



Rees Jeffreys
Road Fund

Celebrating **75**
years

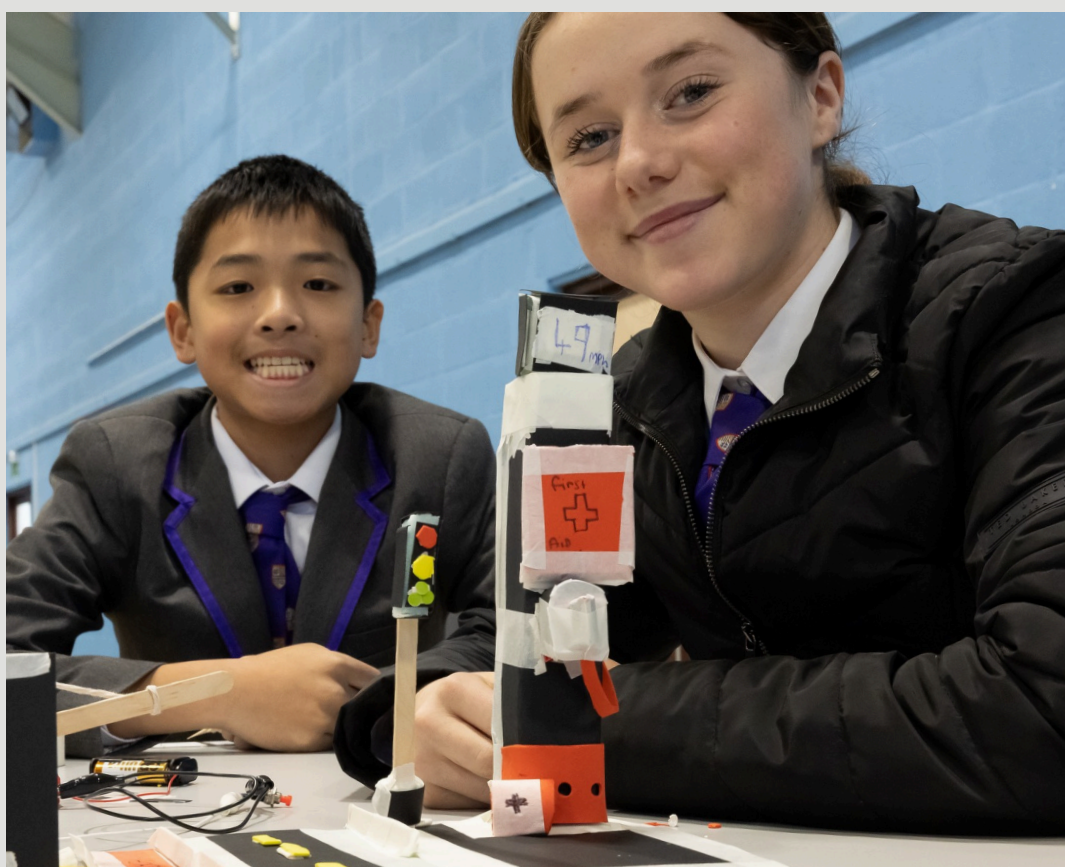


Photo credit front page: The IET Faraday Challenge

...because roads matter to all of us.



Rees Jeffreys Road Fund is a charity providing grants and bursaries to encourage better and safer roads.

It was founded in 1950 by William Rees Jeffreys, a leading authority on the development of roads.

On the 75th anniversary of the charity, this report celebrates and records our work, pursuing the vision of William Rees Jeffreys and contributing to road-related education and training, transport research, and improvements in the roadside environment.



**Roadside Rests
across the UK**

Before he died, William Rees Jeffreys produced a pamphlet with the RAC illustrating his ideas for Roadside Rests.

Since the creation of Rees Jeffreys Road Fund over 75 Roadside Rests have been funded – places where road users can safely pull off the road and admire a spectacular view.

The Fund's trustees marked the 75th birthday of the Fund at the Roadside Rest at High and Over in East Sussex, which says, "It was the wish of William Rees Jeffreys that others should share his enjoyment of this view."

