

On The Road

The journal of the Association of British Drivers

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July members' meeting will be unmissable

The last year has been an exciting period for the ABD, with a huge amount of progress made in key areas, such as networking, campaigning, media profile and lobbying. We've gained new patrons and have more active members than ever before. Clearly there's always more we can do, but taking stock of our position is always good, and you can help us to do that at the forthcoming members' meeting which will be held on 14 July at the Heritage Motor Centre at Gaydon in Warks, near junction 12 of the M40.

All members are warmly invited to attend this annual meeting, where you'll be able to find out everything you need to know about the ABD's performance and plans, which will be discussed with an opportunity to ask questions, make suggestions and offer practical help to move our organisation forward.

After last year's explosive growth where we acquired four new public figures for our patrons list, this year has been one of consolidation, but it's been no less important.

Closer links with like-minded groups and individuals is the chief feature of this year's meeting. We can't get drivers' issues to the fore alone, so we are delighted to have Peter Carroll from Fair Fuel UK, which has achieved an extraordinary level of publicity in the fight for a fair deal on fuel prices.

Our close links with the Tax Payers' Alliance



continue; grassroots organiser Andrew Allison will be attending the meeting to explain the campaigns the TPA is running to get greater public awareness of driving issues, and we're also very pleased to be able to confirm a return visit from former aerospace engineer Eric Bridgstock, who will demonstrate how he successfully argued for realistic speed limits – an issue that continues to occupy a lot of our time.

Eric will be followed by Dave Finney, whose comprehensive report on the ineffectiveness of Thames Valley speed cameras was readily snapped up by the region's press this year.

Like last year, you are welcome to bring friends along –but please note the section of the meeting between 10.30 and 11.00 is for official business and as a result will be open only to members.

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The next issue of *On The Road* goes to press on Monday 17 September. Contributions deadline is Monday 3 September.

UK roads are the EU's safest

The UK is expected to have had the lowest number of road deaths per head of population in the EU last year, despite a 5% increase compared to 2010, according to preliminary figures published by the European Commission. The UK takes over the top spot because Sweden, which previously had the best record, recorded an 18% rise in deaths in 2011. Unlike the figures for most other member states, the UK's figures are an estimate based on data from the first nine months of the year. A number of other member states also recorded rises including: Germany (10%); Poland (7%); Belgium (4%); the Netherlands (2%) (Jan-September). The Commission says the 2% fall in fatalities across Europe last year was lower than the 6% average annual drop over the last decade.

To join the ABD
call us now on
07000 781 544



The ABD campaigns for:

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

abd action

The ABD welcomes another new patron

Glenys Roberts has become the latest person to join our growing list of public figures in the ABD patrons list. Glenys, a self-confessed driving enthusiast, is also a *Daily Mail* and *Evening Standard* columnist, being the only Tory councillor to speak out publicly against Westminster council's plans to hike up parking charges in the borough (see OTR103). Opposition led to the shelving of the scheme, coupled with the resignation of leader Colin Barrow.

Glenys recalls: "Alone among the 48 Westminster Tories I opposed the policy publicly, asked questions in the Council chamber, spoke at length to the Cabinet meeting when the decision was made, pointing out the many disadvantages, particularly at this time of economic downturn and presented an 8000-signature petition to the Lord Mayor".



Despite Glenys's hectic schedule, Brian Mooney and Brian MacDowall finally managed to meet her in central London. She, like many ABD members, is an

independent thinker who values freedom from excessive state control of peoples' lives. Despite living in probably the most crowded and congested city in the UK, she drives everywhere on her day to day business, prizing the freedom, convenience and reliability of the car.

During conversations with her, the two Brians reckoned Glenys must have done the equivalent of the London cabbies' knowledge while she has also lived and driven extensively in both the USA and Europe. She is very much on our wavelength with regard to climate change issues being used to tax drivers disproportionately and of course we're delighted she has joined us.

The ABD is looking for new opportunities to get its views across in the national media, and we will hopefully benefit from Glenys's wealth of media experience.

Fighting back on road pricing

ABD spokesmen hit back sharply following the Prime Minister's announcement, just days before the budget, at a renewed threat to introduce road pricing. National Committee member Ian Taylor said: "I took a call from the *Daily Express* on the Sunday night before Tuesday's budget slamming the government. Yes, we desperately need road improvements, but this is a throwback to the days of turnpikes; our public highways have been well and truly paid for through the nose".

Ian's comments got good coverage in the following edition of the paper. And our Twitter and Facebook sites were buzzing with comment and reaction.

Cameron claimed that "Britain's second-rate roads desperately need a huge injection of private sector investment", but conveniently ignored the fact that the UK's drivers already pay £48bn a year, (almost £5 million an hour), and in return they get back just £9bn each year on maintenance and upgrades.

Chairman Brian Gregory said: "As with his predecessors, he's not answering the basic problem that the UK's drivers are over £480 billion in credit since 1997, between what they extract in taxes and the pittance they give back".

The ABD ran a brilliant campaign five years ago when Peter Roberts gained a world record 1.8 million signatures on the Number 10 e-petition website against road pricing, which put the government of the day on the back foot,

leading to them shelving plans for road pricing at the last general election - which they duly lost.

Cameron has ordered a consultation for the autumn, so it's in the interests of all drivers – and ABD members in particular – to respond in a forthright manner.

We will keep you informed, as shortly before going to press, Transport secretary Justine Greening issued a PR in which she set out a

long-term plan which focused on the possibility of greater private sector involvement in the network's management. The strategy proposals are outlined in the DFT's response to Alan Cook's review *A fresh start for the Strategic Road Network*, which was published last November and covered in a recent issue of OTR.

Greening has accepted most of Cook's recommendations and the

DfT will work with the Treasury to consider how greater funding certainty can be given to the HA; road pricing of the existing network has apparently been ruled out.

Clearly the government is intending to push ahead with private sector involvement but the devil is in the detail; we will be keeping a close eye on this subject.

Finally I'd like to sincerely thank committee members who give up leisure time to ensure our viewpoints got national attention; being quick off the mark is essential.

Brian MacDowall



Join the TPA

We've mentioned them before, but make no apologies in recommending all members become supporters of the Taxpayers Alliance. This brilliant group has a very high profile and is respected even by government; almost every week it is out collecting signatures on topical issues, many relating to driving. The ABD doesn't have the resources to cover the country in the same way, so working with like-minded groups is a much smarter way of reaching out to a wider audience.

I recently spent some time campaigning with the TPA in to Grantham, helping them collect names against the proposed 3p a litre (that's 13.5p a gallon) increase in fuel duty due in August; despite the poor weather we had a good response.

• www.taxpayersalliance.com

You've got mail

Record high postal charges came into effect on 30 April, with charges rising from 46p for a first-class letter, and 36p for a second-class, to 50p and 60p respectively. Meanwhile, the cost of posting large letters will increase from 75p to 90p for first class and 58p to 69p for second class.

Please help us contact you primarily by email, by notifying the membership secretary of your current email address; it'll cut costs, plus it will be used only sparingly and for ABD purposes only; we always keep members' personal details confidential.

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...

The life of Brian

Campaigning can be anything from writing a single letter to an editor of a local paper that is read by thousands, to a national campaign working with like-minded groups persuading government to change its policy. Campaigns are invariably ongoing; they're formed, paused and restarted according to whatever issues become topical.

The important point is to be heard; as my Kent colleague Terry Hudson constantly reminds people, it's no good being the silent majority; government and councils are there to be lobbied, so making yourself known is vitally important.

A not untypical day for me was Monday 14 May. I'd already been contacted by Radio Kent to appear on their breakfast show repeating claims by the Road Safety Foundation that motorways are unfit to allow a speed limit increase to 80mph. All of two minutes to say your piece is not uncommon. Fortunately our webmaster Chris Ward had already picked up on the RSF's PR, and in a flurry of activity on the Sunday, our PR specialist Dave Razzell drafted out our own release showing that motorways are our safest roads; team work like this is how the driver's voice gets heard.

After that there was a letter to draft to a local paper on speed watch vigilantes who are pressing for traffic calming. To help me write the most effective letter, I paid a visit to Kent rep Terry Hudson, who was able to make several valuable suggestions.

Meanwhile, Terry had already drafted two separate letters to local papers, picking up on an article from the new leader of the Medway Labour party, who had claimed that he genuinely wanted to hear the public's views. For us and Medway's residents, parking is a constant hot topic, with extensive restrictions and two roaming CCTV vans clocking up over £200k in fines. Terry would go on to cover that issue; meanwhile we finished our response to KCC's Freight Action Plan consultation.

We don't give freight transport many column inches in OTR, but the ABD is here to represent all drivers and riders, so it's important that we stick up for those in the haulage business too. Not least of all because here in Kent, when Operation Stack kicks off turning the M20 into a lorry park, the knock-on effects are horrendous. It took several drafts before we were happy with what we were submitting, but in the end the results were more than worthwhile.

