

On The Road

The journal of the Association of British Drivers

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New report questions camera effectiveness

A report into speed cameras in the Thames Valley area has found that they've resulted in "no reduction in the number of collisions after they were installed." The independent report, compiled and funded by engineer Dave Finney, concludes that "speed cameras (in the Thames Valley area) have not made any impact in preventing road traffic collisions". That includes all 212 fixed Gatso cameras and 105 mobile speed check sites in the Thames Valley. The report finds that there's "no relationship between vehicle speeds and the number of collisions" and that "reductions in speeds at the camera sites did not result in any reduction in the number of collisions". In fact, looking at Gatso sites specifically, despite a 4.7mph average speed reduction after placement of the cameras, a 0.5% increase in collisions was recorded.

Finney argues that the Government is manipulating speed camera effectiveness figures to justify their existence. The DfT's biggest speed camera report, called Four-Year Evaluation (4YE) and published in 2005, states that 42% fewer people were killed or seriously injured at speed camera sites after they were installed. However, according to Finney, this cannot be the case because less than 8% of those collisions involved a vehicle that was speeding. In fact, using the statistics published in the 4YE, Finney found that a speed camera site prevents, on average, one fatality once every 197 years, and one serious injury once every decade.

ABD chairman Brian Gregory responded to the report by saying: "it highlights what we have long suspected; that the whole speed camera fiasco has saved no lives. By diverting attention away from the real causes of accidents it has actually cost lives. We are grateful to the government for forcing reluctant camera partnerships to reveal the previously hidden statistics which enabled this report, but they must now acknowledge this



abysmal failure and distance themselves from these disastrous policies".

Unsurprisingly, RoSPA has defended speed cameras, claiming that stats prove they save lives and prevent injuries on a significant scale. RoSPA's Jo Bullock said: "In Thames Valley itself, an evaluation of fixed speed cameras in 2009, comparing three years before and after each camera was installed, found an overall drop of 94 KSI collisions and 802 personal injury collisions – a reduction of around 38%. At mobile camera sites, KSI collisions reduced by 61%, and all injury collisions by 30%. Intriguingly, according to RoSPA's speed camera fact website, during a four-year study period leading up to 2010, speed camera sites saw a 42% reduction in the number of people killed or seriously injured – a total of 1745 fewer people. Collisions, it says, reduced by 22%, equating to 4200 fewer.

In response, Finney said: "If only 5.5% of collisions involve a vehicle exceeding a speed limit, how can speed cameras cause a 38% or 30% (fixed or mobile) drop in collisions? The reductions at the camera sites were not caused by the cameras, and RoSPA ought know this. Camera

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The next issue of *On The Road* goes to press on Monday 18 June. Contributions deadline is Monday 4 June.

sites (selected lengths of road) are generally chosen following a spike in the number of collisions. Therefore the numbers tend to drop back to normal over the following years. This is known as RTM (regression to the mean) which, although it sounds complicated, just means 'return to normal'.

"The road safety industry has been unable, or unwilling, to accurately measure or exclude RTM in any of their reports (only estimates and comparisons at best) so I had to do it. As my report shows, there was a significant fall that occurred around a year before cameras (when RTM is expected), but absolutely no fall after the cameras for the first two years of camera enforcement. Therefore the entire reduction in collisions claimed by RoSPA is demonstrated to be due to RTM with the cameras having achieved no benefit at all.

"If the road safety authorities (and RoSPA) don't understand my report, that might not be surprising because my method of plotting collisions on a graph in order to determine what effect speed cameras have (and then accurately reporting the results) has never been done before, so far as I'm aware."

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The ABD campaigns for:

- Improved road user training
- Real transport choices
- Investment in Britain's roads
- Honesty on transport issues

The ABD continues to field spokespeople on key issues, plus parking is turning into a major issue for many drivers around the country.

ABD makes the news

The ABD is frequently asked to supply comment on local radio stations, especially for breakfast drivetime programmes, which means lots of very early starts. Since the last OTR, we've covered issues in Portsmouth, Ashford, London, Stoke, Lancashire, Bristol, Humberside, Cambridgeshire, Essex, Merseyside, the Midlands and Somerset. Topics covered have included parking, speed cameras, road tolling and unfair taxation; chairman Brian Gregory gave a lengthy and robust explanation on LBC of how, by spending less than 10% of motoring taxes, cash is being siphoned to pay for pet vanity projects like HS2.

We also regularly respond to invites to give talks; Bob Bull recently gave a presentation to Bristol Freedom Society, and we answered enquiries from foreign media as far afield as Australia, Spain and Canada; the ABD has influence far and wide.

Meanwhile, Kent colleague Ian Taylor recently picked up on a new study strongly criticising shared space, which he sent into Ashford's Kentish Express – the result was front page coverage plus local TV news two days running.

Publication of speed camera stats meant a burst of activity for Kent organiser Terry Hudson when he spoke on Radio Kent during breakfast time, followed by an urgent call to appear the same day on BBC South East news on the same subject; TV coverage reaches huge audiences. The radio broadcast carried our comments and name every other hour during the day, so it was well worth the effort.

Our campaigns director Brian Macdowall was also filmed for the BBC Politics show (right), on the subject of a possible third crossing at Dartford. Prime-time coverage on this daytime show is priceless, so again it's well worth the effort of being involved. If we had contacts in every BBC region we'd achieve nationwide coverage of driver issues; please contact Brian (contact details on p16) if you can help, but you're not sure how to get started.



Parking: the big issue

Massive parking charge increases, new yellow lines and meters are providing a golden opportunity for the ABD to raise its profile, but it will need your help. Only last year Eric Pickles, the local government minister, announced parking restrictions were being lifted to encourage councils to provide more spaces in developments and to stop setting high charges to deter parking.

Pickles himself said: "Stressed-out drivers now have to run the gauntlet of unfair parking fines, soaring charges and a lack of spaces...these restrictions have hit small shops hardest, creating ghost towns".

Parking policy is an important issue as part of the new national planning policy framework which the ABD's Malcolm Heymer responded to on our behalf - see OTR102 for details. However, letting councils decide for themselves has led to the exact opposite of what Pickles wanted; OTR102 covered the drivers' backlash in Surrey and Barnet.

In Brighton, 300 people turned up to meetings in the Hanover & Elm Grove areas protesting against attempts to introduce CPZs in their areas. Similarly, residents in the Preston Park area have rallied against proposals to extend restrictions in their area – local traders, led by Elliott Raggio, have started a petition on Brighton & Hove City Council's website.

The business rebellion follows the November announcement by the Green administration in Brighton & Hove of plans to increase Business Parking Permits by an eye-watering 128% and Trader Parking Permits by 114%.

Hove MP and motorcycle enthusiast Mike Weatherly wholeheartedly backed the traders. He said: "It seems that they are intent on crushing local small businesses by taxing them out of existence. I wholeheartedly support the fight against this £1.3 million stealth tax."

The ABD plans a leaflet drop, day of action in the area on Saturday 14 April. If you can help, please contact Brian MacDowall, without obligation; his contact details are on p16.

Meanwhile in Somerset, Taunton Deane Borough Council has spent millions of pounds of taxpayers' money on a second park-and-ride scheme, and turned the Castle Green car park into a public square and green space. The result is that parking fee revenues have dramatically fallen by £600,000.

The council now wants to make up this shortfall in revenue by increasing short-term charges – just the sort parking aimed at shoppers – and

introducing Sunday parking fees. Mark Edwards, the executive councillor for transport, said: "The fact that we are down on our parking revenue is a success, as it shows our strategy is right by keeping commuter cars out of the town, which is freeing things up". (That's beneficial? - Ed)

Folkestone in Kent has seen giant protests against the council's attempt to radically extend charges by introducing on-street charges across the district's town centres. The uproar resulted in weeks of bad publicity for the council, petitions and three local referenda, all of which soundly rejected the scheme; protestors were so incensed they took out a full page advert in the local paper.

Additionally the council has outsourced parking enforcement to NSL, which has equipped its wardens with bikes, motorbikes and a car – as well as an incentive scheme for "good quality service" rewarding staff with Argos vouchers. The local newspaper produced a slogan for a picture: "Find it, ticket it, Argos it!" Additionally, the council commissioned a parking survey, and awarded the contract to ... NSL! Slight conflict of interest?

Every district council in Kent (plus Medway) bar two are increasing their parking charges this year. Brian Macdowall was again on Radio Kent as we went to press, arguing for a trial of first two hours' free parking in Canterbury's car parks to boost trade. With KCC elections due next year, the public will remind councillors whether these smash and grab activities were a wise move.

At the beginning of the year Terry Hudson had an article printed in the excellent *Kent on Sunday*, which quoted from the DFT's *Operational Guidance Manual on Parking* that: "Revenue should not be an objective of civil parking enforcement, nor should authorities set targets for revenue or the number of Penalty Charging Notices." The manual also states that parking legislation "is not a revenue raising act." All monies received can only be spent on administration of the scheme, or (this is where it gets a bit blurred: "Any surpluses to improve off-street parking, or, where this is unnecessary or undesirable, for certain other transport-related purposes and environmental schemes." The wording of "environmental schemes" can be interpreted in various ways, and with very careful accounting may perhaps mean councils can justify ever increasing revenue gathering. But this was not the intention of Parliament and certainly is not in the spirit of the legislation. The manual additionally states: "Parking restrictions should be enforced efficiently, fairly and with proper regard to the rights of the motorist."

Get a free electronic copy of OTR each month to send to whoever you like – email otr@abd.org.uk and you'll be added to the free PDF list

You can donate any amount to the ABD's fighting fund at any time. Just contact the membership secretary (see p16) for more information...

Protect your licence for just £9.99

How would your life be affected if you lost your ability to drive, even temporarily? A momentary lapse in concentration can be extremely costly, especially if that lapse results in the loss of your licence. You'll face fines, increased insurance costs and the potential loss of your job if you're banned from driving.

Engage a lawyer to challenge that motoring offence and you can run up a legal bill of thousands (sometimes tens of thousands) of pounds, and if RSS (Road Safety Support Ltd) intercedes you'll need the country's best lawyers to succeed. All is not lost though, as success is possible. In a significant - and rising - number of cases the enforcement processes

are known to be invalid, erroneous, illegal - or all three. As more and more drivers challenge the allegations against them, ever more cases are dropped. Of course, the problem is affording a good lawyer - especially as 'no win no fee' agreements are illegal in criminal/motoring cases. That's why the ABD has teamed up with Motoring First, a company which offers an exclusive product called Licence Shield, which pays for and throws a firm of lawyers at an alleged motoring offence on your behalf. You can use any law firm of your choosing, but Motoring First has a panel of pre-selected and reputable lawyers to save you that vetting process.

