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**The following 5,000 words were an Addendum to my 160,000  
word Dissertation for My Middlesex University's Thesis  
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**A Background to the Cardington *Special* Driving Test;  
ADI NVQs; International Interest in Road Safety; and a  
look forward to potential changes in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century  
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The Cardington **SPECIAL** Driving Test is unique. It may only be taken by Approved Driving Instructors and it has been determined as the highest standard of driver testing available for any Professional Driving Instructors to pass. It was originally PLANNED as a **NIL-FAULT TEST**; but to save embarrassment for some later candidates it was re-rated as a **TWO-FAULT** test, and more recently to the current **THREE-FAULT** Test. The faults are only Minor-Driving faults, of course. As in all driving tests, any **Serious** or **Dangerous** faults/errors cause an automatic fail.

The format of this **Special** Driving Test was originally conceived at a meeting between representatives of examiners and instructors, held in November 1976, exactly three years after the foundation of the NJC-ADI Associations, at the instigation of the then Chief Driving Examiner Bill Smith, OBE. The original plan was to design a **special** driving test; that all ADIs could aspire to, but specifically for those who trained PDIs or re-trained existing ADIs. The initial agreed standard was the same as that required of Driving Examiners (at the end of their initial four weeks' examiner training at Cardington).

Mr Smith invited two representatives of the Driver Training Industry, H P C (Pat) Murphy, Chairman of the National Joint Council of ADI Organisations and Director General of the Motor Schools Association; and myself, Peter Russell, as the then General Secretary, and Training Officer of the NJC-ADIs, and Secretary of the Institute of Master Tutors of Driving, IMTD.

The result was the development of an "ADIs' **Special** Advanced Driving Test", using the Examiner Training Staff and their Department of Transport's marking system. It is important to remember that until this time no instructor had had any official access to

this; and I well remember Pat and myself, walking through the corridors of the newly-opened Driving Examiner Training Establishment and reading the various examples of '**DSA standard write-ups of errors made and reasons given why pupils fail**'. We also left each with our own personal copy of the DSA Training book (DT1) and marking sheets known as form DL25 and all our training course notes. These days ADIs are given copies of any new revised versions of the marking sheets, often even before some examiners receive them

During the following four months Pat & I met regularly with Kenneth Hester, Deputy Chief Driving Examiner (responsible for both the Examiner Training School, and the ADI Register); and John Alexander, Chief Instructor, and his Deputy-Chief, Ken Walkden, at the Department of Transport's newly opened Driving Establishment, at Cardington, Near Bedford, which had moved from Harmondsworth under the shadow of Heathrow's flightpath. Our task was to devise an acceptable format for an advanced driving test which only the best and most experienced ADIs could be reasonably expected to pass. This was initially set at the same level as that expected of driving examiners after their introductory training.

My greatest memory of those meetings came at the end of our three months' hard work, between November 1976 and February 1977, when Ken almost ran along the corridor at Friday lunch time, with the results of Pat's and my driving tests. Not only did he shout, "**You have both passed your No Fault Tests!**" He gave Pat and me what can only be described as huge enveloping cuddles, right in front of the twenty-four odd, Examiner Training Course trainees, some of whom were destined to take their own twenty-yard '**long Friday Corridor Walk**', to be told by Ken, that sadly, they had not reached the qualifying standard and were now being sent home: jobless. And with it, all their aspirations gone. The fear of that 'Friday morning walk' was the most disastrous moment in any potential Driving Examiners' life.

Subsequent initial ADI **Special** Driving Tests were conducted from March 1977 and led to some very disappointing results. Our target audience of N.J.C. Trainers, involved many senior ADIs who were actively involved in Trainee Instructor Training. However, following a very poor pass rate (only one out of the next nineteen applicants was successful), and further discussions, the Pass Level was lowered to what had soon become known as the "**Two-fault Test**". In recent years the test has been open to all Approved Driving Instructors regardless of why they wish to take it. A four-year re-test system exists for those who wish to confirm their skills.

