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**SOME EVENTS OF INTEREST TO THOSE
INVESTIGATING ROAD SAFETY: ALMANAC FOR 1973**

by

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**Any views expressed in this Report are not necessarily
those of the Department of the Environment**

**Accident Investigation Division
Safety Department
Transport and Road Research Laboratory
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SOME EVENTS OF INTEREST TO THOSE INVESTIGATING ROAD SAFETY: ALMANAC FOR 1973

ABSTRACT

This note contains a list of some of the principal events of 1973, together with a summary of weather, which may be of interest to those investigating road safety.

1. INTRODUCTION

For several years a list has been drawn up of the principal events of the year, including changes in the law, which may be of interest to those investigating road safety. A summary of the weather month by month has also been given. This note covers 1973, and the similar notes for previous years (which were unpublished) may be obtained on request from the Transport and Road Research Laboratory.

2. EVENTS

2.1 January 1973

1st. It became compulsory for most vehicles first registered on or after this date to carry reflective plates conforming to British Standard AU 145a. (Statutory Instrument 1972/1865).

23rd. About 36km of M5, between Portbury Interchange and Edithmead in Somerset, was opened to traffic.

30th. The Winnersh Interchange on M4, together with the associated motorway link to A329 and A321, was opened.

2.2 March 1973

18th. British Summer Time started, and clocks were put forward one hour.

28th. The motorway signalling system came into operation on about 80km of M4 between Membury Service Area and Almondsbury Interchange, and on M32 (Bristol Parkway).

2.3 April 1973

1st. In vehicles first registered on or after this date, seat belts must be of a type which can be fastened with one hand.

17th. Computer-controlled signalling came into operation on about 40km of M6, between Brownsover (Junction 1) and Coleshill (Junction 4). Within the following fortnight signals came into operation on a further length of M6 between Bentley (Junction 10) and Gailey (Junction 12) and on M5 between Quinton (Junction 3) and Lydiate Ash (Junction 4).

2.4 May 1973

1st. The speed limit for cars and light vehicles towing caravans or trailers was raised to 50 mile/h, provided prescribed conditions are satisfied. (Statutory Instruments 747, 748 and 756).

24th. New computer-controlled signals came into operation on about 80km of M4 between Langley and Membury Service Area, and also on A423 (M).

2.5 June 1973

1st. From this date it became compulsory for the riders and pillion passengers of motorcycles, scooters and mopeds to wear helmets. (Statutory Instrument 180).

2.6 July 1973

5th. About 8km of M5, between Edithmead and Dunball, was opened to traffic. For the first few weeks traffic in both directions was restricted to the southbound carriageway for a short length of the middle section, while bridgeworks were completed.

5th. About 12km of M62, between Ainley Top, near Huddersfield, and Chain Bar, near Bradford, was opened. The opening of this section completed a continuous motorway from Eccles to M1, south of Leeds. The remaining section of M606, at Chain Bar Interchange was also opened.

25th. Computer-controlled signals came into operation on about 80 km of M5, between its junction with M50 and Avonmouth, and on about 6½km of M4 between Almondsbury Interchange and Aust Service Area.

End of Month. The Heavy Commercial Vehicles (Controls and Regulations) Act, 1973 came into force. This Act (among other things) allows local authorities to prescribe routes for heavy lorries, and heavy lorries may also be banned or partially restricted from using roads and areas where they harm amenities.

2.7 August 1973

1st. The fitting of multi-toned and musical horns is forbidden on vehicles first used on or after this date.

10th. A new section of A1(M), between Lemsford and "The Clock", Welwyn, was opened. This section extends about 6km southwards from Stevenage By-pass.

23rd. The 11km long Gerrards Cross By-pass, on M40, was opened to traffic.

2.8 September 1973

26th. Computer-controlled signals came into operation on the 45km of M3, between Lightwater (Junction 3) and Popham (Junction 8).

2.9 October 1973

8th. The Minister for Transport Industries launched the first-ever major publicity campaign to reduce adult pedestrian casualties.

8th. From this date lorries more than 40 feet in length were banned from 6 square miles of central London. The ban does not apply to lorries which need to begin or end their journeys within this area.

28th. British Summer Time ended, and clocks were put back one hour.

2.10 November 1973

19th. The Motor Vehicles (Construction and Use) (Amendment) (No.4) Regulations 1973 came into operation. This allows the run-flat capabilities of recently introduced tyres to be utilised. (Statutory Instrument 1864).

19th. Motorists were advised to reduce their speeds to 50 mile/h in order to reduce petrol consumption.

20th. The Minister for Transport Industries asked the R.A.C. to cease authorising rallies and to cancel any already authorised, in order to save fuel.

27th. About 6km of M621, between the south-western area of Leeds and M62, was opened to traffic.

28th. Computer-controlled signals came into operation on two lengths of M56 in Cheshire, totalling about 22km. The lengths lie between Princess Parkway (Junction 3) and Bowden (Junction 7) and between Daresbury (Junction 11) and Hapsford (Junction 14).