Because roads matter to all of us



**William
Rees
Jeffreys**

1871 - 1954

With the extensive road network we have in the UK today, it is difficult to imagine a time when it didn't exist. But we have a national network of hard surfaced roads and motorways connecting towns and cities in large part thanks to William Rees Jeffreys.

William was a keen cyclist, and this ignited his drive to improve the safety of roads, particularly to address what were then mostly dusty dirt tracks. With the development of motorised transport, William's vision for UK roads also grew. He imagined a logically planned, well-maintained network of roads connecting cities, bringing economic growth and prosperity.

William held many key roles in campaign and membership organisations, as well as leading the first government road authority.

In 1950, when the Fund was created, there were around 2 million cars. They were regarded as a luxury but, in reality, were uncomfortable. There were few places to stop on the newly built road network and take a break from this discomfort. So William Rees Jeffreys envisaged safe places to pull off the road and admire a spectacular view whilst taking a break. The Fund created a network of over 75 roadside rests still used today.

Now cars are common place, comfortable, reliable and places to stop are part of day to day travel. The road users' focus now is more likely to be on congestion and roadworks, as well as road safety.

The Fund's continues William's life work by focusing on research, training and education to support better and safer roads for all of us in the future.

EDUCATION & TRAINING



We've launched our FREE
to all e-Learning course
An introduction to FHRG
Carbon Calculation &
Accounting Standard (CCAS)



Education and training have always been a core focus for the Fund.

In 1950, hardly any universities researched transport engineering, traffic or transport economics. Since its early days, the Fund has supported academic posts and student study. Now there is an active focus on transport in UK universities in part thanks to funding from Rees Jeffreys Road Fund. Today the Fund collaborates with a dozen universities to provide bursaries towards fees for around 8 students a year. In the last 30 years funding has been made to over 200 postgraduate bursaries, PhDs, fellowships and lecture positions. We know of over 50 of these individuals filling roles in transport in a wide range of organisations, with some becoming trustees of the Fund.

In recent decades we have focused on wider skills development of transport professionals, in line with the wishes of William Rees Jeffreys. In 1999 we commissioned the Transport Skills for the New Millennium report and developed the Transport Visions project for transport professionals under 35. This has morphed into the highly impactful, volunteer-led Future Transport Visions Group, which has already delivered 3 successful programmes offering early career professionals a unique development opportunity.

Ensuring transport professionals can access the skills they need remains a strong focus for the Fund. This has led to funding the Local Council Road Innovation Group online training platform and funding CIHT to develop and offer Carbon Accounting training free to everyone.

60% of MSc Bursary recipients between 2017 and 2022 are still working in transport in a range of organisations.

EDUCATION & TRAINING



These days the Fund feels a responsibility in supporting the pipeline of future transport professionals, funding projects aimed at inspiring young people to consider a career in transport.

These included Fun Kids Radio “Roads to 2050”; The Institution of Engineering and Technology’s Faraday Challenge; The Brilliant Club “Can you shape your city?” and the Arkwright Scholarship programme.

The Fund takes an inclusive approach, and funded Living Paintings to develop 3-D books to educate vision-impaired children about roads.



In 2024, we launched our Ready for the Future grant scheme, equipping transport professionals with new skills via funding for courses they would otherwise not be able to access.



WE'RE INVESTING IN
**FUTURE SKILLS FOR
TRANSPORT
PROFESSIONALS**

READY FOR THE FUTURE?

**Grants for people who can fill
the skills gaps of the future in
the transport sector.**



7,011 school children took part in
the 2023-24 IET Faraday Challenge

RESEARCH PROJECTS

Research became more of a focus for Rees Jeffreys Road Fund in recent decades.

Road Safety

William Rees Jeffreys was keenly interested in road safety. In the 1990's the Fund contributed core funding to the Parliamentary Advisory Council for Transport (PACTS), including a forward-looking Agenda for Road Safety. This was followed by funding the Road Safety Foundation extension of EURORAP risk-mapping to Britain; Northern Ireland Road Safety Council's risk portal; and Transform Scotland's trial of continental-style pedestrian crossings. Some of the research helped to shape Government policy, including IAM RoadSmart's Car infotainment systems & driver distraction study in 2019 and TRL's 2021 report on new driver graduated licensing, which was widely reported in the press.