### **The DSA INVOLVEMENT in the Extension of PDI DRIVER TRAINING and the Introduction of Continuing Professional Development for ADIs.**

Now that the Driving Standards Agency has become more actively involved in ways in which driver education can be brought into the senior school curriculum for under-seventeens, nevertheless, they are only touching their toes in the water at this stage. The DSA involvement consists of sending driving examiners into schools on odd occasions for short question and answer sessions with teenagers, ostensibly to demonstrate the human face of their future driving examiners. More productive ways of introducing driver education to the under-seventeens, as part of their ongoing '**Safe Driving for Life**' education, may well be needed; I am sure that better

methods will be developed that involve a more serious positive Civil Service approach to thinking and a specific intention to training will be shown.

In 1977 following a RoSPA Conference at Eastbourne, another level the DSA was urged by Dr Whitty, the new Roads Minister urged the Department for Road Safety to find ways in which C.P.D. would be made more acceptable to the driver training industry, at a cost that would still be acceptable to working instructors. Previous efforts by the DSA to carry out this work by themselves have failed dramatically, not the least because of the very high fees charged by the DSA for their staff and services. The DSA's normal Conference or Seminar prices of £150-£250 per day were priced on an 'at-cost basis', and contrasted badly with national Driver Training Association equivalents which are more usually priced at £25-£35 for a whole day including meals, but were sponsored by the Motor Trade and Insurance companies.

### **THE POTENTIAL FOR NVQs for ADIs**

Nationally, for the past thirty years, there has been a proliferation in **National Vocational Qualifications** including the introduction, thirteen years ago, of potential National Vocational Qualifications (NVQs) at level three in driving and driver training.

Unfortunately NVQ growth in this direction was initially directed by the LGV and the PCV market places. Car driving instructors must be registered, by law, with the DSA; but so far, Instructors who teach on vocational vehicles (Trucks, Buses and Coaches, and mainly LGV and PCV licence holders) are the only ones who can normally find 'Driver Training employment' and with it, the opportunity for employers to pay for additional training, qualifications and skills of their instructing staff. Sadly in 2001, there is no current compulsory government Registration of bus or of truck driving instructors – or any apparent desire to do so.

**The Bus & Coach Council** was assumed to be the Industry's "Lead Body" at the start of a new century. However, successive Roads Ministers and Secretaries of State for Transport, have traditionally been badly advised by their Civil Service 'masters'; that the only suitable standards of training, could be found in the driver training industry could only be those set up with Trade Union after WW2 to help in the form of Industry Training Boards for each government controlled industry: including House Building Trades, Transport, Civil Engineering, and Ship Building.

Even this advice, blatantly avoided the fact that there were only approximately 120 PCV instructors who are employed in the Bus and Coach industry nationally. And because bus drivers and other personnel in the bus driving industry are able (and are often required) to take NVQs, there was a strong desire by Bus and Coach Employers to enforce NVQs on those of their staff who train bus or truck drivers.

In its infinite wisdom, the General Council for NVQs then insisted that any NVQ in Driver Training must be applied across the whole range of the driver training industry. The Roads Safety Division of the Ministry of Transport, was fully aware of the real world of Instructor training, but found it better not to add any weight to the argument against their demands. Naturally car driver training involves the greater number of instructors (about 29,500 plus 1,500 trainees) compared with less than

500 in the bus industry and 950 in the truck industry; most of whom are not even registered with the Department of Transport's own ADI Register.)

Consequently for more than thirty years the Bus and Coach Council has been pressing the remainder of the industry for NVQs at Level 3 to be made available for **all** driving instructors regardless of the type of vehicle in which they teach. Unless the B&CC achieve this aim they will never receive the financial and educational backing that is required from GCNVQ to continue with their own plans. This Civil Service mentality, of absolute reliance on Trades Union dictats, continued for many years long after the heyday of Labour governments.

