

On The Road

The journal of the Alliance of British Drivers

Issue 110

Winter 2013/14

Time to get stuck in

Delve inside this issue of *On The Road* and you'll soon see that the ABD has been working hard to influence decision makers and campaign both locally and nationally (as well as regionally) on behalf of all drivers. Much of the thrust has come from the ABD centrally, but we need more help if we're going to make the breakthroughs we're capable of in the run-up to the general election.

Helping out may be easier than you thought, and should prove to be surprisingly enjoyable and rewarding. On this page we've included details of just some of the ways that you can get involved in moving the ABD forward; if you're wavering about getting involved, there's no need to be worried about being stuck on your own, as we're here to support and direct volunteers.

Fund raising

Campaigning costs money. If you can help with any practical fund raising – including offering suggestions, please let us know. Ideally we'd like to set up an informal fund raising team.

Alternatively, you might consider remembering the ABD in your Will, in which case please let our Treasurer, Hugh Bladon, know. Donations to our Fighting Fund are also welcome at any time.

Local intelligence gathering

Some of our more committed members may be

happy to act as a local co-ordinator and represent the ABD. However, there is always a need to just keep an eye on local developments and let the ABD know about anything really important. This may help to gain action and provide news items for OTR.

Local newspapers, council websites and community forums are often good sources of information. There's no obligation to take on anything high-profile, but efforts in this area certainly add-up. Can you help us by 'adopting a locality', please?

Local lobbying support

Have you got an enquiring mind and a bit of computer literacy? As a one-off, the ABD would like to get volunteers to look up local residents' groups and other parties interested in motoring issues. Noting email (or postal) addresses will help the ABD to send the groups tailored information and expand our influence.

Obviously this could be done in your own time, and would be a good means of helping us when the weather isn't ideal for going out...

Topical research

National issues are important as well. If you're particularly interested in a topic such as road safety or road pricing and happy to help occasionally check a website or periodical, that would free up some of our existing activists' time for other tasks. Your efforts might even help us to produce an ABD press release and win some national



Brian MacDowall

OTR 110

Highlights

- 3 Campaign 2015: lobbying begins
- 3 Caught on the web
- 4 Bristol camera action
- 5 Working with the media
- 6 Time for a Notts revolt?
- 13 Big changes for Birmingham roads

Regulars

- 9 Soapbox
- 10-11 Letters
- 11 Abbreviations glossary
- 12-14 News
- 15 Get involved
- 16 National & regional contacts

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

publicity? Some example websites are listed on www.fairdealforthemotorist.org.uk/research.htm.

Affiliated organisations

Years ago the ABD set up an affiliation scheme (see the back page), whereby we fed sympathetic organisations a steady stream of stories and they promoted us. We initially targeted car clubs, but a lack of resource meant that once we'd signed up a dozen or so such groups, the momentum was lost. If you could continue that work (albeit several years on), we'd love to hear from you.

Brian Mooney is making more time available to help the ABD. If you might be able to help with any of the above, please contact him to discuss without obligation. He is contactable on fairdeal@abd.org.uk, 07976 414 913 or 0207 385 9757. The greater the number of supporters who are prepared to 'have a go', the more successes we will be able to bring to you via OTR. Your ABD Committee is completely behind Campaign 2015. Please help us to make a difference – even a one-off could go a long way.

To join the ABD
call us now on
0161 408 7070



The ABD campaigns for:

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

roads action

The ABD's Campaign 2015 kicks off with lobbying of the major political parties, plus we meet with TfL to see what's in store for London's drivers.

Building bridges in London

In October, the ABD's Roger Lawson & Brian Mooney met with Isabel Deding, London Deputy Mayoress for Transport, along with some officers of TfL. The meeting was prompted by our concerns over the recommendations of the Mayor's Roads Task Force (RTF, as reported in *OTR109*).

We explored the fallacy of 20mph limits, providing evidence from Portsmouth that they don't work. Deding recapped on the political pressure for them and noted decisions lay largely with the boroughs, whom TfL fund. She admitted that the Met Police were not policing them for compliance (*Really? The 20mph limit on Tower Bridge is certainly being enforced; see tinyurl.com/pa6cqx5 - Ed*).

We complained about gratuitous road closures (cf. RideLondon) and noted that the British Hospitality Association had also complained about their effect on business.

Deding advised that the Mayor had received several complaints and felt that moves for closures had developed 'beyond acceptability'.

We also called for equal treatment of road users, saying that promoting cycling/public transport must not be at the expense of drivers.

We recapped that we had been present at TfL Director Garrett Emmerson's meetings to maximise efficiency of vehicle flow, which started by looking at improving flow on individual corridors, but concluded that this needed to be managed across London. We felt that any gains (e.g. from the SCOOT system) should not be lost by moves such as taking away road space from drivers.

Deding responded that more road space for drivers was not likely in central London, but might happen in outer London. We suggested that TfL looks at innovative ideas such as having more underground parking instead of car-lite developments; this had been suggested by another Deputy Mayor, Stephen Greenhalgh.

We pushed for more flexible use of road space

in drivers' favour (cf. opening up bus lanes when not in use by a bus), an item since aired in *Local Transport Today* magazine.

We mentioned our meeting with Transport Minister Norman Baker, who could not defend 24-hour bus lanes or wasted road space. She responded by saying that moves towards bus priority were now in the form of SVD (smart vehicle detection, which means getting priority at traffic lights).

Raising the subject of 'demand management', we noted that this seems to apply to cars, but not



to bus travel. We queried the track record of TfL, citing the difficulties from the pedestrianisation of Trafalgar Square, after TfL had assured that all would be well on the roads.

We also mentioned the difficulty in producing accurate forecasts, noting the DFT's inaccuracies. On the possibilities of road pricing, Deding responded that there is a perception of political unacceptability, and hinted that TfL will only get involved if there's a wider national debate.

Deding also noted the likely loss of fuel duty revenue to the Treasury through greater vehicle efficiency. We replied that motor manufacturers report little interest in electric vehicles; the Treasury is just eyeing drivers as an extra source of revenue, and it predicted that mileages and therefore revenue will increase, as the economy

recovers, regardless of trends in London.

When asked about 'smart charging', Deding explained that TfL is merely looking at whether technology is up to date. She admitted that there is a view towards tolling new capacity (e.g. river crossings) although we urged that replacement road capacity (e.g. any new Hammersmith tunnel) should not be tolled.

We expressed a concern about roads being opened again more quickly after accidents. She stated that the Met Police had invested in laser scanners to ensure this at accident sites. After the experience of Olympics lanes, TfL considered greater use of VMS signs could help alert drivers to snarl-ups and improve traffic flow.

Next we expressed a concern about road casualties rising due to the promotion of cycling, and discussed whether cycling proficiency/licensing would be valuable.

We complained that box junctions had achieved the opposite effect to that intended, causing traffic to bunch up. If the emphasis is to be on producing compliance rather than getting fine revenue, TfL and local authorities should bring in measures to improve compliance, such as better (overhead) signage, as in the USA. Deding's response was that TfL Director Leon Daniels' enforcement strategy is about keeping traffic flowing.

Deding wasn't able to advise on plans for any consultations on RTF (Roads Task Force) initiatives, including the promotional campaign proposed for late 2013. However she added that there might be another RTF (stakeholder) meeting. We got the impression that the 'motoring organisations' represented [read: RAC Foundation and AA] had not been very vocal, implying that there was an opportunity for the ABD to represent drivers.

Encouragingly, Deding felt that the meeting had been of value and agreed to send us more information (such as on likely expenditure plans and measures for congestion relief). We were encouraged to flag concerns up to her and any other existing contacts. We agreed to follow up over our range of concerns.

The Highways Agency - what next?

In October, a consultation was launched on plans for the future of the Highways Agency (HA) as well as appointing a supervisory body/drivers' watchdog. Consistent with the government's recent treading softly, it assures us that existing major routes in England ('the SRN', run by the HA) will not be privatised or tolled – at least not in the short-term.

However, it must be remembered that the DfT accepted the Cook Report, which proposed that the HA become a company with commercial freedom; indeed, there was a blatant invitation for it to 'sweat assets'. The Government now proposes to take steps in that direction by setting

up the HA as a state-owned company.

To hold it to account for the driving public, it is interesting that the government sees as possibilities a railways body (Office of Rail Regulation or Passenger Focus) or its own Motorists' Forum – which curiously represents groups that make money out of drivers, and even one rabidly anti-car group which has supported workplace parking charges and opposed reducing fuel taxes!

By pure coincidence, Prof Stephen Glaister of the RAC Foundation (represented on the Motorists' Forum) is not just a leading promoter of tolls. His background is mainly in rail and he is also on the ORR's 'Expert Advisory Panel'.

Another member of the panel specialises in bankruptcy and financial distress; perhaps he would be at home in a brave new world of pseudo-privatised roads sweated to burn a hole in drivers' pockets?

The ABD has spotted a loophole in the proposals. They state that the new company won't have any powers to introduce its own tolls, and can't transfer or sell roads, but it does not rule out a lease-off to a tolling concern. Binding safeguards are needed.

So November saw a mass mailout of an ABD letter to local newspapers, urging drivers to respond to the consultation. It was widely published, and followed by a national PR initiative and social media releases (Facebook and Twitter).

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

Campaign 2015: let the lobbying begin

The ABD is totally non-party political, but it seeks the widest possible appreciation of its pro-driver policies. Should one party adopt some of our policies, it may provide an incentive for others to follow suit. That's why we speak to all of the political parties, in a bid to influence their transport policies, and as part of the ABD's Campaign 2015 we've already started canvassing the major parties.

