

## ZONE 108 REFLECTIONS FROM THE CHAIR – SEPTEMBER 2019

*“Have you ever noticed that anyone driving slower than you is an idiot and anyone driving faster than you is a maniac?”*

The day I presented myself at the Perth Traffic Office in 1953 to gain my Driver's Licence is an event which I clearly recall 66 years later. In those days we didn't have L plates or P plates and speeding wasn't an issue because the second hand four cylinder British cars that most of us drove were battling to reach 60 miles per hour flat out. Austin, Hillman, Morris, Vauxhall, Standard and Ford Anglia was about the limit of our wallets and my 1948 Morris Eight, which I purchased in 1956, had a canvas hood that leaked like a sieve!

Gaining a Driver's Licence was and still is to this very day a giant leap from adolescence into the adult world; a sense of achievement and satisfaction, which I believe in my day was regarded by most as a privilege. I think that many of today's P platers regard it as a right, which entitles them to drive aggressively, selfishly and sometimes recklessly. They're the ones that leave us feeling more than a little exasperated and wondering why the police aren't around to catch them doing silly things; they always seem to be there when we're doing 52 in a 50k zone!

There's no doubt that having a licence to drive gives you freedom to journey as you wish, in your own time, at your own pace and I guess that most of those who read this paper have done just that whilst taking it as a given; it's something that we achieved a long time ago and it's become an integral part of our lives. However, things aren't always as they seem and on any given day, a journey to the local shopping centre can be a frustrating affair, sprinkled with annoying, irritating and frightening moments which we all encounter from time to time. Let's imagine that parking is at a premium and we're desperately looking for a spot to park;

- You find a spare bay but a driver coming from the other direction steals it, even though your indicators are flashing;
- You find a bay but the SUV's either side have left you enough room that you need a shoehorn to get out of your car;
- Seniors parking bays have been commandeered by those who are not;
- You find a bay where someone has left a shopping trolley parked smack in the middle;
- You return to your car to find dents and scratches, courtesy of a neighbouring vehicle now long gone;
- You try backing out but vehicles passing through ignore your intent or people returning with loaded trolleys walk behind oblivious to your reversing lights.

As someone once said, "Life wasn't meant to be easy" but it just seems for some that negotiating traffic streams can provide more than a fair share of uneasiness. The once referred to 'Peak Traffic' time of day has become an all day affair and every second vehicle seems to be an enormous truck barrelling along with total disregard for anything in its path. . Many of us have witnessed enormous changes to the way people travel; from horse and cart to motorised vehicles of moderate speed, to vehicles with the capability to travel at 200ks per hour, leaving in their wake the roar of a volcano in eruption mode.

However, when we reach the age of 80 years young our GP has the authority to recommend the renewal of our Driver's Licence for the ensuing twelve months and a negative outcome can be devastating for those living alone. All of a sudden life becomes a whole lot more complicated and getting to the National Seniors branch meeting requires a member picking up a member and branches need to be in tune with that.

Wow, what a ride and there are a million other stories that we have all encountered along the way. My highlight was polishing my Morris 8 on a Sunday to take my girlfriend for a drive; do young people do that today?

Graeme

**CARPE DIEM**