



**RoSPA Advanced Drivers and Riders
North Wiltshire Group**

www.northwiltroadar.co.uk



Patron: Her Majesty the Queen

February 2013

Newsletter

Secretary:

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Dates for Your Diary

Monthly meetings are all held at
Liddington Village Hall opposite the
church.

Monday 11th March

Meeting: Pete Russ, VIP Protection

Monday 8th April

Meeting: TBA

**Do you have a topic you would like
discussed, or know of an interesting
speaker? Please contact Monica!**

Welcome!

Welcome to the following members who
have joined the group recently:

Ross Kelser (car)

Stuart Wallis (bike)

Congratulations!

Congratulations to the following members
who have passed their RoSPA Advanced
test recently:

Steve Buckthorpe: silver (bike); Tutor
Julian Burton

Jim Carr: gold (bike); Tutor **Julian Burton**

Simon Slade: bronze (car); Tutor **Bill
Reed**

Stan Johnston: silver (car); Tutor **Roger
Tamplin**

Robert John: silver (car); Tutor **Chris
Gleed**

Forthcoming Meetings

Monday 11th March, 7:15pm for 7:45: Pete Russ, a retired Police superintendent will be joining us to speak about VIP Protection.

Monday 8th April, 7:15pm for 7:45: Speaker TBA

Events

Bike Ride-outs: Don't forget that regular Bike Ride-outs take place on the **3rd Saturday of each month**. The ride-out calendar is available on the web site.



Group Name Change

As mentioned last month, there has been a suggestion that the group's name is changed to reflect the fact that our membership is growing and expanding in the area we cover.

The meeting on Monday 8th April will therefore include a Special General Meeting to debate the following resolution:

"That the Group change its name from North Wiltshire RoADAR to Wiltshire RoADAR"

This affects one of the principal clauses of the Group Constitution and as such, requires a vote from you, the membership.

A Speaker, who is to be confirmed, will follow this vote.

Please try to attend this meeting.

Monica

February Meeting Report:

Swindon Borough Council, Transport and Streets Department



On 11th February North Wilts RoADAR members were treated to an enthusiastic talk by Steve Sanders and Colin Botter from Swindon Borough Council giving the group an insight into the work of the Transport and Streets Department.

Steve started off with a presentation about road works and closures. He explained the intricacies of the various regulations applied to each kind of closure and the difficulty the Council faces with several hundred applications a year. Steve has a small team, including only two inspectors, so keeping on top of the quality of the works is an issue. Despite what might appear to be a somewhat dry subject, the audience soon got into the swing of things, peppering Steve with questions which he fielded bravely. Not surprisingly, members were interested in particular closures in their area, and the apparently twisted logic behind some of them. Typical questions were:

- Why did you close road X one week and road Y the next, why not do them together? The answer to this centred around unexpected bad weather and the need to maintain traffic flow.
- Can't you arrange all the work on a road at once rather than having one contractor dig up the road and resurface it only for the next to come along and rip it all up a week later? Well, we try, was the answer, but we don't have much control of when contractors apply to work on a particular road.

The department's work is governed by plenty of legislation, from which road signs to display to how to layout cones. Steve did say that on occasion the plan and the reality didn't always come together so should you see some works that don't look as if they are signed properly, to take a photo and send it to him and he can follow it up with the appropriate people.

The department handles all applications for roadworks (approximately 6000 to 10,000 per year) which are put onto the Streetworks Register for all to see. Applications should be in within 3 days to 12 weeks depending on the length of the disruption but interestingly for 'Urgent' works, the department need only be notified within two hours of starting the work. Urgent is defined as 'to preserve life or property' and not just because a utility company has forgotten to lay a cable!

Steve pointed us to some useful websites:

- Swindon roadworks: <http://www.swindon.gov.uk/ts/ts-roadshighways/Pages/ts-RoadworksandClosures.aspx>

- Roadworks.org (formerly ELGIN): Good for checking on present and future delays. This linked to Google Maps and can be manipulated to show works by type, date, and obviously location. It will show road closures due to such things as events and filming as well as the standard digging up the road so you can plan your journey around them.

Steve was followed by Colin, whose speciality is Design Standards and Visibility. Colin introduced us to the huge range of standards the road planner has to be aware of and adhere to. He presented a number of images showing previous and current thinking on road design. I'm sure he had much more material, but at this point the session became very "interactive". It was apparent that the audience was not quite so sold on the modern ideas as the planners. Examples that came up were:

- New estates formed of multi-storey town houses with little or no capacity for car parking, leading to congestion and difficulty passing parked vehicles left on the street.
- Streets with no demarcation between roadway and footpath, leading to cars parked straddling the two.
- Numerous examples of difficulty navigating the new road layouts in the Town Centre.

Steve and Colin rose to the challenge of answering these, referring often to Swindon's Traffic Plan and Core Strategy, both of which can be found on the Council website (<http://swindon.gov.uk>). From the discussion it became apparent that:

- Swindon's traffic management strategy is centred around improving the experience for pedestrians and cyclists, and encouraging the use of public transport over the private car.
- There is a clear aim to cut down on the amount of traffic passing through the town centre as part of a route from one side to the other as opposed to those with a town centre destination.

While the traffic volumes in Swindon are predicted to rise alarmingly over the next twenty years, it was somewhat disturbing as a meeting of drivers and motorcyclists to hear how Swindon plans to cope with the increase. More than one member expressed the hope that Swindon would not turn into another Oxford.

That said, both Steve and Colin encouraged us to keep abreast of what is planned for the future of the roads in our area by looking at the Swindon Borough Council website. Planning is done for our long term benefit but if you think otherwise then they welcome your views.

The discussion was lively and good-humoured, and would have continued if we hadn't run out of time. Many thanks to both Steve and Colin.

Jo Dockeray and Nick Carrington