Back home I finished my letter to the local paper on speedwatch vigilantes, before ringing IAM Bucks to confirm our attendance at their meeting



later in the week where we would present a slide show outlining the ABD's aims and objectives. Requests like these aren't uncommon, so it's a team effort coming up with the goods, which is why my Kent colleague Ian Taylor agreed to help out. But there's more to it than that, which is why I put in a call to Tony Smith-Roberts, our Bucks coordinator. While he wouldn't be able to make the meeting, he agreed to start a twitter account for Bucks, which necessitates a meeting before the IAM presentation.

With all these things out of the way, it's time to jump into an evening of putting together the initial draft of campaigning copy for this edition of OTR.

Last year I started working with local coordinators, arranging local meetings for ABD members. In an increasingly online world, I feel strongly that personal contact, especially occasional face to face meetings, are vitally important for people to get to know each other; any group is only as good as its members. By taking this approach we've made good progress in Essex and Surrey. Just last month I went up to Scunthorpe, staying three days to assist Ray Spalding, our new East Yorks and North Lincs coordinator; we both learned a lot and I'm hoping to arrange a trip to West Yorkshire to boost activity there.

I'm acutely aware that many members are unsure how to commence campaigning so, within reason, I'm willing to travel to assist you find the most effective ways to generate greater publicity for our aims and objectives.

Having retired from paid employment, I've now got an equivalent full-time job. It's always hectic, because I push myself as do all committee members, but it's also fun, never dull, and usually very rewarding.

If you want me to help you boost campaigning activity in your area, my contact details are on the back page of OTR. Call me and make a difference.

Brian MacDowall

Digging a hole

In March, Parliament's Public Accounts Committee (PAC) reviewed the DFT's spending. It expressed concern that councils had been told to trim £223 million (40%) from their roads maintenance budget. Margaret Hodge MP, the PAC chairman warned that the DFT didn't fully understand the impact of cuts on our roads:

My committee is concerned that short-term budget cutting could prove counter-productive, costing more in the long term as a result of increased vehicle damage and the higher cost of repairing the more severe road damage.



The National Audit Office had referred to the 'managed decline' of our roads.

The ABD met with Local Transport Minister Norman Baker last year. We pointed out that it would be a false economy to not spend and let roads (in England that he's responsible for) deteriorate. The benefits of maintenance repay the costs ten times over, as prevention is a lot cheaper than cure.

Possibly as he was pushed for time, he was reluctant to discuss greater funding and just mentioned the forthcoming Highways Maintenance Efficiency Programme (HMEP). He is now talking up the ideas we put to him. His speech to the 'The Future of Highways Delivery' conference conceded:

... prevention is better than the cure... intervening at the right time will reduce potholes forming and prevent bigger problems later, and help head off costly insurance claims that local authorities are now facing.

He also promoted ideas such as getting it right first time, communicating with the public and highways authority monitoring public satisfaction with the condition of roads.

He now acknowledges the size of the problem: We all know that the condition of local roads is consistently ranked near the top in terms of transport priorities in public opinion surveys.

There will be more clues in the comical-sounding Pothole Review, out this spring.

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

ABD's media blitz

There's a permanent battle to get the driver's point of view across, but if you thought only opposition viewpoints get an airing, think again. We've responded to well over 50 media slots recently, notably on BBC local radio stations in the west country, Wales, Sheffield, Newcastle, Kent, Stoke and especially Edinburgh, where new bus lanes caused a storm of protest grossing the council £250k in the first three weeks.

We took loads of calls on this subject; being quoted initially often leads to further requests for comment and reaction. Our national spokesmen responded magnificently to a widely quoted PR from the Road Safety Foundation which alleged motorways are "unfit for 80 mph" – the media blitz caused by this report tested us to the limit with the first call coming in at 06.15 and continuing throughout the day.

Our Roads and Traffic expert, Malcolm Heymer, sent a concise strongly worded statement to roads minister Mike Penning and his chief civil servant pointing out the numerous flaws and dodgy methodology in their report. If you'd like to join in the fun, please contact Brian Macdowall on 01227 369 119.

Bucks fizz

As part of the ABD's ongoing commitment to encourage member participation I and national committee member Ian Taylor arranged to meet up with our Bucks coordinator Tony Smith–Roberts. Tony has agreed to set up a twitter account for Bucks to enable any member to send and receive news and events concerning driver issues affecting your area straight away, to achieve immediate publicity on those issues as well as advertising the ABD to the widest possible audience.

Because of prior commitments our meeting was very short, but things will continue to progress with this project. Meanwhile, Tony, whose details are on the back page, would be pleased to hear from any member in the Bucks region who is willing and able to help promote the ABD.

Ian and I then had to dash to a meeting of the Bucks IAM group, where we presented a slide show of the ABD's aims and objectives; this was well received, with several of their members asking questions and taking leaflets.

We take every opportunity to get our message across, that drivers need a fair deal from the political class; it frequently stretches us, particularly as I'd agreed to do a radio interview at 06.15 the following day.

The ABD backs the principle of driver training as the way to cut casualties on our roads, which is why we're increasingly working with other groups where there is common ground, in order to build up pressure on the government to change its policies on a range of driving issues.

Brian MacDowall

New contact for Yorks and Lincs

While it's true that most of the ABD's national committee members live south of a line from the Bristol channel to the Wash, we certainly haven't forgotten our members in the north; it was only a matter of time before an active member appeared wanting to press ahead with representing drivers' interests further north.

Ray Spalding, our new East Yorks and North Lincs coordinator has a wealth of experience, particularly in the field of driver training and is taking steps to launch driver training for youngsters in schools in the area.

Prior to travelling north to assist Ray with his ABD role, Ray arranged a public meeting using his contacts in the area – went very well and will prove useful for future activity.

In a hectic two days we met ABD members in the area, notably solicitor Michael Pace, whose firm is on the ABD's panel of solicitors. Michael is not fazed by public speaking, offering to help Ray wherever possible.

Later we drove to a RoSPA meeting in Louth in the evening with Ray addressing

the meeting with the focus very much on improving skill behind the wheel.

With barely a pause for breath, I arranged a visit to the *Hull Daily Mail* to introduce Ray to the most influential paper in the region; we were well received and in the process we discovered that the paper runs a features section. I pointed out to Ray this would provide an ideal advert for his attempts to get backing from councils, safety partnerships, car dealers and others to launch his driver training initiative.

We went on to meet Tax Payers' Alliance grassroots organiser Andrew Allison, who lives in the area. Andrew pointed out some sneaky mobile camera sites on the Hull – Beverley road before getting back for our public meeting – a press release for which was sent to the *Hull Daily Mail*.

I'd like to thank Ray for his hard work; this brief flurry of activity will boost our profile, but, as there are members in the area, Ray would love to hear from you. He can be contacted on 01652 654 877.

Brian MacDowall

Bristol cuts scameras – and saves lives

The ABD's long campaign to focus on the true cause of accidents paid off in Bristol, where a huge decrease in casualties has occurred since cameras were switched off in March this year; the camera partnership was disbanded in 2011.

Between 2010 and 2011 the number of tickets being handed out went down from 130,000 to 38,000. However, the police have confirmed that there has also been a 25% cut in collisions in the past three years. Even the head of Avon and Somerset police's road policing unit admits the way to make roads safer is via education as opposed to prosecution; a message the ABD has been repeating for years.

ABD spokesman Hugh Bladon, who lives in the area, told the local press: "The simple fact is that speed cameras have been a total distraction for the authorities and for drivers. They've distracted the authorities from looking at and taking action against the real causes of accidents, and they distract motorists into putting so much emphasis on speed, rather than looking at the way they are driving. The whole business of having speed cameras has been a complete and utter failure as far as road safety is concerned."

The move was condemned by the road safety charity Brake, but Campaigns Director Brian Macdowall, also contacted by the press, said: "Failure to look properly is the number one contributory factor to accidents; speeding comes in around seventh place on the list."

However, the message from Chief Inspector

John Holt, of Avon and Somerset's roads policing unit, is contradictory. Whilst admitting serious casualties in Avon and Somerset have continued to fall beyond national trends – with a 25% decrease in the past three years, compared with a national reduction of 19%, he also warned police would take action against anyone caught speeding and police still operate mobile speed camera vans in the region. He then went on to say: "Education rather than just prosecution has proved more effective in keeping our communities safe".

Our message to him is simple cracking down on drivers being over a posted limit but who are otherwise driving safely for the prevailing conditions is the equivalent of using a sledgehammer to crack a nut; for education to be effective it has to be given priority with enforcement sensibly apportioned and not used as a first line of attack.

This is excellent news, completely justifying our stance on how broadly ineffective cameras have been as a road safety tool.

Swindon was the first council to kick out fixed cameras; Bristol has followed and the accident figures so far have justified the policy change in these areas.

Swindon has recently been named the safest town to drive in in the UK; insurer Staveley Head analysed accidents per thousand vehicles across Britain, with Swindon coming in at 2.0 per thousand compared with a national average of 4.7.

The ABD has its say

The ABD is constantly responding to DfT consultations, which usually propose ever more regulations for drivers. While all committee members take part, it's invariably roads & traffic expert Malcolm Heymer who does the bulk of the work, such as this response he recently drafted in response to plans to change the way speed limits are set by local authorities:

The Association of British Drivers is aware that the DfT is reviewing guidance on local speed limit setting and provided evidence to that review in a meeting with Duncan Price on 1 December 2011. The production of a web-based appraisal tool was discussed at that meeting and the ABD is aware that the DfT has now issued a call for evidence on the impact of speed limit changes, to inform the development of the appraisal tool. The ABD has some comments to make on the scope of the evidence requested by the DfT.