Our first communications were with the Conservatives; the government knows it will have to make up a lot of lost ground if it's to be re-elected. The main policymaking body is the Downing Street Policy Unit, chaired by Jo Johnson MP, brother of Boris.

Meeting time is at a premium for now, but the ABD was recently invited to submit policy

recommendations. So we provided an updated general policy summary, and supporting documents, such as a review of the Under-17 Car Club, and Al Gullon's advice on why Russia should not follow the West on road safety.

These have now been circulated to the policy team. It is also interesting to note that the Roads Minister is now Robert Goodwill MP, whom the ABD met with before the last general election.

We followed up our submissions to the Conservatives with similar communications with Labour. The autumn government reshuffle was matched by Labour's with Mary Creagh MP (now shadow transport and Maria Eagle MP (now shadow DEFRA) swapping roles.

To ensure that the work put into the

2011 transport policy review *Britain Better Connected* wasn't lost, the ABD sent an updated copy to Ms Creagh's office. It was received with some interest by Richard Burden MP, the new shadow Roads Minister. His Birmingham constituency includes the Longbridge area and he has longstanding interests in transport, being a keen motorsport fan. It's hoped to report on a meeting in the next issue of OTR.

We've not left out UKIP either, which although it has no MPs, has polled at around 17%, displacing the LibDems as the third most popular political party in the UK. The eurosceptic party is going through a full-scale policy review with the unique plus being that it can propose policies that do not have to comply with EU political correctness.

Caught on the web

It's always a struggle squeezing everything into a quarterly issue of *On The Road*; there's always a wealth of great articles out there that we just don't have room for. So from this issue we're including a list of links to online pieces which we think you might be interested in.

► The RAC Foundation has come out strongly in favour of Graduated Driver Licensing; this BBC report explains how it might work:

tinyurl.com/p7s25a3

► Another BBC page, this time on its magazine readers' suggestions as to how cyclists can be better protected, after a spate of deaths on London roads. Quite a spread of views in evidence...

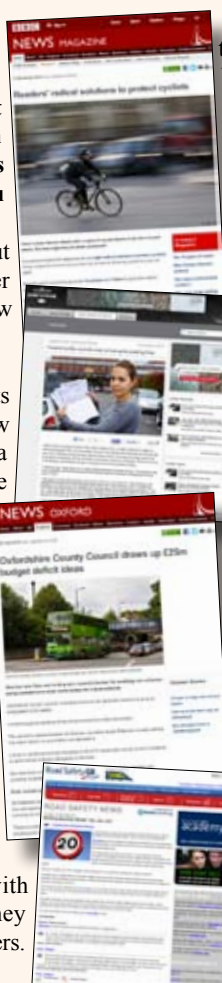
tinyurl.com/op9gg2o

► LGIU, the local democracy think tank, has come up with a policy briefing note on 20mph limits, which it claims are a win, win, win. Here it's reported on the Road Safety GB website. Worth a read, including the comments section.

tinyurl.com/qcxvl4m

► A really good piece on the Conservative Home website looks at Oxfordshire County Council's plans to introduce numerous bus lanes, with the express intention of raising money through fines, to boost its depleted coffers.

tinyurl.com/pt5kqnk



► More factual and less opinionated, the BBC website also covers the OCC bus lane plans:

tinyurl.com/ob4y354

► There's more on the A14 tolling plans being dropped in the EDP24 website; the story includes a line from David Cameron about charging still being an option for other roads:

tinyurl.com/ogyl4oq

► *The Express* reports on the recent 'die-in' when 1000 cyclists gathered outside the TfL HQ to demand that £600m be spent each year on providing segregated cycling lanes

tinyurl.com/18xtrgf

► An interesting video about how Surrey County Council is using a special glue to tackle potholes on its roads, claiming it'll keep the surface in good condition for 10 years.

tinyurl.com/lcozzf8

► Police in Royston, Herts, have been told they must stop using number plate recognition technology because it failed to carry out required privacy impact checks:

tinyurl.com/lhxlmm9

► Keen to learn which authorities make the most from parking? Then check out this ranking:

tinyurl.com/ov3ac4k

► The *Sunday Times* ran an absorbing story on how local

Brian's Home run

In November, ABD Campaign Director Brian Macdowall had an article published in the Local Government section of the *Conservative Home* website; you can read it at tinyurl.com/158t9nl. This is one of the most highly rated political websites, which is read by many councillors, MPs and thinkers from all parties.

The article showed how drivers are not taking repressive policies lying down, and in some parts of the country they're mounting sustained and effective campaigns.

The ABD also got an article on road pricing into *Freedom Today*, the magazine of The Freedom Association (TFA). TFA is non-party political, but runs popular events such as 'the Freedom Zone' public meeting and it gives out literature at the Conservative Party conference. The group also runs a number of youth events, often aimed at free-thinking university students.

authorities are fining drivers for stopping to drop their kids off at the school gates, when lines have been painted forbidding them to do so:

tinyurl.com/lxrm6bt

► Brian Mooney's *Fair Deal for the Motorist* website is a mine of useful information; he's the ABD's chief lobbyist who always keeps his finger on the political pulse in Europe as well as the UK. Two key pieces on his website worth a read; they're about the rise of cycling schemes and the abandonment of the A14 tolling scheme:

tinyurl.com/k8um25t

tinyurl.com/okbxb9d

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

The ABD has started a campaign to publicise good and bad city councils. The final form and questions (as well as the prizes) are still under consideration, but the original idea was to ask a basic question along the lines of "Does your council provide services to car and van drivers, or does it 'give you the hump', among other restrictions?"

To kick this off we visited Bristol, recently measured as the slowest city in England to drive through. Average peak time speeds in Bristol are 16mph (26km/h), the lowest of the eight English 'core cities', with 23% of journey times spent stationary, costing the local economy £350 million per year.

The video shows all the horrors of a city run by an anti-car Mayor and Council; it also shows bad road design causing safety issues for all road users such as cycle lanes in the opposite direction to one-way roads, bus stops in the middle of the road and traffic lights that default to red for cars.

There has been a campaign of road closure, narrowing and unused bus lanes for a number of years in Bristol. The ABD along with local business representatives recently stopped or delayed workplace parking, but 20mph zones and controlled parking zones (along with the return of speed cameras are all under way.

As part of the campaign and to raise awareness, the ABD has created a short video to be put onto YouTube, which will hopefully prove an attraction and raise public awareness of the ABD – and if we're really lucky, membership.

The ABD's Bristol camera action



The video was shot in September, is well on the way to being finally edited, and it should come out early in the new year.

It took the form of a tour around Bristol, as a representative UK city. Our thanks go to Dewi Diesel Evans of Cracking Productions, Cardiff, who donated his time. For two days Brian MacDowall and I visited Bristol. First we met up with our West of England rep, Bob Bull,

who drove us around the proposed spots for filming. That sorted, we retired to our accommodation, then the next morning we set about writing a script for the video, before meeting Dewi. The afternoon was spent driving around again, obtaining the footage: a mix of shots from inside the moving vehicle, shots from static points outside (including a 'heroic' shot from a central reservation), and a short street interview with a local businessman concerning parking restrictions.

There's a short piece to camera from Brian MacDowall at the beginning and end. That was the only time we got into any argument – at the finish it started raining and we retreated from the roadside to the tree cover afforded in a Harvester car park – to be confronted by the manageress because we didn't ask permission first. She was happy when we apologised and promised to go inside for food and drink when finished...

The video release will be notified online and hopefully in the next issue of OTR; meanwhile, for members, below is our draft script, to highlight the issues covered in our video.

Bristol is a busy city with people using different modes of transport. By prioritising some modes over others, road space for motor vehicles has been taken without regard to safety implications and congestion. There is a general view that Bristol is anti-car, and as a result some businesses have moved out of the town.

A number of one-way roads have been modified to allow cycling against one-way traffic; this is dangerous to cyclists, motorists and pedestrians. Some of the cycle lanes introduced end abruptly with no regard to cyclists' safety.

Public transport provides an important service, but cutting road width in some cases by a half to facilitate bus lanes for under-used buses is a waste of space. Having 24-hour bus lanes without a 24-hour bus service makes no sense at all. The practice of installing traffic lights at the end of bus lanes to force their reintegration into normal traffic flow causes congestion and is an admission of bad planning. Some of the bus lanes are dangerous and totally unusable, such as that in the outside lane at the bottom of the M32.

So-called traffic calming kerb build outs, pinch points and humps turn smooth-flowing roads into congested obstacle courses, often forcing cyclists



into conflict with other road users.

The whole design of traffic flow around the city centre area at St Augustine's Parade is crazy; the suggestion to close Baldwin Street will make this worse, and closing four bridges will cause extra congestion on those remaining.

Speed limits are another badly used planning tool in and around Bristol. There is a plan to introduce 20mph speed limits across all residential zones, despite the fact that one of the test areas recorded an increase in casualties. Many residential areas in the Southville district of Bristol have narrow roads negating the need

to spend £2.3 million on introducing an unnecessary limit.

The main A4 access road into Bristol from the M5 has a mix of speed limits which are confusing, bear no relation to the natural speed of the road and have not prevented a number of deaths on the road. Sadly, these aren't the only examples of poor planning though; other examples include:

- Bus stops in the middle of the road in Old Market, which necessitates buses and other vehicles crossing lanes with each other at junctions.
- Multiple pedestrian crossings on short stretches of road.
- Excessive use of traffic lights, particularly on roundabouts

Finally, parking is expensive, with off-street parking costing £20 for a working day in the centre of the city, which causes many commuters to park in surrounding residential streets. The planned answer is Controlled Parking Zones, which will be a further cost to residents with no guarantee of a space and in no way help business.