Due to the wonders of insurance, Motoring

First is offering ABD members annual membership of Licence Shield at an exclusive price of £9.99 for the entire year. And don't worry; you won't be automatically renewed in 12 months' time at an inflated price. That's £9.99 for your own personal motoring lawyer for 12 months, with all their legal costs covered including representation in court. This price is not available for long, so you'll need to take advantage of this very attractive offer before 31 March 2012. The discount code for Licence Shield can be found by logging on to the ABD members' site (at <http://members.abd.org.uk>), where you'll also find instructions for applying online, by post, or by phone.

Speak now, or ...

The Department for Transport intends to change the requirements on local highway authorities when they wish to make a Traffic Regulation Order (TRO), such as when they propose the introduction of a new speed limit or a turning ban. The DfT is currently consulting on the proposed changes, with a closing date of 23 April.

At present, a proposed TRO must be advertised in a local newspaper, with additional publicity at the discretion of the highway authority. The latter often consists of A4 notices on lampposts and/or leaflets posted through residents' doors. These methods are not of much use in making the proposal known to road users who do not live in the area, but often drive through it.

The DfT wants to remove the requirement for a TRO to be advertised in a local paper, arguing that few people read the public notices pages. This would result in a significant cost saving to local authorities. The DfT wants local authorities to decide for themselves what the best forms of publicity are, according to the nature of each proposed TRO.

It's hard to argue against removal of the requirement to advertise in a local paper, but the track record of many local authorities suggests they can't be trusted to make a conscientious effort to publicise TROs properly. Already, many do the minimum they can get away with in the hope that no one will notice and object.

The ABD will be responding to the consultation proposing that, as a minimum, highway authorities should be required to post details of all proposed TROs on their websites (as a few do already), with notification of new postings by email or Twitter to those who register to receive this information. In addition, for those who don't have internet access or where a proposed TRO would affect a road providing more than local access, signs of sufficient size should be displayed at the roadside with the minimum information required to warn drivers of the proposal and where they can get details. For example, "Proposed new speed limit, tel 0800 123456, www.neverland.gov.uk/speedlimits".

It would be helpful if as many ABD members as possible could respond to the consultation as individuals, by 23 April, to reinforce the official ABD response. Details of the consultation are available at www.dft.gov.uk/consultations/dft-2012-06/ and responses should be sent to traffic.orders@dft.gsi.gov.uk or by post to Department for Transport, Traffic orders: simplifying the process, 3/27 Great Minster House, 33 Horseferry Road, London, SW1P 4DR. The on-line response form is not of much use so it would be better to send an email or letter. This is an important consultation, so as many responses as possible would be appreciated.

Westminster backs down on parking



Westminster Council decided last year to proceed with parking charges in the evening on weekdays (including Saturday), and on Sunday from 1pm to 6pm. The rate was to be up to £4.80 per hour on Sunday and at some of the other times, which must be one of the highest on-street parking charges in the country.

Many people believed that this change was simply about raising revenue when council budgets are under pressure. Westminster already makes an enormous profit from on-street parking - see www.freedomfordrivers.org/Profiting_from_Parking.pdf for details of just how much money is raised.

Despite the above disappointment, there was a resounding victory after some residents applied for a judicial review of the parking proposals, and as a result the council has suspended its plans. Subsequently, council leader Colin Barrow resigned "to devote more time to other areas" of his life. So while it's easy to assume that drivers can't force authorities - local or otherwise - to reconsider, this is a good example of how public pressure can result in a swift about-face.

Want to get more involved? There are plenty of ways you can help the ABD to move forward. Just check out page 15 to find out how

Parking rises up the agenda

An arc of protest has sprung up from Herts and around north London to Essex, focused on parking. The ABD has been following the issues, and as time allows, is making contact with campaigners – but we'd appreciate members' support over such a large area. After a rearguard action from councillors, Watford Borough Council rejected a recommendation that CPZ fees should be raised by 50 per cent. It was agreed it was wrong to hit households with extra cost in a recession when many were struggling.

► An unprecedented outcry from villagers forced Welwyn Hatfield Council to drop plans to charge for car parking in Welwyn. Parish Cllr Peter Neville said he could not recall another occasion when so many residents had joined forces – 3400 signed a petition. Hundreds joined a protest where the petitions were brought by hearse and handed to the council in a coffin. Black ribbons were also wrapped around posts in Welwyn to mark 'the death of the village' with the proposed introduction of new parking restrictions.

One local said: "Some people may find this stunt a little over the top, but I would reply saying losing my business is just a little over the top, and we believe these car parking charges will kill off the village and its businesses. The black ribbons sum up how everyone in the village feels. No-one is in favour of parking charges, it's a simply ridiculous money-making exercise."

None of this will be lost on the local MP, Grant Shapps, who is leading the government's review on town centres. The Welwyn Garden City Society has also moved against a new superstore which would see the loss of many free and disabled parking spaces, and potentially gridlock the town centre.

► Potters Bar residents rejected their council's suspension of parking charges over Christmas as "trying to appease us" for the charges they have introduced, and called for abolition. One councillor mused "I see empty car spaces from time to time and that never used to be the case".

► St Albans District Council's new CPZ near a hospital simply led to the parking problem being dispersed, leaving empty bays. Residents complained the problems were of the council's making and they were now being asked to foot the bill with swingeing charges. Introducing a mix of residents' and pay and display parking elsewhere was justified as buses 'were unable to pass' at peak times due to parked cars.

The council has a 'quality network partnership' (Network St Albans) for congestion reduction. Its representatives seem to be just from the council and public transport companies. One protester complained: "It is clear the council's aim was to prevent parking in this area. None of the local businesses were invited to the consultation. Despite all the words, it is clear the local economy is way down on the council's priorities".



► Enfield MP Nick de Bois attacked his local council in Parliament, for proposing drastic changes to parking restrictions and charges, including Sunday charging. He said: "It is worrying that Enfield council has refused to explain where the extra income generated will be spent". The cabinet member for finance, Councillor Andrew Stafford, claims that it will be used "to gain additional revenue" for the council's coffers. I question that judgment, because the guidance for the Traffic Management Act 2004 stipulates that merely raising revenue should not be an objective of parking charges".

Residents and both local newspapers also attacked the council. Campaigner John Jewson rejected the argument that the charges will mean more people will take public transport. He added: "If people do a lot of shopping, they are not going to take the bus, particularly not if they have young children".

Cllr Chris Bond, cabinet member for Environment, responded that "the charges are not high enough to act as a deterrent" to shoppers. This undermines the claim that the changes were "designed to reduce congestion".

► At a North London public meeting run by London Mayor Boris Johnson, the most contentious topic was parking, which was met with loud applause at its first mention. Notorious Barnet parking chief Brian Coleman 'refused to take questions' after a point and furore erupted. After the event, Barnet parking campaigners in T-shirts were thanked by the Mayor, who warned "Parking is at risk of abuse as a revenue raiser, and we need to be very careful about doing damage to businesses" However, council leader Richard Cornelius felt: "It's not fair to call it revenue raising as such because any surplus we make is

very small". Barnet Council makes about £4-5m a year from parking.

► Local traders marched down Finchley High Road to protest against crippling parking charges, and loss of business due to mobile-phone only payment. Posters have been displayed in shop windows across the borough and petition forms lie beside cash registers. More than 1000 people have already signed an online parking petition set up by Barnet's opposition councillors, and getting 7000 signatures by March would force a council meeting on parking. The Council has had to make a concession of also offering pay-by-cash scratch cards but is now proposing to increase their cost by 5%.

► Waltham Forest Council decided to close a popular Chingford car park and sell it off to developers - while keeping another open, despite figures showing it is not well used. There was massive public opposition - 1000 residents signed a petition, fearing closure could hit trade and worsen congestion in their streets.

► Redbridge Council had to drop parking charges following public opposition. Even so, a Woodford driver received a parking ticket despite the local paper reporting that they had ended. After a three-month battle to get the penalty withdrawn, and a campaign by the local paper, the council finally backed down. It didn't even know when its restrictions had ended, blaming the ticket on "an oversight".

► Essex County Council introduced an experimental restriction at a Chelmsford roundabout in the name of easing congestion. This forced drivers to make a complex manoeuvre to get into a shopping centre car park. "They just did it without consulting us," said the centre manager. Angry businesses called for the trial to be scrapped after it caused several near misses between confused drivers. Many thought that the centre was shut because of the traffic cones outside, and it led to a big reduction in shoppers coming to the centre and local independent shops, hitting pre-Christmas trade.

► Witham Chamber of Commerce chairman Chris Bailey convened a lunchtime meeting of local businesses with a Braintree District Council (BDC) regeneration rep over parking. ABD Essex coordinator Rowland Pantling and media rep Brian Mooney also attended. The BDC rep had to back down on an idea of pedestrianising the main shopping thoroughfare on hearing it was a route used by emergency services. Local firms were all totally adamant that BDC's experimental gesture of '10p charges after 3pm' in council car parks was too little, too late and pushed for free parking.

After consulting in the town, Bailey has valued free parking at up to £300 an hour for a medium-sized retailer like a supermarket, with appropriately-scaled benefits for other businesses.

ABD patrons get busy fighting for drivers

The ABD greatly appreciates the support of its Parliamentary patrons and we're very pleased to report that they've recently been doing their bit for Britain's drivers...

Sammy Wilson MP is also Northern Ireland's Minister for Finance, and has announced an investment of £330m for upgrading the A5, which links the north west of Northern Ireland to the Republic; he's also earmarked £105m for the A8 from Larne to Belfast.

Tom Wilson, FTA's Head of Policy, welcomed the upgrade which should finally make the A8 'fit for purpose'. He said: "The road has seen many fatal road traffic accidents owing to the lack of safe overtaking opportunities. Typically, slower-moving agricultural vehicles have caused long tailbacks on this road and motorists have taken risks when overtaking tractors, combine harvesters and the like. Dualling will reduce instances of risky overtaking".

He added that better roads will "not only encourage investment, but mean lower fuel costs and more reliable journey times, giving hauliers, local businesses and motorists a welcome boost."

Morecambe and Lunesdale **MP David Morris** drew on his commercial experience in the vital Backbench Debate on the future of town centres and high streets. He highlighted the history of town centres being places where traffic passed in and out, and the consequences of pedestrianisation. He said that more than

anything, a better system of parking is needed, and appealed for free parking areas.

