

Safer Driving

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

Winter 2020



Beware - Frosty mornings !

Photo by Peter Caton

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Who is who on the Committee?

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Updated 15/12/20

The Editor writes...

It has not been a good year for driving. I have covered the fewest miles in my motoring life. Once, when I checked on the car and opened the door, a message came up on the main screen, 'Start the engine immediately.' The car was not pleading to be taken out for a run but telling me that the battery was about to fail. One tends to forget how much electricity a car uses unlocking doors, adjusting mirrors, powering its security alarm and various others things from seats to control systems.

I remedied the situation with my charger which also analysed the condition of the battery by measuring the time it took to achieve a full charge. If it was two to three hours, then it was in good condition. If it took 20 to 30, I needed a new battery. Thankfully, it passed the test.

Unfortunately, there is not much incentive to drive in my area at present. All roads out of town are being rebuilt or widened to take the large trucks which will be busy when just a couple of miles away the two gigantic HS2 tunnelling machines start work. One will start boring its way through the Chiltern hills towards Denham in January, and its twin will start work in February. The tunnelling is expected to take two years.

The spoil from 12 miles of twin tunnels, around 25 million cubic yards of it, will be piped back to Little Missenden as slurry. Water is being pumped to various points on the route for this purpose. The idea is to use the chalk and flints for 'landscaping', by which seemingly HS2 means railway embankments as there is no room for a new mountain.

About 20 miles of the overall route from London will be through tunnels, then there will be miles of viaducts and some of the lines on solid ground. It will probably look marvellous when it is finished, but currently it is a mess of turned earth and fallen trees.

The roads, around my home area are now constantly congested with traffic, and there have been multiple accidents in diversions down narrow lanes. Only the sections needed for heavy transport are being reinforced, sharp corners being taken away, and then the entire route resurfaced to a standard not usually seen around here. It might seem there is no shortage of money for road improvements, but the cost of all of this is coming from the vast pot of money allotted to HS2.

With the news that fossil fuel cars will themselves become fossils in nine years' time, I have resolved to make mine last until I see some progress on creating a country-wide network of charging points. I hope by then cars' batteries will take you further.

At present I can drive to a part of Scotland in seven or eight hours on one tank of fuel. With an electric car, it might take three days. I hope that is not a Government ploy to get us out of our cars and on to HS2 when it eventually heads further north in future years.

I wish you all a merry Christmas and a happy and healthy New Year.

Max Davidson

From the Winter Chair

We can but hope

for better times ahead

The latest national lockdown in England ended on December 2 and very shortly afterwards we received confirmation from RoSPA HQ that all training and ride-outs can begin again with the proviso that social distancing guidelines must continue to be adhered to. This does not automatically mean that driver tutoring will be back to the 'norm' as it was pre-COVID. There is still understandable caution among Tutors (and Associates) who do not wish to risk infection and this will continue to place a limit on the amount of tutoring that can occur.

The 2020 AGM was held on the 19 November and for the first time in our history it was a virtual meeting taking advantage of Zoom conferencing. This approach enabled the meeting to be recorded and if you missed the event and would like to catch up you can do so by clicking on this link:

https://zoom.us/rec/share/uskdy9OOVMWZ4LJpNqJ_H7vj4PDF709y2lhXHfckejWvCX-AyC8vNsZs1r4S-HsH.0-FugUmFoPWYUVz8

Use the passcode to access the link: dz@w7wN^

I wanted to mention a few critical items relating to the Committee.

1. Mike Cowling has stepped down as Treasurer, following more than 10 years of sterling service in that role, and I want personally to thank Mike for all of his support and expertise and wish him luck with his relocation to the South West.

2. Neil Goodhand has stepped down as the Car Training Officer. During his three-year tenure Neil made significant updates to how we operate with car training and again I want to thank Neil for his hard work and time in the role.

3. Peter McMillan has stepped down from his role as Car Without Portfolio, in which role Peter has worked on multiple projects on behalf of the Group. Thanks go to Peter for his time and diligence.

The good news is that we now have a new Treasurer in Axel Thill, who comes to us with a wealth of financial experience and also two Group stalwarts, Tony Parish and Paul Sheppy have temporarily become joint Car Training Officer.

Finally, I was meant to step down as Chair at the AGM, but for a variety of reasons that change has been postponed, and I was voted back into the role again until the 2021 AGM.

Note that the 2020 AGM Minutes are available from the secretary.

