



# NORFOLK AND NORWICH GROUP

## ADVANCED DRIVERS AND RIDERS

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# DriveLines

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The monthly newsletter for the Norfolk and Norwich Group of the RoSPA Advanced Drivers and Riders Association.

[www.roadanorfolk.org.uk](http://www.roadanorfolk.org.uk)

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## ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

WEDNESDAY, 23rd MARCH 2016 -7.30pm  
CRINGLEFORD PAVILION

**Please come along  
the meeting is for and about your Club -**

**Your chance to tell us what you think and want from  
the club.**

**Volunteers required please to join us on the  
Committee**

**YOUR IDEAS ARE VERY IMPORTANT.**

**Can we please have as many members as possible at  
this important meeting.**

## WHAT NEXT?

I am sure that most of you will have seen or heard about 'driverless' vehicles. What do you think? I am not too sure myself how this can be! I know that I am old and set in my ways but several points spring to mind, not least their stopping and steering capabilities. Obviously they will be going through a lot of very thorough tests before they are let loose on the public. They are on test in Milton Keynes, but as I understand it only on pedestrian only areas and would be treated like taxis from the Station to the Town Centre. I understand that somewhere one test vehicle collided with a bus (no injuries). My concern is whether a person has got to be present in the vehicle anyway to over-ride any problem or is it all WI-FI controlled from elsewhere who has no knowledge of the traffic conditions. If it has got to have a human on board, is he a driver? Do you have to have a driving licence? If you need a Licence; is it a separate test making it three, manual, automatic or 'hands off'? What about the roads – are they necessarily especially 'hands off' only? Paper talk stated that the scientists wanted to test 14 lorries in convoy on a motorway. I bet they will not be without someone in each vehicle, probably at night on a closed section. My other thought is that they will be electric vehicles. They have a limited range and the cost (at the moment) in most cases is more expensive than conventional vehicles. As you can see I need to be convinced. Let me have your thoughts.

# What's On

## FORTHCOMING EVENTS

UNLESS OTHERWISE NOTIFIED  
7.30PM AT THE PAVILION, OAKFIELD ROAD, CRINGLEFORD

**ALL MEMBERS ARE REMINDED THAT THE MEETINGS ARE HELD  
ON THE 4TH WEDNESDAY OF EACH MONTH.  
THIS IS NOT ALWAYS THE LAST WEDNESDAY**

### MEETINGS

#### MARCH

**Wednesday, 23<sup>rd</sup> March 2016**

*The local Group's Annual General Meeting followed by an in house DVD presentation. This is your chance to have your say about how your Group is run, your ideas to help or even to volunteer to come on the Committee to assist. Please make a note in your diaries and we hope to see as many Members attending as possible.*

#### APRIL

**Wednesday, 27<sup>th</sup> April 2016**

##### **The Wherry Trust**

*Most of you will at some time have seen those graceful sailing craft on the Broads – The Wherries. The Wherry Trust is in being to keep the memory of those craft alive and towards that end they have restored the wherry 'Albion'. She is the one with the black sail. Come along for a very interesting evening with a talk by a member of the Wherry Trust on all aspects of Wherries and in particular how they keep 'Albion' sailing.*

#### MAY

**Wednesday, 25<sup>th</sup> May 2016**

##### **Milestone Society**

*Carol Haines is a member of the Milestone Society and will give a talk which includes roads and driving. You may have noticed that many of the milestones along the roadsides have been restored and it is members of that Society who undertake this work. All welcome.*

## Chairman's Chunterings!

HQ RoADAR is increasing their prices from 1<sup>st</sup> April. The new rates are as follows:

### RoADAR Yearly Subscriptions

Car	£28
Bike	£28
Dual membership	£28
Emergency Services	£25

### RoADAR Initial Test Fees

Car, 26 years and over	£60
Car, 25 years and under	£50
Bike 26 years and over	£66
Bike 25 years and under	£56

### NEW TRAFFIC LIGHTS RULES?

What do the colours mean to you; which one applies to you? Please remember that Group memberships **expire on 30 Nov** each year and not on the anniversary of when you joined. If your membership is not up to date, you cannot receive any training from our tutors. This is a RoSPA Insurance requirement that we are obliged to comply with. Please ensure that your membership is up to date and that the Membership Secretary has your current email address and contact details. If you have not renewed and wish to, you need to do so quickly before you are removed from the membership list.



