



Colin's Blog

13th October 2017

Positive thoughts for changing times

I apologise for not sending out my blog for last Friday, but, my wife and I, had the audacity to take some time off and to spend a few days in the Peak district, and I enjoyed a belated birthday present, taking part in a Tram driving experience day at Crech. As a very young child, I travelled on the last London Tram, and had wanted to relive the experience, and go one better, by actually driving trams. Wow what day that was, my wife and I were welcomed, and were well looked after, during the whole experience. We didn't get back until Sunday, hence, my inability to send out my blog on time.



Sense & Sensibility

Children & Young People at Halloween

Children and young people always enjoy Halloween, but it can be a worrying time for parents. Essex Watch and The Suzy Lampugh Trust, think Halloween should be a treat for everyone, so we have produced the following safety tips to help make sure that they have fun in safety!

Dressing Up Safely Some like to make turnip or pumpkin lanterns – so try and make sure that costumes are flame-retardant.

- Costumes should not be too long or restrict your child's freedom to move – you don't want any unplanned bumps in the night!
- Some masks can obstruct a child's vision, a potential danger, especially if they are crossing roads. Consider using face paints instead.
- If your they are going to be outside then make sure they are wearing visible clothing – perhaps you could put reflective tape on their costumes.

- Some costumes – coupled with the excitement of Halloween – can encourage aggressive behaviour. Even fake knives, swords and other costume accessories can hurt or scare people. Make sure that they understand this and that any potentially dangerous items are made of cardboard or other flexible materials.



Any child or young person seen in possession of flour or eggs, intended for throwing at property or persons, is obviously out to cause distress or trouble, and they will be spoken to and, or dealt with, by the Police or other enforcement agencies.

Having Fun in Safety

- The safest way for children to celebrate Halloween is by going to an organised party. Why not hold your own with ducking for apples, doughnuts on strings and all the other fun and games of Halloween?!
- Many children and young people like to go trick-or-treating or guising at Halloween. Children in particular, should always go out in groups and younger children should: -
 - **without exception**, be accompanied by an adult.
 - Children and young people should agree with parents or guardians in advance exactly where they are going and if possible, which houses they intend to visit.
 - It is likely to be dark outside – make sure they have torches and, where possible, walk down well-lit streets.
 - If they have a mobile phone make sure they take it with them and check in at regular intervals to let you know all is well.
 - Agree in advance a time when they will be back home and make sure one of them has a watch.
 - Make sure they know not to enter anyone's house and not to accept lifts in people's cars.
 - **Talk through the idea of trick or treat, and make sure that those taking part don't do anything to upset or annoy the people they visit.**

Safe Treats – Food for Thought!

- **Ask them not to eat any sweets or other goodies that they have been given until they get home. Giving them a meal or snack before they go might help them resist temptation!**
- **Carefully check all the things that have been given. Sweets and food that are still in their original wrappers are safest.**



MORE SENSE & SENSIBILITY

Many estates and built up areas were constructed long before the popularity of motor vehicles caused the parking chaos and congestion which many of us witness or experience on a daily basis.

We all appreciate and realise the importance of motor vehicles in our daily lives, but, how many of us actually stop to think about ensuring that sufficient room is left on roadways to allow for the safe passage of emergency vehicles when they are called deal with what could be life threatening situations. Sometimes there is barely room for a car to get through between parked vehicles, which means that an Ambulance or Fire Appliance would have no chance of getting through.

For example: an average size Fire Engine (pump appliance), needs a minimum width of 3.7 metres to safely negotiate a road, and a minimum gateway width of 3.1 meters. The average turning circle between kerbs is 16.8 metres and 19.2 metres between walls.

When considering where to park, here is a reminder of some of the basic legally enforceable rules: DO NOT stop or park:-

- near a school entrance
- anywhere you would prevent access for Emergency Services
- at or near a bus or tram stop or taxi rank
- on the approach to a level crossing/tramway crossing
- opposite or within 10 metres (32 feet) of a junction, except in an authorised parking space. (Yellow lines are often painted at junctions but do not always stretch to 10 metres, however, this **does not** automatically exempt you from complying with this rule).
- near the brow of a hill or hump bridge
- opposite a traffic island or (if this would cause an obstruction) another parked vehicle
- where you would force other traffic to enter a tram lane
- where the kerb has been lowered to help wheelchair users and powered mobility vehicles
- in front of an entrance to a property
- on a bend
- where you would obstruct cyclists' use of cycle facilities **except** when forced to do so by stationary traffic.