Keith Pruden, Chairman

Group thrives despite Covid

The Group's AGM was held by Zoom on 19 November with 20 Members from both the Car and Motorcycle Sections in attendance. The Chairman, Keith Pruden, summarised the key events of a year that has been dominated by Covid, resulting in severe restrictions to social and training activities, particularly for the Car Section.

However, the Group still managed to recruit new members. Membership renewals are currently being extended to compensate for lost training time.

Both Mike Cowling and Neil Goodhand have stood down from the Committee, and Keith expressed his thanks for their dedication and diligence. Keith also commented that, although he had intended to stand down as Chair, he was prepared to continue for another year as Robin Carlyle had given up his role as Vice Chair.

Treasurer Mike Cowling reported that we have had another financially positive year. This is due to the increased number of Members who have renewed their membership following our adoption of Member Mojo as our central record of Members new and existing. In fact, 26 per cent more existing members renewed this year than last year. In order to maintain and enhance communications, the Thames Valley Group website has been the focus of considerable effort to improve its content. The website is your first point of contact with TVG and is the hub for the latest Group news, information, events calendar, contact information, membership updates and renewal information.

Membership Secretary Samantha Appleyard reported that Member Mojo, which went live in January, is working smoothly, and Members and new applicants are using it with little or no help required. Most new joiners have been seeking motorcycle training which has been comparatively unaffected by the pandemic. At the moment total membership is 218, made up of 101 Car and 117 Motorcycle Members. In the past year we gained four new Car Members and 18 Motorcycle Members, but overall there has been a *decrease* in Membership since last year.

Car Training Officer Mike Cowling reported that the pandemic has all but stopped training since mid-March, but in the past year six Associates had completed their training. It is still unclear when driver training will restart, and it may not happen until well into 2021.

Motorcycle Associates Co-ordinator Robin Carlyle reported that the section had not accepted new Members for several months in the first half of the year and only began training again in June. Despite the problems, 15 new Associates joined this year, and there are currently 37 Associates recorded as 'in training'.

Web manager Colin Ashley gave an introduction to Groups.io, a new platform for communicating within the Group. It allows Members to find what they are looking for more easily, be it information on motorcycles, cars, Tutors, or Committee members.

The meeting re-elected **Keith Pruden** as Chair. The vice-Chair is still vacant. **Andrew Storey** remains as Group Secretary. **Axil Thill** is the Treasurer now Mike Cowling is moving out of the area. **Samantha Appleyard** was elected Membership Secretary, and **Robin Carlyle** continues his joint role as Motorcycle Training Co-ordinator and Associate-Co-ordinator. In the absence of a nominee for Car Training Officer, **Tony Parish** and **Paul Sheppy** will share the role until a replacement for Neil Goodhand can be found.

ID 4 is VW's first electric SUV

Volkswagen's new ID 4 is the second model in its series of electric cars. It has already made its debut in the United States where VW sees the potential for a large number of electric car sales. It has even set up a factory in Tennessee to make the cars for the American market, and the ID 4 is the first longer-range, fully electric VW to go on sale in the US. .

It is hard to tell much about this eye-catching SUV's size from the picture. The ID 4 is a little smaller than the Tiguan. It is 4.6 inches shorter at 180.5 inches, with a 0.9-inch shorter wheelbase at 108.9 inches. It also sits lower and is about half an inch wider than the Tiguan. The interior is comparable to its larger, fossil-fuelled sibling. The boot has 30.3 cubic feet of space and 64.2 cubic feet with the seats folded flat.



Despite the Tiguan similarities, the ID 4's design has more in common with the latest Mark 8 Golf than any of the current VW SUV models, particularly when viewed from the front. The ID 4's LED headlamps are joined with an illuminated light bar stretching the width of its grille-less front end. There is a similar full-

width bar for the lamps at the rear.

Potential 310-mile range

Based on VW's Modular Electric Drive Matrix (MEB) dedicated EV platform, the ID 4 is built around an 82-kilowatt-hour battery pack that lies beneath the SUV's floor. That pack powers a single, 201-horsepower motor on the rear axle, sending 228 pound-feet of torque to the rear wheels. Later in 2021, a 302 HP all-wheel-drive variant will join the ID 4 line-up with a second electric motor powering the front wheels.

With the single-motor configuration, according to the independent WLTP test figures, the ID 4 will have around a 310-mile range. At home you will get a full charge in about seven and half hours from your domestic electricity supply.