Meanwhile, Lincoln **MP Karl McCartney** has won a Parliamentarian award for his campaign for tougher penalties for uninsured drivers. The average fine for driving without insurance is only £200, which is hardly a deterrent. His web articles are well worth a read:

tinyurl.com/8a7d28z

tinyurl.com/6syddra

Steve Baker MP joined his local Wycombe Motorcycle Action Group in an on-the-road protest against EU regulations. He welcomed the nationwide peaceful and lawful protest against "unnecessary and oppressive over-regulation". One proposal threatened to remove an owner's right to modify their bike; others would prove very costly to the average biker, forcing them to wear fluorescent clothing, making ABS brakes compulsory and subjecting motorcycles to three MOT tests a year.

And all of our parliamentary patrons joined over 100 other MPs in signing a letter calling for the Prime Minister to cut wasteful wind farm subsidies.

Also recently, other politicians have been showing their hand:

Mike Weatherley, MP for Hove, took part in a parallel local motorcycling protest in Brighton, then joined protestors outside the European Parliament in Brussels. He accused

the EU of regulating biking "out of existence" and taking away the freedom of motorcycling. He has also been active in taking on Brighton & Hove's City Council on parking charges.

The Greens run that Council with Labour support, however deputy Labour leader Cllr. **Warren Morgan** has publicly slammed the Greens' proposals for huge rises in traders' parking permits. He commented: "They said parking charge rises would not be significant, but now they are increasing many parking fees by more than 70%".

Meanwhile, West London **MP Mary Macleod** was quick to act after local roads clogged up when the vital A4 Hammersmith flyover was suddenly closed down for repairs. She organised a public meeting in which local people could ask questions of two councils' cabinet members for transport, and a Director at TFL.

John Woodcock MP, Labour's Shadow Transport Minister, proposed to an ABI motor insurance conference, that unemployed young people should be offered the choice of cheaper "work journeys only" car insurance. Both he and **Cathy Jamieson MP**, Labour's Shadow Treasury Minister, have been calling for fuel tax reductions.

Finally, Shadow Transport Secretary **Maria Eagle MP** has at last warmed towards 80mph speed limits on motorways 'when appropriate' and firmly rejects express [toll] lanes as 'inappropriate for infrastructure we've all paid for through our taxes'.

Lindzen's warm reception

Ian Taylor and Malcolm Heymer travelled to Westminster on 22 February to see Richard Lindzen speak at the latest meeting of the Repeat the Climate Change Act campaign. The meeting was well attended and chaired by Viscount Monckton, a high-profile climate sceptic.

Dr Lindzen is Professor of Meteorology at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, and one of the most knowledgeable and respected climate scientists in the world; even the 'warmists' are wary of attacking him. He spoke for about an hour and a half; the presentation can be seen at <http://climaterealist.com/index.php?id=9188>.

Lindzen is a 'luke warmist'; he accepts there's a greenhouse effect, so rising CO2 levels will have some impact on global temperatures. If nothing else changed, every doubling in CO2 concentration should produce an increase in global temperature of about 1°C. The disaster scenarios produced by the computer models, on which the IPCC relies, are based on assumptions of strong positive feedback mechanisms, involving water vapour and clouds, to amplify

this initial warming. There is, however, no evidence that positive feedbacks occur in reality. Instead, both theoretical calculations and direct observations suggest negative feedbacks come into play, reducing the temperature increase by a third to a half. Thus even a doubling of CO2 would produce a temperature increase of well below 1°C, which is no cause for alarm.

The important factor in climate change is the temperature difference between the poles and the equator, not average global temperature. It is this differential that drives stormy weather. Polar temperatures are much more changeable than those in the tropics, both on an annual basis (winter to summer) and during the ice age cycle (glacial to interglacial). This is why storms are less frequent in summer and why the climate is less variable during an interglacial than a glaciation.

It was a well argued, fact-based presentation, contrasting with the alarmist propaganda of the warmists. It should be compulsory viewing for all MPs and MEPs.

ABD + TPA = success

The ABD is happy to be affiliated to the Tax Payers' Alliance (TPA), Britain's most successful grassroots organisation campaigning for value for money for the UK's hard-pressed taxpayers; we encourage all members to join the TPA and submit articles for their blogs on drivers issues; currently they're very interested in parking articles. In the first of three posts looking at East Kent councils, TPA supporter Ian Taylor examines the vexed issue of parking charges.

Through our links with TPA, Ian had an article on East Kent parking published on the TPA website. This led to immediate publicity through ABD's website and Facebook page, and more via Twitter broadcasts (ABD nationally, ABD Kent and Ian himself).

The *Kent On Sunday* paper picked up the article and quoted from it and in total we achieved no fewer than seven mentions on this article for the price of one; you can do likewise by opening your own twitter account and following the ABD.

Road pricing – snouts in the trough

In recent months, a number of reports have appeared, with the aim of promoting wider road pricing. OTR102 reviewed the *Cook Report*, which proposed the commercialisation of the Highways Agency (HA), with perks for the management team and a strong implication of road pricing. Two of the contributors approached for that report were the RAC Foundation (whose own road pricing blueprint *Keeping the nation moving*, came out in the same week) and their allies, transport consultancy Arup.

A third report was produced by the 'connectivity commission' of the business group, London First. The latter might as well have been called 'Lobbyists First' – as, by coincidence, the Chairman of their Board is from Arup. One of their 'commissioners' is from a secretive consulting firm linked to asset sell-offs, and another from a specialist company in 'Intelligent Transport Systems' – a term that covers tracking and charging technology. Then there's an executive of Australian bank Macquarie, which

owns the currently loss-making M6T toll road.

This third report gives a plug for the *Cook report*; by coincidence, their 'expert witnesses' include Graham Dalton of the HA. Their well-balanced team includes road pricing advocates such as Stephen Joseph of CfBT, TFL's 'Kengestion Charge' promoter, Michele Dix, a couple of global warming devotees – and the CEO of Macquarie....!

Darren Johnson, the Green Party leader on the London Assembly, commissioned a 'Pay As You Go Road Pricing' report. Nice of him to hire a Green transport professor, John Whitelegg, who got elected as an 'independent' councillor in Lancaster.

According to the Chancellor's Autumn Statement, the government will explore 'new sources of revenue' to support investment.. "Innovative ways of financing" the A14 in Cambs and other proposals will be investigated this spring – tolls included. As if the £50 billion a year or so in driver taxes isn't enough...

Capital idea

With traffic disruptions due to Hammersmith problems, the Jubilee and the Olympics, 2012 is not a great year to be driving in central London. Brian Mooney has aspirations to be out of London and will be taking a break from the London media rep role he's done for three years. He will be helping with media work selectively, though, and an important campaign south of the Thames. The new Transport Secretary, Justine Greening, encourages her Putney constituents to keep her posted on their key concerns.

MPs are often swayed by their postbag, so the ABD has launched a new leaflet, *London Driver*, putting the case for a fair deal and suggesting drivers contact her. With local support, it's now going out by the thousand. If you have any connections with the area (covering Putney, Roehampton and Southfields) or can offer help in any way, please let Brian know; his telephone number is 07976 414 913.

The ABD feeds into TransCom

Despite bitterly cold weather, national committee members recently took opportunities to represent drivers' interests at two important meetings.

Firstly, our Roads and Traffic expert Malcolm Heymer made another lengthy journey into London to present evidence at the Commons Transport Select Committee's Inquiry into the Government's Road Safety Strategy. In 2011 the Government published its road safety strategy and later in the year the House of Commons Transport Committee launched an inquiry into that strategy. The ABD answered the committee's call for evidence and sent a written response in October; the document is on the ABD's website. Subsequently the ABD was asked to give oral evidence to the committee and Malcolm Heymer attended a session in January.

Robert Gifford of PACTS and Julie Townsend of Brake were the other panellists with Malcolm, so differences of opinion were inevitable! The first issue the committee asked about was the need for casualty reduction targets, which the Government believes are no longer necessary. This is a view the ABD supports, as striving to meet targets can encourage actions aimed solely at meeting a numerical figure rather than addressing the underlying issue. Malcolm made this point and gave as an example the pressure that might be applied to police officers attending road accidents to downgrade injuries from serious to slight in borderline cases.

One of the committee members asked Malcolm whether the ABD considered itself to be a road

safety organisation, which Malcolm confirmed. The MP then asked why the ABD's views were at odds with every other road safety organisation. Malcolm replied that the ABD bases its views on empirical evidence of what actually works, which gave him the opportunity to raise the issue of speed limit setting and why the 85th percentile speed is the best basis for doing so. Limits set lower than that can adversely affect road safety. One of the main points in the Government's road safety strategy that the ABD opposes is the intention to give local authorities even greater powers to decide road safety policies in their areas, which is likely to lead to even more unrealistic speed limits.

The discussion then moved on to the proposal to increase the motorway speed limit, which the ABD supports. PACTS and Brake oppose it and Julie Townsend spouted the usual nonsense about 'extensive academic evidence' linking speed to accident risk. This was undoubtedly a reference to TRL reports of desktop studies that are statistically flawed, as exposed by Nigel Humphries on the ABD website (check out www.abd.org.uk/onemph.htm along with www.abd.org.uk/trl511.htm). Malcolm was able to give an example of a U.S. dual three-lane freeway where the speed limit was raised from 55 to 70 mph with only a minimal increase in average speed and a reduction in the 85th percentile. In a sane world such direct, empirical findings would be valued more highly than 'academic evidence'.

One of the MPs on the committee is one of the ABD's patrons, Steve Baker, who declared

his interest at the start of the session. While discussing speed limits, he asked the panel to what extent they believed drivers consent to the current 70 mph motorway limit, given that around half of drivers exceed it. Robert and Julie tied themselves up in knots answering this, arguing that most drivers do believe the 70mph limit is correct, even though they don't always obey it! Julie also said that we shouldn't be changing the law just because it is broken by a significant proportion of the population. This led Steve to ask the rhetorical question, "So you don't believe in government by consent in a democratic society?" He later tweeted, "Fascinating attitudes to the Rule of Law and govt by consent at Transport Committee this morning!"

Malcolm's response was that anyone who regularly broke the 70mph limit while saying they supported it was guilty of hypocrisy. The fact that 50 per cent of drivers break the limit means that 50 per cent do not support it.

As is usual with these Transport Committee sessions, it was not always possible for Malcolm to refute some of the points raised by other panellists before the chairman moved on to another question. In particular, he would have liked the opportunity to praise the work of the Under-17 Car Club in pre-driver training. The ABD's written evidence does, however, cover this and other points not discussed during the session.

