

# GOD OF SMALL THINGS

## **Matt Rudd seeks enlightenment on the dark roads**

**'This is the same logic as taking a 4x4 on the school run for safety.**

**Those on board will be okay.**

**Everyone else can jump out of the way'**

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As the nights draw in, do you find it hard to drive when your retinas are being burnt out by the headlights of oncoming traffic? I drove from the Pennines to Kent the other night. Got blinded several hundred times. Squinted my way home. A miracle I didn't end up in Devon or a ditch.

It could be my fault. I'm not getting any younger.

Maybe I need driving glasses? "You don't need driving glasses," says the optician. "You have excellent eyesight." Weird. This sounds crazy, but maybe it's the massive xenon "high-intensity discharge" headlamps? First used in luxury cars in 1999, they're now endemic on Britain's roads. Laser bling for the nation's penis extensions.

"There is no evidence to suggest that these lights distract drivers," says Paul Everitt, chief executive of the Society of Motor Manufacturers and Traders. But I'm evidence, Paul. Me. Blinded me. There's also the [blindedbixenon.co.uk](http://blindedbixenon.co.uk) campaign group (see what they did there) and [lightmare.org](http://lightmare.org) (see what they did there). These headlights are twice as powerful, Paul. "They have adaptive lamp-levelling technology," he says. "They're particularly important on poorly lit roads to enable drivers to identify hazards."

This is the same logic as taking a 4x4 on the school run "for safety". Those on board will be okay. Everyone else can jump out of the way. Or join the club. I'm off to buy xenon light bulbs. If everyone is blinded, it's bound to be safer, isn't it?