Nevertheless, the Road Transport Industry Training Board's (RTITB) guidelines for NVQs in driver training have been discussed and studied at length and no doubt will continue to do so. The current position (at the time of writing – February 2002) is that the **TRANSfED** National Training Organisation (the trading arm of the Bus and Coach Council) had been appointed as **the** National Training Organisation for NVQs in the driver training industry, by the Government; and it is still attempting to carry out a **Driving Instruction Standards Review** in relation to the whole industry. For most of those years I was the only car ADI sitting on that committee. . . (Discussions had commenced in 1988, however the previous meetings scheduled for January 2001 were held over for more than a year, because no one in the TRANSfED staff had any genuine experience of "basic car" driver training.)

The object of Bus or Truck training is to convert experienced car drivers to handle larger vehicles. The purpose of a car driving instructor' job is to enable a frightened pedestrian or cyclist to take total charge of a one-ton motor car until they can demonstrate a mediocre standard of ability to avoid making any serious or dangerous errors in a 35 minute pre-determined vehicle handling skill at the lowest acceptable standard for public safety.

**Imagine the challenges facing any Bus Driver Trainer, explaining the safety principles of reversing to the left, to any middle aged, retired headmistress, for the very first time!**

All trainee bus drivers will normally already hold a full car licence of course. To my disgust, as a qualified and experienced Department of Education school's classroom teacher: nowhere in **any** Bus & Coach Driver Trainers' Handbook was there any mention at all, of '**Teaching for Transfer**'; yet that is their true objective.

There is no doubt that NVQs for driving instructors will eventually find their place in the industry. It is recognised that both the previous and present governments were in favour of National Vocational Qualifications as a replacement for old style apprentice-ships or no qualifications at all. The weakness in the **TRANSfED** proposals has always been that all their assessment criteria are based around the sole needs of a bus-driver trainer.

Bus Instructors' clients have normally held full car driving licences and need to be experienced drivers before they can start their training. Consequently there is less need for basic instruction in vehicle control and road procedure that are the cornerstones of Learner driver training; and much more specific training in bus

vehicle handling skills; and, more pertinently, present NVQ assessments are based on satisfying employers' needs. With self-employed instructors one further stumbling block will always be: – **“Who sets the daily employers' parameters for an ADI?”**

If self-employed trainers lay down their own standards of acceptance, it means these standards will automatically be met, even if they are ridiculously low. This impasse is still being debated, with further meetings scheduled for some time beyond Summer 2001 and beyond the scope of this 'History'. . .

. . . It is interesting to note, that in normal and academic (University) education that the term NVQ: has only one connotation: **“Not Very Qualified”**.

During the time that I have been actively involved in the discussions on NVQs (from 1986 to date) the only apparent take-up by those in the car-training segment of the industry has been in those instructors who want to gain a personal NVQ “Assessors” qualification. A very small number of car driving instructors have already taken NVQ D32 and D33 Assessors' Courses and have subsequently been awarded these qualifications in the hope that they may become real assessors of their peer-group locally based driver trainers.

However, there has been virtually no real interest of the level-three qualification itself in the car instruction world. There is no doubt that this is essentially through lack of willingness of self-employed people to be assessed by their peers; with natural time and cost factors – three months and more than £500 in fees, payable to **TRANSfED**, naturally, alone are often quoted as the minimum – have also become great factors explaining why the whole system fails to find any ground-roots support.

Another serious setback to the development of NVQs at level three, (and which may have had an effect on the cancellation of the January 2001 meeting, still not yet reconvened), was the award of NVQs at level three, to three trainee instructors, none of whom had yet been able to pass their government Register part three examination. Fully qualified and experienced Approved Driving Instructors instantly saw this as proof that the NVQ certificate must have a lower level of acceptance than that of the DSA's examinations, even if the DSA failed to do so.