It will be interesting to see whether the committee's report on the inquiry takes any account of any of the points put to it by the ABD. Here's hoping!

The ABD joins the British Parking Association

The ABD was recently asked to support the British Parking Association, a forum of private and public operatives along with the RAC, bikers and various others. In the past we've been very sceptical of this forum, as it holds the view that strict enforcement coupled by swingeing charges should be the norm. On that basis it would hardly accept the ABD's view that régimes should be fair and cheaply priced to encourage trade.

But the request came from long-time ABD friend and supporter Neil Herron, so we decided to open up a communication channel with parking decision makers directly, in what has all too often been an inequitable industry.

At this first meeting, the comment was made by one of the BPA's luminaries, Kelvin Reynolds, that there is no such thing as free parking; every space is paid for (provided, maintained, etc) by someone. We pointed out that road users have already paid for such provision a number of times over; but we're not getting an equitable deal from either local or national government. To help back up this assertion, we cited citing 1970s against current tax-takes compared with local and national road/ parking provision expenditure.

Also on the agenda was coin changes; the Mint is saving £8m by making cheaper 5p, 10p and 20p coins. The new coins are indistinguishable from their predecessors but are 10% thicker; both types will be in circulation for some time during the changeover period. The problem is that some coin machines don't accept the new coins; many Councils are being slow to replace them in the current financial climate.

Pay-by-phone was hailed as the growing trend to overcome such problems. A straw-poll of those present - most of whom were in the parking industry - showed only one or two people had used this facility.

Sheila Richards from the Consumer Action Group pointed out that there are many mobile phone black-hole reception areas where exclusively pay-by-phone charging would be highly inadvisable - aside from the charges levied on the parking service providers by the mobile networks.

Next, came an overview of the Yarm, North Yorkshire situation, with which I've been involved. Yarm is a typical North Yorkshire village, five miles from the Labour-controlled Stockton Borough Council's HQ, where parking

in the main street is currently free, but Stockton wants to introduce charging despite strong protests from residents.

The main focus of the BPA meeting was to provide reaction on the Mary Portas High Street Review, which recently reported to government following concerns about the continued decline of our high streets. Portas made a strong case for free parking, but the meeting took the view that parking has to be paid for by someone; whilst we concede this point, a lot more needs to be done by operators, especially councils, to offer either a free period, such as the first two hours, or at a much-reduced rate to boost trade

The consensus was that road users are prepared to pay for parking provided they feel they're getting value for money, well-maintained, safe, secure parking and are not being ripped off by exorbitant overstay penalties and over-aggressive bailiff activities in pursuit of said unreasonable penalties. The problem is that all of the above continue to occur on a daily basis - particularly in inner London boroughs. Interestingly, as much was openly admitted during the discussions by those present...

Brian Gregory

Pothole challenge success

This is your magazine and we always welcome articles from members, sent to the editor Chris Medd, (contact details back page). Here, Surrey member Graeme Hogg relates how he successfully lodged a pothole damage claim.

My pothole - a 'mere' 43 inches long, 15 inches wide and over four feet deep - damaged my front wheel in March 2009. It took time and effort but, in view of the poor deal we drivers have received, I did not feel inclined to let the matter pass. Damage can be substantial if alloy wheels and suspension are involved, so I would suggest it's worth pursuing a claim.

Councils can wriggle out of responsibility by virtue of a 'Statutory Defence'. By showing they

have a written regime for maintenance of the highway in cognisance of the relevant Act, they can deny knowledge of the defect by invoking a Statutory Defence to reject your claim.

To be successful it's necessary to carefully gather evidence before submitting a claim. The party with the information needed is of course the Council; the same party with the power to summarily dismiss a claim.

Make a request under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 before making a claim. I understand any request subsequent to a claim can be considered sub judice and information under the Act denied; sites such as www.potholes.co.uk offer a useful guide.

If a council's records show it was aware of the defect and had not effected a repair in reasonable time, a claim is more likely to succeed. In my case, I reported the pothole the following day and 20 days later another driver damaged two tyres at the same spot and was undoubtedly successfully compensated.

I delayed submission of a claim until I had gathered as much detail from the Council, but was still subsequently rejected by the Council with the statement that no appeal was possible. I discovered the Council had:

- Made an 'ad hoc' inspection two days previously,
- Mis-recorded the size and location of the pothole



- Given it a lower category for repair purposes, allowing the next driver to be caught 20 days later - when it was assigned an immediate one hour repair.

The pothole in question had been previously repaired and so, in my view, should have received greater attention. I also noted that Surrey considered a twice-yearly inspection was appropriate for the C-road in question, but neighbouring Hampshire held quarterly inspections. A pothole can deteriorate hugely within the six months Surrey deems sufficient.

Feeling sufficiently aggrieved, I took my claim to the Small Claims Court. The Council submitted a defence but capitulated and agreed to settle in full, including a sum for consequential damages that had been part of my initial claim.

Graeme Hogg



An evening with the Danish ambassador

The possible introduction of congestion charging was the hottest issue in last year's general election in Copenhagen. Out of the blue, I received a request to give a 5-10 minute presentation to the Danish Embassy in London, which was specifically interested in the losers from the London Congestion Charge (CC). This proved to be one of the most interesting challenges I've done for ABD. I only really had a few hours to prepare - so I kept things simple and looked up a few Danish news items.

I received a warm welcome from the Danish Ambassador, Anne Steffensen, at her Knightsbridge residence, and her guests, who included Danish MPs, Embassy political researchers and similar. A bus load of them had been visiting TFL and GLA contacts and were besieged by Danish TV when they arrived at the Embassy.

I was one of four Brits invited to the working lunch - the others being the pro-CC Prof. Stephen Glaister, RACF; his fellow rail fanatic, journalist Christian Wolmar; and Colin Stanbridge of the London Chamber of Commerce (LCC). Although LCC members had been critical of the impact on retail business and the West London extension, Stanbridge seemed too readily persuaded that the CC had been a success. That left me as the only confirmed opponent.

The meeting heard some strange assertions like 'Road pricing has been successfully implemented all over the world', 'Stockholm voted for it' and even 'Thatcher totally abolished London government'. I outlined the financial statistics showing that the CC had only been profitable

through the penalties and that it had been set up to be deliberately difficult to pay. I went through the various negative impacts and injustices and added that the truth had also been a casualty. I highlighted the deception that had been used in stage-managing the introduction of the CC to make it look a success, and debunked some of the claims made for it.

Then there was an open discussion. I disputed a claim that Ken Livingstone had an 'explicit mandate' for introducing the CC, as his manifesto only had a commitment to consult (p5, tinyurl.com/8ylmh3a). I made sure that the Danes were aware that in Stockholm, 14 out of 15 districts who voted on their CC were ignored, and the government broke its promise for expedience; according to the *Copenhagen Post*, only a third of residents overall, supported the charge.

One of the MPs asked me about alternatives to CC - fortunately, I had plenty of suggestions. I added how congestion had been engineered by officialdom, prompted by my rivals admitting that removal of road space/parking space was to get people out of their cars.

A final point was made on journey tracking and privacy, which may be a key issue - I suspect that the Danes were not impressed by claims that 'everyone in London is on CCTV anyway'. A delegate I chatted to before lunch told me how Denmark would not have anything to do with CCTV. I've since made sure that my research contact has various anti-CC webpages from ABD and NAAT to pass on to enquirers. I suspect that we might get a bit of media interest on this topic in 2012!

As an aside, Danish drivers already know about being heavily taxed - VAT is 25% on cars, while a purchase tax of 105% is levied on sub-£8000 cars - and 180% over this figure.

During the general election, the left-wing parties proposed reducing public transport fares through the CC - but once elected, they raised fares. As for the familiar argument that CC promotes 'modal shift' to public transport - wised-up local mayor Joy Mogensen has pointed out that the city's rail system is already desperately overloaded.

Meanwhile, opposition traffic spokesman Kristian Lorentzen said implementing the toll-ring would cost a fortune before it ever began paying back, yet, at the same time, the government is proposing to use proceeds to pay for improvements that would increase capacity on trains and buses. The Danish Construction Association claims it won't be financially viable until 2025.

One of the claims made for the CC is a cleaner environment. However traffic and pollution expert Kåre Press-Kristensen noted that the proposed CC zone would have "negligible impact" on particulate air pollution and respiratory illnesses... "Copenhagen already has good air quality".

The Danish Chamber of Commerce claims that the charge would damage trade and business in Copenhagen. With her party's popularity waning, the new Danish Prime Minister, Helle Thorning-Schmidt ('Mrs Kinnock') has also called for alternative suggestions on congestion.

Brian Mooney

Members' forum

Due to the closure of the service provided by the host of our forum, the ABD Forum can now be found at <http://forum.abd.org.uk> - you should be able to log on using the same username and password as before. If you had your username and password stored in your browser, you'll need to re-input and save them the first time.

The forum structure, user data, and messages have been transferred, but attachments and avatars will have been lost as we have no access to the server folders they were stored in. However, you should be able to re-attach any documents by editing your message; just look under "View Your Posts" to review your messages.

You'll also need to re-upload any avatar you had and the old forum has now been disabled. If you're not subscribed to the forum, see the members' site for how to subscribe and stay in touch with other members; once you've started using it, we're sure you'll find it an invaluable tool.

ABD Surrey is revived

Thanks to Surrey member Matthew Truelove, a venue was found for the revived Surrey meeting, at the Hilton Hotel Cobham. An initial meeting took place on a bitterly cold February day when Brian MacDowall, supported by national committee members, joined local members to plan future campaigning. Topics covered parking, traffic lights, roadworks and related issues

After Brian's slide show presentation members asked numerous questions and a plan of action is being formulated with members taking on individual tasks whilst coordinating activities to share the workload.

Campaigns Director Brian Macdowall said: "It was a real pleasure to see so much interest expressed and I wish to thank everyone who made the journey despite an early morning snowfall".

National committee members are making a real effort to provide advice and back up to ensure these areas run under their own steam; another meeting has been arranged

at the same venue for 24 March.

The venue is easily accessible from adjoining areas; even if you don't live in the county you are welcome to come along.

Campaigns Director Brian Macdowall said: "We would also be very interested to receive suggestions for a convenient venue on the north side of the M25, suitable for Herts Bucks and Berks & North West Essex; my contact details are on the back of OTR"

Additionally another Essex members meeting has been set up for 18 April at the same venue: The Miami Hotel, Princes Road in Chelmsford (CM2 9AJ).