There was also a plan last year to impose a workplace parking levy, which was, however, abandoned after a vigorous campaign of opposition in which the ABD participated.

How the ABD works with the UK's media

For several years I've been one of the ABD's media spokesmen; it's something that takes up rather more time than you might expect. Preparing for interviews, travelling to studios and briefing journalists can be a time-consuming business, but if the ABD is to be taken seriously it's a job that has to be done - and one which can also be very rewarding. More than 20 years after the ABD was created, it's now the first port of call for many journalists wanting the driver's side of the story; this snapshot of the last six months is little more than edited highlights of just some of the coverage the ABD has enjoyed in the media.

In June Roger Lawson spoke to *This Is Nottingham* about a penalty scheme for "inconsiderate parkers" while Brian Mooney was published in the *Evening Standard* on proposals for London-wide 20 limits. Those limits were also the subject of an interview on *BBC Radio Sussex* for myself when the dreaded zones came to Chichester. On that occasion when asked why accidents to pedestrians and cyclists went up, I introduced the expression "the complacency factor". Radio producers love expressions and catchphrases, so expect to hear this one again.

In July Bob Bull spoke to *BBC News, Bristol* about cyclists while I spoke to *The Derby Telegraph* about CCTV vans and their use to police bus lanes. This time the quote was about "indiscriminate automated justice dispensed by Big Brother". The same story was picked up by *This Is Nottingham* with a quote from Keith Peat - who was also quoted on plans to ban cars from some roads, in favour of buses. Digital speed cameras were the subject of a quote from Roger Lawson in the *Bradford Telegraph & Argus*. In August Roger Lawson was also in *Ham & High* joining local cabbies slamming Camden's 20mph policy. Roger also appeared twice in *Get Surrey*, on speed cameras and falling rural road deaths. Regular congestion and delays on the M6 got Hugh Bladon in the *Birmingham Mail* and on *BBC News* - driving test multi-failures led to the *Birmingham Mail* talking to Nigel Humphries.

In August I was interviewed by the *Scottish Daily Mail* about the intention to dual the A9 and install average speed cameras south of Inverness. I welcomed the dualling but not the cameras, and asked if dualling would mean upping the limit to 70.

There is pressure from some quarters (including the LibDems) for presumed liability against drivers in accidents with cyclists and pedestrians. I was interviewed about it by the *Daily Star*, my line being that it's a bad idea it reverses the

principle of innocent until proven guilty - and accidents need examining to establish fault.

Other radio interviews during August included Brian Macdowall on *BBC Radio Kent*, about potholes, myself on *BBC Radio Sussex*, about more 20 zones in Brighton and me on *BBC WM* against the leader of Walsall Council - on 20 zones again. That one was memorable because the councillor couldn't answer how much the scheme was costing when I asked. Another BBC WM interview was about the managed motorway proposals for more of the M6. My soundbite this time (much to the delight of the producer) was "if you're in a motorway accident or break down you need a hard shoulder to cry on."

In September *This Is Kent* reported that pothole damage claims had reached £1m; comment came from Peter Morgan. Annoyingly, we had to turn down an invite to appear on *ITV Daybreak* because nobody was available; we need more spokesmen in London, where we're sometimes asked to go at short notice, to TV studios. On the other hand, with both the BBC and ITV now in Media City, Manchester, our man Sean Corker lives very close.

Also in September Brian Macdowall was quoted in the *Express/Star* about people who take a lot of driving tests before passing. Brian Mooney got an article "Highway Robbery" published in *Freedom Today*, the members' magazine of The Freedom Association - their equivalent of *OTR*.

On to October: Peter Roberts was in *This is Staffordshire* on 40 and 50 limits enforced with average speed cameras on the M6. Nigel Humphries went on *BBC Radio Leeds*, against 20's Plenty and Bob Bull featured on *This is Somerset* about a "crackpot" new one-way system in Bristol. I was on *BBC Radio Kent* where the local camera partnership reported an "over 100%" increase in fines.

The 23rd was the day I did three interviews: *BBC WM* at breakfast, about 20mph limits. Later I recorded on the same subject for Birmingham's *Free Radio* (formerly BRMB), then in the evening was on the *Mark Forest Show*, which is networked across all BBC local stations - it was on Liverpool's trial suspension of all bus lanes.

November was busier still. Sean Corker was on *Granada TV* about congestion figures and bus lanes in Leeds and Sheffield. He then appeared on *BBC Breakfast TV* about the Boris cycle super-highways in London. Brian Macdowall was published on potential road pricing on the *Conservative Home* website and I was live on *BBC Radio Coventry & Warwickshire* on yet

The highlights

One day BBC Radio Stoke asked me to speak about taking care for horse riders. It's not one of our subjects but some Highway Code research led to everyone being in broad agreement; it's so good not to have a divisive discussion.

Meanwhile, BBC Radio Kent picked up on our ASA victory over the Kent & Medway Camera Partnership. In a live interview I was asked about the benefits of cameras; plenty of pre-interview research meant I had a wealth of information from the likes of Swindon and Northamptonshire to prove that cameras aren't the panacea they're claimed to be.

A TV interview with Meridian News covered speed humps and 20 limits; filmed on location in Chatham, it started with a sports car negotiating humps with difficulty. My interview was recorded; when the piece aired, Richard Linden of Living Streets had gone up against me in a studio interview - which I didn't know about. He delivered a po-faced monologue while I gave official figures which showed he'd been talking nonsense. So I think I won that one!

more proposals for a "20 Town".

A BBC Radio Lancashire interview centred on Brake's call for tougher penalties for distraction, and in particular a ban on all phones in cars; this led to me being contacted by a BBC control centre for a series of local interviews on the same subject. I spent an hour being put on one station after another; eight in all including Tees, Three Counties, Berkshire, Suffolk, Kent, Sheffield, Hereford & Worcester and Gloucestershire. Later that afternoon I was on BBC Radio Merseyside to make 10 interviews in one day - a record?

Hugh Bladon appeared on a local station in Inverness about the A9 proposals, and then in York about a policeman who was in an accident. He was soon on again, about cyclists, on BBC Radio Bristol; Hugh was next on BBC Radio Leeds about yet more blanket 20 limits.

December is proving to be just as busy; on the 4th Hugh Bladon talked about cycling on BBC Radio Sussex and I recorded some "drop-ins" for BBC Radio Kent, about proposals to drastically increase prison sentences for driving while disqualified and/or causing death by dangerous driving while disqualified.

I've scored a series of hits with my local paper (the *Dover Express*). We always welcome help in keeping the ABD in the news - that's how prospective members know we exist. It's worrying that many people don't even know we exist - if we're to have a future we must reach them, and the media is how we do that. So get writing to your local paper, or if you could talk for us on radio or TV, please contact us (see back of *OTR*).

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

There are many schemes designed to discourage you from using your car, and to extract ever more money from you if you do. Nottingham City Council became the first (and so far only) council in the UK to impose a Workplace Parking Levy (WPL). This works by requiring all workplace parking spaces to be registered and licensed. There are a few exceptions: firms with 10 spaces or fewer are exempt, but they still have to register for a 100% discount. Spaces for blue badge holders also get a 100% discount. The scheme doesn't cover occasional business user spaces, customer parking, display vehicles or fleet vehicles which aren't used for commuting. Who, a few years ago, would have imagined having to pay to make your way to work unless by an "approved" method of transport?

The money raised went towards a tram system, with the possibility of building a second line. These, of course are only of any use to people who happen to live and work along their routes. Tramlines almost always involve some degree of taking road space – increasing the congestion they're supposed to avoid. Also, wherever trams are used, they have proved to be hugely uneconomical to run, requiring never-ending subsidy.

When the charge was introduced there were threats by several companies, including the head office of Boots, to quit Nottingham. As so often happens, that did not materialise – relocating is a major undertaking. Whether any new firms have

Time for a Notts revolt?



decided Nottingham is not for them is more of an unknown. So everyone just moaned, dug into their pockets and carried on. The employers have to pay the fee, but can pass it on to employees. Some simply stopped providing employee parking, sealing off the car parks. Predictably, those displaced employees started parking in nearby streets, upsetting the residents. Equally predictably, the council reaction was to impose miles of parking restrictions and controlled parking zones, which boosts council coffers and makes life more expensive for residents.

The cost of the WPL licence is currently £334

per annum. That's set to be increased in 2014/15 to £363. Then again the following year (2015/16) to £380. The council says these figures are "estimates". It never ends either: the intention is that the levy will increase every year after that in line with inflation.

Can anything be done to prevent this? Well, in Bristol, plans were stopped in their tracks by a well organised protest, with several organisations coming together. The local Federation of Small Businesses combined efforts with the TaxPayers' Alliance (TPA); the ABD joined in, and on the final protest day The Freedom Association came along too. The publicity generated was sufficient to bring about a last-minute climb-down by Bristol City Council.

Sadly this doesn't look likely to happen in Nottingham. The TaxPayers' Alliance tried to get something going (again with the ABD on board), but this time apathy reigned, and the local part of the support was not forthcoming, so their plans have been shelved. They might be revived, but only if strong support should materialise in Nottingham from the business community. So, if you're an East Midlands member with business connections, I'm afraid the ball is in your court. The ABD and TPA remain ready to support you.