But if you can plug into a 125-kW DC fast charger, you can recharge a depleted battery to 80 per cent capacity in about 38 minutes. The power supply to a British home is rated typically at 70 kW. So with any of the fast chargers available, you will need to upgrade your electricity system. Electricity suppliers such as EDF can advise you.

The ultra-modern interior has a standard 10-inch infotainment display, as on the Mark 8 Golf, or an optional 12-inch Discover Pro Max system. Either way, the screens are large enough for navigation, monitoring the battery, and a host of other infotainment functions powered by VW's CarNet 4G LTE data connection. One very useful innovation is a heat pump for the cabin heating which means that in winter the heater does not rely so much on the battery and consequently the ID 4 can travel further.

Gesture control is a gimmick, but it does have its uses in cars with touch screens such as this one in keeping the information screen free of fingerprints. Wireless AppConnect for Android Auto and Apple CarPlay is a very desirable bit of standard kit that should work well with the also standard wireless phone charging pad. The cabin is full of USB-C ports for charging all of the ID 4's passengers' gadgets.

Facing you through the steering wheel is a 5.3-inch digital instrument cluster and an electronic rocker switch for forward and reverse, not unlike the one you will find for changing drive directions in BMW's i3.

Your wish is the ID 4's command

A slender LED strip along the base of the windscreen illuminates during certain actions to give visual feedback to the driver. For example, when parked and charging, it becomes your battery meter, filling from left to right with green light. It can also light up while you are driving to indicate that the voice recognition system has heard you say, *'Hello, ID,'* and is listening for your command. During navigation, the LED strip can sequentially illuminate its right half to indicate that it is time to make an upcoming left or right-hand turn.

Every ID 4 also has as standard the IQ Drive suite, which is VW's name for its driver-assistance/safety package. It features such things as automatic emergency braking with pedestrian detection and adaptive cruise control, as well as lane-keeping assist and blind-spot monitoring.

There are options, as you might expect, available such as a glass panoramic roof. Given that more than a third of British drivers prefer SUVs, this could be the perfect family car, if you can afford it. There are no firm prices yet, but expect the ID 4 to cost something in excess of £40,000 even with the Government's contribution.

Car with a world-beating badge

The Italian car company Alfa Romeo celebrated its 110th birthday on 24 June 2020 by releasing archive images of its development. Most eye-catching was the evolution of the distinctive Alfa badge, which appears to be a serpent eating a man. Its transformation over 100 years is a good illustration of how company logos change with the times.

How did the ideas for the badge come into being? One explanation is that the badge was inspired by the coat of arms of the Visconti family which dominated medieval Milan. Another suggestion is that the badge was copied from the emblem on the shield of an Arab leader during the Crusades, and a further proposal is that the serpent represents a dragon which had its lair in a lake that surrounded Milan in the Middle Ages, and had a habit of eating people until a member of the Visconti family killed it.

Each version has its supporters, but there can be no doubt about the red cross on a white background. That is the emblem of the city of Milan, where the cars are made.

The two symbols are bordered in blue, with ALFA and MILANO at the top and bottom with some decorative cords in between, which are Savoy knots in tribute to the lineage of the Italian royal family. The present Alpine region of French Savoy was, like Provence, once Italian territory.

The original logo was updated in 1913 by changing the lettering to white with a gold surround with subtle alterations to the knots and serpent.

In 1915 Nicola Romeo took control of the company and added his name to the badge, turning A.L.F.A. (the initials of the company's name) into Alfa along the way. By 1925 the first World Manufacturer's Championship for Grand Prix racing had begun, and

Alfa-Romeo won the trophy along with victories in the Belgian and Italian Grand Prix. To commemorate the occasion, a distinctive laurel wreath was added around the logo until 1945.

Alfa Romeo logo (1946-1950)

The Second World War left Italy in ruins, and the factory that made Alfa Romeo logos had been destroyed. As an interim measure in the immediate post-war era, Alfa Romeo moved to a simpler two-colour logo and the hyphen between Alfa and Romeo was temporarily removed. Because it was short-lived and few cars were made during this time, this is the rarest version of the badge.



Alfa Romeo logo (1950-1960)

By 1950, mass production had resumed and the badge was once again multi-colour, with a relatively thinner representation of the laurel wreath.



1950-1960



1960-1972

Alfa Romeo logo (1960-1972)

In 1960, Alfa Romeo switched from metal to plastic for the emblems. It continued with the progressive simplification of the design, and the scales disappeared from the serpent.