Essex coordinator Rowland Pantling would be delighted to receive support and topics for discussion; see the back page for Rowland's contact details.



soapbox

What's on the mind of Chris Medd, OTR editor. This issue; a request from an ABD patron, plus why cyclists in Cambridgeshire are up in arms.

ABD patron Steve Baker MP has written to us, asking members to write letters to their MPs backing an increase in motorway speed limits. Receiving supportive letters will help ministers to stand up to anti-car lobbyists, some of whom predict 'carnage' on the roads if what most drivers currently do is legalised. MPs can only act if their constituents show they feel strongly about an issue; drivers' apathy has allowed anti-car groups to force MPs into acting against us. So get writing.

Rail has been the big winner and the Highways Agency the loser from transport spending decisions made by the coalition Government, according to a new analysis by the Passenger Transport Executive Group (PTEG). The umbrella body analysed spending for transport in England since the May 2010 election, examining the effects of the three major change events: the in-year cuts made by the coalition government soon after the election, the autumn 2010 comprehensive spending review (CSR); and the Chancellor's autumn statement last November.

"Rail is clearly the overall winner... with an 8% real terms increase in the Network Rail grant between 2010/11 and 2014/15, and that is even before the investment in Crossrail is taken into account," says PTEG. The Highways Agency's budget was hit by the in-year cuts and the comprehensive spending review but received a boost from the Chancellor's autumn statement, which allocated the Agency an extra £1.2bn in the current CSR period, albeit heavily focused on the final year, 2014/15. Why can't public spending more closely reflect the fact that well over 80% of journeys are made by car?

The Cambridge Cycling Campaign is calling on the DfT to reconsider its decision not to give English traffic authorities outside London the powers to enforce moving traffic offences such as yellow box junction offences, and the infringement of mandatory cycle lanes and advanced stop boxes for cyclists. Transport

minister Norman Baker wrote to the Local Government Association last autumn to say the Government would not be enacting part 6 of the Traffic Management Act 2004, which contains the relevant powers. But the Cambridge Cycling Campaign is demanding that "as part of the DfT work to support 'Cities fit for cycling', part 6 of the Traffic Management Act 2004 must be enabled as soon as possible".

No doubt the Cambridge cyclists wouldn't want double standards, so to level out the playing field we can only assume that they'll also be happy for cyclists to be fined for minor infringements of petty rules. And let's not start on the more basic rules, like stopping at red lights and not cycling on pavements...



President Nicolas Sarkozy committed France to produce a roadmap for the deployment of Intelligent Speed Adaptation systems within three months, during a road safety speech on 30 November. "Enforcing speed limits must remain our top priority," he said, suggesting that the ISA system that the French government has been testing since 2001, known as LAVIA, would enable the country "to achieve outstanding results". "France must be a forerunner in this

field," Sarkozy added. Great; let them see just how many lives it actually saves. Then, once ISA has been proved to be a blind alley, we can hopefully finally bury it for good.

Interesting letter from David Cummins in *Local Transport Today* recently:

Keith Peat states as fact "Speeding, the simple act of driving above a number on a pole, cannot cause accidents."

Roads are designed. They have radii, forward visibility and superelevation. Even where the road may have been there before design guidance, the paraphernalia associated with it has been designed, such as junction spacing, side road spacing, visibility to and from side roads, visibility to and type of pedestrian crossing, forward visibility to junctions, sign size, etc. Moreover, all these elements exist in a complex system that is not navigated alone but involves interactions with others, perhaps less able and experienced.

The road designer starts with a design speed, which corresponds with the number on the pole. Exceeding the number therefore violates the design. Hence speeding, the simple act of driving above a number on a pole, increases the accident potential.

That's all very well, but what about all the roads which started out as national speed limit – so 60mph – but which have been dropped to 40mph or even 30mph over the years?

Preparing the last issue under time pressure led to a slight crossed wire - Felicity's title was actually 'Membership Administrator' not 'Membership Secretary'. She did a sterling job handling the seasonal avalanche of membership renewals for us, but was only on a short term arrangement, which she couldn't extend for personal reasons. Please continue to use our Kenley PO Box for any postal correspondence.

Chris Medd

Road pricing was put back on the capital's political agenda recently, as the Green Party published a report recommending a London-wide scheme. Green Assembly member Darren Johnson commissioned John Whitelegg, of the University of York, to study the case for a scheme. His work was then reviewed by Phil Goodwin of the University of West of England and Chris Nash of the Institute for Transport Studies, University of Leeds.

So a nicely balanced team commissioned to do the work then; Whitelegg is an avid supporter of public transport and until recently was a Green Party councillor. Well known for his anti-car views, his views are the same as Phil Goodwin's. He's long been very open about his views on congestion charging –

as a staunch advocate of it. Meanwhile, Chris Nash used to be a lecturer on rail transport, and has particular interests in rail as well as road pricing. So, that's three people all involved in a report on road pricing, all of whom are strongly in favour of it; no foregone conclusion there then.

Bearing all this in mind, it's no wonder the report makes statements such as: "It is our view that a London-wide road pricing scheme is essential and without it congestion will worsen, air pollution will worsen... the health of Londoners will suffer, [and] CO2 reduction targets will be missed". The report also says that no other policy tool can cut traffic volumes to an economically efficient level in a way that meets with a degree of public approval, is widely seen as fair, and generates

a revenue stream to fund improvements to walking, cycling and public transport. A pay-as-you-go scheme, with a 20p per kilometre charge, could raise over £1.2bn a year and cut car trips by 10%, it suggests. But note that word 'could' – it wouldn't, of course.

Whitelegg acknowledges concerns that pricing could force low income motorists off the road and damage the economy. But he says reducing traffic levels and using revenues to boost alternatives to the car will benefit low income groups. "Road pricing delivers a strong push in the direction of social justice."

Oh, hang on. So it's not about cutting congestion or raising cash for improved public transport then? It's about social justice. Glad that's been made clear.

letters

Opinions expressed are personal views and not necessarily those of the ABD. Please note letters may be shortened.

Write to OTR: Chris Medd, PO Box 2228, Kenley, Surrey CR8 5ZT or send an email to otr@abd.org.uk

How would you feel about being paid to NOT drive at peak times on a road that you drive on every day? That's exactly what has been getting trialled, with considerable success, in the Netherlands for three years now. No, I am not mistaking it with the various Dutch attempts for national road pricing. It is a project driven by the Port of Rotterdam, City Region of Rotterdam and the Ministry of Infrastructure and the Environment. It is called Spitscoren or "profit from the peak".

The project is due to end in June 2012, but I expect it may well be extended given its significant success. Well the previous UK government used to bribe teenage delinquents not to offend, so I suppose anything is possible... maybe we should ask Norman Baker to comment as 'Minister for Alternatives to Travel'. It might even be funded from his sustainable transport fund?

See tinyurl.com/86xjzn8 for more information about how the scheme works.

Brian Mooney

Between 1995 and 2002, I was the manager of the Staffordshire Safety Camera Office and as a police officer with experience of both community policing and as traffic officer I understood the need for unattended 24/7 cameras to monitor and enforce inappropriate speeds.

My understanding was that the cameras would, if located correctly, help reduce the severity of collisions and thereby make parts of our road system safer.

The value of the cameras would therefore be measured by the reduction of offences, as well as the reduction in injuries. I was disappointed when the Government of the time and under pressure from the police and local authorities

Having studied road casualty data, trends and claims for thousands of hours over some 12 years I find Dave Finney's analysis of the impact of speed cameras on collisions entirely credible (for the report, log on to tinyurl.com/7zoq7ww).

I am currently updating my own analysis of 4.7 million injury accidents from 1991 to 2007 to six million from 1985 to 2007, the earlier data now being available, to highlight the extent to which selection bias skews the results of studies into speed cameras and gives rise to the largely bogus claims of effectiveness we have seen for many years.

It is in any case clear that these claims have to be bogus because it is beyond rational dispute that speed cameras cannot lead to falls in accident numbers far greater than those involving speeds above limits in the first place – 5% for slight injuries, 6% for all injuries, 9% for serious injuries, 10% for killed and serious injuries; and 14% for fatalities.

Even these figures are inherently overstated, however, because they include accidents where speeding might have been involved as well as those where it probably was. Further, and in any case, in many of those accidents, speeding may

Give us a quote

"The only power any government has is the power to crack down on criminals. Well, when there aren't enough criminals, one makes them. One declares so many things to be a crime that it becomes impossible for men to live without breaking laws."

Ayn Rand

agreed to introduce the Hypothecation Project and turned the cameras into a method of indirect taxation. I decided then to walk away from the project I had so valued.

I was and always will support the deployment of cameras to enforce speed limits. What I object to is the management of the cameras and the way money generated from them is used. The Hypothecation project was introduced with a direct link to the Exchequer's Office. The project was then linked directly to the number of prosecutions with the numbers being increased with each tranche of the project.

Each partnership would be required to submit targets for the amount of money raised and if they failed to reach those targets the short fall would be met by the local authority.

Needless to say it was clear from those already involved in the scheme that they would ensure that they prosecuted greater numbers to ensure the targets were met.

At meetings I attended, the forecasts were that within three to five years speeding would be as anti-social as drink driving and that it would be difficult to catch speeders as most would have been put off because of the fear of being caught.

This statement was made 10 years ago to date. I now read in The Sentinel that the police and authorities are thinking of raising the prosecution levels in order to ensure that they get a flow of drivers to attend the driver improvement scheme. This is the exact opposite to the forecasts made by the then head of North Wales Police who was in charge of the project.

At the same time the Hypothecation project was introduced Staffordshire Police and many other forces reduced their traffic policing. Overnight Staffordshire reduced the traffic patrols from 200 to less than 20.

Rather than speeding being treated as anti-social in much the way of drink driving, I get the impression that drink driving is again on the increase. Figures released for the Christmas period were I believe disappointing with drivers being caught at all hours of the day.

In truth the lack of traffic patrols and the high visibility deterrent they have on drivers, I would argue, means that the roads are in fact less safe than previously.

It is appalling cameras are now being used as almost a threat to the safety of road users in Staffordshire.

Our safety and that of the public using our roads is



only have been a minor or indeed irrelevant factor compared to the many other triggering factors. For all these reasons the potential benefits of cameras can only ever be relatively minor at camera sites and quite trivial in terms of national figures. As Sherlock Holmes pointed out, once you have eliminated the impossible what is left must be the explanation, which, in this case, includes selection bias and drivers diverting to avoid cameras etc.