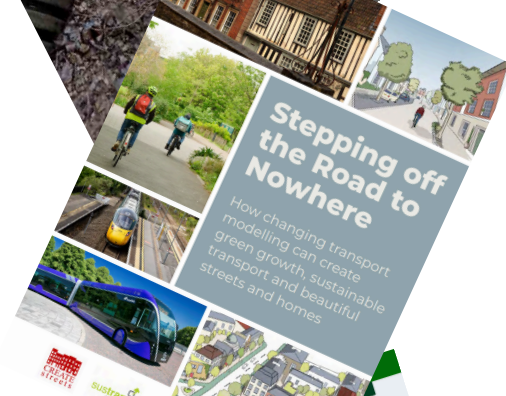
Roadside environment

William Rees Jeffreys cared greatly that roadsides should be attractive and we believe he would be concerned about the environmental impact of roads today. Projects we have funded in this area include the highly impactful 2017 Wildflowers on the Verge guidance by Plantlife ultimately leading to the "no mow May" campaign; ADEPT's Value of Trees and Green Linear Asset Management toolkits and many more.

Innovation

In 2021 the Fund celebrated 150 years since the birth of William Rees Jeffreys by launching the 150 Competition aimed at encouraging innovation for the future of roads.

70 % of Local Authorities adopted the Plantlife's Good Verge guidance by 2023



RESEARCH PROJECTS

Influencing transport policy and practice

As William Rees Jeffreys spent much of his life trying to influence policy and practice around roads, the Fund continues to support projects to develop policy and practice for the future. This included funding the Institution of Highways and Transportation to research Public Transport in New Developments in 1996, a topic we returned to later with Transport for New Homes, and “Getting off the Road to Nowhere” by Create Streets and Sustrans.

Other research has been extremely diverse, including bus usage decline by the Independent Transport Commission; studies by Oxford University into Uber, dockless bikes, and shared road space; Maximising the Circularity of Asphalt by Nottingham University and the influential 3rd Pedestrian Pound report by Living Streets. In 2004 we funded Dr. Greg Marsden at Leeds University to explore whether appraisal of sustainability could be applied to transport - Greg is now a trustee.

Because roads matter to all of us

William was interested in making roads work better for everyone, however they use the road and however they are impacted by it. This has become a stronger focus of the Fund, leading to RNIB’s wayfinding for vision-impaired people; Royal College of Art’s influential “Streets for Diversity” exploring how neurodivergent people experience our streets; Oxford Brookes University study of experience of people living within a low traffic neighbourhood; and The Engaging Young People in Consultation toolkit.



Always a keen cyclist

William said the best way to survey a road was from a bicycle. We continue his passion by funding various cycling projects including Cycle Street’s mapping; Carlton’s Reid’s map of 1930s cycle tracks; and Wheels for Wellbeing’s Inclusive Cycling guidance.

Because roads matter to all of us....

Over
£7.5m
grant
funding

FINANCE

William Rees Jeffreys created the Fund by donating his estate upon his death, leaving a lasting legacy now worth over £7.25m. His generosity has allowed the Fund to distribute over £7.5m in grant funding in the last 30 years alone.

The Trustees are extremely grateful to recent donors: The Highways Term Maintenance Association £6,584; The Traffic Research Centre, a charity founded by the late Arthur Henderson, £402,764; Richard Oram (USA), 1977 Rees Jeffreys Road Fund Grant Recipient £705.

TRUSTEES

Rees Jeffreys Road Fund benefits from dedicated, knowledgeable trustees, committed to continuing the work of William Rees Jeffreys and seeking to make roads better for everyone.

In 2025, Trustees welcomed the first emerging/early career Adviser to contribute to the Trustee's thinking. Zahra Ali, a past MSc bursary recipient, has been appointed to the role of Adviser for 2 years.



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Registered with the Charity Commission in England & Wales Number 217771