In the list of outcomes, only before-and-after mean speed data is requested. The ABD remains strongly of the view that the 85th percentile is the best basis for setting speed limits, and there is good evidence that drivers travelling in the 80th to 90th percentile range have the lowest accident involvement. Setting speed limits at or below the mean speed criminalizes half of all drivers, including the safest, if they continue to use their experience and judgement to drive at safe, normal speeds. Consequently, it is essential that before-and-after 85th percentile speeds should continue to be collected.

Only data from 2002 onwards has been requested. This excludes large amounts of valid evidence from earlier years. The way drivers respond to speed limits is a function of human nature, which does not change fundamentally over time, so all the evidence collected during the last 70 years should be included. Few people will voluntarily comply with rules and regulations that do not seem to them to be reasonable or necessary, which is why lowering speed limits to unrealistic levels leads to high levels of non-compliance. As an example the ABD has obtained data from Warwickshire County Council on the results of recent blanket



And what might that reason be? Political correctness?

speed limit reductions, mostly on rural roads, in that county. This showed that, at the 115 sites surveyed:

- ▶ The 85th percentile speed was above the new speed limit at 78 sites (67.8%) compared with just 16 (13.9%) previously; and

- ▶ The mean speed was above the new speed limit at 27 sites (23.5%) compared with none before.

It is not known how the speed surveys that produced these results were conducted, and this is another area over which the ABD has concerns. When measuring the effect of a speed limit change, it is vital that only the speeds of vehicles unimpeded by others should be counted. Only then can a true picture be obtained of the speed choices that drivers would make if free to do so. On single-carriageway roads, especially where alignment or traffic volume make overtaking difficult, the small minority of drivers who rigidly adhere to speed limits have a wholly disproportionate impact on the speed of other traffic.

It is not enough, therefore, just to conduct speed surveys outside peak periods - the speed of individual vehicles with less than a minimum headway to the one in front must be discounted. It is recommended that the minimum headway for this purpose should be six seconds. Traffic authorities should ensure that their speed surveys, whether automated or manual, discount the speeds of vehicles that do not meet this criterion. At headways shorter than this, the following driver may already be slowing as the vehicle in front is being caught.

It is unacceptable to introduce laws knowing that at least half the people to whom they apply are likely to break them. It undermines the respect for the law generally. The ABD hopes that the review of local speed limit guidance will reverse the trend of the last 15 years and lead to speed limits that more realistic and acceptable to the majority of drivers. Enforcement can then be targeted at those who drive in a dangerous manner.

The value of challenging information

Proving the worth of challenging information, Peter Roberts recently picked up on a misleading statement which was subsequently removed from a safety partnership's website. Misinformation does a lot of damage as it makes a big difference to the way people view road safety; keeping a weather eye open for comments on the camera partnerships' websites is valuable as it can get spurious claims removed. Peter

says: "Whilst researching the issue of roadworkers killed in Wales, I came across this statement on the Go Safe website:

Every year a large number of roadworkers are killed while working in areas with restricted speed limits, narrow lanes or contraflows.

I found this unlikely, so contacted Go Safe and today received the following reply:



"Thank you for your email regarding roadworkers fatalities in Wales. In each of the years 2008, 2009 and 2010 there were no police recorded roadworker fatalities on Welsh roads. Complete data is not yet available for 2011 at this time. The quote on our website is based on old data, and as a result has been removed from the site today".

20vision

Local authorities are starting to adopt 20mph speed limits in large numbers. But is such a move good for road safety? Eric Bridgstock reckons not.

Independent road safety campaigner Eric Bridgstock is not an ABD member, but he has carried out a great deal of analysis on the effectiveness – or otherwise – of speed cameras, which he has shared with the ABD. In May he managed to get a place as a speaker at a conference on 20mph speed limits. What follows is an abridged version of his report on the day (Eric will be giving a presentation to the ABD's AGM on 14 July):

I responded to a call for papers for the 3rd 20mph Places Conference in London, on 1 May. I was offered a talk entitled *Presenting the Safety Case for 20mph*. I was invited to speak for up to 10 minutes as part of a debate session with three other contributors, which would then be followed by discussion. I accepted.

That was the easy bit. It was also surprising. All the evidence was that this event was a 20mph "love-in". The key players (Rod King of 20's Plenty, and many others), who were also speaking, know me from spats on web pages. Surely I would eventually get a "we've withdrawn your invitation ..."? Such was my expectation that I did not think seriously about what I was going to say until just over a week beforehand.

It's funny how a deadline focuses the mind. One evening, and I had the basis of a handout covering my key points. I fleshed it out and sent it to Idris Francis for review. He also provided additional material, which formed the basis for a Powerpoint presentation.

I arrived at the venue and introduced myself to Steve Agg, who would be chairing the debate session. He obviously knew my name and that I was listed to speak fourth (and speak forth, as it turned out!).

So, 10 o'clock rolled round and Norman Baker delivered a sickening account of how lovely 20mph was and how he was enabling and encouraging its rapid rollout. He fielded a few questions and left. I had already decided to keep my powder dry and not ask the sort of questions or make the sort of comments that I desperately wanted to.

The next speaker was Bob White (of Kent CC) on what they have done to Ashford – shared space, etc. Most revealing was his admission that public opinion was [to him] a disaster because 80% say they felt safer with the roads as they were before they spent millions creating 'a new vision'.

Then Jeremy Moore from ACPO explained why the police could not and would not rigorously enforce 20mph limits. For once I felt an affinity for ACPO – the rest of the audience did not like what he had to say.

Now a small digression. A local journalist asked me to submit an article for the *Watford Observer* as part of a 20mph debate. I was about to go away for a few days, so sent him my formal objection to the St Albans scheme. The result can be seen at tinyurl.com/c9mw4la – a nice job from



the journalist! Meanwhile, the pro-20mph article was prepared by Kevin Ambrose; you can read it at tinyurl.com/bmc36m2

The relevance is that one of the first questions was from Kevin Ambrose, asking "Is one of the counter-arguments that pedestrians feel safer, take less care, so get knocked down?" During the coffee break I went up to him. At this point Anna Semlyen (20's Plenty campaign manager) arrived, collecting email addresses. I offered her my card. "I know who you are, I've seen what you've written", she said, sneering. My reply was something like "Oh, good - looks like we should have a good debate this afternoon." Her next line was straight from the Climate Change handbook – "The time for debate is over, I want implementation."

After the break we were into a truly nauseous session on social marketing, changing behaviour, hearts and minds, civilised streets, public opinion, "selling social change", influencing, focus groups, need to appoint a soft measures manager (a what?), child protection and public health benefits and NHS funding (!). By this time I needed air.

Then came Phillipa Hunt, who used the DfT values for deaths to present the business case. To be fair, she did acknowledge that the "financial benefits were not accrued by those spending money on the schemes," but I don't believe she stated that such 'benefits', if they existed, were not actually accrued by anyone.

The lunch break gave me a chance to talk to two or three people in some depth, and it was clear that I was telling something that was new, refreshing and actually made some sense.

On my return, I walked into the lecture theatre with Rod King (Mr 20's Plenty). "You're Eric, aren't you?" We shook hands and I again referred to looking forward to the debate.

Rod was on first. He started on the offensive – "the question is no longer why, but how", and "benefits beyond road safety, £10 billion cost of casualties".

In a video report, Caroline Russell showed how she asked shopkeepers if they would like the A1 past their door to be 20mph. She was "astonished and encouraged" that they all said yes. She did not find anyone who did not want it. Well, isn't that amazing. And Matthew Snedker boasted how he was getting public petition signatures in Darlington and influencing everyone.

And so to the debate. We each had 10 minutes. Rod (20's Plenty) and Phillipa Hunt (Living Streets) delivered emotionally charged talks about the children and laws of physics and all the usual.

Then Martin Cassini (who I had spoken to earlier) delivered something much closer to my view. His main point is that intervention of any sort (traffic lights, speed limits, priorities, etc) cause more problems than they solve. He is totally against. He has some very good ideas, but his delivery (considering he is a TV producer) sometimes diluted his message.

Finally it was my turn. I began by saying something like ... "I was delighted and surprised to be invited to speak – you'll soon see why (some wry laughter). I thought I was going to be the bad boy, but at least with Martin I have something of an ally. A debate with everyone agreeing is not much of a debate."

All of the presentations from the day can be accessed from www.ptrc-training.co.uk. Click 'log-in to access resources' near the top right of the screen. The username is 20mphPlaces2012 and the password is C0v3ntg4rd3n. The username and password are case-sensitive, and the second character of the password is a zero.

I used slide 2 to explain that I was at City University in the mid 1970s and knew the Holloway Road area well, having lived close to it for 2.5 years.

Slide 4 showed the reality of Portsmouth, when I sensed some real interest and the emotional bunch feeling got at.

Sarah Toy's social marketing had focused on Bristol, so Slide 5 struck home there.