The whole speed camera programme has been based from the beginning on wishful thinking, seriously flawed analysis, snake-oil salesmen promising cash flow, empire building and, in far too many cases, active dislike of motor vehicles. Is Richard Owen, in flatly denying selection bias prior to the DfT introducing their accident criteria for site selection (which he presumably accepts did introduce such bias) claiming that those earlier sites were chosen using a blindfold and a pin? Presumably (and we must hope) not; and if not then recent crash history surely would have been involved, resulting in the selection bias he seeks to deny, even if not exactly the same as if the DfT criteria had been used.

Only two months after Thames Valley cameras were switched off in 2010, Mr Owen, head of the then Thames Valley Safer Roads Partnership,

issued a press release claiming a 200% or 300% increase in speeding at those sites. However, closer examination of the figures in the context of likely traffic flow shows that this corresponded to compliance falling from 99.8% to 99.4%! I made a formal complaint of misconduct in public office to Thames Valley Police at the time about this seriously misleading report, but of course they were not interested.

As an engineer for 50 years, when my business and survival, let alone success, depended not only on being right most of the time but also – crucially – on admitting that I was wrong when I was – I have been utterly shocked over these past 12 years by the grotesque errors of fact and analysis I have found in road safety analysis, particularly with respect to speed camera claims.

To give only two examples – I proved that the DfT's claim that cameras were marginally more cost effective than vehicle activated signs were wrong by a factor of 50, and that its House of Commons reply that daytime running lights would add 5% to fuel bills was a typing error – for 0.5%. All this and more is fully detailed in my website www.fightbackwithfacts.com, albeit not all material is yet in place.

Idris Francis

Does the membership secretary have your current contact details – including a correct email address? If not, please send an update ASAP!

being measured by the amount of money it can keep raising to fund itself and while I am sure that there have been casualty reductions it is clear that the path chosen was the wrong one. More road policing officers and reduced collision hot spots should ensure safer roads.

When I was a traffic officer the Association of Chief Police Officers offered the following advice: 'Target those drivers who are most likely to cause the greatest dangers to others.' This blanket process fails to do that and therefore is seen by the majority of just another stealth tax.

Steve Walsh

An acquaintance of mine received a notice of prosecution from the Hampshire Safety Camera Unit for exceeding a 30mph limit. Her recorded speed was 35mph. However, the following day she received another letter (copy enclosed) suggesting that there had been a procedural error with a small number of offences and therefore the tickets

were being cancelled. On checking the road where she was caught exceeding a 30mph limit, she discovered the limit was actually 40mph! More a case of a rather inept scamera van driver than a procedural error you may think.

David Uwins

With the recent publicity about satnavs and the continuing debate about automatic speed control or enforcement based on GPS data, I thought you might be interested in my recent experience.

I bought an expensive sat-nav system that purported to be designed and specified to meet the needs of motorhome users. In particular, it:

- would display the speed limit appropriate to the location or the vehicle, the details of which could be specified in the configuration.
- would display restrictions and constraints on height and weight applicable to roads displayed on the map, providing routing directions appropriately.
- had an accurate, up to date map, plus other features of benefit to users of large vehicles, such as warning of sharp bends.

On receipt I established that the device had the most up to date map available already installed and I configured the settings for my vehicle. I then used it once and found a number of inconsistencies, so I conducted a detailed test; I found the following.

Not all height restrictions are shown on the unit, which makes it risky to trust. For example, on Stewartby Way in Stewartby, Bedfordshire there is a low railway bridge, marked at 11' 3" clearance. This is not marked on the device's map, although it is marked in the AA Trucker's Atlas dated March 2009.

The A421 Bedford By Pass, from the Kempston interchange near the A6 to the M1 just north of junction 12 is not marked on the map at

all, despite its having been under construction for several years and open since December 2010. This is a major road, finishing the dual carriageway link between the M1 and the A1.

A link road between the A421 and the B530 near the Interchange Retail Park is still shown despite its having been closed and the junction removed perhaps two years ago.

The map displays the A1 around the Black Cat roundabout (j/w A421) in dark blue as if it were a motorway, which it is not.

The speed limit displayed on the unit continues to be inaccurate and inconsistent (Stephen supplied a full table of issues with his letter - Ed). Sharp bend warnings continue to be inconsistent and unreliable. For example, a moderate bend is marked and produces a warning; a severe double bend is not marked and produces no warning, despite it being a notable accident site with chevrons and vehicle-activated warnings.

I sent the device back to the retailer, which refunded my money immediately.

Stephen Cavender

There's a car parked near us; I noticed the front right tyre was so worn, the canvas was showing. I reported this to the police; soon after, I met two cops going to examine the vehicle. Soon after I met them again and asked what they thought; they said this is a 'moving traffic offence' so although they had taken the car's details, they could do no more. How stupid is that? If the car is on the road, surely it should be legal. Or am I missing the point somewhere?

Name supplied

I've recently been swapping letters in my local newspaper over the issue of Controlled Parking Zones (CPZs) where I live in Merton, south west London. One correspondent claimed that "roads that had a majority in favour of the CPZ got a CPZ. Roads that voted against did not". If only this were true, but unfortunately it isn't. In the correspondent's own road there was a small majority opposed (28 to 27) but they still got a CPZ. Another road had a majority of 12 to 8 against a CPZ, but got one too after a second consultation.

The council held a meeting with just three residents and used their unrepresentative decision to justify the implementation of a CPZ. In fact the council's conduct throughout the CPZ was to me both shocking and eye-opening.

It must also be obvious that CPZ schemes cannot be implemented piecemeal as some suggest. If there's a problem with commuter parking (where are commuters meant to park, incidentally?) and some roads get a CPZ then the problem will shift to roads without it. A classic case of nimbyism. CPZs have been disastrous for Merton Park with the ugly road markings, signs and ticket machines and the paving over of many, many front gardens. I wonder what John Innes, the founder of this garden suburb, would have made of it?

OTR glossary

- **ACPO**: Association of Chief Police Officers
- **ANPR**: Automatic Number Plate Recognition
- **Brake**: Vocal anti-car group
- **CfBT**: Campaign for Better Transport (previously Transport 2000)
- **CPRE**: Campaign to Protect Rural England
- **CPS**: Crown Prosecution Service
- **DfT**: Department for Transport
- **DVLA**: Driver & Vehicle Licensing Agency
- **EC**: European Commission
- **ECHR**: European Court of Human Rights
- **FoI**: Freedom of Information (Act)
- **FTA**: Freight Transport Association
- **Gatso**: Speed camera that measures a car's speed at a single fixed point.
- **IAM**: Institute of Advanced Motorists
- **IPCC**: Inter-Governmental Panel on Climate Change (pushes man-made CC view)
- **ISA**: Intelligent Speed Adaptation
- **KSI**: Killed or Seriously Injured
- **LTP**: Local Transport Plan
- **MART**: Manchester Against Road Tolls
- **NAAT**: National Alliance Against Tolls
- **NIP**: Notice of Intended Prosecution (usually a speeding ticket)
- **RHA**: Road Haulage Association
- **PACTS**: Parliamentary Advisory Council on Transport Safety (of which the ABD is a member)
- **PCN**: Penalty Charge Notice
- **Scamera**: Speed camera
- **SPECS**: Speed camera that measures a car's average speed between two or more points.
- **TfL**: Transport for London
- **VAS**: Vehicle-activated sign

But the ultimate irony in all this is that many of the people who voted for a CPZ don't actually pay for a permit, because they have drives or garages. So they had nothing to lose while many of the people who didn't want it are suffering the regular increases in permit charges.

It is also worth remembering why CPZs were proposed in the first place. Merton Council said that it had had several petitions from members of the public asking for it. When questioned, the council was at first reluctant to reveal how many people had signed these petitions, but eventually admitted that the total number of signatories on all three petitions was just 19. That's right, 19. Hardly a public clamour. But then petitions are funny things.

Take the infamous 1.8-million petition, campaigning against road pricing; there's never been such a massive petition 'handed in' to No. 10, yet road pricing still hasn't been removed from the political agenda; indeed, it's still being actively looked into.

And this, to go back to the point of my original letter, is why people are cynical and mistrusting of politicians big and small, and reluctant to take part in a political process that takes no account of their views.

Clive Whichelow

in brief...

► Coventry councillors have rejected calls to reinstate signals at three city centre junctions, where shared-space schemes have been implemented. The Labour-controlled council recently received two petitions raising concerns; a 71-year old pedestrian died after being struck by a bus at one of the junctions in January.

► The London Borough of Barnet is planning to remove traffic lights from some of its roads and cut the use of temporary signals at roadworks, to cut delays. Conservative-controlled Barnet plans to review all 130 sets of traffic signal-controlled junctions and pedestrian crossings on its roads "with a view to removal or replacement with an alternative method of control where these are no longer needed". As well as cutting delays, the programme could cut its £460,000 annual traffic signal maintenance bill paid to TfL.

► The HA is consulting on plans for hard shoulders to become permanent running lanes in future managed motorway projects. Most sections of existing managed motorway have dynamic hard shoulder running, whereby the lane is opened up as an additional running lane during times of heavy traffic. But the HA is considering making hard shoulder operation permanent in future schemes. Intervals between emergency refuge areas could also be increased from the current 1km or so to up to 2.5km.

► Most local authorities in Cambridgeshire have backed new tolled road capacity in the A14 corridor. In a joint response to the DfT's A14 Challenge, Cambridgeshire County Council and the county's districts, except Cambridge City Council, call for major highway improvements on the A14 between Girton, just north of Cambridge, and the A14/A1 intersection at Ellington. Road tolls may be necessary if private finance is needed to part-fund the new capacity, they say, but new free-to-use highway capacity for local traffic is also recommended.

► Manchester could become the next city to have 20mph limits across residential streets after city councillors ordered officers to prepare a report on the feasibility of implementing a scheme.

► DVLA figures show there are now 1,012,399 drivers over 80 and 122 over 100, including three 105-year olds, and one aged 106. But contrary to common assumptions, drivers in their eighties aren't dangerous; figures show they're much safer than their more youthful counterparts. The rate of deaths and serious injuries in crashes among drivers over 80 is three times less than the rate for those aged 17-19. In 2010 almost one driver aged 17-19 was killed or seriously injured per thousand licence holders. The rate of deaths and serious injuries in crashes among car drivers aged 20 to 24 is 36.4% more than the rate for drivers aged 80 or over.

► Five people have been dismissed by the DVLA in Wales in the last three years for breaches of the Data Protection Act. Offences included 'unauthorised access of a vehicle record' and 'releasing information to a third party'. Also one person received a written warning for 'mail sent accidentally to an incorrect e-mail address'.

