

Five-a-day



Five families a day are bereaved by road crashes in Great Britain

Last year, 1754 people died on Britain's roads; this was 147 fewer than in 2011. Despite this welcome decrease, five people were still killed every day on our roads, with each death leaving behind many more bereaved family members and friends. Here we share the experiences of five families whose loved ones were among those killed during 2012; their stories illustrate the daily toll of road death and the devastation this brings to families.



On Monday 7th May 2012 **Ben Andrews** (19) went to meet his friends for a game of football after work. At about 9.30 that evening Ben's dad, Paul, found out that Ben's car had been involved in a crash on the A354 at Pimperne, Dorset and that Ben was in a bad way and trapped in

his car. He arrived at the scene promptly and comforted Ben whilst waiting for the emergency services to arrive. Ben had suffered severe internal trauma and lost his fight for life at 11pm.

The crash was caused by a 19 year old driver who was over the alcohol limit, speeding and on the wrong side of the road. He was jailed for 32 months for causing death by careless driving when under the influence of alcohol but is likely to serve only 12 months.

Ben's father Paul said: "Ben's death has had a devastating effect on his close family and friends and there is a hole in our lives that cannot ever be filled. Ben was funny, kind, caring, loving and the best son, brother and friend you could ask for and we will never be the same again because he is not here with us".

This tragedy was unnecessary, and all because the driver decided to get in his car and drive rather than get a taxi home. Ben's family hopes that one day the driver will be able to talk about what he did and raise further awareness of why people shouldn't drink and drive and the devastating effect it has on all those involved. ■



Mike Ellis (41) was at work on 2nd April 2012 and had been out to test ride a motorcycle he had been repairing. On his way back through the business park, an 18 tonne delivery lorry came to a stop as the driver realised he had missed his turning. He chose to reverse more than 100m back up

the hill. Mike was stopped behind him and unable to get out of the way in time. He was knocked off his motorbike and dragged under the wheels for more than 80m before the lorry driver noticed anything was wrong. He died at the scene from horrific crush injuries.

The CPS chose not to prosecute the driver, stating that there were no witnesses and that the driver had claimed he had checked his mirrors. Despite the excessive distance reversed up a one-way street the CPS stated that because the road was on a 'private estate' the one-way system was 'unenforceable'.

At the inquest, the Coroner noted the excessive distance reversed by the lorry but concluded that it is the 'responsibility of those behind lorries to make themselves seen'. In response, Mike's wife Barbara is now campaigning for rear-view cameras to be fitted on all commercial vehicles. This would ensure that drivers have to take responsibility for knowing and seeing what is behind them before they reverse, in the hope that such a horrific death does not occur in this way again.

Barbara said: "Mike was an amazing husband, step-dad to three children, son and brother. An ex-RAC patrolman, he would stop anywhere to help anyone." He and Barbara had been planning to spend more time together as the last of their three children was moving out after finishing university. ■



Five-a-day 2012



Sarah Child (26) and her sister Claire (24) were crossing the road near their parents' house on 28th July 2012 when they were hit by a speeding driver. Sarah died at the roadside and Claire suffered serious leg injuries. With CCTV evidence, the police calculated the driver was doing at least 64mph in

a 40mph speed limit.

After several months, the driver eventually pleaded guilty to Causing Death by Dangerous Driving. He was sentenced to 6 years imprisonment but with 2 years off for his guilty plea. He was also banned from driving for 5 years. The driver was not given an interim ban.

Sarah's family had to fight to get information about the investigation and trial and were told that if the driver had not paid for a second post mortem, Sarah's body would not even have been released for burial!

Sarah's mother said she "had to fight with the CPS to have any knowledge of the process. Sarah was killed by the driver, but the CPS and police took away our rights as Sarah's parents. Our justice system needs to change and give rights back to the victim's family". ■



On 3rd July 2012 **Baz Cottle** (19) was a passenger in a car driven by one of his friends in Bristol.

Though the road was wet and slippery, the car was driven at 30-50mph above the 30mph limit and the driver lost control of the vehicle. Baz, who was sitting behind the driver, was thrown 6ft

from the car and suffered fatal head injuries. The driver and two more passengers emerged from the crash with minor injuries.

During the court hearing, Baz's family walked out of the court room disgusted at the sentence, after

hearing the driver was given credit for pleading guilty. He was sentenced to a total of 21 months in a Young Offenders' Institution and given a three year driving ban. They are still angry at how their son's death was dealt with by the criminal justice system and believe that "cases where people are killed by dangerous drivers should be treated as manslaughter cases".

Baz is deeply missed by his family. His mother said, "Baz was an extremely caring son who I think about every waking moment of the day. When you lose your parents you lose your past, but when you lose your child you lose your future". ■



On 16th October 2012 **Hilary Lee** (66) was knocked off her bike and run over by a lorry in Barnet High Street, North London. She was one of 14 cyclists who met a similar fate in collisions with HGVs during 2012.

Hilary was fit, active and vivacious throughout her life, professionally, personally and socially. A very special person much loved by everyone and who touched the lives of so many. She was always very caring and fitted naturally into her role as a Social Worker for adults with learning disabilities.

In April, six months after the crash, the police sent their accumulated evidence to the CPS, asking for them to consider a prosecution for 'Causing Death by Careless Driving.' Hilary's family is still waiting for a decision and sincerely wishes that the outcome of all that follows will go some way to diminish the risk that lorries pose to others so that no one else has to endure the same heartache.

Hilary's husband Geoff says: "Lorries with blind spots, high ground clearance without deflection guards, lack of driver training, inappropriate use in certain areas at certain times are unacceptable and should be the subject of legislation." ■

This briefing is dedicated to all the people killed on our roads during 2012 and their families. To the 1,754 recognised in the official count must be added all those deaths that occurred longer than 30 days after the crash, making a probable total in excess of 1,850.

RoadPeace, the national charity for road crash victims, continues to campaign to reduce road danger, to work for an improved post-crash response and to highlight the injustices that families encounter. For more information about our work please visit our website www.roadpeace.org