Alfa Romeo logo (1972-1982)

Alfa Romeo had opened a factory in Naples in 1971 to build the Alfasud and, as a consequence, Milano was removed from the badge along with the hyphen in Alfa-Romeo. In this version the man (or child) being devoured is coloured red, making it easy for someone, unaware of the logo's origin, to think the serpent is spitting fire or has a three-pronged tongue. The extra twist in the serpent's body has also disappeared.



1972-1982



1982-2014

Alfa Romeo logo (1982-2014)

In 1982 the badge was updated on, with the lettering and accents changed to gold and the laurel wreath removed.

Alfa Romeo logo (2015-the present)

The final update came in 2015, with the launch of the new Giulia. Like many modern brand logos, the latest is an exercise in minimalism. The border between the Milan and Visconti halves has been removed. The serpent is given more prominence and but is thicker but with two fewer coils to its shape. The crown is now a line with three dots above it, and the background is monochrome with a mesh-like pattern. Even in simplified form, however, Alfa Romeo still shows the grisly upper body remains of that ill-fated human victim in the dragon's mouth, but the blood-red has gone.



2015-Current

When it comes to car badges, Alfa Romeo is in a league of its own. It will be interesting to see how the badge develops in coming years with the switch to all electric vehicles.

Lights always green for cyclists

Cyclists will be given priority at junctions for the first time under plans for a new generation of smart traffic lights. Technology is being tested and developed in three cities that will enable traffic lights to ‘see’ approaching cyclists and change to green, allowing them to ride straight through.

The system, which uses cameras and artificial intelligence (AI), is designed to make busy roads more cycle-friendly while reducing the likelihood of accidents. It also acknowledges the fact that some cyclists fail to stop at red lights, putting them at risk of being hit by a vehicle.

The move is being made after a Government report was published suggesting a boom in the number of people taking to their bikes in towns and cities across Britain during the various coronavirus lockdowns.



However, safety is seen as a concern for many new cyclists, particularly with vehicle traffic almost restored to pre-pandemic levels. Separate research by the DfT has found that three quarters of road accidents in which cyclists are injured occur at or close to road junctions. Traffic lights use a variety of sensors to detect the presence of vehicles and change to green to prevent a build-up of traffic.

However, cyclists are largely invisible to all existing systems. The new technology, developed by Surrey-based Now Wireless, uses cameras mounted on traffic lights and up to 50 metres in advance of them. They detect approaching traffic, and AI can pick out the image of a cyclist, as distinct from a car or motorbike. The cameras are synchronised with the traffic signals, allowing them to change to green even with a single cyclist approaching. The AI technology is being tested in Wolverhampton, Coventry and Southampton. It costs less than £700 to install on each traffic light.

Currently, the presence of cyclists turns traffic lights green for all vehicles heading in the same direction as the bike. However, it can be adapted specifically for cycle-only traffic lights — those at eye level that give priority only to bikes over other forms of traffic.

The development follows the publication last summer of the Government’s plans to overhaul the *Highway Code*. Ministers proposed creating a new ‘hierarchy’ that gives priority to cyclists, pedestrians and horse riders over vehicles. A consultation into the proposals has suggested that drivers should give way to cyclists at junctions.

Observation Post

Roadcraft and the Highway Code are changing and don't forget to read your car handbook

The foundation documents for advanced driving are changing. The latest edition of *Roadcraft* was published in October (2020) and a new edition of the *Highway Code* is to be released in Spring 2021.

The new edition of *Roadcraft* does not change the elements of the System of Car Control, but it has clearer graphics and more detailed information about driving vehicles with automatic transmission and some advice about electric vehicles, particularly in respect of how their braking systems work and the implications for the implementation of the System.

The changes in *Roadcraft* cannot cover every situation or all the varieties of systems included by manufacturers in their vehicles and so the advice remains: *Read the manual!* Many Tutors will be aware that not all their Associates know how their cars work. Why should a Tutor who drives a VW Golf know the details of his/her Associate's Vauxhall Astra's automatic transmission? It is the responsibility of every driver to read the manual in glovebox. And if it's missing, it is possible to go online.

The other day, a friend rang up to ask about whether the tailgate on her car was shut or not. She drove round to my house and while she did I went online. She did not understand her dashboard warning lights and the manual was not in the glovebox. The car was new to her and the dealer had sold her the vehicle without providing her with the knowledge to understand whether her doors were properly shut. Five minutes, later she knew what to look for and her anxiety was lifted. I am not a car mechanic. All I did was to read the manual.