Road charging moves closer

The European Commission has outlined plans to promote distance-based – rather than time-based – charges for lorries and coaches as a possible first step to road pricing for all vehicles across Europe. The Commission plans to come forward with a legislative initiative in 2013 to "promote a more systematic use of distance related road charging reflecting infrastructure and external costs based on the polluter-pays and user-pays principles".

It adds: "For road transport, distance-paid charging is expected to replace time-based user charges or annual charging on vehicles, with the gradual phasing in of a mandatory harmonised internalisation system for commercial vehicles on the entire inter-urban network."

The Commission's desire to move away from time-based lorry charging schemes to

distance-based charging comes just as the DfT consults on introducing a time-based scheme for the UK. The Commission also intends to provide a framework to facilitate road pricing for cars but says that member states will have the right to determine if passenger cars should face road charging. Nevertheless, it adds: "The long-term goal is to apply user charges to all vehicles and on the whole network to reflect at least the maintenance cost of infrastructure, congestion, air and noise pollution."

The Commission is in the process of procuring new research that could inform a legislative proposal. The appointed consultant will evaluate transport infrastructure charging policy and prepare an impact assessment of "policy options supporting further initiatives in the field of road charging".

PTWs get bus lane thumbs up

Boris Johnson has authorised bus lanes on the TfL road network to be opened permanently to motorcyclists, following three years of trials. The mayor said giving powered two-wheelers permanent access to almost all the 478 bus lanes on the 360-mile network will smooth traffic flow, reduce journey times and cut CO2 emissions, without adversely affecting the safety of motorcyclists, cyclists or pedestrians.

Motorcyclists were first given access to bus lanes in January 2009 in an 18-month trial. However, monitoring by TRL found that collision rates at 28 trial sites increased. The mayor ordered a second 18-month trial in summer 2010; there was a 23% rise in motorcycle injury accidents in or around bus lanes on between a nine-month period before 2009 and a nine-month period of the second trial.



But the collision rate between the current trial and before motorbikes were allowed in bus lanes has risen only 2.1%; the rate on the remainder of London's road network rose 2.7%. Overall, about half of motorcyclists use the bus lanes with the rest choosing to ride in the remainder of the carriageway.

A14 Challenge is go

The DfT has launched the A14 Challenge to seek ideas about how to improve travel conditions in the A14 corridor across Cambridgeshire. The 130-mile A14 trunk road connects the M1/M6 near Rugby with Felixstowe port on the East Coast. The main focus of the Challenge is the 24-mile section of dual carriageway between Ellington, where the road intersects with the A1(M), and Fen Ditton to the east of Cambridge. The Government scrapped a £1.2bn plan to widen this road from two to three lanes last year (one section is already three lane), saying the solution was unaffordable.

The DfT says it will welcome suggestions on how to improve not only the A14 but also local roads, local public transport and parallel rail lines. It wants solutions that will cost "considerably less" than the £1.2bn of the abandoned scheme.

LGA wants more power

The Local Government Association is pressing the DfT to reconsider its decision not to give local authorities outside London powers to enforce moving traffic contraventions. Transport minister Norman Baker announced in November that the Government would not implement Part 6 of the Traffic Management Act 2004 allowing councils to enforce infringements such as banned turns and yellow box junction offences. He said an approach to 20 authorities last year had indicated that demand for the powers was "far from overwhelming". Peter Box, chair of the Local Government Association's economy and transport programme board, has written to Baker, pointing out that ten authorities voiced support for the plans. The LGA is also puzzled why four of the councils approached by the DfT were not traffic authorities.

Workplace parking levies blocked

The DfT has blocked local authorities in England from introducing workplace parking levy schemes, declaring that any proposals must have support from the local business community. "Local authorities must show they have properly and effectively consulted local businesses, have addressed any proper concerns raised and secured support from the local business community," the DfT said in a report outlining the conclusions of the Government's Red Tape Review on motoring regulations.

The new approach will not be embodied

in legislation. Instead, ministers will review business engagement and support when considering a local authority's application for a workplace parking levy Order.

The policy change comes too late to stop the country's first workplace parking levy scheme going ahead in Nottingham. The city council will start charging for spaces in April. Nottingham's levy has been fought by Derbyshire and Nottinghamshire Chamber of Commerce and many businesses, including Boots, whose headquarters are in the city.

CC falls out of favour

The public's willingness to change their travel behaviour in response to fears about climate change is falling, according to the Office for National Statistics. Each year the ONS quizzes just over 1000 people about their attitudes to climate change and transport. The 2011 survey, just reported by the DfT, found the proportion willing to change their transport behaviour in the name of climate change has fallen from 81% to 65%. Only 42% were willing to reduce their car use and 20% were willing to reduce their air travel. "Graduates were significantly more likely to be at least fairly concerned about climate change – 82% compared to 60% for non-graduates," reports the DfT. It says the gap is widening.

The rail park rip-off

Two weeks after ticket fares went up by an average of six per cent, rail company Southeastern has increased parking charges in SE London by up to 28%. The Transport Salaried Staffs Association (TSSA), the union for the transport and travel industry, has long campaigned for station parking charges to be covered by the same formula that applies to fare increases.

General secretary Manuel Cortes said: "Southeastern is ripping off commuters.... parking increases of 30% simply cannot be justified when inflation is 5% and wages are only rising by 2%. Rail companies are now treating car parking charges as another revenue stream which they can simply turn on when they want extra cash."

Mainstream EVs "still 20 years away"

The mass take-up of electric and other low emission vehicle technologies could still be 20 years away, according to the Government. Its Carbon Plan, released in December, lists numerous barriers to people acquiring so-called Ultra Low Emission Vehicles, such as electric vehicles. These include costs of ownership, consumer acceptability (including range), availability and the cost of natural resources plus the appropriate recharging infrastructure.

"Uncertainties around when these barriers will come down could mean mass ULEV uptake is

delayed into the 2030s," the report says. In 2010 the Committee on Climate Change called for an ambitious target for electric cars on the road by 2020, suggesting 1.7 million such vehicles was both "feasible and desirable".

The Renault Fluence EV



LEZ validity queried

Ministers have urged local authorities to carefully consider whether Low Emission Zones are cost-effective, warning that their implementation could be economically damaging and do little to improve air quality. The sceptical comments come in the Government's response to a House of Commons environmental audit committee report on air quality.

The Government notes that nitrogen oxides concentrations in many urban areas exceed EU limits that were supposed to be achieved by 2010. "It has become clear that even the extended compliance date of January 2015 is inadequate, not just for parts of the UK, but also for parts of many other EU countries," it adds.

A9 to be dualled

The Scottish Government has promised to dual the entire A9 from Perth to Inverness – but not until 2025. The timetable for delivering the project, which has an estimated price tag of £1.5bn-£3bn, was outlined in the Government's new Infrastructure Investment Plan last December. It proposes a phased approach to dualing, beginning in 2017.

Completing the dualing of the A96 between Inverness and Aberdeen would follow the completion of the A9 works. The plan contains few new details about transport. A refresh of the Strategic Transport Projects Review will be published in early 2012. The Scottish Government expects road traffic kilometres to grow by 15-20% by 2020.

in brief...

► Boris Johnson has launched a preliminary consultation on plans for a new road tunnel and ferry service across the Thames in east London. The road tunnel at Silvertown and the vehicle ferry crossing at Gallions Reach aim to ease congestion and improve regeneration prospects. Major population growth is expected in east and south-east London. The Silvertown road tunnel would be built adjacent to the existing Blackwall Tunnel and connect Silvertown on the north of the Thames with the Greenwich Peninsula on the south. It would have capacity for up to 6,000 vehicles an hour.

► Vehicular traffic on London's A roads is currently about 8% lower than it was in 2006/07, according to monitoring by Transport for London. TfL's managing director for surface transport, Leon Daniels, said that taking 2006/07 as the index base year (100), the figure for 2011/12 to date was 92. This is 1.4 points below last year's equivalent year to date figure of 93.4. The figures cover 24 hour weekday flows.

► Traffic entering the former Western Extension area of the Central London congestion charging zone increased by 8% in the months following the scrapping of the charge in December 2010, monitoring by Transport for London indicates. The volume of circulating traffic within the zone rose by 7%.

► Solihull Metropolitan Borough Council plans to trial the effectiveness of 20mph speed limits on various cul-de-sacs and through streets. Solihull's head of highway services Paul Tovey said the experiences of places such as Portsmouth, which has already implemented 20mph limits across residential streets, had limited relevance for the borough. "The road layouts in Solihull are of more recent design and in large parts of the borough on-street parking does not narrow the road to a point where the roads operate under an informal 'give and take' traffic system," he said.

► Newcastle City Council has completed the implementation of 20mph limits across neighbourhood streets. The programme covers 75% of the city's roads and has cost £1.4m. Newcastle is now working with Sheffield (and potentially Liverpool and Warrington) on publicity campaigns to promote the benefits of the limits.

► The Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead is to retain its 26 fixed speed cameras but place more enforcement emphasis at 20 mobile camera sites. The decision follows a consultation with communities living close to fixed camera sites. The council is also to buy two more Speed Indicator Devices, taking the number to 12.

► Norfolk County Council plans to divert more than half its DfT grant for integrated transport projects into road maintenance next year. The county will receive a £5.3m allocation from the DfT for small-scale transport improvements but proposes diverting all but £2m into maintenance.

in brief...

▶ On-street parking plans for 30 Northern Ireland towns have been officially axed by a Stormont minister. The U-turn follows a vigorous 'Park The Charges' campaign. Regional Development Minister Danny Kennedy said: "Given the tough economic climate that town centre businesses are operating in I do not believe it is the right time to be implementing such a widespread proposal. He proposes to offset the shortfall with a £2m saving by greater efficiency within his department and other cost-cutting measures

▶ Motorway service stations are charging up to 40% more for items than a high street outlet, according to the IAM. The group claims a large Snickers bar costs 90p on the motorway compared with 68p on the high street (32% more) while a regular coffee costs 16% more. A packet of McCoy's crisps is almost 45% more expensive and a packet of Walkers crisps is marked up by 36%. Meanwhile, petrol prices average about 10p per litre more than at off-motorway forecourts.

▶ The speed limit for lorries on single carriageway roads could be raised from its current 40mph under proposals being drawn up by ministers. The DfT will consult this year on raising the speed limit to 50mph, for HGVs over 7.5 tonnes. Any change would be UK-wide. The Scotland Bill will give the Scottish Government the power to set speed limits for types of road but not vehicles.