Keeping tabs in Kent

In November, Kent ABD was invited to an annual meeting organised by Kent County Council (KCC) to report on its previous casualty reduction progress and to ascertain what they hope to achieve over the next seven years. The target is to reduce KSI accidents by 33% and children killed or seriously injured on Kent's roads by 40%. Only one child was killed on Kent roads in 2012, none in 2011; seriously injured in 2012 was 44, in 2011 it was 43. Of course the definition of 'serious injury' is not clearly defined by the DfT.

All the usual suspects were there, KCC heads of transport-related departments, Police, the camera partnership, NHS, HA, Fire & Rescue, Councillors, 20's Plenty, Spokes, other local cyclist groups and a range of others such as RoSPA and the IAM. The ABD was represented by Terry Hudson, Ian Taylor and Brian Macdowall, the latter in his role as a county councillor; they certainly weren't expecting a councillor to be so pro-driver!

To a certain extent we got what we expected, including more of the same in the way of lower speed limits, a vast expansion of 20mph zones and of course more enforcement. Kent Police

prosecuted approximately 50,000 speeders last year and the police 'sold' 34,000 speed awareness courses at £85 each.

The road safety industry is run by people who see cars purely as white goods; handy like a fridge or a washing machine, but totally devoid of any form of passion and incapable of providing any form of enjoyment through driving or owning it. To them, enjoying the design and engineering that makes the modern car must be eradicated at all costs. So we had to endure the usual barrage of condescending, insulting, meaningless drivel you would expect from such organisations. We learnt that yawning means we are not in control of the vehicle; naughty children!

Incidentally, several times we heard the DfT-sourced cost to society of £1.9m for a fatality on the roads – a figure that's patently nonsense.

One very vocal chap from a local cyclist group and Speed Watch vigilante stated that the camera partnership should be more pro-active like in Oxford where he'd been caught! He stated this without any hesitating in his rant; how can you argue with such hypocrites?

We had a talk from the Traffic Schemes Manager, who seemed to enjoy his job of cluttering up the roads with traffic calming. He used an example of a once free-flowing NSL rural A-road, which is now a slow moving caterpillar of traffic, caused by continuous speed limit changes.

We had a talk by the head of road policing,

who chose his words and statistics carefully. He named the main four things they target, as the most dangerous causes of accidents, but these 'targets' were far removed from the DfT causations, which of course are supplied by the police on the Stats19 forms.

We asked a few questions; are speed awareness courses about raising money? For a few seconds there was an eerie silence as they couldn't believe anybody had the audacity to question such 'experts'. Perhaps this was the reason there was no media presence.

So was it a worthwhile day? There was a lot of tongue biting with such ill-informed vitriolic bigotry, repeated over and over again, especially for those who drive above KCC ill-conceived speed limits. But we did talk to a number of people representing other organisations. We also handed out some ABD leaflets and young driver information downloaded from www.skilldriver.org and gave this to three driving-age students from a local college, who were in attendance.

One last interesting fact, was when we spoke to Anne-Marie Penny, Project Manager of the speed camera partnership. She said that photographs of alleged offences are available and you would have to apply to Kent Police to see them. So if you have any problems, she is the lady to contact! She also said they have nothing to hide, so we will be arranging a meeting with them at some point in 2014.

DfT reconsiders camera effectiveness

The DfT's head of statistics has endorsed a new method for measuring the effect of speed cameras on road casualties, which aims to isolate the effect of the cameras from random variations. The 'four-time period' method has been used by Slough-based engineer (and ABD member) Dave Finney and Professor Richard Allsop of University College London in reports examining camera effects.

Finney explained his method in a report analysing data from mobile speed camera sites in the Thames Valley Safer Roads Partnership area. He separated the casualty data into four time periods:

- a pre-Site Selection Period when no cameras were present
- the Site Selection Period (SSP) – the period of time in which accident/casualty levels influenced the decision that a camera should be sited at the specific location
- ASBiC (After site selection but before installation of the camera)
- after camera installation

Finney ignored the SSP period data because this would contain the influence of selection bias – i.e. an abnormally high number of accidents (the 'regression to the mean' – RTM – effect). He therefore combined casualty rates in the pre-SSP and ASBiC periods to determine the mean collision rate before the start of speed camera operations. This was then compared with the rate after camera installation.

Finney said the method proved



magiccarpits.co.uk

"beyond reasonable doubt that the entire reduction in killed and serious injury casualties at mobile speed camera sites actually occurred due to 'regression to the mean', and not as a result of mobile camera operations".

Allsop also used a four-time period method (though with a slightly different treatment of time periods) in a report advising citizens about how to interpret casualty data at speed camera sites, published by the RAC Foundation this summer. The report included analyses of data from fixed camera sites and concluded that cameras do have an observable effect on cutting personal injury collisions.

Tim Stamp, the DfT's head of statistics, endorses the four-time period method in a letter to retired engineer and speed camera critic Idris Francis. "The basic conceptual framework for taking account of regression to the mean (RTM) in

safety camera analysis, as used by both Professor Allsop and Mr Finney, strikes me as straightforward and logical," says Stamp.

Coincidentally, the RAC Foundation has published a revised version of Allsop's report. "The main change I have made is in the recommendation I make (to users of data who do not have knowledge of the SSPs for the cameras they are investigating) about the assumption they need to make about the SSP to apply my method," Allsop said.

"I recommended previously that they assume the SSP to be the last three calendar years before establishment of the camera. In the light of helpful comments and analysis by Professor Mike Maher (of the University of Leeds), fuller consideration of Dave Finney's work and sets of recorded SSP for several partnership areas, I now recommend that they assume the SSP to be the first three of the last four calendar years before establishment of the camera."

Allsop has reworked his calculations with the revised assumption. His estimate of the reduction in personal injury collisions attributable to cameras across the nine partnership areas studied (previously 15%) is now 14%, and the estimate for fatal and serious collisions (previously 27%) is now 22%.

Explaining that the changes bring his method closer to Finney's, Allsop said: "I stand by my assessment that my method largely allows for regression to the mean. I recognise that some of the reduction my method attributes to the effect of cameras may still stem from RTM, but I don't believe that this can be more than a small proportion."

In his letter to Idris Francis, Tim Stamp says a large-scale study of speed camera effects could be invaluable. "As site-level camera data continues to be made publicly available, it's easy to see real value in a robust analysis that encompasses a wider range of camera sites and geographic areas, and that takes account of RTM and other relevant factors such as trend. You may well be interested in contributing to such an analysis."

But Stamp adds: "It's very clear that any results and conclusions will carry most weight and influence if they are presented in objective and dispassionate terms, with their methods, assumptions, calculations and underlying data all clearly described and made available for scrutiny."

"Publication following independent peer review would be by far the best way to ensure this outcome."

Guidance on use of speed camera transparency data – updated November 2013 is available at <http://tinyurl.com/nlllbu>



20 limits for Worthing – get stuck in

West Sussex County Council is considering making vast amounts of Worthing a 20mph zone. There was a meeting about this on 4 December, where the Councillors were present and the public were given an opportunity to make their views known. Obviously that meeting has now taken place (it didn't fit in with the deadline for this issue of *On The Road*), but it's still worth getting involved in the campaign to make the relevant councillors see sense. If you're undecided as to whether this is a good thing or not, you may wish to read these articles:

- ▶ General info about 20mph schemes: www.speedlimit.org.uk/twenty.html
- ▶ Portsmouth's 20mph experiences: tinyurl.com/d4bvq93
- ▶ The likely cost of the proposed scheme: tinyurl.com/q3uhpql

The person who has alerted us to this is Elise Mason, who writes:

I live in Worthing and was alarmed to hear of a proposal being spearheaded by the '20's plenty' mob which has led to a public consultation on imposing a 20mph zone throughout vast areas of Worthing. I write to request your help and support.

I'm trying to put together an opposition who will lobby the WSCC committee, and would be really grateful if you would forward this to all of your members, as I would like as many people as possible to object to this. Please see details below. With my very grateful thanks and please do not hesitate to contact me if you want to discuss this further.

Elise Mason
07976 952 229
elise.mason@virgin.net

The ABD needs more active members. Whatever time or skills you can offer, you can be of use. Contact Brian MacDowall (details on p16) if you can help

IPCC in misleading information shocker

Each year, as a result of the ABD's affiliation to Repeal The (Climate Change) Act, we get invited to a presentation which it organises. This time the key speaker was Prof. Murray Salby, a scientist from the Atmospheric & Oceanic Studies Faculty at Australia's Macquarie University. Australia is in the news right now because the new Prime Minister is ditching its carbon tax. The talk took place on 6 November in a committee room at the Houses of Parliament and was attended by the ABD's Ian Taylor.

It's 95% certain that humans are 50% responsible for climate change – according to the UN's Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC). Is this true? "No" according to Prof. Salby. He explained why in considerable detail – much of it involving detailed science and many figures. Too many to detail here, and they wouldn't make very exciting reading. However, one thing emphasised was the claim that the type of 'carbon footprints' detected show human origin does not stand up to scrutiny – in fact it involves an impossibility.

On 27 November Ian attended a second talk, this time at the Institute of Economic Affairs (IEA) in Westminster. The speaker was Michael Beenstock, an economist who calls himself an 'Earth Scientist', from the Hebrew University of Jerusalem. He said that IPCC predictions on temperatures for the last 20 years simply didn't happen. Hard science

(physics) tells us that 'primitive equations' are unchangeable, but climate scientists also use 'speculative science' when it comes to clouds, water vapour, biospheric albedo, marginal gas forcing effects, sea ice dynamics and biosphere interaction – which is all very vague. Known as soft science, it's more akin to economics – and open to error from several sources. Computer models have to be tweaked to produce results. In models of 'chaos' if all data is not absolutely correct, results will go wrong. The IPCC fifth review admits this in trying to explain the difference between prediction and observation.