Even if you don't drive an emergency vehicle, the chapter in *Roadcraft* addressed specifically to them is worth reading. It will help you to understand the kind actions we can take to help them when those blue lights are flashing and the sirens are wailing.

The new edition of the *Highway Code* has more explicit guidance about cyclists and we need to know and understand it. What's more, we need to adhere to it. Cyclists are vulnerable and in crashes with cars, the scientific evidence shows that cyclists are in greater danger in 100 per cent of cases. We have a duty of care, and, regardless of the bad practice of any other road user, our responsibility is to do all that we can to keep one another safe and free from harm.

As I write, mass Covid vaccination has begun, but I doubt whether we can start training before next Easter. However, we can refresh our knowledge of *Roadcraft* and the *Highway Code* – and perhaps even read the manual. And we can determine every time we get behind the wheel to be attentive to the task in hand: the safe control of the vehicle and the welfare of those who share the road with us.

Go well and keep safe.

Paul Sheppy

Back in Bideford

Back in March 2020 I thought ‘this virus problem should clear by the autumn’. So, I booked a holiday in North Devon for late September. Luckily, when the time came we were out of ‘Lockdown 1’. So, I managed to enjoy a brief respite. As always when we are in the area, we visited one of our favourite places - Bideford. Although I have published two earlier articles about this town, it has so much to feast upon that here is a third helping.

As you enter the main town along the main road from Torrington you will find this impressive Grade II listed building to your left...

This is the Town Hall and library which dates from 1850 and commands an impressive position on the waterfront. You may easily miss it as you slow down for the busy crossroad. So, I suggest you continue

on a little further and then use the quayside car park, which you will see to your right. You can then walk back, as I did, and take in this view...and then turn around to look at the Long Bridge, which crosses the River Torridge immediately opposite the Town Hall. But watch out for the seagulls!





Turning to our left and looking out across the river, we see the village of East The Water with its rows of white painted modern houses.

The Torridge is a wide, slow moving river that was probably an advantage in the days of smaller wooden hulled vessels which led to Bideford becoming a major port. However, this did not suit the coming of sea-going vessels with deeper draught, and the trade then moved away to ports such as Liverpool which could accommodate them.

Look carefully and you will see grass growing on the mudbanks on the far side. To the right on the photo above is this long-abandoned fishing boat, and just out of view to the left is another beached vessel now used as a houseboat.



Continue to move your gaze to the left and take in the length of the main quayside, which is still in current use by smaller fishing boats and those mooring for repairs in the nearby workshops.

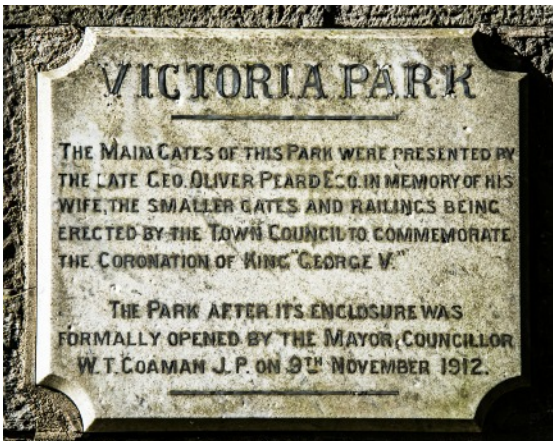
Now start a walk northwards along the quayside towards Victoria Park which marks

the end of the main part of old Bideford. But before you get there take time to look at some of the boats tied up alongside. Here are a couple that I saw.



The LucyToo seems rather a long way from her home port, while the Ionia appears to have seen better days.

Passing the Harbour Master's office you will then reach Victoria Park with its impressive entrance gates.



Standing on the green just outside the gates you will see a statue of Charles Kingsley who wrote *Westward Ho!* whilst living in Bideford. Look carefully at this photo and in the background behind the statue you will see what is nowadays the greater attraction for visitors to Bideford. One of the vans selling Hockings Famous Dairy Ices. The company was started by Dave Hocking in 1936, using local butter and clotted cream, and is still family run to this day. I know of people who visit Bideford just to get some of this ice cream. That ends our very short walk along the Bideford waterfront, but I am sure this will not be the last of my short travelogues.

We made our way back to our holiday accommodation via the winding country lanes thinking how lucky we had been to enjoy this short break. But at least we now see some light at the end of the tunnel!

