

1) "Mr Woodford, can you tell us your story? How did you come to road safety?"

It was an event from my childhood that had a profound effect on me. At the age of fourteen, I witnessed a fatal crash involving a car and a motorcyclist. I had no connection with the accident and was just walking along the pavement, but the way a split second can suddenly change lives profoundly altered how I viewed the world. It was a common accident where the car driver exiting from a side road, simply hadn't looked properly and seen the approaching motorcyclist, and had moved out in his path.

I can still vividly remember the motorcyclist lying on the ground with his white helmet removed and blood coming out of his ears. It started a lifelong passion for road safety and in my teenage years I began a campaign to make the use of daytime running lights on motorcycles compulsory, eventually meeting with the Transport Minister of the time, Peter Bottomley. In such accidents the motorcyclist is almost inevitably the innocent party, but having a bright light on during daytime makes them much easier to see. Whenever I travel on the roads and see potential accident sites, wherever they may be in the world, I take photographs and then write to the authorities seeking remedial actions. I established the Safer Roads Foundation (SRF), a UK registered charity, some 15 years ago, and the Foundation has literally made thousands of locations safer. If your readers would like to learn more they can do so by visiting SRF's website, through the link: <http://www.saferroadsfoundation.org/>

2) "Your Foundation has funded many projects around the world. Can you tell us some of your successes that you are most proud of?"

The work we have done in Thailand has been incredibly satisfying, in particular the introduction of speed, red light running, and non-helmet wearing enforcement cameras, the latest of these was implemented earlier this year in the province of Chiang Mai, where non-helmet wearing cameras were installed at five sites. In this province alone it is estimated that it will save over 100 lives a year by dramatically increasing helmet wearing.

The first major scheme SRF carried out was in 2015, which related to the Mittraphap Arterial. This was a scheme where the main north to south motorway runs through Thailand's second city of Khon Kaen, where speeds had to come down from 120km/hr to 80km/hr or 60km/hr. On this 14km section of road, in just one year there were 551 reported accidents. Once the scheme was implemented, fatalities fell by over 40%.

It was wonderful working collaboratively with the Khon Kaen Road Safety Foundation (KKRSF), from the trauma hospital, local government and the police. From all the countries in which we are involved, Thailand is the easiest to get things done. There is such a sincere welcoming of support, rather than a resentment that you are raising issues. What we try to do in Thailand and elsewhere is show by example what can be achieved and encourage the local and national government to adopt comparable initiatives across the kingdom in their hundreds.

In relation to changing standards, the project which has saved most lives was campaigning for the 'Automatic Headlight On' (AHO) feature for powered two-wheelers in India, which we have continued to champion around the world. I visited India on many occasions with Antonio Avenoso, Executive Director of the European Transport Safety Council (ETSC) and we met three different permanent secretaries, and the Supreme Court Judge who had been appointed by the country's parliament to identify actions to reduce the carnage on the country's roads. In working closely with the Ministry of Transport and persuading the Society of Indian Automobile Manufacturers (SIAM) to drop their resistance, in 2017 legislation was passed making AHO mandatory for all bikes manufactured in the country, which is more than 25 million each year! If you go to India today you will see the dramatic effect of this with an ever-increasing vehicle population incorporating the feature.

3) "In your opinion, will the objective set by the EU Commission for the reduction of 50% of road victims be attainable by 2030?"

I certainly believe it is attainable if there is the political will. What encourages me most about Europe is that the European Transport Safety Council (ETSC), led by an exceptional individual, Antonio

Avenoso, who is totally dedicated to reducing the misery associated with road accidents, has a strong working rapport with the European Commission and with the Member States and can help put on the agenda the most important actions. These being:

- Common speed limit on the trans-European network and a widespread use of a 30 km/hr limit in urban areas;
- Vehicle safety is fundamental – technologies for example, Intelligent Speed Assistance (ISA) and alcohol interlocks;
- Infrastructure for safety schemes on rural and urban roads.

These are just three areas, but we have to look at these in the framework of a safe system approach, where all the measures come together supporting one another.

4) "Do you have any tips for people who want to make a contribution to road safety in their city?"

Many people believe they can't change things in their own city but they can. What is important is to put the concerns in writing, as a phone call can just be ignored. Write to the most senior responsible individual, if need be the Mayor. If helpful, involve the local councillor and if nothing is done, then the local papers. There are some very good people involved in municipal governments, but there are also those who are either passive or indifferent and need to be pushed. In essence, just be relentlessly persistent!



BEFORE

Chiang Mai (Thailand)



AFTER



BEFORE

Giardini Naxos (Italy)



AFTER