Historic tracking of climate models shows that they don't explain the past; since the mid-1990s all models have over-predicted warming. In previous years some models under-predicted. The errors don't 'mean revert' which means the models are wrong.

Policy is therefore ambiguity. Action on carbon abatement calculations on economic effects may be 50% right, but the costs might be more, so it would be wise to wait and see – time is not running out. In fact, different action might be required; in the 1970s some climate scientists were predicting global cooling, and some are doing so again. Climatologists change their minds every decade or so – not to mention politicians.

In conclusion, Beenstock emphasised that experimental science is successful, observational science less so, and climate

science is as unsuccessful as economics. The UN has politicised climate science; politicians too, as in "Vote blue, go green". The sixth IPCC review, due in 2020, could be interesting.

The talk was followed by questions and answers. Beenstock hopes to publish his research soon but it's a battle to get published. He had a similar battle with research on rising sea levels – as in they're not. Because of the politicisation many scientists disagree with the so-called consensus, but aren't prepared to put their heads above the parapet.

Asked if carbon reduction targets are the wrong target to be chasing, and "What's the right one?", Beenstock replied that carbon abatement is a complete waste of time; pollution abatement, however, is worthwhile. He found it surreal that nuclear energy is being invested in for carbon abatement reasons – it might be the right decision, but for the wrong reason.

Asked about how to handle the huge vested interests now involved in green politics, he said that politicians had got themselves into a mess, but there are signs that they are beginning to try and extricate themselves from it.

The evening ended with an informal gathering, during which I spent an hour talking to others, most notably the Rev Phillip Foster (a leader of the Repeal The Act organisation) – together we put the world to rights regarding climate and energy.

• www.repealtheact.org.uk

Hammersmith flyover to become a flyunder?

The Hammersmith Flyover section of the A4 is now approaching the end of its life. In recent times, it has needed maintenance causing much disruption in a congestion hot spot. In October, Hammersmith & Fulham Council (LBHF) organised a meeting at which residents could question council officers, TfL, consultants Halcrow and architects body West London Link. It proved very popular; with at least 150 people attending.

LBHF has commissioned a feasibility study (paid for by TfL) which will report in March; 2030 was given as the possible opening date for a new tunnel (nicknamed 'the Flyunder'). Both Labour & Conservative groups on the council favour some sort of tunnel, and there is strong talk of it being paid for by property development on the land freed up. Currently two key routes through Hammersmith Broadway are the A4 East-West (Earls Court-Chiswick/M4) and the A219 North-South (Shepherds Bush-Putney Bridge).



We were presented with different options, basically combinations of shorter/longer tunnel, with or without a tunnelled North-South route.

Audience questions covered the possible disruption caused by road closures, possible impact on the Thames Tunnel work in Fulham,

links and local routes, pollution, other priorities (e.g. repairs to Hammersmith Bridge). Only one person, a former DfT civil servant, proposed a toll, although he wanted it kept low.

One active local resident felt that the options were biased towards a particular solution, and that more should be considered.

At the end, LBHF gave out a questionnaire which I found a bit clumsy. At this stage, all parties concerned should be airing the issues – and not deciding preferences in advance of the feasibility study, which might not even conclude that the development is viable.

At least it was a good opportunity to meet council contacts and gauge local opinion. LBHF also runs a Flyunder webpage that has attracted a lot of interest. I managed to get some anti-tolling comments up prominently just before the meeting!

• www.lbhf.gov.uk/Directory/News/hammersmith_flyunder.asp

All over the UK, councillors are jumping on the 20mph bandwagon, with reduced limits being introduced all over the place - often on a blanket basis. One of the reasons for their popularity is the enthusiasm of Rod King, founder of 20's Plenty for Us (aka 20's Plenty), who set up a voluntary organisation to focus solely on getting 20mph limits into as many towns and cities as possible. So far he's hoodwinked Portsmouth, Oxford, Cambridge, Brighton, Warrington, Liverpool, Bristol, Bath, Manchester, Birmingham, Lancashire, York, Newcastle, St Helens, Sefton, Oldham, Wigan, Rochdale, Middlesbrough, Edinburgh, Chichester, Bolton, Nottingham, as well as the London Boroughs of Camden, Islington, Waltham Forest, Haringey, Lambeth, Greenwich and the City of London. That means more than 12 million people are affected by his limits, many of which cause more problems than they solve. The momentum is still growing however; 20's Plenty now has 216 active campaigns around the UK and staff in both London and York - that's what we're up against...

Parking costs and penalties is one of the biggest gripes that drivers have, so it's great news that the Government may bring forward plans forcing councils to compensate motorists if the parking adjudicator cancels their penalty charge notice on appeal (see below). It's hoped that this will incentivise drivers to lodge appeals against parking fines, and because it will add to the administrative costs of both boroughs and the Parking and Traffic Appeals Service, it's hoped that wardens might just be a bit less keen to hand out fines in the hope that there'll be no appeal. The question is: why isn't this happening already?

York residents are furious that the City Council has decided to close a major route in and out of the city centre, resulting in 26,000 drivers being fined in just 10 weeks. The bridge has been closed to provide pedestrians and cyclist with a more pleasant environment, but the closure of this short stretch of road means alternative routes are swamped with traffic and drivers are inconvenienced by having to use those routes.

- www.york.gov.uk/citycentreimprovements
- www.facebook.com/saynotolendalbridgeclose



You can say what you like about the French - and let's face it, that's exactly what most Brits do at every opportunity - but they sure know how to complain. Plans for France's 'eco-tax' recently saw a show of force by around 1000 demonstrators, including farmers, business owners and truck drivers in Brittany. Protesters set fire to hay bales and stacks of tyres next to the only eco-tax toll gate still functioning in the region after the other two had been sabotaged. Following a meeting between local MPs and the French PM, the government "suspended indefinitely" the eco-tax which was due to go into force this January. Meanwhile, our government piles ecotaxes onto us and we just cough up, with just the odd bit of tutting here and there...

The ABD has long said that it's technology which should be the means with which to achieve cleaner air - not restrictions on car use. Catalytic converters and diesel particulate filters (DPFs) are the way to keep our air clean, so the fact that companies exist to remove DPFs from exhaust systems is a scandal; they do so by claiming that removing the DPF improves fuel economy, even though it doesn't. The Government clearly also thinks the existence of these shady operations is a scandal, as it's introducing a new element to the MoT for diesel-powered cars; if a car was sold new with a DPF, it must still be fitted to pass the MoT. The new rules will come into effect from February 2014; any car which should have a DPF but which doesn't, will automatically fail the MoT. There's more about the new rules at tinyurl.com/mzoty3

So, that's another year over, and it's been the ABD's busiest yet. As ever, there's been a huge amount of interest in the ABD from media around the globe and the ABD has continued to lobby in the UK while also creating contacts worldwide. We couldn't do it without your support, for which the committee is always grateful; if you're not already active within the ABD, maybe pitching in next year might be a possibility. There are a lot of well-funded anti-car groups campaigning very heavily across the UK, and there's just the ABD to counter them, so we need all the resource we can get. Particular thanks are due to Brian Mooney and Ian Taylor, without whom the pages of OTR would be bare each month. Not only do they put in a huge amount of time for the ABD, but they also take the time to write up their efforts.

Chris Medd

Transport committee talks sense on parking

The Transport Select Committee has recommended that every local authority publishes an annual report to show where their parking revenues come from and how any income is being used. Louise Ellman, chair of Transport Committee said: "The use of parking charges and fines specifically to raise revenue by local authorities is neither acceptable nor legal. Yet there is a deep-rooted public perception that parking enforcement is used as a cash cow, so it's essential that local authorities apply stringent transparency.

"It's right that parking charges be determined locally, but central Government should freeze the maximum penalty charge and develop differential fines for less serious

parking violations. A 25% penalty charge discount should also be introduced for motorists who pay within 7 days of losing any appeal to a parking tribunal. Local authorities currently offer a 50% discount if motorists pay their penalty charge within 14 days, but remove this benefit entirely from motorists who appeal to a tribunal.

"Motorists should also not have to appeal against PCNs where tribunal adjudicators have repeatedly identified a problem such as poor signage. Local authorities must resolve these sorts of problems and Government must impose a statutory requirement on them to refund monies received from invalid PCNs of this kind.

"Adjudicators should also be given powers

to allow appeals where local authorities fail to follow statutory guidance concerning the use cameras (their use should not be routine) or issue PCNs in settings where exemptions (such as resident permits or Blue Badges) are not visible to such camera equipment.

"It is also unacceptable that enforcement regimes effectively force some companies to incur Penalty Charge Notices costing hundreds of thousands of pounds a year for carrying out their business. While businesses cannot be completely exempt from parking restrictions, local authorities must ensure that the need to restrict parking and manage congestion does not stifle the ability of businesses to trade and help grow the economy".

It appears that the ABD's lobbying has paid off; our frequent submissions to the Transport Select Committee clearly aren't falling on deaf ears. All that remains now is to get those recommendations implemented...



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 248, Manchester M41 4BW or send an email to otr@abd.org.uk

Here in Kent, the police 'sold' 34,000 speed awareness courses last year, out of 50,000 offenders. The course costs £85, of which £45 is for the cost of providing the course and associated administration; the other £40 goes directly to NDORS Ltd. I'm led to believe that NDORS Ltd and RSS (Road Safety Services) Ltd share the same three directors. How cosy and lucrative!

If you visit www.teletraffickuk.com you can read that "98% of the UK police forces use systems supplied by us" and the sales/customer service team employs two retired police officers who spent many years as traffic police.

