village, with Chantry in the distance, as seen below.



And so, as night falls and the bell tolls, we finish this short tour of Portmeirion with another view of the floodlit Campanile.

I hope you have enjoyed these photos as much as I did taking them. If you get the opportunity, I would recommend that you see for yourself by staying in one of the cottages (as did Patrick McGoohan whilst he wrote *The Prisoner*) or for a real treat follow in the footsteps of Noel Coward and stay in the Hotel itself.

Peter Caton

(All photos taken on a Pentax K1ii camera
with HD Pentax DFA 28-105mm lens)



Bentley spurs on its modest hybrid

Following the success of Bentley's SUV Bentayga Hybrid, which accounts for 40 per cent of all Bentley sales, the company has produced the Flying Spur Hybrid with a starting price of around £170,000. This one looks stunning in British racing green, but there are few visual changes to denote this Hybrid.



There are just tiny badges on the quarter panels and an extra metal flap close to the refuelling access. There is a hybrid driving mode icon at the top of the digital gauge cluster and an E-mode button on the console lets you switch between the Spur's pure EV, Hybrid, and petrol engine settings.

But technical marvels are not only why one buys a Bentley. The Flying Spur's cabin is furnished with the softest of leathers, real wood veneers and polished metal accents. It all looks wonderful in the photograph, but you have to see it for yourself.

Sitting in the driving seat, you will appreciate the attention to detail as you run your fingers across the threads of the hand-stitched seams on your seat. Just look at the intricate knurling on the stalks and knobs. Feel the weight of the plungers that open and close the air vents. And treat yourself to a massage from your seat. It is very relaxing and soothing on a long day's driving.

The Flying Spur's cabin is an especially serene place to be when you are cruising around silently in a built-up area under battery power. With the electric motor providing 134 BHP and instant torque, pulling away from the traffic lights is an effortless and graceful affair. The battery should deliver between 20 and 25 miles of range, and with the ability to cruise silently at speeds up to 80 miles an hour, this quiet experience will make you look forward to the day when Bentley has its first full battery electric vehicle.

But as this is a hybrid, the Flying Spur's 2.9-litre twin-turbo V6 soon makes itself heard. As a member of the VW Group, the Flying Spur's engine is identical to the one that powers the Porsche Panamera 4S E-Hybrid. The Panamera in turn shares the Bentley's floor pan.

With the engine and electric motor working in together, the Flying Spur Hybrid produces 544 BHP and 750 Newton Metres of torque. Bentley claims a 4.1 second 0-to-60-mph time for the saloon, which is only one-tenth of a second slower than the Flying Spur V8, despite the extra 182 kilograms of hybrid weight. When the battery is depleted, you are left with the V6's 410 BHP to propel two and half tonnes of Bentley.



As you start the Flying Spur Hybrid, it defaults to EV Mode, where the battery is used for most of the acceleration unless the throttle is pressed beyond a certain point. Regenerative braking will send energy back into the battery while driving, though if it is already full, the engine will fire up in EV mode for engine braking, which is particularly noticeable and welcome when going downhill.

The transition between regenerative and mechanical braking, however, is not very smooth at slower speeds.

It takes two and a half hours to recharge the battery fully at a charging point. You can also recharge the battery while driving in Sport mode, but the eight-speed dual-clutch transmission eagerly downshifts at the lightest touch on the accelerator and causes the engine to rev higher, filling the cabin with a jarring unpleasant very un-Bentley sound.

The Flying Spur's ride quality, however, is simply superb. The air suspension soaks up the deficiencies on our roads and will automatically lower for better aerodynamics at motorway speeds. Unfortunately, the constraints of accommodating the hybrid system mean that Bentley's 48-volt Dynamic Ride anti-roll technology is not available on the Flying Spur Hybrid. The same applies to the rear-axle steering system that seems to shorten a Bentley's 10ft 6in long wheelbase while cornering.

These 'extras' are usually two vital requests for people ordering Flying Spurs who actually drive their own cars, and as Bentley loves to point out, Bentley owners are more drivers than driven. So it is a pity that these two aids to comfortable driving cannot be installed in what otherwise is a very enjoyable car to drive.

Tyres you can fit and forget

Tyres are often the most neglected part of a vehicle. Yet they are by far the most important. Neglect your engine, and your car will grind to halt, but neglect your tyres and you could easily lose your life. With this in mind tyre manufacturers have been looking at ways to make tyres maintenance free and unaffected by neglect.

Up until now tyres have simply evolved. They started off as solid rubber. Then they were provided with inner tubes to make them more cushioning on rough road surfaces. Next the structure of the tyre changed. It had rigid sides, but tended to lose grip on cornering. So Michelin revolutionised the tyre with a radial construction it called Michelin 'X'. Tyres have continued to be evolved, producing reinforced tyres, run-flat tyres, winter tyres, and tyres with asymmetric tread patterns.