Slide 6 is the most powerful – the dramatic rise in KSI for £250k spent.

Slide 7 – Warrington – Rod's home town, a point I made clear.

By slide 9 it was getting personal. The 20's Plenty website could muster only a 22% reduction in casualties, but I had already shown them the reality. 20's Plenty has no credible claim for road safety improvement.

Slide 10 was where I got passionate – the repugnance of the "if you are hit at ..." style of argument only really sank in when I was preparing for this and turning it into "hitting people at slower speeds kills fewer of them", which resounded with some. I repeated it: "Who in their right mind could make this the central pillar of their road safety policy?"

I then quoted from Malcolm Heymer's timely and perceptive email where he exposed the other weakness in this stance: "Reaction times are far less important than good anticipation, which can avoid a dangerous situation altogether rather than react more quickly to one that has already come about!" Looking ahead to my slide 12; it weakens further my only 'positive' for 20mph. I had not previously formulated exactly why it was not a great casualty 'preventer', but this explains it, as it can only help in an emergency situation, which can be avoided by good observation and anticipation.

Slide 11 is what Kevin Ambrose was referring to earlier, and leads into much more in the list of negatives.

Slide 13 was going well but I fluffed part of the punch-line – although it had been made earlier: "financial benefits were not accrued by those spending money on the schemes". But I did make the point that their calculator works both ways and can work out a 'cost' of the injuries attributable to 20mph.

Slide 14 undermines arguments based on public opinion – I had direct shots at Holloway Road, Darlington, Bristol etc at that point.

Slides 15 and 16 are standard stuff from my speed camera argument, but it was particularly interesting how much those terms were used intelligently in the discussion that followed. I had given them a language to describe how collisions happen.

Slide 17 on credibility prompted some debate later, but I stand by my 'wager' and await an offer.

The numbers they don't tell you

Portsmouth is often held up as an example of why blanket 20mph speed limits are a great idea. But look more closely at the figures and you'll see that:

▶ Killed and serious injuries (KSI) rose from 19 per year prior to implementation to 20 per year after.

▶ There was also a 38% increase in pedestrian KSI and an 11% increase in injured cyclists.

▶ Although there was a 12% average reduction in KSI nationally, Portsmouth recorded a 6% increase in KSI – despite a 12% reduction in traffic volume within their 20mph zone

▶ From the School Children section of the report: "more casualties annually in the two years following the introduction of the 20mph speed limit scheme than the annual average for the three years before"

▶ Overall "casualty benefits greater than the national trend have not been demonstrated". These are weasel words - why did they not state simply that casualty benefits were lower than the national trend?

Meanwhile, in Bristol there was also a move towards 20mph zones in some sections of the city. Again, the results have so far proved to be far from encouraging:

▶ Overall casualties in the first 12 months of operation reduced by five in the Inner

East Area but increased by eight in the Inner South area – a net increase of three.

▶ The change in traffic volume was not reported, but all 20mph schemes experience reduced traffic – it's usually an objective.

Similarly, Oxford has also implemented lost of 20mph limits – and also similarly, the results have so far proved to be nothing to shout about:

▶ £250,000 spent on 20mph zones in 2009.

▶ Casualties increased; in 2008 there were 61 KSI, in 2009 that rose to 71 KSI (+16%) then in 2010 this rose again to 72 KSI (latest available figures).

▶ The number of accidents also increased. In the two years before Sept 2009 there were 64 crashes that resulted in KSI, but this rose to 71 (+10%) in the first two years of the 20mph scheme.

And in Warrington:

▶ During the 18-month 20mph pilot from Feb 2009, serious injuries increased by 66% and minor injuries increased by 48%.

Some say the numbers are too small to be meaningful, but when taken together, these projects show a consistent detrimental effect on road safety. No examples can be found where 20mph has led to a reduction in road casualties, after accounting for national trends and traffic volume.



The final two slides are the killers and the best bit was that, without thinking, I took my seat at the 'Question Time' table with the final slide on the screen for the next hour's debate!

I was delighted to receive an appreciative round of applause (underlined by opening remarks during later questions). I took a few notes during that debate session but remember making a few key points.

I referred back to the comments about debate being over. I pointed out that 20mph was proposed with wishful thinking and emotional argument. We now have three years of results and the trends are bad for the reasons I had explained. It was hardly surprising they did not want to debate – they were bound to lose. Anna Semlyen claimed she did not say that so I quoted her "I don't want debate, I want implementation" – I don't think she spoke after that.

One chap queried my Portsmouth figures and claimed that change in traffic volume was not quantified. I said that it was in the interim first year report, but magically disappeared in the final

second year report. He said "oh", and the rest perceived that I really had done some detailed research (in fact, thanks again to Idris – that point was included in one of his reviews of my presentation).

Interestingly, although the debate was scheduled until 4.30, at about 4.10 Steve Agg said he would give the last word to Phillipa Hunt. Hunt's comments were truly abysmal and someone in the audience said, "Why are we stopping early – we still have 20 minutes?" And so we continued for 20 more minutes.

It's difficult to gauge how many I may have converted but I went to the exit from the auditorium with my 100 blue handouts. No one refused, most said "thanks Eric", and two asked for more than one copy. I sensed a general feeling that many felt they had been misled and did not want to admit it, others were pleased to hear an explanation as to why they felt uncomfortable with the standard propaganda.

I could have made more from the vested interests – 20's Plenty and Living Streets are run as [charity] businesses, and they need to propagate the myths they have created otherwise their livelihood is at stake. My introduction emphasised my total independence, as does my handout, but I could have done more to damage King and Semlyen.

abd *action*

In May, the Road Safety Foundation published a report entitled *Unfit for 80: An Assessment of the Safety of England's Motorways*. As the title suggests, the report's main conclusion is that the majority of England's motorway network is not suitable for an increase in the speed limit to 80mph, as the Government proposes. So on what basis has the RSF reached this conclusion and are its arguments valid?

Reading the report, its conclusions often seem to contradict its own findings. One of the main reasons given for opposing a speed limit increase is the claimed inadequacy of safety barriers to protect the occupants of vehicles leaving the carriageway at motorway speeds. Yet it quotes the findings of an independent safety rating that "only 50% have the maximum 4-star rating; half the remaining network has significant flaws in run-off protection and there is room for improvement on a further 25%." So, although only a quarter of the network allegedly has significant deficiencies in crash protection, the authors consider this to be justification for not raising the speed limit anywhere!

The report states that single-vehicle 'run-off' crashes account for 23% of all serious motorway accidents. That may well be the case, but might not many of those accidents be due to drivers falling asleep through the boredom and monotony of travelling long distances at relatively low speeds? There is no breakdown given of these accidents by vehicle type, but it is likely that a significant proportion involve lorries and other vehicles fitted with speed limiters. Single-vehicle accidents involving these vehicles would not be affected by an increase in the speed limit for cars. Drivers who currently exceed the 70mph speed limit are less likely to fall asleep at the wheel because of the greater concentration required.

The report then states that 'shunt crashes' (rear-end collisions) account for 20% of motorway crashes and, unsurprisingly, that their numbers increase with traffic flow. But as traffic flow – and congestion – increases, speeds fall anyway, often to well below the current 70mph limit. So again, raising the limit to 80mph cannot affect actual speeds or accidents during periods of high traffic flow. A speed limit is supposed to approximate a maximum safe speed under favourable road, weather and traffic conditions. Failing to raise the limit to this level because it cannot safely be reached when traffic is heavy is as absurd as the justification for introducing the 70mph limit in 1965 in the first place – a series of pile-ups in thick fog!



nearly 13,000 people in March 2011, quoted in the report, show that 40% think the speed limit should be raised to 80mph, with enforcement to the same level as the 70mph limit is now (i.e. 10% + 2mph leeway). A further 24% think the limit should be raised to 80mph, but only if strictly enforced. There were 32% in favour of retaining the 70mph limit, 3% wanted to lower it and 1% didn't know. So 64% were in favour of raising the limit, with well over half of those wanting a sensible level of enforcement. Another figure quoted in the report is that only 30% of the public believe exceeding the motorway speed limit is wrong.

The report does concede that it is not desirable to have such a low level of respect for a speed limit, and the principal argument for increasing the motorway limit is to increase respect for all speed limits. The ABD agrees with this (and that all poorly observed speed limits should be raised to levels that command respect by adopting the 85th percentile principle as the basis for setting them).

The ABD's 20-year campaign to have the motorway limit raised has always been based primarily on the need to legitimise the safe behaviour of the majority of drivers, rather than the benefits of reduced journey times. The oft-repeated claim that raising the limit to 80 would lead to everyone driving 10mph faster is not borne out by extensive experience in the United States, where raising freeway speed limits, often by 15mph or more, has resulted in little change in either average or 85th percentile speeds. Drivers travel at speeds they feel comfortable with, regardless of the posted limit. Most of those who would want to drive at 80mph already do so.

The report concludes that an 80mph limit should only be considered on managed motorways with variable limits and strict enforcement, not as a default legal speed across the network. This position reveals the authors' evident opinion that drivers cannot be trusted to judge a safe speed for themselves and must be micro-managed with speed limits. Even the most sophisticated system of variable speed limits, however, cannot deal with the constantly changing conditions that drivers encounter. They undermine drivers' essential ability to think for themselves and may create a false sense of security.