The trainees concerned were being prepared for their registration examinations by a non-**ORDIT** registered training body. ORDIT is the government's own **Official Register of Driving Instructor Training**. The ultimate effect of this action has yet to be seen.

Although it may be that the benefit of NVQs, it is obvious that many ADIs will eventually be seen by those who dislike examinations and therefore may be more willing to be subjected to the spot-check style of an NVQ assessment. My gut instincts tell me that those who dislike examinations, or are not prepared to risk taking them for fear of failing, will equally dislike the idea of an NVQ Assessor coming to visit their home and sit in on their driving lessons to 'Assess' the quality of instruction, and assessment given.

An absolute objection to NVQs in principle is one very simple factor, still fundamental to **ALL NVQs**. The standards of training must always be determined by the **NVQ**

**candidate's employer.** Virtually 90% of all ADIs are self-employed. So a simple answer to any keen Assessor asking if the candidate's training standards match the needs of their employer, can easily be answered with a definite and truthful **"Of COURSE!"**, and it will probably be confirmed by the candidate's spouse.

There is certainly a perceived need for this antipathy towards NVQs to change in the next few years, as driving instructors recognise the potential for a dual-track option. My own views have also changed as a consequence to continuing discussions with those involved in the broader streams of education. I now see some benefits that can accrue to self-employed people who will probably never change jobs, and yet who will not want to take the academic route to self-improvement.

Those with a truly academic bent will still remain convinced of the benefits of the **"training course, followed by a professional and matching assessment and qualification"** route; whilst the less-academic, more practical vocational route of NVQs will prove more attractive to those who are less capable or prepared to take written "A" level style examinations. However this is much more likely to happen if some form of motivation can be brought into the industry.

### INTERNATIONAL INTEREST AND AWARENESS



**This Group Photograph of European Driving Examiners, Driver Trainers and Government Officers, was taken in Best, 1988, in Holland, during one of dozens of European Commission Driver Training Conferences; the writer and the ADI Registrar, Brian Austin, can both be seen standing in the second row from the back, both wearing dark glasses (and Dutch clogs).**

Changes that are happening in the United Kingdom driver training business are of great interest to many other countries and their own driver training authorities. It is my privilege at this stage to have been one of two British representatives on a

European Union and a CIECA (The International Association of Driving Test Organisations) Joint European Working Party on the extension of driver training programmes for new drivers after they have passed their initial practical driving test. There is no doubt that the decisions of the European Union will eventually require driver training to be a continuous process, rather than something that ends with the removal of L plates: or in as tragic road death.

One of the outstanding problems currently facing the driver training and testing industries all over the world is that whilst drivers are living in a world of IT and modern training methods, professional Approved Driving Instructors and even Driving Examiners those in the UK are still working in a 'cottage industry'. The essence of the problem (faced by this project) is that ADIs are not always able to see the benefits of further training, and are unable to devote sufficient time and money to professional Research & Development; and – as yet – are unlikely to benefit financially as a direct result of taking any pertinent additional higher and further qualifications.

On the other hand an interesting quote was received by e-mail last year from the **“United States US Transportation Research Board Conference 2000”**, held at their annual Washington Conference in January 2000; this stated:-

*“That those same people whose VCRs have been flashing at 12.00 for the past decade are now going to be driving cars with Global Positioning Systems navigational aids, on-board Internet, Heads-Up Display units on the windscreens, and doing this on roads that are wired up for information display and road pricing toll systems.*

***“Who is going to re-educate them?”***

This report further stated:

### **The Conference Report of the US Transportation Research Board**

*“With the rather ominous prospect of information befuddled drivers on the horizon, the Transportation Research Board is gearing up for a large-scale effort to find out more about drivers' capabilities and what kind of preparation they will need for vehicles and roads of the future. At the Washington conference, the committee on Vehicle User Characteristics identified several areas for research attention:*