Now the French company Michelin, the world's No1 tyre company for 125 years, is about to make another dramatic advance in competition with the South Korean company Hankook, the seventh largest tyre company in the world. Michelin and Hankook believe that the future tyre should be maintenance free and completely airless, but offer the same advantages of present day tyres in terms of grip and comfort.



Hankook has already revealed its future airless tyre concept called the i-Flex. The tyre had its debut fitted to a futuristic small model made by Hyundai, which is appropriately also a Korean company. The smaller Hankook prototype tyre looks very much like the full-sized Michelin



version called 'UPTIS' (*unique puncture-proof tyre system*) with multilayer interlocking 'spokes' to absorb bumps, imperfections and to support stability.

Like any airless tyre concept, there is no chance of a blowout, no tyre pressure maintenance, and an appearance which is vastly different to the tyres on every single car in production today. The Hankook tyre has some way to go before it is ready to be fitted to your car. It is just a small size prototype and needs further development.

But Michelin has taken a giant leap ahead. Its tyre looks like it is about to repeat the success it had with its first radial tyre. There are some UPTIS tyres already on sale, but they are too expensive to be competitive. The company has aroused the interest of General Motors, maker of the EV Bolt and the parent company of Vauxhall and Opel. Puncture proof Michelin tyres could be a standard fitment on its cars by 2024. According to Michelin, the tyres are longer lasting, but it suggests you should at least take a close look at them after five years.



Would you buy a ‘refurb’ car?

The green revolution buzzword at the moment is *refurbishment*. Apple stores are selling iPads refurbished and made like new. Buying refurbished second hand clothes is also *de rigueur*. But the idea of refurbishing a car to make it like new? Would you buy one?

Toyota UK thinks it could be a green solution to increasing a car’s lifecycle and enabling people to own a ‘good as new’ car at a lower price. At the moment second-hand cars are more expensive, and new cars, which have long waiting lists, are about to soar in price. You will already have noticed that cars are being made to last longer. Improvement in manufacturing and preservative treatment of the body shell has already made cars more rust resistant, and many more may last longer with the factory service proposed by Toyota.

Agustin Martin, Toyota president and managing director for Great Britain, says that this process will be the mainstay of a new sub-brand called Kinto. According to Mr Martin, the idea is to take a car after its first-use cycle, such as a three-year lease term, and return it to the factory. There, it will be ‘remanufactured’ to ‘the best standard’ and be ready to be leased for a second cycle. This will certainly make financial sense for the company if Toyota gets the cash benefit of two three-year leases.

Toyota may perform its magic for at least a third cycle before it finally turns its attention to recycling the car by dismantling it and re-using parts which are still in good condition. Batteries, for instance, could be rebuilt.

The planned programme is still in its early stages, and Toyota has given no details of how the refurbishment will be achieved at a factory which was built primarily to make new vehicles. The idea of offering remanufactured cars for sale or lease could be very attractive to car buyers on the lookout for a ‘good as new car’ at a much reduced price. As new and used car prices soar, this could be a happy medium and at the same time providing more revenue and customers for Toyota.



The current refurbishment programme will take place at Toyota’s factory in Burnaston, in Derbyshire, which builds the Corolla hatchback and Corolla estate car. If all goes well, Burnaston could set a trend which could be copied throughout the world.

You have the TV, now get the car

Sony is a premium brand associated with a myriad of products from televisions to cameras and games consoles to computers. It is now about to move into making electric cars where the passengers will be able to use their Sony PlayStations and smart phones and watch Sony movies from its world of Hollywood entertainment.

Sony has already made two electric prototypes. The first is a saloon and its second is an SUV. It seems that in just a few months from now that Sony will launch a new division that will make use of the company's considerable electronic expertise to enter the EV market and profit from the bounty to be made from the move towards electric motoring.

The Sony Vision-S SUV uses the same platform as the saloon that was first revealed in 2020, but the new shape means seating for seven as well as increased space for cargo and passengers.

It is also loaded with electronics, including image and LiDAR (*Light Detection and Ranging*) sensors that are meant to work with its semi-autonomous driver assistance technology. Sony says it is already testing that technology on the roads of Europe as a prelude to putting the SUV into production.



Sensors in the cabin will monitor the driver and passengers. The idea is to add intuitive gesture control support to cut down on the need to use touch a screen as well numerous safety features and rapid assistance for the driver. The powertrain is the same as the Vision-S saloon, with two motors making a combined 536 BHP, but battery size and any estimates about how far the batteries will take you are still to be announced.

At the moment it appears that Sony will take care of the design work, the power set up, and electronics, but the cars will be built by the highly esteemed contract car maker Magna-Steyr, based at Gratz, Austria, which already builds cars on contract for some of the top European brands.