**Peter
Caton**



The new Maserati with 621 BHP

Maserati was founded by five brothers in Bologna in December 1914. Since then the company has been owned by Citroen, Ferrari and Fiat-Chrysler. It is now based at Modena, although it still has a link with Bologna through the trident emblem, designed by Mario Maserati for the car's radiator and is based on the trident carried by the statue of Neptune in the city's Piazza Maggiore.

The company has a heritage of making quality cars, but sales in recent years have been slipping. Last year it sold just 19,000 cars, despite the Quattroporte being one of the most elegant, if rather staid saloons around. But that image may be about to change with the recent debut of the 2021 Maserati MC20. It is the company's first new supercar in 16 years, giving a vital boost perhaps to a company in desperate need of something fresh and new.



The in-house designed and engineered Fiat-Chrysler Maserati MC20 is a very different car to the 2004 Ferrari Enzo-based Maserati MC12. It is a much more restrained modern supercar with a look that is very appealing. The cabin is beautifully finished and the exterior is pleasing to the eye. It is may be more ostentatious than a Porsche or Aston Martin, but it is less flamboyant than a Ferrari. Some might even see the MC20 as somewhat understated through a desire to have that trident on the radiator stating that *this is* a Maserati.

Yet the MC20 is a successful combination of artistic design and aerodynamic sensibilities, and Maserati has thoughtfully colour-coded those different elements. The parts of the car that are white? That is where the designers had the final say. The darker parts along the bottom? Those are the engineers' contribution and driven by efficiency and performance. The white is called



Bianco Audace, or ‘white boldness’, which Maserati says was designed to ‘*evoke the gleam of quarried marble, struck by the light of a Mediterranean sunset*’.

The body of the car is simple and clean, with neither a large wing protruding from the back nor a low-set bonnet sticking out Ferrari-style from the front. Vents and intakes are kept to a minimum, with the most aggressive visual component, the rear diffuser, cloaked in carbon fibre.

The carbon fibre monocoque shell was designed to suit three versions. The first is the coupe pictured here. A retractable hardtop is coming next. The third version will be electric, but that may still be some way off.

The 2021 Maserati MC20 boasts 621 BHP from its completely new engine. It reaches 60 miles an hour in just three seconds. The engine, called Nettuno, is exactly the same power output as the Ferrari-engined, the MC12, though the new Maserati engine needs twice the cylinders and displacement to achieve it. While turbo charging is the main reason for that increase in relative output, the company also credits what it calls Maserati Twin Combustion. It is type of pre-combustion chamber, also pioneered by Mahle Powertrain, one of the world’s largest motor component makers with six factories and offices in Britain alone. The pre-combustion helps for more efficient combustion and more miles to a gallon.



Power reaches the rear wheels through an eight-speed, dual-clutch transmission and a mechanically locking rear differential. The on-the-road weight of the car is one and a half tons, which Maserati claims gives it a ‘best-in-class power-to-weight ratio’. *What class*, you might ask? Well, with a starting price of around £170,000, it is an expensive class occupied by the likes of Aston Martin and the McLaren 570GT. It is very strong competition for any new entrant.

The suspension is a dual-wishbone setup front and rear, with what is described as ‘*a semi-virtual steering layout designed to reduce scrub angle and increase steering*’

feel and response'. The brakes are Brembo carbon ceramic units with six pistons at the front and four at the rear.

The interior of the MC20, accessed via doors that open in the normal way, meets the needs of day-to-day motoring. The buttons and controls on the steering wheel are limited to what you would expect to see if you were driving a modern saloon car.



Dual, 10-inch digital displays provide information, navigation and the infotainment system, powered by Android Automotive, such as on the new Chinese-made Polestar 2. This software gives easy access to all your needs. In the MC20 it has been rebranded as Maserati Touch Control Plus MIA. *MIA*? Those are the initials of Maserati's Intelligent Assistant. Where would we be nowadays without smart assistants from Siri to Alexa and from Google Assistant to Microsoft Cortana?

Maserati promises almost 5.3 cubic feet of storage in both a boot it calls a 'trunk' and a tiny compartment at the front called a 'frunk'. That is a small, yet a big step up from the MC12, which did not even have a trunk. It is also yet another sign that the MC20 is a very different car, something intended for daily use, a car that will be as good to drive on the road as it is on the track. Admittedly it will not be able to cope with the weekly shop, and if you have a weekend away, you may not be able to dress for dinner, but you will certainly have more than enough space for a change of underwear and your sponge bag.

