

CASE STUDY

IF YOU'RE BEING DISTRACTED OR EGGED ON BY YOUR MATES, JUST REMEMBER IT'S NOT THEM WHO'LL BE PAYING THE FINE AND GETTING POINTS ON THEIR LICENCE!



SASHA'S STORY



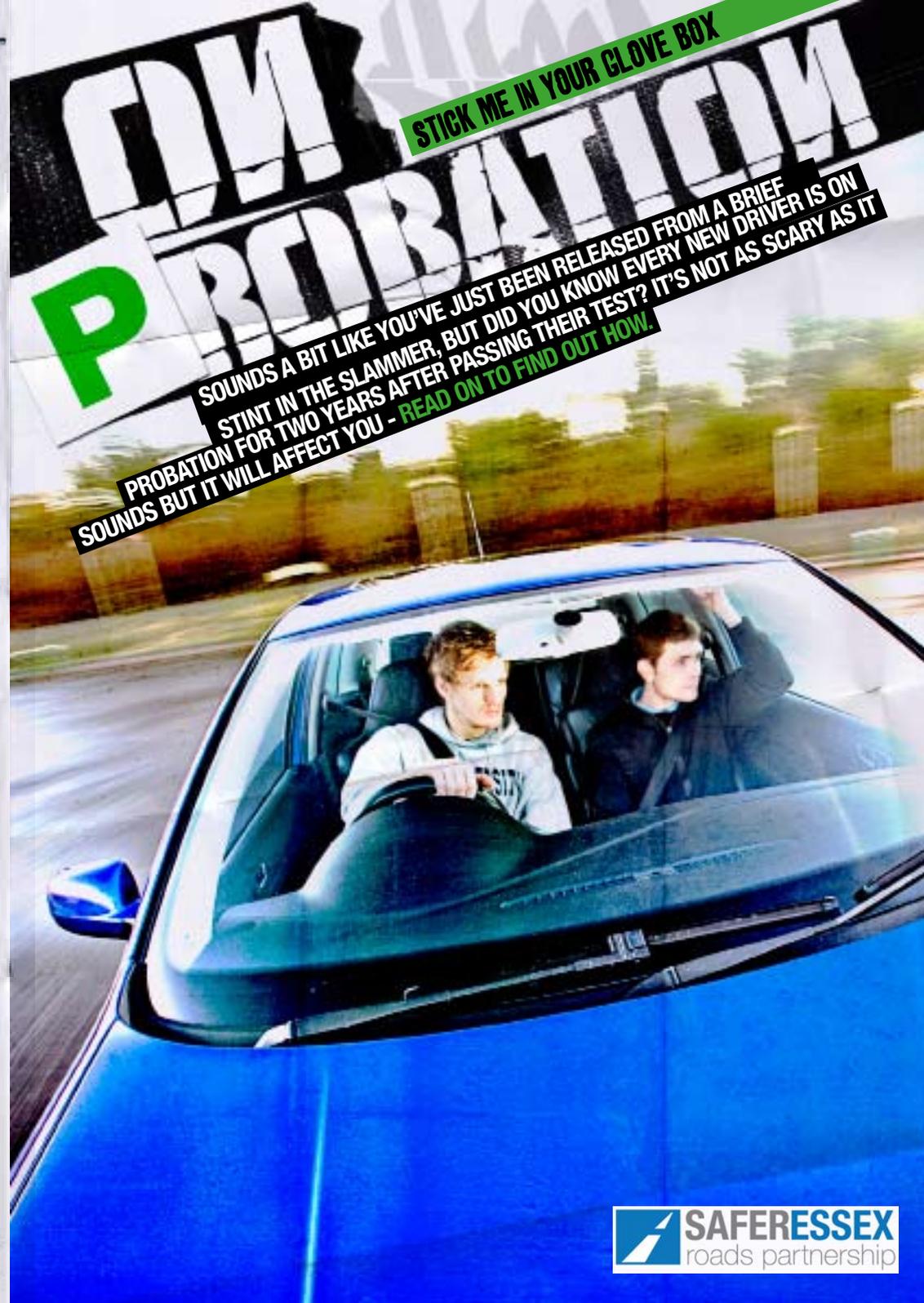
BEING ONE OF THE OLDEST IN MY YEAR, I GOT TO START LEARNING REALLY EARLY. LUCKILY MY PARENTS AGREED TO PAY FOR MY LESSONS AND I PASSED MY TEST ONLY FIVE MONTHS AFTER STARTING! APPARENTLY I WAS A QUICK LEARNER.

My Renault Clio quickly became the Year 12 taxi, and it was all going well until the day I drove back from a weekender in Sheffield, when with a car full of mates, I got flashed by a speed camera on the A1(M). The speed limit kept changing from 50mph to 70mph and back again; with everything going on in the car I just couldn't concentrate. I was pretty pissed off with my mates because I'd kept asking them to let me focus on driving - then I got flashed. Stung by a £60 fine and three points, I was on edge everywhere I went. Driving just wasn't fun any more!

About a year later I'd pretty much got over the worrying and knew I had only another seven months until my probationary period was over. But August must be my unlucky month, because on

a trip to check out uni halls in Guildford I made a very silly mistake. It was an area I didn't really know and whilst trying to navigate around the city centre, I accidentally went through a red light a few seconds after it had turned red - I was flashed by another camera. My heart sank; I knew instantly what had happened.