A point remembering should you ever wish to challenge an allegation of 'Obstruction.' It has been what is known as 'case stated' in law, and used as a legal precedent that:-

As a general rule: **'A brick in the road is an obstruction, therefore a vehicle must be.'** (*Individual circumstances may apply*).

Autumn is a time for reflection

A time for change,
To look back and take stock.
To chill out and relax and plan,
For a new beginning.

Whilst nature sleeps,
It too, takes stock and braces itself,
To face the long winter months,
The challenges of climate that lie ahead,
And, as it looks towards the reincarnation of life

Through seeds that have been shed from
The mighty trees and plants galore,
Landing on the earthly floor.
It doesn't give up, as it propagates for the future

For it is part of the circle of life, something which
We as humble Human Beings can relate to,
As we learn to tread cautiously along life rickety pathway,
We find our feet, and make our way, despite the
Many obstacles that come our way.

Just like nature, we learn to adapt, to overcome,
And most of all to shine.
So, let there be peace on earth, and let it begin,
Through both you and me.
There's no time for despair.

We have the ability to inspire,
And to inspire others along the way,
Helping to shine the light of hope,
In what are sometimes uncertain and troubled times.
Have faith in yourself, and in others,
And go forward in good heart.

The moral of this little ditty is simple: *'Be Inspired and Inspire others!'*
Together we can make a difference!

Much of my life revolves around serving the community, my family and my close friends and colleagues.

A big part of my life also revolves around my appreciation of nature, music and the written word. All have so much to offer, and have played a major part in my motivation, understanding and attitude, from an early age.

Although I don't always agree, I respect the beliefs and opinions of others, and strive to form a balanced overview of every aspect of life, indeed, since I underwent a lifesaving operation three days before my fourth birthday, from thereon, and into adulthood, I have grown to appreciate the true value of life, as well as appreciating the wonders of our NHS, which came into being, just three years before.



You have heard me rattle on about dog fouling, many times in the past, well, in some areas, the message has been listen to in part. So, what do I mean? Well I have noticed an increase in the number of poo bags that I have seen, hanging from the branches of trees and bushes, as well as hedgerows, which often seem to appear like fungi, the difference being that fungi dies off, whereas the bags take

years to degrade!

So are those responsible, incredibly thick, downright stupid, or just lazy and irresponsible. Perhaps several reasons into one!

I have also noticed some dog owners taking their dogs out on a lead, alongside their mobility scooters. I have a great deal of respect for anyone who is disabled, however, the law says that dog fouling must be cleared up, so that does not exclude them from their legal responsibility to do so.

I was trying to avoid talking about cyclists this week, however, I still see a few of them with their dog on a lead, as they do so. Most sensible level-headed people would say straight away, that such behaviour is an accident waiting to happen, yet alone the legal consequences that they could face, under existing legislation!

Latest from Action Fraud: -

Alert: PPI fraudsters claiming to be from the FCA

Posted 5th October 2017

Fraudsters are posing as officials from the Financial Conduct Authority (FCA) and are cold calling people stating that they are eligible for a Payment Protection Insurance (PPI) claim.

There may be an increase in these types of frauds following the FCA announcement and new campaign urging people to make a decision about making a PPI complaint before the deadline on 29th August 2019. PPI was usually sold with products that you need to make repayments on, like a loan, credit card or mortgage.

As well as cold calls, scammers are using text messages to convince victims that their PPI claim is legitimate when in fact this may not be the case.

The fraudsters tell you how much PPI you can claim back but emphasise that an advance fee payment is required in order to make the claim successful. You should never take up offers of PPI claims on the spot from cold calls and text messages.

If you use a third-party organisation to assist with your claim, you can check to see if they are legitimate by carrying out independent research on the company, as well as checking the **FCA's website**: <https://www.fca.org.uk/> for the company's details or by calling them on **0800 101 88 00** (Monday to Sunday, 8am to 10pm).

http://www.actionfraud.police.uk/report_fraud

ActionFraud
Report Fraud & Internet Crime
0300 123 2040

THOUGHT FOR THE WEEK



When trying to resolve a problem

Always go to the root of the matter

Before you try to branch out!

Keep Alert, Keep Secure, Keep Safe and have a great weekend!