It is on track days that the MC20 seemingly comes into its own. The sales pitch claims that it will 'take Maserati back to the world of racing'. That will be good news for those with really deep pockets, for whom speed limits and those they regard as 'the hoi polloi' are a hindrance. At least we ordinary mortals will have the satisfaction that on the track they are safely out of our way.

Ford's E-Transit offers a better standard of driving!

In the next year or two, van drivers will be silently cruising the streets dropping off the packages from your online orders. The driving too will be remarkably better as this particular Ford van monitors the driver's behaviour and tells him or her when it needs to be improved!

Ford has released details of the 2022 model E-Transit which will go on sale towards the end of 2021. The battery-powered commercial van is a vital part of Ford's \$11.5 billion investment in electric vehicles over the next two years. It has the sort of clever features and comfort you might find in a saloon car and the promise of much lower maintenance costs with huge amounts of interior space.



When it goes on sale, the van will be available in three roof heights and three different lengths to suit the operator's requirements. The power comes from a lithium-ion battery mounted underneath the floor. So there is no intrusion into the cargo area. The E-Transit also features an independent rear suspension which was made possible by the way its powertrain was designed, and since there is no internal-combustion engine up front, Ford has mounted the full-size spare wheel under the bonnet

The Transit's battery pack gives 67 kilowatt-hours of usable capacity, which, in a low-roof cargo van, provides an estimated driving range of 126 miles. In a world where Tesla is offering cars with 400 or miles of range at a price, this seems like a laughable figure, but it makes commercial sense.

Most of these vans will be used for local deliveries and may drive just 50 miles on an average day. So why pay the cost of a 300 to 400 mile-range with an upgraded

power unit? Fleet customers, who need to watch every penny, are unwilling to pay up for any capability they do not absolutely need, and Ford has the data to back this up.

According to Ford, the average commercial van drives just 74 miles a day. This means the E-Transit's range will be adequate for most customers. For those who need a longer range, there is a further version to come. There is also the possibility of a four-wheel-drive version.

The van's battery pack can be recharged in a variety of ways since it supports both AC charging and DC fast charging, with the port being mounted in the middle of the grille, right underneath the Ford logo. The included mobile charger can be plugged into a domestic 240-volt supply and will recharge at the rate of about 10 miles of range per hour. But if you can plug the E-Transit into to a 115-kW DC fast charger, it can gain about 30 miles in just 10 minutes.

The E-Transit's electric motor delivers an estimated 266 horsepower and 317 pound-feet of torque. The power should be able to cope with a maximum payload capacity of 3,800 lbs. To protect the customer's investment, the E-Transit's EV components are covered by an eight-year or 100,000-mile warranty. The van is also estimated to have 40 per cent lower maintenance costs than a comparable conventional 2020 Transit over that time or distance.

To provide further help to fleet managers, the new E-Transit will offer a range of connected-vehicle services. Users will also be able remotely to pre-condition their E-Transits while they are plugged in to help preserve driving range. The van will also allow managers to monitor off-hours use and to know whether a vehicle has been towed or moved when it is not supposed to be. The E-Transit will be the first Ford to have these features, but they will soon be available on other vehicles in the Ford range.

In addition to EV-specific features, the new van will monitor how the E-Transit is being driven. The system keeps track of acceleration and braking as well as speed and, through the voice assistant, will advise the driver to operate the van in a more desirable manner. How long, one wonders, before such a system is a feature in all cars?

The new E-Transit offers the driver the sort of technology that you find in more up-market cars. It helps make working with the van more pleasant and easier. Lane-keeping assist and automatic emergency braking are standard, while other aids, such as blind-spot monitoring, a surround-view camera system and adaptive cruise control will be optional. Another standard feature is a Ford infotainment system with a large 12-inch touchscreen. For added convenience, this multimedia array includes a 4G LTE modem and supports over-the-air software updates.

The new E-Transit is what Ford calls a 'global product' and will be on sale in North America, throughout Europe and even in New Zealand for £40 to £50,000 towards the end of 2022.

A Lotus became the first Tesla

Thanks to his engineering innovations and the move to electric cars, Elon Musk is now the world's second richest man with a fortune of some \$130 billion. His company Tesla is now also among the world's most successful as it extends to building reusable space rockets. Musk's office is in the centre of the factory floor, and employees move around rapidly on electric scooters. From small beginnings great fortunes have been made and all because of one now forgotten British car. Before the Model S, Tesla's prototype was a re-engineered Lotus Elise. Now Mr Musk talks of 'million mile batteries' and experiments with cylindrical batteries to make the cars even more efficient.