29th. The issue of ration books for petrol and derv commenced. The issue was a precautionary measure, and no date for the commencement of rationing was announced.

30th. About 17km of M62, between Tarbock and the M6 motorway at Croft, together with about 5km of M57, between Tarbock Interchange and A57, was opened to traffic.

During the latter part of the month it became difficult to obtain petrol in some areas, particularly London and the South-east, leading to queues for available supplies, and some vehicles had to be abandoned at the roadside when the tank ran dry. The situation eased in late December.

2.11 December 1973

6th. Local authorities were asked to reduce street lighting by 50 per cent, in order to save fuel.

8th. At midnight on 7/8th a 50 mile/h speed limit was introduced on all roads not already subject to a lower limit, with the object of conserving fuel.

12th. Industrial action by the train drivers union, ASLEF, commenced, leading to disruption of rail services.

17th. From this date TV programmes ended at 10.30pm in order to save electricity. The ban on later programmes was relaxed at Xmas and New Year's Eve.

18th. About 8km of M5 between Dunball, north-east of Bridgwater, and Huntworth, south of Bridgwater, was opened to traffic.

28th. About 7km of M9, Stirling By-Pass, was opened.

31st. Large sections of industry went on to a 3-day working week, in order to reduce electricity consumption.

3. WEATHER

3.1 January 1973

Temperatures ranged from much above average over North Scotland to near average over southern districts of England and Wales, but sunshine amounts were below average everywhere. Rainfall was below average in most areas.

3.2 February 1973

Mean temperatures were a little above average over northern England and the Midlands and near average elsewhere. Rainfall was below average except in north and west Scotland. Sunshine varied from below average over south-west England to above average over east Scotland and England.

3.3 March 1973

Mean temperatures were about average in southern England and above average elsewhere. Sunshine amounts were above average in Wales and western England and average elsewhere. Rainfall was below average in all districts.

3.4 April 1973

Mean temperatures were below average everywhere. Sunshine totals were near average everywhere except north Scotland. Rainfall was below average in east Scotland, above average in East Anglia, north-east England and the Midlands, and near average elsewhere. There was some moderate to heavy rainfall over eastern and southern districts of England at the Bank Holiday week-end.

3.5 May 1973

Mean temperatures ranged from above average over north-west England and North Wales, to below average over Scotland and north-east England. Sunshine totals were near average over north Scotland, the Midlands, East Anglia and south-east England and below average elsewhere. Rainfall amounts were near average over north and east Scotland, North Wales and north England, and above average elsewhere. The Bank Holiday week-end started dry and warm, but unsettled weather moved in later.

3.6 June 1973

During the month temperatures were above average in most areas, while sunshine varied from above average over England and Wales to below over north Scotland. Rainfall was above average over north Scotland, the Midlands, east and south England, below average over north-west England, and average elsewhere.

3.7 July 1973

Mean temperatures were below average in most areas, and sunshine totals were below average everywhere except west Scotland. Rainfall totals were below average in Scotland and south and south-east England, average in south-west England and South Wales, and above average elsewhere.

3.8 August 1973

Temperatures were above average over most of England and Wales, particularly South Wales and southern England. Sunshine amounts were above average over east Scotland, North Wales and north-west England and near average elsewhere. Rainfall was near average in some areas and below average in most.

The Bank Holiday week-end was mainly dry and warm at first, but rain spread to all areas on 27th August.

3.9 September 1973

Mean temperatures were below average over north Scotland, about average over the rest of Scotland and eastern England, and above average elsewhere. Sunshine varied from a little below average over north and east Scotland to above average over east and south-east England. Rainfall was below average over east and west Scotland, above average over east and south-east England, and about average elsewhere.

3.10 October 1973

Mean temperatures were below, or much below, average in all districts. Sunshine was above average in Scotland, below average in the south-west, and about average elsewhere. Rainfall totals were near average or below.

3.11 November 1973

Temperatures ranged from near average over Wales, south-west and north-west England to much below average over north and east Scotland, north-east England and East Anglia. Sunshine amounts were above average in most districts except north and west Scotland. Rainfall was above average over north Scotland, about average over west Scotland, and below average elsewhere.

3.12 December 1973

The mean temperature varied from below average over north Scotland to above average over the Midlands and south-east England. Sunshine was below average over Scotland and above average over England and Wales except the south-west. Rainfall was above average in north and east Scotland and below average in the Midlands, East Anglia, and south-east England. There was occasional rain or drizzle generally over the Xmas period, and fog persisted in central areas of England on 25th December.

4. ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This report was prepared in the Accident Investigation Division of the Safety Department of the TRRL.

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Some events of interest to those investigating road safety: Almanac for 1973: H.D. JOHNSON, Department of the Environment , TRRL Supplementary Report 70 UC: Crowthorne, 1974 (Transport and Road Research Laboratory). This note contains a list of some of the principal events of 1973, together with a summary of weather, which may be of interest to those investigating road safety.

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