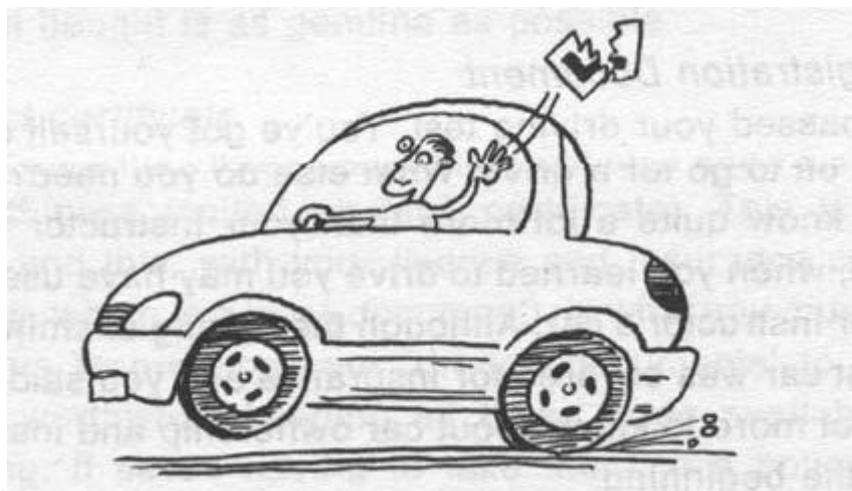
*“OLDER DRIVERS – by the year 2020, drivers aged 65 years and older will account for more than 20% of the U.S. driving population. It will be important to know more about how they handle the upcoming changes and how life can be made easier (e.g. with larger road signs).*

*“YOUNG DRIVERS - Due to the "baby boom echo", this age group will also increase as a percentage of the U.S. driving population. Researchers will focus on graduated licensing systems, mobility needs of young drivers, and the effects of age on risk-taking behaviour.*

*“DISABLED DRIVERS - There are currently about 750,000 disabled drivers, and this group will also increase in numbers. But they will benefit from technological changes in vehicles and better rehabilitation facilities. As vehicles move from mechanically linked controls to electronically operated, special needs will become easier to accommodate.*

*“However, the Vehicle User Characteristics Committee observed that, although technologies can make life easier for drivers and other road users in the coming decade, complacency and loss of **“situational awareness”** are seen by safety researchers as potentially serious problems.”*

**An interesting feature of the above report is that the full details of this and similar reports are now put onto the web, and sent out as e-mails within hours of publication.**



**Who is responsible for the Driving Behaviour of newly qualified drivers? Is it the Examiners? Instructors? Parents? or Secretaries of State for Transport? Why do I blame Parents?**

## **DRIVER TRAINING, and TESTING IN THE 21ST CENTURY**

Some of the more forward thinking driver trainers are already changing, or trying to change, by increasing their range of qualifications to face modern testing methods and, at the same, time to increase their income potential by widening their range of clients.

**Historically, the role of the driving instructor is assumed to have been to help learner drivers to pass a minimal driving test. End of story!**

Nevertheless, today, ‘Driver Education’ is concerned with the whole syllabus of driving; as demonstrated by the DSA's "recently published ***Driving Syllabus***. Just as no one assumes that by passing a grade one piano examination they will never need any more training, so I have argued for more than 45 years the need to continue with driver training – a greater range of learning and gaining greater understanding – throughout all forms of driving. The DSA's catchphrase for the past ten years has been that ***“passing the driving test is not the end of learning to drive, only the***

**beginning**'. This has been the ethos applied by myself and other like-minded driver trainers for many years.

Driver training in business has been proven, not only eventually to save lives, but almost immediately to save time and money too.

The application of a pro-active defensive driver training programme in business, not only reduces accidents and crashes, it also demonstrates to Company & Fleet vehicle operators that when drivers look further ahead and pro-actively plan for what changes are imminent they save fuel by not accelerating into hazardous situations. This saves brake and tyre wear as well and allows for better overall travelling speeds, which also lead to making better and safer progress.