**Your membership has expired and you cannot be trained!**

**Your membership has expired and you need to renew ASAP!**

**Well Done – your membership is up to date and you are entitled to free training and refresher drives.**



## **SPOT THE DIFFERENCE!**

**OK, it's White Lines or No White Lines? I'm sure you will all have read about the latest road safety initiative regarding the removal of some white lines to make our roads safer. Which option do you consider to be safest? Will their removal make the roads safer, or drivers more cautious. I believe there are pros and cons for both options but have reservations that there would be any significant impact (pun intended) on statistics. Would there be any effect on those super-duper modern motors that enjoy the luxury of lane guidance systems? Perhaps the next step could be a man in front with a red flag might be a good idea!**

**Robin**

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### **WHAT IS IN THE PRICE OF FUEL?**

Anyone who drives is bound to have noticed that the cost of petrol and diesel has fallen considerably recently (both currently sitting under £1 at a local filling station, which is very much a welcome change!), just as we all noticed the rocketing prices that we were treated to not so long ago. The question is, why does the price of fuel change so often, and so dramatically at times? Why can there be such a discrepancy between the price of petrol and the price of diesel? While most of us have a vague knowledge that the price is linked to the cost of oil, the truth behind it is actually quite interesting. Here's what you need to know about fuel pricing.



#### **Lowest diesel prices since 2009**

If it feels like quite a while since the price of diesel was under £1, that's because the last time it was reported to have happened was in 2009. Motorists may find their journey becoming even more affordable in the not so distant future, as the RAC have predicted a drop to approximately 90p per litre. We're not going to complain about one aspect of our lives becoming cheaper rather than more expensive, but we are curious as to why it is happening and how sustainable it is likely to be.

#### **Why are fuel prices continuing to fall?**

With the price of a barrel of oil looking set to fall below \$10 for the first time since 1998, now seems like as good a time as any to investigate the factors contributing to this pricing.

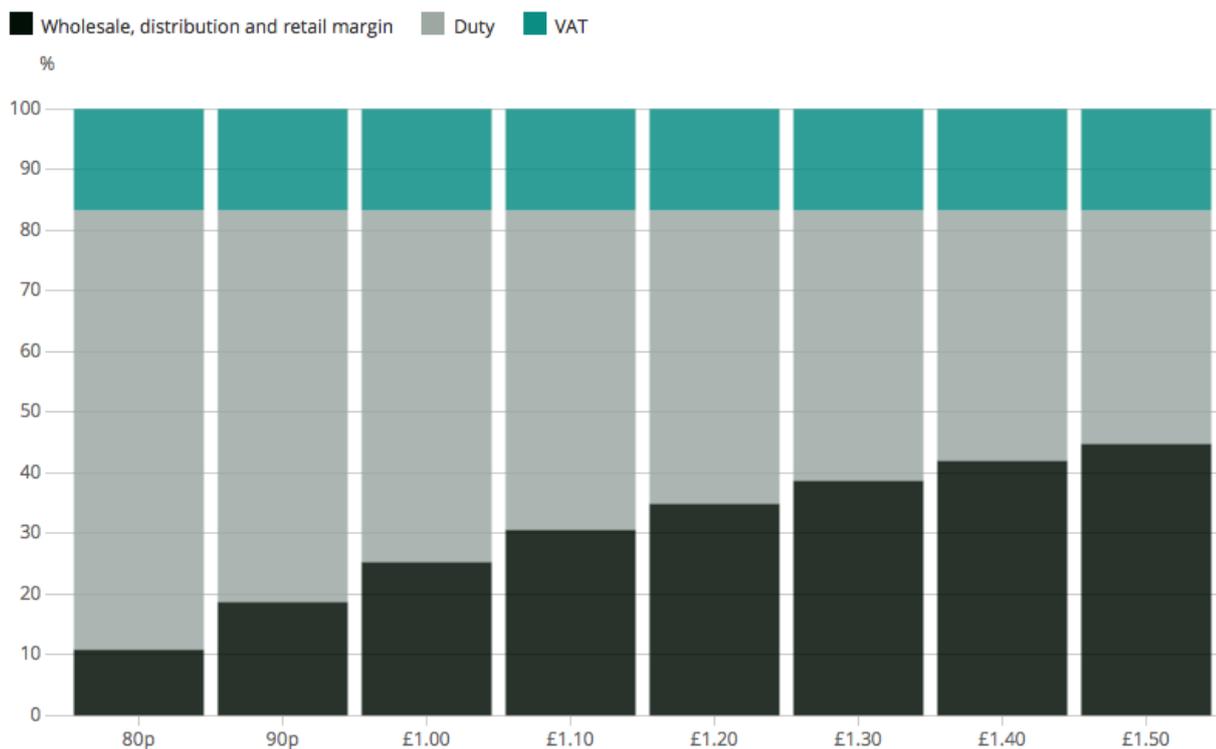
This is a very brief overview of the situation but, in short, it all comes down to the value of Brent Crude; a type of oil which is obtained from the North Sea region and then used as a benchmark for crude oil pricing in general.