It would seem retirement from the police force opens many lucrative career opportunities, at the expense of the licence holder.

Terry Hudson

With regard to speed awareness courses, it's beyond belief that ACPO has been allowed to implement a scheme in which it's able to offer avoiding the normal penalties in exchange for attending a course from which they, the police profit directly. This must be the first time in history that our police, and perhaps any police in the Western world have been allowed to have direct financial incentives to penalise people – and it stinks.

ACPO is now threatened with closure, by the recent Lord Stevens report. About time too. I will soon be filing a formal complaint with the Home Office and Police Minister about police and partnerships giving misleading legal advice to defendants; it's not their job to give legal advice at all, let alone bad advice.

Idris Francis

Recently I had the opportunity to experience a driving simulator as part of a trial to evaluate touch-screen technology. I had to 'drive' down a motorway whilst performing various navigation, music and phone tasks on a touch-screen. My experience taught me that simulators are nothing whatever like driving a real car, and this in turn explains how groups undertake studies about alcohol and distractions and produce results that we all find ridiculous in the real world.

I sat in the front half of a car with all the normal controls, with three large screens arrayed through a 120° angle showing the motorway, on which there were a number of cars passing me. Eventually a Ford Kuga overtook and pulled in front of me; I had to follow it at a safe distance through a series of gentle motorway curves.

This in itself was difficult, as the steering offered no feedback at all and responded to the slightest input. There was no directional inertia or self centering effect, neither was there any kinetic feedback, so it was like a console game only more sensitive. Simply staying in lane required 100% concentration, and I found it hard to maintain distance from

Give us a quote

"I fail to see that investment in a local transport infrastructure should necessarily be linked to or dependent on a road pricing scheme".

Stephen Hammond, 2008. He was then shadow Roads Minister, and would go on to become the Roads Minister hoping to implement tolling for the A14 (now abandoned).



The New Labour administration in Birmingham hasn't wasted any time in coming up with anti-car plans. Following on from 20's Plenty, the desire to downgrade the A38, and now the Birmingham Mobility Action Plan (www.birmingham.gov.uk/bmap), there are no prizes for guessing which mode of transport is under attack. Not that the previous Con-Libs were much better; they had the downgrading of the A38 firmly in their sights in the pathetic 'Big City Plan'.

Meanwhile, managed motorways are being rebranded as Smart motorways. Seems that 'smart' is another trendy word to add to 'green' and 'sustainable' - and it's equally meaningless.



the Kuga even in the "null trial" - with no distractions at all - and steering movements resulted in quite disturbing optical effects on the outer screens, which disorientated me.

In the test itself I had to complete 10 tasks in a random order. This was a complete disaster. Because the only bright objects were the screens and the navigation touchscreen (everything else was dark and they were very bright) I couldn't look at both at the same time. It was one or the other. Every time I looked up from taking my eyes off the road, even for a fraction of a second, I had come off my line and was all over the place, resulting in big steering corrections and more disorientating optical effects on the screen.

Pretty soon I started to sweat profusely and found it more and more difficult to complete the tasks; my driving became more and more erratic. As I finally completed the tenth task I was overcome with nausea and had to demand

Speaking as someone who drives on 'managed/smart' motorways twice a day, there's nothing 'smart' about them. The speed limits are often unrelated to the prevailing traffic conditions or refer to non-existent incidents or long since passed incidents. Nothing 'smart' about the incompetent, unaccountable quango known as the Highways Agency. Also, apparently, travel is only 'smart' if it is by bus, train, cycling or walking.

Paul Biggs

According to EuroRAP, England's road with the highest risk is the A537 between Macclesfield and Buxton, a seven-mile route across the Peak District National Park. The organisation says the road has seen a 66% rise in fatal and serious injury crashes in the last five years, two-thirds of crashes involving motorbikes.

Apparently, fatalities on the road rose from 15 in the three years to 2005 to 34 between 2006 and 2008. Assuming that the five years referenced above refers to 2008-2013, it would appear that accidents have gone up for the best part of a decade. Those bike-catching rear-facing average speed cameras and 50mph limit installed in (March?) 2011 are clearly working well...

Paul Anstey

a sick bucket from the researcher. Fortunately I managed to get out before being sick, but I still felt nauseous the next morning.

The researcher said they get this sometimes; they didn't want me to drive home but I needed to get back in a real car to make the comparison. This highlighted just how important the full 360° visual inputs and the kinetic feel of the car are - in terms of keeping the car in lane, visual inputs from straight ahead are a surprisingly small part of it. Most of the work is done through the seat of the pants and peripheral awareness, which the simulator took away. That's why in reality you can take your eyes off the road for far longer than hazard perception dictates that you should, and still hold your direction, even in a curve.

So next time Brake tells us it's done some research paid for by some insurance company that shows doing x or y at the wheel is equivalent to drinking 10 pints, be assured they're measuring a problem that only exists on a simulator. Meanwhile they're missing the real life issue, which is whether the Kuga has slammed its brakes on while you're engrossed in the navigation.

Nigel Humphries

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

I recently had the misfortune to attend the Road Safety GB conference, held in Harrogate. I say misfortune; the private conversations were illuminating and generally encouraging, but the talks on the live stage were generally anything but. Virtually all of the speakers focused on speeding as being the most pressing issue on our roads (in terms of road safety), but in private a very different picture emerged.

When I spoke to one police officer about the most pressing road safety issue on his patch, he didn't hesitate to volunteer cyclists and pedestrians – getting killed by cars, lorries and buses because of their own carelessness. He said these vulnerable road users are getting drunk and/or listening to music while using the roads, and are oblivious to what's going on around them.

When I asked what the solution is, once again he wasted no time in suggesting that education of those groups is the key – not restricting drivers.

Another speaker talked about Graduated Driver Licensing, which has been tried in countries such as Canada and Australia and which is about to be introduced to Northern Ireland. Her talk didn't mention speed much, although she was keen to massively restrict

Brighton and Hove Council, together with other organisations promoting 20mph speed limits across that city, believe there is "masses of evidence" that 20mph limits make roads safer. They're so incensed by claims to the contrary from the campaign group Unchain the Brighton Motorist that they have reported an advertisement by the group to the ASA.

In fact, the evidence about signed-only 20mph limits and casualties is very mixed, based on the results of schemes implemented in Portsmouth and elsewhere. Some categories of road user casualty have increased markedly. Other local authorities realise this and are not so enthusiastic as Brighton & Hove.

For example, Norfolk County Council has rejected the widespread use of 20mph limits. The county council's director of environment, transport and development, Mike Jackson, is quoted as saying: "Within Norfolk at present, the commitment of funds to the implementation of 'blanket' 20mph schemes would not offer good value for money compared to other measures to reduce casualties. The council should continue to prioritise schemes that target reductions in killed and serious injuries and should not divert resources to area-wide 20mph speed restrictions, which offer little benefit in this regard."

In York, Liberal Democrat councillors are aware that 20mph limits are not a road safety panacea. They're quoted as saying "We continue to support a targeted use of 20mph limits at known accident blackspots and in areas such as outside schools and shopping areas." But they say evidence for the effects of blanket 20mph limits is "very mixed in regards to accident levels, reducing speeds, helping produce a modal shift away from car use

new drivers for the first few years of their driving careers. Speaking to her later, her view was that speeding is hardly an issue when it comes to young drivers crashing; of more concern are drugs and alcohol, being distracted by mobile phones and bowing to peer pressure when they load their cars up with mates. Drivers aged 17-24 are the ones most likely to make poor speed choices, so her view was interesting, if not necessarily credible.

Private conversations highlighted that many people don't believe in the measures they're implementing and also that if they can get some kind of restriction implemented ASAP, tougher restrictions can follow, in stages. The sense of being among people desperate to impose their ideals on others was overwhelming.

Perhaps the most depressing thing though were the references to the fact that 'accident' is now a non-word, because apparently accidents don't exist. Because crashes on the road are all avoidable and they're always the driver's fault, the word 'accident' is an insult to the memory of people killed on the roads, so we all have to use the word 'collision' instead. What nonsense.

Details supplied

and in reducing emissions. The evidence from the UK's first city-wide 20mph scheme (Portsmouth) showed that serious accident levels went up slightly, the average reduction in speeds was just 1.3mph, and the scheme made little difference to the majority of respondents in the amount they travelled by their chosen mode."

It will be interesting to see if the ASA is prepared to take up Brighton and Hove Council's complaint about the campaign group's advertisement, bearing in mind that the ASA recently decided that an advertisement on the Scottish Safety Camera Programme Office's website was outside its remit, as it was "not an advertisement ... directly connected with the supply or transfer of goods or services". The advertisement by Unchain the Brighton Motorist must come into the same category so, for the sake of impartiality, the ASA must surely refuse to become involved. We shall see.

Brighton's green administration is currently languishing in third place in local opinion polls, behind Labour and the Conservatives. It should be a lesson for other councils that anti-car policies are not favoured by most voters, and the pressure groups that promote those policies do not speak for the majority.

Malcolm Heymer

See p14 for more on this

There was a multi-vehicle pile-up on the M5 near Bristol recently; a van driver was killed and another man seriously injured. The motorway was closed for no less than seven hours, but what's more interesting is that this is a newly refurbished section of motorway, with cameras at frequent intervals on the various gantries in

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

both directions.

Whereas previously a lot of traffic used to travel at 80mph or more when the traffic was light, now everybody is wary of the numerous cameras and 70mph is the more or less the maximum. Of course at the time of this accident it becomes so congested that even 70 is rarely achievable so I don't know how this shunt came about. Probably people looking at their speedometers instead of what is going on around them...