Future is hydrogen electric

The French company Faurecia specialises in vehicle seating and interiors, a business that currently accounts for 69 per cent of its sales, is staking its future on hydrogen fuel-cell systems. The company already makes exhaust treatment products for zero emission engines. So it is that part of the business which will lead its hydrogen effort in the powertrain revolution.

Faurecia could have gone into battery-electric technologies, but more than four years ago it decided that hydrogen fuel cell power was the real solution for zero emissions of commercial vehicles as well as for cars and SUVs. Fuel cells offered rapid fuelling, less weight than a battery pack, and a greatly improved range and payload.

Industry forecasts and investors agree and are equally enthusiastic. An August 2021 report by Market Research Future projected the global hydrogen fuel-cell market to be worth £37 billion by 2028. Car makers, including BMW, GM, Honda, Hyundai, Mazda, Mercedes-Benz, Nikola, Renault, Tata, and Toyota, already have active development programmes. Faurecia itself projects demand for 2.5 million hydrogen-powered vehicles by 2030, including 500,000 trucks.

Faurecia has linked up with Michelin in a jointly owned company called Symbio to make hydrogen fuel cell kits and related hardware. It has also bought CLD, a China-based specialist in hydrogen storage tanks. It has hydrogen development centres too in France and South Korea and plans to build one in the US.

Faurecia currently has links with nine car makers. Three of them, Hyundai, Stellantis, and Renault, already have hydrogen fuel-cell vehicles fitted with Faurecia storage tanks and related hardware which will enter production this year.



The hydrogen molecule's tiny size means it is a natural escape artist. So gas retention is an ongoing challenge for vehicles and the filling stations. The main storage tanks are already available. The problem now is to make the vehicle tanks so strong that they will resist crushing up to a force of 500 bar (half a metric tonne per square centimetre), fire, and even bullets, using new super strong materials.

Hydrogen storage for a vehicle is currently about half the cost of the entire fuel-cell propulsion system. So making this technology affordable for all car makers is the key objective. The problem at the moment is that the tanks for city buses may mean just 60 being made in a year, but once the production is scaled up when volumes greatly increase, the cost will drop markedly.

Congratulations...



....to the following people who have passed their Advanced Driving Test.
We would all like to say 'Well done' to them and their Tutors.

Car Members

Associate/Member	Grade	Tutor
Brian Worsley	Silver	Brian Allan
Mark Kaye	Advanced Tutor, Gold	Retest

Motorcycle Group

Associate/Member	Grade	Tutor
Mark Benians	Advanced Tutor, Gold	Retest
Gary Ward	Gold	Retest

NOTE: RoSPA car tests have now fully resumed

Please remember to notify Max Davidson editor@roadartvg.org.uk
or Robin Carlyle motorcycle-training@roadartvg.org.uk of your Test success.

Please also remember to let us have a note too of any re-Test result.
Publishing results encourages those Associates who are about to take the Test and gives an indication of how the Group is performing.

Your contributions to the Newsletter either 'Letters to The Editor'
or articles of interest to members are always welcome.
Please send them to The Editor, Max Davidson ...editor@roadartvg.org.uk

What's On - 2022

Here are our plans for events for March to July 2022

MARCH

6 Tutor Led RIDE OUT: Ride Leader Allan Craven

24 Loomies Cafe

APRIL

3 Tutor Led RIDE OUT: Ride Leader Robin Carlyle

9 Visit to Silverstone Interactive Museum, 1pm - 5pm
Special cut price admission - **REGISTRATION** required.....see Note below

21 Beaulieu National Motor Museum

MAY

1 Tutor Led RIDE OUT: Ride Leader Gemma Allen

4 Low Speed Handling Course

JUNE

4 Visit to Aston Martin Heritage Museum, 2pm
REGISTRATION required.....see Note below

5 Tutor Led RIDE OUT: Ride Leader Allan Craven

23 RIDE OUT: Tank Museum, Bovington

JULY

3 Tutor Led RIDE OUT: Ride Leader Gemma Allen

Silverstone and Aston Martin Museum visits

Advance payment required for our cut price admission

Please **REGISTER** using the link in the email sent out previously

Or contact the Events & Social Secretary events@roadartvg.org.uk for more details

In case of changes please refer to the website for latest information.

Don't forget to let us know of any places or activities that would be suitable for a Group visit - contact the [Events & Social Secretary](#) to take it further.

TRAINING

Training has now resumed following the easing of the Covid-19 restrictions.

New Associates may join at any time by contacting the [Membership Secretary](#).

For further information on training please contact the relevant training officer at

car-training@roadartvg.org.uk or motorcycle-training@roadartvg.org.uk

REMINDER

The Newsletter is also available online at www.roadartvg.org.uk

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