It's clear that the report was written from a biased perspective, with a pessimist's 'glass half empty' approach to distort inconvenient facts in support of rejecting an 80mph motorway speed limit. The ABD will continue to campaign vigorously in favour of an increase.

No to 80

It hasn't taken the usual suspects long to mobilise. Brake, the CfBT, CPRE, Greenpeace, RoadPeace, Road Victims Trust and 10:10 have teamed up to form No to 80, to "fight-back against costly and dangerous 80mph limits". Forming the basis of the coalition's argument are 'facts' like:

- ▶ It would lead to 25 extra deaths and 100 more serious injuries each year.
- ▶ It would mean 2.2m more tonnes of carbon emissions each year
- ▶ The combined economic cost would be £1bn annually.
- ▶ The potential benefits to society and the economy of 80mph limits are questionable.

More at <http://noto80.wordpress.com>

A misleading claim in the report's conclusions says that "English roads generally have become safer over the last decade with a 47% drop in the number of deaths, but motorways have not done as well with only a 42% drop." These figures refer to the numbers of deaths, rather than the rate per billion vehicle-miles. Motorway traffic has increased at a faster pace than on other roads, but the accident rate has declined by about 35% in the ten years to 2009, the same as for accidents overall. The motorway accident rate is about a fifth that for all roads combined, showing that motorways are by far our safest roads.

Another distortion of the truth in the report's conclusions is the statement "Opinion surveys reveal no evidence of broad public support for increasing the speed limit to 80mph unless there is an 'enforced 80mph' strategy so that driven speeds stay broadly as they are today." If this strategy were introduced, the report concludes that no material economic benefits would arise from increasing the speed limit.

Yet the results of a Populus survey of



soapbox

What's on the mind of Chris Medd, OTR editor. This issue; traffic cop madness plus Brian MacDowall remembers John Ryle, who died recently.

The Tax Payers' Alliance has awarded its Pinhead of the Month to Cllr Kay Cutts, Conservative leader of Nottinghamshire County Council, which is behind the recent move to spend £77,975 of council taxpayers' money on rebranding 188 council vehicles, and 179 council buildings on the introduction of a "Corporate Identity Policy". Good to see where the council's priorities lie.

Bristol City Council has proposed replacing two expensive night bus services with what they describe as a shared taxi scheme. Night buses to Avonmouth and Henbury could be replaced if residents share a taxi service from the same bus stop in return for a flat rate fare of £4, saving £50,000 a year in bus subsidies plus giving a boost to hard-pressed taxi firms. As the ABD's Brian Macdowall commented: "Running half-empty buses over long periods of the day is a bad deal for taxpayers; more councils should experiment with ideas like this".

Last November, many assumed that costs to use the Dartford crossing were to be frozen. After all, Roads minister Mike Penning said: "I can advise there will be no increase in either November 2011 or April 2012". Sounds pretty clear-cut you might think – but no. Penning carefully covered himself by saying that a final decision on the timing of future rises and a full response to the consultation would be announced in 2012. Which is when he announced prices will rise by a stinging 33% in October this year with a 25% increase later. And yet we were originally informed the tolls would be scrapped altogether once the crossing had paid for itself – which it already has. The ABD will be seeking another meeting with Penning to discuss this and related driving issues later this year, but your backing in the form of critical letters, emails, texts and tweets to his department will help us considerably; we need your support.

Drivers convicted of a victimless crime, like petty parking infringements or exceeding an

Obituary: John Ryle

I first came into contact with ABD member John Ryle, who died in April, when he emailed me to volunteer his services as the ABD's Regional Coordinator for the North East of England. I quickly reached the conclusion that John was knowledgeable and very enthusiastic; and he did not suffer fools gladly.

John rapidly established himself as a valuable member of the ABD at both local and national levels. One of his first actions was to organise a successful regional get-together at the Church Mouse pub near Chester-le-Street.

At this initial meeting John explained to me that he had had transplant surgery

A Hampshire police officer's been found not guilty of dangerous driving while he was following a stolen car; PC James Holden had been accused of putting people's lives at risk. The minivan involved had been stolen in Petersfield, and the police officer spotted it. During the pursuit, the minivan went through red lights, the wrong way round a roundabout and the wrong way down a dual carriageway. It eventually smashed into level crossing barriers and the driver was arrested.

PC Holden, 35, had always denied dangerous driving. He was found not guilty after a 7-day trial at Guildford Crown Court. The 19-year-old driver of the stolen minivan was later found guilty of a string of offences, including dangerous driving, and was sentenced to four years in a Young Offenders' Institution.

John Apter, Hampshire Police Federation welcomed the unanimous verdict, but warns officers' confidence in the system has nosedived in the wake of officer PC Holden being charged. He said: "We are clearly very pleased with the result.

unrealistically low speed limit could see their fines jump from £60 to £90. Those who go to court to challenge speeding tickets or for more serious driving offences could pay up to £120. Yet over 23,000 violent, robbery or sex offenders were only given a caution (a formal slap on the wrist) in 2010. Almost half of violent offenders never appeared in court where they could face the risk of a prison sentence. Again, good to see where the government's priorities lie.

Simon Lawrence used an FOI request to find drivers in the Aylesbury Vale area have been short-changed by just under £30,000 in 10 months, by council parking machines which don't give change. He said: "I find it irritating that most of the car park machines don't give change. They set tariffs deliberately at levels that require combinations of small change, such

and was consequently on a pretty intensive medication régime - which he did not allow to hinder in the least his ABD activities.

John organised a follow-up meeting some time ago; a further repetition undoubtedly having been prevented by the health problems which led to his untimely passing.

He was always very quick to pick up on any road transport-related issues and to bring them to the attention of everyone in the Association; and was a regular contributor on the ABD member's forum. John had an engaging but pithy, down-to-Earth Yorkshire sense of humour with an acerbic edge with which I very much identified.

I learned via a chance conversation with

PC Holden is a highly trained police driver who was doing the job he was trained to do. However I have serious concerns over the fact that this case has ended up in crown court. Police officers are not above the law but when they do what they have been trained to do and that then results in them being charged with dangerous driving then something, somewhere has failed."

Alan Jones said: "We predicted cases like this would happen following the ruling in the Bannister case in 2009. Officers are exposed to prosecution for doing what they are trained to do and what the public expect of them. We thought the Crown Prosecution Service (CPS)

and our own colleagues might understand the difficulties officers face. Sadly this case proves that they are out of touch. We will be holding an urgent meeting with ACPO and the CPS again to discuss this matter."

While the point of this page is to offer some comment on news stories from around the globe, I'm not sure I can add anything to the comments already made by Apter and Jones; how can this sort of thing be allowed to happen?

as £1.30. And as most people don't carry lots of small change they end up paying £1.50 or £2". Stephen Harding, district council parking services manager, claimed that the council was unaware of any machines that give change; seems nobody there has heard of Google, or British firm Parcare...

The Department of Energy and Climate Change was the lead government department responding to a possible fuel tanker drivers' strike. Their website advised drivers to slow down and stick to speed limits to conserve fuel. Intriguing that the DECC didn't also ask the authorities to suspend the introduction of speed bumps, 20mph zones, and congestion-causing bus lanes, which all make us use more fuel...

Chris Medd

a shared acquaintance that he and I had also shared a common employer for several decades (which John later confirmed). Both of us had been recruited by ICI during its golden era.

Not only will John be greatly missed by his immediate family and friends; but also by all those of us who shared his ABD convictions - having been taken into his confidence and hopefully also been considered by him as a comrade-in-arms.

He was one of the good men who would never stand idly by and allow evil to prosper. There can be surely be no better epitaph than that.

Brian MacDowall

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

I was very unhappy to see Soapbox (OTR103) repeating the standard anti-cyclist bigotry that we get in Cambridge every time any cycling body requests or supports anything. I'm a Cambridge driver, cyclist and pedestrian, and whilst I'm not a member of the Cambridge Cycling Campaign, I do read their communications from time to time.

Yes, as I understand it, CCC is in favour of proper enforcement of the law as it applies to cyclists; the local police have periodic blitzes on unlit cyclists, red light jumpers et al, all supported by CCC – with on the spot fines. CCC campaigns for cyclist education for the 1000s of foreign students who come to learn English but the Council and bike rental companies won't do it, in case a visitor is killed and they get sued for not training them properly. A travesty. So CCC isn't as you imply at all.

As a road safety body, are you really saying that the ABD is against proper enforcement of moving traffic offences, such as the yellow-box rules, advanced stop boxes and so forth? Surely we support those laws which are actually about safety and improved traffic flow, such as these?

Those of us cyclists who do obey the law despair of those who don't, because they give us all a bad name, and give rise to the destructive attitude in drivers, which to my disgust you appear to share, that it's OK to treat cyclists badly - perhaps even endangering their lives - because some other cyclists break some of the rules. All sensible cyclists are in favour of proper enforcement, in exactly the same way that sensible drivers and the ABD support proper enforcement of the laws about dangerous and inconsiderate driving and parking.