Hugh Bladon

I have a friend whose 27-year old son doesn't drive. He lives 11 miles from the nearest city (Chelmsford in Essex) and 16 miles from the nearest big town (Colchester, also in Essex). For him to get to work it takes 90 minutes, in which time he has to take either a bus and a train or a pair of buses; he could do the same journey in under half an hour by car.

The thing is, he's not necessarily saving any money by using public transport; it's costly and a small hatchback would probably cost no more to run. It would certainly improve his quality of life, as he'd be able to socialise far more; he's generally stuck in his rural home otherwise. But the killer is the job market; if he tells a potential employer about his circumstances, the chances of him landing a job are minimal.

Steve Renwick

in brief...

► Motorists will no longer need to have their insurance policy checked when renewing their road tax. The changes, which came into force on 16 December, also mean that motorists only need to tell the DVLA once when they declare their vehicle off the road. Currently, motorists who declare SORN have to renew every year. Last year, around 4 million SORNs were made, with over 1 million of those repeat renewals.

► Removing a bus lane on a main road in Sheffield will reduce delays to buses and other traffic, according to modelling undertaken by Sheffield City Council. Removing the outbound bus lane on the approach to a roundabout on the A621 Ecclesall Road should cut journey times for everyone, but the council has deferred the lane's removal until a suitable alternative route for cyclists has been provided.

► London Mayor Boris Johnson's proposal to ban cyclists from wearing earphones has hit a brick wall with the DfT saying it has no plans to introduce such legislation. Johnson raised the idea alongside suggesting installing audio warnings on lorries that would alert cyclists to when drivers are turning left. But a DfT spokesman says there are no plans to make earphone wearing a specific offence, adding that a ban would imply that deaf people should be banned from cycling too. The DfT spokesman said the police already have powers to prosecute careless or dangerous cycling.

► Pedestrian campaign group Living Streets is calling for an extra three seconds of green man time on pedestrian crossings to allow the elderly to cross in comfort. The group says research by University College London has found that many people over 65 walk much slower than the current assumed walking speed of 1.2 metres per second in the DfT guidelines for pedestrian crossings. For men the average speed is 0.9 metres per second and for women 0.8m/s. Living Streets said the DfT should take the opportunity of a planned revision to guidance on signal-controlled crossings next year to change the timings – but the DfT spokesman says there are no such plans.

► TfL is set to install average speed cameras on the A406 (North Circular), A40, A316 and the A2 (from Black Prince to the Blackwall Tunnel), replacing a number of fixed cameras. TfL claims there will be road safety benefits but the evidence from existing average speed camera sites is inconclusive; they also cost up to £15m to install and have a high operating cost.

► RoSPA has a new chief examiner for advanced driving and motorcycling: former police officer Stuart McMillan. In 2010 he achieved a gold award in the RoSPA Advanced Motorcycling Test and became a member of Shropshire and Powys Advanced Riders (SPAR). He has since gone on to take RoADAR's Advanced Tutor Test, subsequently becoming training officer for SPAR. Earlier this year, he gained RoSPA's Diploma in Advanced Riding Instruction. He is also a RoSPA examiner for cars and motorcycles.

A14 toll plans dropped

Plans to create the UK's first toll road for a decade have been dropped, with improvements to the A14 instead funded from general taxation. The scheme involves widening a heavily congested 25-mile stretch in East Anglia carrying traffic from the port of Felixstowe to the Midlands. David Cameron has said he understands the strong opposition to the proposal to charge motorists.

The plan had been to raise 20% of the overall £1.5bn cost from tolls. The Highways Agency said the charges would have been set at between £1 and £1.50 for cars using the 12-mile stretch of toll road, and about double this sum for lorries, although these figures weren't finalised.

New scheme aims to cut road deaths

A new initiative which could play a dramatic role in reducing road traffic collision (RTC) casualties has been launched. Driver First Assist (DFA), aims to allow professional drivers to make a real difference when faced with an RTC. DFA aims to provide drivers with first aid training and to instruct them on how to manage the scene prior to the arrival of the emergency services.

It's estimated that 46% of fatalities could be prevented if first aid assistance was available early at the scene of an RTC. Between 39% and 85% of these deaths may be due to airway obstruction; death from a blocked airway takes about four minutes, while the target time for an ambulance to arrive on scene is about eight minutes.

Dr Anthony Marsh of the Association of Ambulance Chief Executives (AAACE) said: Road traffic collisions sometimes result in people suffering life-threatening injuries where every minute counts to their chances of survival. By providing professional drivers, who are often first to witness or come across such incidents, with

Northants gets radical

Northamptonshire County Council is asking people how it can improve the condition of county roads after a £140m budget cut. The council has acknowledged that its roads are deteriorating, and for them to be maintained to even a similar standard, radical ideas are needed. Some roads could be reclassified to reduce the inspection regime and ongoing maintenance costs. Other measures include reducing the width of some rural roads to restrict the vehicles that can use them to help preserve surfaces. Already work has begun to de-clutter roads of costly unnecessary signage and it's anticipated this downsizing could be spread to encompass redundant assets including some roads and bridges.



basic life support training and the knowledge to know what to do, will ultimately mean patients get the care they need whilst emergency help is en route".

DFA founder David Higginbottom said: "Our vision is for hundreds – or thousands – of trained drivers equipped to take action in the first critical moments after an RTC. Simple first aid techniques could do much to reduce casualties while the emergency services' own ability to perform would be dramatically enhanced by receiving an onsite situation report the moment they arrive on scene."

• www.driverfirstassist.org

Car use set to decline ever further?

Young people will determine whether peak car theory turns out to be correct, according to a report for the House of Commons transport committee. Peak car use in Britain has been written by the Parliamentary Office of Science and Technology (POST) to inform the committee's inquiry into better roads, which began recently.

The paper says the key peak car hypothesis is that car miles per person per year have reached a historic high and will remain static or decline in future. But this is at odds with the DfT's National Transport Model forecasts.

The travel habits of young people will be of "key interest" to the debate, it says, noting that driver licence holding among young people has declined over the last 10-20 years. POST says there are many possible contributory factors, including increasing costs of learning to drive, the high cost of insurance, youth unemployment,



lifestyle factors such as more higher education, later marriage, and greater urbanisation along with changes in attitude such as a reduced perception of the car as a status symbol.

"Importantly though, it is not clear whether these trends will persist as young people grow older, or whether they are simply delaying getting a licence. More research is needed to better understand these influences."

Big changes for Birmingham's roads

Birmingham City Council is considering downgrading the A38 that runs across the western edge of the city centre, connecting with the Aston Expressway. The council says the city's road network appears to have coped much better than expected with this summer's six-week closure of the A38 Queensway Tunnels for repairs, and that the road's future therefore needs to be "debated openly".

"There is no doubt that the A38 provides a fast route across the centre for all traffic, but it also severs the centre, creating a very noisy unattractive barrier to intra-centre movement," says the city's mobility action plan. The plan also suggests exploring a city centre low emission zone, a workplace parking levy and road charging.

Bus priority corridors are identified and the plan proposes using Statutory Quality Partnerships to improve services. Rail services could be re-introduced on the Camp Hill and Sutton Park lines and Midland Metro extended at least to Centenary Square and the HS2 station at Curzon Street.

Birmingham City Council is also consulting on introducing 20mph speed limits across the city's residential streets and on busy high streets. Implementation of the signed-only limits would



take 5-7 years to complete, with areas prioritised on the basis of their accident record. The council suggests 20mph limits could be appropriate on high streets such as the A435 in King's Heath, the Alum Rock Road, and the A41 Soho Road. The council estimates that the cost of the programme would be about £7m, of which £800,000 has been secured from the city's successful bid to the DfT's Cycle City Ambition Grant.

Meanwhile, councillors in Sandwell have approved plans to introduce an area-wide 20mph limit in West Bromwich town centre. Sandwell's highways services manager, Robin Weare, said the lower limit would improve road safety in an area with high levels of casualties, complement urban realm improvements, and encourage walking and cycling.

www.birmingham.gov.uk/20mph

in brief..

► Norfolk County Council is to commission a feasibility study into extending the proposed Norwich Northern Distributor Road (NDR) round to the A47 to the west of the city, completing an orbital road. The council is currently promoting the £148.5m dual carriageway NDR, which will connect the A47 at Postwick Hub, to the east of the city, round to the A1067 in the north-west. The new study will examine options for the A1067-A47 connection, which is likely to be environmentally controversial, passing through the picturesque Wensum Valley. Construction could begin in spring 2015.

► The Highways Agency is exploring whether features of managed motorways could be implemented on some of England's busiest A-roads, for safety rather than capacity reasons. The use of mandatory variable speed limits and the greater use of electronic signs and traffic detection equipment will be among the features considered in feasibility studies on two dual carriageway trunk roads in the Midlands: the A500/A50 around Stoke-on-Trent and the A38 from the A5 Weeford junction, through Burton-on-Trent, the A50 junction south of Derby.

► The DfT has asked local authorities in England to consider reducing their use of "intrusive" yellow lines to mark parking restrictions in favour of implementing restricted parking zones. These require a limited number of signs to inform motorists if they can or cannot park and during which times.

► A new IAM poll suggests that a third of drivers don't enjoy driving any more, the main reason being the cost of fuel (51%) followed by congestion (41%), no longer excited by driving (28%) and less leisure time (25.9%). However, 39% still consider driving and riding for fun as their hobby. A third of respondents still go out for a spin.