▶ The DfT is considering setting a national definition of a pothole. The progress report of the Potholes Review acknowledges that, currently, a highway defect of a particular size will be repaired by some local authorities but not by others because they have different service standards. The London Borough of Lambeth was recently criticised for revising its definition of a pothole from a defect 25mm deep to one 40mm deep.

▶ The London Borough of Camden is considering charging motorcyclists for parking in an effort to manage demand. The borough says free parking for motorcyclists "effectively encourages a shift to motorcycle use". "There is a case for restraining demand of motorcycle parking and limiting non-essential journeys through the introduction of motorcycling charging," Camden's director of culture and environment Rachel Stopard told members. Parking charges would "encourage usage of public transport and more sustainable modes of transport such as cycling", she said.

▶ The DfT has announced a new plan to help the nation adapt to changing weather patterns. "Toads on the carriageway can present a skid risk to drivers and signs warning that toads may be on the road are currently allowed to be used from February to May," explains a press release about the traffic sign rule changes that came into force recently. "To allow for the effect of climate change on toad migration, councils can put the warning sign in place a month earlier without needing to gain approval".

UK traffic levels continue to fall

Traffic levels on Britain's roads fell for the third year in succession in 2010 – the longest period of decline since records began in 1949. The volume of traffic fell 1.6% in 2010, and follows drops of 1% in 2009 and 0.8% in 2008. Traffic levels were, however, still 6.2% higher in 2010 than in 2000. The figures are recorded in the new edition of *Transport Statistics Great Britain*.

The report also highlights rail's remarkable renaissance, with the number of journeys on national rail services having risen by 84% since privatisation in 1994/95, from around 0.7 billion a year to circa 1.4 billion in 2010/11. Journeys rose by 7.6% between 2009/10 and 2010/11.

New figures released by Transport Scotland show that the volume of car traffic, bus trips and

plane flights in Scotland all fell in 2010. Road traffic fell by 1.7% and bus trips in 2010/11 were down 6% on 2009/10 levels. Air terminal passengers at Scottish airports fell by almost 1.6 million to 21 million. Rail travel on ScotRail trains increased 1.8% in 2009/10.

Meanwhile, data from Northern Ireland shows that residents are making fewer trips. The average number of journeys made has fallen 7% in the last decade, from 978 in 1999-2001 to 905 in 2008-2010, according to the Travel Survey for Northern Ireland, based on household surveys. Average distance travelled has remained stable – 5,976 miles (2008-10) and 5,985 miles (1999-2001). The amount of time people spend travelling has remained stable, amounting to 301 hours a year in 2008-10.

Fuel stations continue to dwindle

The number of fuel stops in the UK continued to decline over the past year, falling to just 8480 – down from 8892 in 2010. This compares with 1967's all-time high of 39,958 forecourts. The Retail Marketing Survey, published with the Energy Institute's March issue of *Petroleum Review*, provides a comprehensive, statistical overview of the UK forecourt market. Data is broken down by company, region and forecourt facilities. Key findings include:

- Petrol sales totalled 13.86m tonnes in 2011 – down from 15.01m tonnes in 2010.
- Diesel sales totalled 13.91m tonnes in 2011 – rising from 13.06m tonnes in 2010.
- Total 2011 road fuel sales fell to 35.608m tonnes – down from 36.111m tonnes.
- By the close of 2011, unleaded prices had averaged 133.60 p/l (versus 117.16 p/l in 2010); while diesel prices closed the year at an average price of 138.90 p/l (versus 119.51 p/l).
- Registered UK vehicles rose from 34.1m



in 2010 to reach 34.7m by end-2011, with each forecourt supplying an average of 4088 vehicles.

- 711 sites retail auto-LPG – the largest operators are Shell with 213 sites and BP with 207.
- The five largest oil company operations were BP: 1178, Esso: 890, Shell: 845, Texaco: 840, Total: 782.

HS2 gets a high-profile thumbs down

A withering attack on the Government's proposed high-speed railway from London to the West Midlands has been launched by an economist who pioneered the application of cost-benefit analysis to transport. "I doubt one could find a worse current example than High Speed 2 of a failure to make a credible case for a major project," says Sir Christopher Foster, who developed the economic case for constructing the Victoria Line in London almost 50 years ago. "I do not know one economist I respect who believes in the case for HS2."

Foster's comments come in the foreword to an equally critical review of the HS2 plans commissioned by 51m, the group of anti-HS2 local authorities, and published by the RAC Foundation. The report's authors are the economists Chris Castles and David Parish,

both of whom have had long careers in transport project appraisal, most recently with consultant PwC.

Castles and Parish say the appraisal of HS2 has failed to follow the advice of the Treasury's Green Book or the DfT's appraisal guidance in a number of crucial respects. Demand forecasts for HS2 are too high, they say, remarking that the assessment used a now outdated version of the rail industry bible, the *Passenger Demand Forecasting Handbook*. "If the DfT had used these new forecasts, the economic case for HS2 would have disappeared," they say.

They say there is evidence that the growth in long-distance travel demand is reaching saturation. "Total long-distance journeys by all modes has stayed at a broadly constant level since 2003."

Stay informed

Email groups

Keep abreast of what the ABD is up to by subscribing to the ABD Action mailing list. Join the list by emailing abd-action-owner@yahoogroups.com with your name and membership number. Get even faster updates via Twitter (twitter.com/TheABD) and Facebook (www.facebook.com/associationofbritishdrivers)

Forum

You can discuss issues with other members by registering on our online forum. The forum is split into both topics and regions, so whether your concern is a particular topic such as speed limits, or something happening in your local area, you can easily find other members to advise and assist you. Full details of how to register can be found on the members' website.

Website

The main ABD website (www.abd.org.uk) is available to everyone, and there's a members' site at members.abd.org.uk – both contain mountains of information on a diverse range of subjects, with dozens of links to other websites which may help you in your research. Log on to to find out more or email the ABD webmaster – Chris Ward – at website@abd.org.uk

OTR – go electronic

You can save the ABD lots of money if you opt to receive each issue of *On The Road* electronically, rather than as a hard copy – you'll also see it far quicker. To go electronic please email membership@abd.org.uk using the subject header **electronic OTR**. Please use this header and no other to ensure your email isn't binned as spam.

OTR in cyberspace

OTR31 onwards are now available as PDFs, which you can obtain from Chris Medd or download from the ABD website.

Speed limit objection packs

The ABD has prepared an informative action pack which sets out in detail the process by which local authorities set speed limits, and the rights that every member of the public has to object to the imposition of new or reduced limits. The pack costs £5 to non-members, but is available free to current members. Please send a large SAE (30p) to:

**3 Wheatcroft Way
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Norfolk NR20 3SS
malcolm.heymer@abd.org.uk**

Help out

ABD publicity material

If you'd like copies of any ABD literature please contact Susan Newby-Robson (details overleaf), but please don't over-order as printing costs are high.

Affiliated organisations

The ABD runs an affiliation scheme, allowing groups which support the ABD to formally recognise the work we do. Overleaf is a list of the groups currently affiliated, along with contact details for Terry Hudson, the affiliations contact. If you're a member of an organisation which you think should support the ABD, please let Terry know and we'll endeavour to sign them up.

Complain

Object about proposals for traffic calming and speed limit reductions. Few people do, which is why they happen.

Facebook

Follow us on Facebook at www.facebook.com/associationofbritishdrivers where you can comment on posted articles, find out about press articles you can comment on, and by sharing some of our updates, encourage your friends to support us too.

Fighting fund

The ABD has a fighting fund to which you can donate any amount at any time. You can also donate by standing order if you wish to give a regular sum. Please contact the membership secretary for more information; she'll send you the relevant form to fill out.

Joint memberships

These are free and help us to increase the size of the group easily. If your partner/spouse isn't a joint member, please sign them up if you can – just contact the membership secretary to do so.

Local/regional contacts

Have you been in touch with your local co-ordinator recently? Advise them of anything local you see, find out how you can help campaign locally. You can find out their details on the members site (<http://members.abd.org.uk>). If there's no local co-ordinator for your area, perhaps you can take on the role – more details on what is involved can be found on the members site.

National committee

The ABD's national committee is always keen to increase its effectiveness, which means getting more members involved. An ability to function effectively and diplomatically in committee email discussions across a wide range of issues is essential, and ideally, after an acclimatisation period, new recruits would eventually become a media spokesman too. There are usually around four committee plus (up to) two members' meetings each year, which you'd ideally be able to attend. If you reckon you could get involved, just contact Brian Gregory (brian.gregory@abd.org.uk), Brian MacDowall (brian.macdowall@abd.org.uk) or Bob Dennish (national@abd.org.uk) and they'll do the rest.

Twitter

Follow us at <http://twitter.com/TheABD>, where you can stay up to date on what's happening. Find out about press articles you can comment on and retweet our posts to spread the word. You can also use Twitter to update us on things you see, if you make sure we're following you. If you're in Birmingham, Essex, Herefordshire, Kent, North West, Rutland, Scotland, Staffs, Surrey or Warwickshire we have a local Twitter account too: <http://twitter.com/TheABD/local>

Write to the press

Take the time to reply to anti-car articles and letters in the local press. Not only do you get to respond to information already published, but you may be able to get a debate going – and could even become a local point of contact.

Contact your MP

Write to your MP regularly, reminding them of their duty to stand up for drivers. MPs are listed by name & constituency on the Parliament site (parliament.uk/directories/directories.cfm). Many MPs have their own email, but if you use the Parliament webpage to email them, it's involved. It's often better to check their constituency website (if they have one) for contact info. Make sure you state clearly you're a constituent to get priority in a reply. Conservative ministers are listed at conservatives.com

national & regional contacts

We are always pleased to hear from members who can offer support or need help. But remember that the ABD is a voluntary organisation – funded only by its members' subscriptions – and is staffed by unpaid volunteers who do their best to help members. **So please, no phone calls after 9pm!**

Affiliated organisations

- ▶ American Automobile Club
- ▶ BMW Car Club
- ▶ CIPS (Choice in Personal Safety)
- ▶ Citroen Car Club
- ▶ Driver Awareness
- ▶ Jaguar Drivers' Club
- ▶ NO2ID
- ▶ Parkingticket.co.uk

- ▶ Professional Drivers' Association
- ▶ Renault ClioSport Club
- ▶ Repeal the Act
- ▶ Safe Speed (safespeed.org.uk)
- ▶ South East Lotus Owners' Club
- ▶ Subaru Impreza Drivers' Club
- ▶ The Independent Porsche Enthusiasts' Club
- ▶ Triumph Stag Enthusiasts' Club

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