Any news update discussing the falling costs of fuel will have mentioned Brent Crude and the major factor which has led to its value plummeting from \$65 a barrel in December 2015 to just \$28 dollars in mid-January. No knowledge of the industry is required to recognise that is an astronomical devaluing. So what is behind the -57% change in value? Put simply – there is too much crude oil available. The principles of supply and demand mean that, when supply greatly outstrips demand (as is happening now), the price will be adversely affected.

Of course, this is fantastic news from the point of view of an individual motorist seeking to run a car on a budget, but a completely different story for those relying on the oil itself for their livelihoods.

### Is the price of petrol and diesel solely based on crude oil prices?

Not at all. In fact, the cost of the crude oil required to manufacture various fuels and related products makes up only a small percentage of the cost of a litre of fuel. Most of the price paid by consumers at forecourts is actually made up of various taxes – rather than launch into a lengthy explanation, here’s a graphic compiled by the Office of National Statistics that illustrates it perfectly.



Source: Consumer Price Index and Producer Price Index, Office for National Statistics

As you can see from the graph, the lower the price of fuel, the smaller the profit for the retailer, which could spell bad news if unusually low petrol and diesel prices are maintained over a longer period of time. A litre of fuel costs 70p to get to the forecourt and be offered for sale, meaning there is currently only around 30p per litre for the retailer to benefit from. This may seem like a reasonable profit to make on each unit of fuel, but bear in mind the sheer volume of overheads the retailer is likely to have to cover.

An announcement from OPEC (Organisation of the Petroleum Exporting Countries) in December confirmed that crude oil is set to continue being extracted at the same rate despite the drop in the supply and demand ratio. All else remaining equal, this would suggest that the low forecourt prices are here to stay for a while at least, although it is almost certain that the price will rise once more in the future.

### Why so much tax on fuel? Where does it go?

The previous section of this article clearly shows that the vast majority of the cost of fuel can be attributed to taxes – making Britain the country with the highest fuel taxes in the world.

60% of the price of each litre of fuel goes to the government in the form of fuel tax. There is no one reason why this rate has been set so high, but potential factors include it being a reliable source of income for the government (particularly while the economy is in recovery) and a deterrent to at least some of the traffic that would otherwise contribute to congestion and the related environmental issues.

If you are particularly interested in the differences in fuel duties and prices across Europe, there is plenty to investigate on the [European Environment Agency](#) website.

While some professional bodies have called for a reduction in fuel tax, the reality is that any shortfall would need to be recovered through alternative taxes or the introduction of more toll roads. Neither of these are likely to be popular with the public.

A further portion of the cost is deducted as VAT, as is standard on purchases across the UK.

### The effect of low fuel prices on the North Sea oilfields

Of course, the price of fuel doesn't only affect the retailers and consumers involved in forecourt transactions; there's a knock-on effect on the North Sea oilfields too.

We won't go into too much detail here as there is a lot of information to cover but, in short, the longer the low price is maintained or declines further, the more important it becomes for the economy to diversify and rely less on the North Sea oilfields. The offshore industry has been suffering for the past few decades, with the situation worsening significantly since the prices plummeted.

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*After my piece last month on the price of fuel I thought our Members would find this article interesting. As I said in January, prices will start to go up again soon. This has happened in my area, diesel was 99.9 but is now 103.99 and again is more expensive than petrol. We, as motorists, will be looking very warily at the Budget this week as again the profits of doom are predicting that the motorist is again going to be attacked for further taxation to the government. We will wait and see!!! Editor.*

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End Piece: Just to say thank-you for remaining Members and I hope that all the instruction you have had and taking a test has made you all safer and better drivers. Do not forget the AGM this month when you will be able to have your say on how we operate on behalf of all of you. Have we got it about right? Do we need to have a meeting every month? Are the meetings run as you would like, or are we missing something? Is this Newsletter okay or would you like to see some changes? Do we need the Newsletter? Unless you tell us we will not know you have ideas or a grievance, now is the opportunity. Hope to see as many there as possible. There will also be some interesting DVDs afterwards.

Safe Driving.

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