► Another IAM poll claims that drivers' support for speed cameras has gone down - from 80% last year to 79% this year. Bizarrely, the IAM goes on to say that 52% don't believe cameras are only sited at locations where accidents happen and almost half of drivers think that raising money is the main purpose of speed cameras. Scottish drivers are the ones least likely to have speeding points and they're also the most against speed cameras and speed awareness courses.

► Sussex Police has said it won't enforce Brighton & Hove's new 20mph limits - despite ACPO issuing guidelines on enforcing 20 limits, claiming speeding offences in residential streets "won't be tolerated". Sussex Police had previously announced it would only support 20mph speed limits when they were self-enforcing - leaving it up to drivers to stick to the limit. And despite the new guidelines the force has refused to alter its approach, insisting no extra resources would be used to track down drivers.

German ruling: blocking scameras is OK

The Federal Court of Justice of Germany has upheld the right of citizens to park in front of mobile speed camera vehicles, blocking their ability to issue tickets. The case came about after a driver flashed for speeding, got even by parking his van in front of the radar unit and walking off in June 2011. A district court found the man guilty of assault and imposed a fine. He appealed, and a higher court found he did not act with coercion needed for an assault charge, but

it asked the high court to resolve the question of whether the man's actions interfered with public order and safety, which would make him guilty of interfering with a public enterprise. The high court looked at the statute in question and found that "there was no manipulation of the instrument itself or any substantial part thereof that could have led to an actual reduction in function; the actions of the man prevented speed camera measurements, but they did not substantially affect the camera itself".

Box cameras coming

A new system has been launched for yellow box junction enforcement. Developed by Vysionics ITS, the VECTOR YB is designed to give evidentially-acceptable proof that junction exits were not clear when a driver entered a yellow box and that the Highway Code has therefore been broken.

The system uses a combination of ANPR cameras to identify vehicles, and radar to locate and track them in two-dimensional space in varying weather conditions. It then creates an evidential record file containing timestamped ANPR plate matches, offence data including box dwell time and context views of the vehicle. Currently, the only councils that have the powers to enforce yellow box junction offences are the London boroughs and TfL. The Local Government Association has been pressing the DfT to extend the powers to councils elsewhere.

BlipTrack's UK trials

Portsmouth City Council is staging the first UK trial of BlipTrack, a low-cost, Bluetooth- and wifi-based vehicle sensor for collecting average speed and traffic congestion data. Via standard web browsing, the results can inform journey time predictions on variable message sign displays.

Unit purchase and fixing onto existing roadside structures cost about £2000 for each of six detectors covering 12 cross-city routes, compared with £5000-£10,000 for each of the 12 or so ANPR cameras that would otherwise need to be installed.

Developed by Danish firm Blip Systems, the system has been delivered by UK partner SmartCCTV. Smart CCTV managing director Nick Hewitson said: "BlipTrack catches upwards of 20% of vehicles, compared with 95% using ANPR. But this is statistically adequate for journey time information."

in brief...

► Nottinghamshire County Council is to implement 20mph speed limits in four residential areas that straddle the boundary with Nottingham, to complement Nottingham City Council's plans to introduce 20mph limits in these areas. Andrew Warrington, Nottinghamshire's service director for highways, said: "Changing the speed limit at the county boundary could result in inconsistent speed limits leading to confusion amongst road users."

► The Highways Agency plans to install average speed cameras on a two-and-a-half mile stretch of the A12 in Suffolk. The cameras will enforce a 70mph limit on the road between the Colchester and Ipswich. The HA says the cameras will "target accidents related to traffic speed in an area of difficult road alignment and geometry". Installation of the £843,000 scheme is expected to start in September 2014.

► Low-level traffic lights designed for cyclists have been authorised for use following safety trials. The system works by repeating the signal displayed on main traffic lights at the eye level of cyclists. The clearance means that TfL can install the lights at Bow Roundabout – the first time the lights have been used in the UK. Initially the system will be piloted at Bow but the DfT is working with TfL to extend it to a further 11 sites in London.

► A camera near Coventry train station has caught out 14,559 drivers for encroaching on a bus lane in 14 months. The camera, in Stoney Road, has netted the council a minimum of £436,770 in penalty fines from drivers between June 2012 and August 2013. The camera was installed last summer, and caught 1500 drivers in its first week alone, as it was hidden behind a tree.

► More than £350,000 was spent by Thames Valley Police repairing their vehicles following collisions last year. Figures show the force was to blame for 466 crashes in 2012, more than half of those involving their vehicles. But it was at fault in a third fewer crashes compared with figures for the last five years, spending £216,000 less on repairs than in 2008.

► Rush hour commuters are being asked to walk or cycle instead of taking trains the Northern Line between Tooting Bec and Clapham North, in an attempt to reduce overcrowding. Travellers are being asked to avoid the station between 08:00 and 08:45. TfL said commuters often have to wait for two or three trains before they could board. Travellers will be given advice on alternative routes. Tooting Bec and Clapham North are a 2.5-mile walk apart.

► Use of hands-free phones should be banned from vehicles as well as hand-held ones, according to Brake, which has also called for the penalty for calling or texting behind the wheel to be increased from £100 to somewhere between £500 and £1,000. Brake claims that more than 500,000 people have points on their licence for using a phone or being otherwise distracted.

CfBT threatens to sue over A14 plans

Environmental campaigners have threatened legal action against the Government's proposed A14 improvements in Cambridgeshire because of their air quality implications. The CfBT makes the threat in its response to the DfT's consultation on a £1.5bn programme to improve 22 miles of the A14, which includes a new tolled Huntingdon Southern Bypass.

CfBT says two Air Quality Management Areas already exist close to the road, at Brampton and Bar Hill to Girton. It believes the road improvements could push these areas and other locations nearby "above, or further above, the legal limits".

"EU legislation and the recent Supreme Court ruling that the UK is failing in its legal duty to protect people from the effects of air pollution, is clear that areas currently within legal limits cannot be pushed over them," says the CfBT. ClientEarth, the environmental legal organisation, is taking an interest in the scheme.

M60 plans on hold

The Highways Agency has put plans on ice to convert hard shoulders on part of Manchester's M60 orbital motorway into traffic lanes, because the resulting traffic flows would trigger exceedances of legal air pollution limits. The HA said opening up the hard shoulder between junctions 8 and 18 round the west and north of Manchester would have moved traffic nearer to properties and attracted more vehicles to the road. This would have resulted in new exceedances of air quality levels, particularly in relation to NO2. The HA has just launched a consultation on implementing mandatory variable speed limits on this section of the motorway. But the Agency remains determined to find a way to increase capacity between junctions 8 and 15, including possibly converting the hard shoulder to a traffic lane, if a way can be found to reduce the air quality impact.

Brighton's drivers take action

Brighton and Hove Council's green administration is facing a backlash from motorists who claim the council has declared "war" on the car. Local taxi firms together with businesses including cafes, restaurants and hotels have launched the 'Unchain the Motorist' campaign, criticising the roll-out of 20mph speed limits, draconian parking charges, and changes to the Lewes Road, which have seen the introduction of bus and cycle lanes and cut space for general traffic to one lane in each direction.

The council introduced a 20mph limit in the city centre in April and has just completed a



The CBT also questions the case for the improvements, saying traffic levels between Cambridge and Huntingdon were 4.2% lower in 2012 than 2002. "Against this background, we strongly oppose any new road building in this area, and argue that the recent history of flat or reducing traffic allows considerable 'breathing space' to look at other options that will build on these trends and reduce traffic further rather than encourage more traffic and car dependency."

Fuel discounts delayed

Plans to offer fuel duty discounts to motorists in some rural mainland areas have been delayed. Ten rural communities in mainland Scotland and England were earmarked in October for a possible 5p a litre reduction in fuel duty, but communities in parts of the Highlands and Wales complained that they had been missed out.

Chief Secretary to the Treasury, Danny Alexander, has said more work will be done on the proposals; he said it would now be next year before permission was sought from the European Commission to implement the discount. Alexander said: "Further work is needed to ensure that we have all the information that is necessary to submit the application. That will be the subject of a supplementary piece of work and we will submit the application early in the new year".

consultation on phase two of the programme, which will see the lower limit extended to nine residential parts of the city. Main roads in the areas will retain their existing limits.

The Unchain the Motorist campaign says there is no evidence that 20mph limits reduce accidents, CO2 emissions, pollution or congestion, or that they encourage more use of public transport. The Unite and GMB trade unions have joined the campaign, with Unite saying the imposition of 20mph limits will "burden our members in the transport sectors with extra costs in both fuel and time".

• More online at www.facebook.com/UnchainTheBrightonMotorist



Stay informed

Social media

Keep abreast of ABD-related news, and what the ABD is up to on a daily basis, by following us on Twitter (twitter.com/TheABD) or 'liking' us on Facebook (www.facebook.com/associationofbritishdrivers). Please retweet or share one of our updates occasionally to help promote us to your followers or friends.

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 on iPad

If you have an iPad and want to read OTR on it, it's easy. Once you've downloaded OTR from the members' site, just drag the OTR file to the 'Books' Library in iTunes, then sync your iPad. OTR will appear on the 'PDFs' collections page in iBooks.

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 to:

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

Help out

ABD publicity material

If you'd like copies of any ABD literature please contact Sean Corker (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 Essex, Herefordshire, Kent, North Wales, North West, Rutland, Scotland, South West of England, Staffs, Surrey, Sussex, Warwickshire or the West Midlands, 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*
▶ *National Motorists' Action Group*
▶ *NO2ID*

▶ *Parkingticket.co.uk*
▶ *Professional Drivers' Association*
▶ *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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