

The Highway Code (AgInt03,8b)

Journalist: The Highway Code was first conceived in 1931. It really is a masterpiece. It's very important. It's up there with the complete works of Shakespeare, with the Bible. Why do I say that? I'd say that because between 1918 and 1937, some 200,000 people were killed on our roads and the reason was that there was total anarchy. So at the RAC [Royal Automobile Club], it was the brainchild of someone called Mervyn O'Gorman who was on the RAC Motoring Committee and he came up with the idea that we should have this code which all drivers should follow.

Now it's evolved over seventy years. It has adapted to the times. We saw the introduction of speed limits on motorways in 1965, we saw warnings on drink driving in the 70's, in the most recent editions there are warnings about the use of mobile phones. But the thing that has probably changed the most is the number of traffic signs that are now in the Highway Code.

In a recent survey that we conducted, we actually found that people's ignorance of signs was quite amazing. For example, a sign that shows wild fowl, people actually thought it meant puddles in the roads, or the sign that shows to beware of side winds people actually thought it was a kite flying area. Or the sign that says no motorised vehicles people thought it meant beware of fast motorbikes. So it just goes to show that many of us really need to go back to school to take up the Highway Code and read it again and learn those signs.

Warning: A life on the road, taking risks, may be a gay one, but it will be a short one as well. Take things slowly and remember the old saying: "It's better to be late in this world than early in the next."