Since 1992 after retiring from my role as general secretary at the Driving Instructors Association, I have been working in the commercial world of teaching experienced 'company' drivers in the fleet and corporate markets. Our company makes use of some of the highest qualified instructors and driving assessors in the country. I rarely carry out any practical training myself, except in most unusual circumstances; but I do plan and write all the individual training programmes that our instructors use. During this time my own training company has been able to demonstrate that commercial clients are willing to pay much more realistic prices for their staff, than learner drivers do, provided that they can be shown that there is a 'profit' to them as a result of these driving assessments and associated training. Naturally we did not begin and develop our company without sound market research beforehand. An initial gut feeling was readily substantiated in practice. A significant difference between commercial research and academic research lies in the principle that businesses have to risk their own money on the results.

Early reliance on this proof was originally based on a reduction of accidents and reduced insurance claims, and eventually insurance premiums. In this sense the corporate driver training industry has become essentially insurance-led. However there is now a different element playing a greater role. It is noteworthy that Health and Safety Regulations are now playing a much greater part in Fleet and Corporate driver training. It is also significant that government thinking is that all drivers need training or re-training in their **work place**. To do this suitably qualified driver trainers are required.

This apparent quantum leap of logic was very strongly supported by the dual appointment of the DETR's Minister for Roads, (Lord 'Larry' Whitty) who had underlined his Transport Minister's Road Safety role by also being responsible to the government as Minister for Health & Safety at Work. But like all butterflies all Ministers for Roads and Secretaries of State for Transport only reign briefly. Briefly enough to flower and make themselves well known as they flutter in the breeze; but doomed to fade and disappear up their own exhaust pipes, before any of their innovations can be given the kiss of life.



**Fleet and Company Vehicle Drivers are the third most unsafe group of drivers;  
After young and new-drivers; and Police drivers.  
(According to most recent government statistics)**

One of the stated intentions of the Minister had been to bring home the message of the need for all company drivers to take additional training in their work place. The current definition of a company driver has been agreed as anyone who uses a vehicle, whether a company car van or truck, or their own private vehicle which is only used occasionally. It is also felt that all company drivers should be required to have their risk potential assessed and to take additional training on a regular basis.

It is also worth noting at this point that many companies are now prepared to have their drivers assessed and re-trained; and are perfectly willing to pay sums in excess of £250 per day (even this is cheap when compared – say – to one-to-one training in IT where daily rates of £750+ per day are common). These sums contrast markedly with the 'norm' of driving lesson fees paid for L test lessons which are often less than £12 per hour. This latter sum does not even total a gross figure of £100 per working day out of which all their vehicle running costs have to be met.

If Driving instructors in the 21st Century intend to make their mark as professional operators in a worthwhile professional occupation, and one that brings a marked effect on road safety for the next one hundred years they have their work cut out for them. One of the first things they will have to do is to improve the professional standards of those already at the top of the industry ladder. Next they will have to ensure that they charge professional prices for professional services. This has been proved possible outside the learner driver market and can equally do so for new drivers too. One only has to contrast the price of a pair of trainers that will be bought by or for new clients, with a pair of driving lessons, and ask the purchasers what is the best value.

There is scope for greater use of computerised simulators both for training and testing; there is a desperate need for Educators to recognise the need for driver behaviour training to be started at school to compensate for the 'dangerous' values which their parents and peers demonstrate daily to them, long before they are old enough to gain a provisional licence to drive.

Finally there is the equally important need to develop a driving test system based on progressive and recognised stages of competence. Who will be the brave Secretary of State for Transport willing to grasp the nettle and 'save drivers for life'?

However the over-riding factor in prices, charges and costs has to be that there is a perceived value for money. The 21st Century, might, just be the time when driver training becomes recognised as a profession and not just an industry.

Peter Russell (February 2002)

**DERF      SOUTHAMPTON**

**This was an essential Addendum to my 2001 FULL Doctoral Dissertation**

(4,000 words