

The RAC Guide to the Great British Pothole and Other Road Surface Defects

....in association with Mr Pothole



Potholes

RAC name: The Great British Pothole

RAC definition: Sometimes also referred to as The Classic. Sadly needs no introduction. More common in town centres than pigeons. Encountered in varying depths and sizes, causing all kinds of damage and dangers. Needs repairing as soon as it becomes dangerous, but would benefit from a 'permanent fix' as opposed to the customary 'patch and dash'.



RAC name: The Alcatraz

RAC definition: There's no escaping this one. A pothole, or cluster of potholes, that are extremely difficult to avoid due to their size, location or number. The damage one of these could cause to a vehicle may not be criminal, but it surely must come close. And the thought of someone on two wheels hitting one is beyond frightening.



RAC name: The Slalom

RAC definition: The collective name for a group, or groups, of potholes that have somehow escaped the attention of those that are supposed to carry out regular checks of our roads. Leaves motorists with little choice but to attempt to steer their way through in their own Winter Olympics-type challenge. Do not pass 'Go', spend £200: head straight to the garage for some new shock absorbers or maybe a new suspension spring or two.



RAC name: The Sniper

RAC definition: Lurking just out of sight, this one will get you when you least expect it. Of varying depths and widths this is a pothole that is hard to spot which is normally found right in the path of your wheels. Hitting one of these at speed will cause a sudden jolt that does your wheels and suspension parts no good whatsoever.



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RAC name: **The Alligator**

RAC definition: It might not have teeth yet, but you won't have to wait long. These are no longer just found in Florida: sadly a plethora of crazy crack patterns just like an alligator's skin are there for all to see on Britain's roads – no need to book a wildlife trip. What's more, they tend not to be a priority for fixing ... in other words: they'll fix it 'in a while crocodile'.



RAC name: **The Canyon**

RAC definition: Grand it isn't! When construction joints open up, chasms are created. Water gets in making matters worse until a river runs through it ... and wheels fall into it. Bad news for drivers and vehicles, but a complete nightmare for two-wheelers.



RAC name: **The Fade to Grey**

RAC definition: Camouflage is best used by the army and a faded zebra crossing is no longer a black and white issue. Road markings you can't read or see are an all-too-common sight, or perhaps that's not quite the right way of putting it. Whatever the case: they are as much use to road users as the proverbial chocolate teapot.



RAC name: **The Great Beyond**

RAC definition: The edge of the road starts to fall away leaving less and less to drive on. And in the words of the REM song of the same name, this can easily lead to cyclists 'crashing to the ground'. Unfortunately, councils generally have nothing up their sleeves to sort this out unless it poses a real hazard to road users.



RAC name: **The Groundhog**

RAC definition: You don't have to go to Punxsutawney, Pennsylvania to find one of these, you can find plenty right here in good old Blighty. Borne of the 'patch and dash' approach to road maintenance this one recurs more often than Bill Murray's day or a bad case of heartburn. If only they'd fixed it properly the first time round, there wouldn't be so 'many unhappy returns'.



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RAC name: The Harbinger

RAC definition: The sign of things to come. General cracking that will soon bring doom and gloom to drivers as water gets into the cracks, freezes and expands, further breaking up the road surface. Perhaps unsurprisingly, not usually prioritised for urgent repair.



RAC name: The Iron Maiden

RAC definition: You might spot a number of these beasts. They're cracks or holes that emerge from iron covers or grates in the road surface. Often not prioritised for repair, but try explaining that to a cyclist.



RAC name: The Little Devil

RAC definition: A little 'difference in level' might not seem like a big thing, but these tricky customers can be demon-like for unwitting vulnerable road users who encounter them. They often occur where repairs to the road surface sink after utility works, leaving treacherous edges that can cause loss of vehicle control or send a cyclist tumbling.



RAC name: The Moonscape

RAC definition: An uneven, out of this world, sunken road surface consisting of humps, bumps and craters. Often the result of poor workmanship or the use of poor materials. Very uncomfortable to drive over and at its worst could give passengers all the effects of whiplash without the crash.



RAC name: The Patchwork Quilt

RAC definition: Not as visually appealing as something you put on a bed, the road version is a hotchpotch of unpleasantness. General deterioration and a proliferation of poor repairs makes negotiating one of these a real challenge for driver and car, let alone anyone on two wheels. It's time to get the big road surfacing machine out.



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RAC name: The Pebbledasher

RAC definition: You may hear this before you see it. A crumbling road surface beneath your tyres causes bits of asphalt to fly up against the underside of your vehicle, or worse still against its paintwork. Often found hiding along colder routes at the mercy of the elements, these stretches of road could single-handedly keep bodywork specialists doing overtime for years to come.



RAC name: The Rumblestiltskin

RAC definition: Unfortunately not a fairy tale, but grim nevertheless. General wear that turns roads into rumble strips designed to stop drivers straying from the carriageway rather than smooth surfaces for driving. Bet you don't see these in Germany.



RAC name: The Rutger Howler

RAC definition: A long depression in the road surface that is truly depressing. Get your wheels stuck in one of these and you'll know about it from both the noise and the steering difficulties. Can lead to water 'ponding' effects. Pretty ... appalling.



RAC name: The Unwisecrack

RAC definition: Not the least bit funny, but definitely cutting. First appearing as a little crack in an otherwise smooth road surface, it could easily be the sign of something far worse: a landslip where the carriageway literally crumbles away into a rock face.



RAC name: The Windermere

RAC definition: It's a low point for every motorist when low spots in the road pool water forcing drivers to change course, possibly into danger. We all love the Lake District, but standing water and roads really don't mix. Roads should be for driving, not sailing.