The final paragraph in the article is what's offensive, in its clear implication that cyclists en masse want to have their cake and eat it. It's that tarring all with the same brush which

Earlier this year, schoolboy Ali Nasralla was run over by a cab near Kingston-upon-Thames, in Greater London. A police spokesman said they could not comment on what speed the cab driver was travelling at when it collided with him and a Kingston Council spokesman said he believed the issue was not speed-related.

Even so, 'road safety charity' Brake lost no time in jumping on the bandwagon to exploit his death. Campaigns officer Ellen Booth said it was 'vital' the authorities listened to the demands of residents and made communities safer, greener and more enjoyable. The local paper, the *Surrey Comet*, launched a 'Stop Look Listen' campaign promoting spurious measures. The boy's grieving father called for speed bumps and the 30mph speed limit to be cut to 20mph. He was predictably backed by the usual suspects, on Kingston Council, Zac Goldsmith MP and even Ken Livingstone.



Give us a quote

"We can help families by cutting fuel taxes when global prices rise. That's the kind of real, responsible difference to motorists a Conservative government would bring."
David Cameron talking to Mike Rutherford for the Telegraph, 29.4.10
For the full interview, see tinyurl.com/7h6an87 (it makes fascinating reading)

causes a cycle of bad behaviour on both sides of the argument. It's bad sarcasm worthy only of the bigots in the *Daily Mail*.

Hugo Tyson, Cambridge

Thanks for setting the record straight with the CCC Hugo. As a very keen rider, I'm not anti-cyclist and I certainly didn't suggest that "that it's OK to treat cyclists badly". Perhaps my views are coloured by one-time membership of the CTC, which spent more time campaigning against drivers than it did for cyclists. That's why I left. That's the problem with most campaigning groups; they tend to be divisive. And that's where the ABD genuinely is different; it doesn't campaign at the expense of any road user group; it wants the best deal for everyone. Ed.

Looks like we've finally seen the last of Ken Livingstone – politically at least. I can't say I was sad to see Boris voted in as London Mayor recently; Ken's manifesto was very thin on carrots for drivers. Indeed, read past the *A Better Deal for Motorists* (a rather short section) and there was plenty about 20mph zones, traffic calming, pedestrianisation etc.

What many people didn't realise early on, but which came to light later, was that Ken made a pre-election pact with the Green Party, which wants to increase congestion charging. Ken and the Green Party Mayoral candidate Jenny Jones made this pact, both recommending to their members that they give their second preference votes to each other. Livingstone

This was all in spite of TfL reporting that it had conducted speed surveys with the police at the site, which showed that most drivers easily remained under the limit. Even so, campaigners said the accident showed how unsafe the road was and urged TfL to carry out 'urgent changes' as a tribute to the boy.

The former chairman of the local Cycling Campaign tried it on: "Kingston roads are generally quite safe but the number of cyclists getting killed is unusually high. Reducing the speed would encourage more cyclists."

I was so incensed at this blatant exploitation of the family's grief and hysteria-mongering, that I sent in a cautious letter, expressing due sympathies to Ali's family, but calmly pointing out that he could have been killed if the speed limit was 20mph and the cab driver was sticking to it.

I explained that perversely, 20mph zones had been justified on speed reductions in Portsmouth,

openly said "if I am elected, Jenny Jones will be a key part in my administration", while Jones let slip what the true impact of the Labour/Green pact on Londoners would be. When asked whether she would reintroduce the Western Extension, she said: "Oh no, we are absolutely not going to do that. We've got a much better scheme that we are going to bring in over the four years of the next Mayoralty. And that is a Pay As You Go for drivers, for car users, well for all vehicle users. And this can raise over £1 billion a year".

Jones admitted that she would only look to introduce the Pay As You Go scheme after the first three years of the Mayoralty. Up until then, she would look to raise the congestion charge to £15 for smaller cars and £40 for larger family cars. It's frightening to think how close Livingstone got to getting in again.

Mark Somerfield

According to the *Sunday Times*, residents' groups are buying a new slimline average speed camera 'Sicore' (more details in News briefs on p14 - Ed). At £25,000 each, even concerned (wealthy) individuals will be able to buy them. Unsurprisingly, the British government has been the first to approve these cameras, which can be linked into a network to cover an area rather than a single road. Milton Ernest in Bedfordshire has become the first to buy some (they've bought four), to be operated by the police. Bedfordshire Council has set aside £260,000 for more sets of these cameras; Mayor Charles Royden wants to

although evaluation actually showed an increase in KSI accidents. Elsewhere 20mph zones were imposed by 'must do something' busybodies, in spite of police advice.

Finally, I regretted that road safety policy seems fixated by speed, when excessive speed is only a factor in a small proportion of accidents, with tiredness, lapses of attention and judgment being far more significant.

Instead of a misplaced focus on speed, I suggested that road safety policy should promote more police patrols to tackle the rising number of drugged drivers, and better road user training, especially for cyclists and pedestrians. If the local community wants the best possible tribute to Ali, there are better measures that might ensure that vulnerable road users are not hit at any speed.

Unsurprisingly, the letter wasn't published, although the *Surrey Comet* did quote from it in a follow-up article. Not to be deterred, I copied most of the letter prominently into the comments area of the campaign webpage - at least it wasn't taken off. I hope that in a moment of calm, the locals will actually read it.

Brian Mooney

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

cover the whole of Bedford in them.

It'll be very interesting to see what happens to casualty rates in Bedfordshire over the next few years.

Chris Appleby



Here's a photo that I took, which illustrates a fine example of pavement parking by camera operators in Dyserth Road in Rhyll. I didn't manage to photograph the business end, because when they saw me taking a photo they closed the shutters and two minutes later they left the location.

Giles Pepperell

The Green Party has had a controversial year running Brighton and Hove Council. Two senior councillors, Bill Randall and Jason Kitcat, said transport had been one of the areas the administration had been most successful in, but judging by comments in the Brighton Argus, many locals don't agree.

Plans for cycle lanes, a bus lane in Lewes Road, the introduction of widespread 20mph zones and parking charge rises produced many complaints. One local blogged:

Funny how the Greens have not put parking control zones in the areas where most students with their old bangers live, but these are Green voters so it won't happen. Then there are the empty number 25 buses going up and down Lewes Road every five minutes, sometimes four or five bumper to bumper.

There are 40,000 university students yet less than 200 cycles on the road a day during term time. When asked why he didn't cycle to university, one student replied: "Are you mad, I'm not going up and down these hills". The town's geography isn't good for cycling. The Lewes Road money would be better spent elsewhere.

The local Green MP Caroline Lucas has had plenty of complaints. She wrote "It's no secret that I publicly asked the council to change some of the higher tariff charges in the city as I felt they were too high for traders and I'm pleased that the council revisited them." However this produced the response: "Shame they didn't take any notice of you then, wasn't it, but I suppose you could regard it as democratic as they also ignored traders, residents and visitors as well".

The council now has Kitcat as its leader, although residents allegedly remark that it already had plenty of Fruit & Nuts and Flake!

Colin Carter

I was recently listening to Tory MP Tim Yeo's comments on BBC's Radio 4, prior to the fuel debate. What he said almost made me want to throttle the man for his crass indifference to the plight of rural motorists – and indeed drivers in general. He made a comment that motorists don't really seem bothered about the cost of fuel, as there are plenty of garages selling cheaper fuel. Typical of a smug self-satisfied public servant who has no concept of the realities of life, least of all of those who pay taxes to support him in his care-free life of expenses and expected gold-plated pension.

Sadly this is typical of a great number of MPs who have never experienced hardship or had to make tough choices on their expenditure, living as they do in the virtual-reality world of Westminster. I am staggered at the naivety of the man who blithely casts off the fuel cost rises as part of the "big" plan to make the UK greener than anyone else and that we will have to lump it.

Fine, no doubt once the spiralling recession bites even harder, driven by Tory ineptness, we will indeed be far greener because there will be no traffic around – apart from those very wealthy businessmen and MPs who will be the only ones able to afford fuel and who will no doubt relish the lack of annoying plebs on the road.

And as for his comments on those who choose to live in rural areas as being victims of their own choice...

Karl Sheridan

I have been carefully observing hours of daylight recently. Since 22 Dec 2011 I have noticed a small steady increase of daylight hours. I fed this data trend into my computer and it predicted that, by next October, we shall be approaching 24 hours of daylight with unknown but catastrophic consequences for the planet.

Last year, 22 June was the longest day ever on record - with an extra 0.023ms of daylight! Despite a brief downward trend since last July, the trend is going remorselessly up again. WE ARE ALL DOOMED unless the government acts now. Acting now will provide millions of new jobs fitting blackout curtains to homes and

Presumption of innocence before proof of guilt is key to our legal system. However, according to the Police Federation roads policing newsletter (downloadable from tinyurl.com/6m66tkl – look at page 7), the government will consider whether the licences of suspected drink-drivers (persons merely charged) should be revoked without delay, following an appeal by the sister of a young crash victim...

Raising the matter on behalf of the young victim's relatives at Prime Minister's Questions, Liberal Democrat MP for Leeds North West Greg Mulholland said: "His family had to face the fact that the person



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

reflectors to keep sunlight off crops, informing citizens of when they should go to bed and sundry other vital and important high quality job opportunities.

