BHS Virtual Reality Film

The British Horse Society has launched a new virtual reality film to raise awareness of the safety issues horse riders face on the roads.

The film, which forms part of the BHS' ongoing Dead Slow campaign, aims to give drivers first-hand experience of how it feels to be riding a horse when a car passes either too fast or too close.

The film also demonstrates what drivers experience when approaching a horse in a vehicle that is travelling too fast.

In the last scene, viewers are in a car with BBC Sport presenter Lizzie Greenwood-Hughes, who explains how to pass a horse in a safe manner.

The BHS's Horse Accidents website shows that from November 2010 to March 2018 there were 2,902 road incidents involving horses – ranging from a near miss to a collision.

Since the launch of the Dead Slow campaign in 2016, the BHS has been working with many organisations to educate drivers on how to pass horses safely, including many in Wales.

Alan Hiscox, Director of Safety at the BHS recently gave an emotive and powerful presentation at the Road Safety Wales Conference. During his presentation he said "We believe that we can tell drivers how to behave around horses and they will forget; we can show them and they will remember – but if we involve them with our VR film they will understand."

He also reiterated the four Dead Slow campaign messages, which are designed to influence drivers and change their behaviour around horses:

- **Slow down to a maximum of 15mph**
- **Be patient**
- **Pass the horse wide and slow, giving at least a car's width**
- **Drive slowly away**

You can view the film here.

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Operation Close Pass

This initiative aims to improve the safety of cyclists on the road by educating drivers on how to overtake safely.

The Highway Code recommends that road users should give vulnerable road users, such as motorcyclists, cyclists and horse riders, the same amount of room as they would when overtaking a car – this is approximately 1.5m.

Assistant Chief Constable Jennifer Gilmer said, "Protecting vulnerable road users is a vitally important for police forces across the country. Operation Close Pass highlights the vulnerable position many cyclists are put in, it shows drivers what happens when they drive dangerously and don't leave enough room when overtaking."

Economy and Transport Secretary Ken Skates added, "I cannot praise this scheme highly enough. Contrary to common perception, the vast majority of pedal cyclist casualties occur not during complex manoeuvres, but when the cyclist is simply going along.

"We need to find a way of keeping safe those people who have made the decision to have healthier, more active and sustainable lives, and those who just enjoy riding their bikes. I support road safety interventions that make active travel a realistic and safe choice. All road users need to be aware of the things they can do to make everyone safe as part of their daily journeys."

Operation Close Pass deploys police officers on bicycles fitted with cameras which record the behaviour of drivers who overtake them. If an offence is detected, the officer radios colleagues further down the road to direct the vehicle into a checkpoint where the driver will be offered education from fire service colleagues using a specially designed equipment which illustrates the safe passing distance.

Huw Jakeway, Chief Fire Officer South Wales Fire and Rescue Service explained, "As part of our involvement, we will be delivering education to road users found to be dangerously overtaking vulnerable road users, such as cyclists and horse riders. Our education package will explain the impact and potential consequences of overtaking dangerously, we hope to change behaviours and attitudes within our driving communities allowing all road users to use our roads safely together".

Teresa Ciano, Partnership Manager GoSafe said, "Multi agency partnership working is key to delivering safer roads and behaviour change from drivers. Police forces across Wales are committed to keeping road users safe and reducing the number of casualties seriously injured or killed.

Police Recorded Road Accidents, Wales 2017

The Welsh Government has recently published information on the severity of injury and type of road user in Wales for the year 2017.

Key points:

- **In 2017 there were 4,556 road accidents involving personal injury recorded by the police, a reduction of 365 on 2016 (7.4% reduction).**
- **Recorded accidents resulted in 6,202 casualties, which was 651 fewer than in 2016.**

Within the 6,202 casualties:

- **103 people were killed on Welsh Roads, which was the same as in 2016.**
- **961 people were seriously injured, which was 44 fewer (4.4% fewer) than in 2016.**
- **5,138 people were slightly injured, which was 607 fewer (10.6% fewer) than 2016.**

See the full statistical release here.

National Eye Health Week

National Eye Health Week took place between 24th and 30th September 2018, aiming to promote the importance of eye health and the need for regular eye tests.

Good eyesight is vital when using the road, no matter what your age. Drivers and motorcyclists must be able to read a vehicle registration plate from a distance of 20 metres (or 20.5 metres if the vehicle was registered before September 2001) wearing glasses or contact lenses if required.

If you're finding it difficult to read road signs, particularly those with text, it could indicate that your eyesight has deteriorated and you may require corrective lenses. If you're finding it harder to see clearly in the dark, this may also mean you need to wear glasses or contact lenses.

Although eyesight often gets worse as we get older, eye conditions can develop at any age. Glaucoma and cataracts are well-known but other age-related diseases, if left untreated, can also affect your ability to use the road safely. During an eye test, other health conditions that you may not yet be aware of, such as diabetes or high blood pressure, could also be detected – another reason to have regular checks.

Teresa Ciano, Chair of Road Safety Wales, said: "We would recommend having an eye test every two years, or more often if your optician suggests it. This can not only help to make sure you meet the minimum eyesight standards for driving or riding but may also identify some conditions early before they develop. Please be aware that if you drive with eyesight below the minimum legal standard you could face a fine of up to £1000.

"Road Safety Wales supported National Eye Health Week through its website and social media channels, giving reminders of the importance of regular eye tests and common conditions that could compromise the safety of all road users."

In-Car Advice for Parents and Carers

Choosing and fitting the right child car seat can seem very confusing, especially given the wide range of different types of seats on the market.

To help parents and carers select the seat that matches the weight and height of the child, and avoid the most common fitting problems, RoSPA has produced 16 short films.

It is not necessary to watch all of the films, simply click the title of those that match your personal circumstances.

To view the films please click here.

The Effectiveness of Speed Awareness Courses

New research published in by the Department for Transport indicates that drivers who take a speed awareness course are as much as 23% less likely to re-offend in the six months after a first offence, compared to those who accept the fine and points.

The study carried out by IPSOS Mori and the University of Leeds used speed offending data made available by 13 police forces in England for the period from 2012 to 2017. Data was provided for 2.2m drivers, of whom 1.4m had opted to participate in the National Speed Awareness Course (NSAC).

The study found that drivers who attend the NSAC are between 12-23% less likely to reoffend within six months of committing their first offence - a figure which drops to 9-17% within 12 months, 9-11% within the first two-years, and 6-13% within three years.

Read the report here.

No Breakthrough on EU Road Deaths for Fourth Consecutive Year

The UK is failing to make sufficient progress in its bid to reach the EU target of halving the number of road deaths in the decade to 2020, according to the latest edition of an annual report.

The 12th Road Safety Performance Index Report, produced by the European Transport Safety Council (ETSC), compares statistics from 32 European countries – including the 28 EU member states.

The UK's 6.4% reduction since 2010 is far below the EU average of 20.1% – and ranks the UK fourth bottom, ahead of Sweden, the Netherlands and Malta. Despite this, the UK remained the EU's third safest country in 2017, behind Norway and Sweden, with 27 deaths per million inhabitants.

On the whole, the report shows that progress has 'stagnated' across the EU over the last four years – with the number of road deaths falling by just 3% since 2013. The ETSC is now calling for strong political will, urgent measures and substantial investment in safe infrastructure to reduce the 500 deaths that occur on EU roads every week.

Read the full report here.