By taking the shell of the Elise and converting it to electric drive, Tesla was able to test the possibility of a long-range EV, without the added complexity of building an entire car. And the Elise served as an excellent starting point, with a kerb weight of less than a ton in petrol-powered form, an excellent ride, and the good handling characteristics you would expect of such a top class British sports car.



As with its current models, Tesla made several running improvements to the Tesla-Elise over its four-year test run. The car in the picture has an updated interior compared to earlier Roadsters, with a small digital screen that delivers real-time charge and range data. It is just one of very many cars from a



wealthy American engineer's collection. With only 1,019 miles on the Tesla's odometer, it would appear he has had too many others to drive to get this car out on the road. It has been on sale, but who among us will have the money or wish to buy it?



Mustang Mach-E goes SUV

Such is the worldwide popularity of the SUV as the shape of car that the public wants, that Ford has brought out its electric Mustang Mach-E sports car in SUV form. According to the American Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), which tests everything from the quality of water to the pollution emitted by cars, the rear-wheel drive Mustang Mach-E will do an estimated 300 miles on a single charge when equipped with the extended-range battery option.



So when customers go to buy the Mustang Mach-E from Ford showrooms, they will find that EPA sticker on the car's windscreen giving all the test details. Apart from the magic 300-mile figure, Ford also achieved confirmation for every other factory estimate for the SUV after the EPA had finished its testing procedures.

There are other versions. The Mustang Mach-E extended range with all-wheel drive will do 270 miles, the standard range with all-wheel drive will cover 211 miles, and the standard range model equipped with rear-wheel drive will go 230 miles, all exactly as Ford said they would. The standard range/AWD version is actually up by one mile. Ford thought it would do 210 miles on a charge.

One model not included in the testing just yet is the California Route One trim. Ford also expects this variant to do 300 miles on a charge and says the EPA will confirm its estimate at a later date. The SUVs that are first to go on sale will be the Mach-E First Edition and the Premium trim. Based on the Premium trim, the First Edition costs £48,000 including a £866 delivery charge and comes standard with the extended range battery all-wheel drive, which is expected to do 270 miles. The Premium trim misses out on a few of the First Edition's goodies and starts at £40,700 with the standard range battery. Adding the bigger battery pack costs an extra £3,937, and all-wheel drive is a £2,125 option.

In 2021, the entry-level Mustang Mach-E will be on sale at launch with a starting price of £35,430 about the price in Britain you would pay for a top of the range VW Golf. The California Route 1 and GT trims will be on sale 2021.

One very important point about *all* the above prices. Every variant of the Mach-E will qualify for a \$7,500 (about £5,905) US Federal tax credit. Imagine being able to buy a Mustang for less than £30,000!

What's On - 2021

In line with current restrictions here are our plans for events for Jan to Jun 2021.

JANUARY

- 3** **Sunday RIDE OUT:** Ride Leader and destination varies
12 **Speaker:** Graham Feest , Travel Traffic Safety and Roads
(online by zoom - see joining instructions below)

FEBRUARY

- 7** **Sunday RIDE OUT:** Ride Leader and destination varies
10 **Speaker:** John Gregory (Reg Local), topic t.b.a. (online by zoom)

MARCH

- 7** **Sunday RIDE OUT:** Ride Leader and destination varies
11 **Speaker:** Ryan Decarteret, Advanced Riding, the Rapid Training way (online by zoom)

APRIL

- 11** **Sunday RIDE OUT:** Ride Leader and destination varies
22 **Thursday mid week Car & Motorcycle DRIVE / RIDE OUT:**
Haynes Motor Museum events@roadartvg.org.uk

MAY

- 2** **Sunday RIDE OUT:** Ride Leader and destination varies
17 **Thursday mid week RIDE OUT:**
Shuttleworth Museum events@roadartvg.org.uk

JUNE

- 6** **Sunday RIDE OUT:** Ride Leader and destination varies
20 **Thursday mid week Car & Motorcycle DRIVE / RIDE OUT:**
Coventry Transport Museum events@roadartvg.org.uk
28 **Cassington Bike Night Ride Out:** events@roadartvg.org.uk

For the online ZOOM meetings members will need to register through the link in an email sent prior to the meeting
In case of changes please refer to the website for latest information.

TRAINING

Training is currently very limited due to the constraints of operating under the Covid-19 restrictions. However 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

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

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