This is a joke by the way. But no more a joke than the belief in man-made global warming, which has long ceased being even remotely funny. It has become tedious, time-wasting, extremely expensive and ruinous to the poorest people on the planet.

Rev Philip Foster

who killed him continued to drive for a further eight months until sentencing."

David Cameron has now agreed to look at whether the law should be changed. But if there is belief in danger through the suspect being at liberty, surely the answer is faster trials. Otherwise you will get some drivers unnecessarily banned for months before their trial? This could also start a slippery slope for drivers merely 'suspected of' speeding, and other disqualifiable offences – without proof of guilt. After all, the authorities don't always get it right; the CPS is wrong as much as 20% of the time.

Tom Sutton

in brief...

▶ A bit of news for the west country; a bypass has been approved at Kingskerswell between Torbay and Newton Abbott, where over three miles of dual carriageway combined with a flyover at Penn Inn will be built. The scheme, costing £109m, is expected to be completed by December 2015.

▶ Speed cameras in Wiltshire could be switched back on two years after they were turned off. A review is currently underway into whether to remobilise the cameras that were switched off in 2010 following the disbanding of the Wiltshire and Swindon Safety Camera Partnership, a decision taken after the Government reduced – and ultimately scrapped – Road Safety Grant.

▶ Road traffic volumes in Great Britain were 0.5% higher in the first quarter of 2012 compared with the corresponding period last year, according to a provisional estimate published by the DfT. Increases were recorded in both car and light van traffic – the latter has risen 64% since 1993.

▶ Yellow lines and lines marking parking bays have been removed from streets and squares of Bloomsbury in central London in a £5m scheme. In January, the DfT amended the Traffic Signs Regulations and General Directions 2002, allowing restricted zone signs to indicate no waiting or loading allowed except in signed bays. Yellow lines are no longer required, provided other means are used to define the parking areas from the surrounding footway, such as by using a contrasting material. A civil enforcement officer claims the scheme has been confusing motorists.

▶ The legal action to overturn Barnet's outrageous CPZ charges is back on track. The Court of Appeal has overturned the decision made in February by a deputy judge to dismiss the claim. According to Lord Justice Richards's ruling, the case warrants "fuller consideration of the factual and legal issues". More at www.barnetcpz.blogspot.com

▶ Every Integrated Transport Authority (ITA) is now in Labour control following the recent local elections. The results handed Labour control of Centro, the West Midlands Integrated Transport Authority, which had been run by a Conservative/Lib Dem administration. All the other ITAs were already in Labour hands.

▶ James Lovelock warned about the effects of CO2 emissions in his 2006 book *The revenge of Gaia*. But Lovelock now says he was wrong and others, such as Al Gore, are wrong too. "The problem is we don't know what the climate is doing. We thought we knew 20 years ago. That led to some alarmist books – mine included – because it looked clear cut but it hasn't happened. The climate is doing its usual tricks. There's nothing much happening yet. We were supposed to be half way toward a frying world now. The world has not warmed up very much since the millennium. The temperature has stayed almost constant, whereas it should have been rising – CO2 is rising, no question about that."



WPL disquiet in Notts

The GMB trade union has entered the fray in the battle against the workplace charging scheme levied on workplace parking places in Nottingham. It condemned Imperial Tobacco for passing on the £288 charge but crucially, without criticising the council, present government or the previous government which introduced the charge.

GMB members will take industrial action over Imperial Tobacco passing on the £288 per year per space levy on workplace car parking imposed by Nottingham City Council with an overtime ban and work to rule.

Chris Needham, GMB Regional Officer said: "The company is adamant it is going to pass on this workplace car parking levy of £288 a year to its employees. If there is to be a workplace car parking levy the employers should pay it. The City Council say they want to raise £14 million per year from this levy which is a simple straightforward tax on jobs whoever pays it".

HA gets roads OK

Roads minister Mike Penning has authorised planning work to recommence on six Highways Agency schemes, and said they would be priorities for construction in the next comprehensive spending review period, starting in April 2015. The schemes are:

- ▶ M4 junctions 3-12 managed motorway scheme in the Thames Valley
- ▶ M25 junction 30/A13 capacity scheme in Thurrock
- ▶ A19/A1058 Coast Road junction improvement in North Tyneside
- ▶ A21 Tonbridge to Pembury widening in Kent
- ▶ A63 Castle Street improvements, Hull
- ▶ A160/A180 improvements, Immingham

Road tolling officially on hold

Fundamental changes to the way England's strategic road network is managed and financed will be examined in the joint DfT/Treasury review of the national road network ordered by the Prime Minister. But ministers have ruled one source of new funding strictly off limits for the investigations: the introduction of tolls for cars on existing roads.

David Cameron announced the review in his infrastructure speech in March and the DfT then published the terms of reference alongside its response to the Cook review, *A fresh start for the Strategic Road Network*. The DfT/Treasury study will examine a range of issues including:

- ▶ How different ownership and financing models could apply to roads.
- ▶ Investment needs of the existing network: identifying the priorities for any future private sector investment.

If you have a cutting you'd like to have included in OTR, please send it to Chris Medd – contact details are on page 16.

EU hikes fuel costs

Anger has erupted over a new "green" fuel drive by the EU, that could add 4p to a litre of petrol or diesel. Hard-pressed motorists would pay the price of a draconian new quota on the amount of fuel from environmentally friendly sources to be sold in the UK. Under a Brussels directive, one in every 10 litres of fuel sold would be made up of sustainable alternative biofuels rather than fossil fuel by the end of the decade. It's feared this will have a significant impact on petrol and diesel costs when world oil prices are already rising relentlessly.

Critics have urged David Cameron and Chancellor George Osborne to stand up to Brussels. Peter Carroll, of the FairFuel UK campaign, said: "Many of our supporters have the environment at heart but the priority has to be to keep the cost of petrol down because that is what the economy needs." Robert Oxley, of the TaxPayers' Alliance, said: "This is just another example of how Brussels is out of touch with the priorities of ordinary taxpayers."

Camden crosses line

A traffic warden anonymously blew the whistle on Camden Council after nearly a mile of double yellow lines near the British Museum were removed. They were replaced by small restricted zone signs and metal studs marking loading bays, in the name of reducing street clutter. But hundreds of drivers received tickets after parking and failing to notice that the restrictions still applied. The number of tickets issued soared since the lines were removed.

One disgruntled driver said: "There are no bay markings either, just studs, and nothing to say what's the road and what's the pavement. Camden council is definitely making more money from it. What they've done is wrong, but their excuse is it makes the area look nice."

Self-driving cars move closer

A convoy of self-driven cars has completed a 125-mile journey on a Spanish motorway, in the first public test of such vehicles. The cars were wirelessly linked to each other and "mimicked" a lead vehicle, driven by a professional driver.

The so-called road train has been developed by Volvo, which is confident such technology will be widely available in future. The project aims to herald a new age of relaxed driving. According to Volvo, drivers "can now work on their laptops, read a book or sit back and enjoy a relaxed lunch" while driving.

The road train test was carried out as part of a European Commission research project known as Sartre - Safe Road Trains for the Environment. The vehicles drove at 52mph with the gap between each vehicle just 6m



(19ft). The eventual aim of the project is to have lots of cars "slaved" to a lead vehicle and travelling at high speed along specific routes on motorways.

Taxi drivers revolt

Cabbie Munir Ahmed was standing just feet away from the Amersham station taxi rank where he was parked, when he was given a £35 penalty. NSL, enforcement agents for Chiltern District and Bucks County Councils, refused to back down claiming 'only taxis plying for trade should be in the rank'.

Ahmed argues his taxi's light was left on and he was stood close by, available for hire. The Chiltern Taxi Drivers Association (CTDA) backed him saying: "This parking issue is becoming a major controversy. This company seem hell bent on making money since they bought the contract from the council and this unfair ticket is an example of this."

CTDA raised concerns that the ticket suggests drivers doing an 8-10 hour shift are expected to sit in their car without a break, as NSL claims that taxis must always be occupied by a driver. 250 of the 300 cabbies in the area signed a petition asking the Councils to support an appeal, with the threat of a strike if not.

M6T volumes drop

Traffic volumes on the M6 Toll in the West Midlands dropped 13% in the first three months of this year. Figures published by the road operator show the average daily traffic level for January-March 2012 was 30,418 – 12.9% below the 34,909 recorded in the first quarter of 2011.

The drop was greatest on weekends and public holidays, with average traffic volume down 15.2%, from 21,958 to 18,618. Average traffic on a workday fell 9.6%, from 40,459 to 35,396. Overall, average daily traffic volumes were 28% below the highest quarter 1 level recorded on the road in 2005. Weekend and public holiday traffic is 45% below Q1 2005.

The M6 Toll operator has blamed the latest decline on the "continuing weak economic conditions" and the managed motorway measures on the competing M6. It made no mention of the toll increases that took effect on 1 March.

in brief...

► Herts Council must refund fined drivers nearly £1.3m after the notorious Moor End Road bus lane was declared illegal. Ten percent of drivers in Hemel Hempstead were caught on camera (see OTR101). The Traffic Penalty Tribunal ruled that the wrong wording was used in the traffic regulation order (TRO) used to enforce the bus lane and the road sign layout was incorrect.