Having to start again, I passed the theory test first time. But having picked up so many bad habits it took me ten lessons and two attempts to get through my practical again. If I could give one piece of advice to new drivers, it would be to avoid getting any points at all. Driving knowing that one wrong move could cause you to lose your licence is no fun, and making that wrong move is even less fun!



PROBATION

STICK ME IN YOUR GLOVE BOX

SOUNDS A BIT LIKE YOU'VE JUST BEEN RELEASED FROM A BRIEF STINT IN THE SLAMMER, BUT DID YOU KNOW EVERY NEW DRIVER IS ON PROBATION FOR TWO YEARS AFTER PASSING THEIR TEST? IT'S NOT AS SCARY AS IT SOUNDS BUT IT WILL AFFECT YOU - READ ON TO FIND OUT HOW.

WHAT IS THE PROBATIONARY PERIOD?

IT'S A BIT LIKE when you start a new job and you're put on a six-month 'trial'; your employer is making sure you're not rubbish before committing to let you work permanently, with all the rights and privileges of someone who's been working there for years. It's the same with driving. You're automatically on a two-year probationary period from when you pass your practical test; during those two years you're allowed to clock up six points before your licence is

turned green again. That's right, back to wearing L-plates until you've passed all the tests, just like before.

Once you're out of probation it'll take 12 points before you lose your licence, but for the first two years it's just the six – and they're easier to clock up than you might think! Remember that once you have your first three points, the next set means **GAME OVER**. Driving can be stressful enough without having to worry if one silly mistake is going to cost you your licence.

10 WAYS TO LOSE YOUR LICENCE

DRINK DRIVING

Drive, or even attempt to drive when you're over the limit, and it's an instant 12-month ban that'll stay on your record for 11 years! Yep, insurers won't like that much either.

DRUG DRIVING

Think it's less serious than drink driving? You're wrong; driving whilst unfit through (even prescription) drugs carries an instant ban for at least 12 months.

SPEEDING

Break the speed limit and you'll get between three and six points. If you regularly drive too fast, you could be snapped twice and not realise until it's too late.

RED LIGHT JUMPING

Going through a red light clocks up three points, and not much gets past red light cameras! Concentrate and leave yourself plenty of space to brake.

TYRES

Tyres help you stay in control of your car. If they're worn below the legal minimum tread depth of 1.6mm, you can look forward to a penalty of three points per illegal tyre.

MOBILE PHONE

If you talk, text or even play with your phone whilst driving, it's a straight three points. CCTV footage can now be used too, so no good just keeping an eye out for the fuzz.

NO INSURANCE

Driving without insurance scores you 6-8 points; the police may take your car too. It'll cost you £150 to retrieve it plus £20 per day storage. Alternatively they'll crush it for you.

CARELESS DRIVING

Drive like an idiot and you can expect to be walking soon. Get caught and the enormous fine will be the least of your worries, as this offence carries 3-9 points.

DRIVING OFF

If you're in a smash (or even a bump), make sure you stop and exchange details, otherwise it's anywhere between three and nine points. See accident checklist opposite.

ABANDONING YOUR CAR

If you leave your car in a dangerous position it could be towed away – and you'll be given three points for the inconvenience you've caused.

ACCIDENT CHECKLIST

NOBODY WANTS TO CRASH, BUT IF YOU DO, MAKE SURE YOU'VE GOT THIS SHEET HANDY, ALONG WITH A PEN AND SHEET OF PAPER. IF IT ALL GOES PEAR-SHAPED, JUST FOLLOW THE INSTRUCTIONS.

FIRST:

- If a car involved has failed to stop, take their registration or a description (make, model, colour) as quickly as possible.
- Call the police if there's debris on the road or an obstruction to traffic – or if any other driver is aggressive or uncooperative.
- Switch on your hazard lights and, if possible, move the vehicles involved to a safe place. Assess any injuries and offer first aid if you can – if anyone has been injured, contact the police or ambulance service immediately.

ACCIDENT INFORMATION:

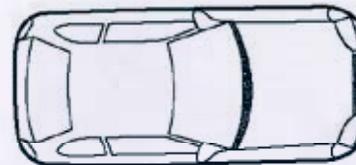
Date: Time: Weather conditions:
Road conditions: Road where accident occurred:
Brief description of what happened:

OTHER VEHICLES:

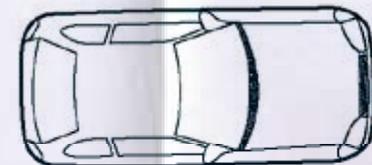
Note: If more than one other vehicle is involved, make sure you collect their details too.

Registration: Make & model: Colour:
Driver's name: Description of driver:
Contact number: Car's insurer:
Policy number: Insurer's contact number:

DAMAGE TO VEHICLES:



YOUR VEHICLE



OTHER VEHICLE



SNAP IT!

Don't forget to take photos of the scene and the cars involved – use a phone camera if you have one.

YOUR DETAILS:

Fill this section in right away, so in the event of an accident, you can simply tear it out and hand it over.

Registration: Make & model:
Colour: Driver's name:
Contact number: Car's insurer:
Policy number: Insurer's contact number:

REMEMBER:

- Don't admit liability – even if you think it was your fault
- Don't put yourself in danger to make the area safe – call the police
- Don't leave valuables in your car if you have to leave it, as it could be looted
- Contact the police – if anyone has been hurt or the other driver is uninsured
- Contact your insurance company as soon as possible after the accident