► The DfT has delayed the launch of free flow tolling on the Dartford crossing until autumn 2014. The system had been planned for introduction at the end of 2013. News of the delay came as the DfT confirmed crossing tolls will rise in October, from £1.50 to £2 for cars and from £3.70 to £5 for articulated lorries. They will rise again in October 2014, to £2.50 for cars and £6 for lorries. Discounts apply to local residents and users with a Dart-Tag and the charges apply only between 06.00 and 22.00.

► Court convictions in England and Wales for driving on defective tyres are at a four-year high. In 2010, 10,475 motorists were successfully convicted – almost 1000 more than the previous year. The figures highlight the scale of the problem of illegal tyres in the UK, especially as they do not take into account tyre-related matters dealt with by the police at the roadside.

► The HA claims to have cut the cost of each additional lane of new road it builds by more than a quarter in two years. The HA has reported progress against cost benchmarks set as part of a Whitehall drive to make 15% efficiency savings on infrastructure construction by 2015. These show that the average cost per metre square of new road was £19,000 in 2011/12 compared with £26,000 two years ago.

► The DfT has authorised the construction of two local authority road schemes. Transport secretary Justine Greening granted final approval to Devon and Torbay councils' Kingskerswell bypass and Northamptonshire's A43 Corby link road.

► Electric cars will account for 1% of all car miles travelled in the UK by 2020 and 5% by 2030, according to forecasts prepared by the DfT. Their publication came as Oxfordshire County Council said electric vehicles will have to be intensively used if they are to deliver CO2 emission benefits. "It is not until an electric vehicle has been driven around 50,000 miles that a carbon benefit is gained overall [compared to a medium-sized petrol vehicle]," said OCC, noting the CO2 emissions associated with electricity generation and production of the vehicle battery.

► The DfT is to consult on giving local traffic authorities outside London powers to enforce moving traffic offences such as illegal U-turns and blocking yellow box junctions. A DfT spokeswoman said that there would be an announcement "in due course" on the implementation of Part 6 of the Traffic Management Act 2004 outside London. The news comes after Norman Baker had already said that such a move wouldn't happen.

Southend spy cars ruled illegal

Southend Council has two 'spy cars', which have issued 46 fines a day since they were introduced last summer. They capture parking offences using a rotating CCTV camera. Last August, it was reported that five times as many parking tickets were issued than a decade ago, with a 10% increase since the introduction of the camera cars.

Roger Hutchinson appealed after receiving a £50 fine for parking one of his cars on a single yellow line outside his own home while swapping it with another vehicle. The enforcement car driver had got out to check for a blue badge after a number of



disabled drivers had been wrongly issued with tickets after the camera cars were launched. The badges were not visible on CCTV footage.

However the traffic penalty tribunal adjudicator ruled that by getting out of the car, the driver had proved a traditional traffic warden could have carried out the enforcement instead of the cameras. The adjudicator said: "The sensitive nature of evidence gathered by CCTV is specifically considered and addressed by the guidance issued by the Government. Recommendation is made that such devices are only used where enforcement is difficult, sensitive or enforcement by wardens is not practical."

in brief...

▶ SafeZone, Siemens' average speed enforcement technology, has been approved for deployment in the UK by the Home Office. SafeZone is a modular system that utilises ANPR technology using Siemens' Sicore cameras; each camera can monitor two lanes of traffic in both directions, slashing the cost of deployment and system complexity. Minimal infrastructure, wireless communications and compact cameras also mean the system can be continually re-deployed into other areas. The distance between each camera outstation has been approved to a minimum of just 75 metres.

▶ Robert Gifford is to step down as executive director of PACTS at the end of the year. Gifford, who took up the post in 1994, is 60 in October but he hopes to continue as an independent consultant. The new postholder, who will receive a salary of £50,000, is expected to start at the beginning of December.

▶ A new offence of driving under the influence of drugs has been announced. The legislation will create a specific offence for drivers having certain controlled drugs in their body in excess of specified limits. Devices to screen for drugs in the body are expected to receive type approval by the end of the year. The drugs to be covered by the offence and the specified limits are yet to be set, but the penalty for the new offence will be a maximum of six months imprisonment or a fine of up to £5000, plus an automatic ban of at least 12 months.

▶ A federal judge in Mississippi has ended a long-running suit that attempted to hold various US companies responsible for flooding damage caused by Hurricane Katrina. US District Judge Louis Guirola Jr. dismissed *Comer vs. Murphy Oil* with prejudice, meaning it can't be refiled or reconstituted. The decision should serve to preclude other similar lawsuits accusing companies of emitting global-warming gases that cause damaging weather patterns.

▶ Sales of fuel-efficient cars with low CO2 emissions are rising rapidly, according to the SMMT. 46.8% of cars sold in 2011 emitted less than 130g/km, up from only 10.6% in 2007. Average emissions from new cars sold in 2011 stood at 138.1g/km. In order to meet EU regulations, the average figure must fall below 130g/km by 2015 and then below 95g/km by 2020. Technology improvements, coupled with changing consumer tastes, have resulted in a 23% fall in average vehicle CO2 emissions since 2000.

▶ Buses have been found to be the major source of nitrogen oxide emissions in Putney High Street, despite making up only 10% of traffic. A study concluded that buses contribute over two-thirds of NOx and 21% of particulate emissions. Cars make up two-thirds of traffic but contributed 14% of NOx emissions and 35% of particulates.

Speed limiters declared dangerous

Requiring lorries to be equipped with speed limiters jeopardises the safety of their drivers and those near them on the road, an Ontario court has claimed, in declaring the law unconstitutional.

Lorry driver Gene Michaud was charged under the Highway Traffic Act with not having a working speed limiter. He challenged the requirement on commercial vehicles, saying the speed limit of 105km/h puts him in danger. A justice of the peace in Ontario agreed and declared that the law violates the section of the charter that guarantees life, liberty and security of the person.

"Inability to accelerate, or not accelerate fully places a driver in a less-than-safe situation because we have taken some of the tools required to drive properly away from the driver," justice of the peace Brett Kelly found. "Mr. Michaud needs to be able to take certain precautions in the execution of his job that will take him out of harm's way and keep him and those around him safe."

Because the challenge happened at the provincial court level, the law is not struck



down across the province, but Michaud's lawyer said he intends to fight similar cases using this decision. "I would hope that the government sees what's real in this case, and that is the fact that these speed limiters don't promote safety, but rather discourage it," lawyer David Crocker said.

Michaud argued that not ever being able to drive faster than 105 km/h is unsafe because it means he is often not able to keep up with the flow of traffic. The speed limit on major highways in Ontario is 100 km/h, but Crocker said there's plenty of anecdotal evidence that people regularly drive 20 km/h over the speed limit.

Going to pot declared a good thing

A recent US study found a strong correlation between traffic-related accidents and marijuana use. The study, which looked at statistics regarding accidents, traffic violations, and insurance prices, found that the only significant effect that marijuana has on operating a motor vehicle is slower driving. A similar study had already shown that drivers with THC (the active ingredient in marijuana) in their system have accident responsibility rates below that of drug-free drivers.

A recent study showed that use of medical marijuana has caused traffic related fatalities to drop by up to 9% in states that have legalised its use. Marijuana users often say that when they're high, they feel like they're driving at 80mph, but are actually only doing 30mph, but it's the other way round for drink drivers.



Court offences down

The total number of magistrates' court proceedings for motoring offences fell from one million in 2010 to 888,000 in 2011, down 12.6%. The number of people facing prosecution in magistrates' courts fell from 630,900 in 2010 to 566,800 in 2011, while other findings include:

▶ The number of people facing prosecution for driving offences that resulted in death dropped from 694 in 2010 to 614 in 2011.

▶ The number of people facing prosecution for causing death by dangerous driving fell from 282 in 2010 to 201 in 2011.

▶ In 2011, 3200 people were sentenced to immediate custody for summary motoring offences, a fall of 18.8% since 2010.

In magistrates' courts:

▶ 7,617 faced prosecution in 2011 for failing to stop at an accident, down from 8,531 in 2010.

▶ There number of people facing prosecution for using a hand held phone fell from 40,000 in 2010 to 35,400 in 2011.

Sheffield cautious on 20s

Sheffield City Council is to take an incremental approach to introducing signed-only 20mph limits, saying evidence from elsewhere does not lend support to a city-wide roll-out. Simon Green, Sheffield's executive director, said: "Currently, there is insufficient evidence of the benefits of 20mph speed limits to justify the level of investment required for a city-wide roll out."

He claimed that evidence suggests that the majority of motorists would drive at speeds above the new limit. The key to lowering speeds lay in shifting attitudes, he said. "It may be possible to realise a short-term, marginal adjustment in behaviour amongst some drivers simply by erecting the 20 signs, but it will be a much lengthier project, perhaps 10 to 15 years, to achieve the goal of a fundamental change in driving behaviour." The council plans to introduce signed-only 20mph limits in seven residential areas of the city, one in each of the council's community assembly areas.

See <http://twitter.com/TheABD> for the latest ABD news

make a difference – get involved

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@yahoo.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 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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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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