

On The Road

The journal of the Association of British Drivers

Issue 90 – Winter 2008/09

abd.org.uk

Govt puts politics before safety

The latest House of Commons Transport Committee road safety report confirms that road safety policy has allowed a litany of political aims to take precedence over reducing casualties. It also shows that MPs have no grasp of real road safety issues, bizarrely misrepresenting expert driver criticism of current policy as "defending risk taking". In its first paragraph of conclusions and recommendations, the report commends the Government:

"for recognising that road safety needs to be integrated with other important policy objectives such as promoting good health, reducing carbon dioxide emissions, tackling deprivation and improving quality of life"

ABD spokesman Nigel Humphries comments: "The reason that recent road safety policy has failed is that it has become a facade for the anti-car agenda – a deadly mistake that Transcom wants to continue and expand. The stated political objectives have nothing to do with road safety, yet drivers have been obstructed, penalised and bullied to achieve them, and this has been done falsely in the name of road accident victims. While this has been happening, the real causes of these tragic deaths have been neglected. The committee



of MPs either can't or won't understand the arguments; we've already seen that safety policy is riddled with irrelevant political agendas, so it's not surprising that pathetic attempts are made to dismiss its critics as dangerous drivers. Of course nothing is further from the truth – it's the ABD which is standing up for safe and responsible driving against those who seek to criminalise it in order to make using a car unattractive."

There are some aspects of the report welcomed by the ABD, in particular the recognition that official figures for seriously injured casualties are flawed and numbers are not reducing in the way the Government claims. The ABD supports

separate targets for reductions in fatalities and the establishment of an independent body to track overall casualty and safety trends.

Although the report makes some useful recommendations about better education and training, it does not fully recognise their importance. Since the vast majority of accidents are caused by human error on the part of one or more road users, helping people reduce these errors could produce far greater improvements in safety than any amount of legislation or enforcement. A start could be made by publicising the real causes of serious accidents rather than covering up this information because it doesn't suit the policy agenda.

ABD chairman Brian Gregory sums up: "The Transport Committee's report is a missed opportunity to learn from the failed road safety policies of the last 15 years. Instead of proposing positive measures to treat road users as responsible people, which most of them are, the report paves the way for more of the same failed, oppressive medicine. The deadly consequences of using road safety as a facade for other unrelated political objectives is the real scandal."

•Read more about this on p6

Manchester says no to tolls

The people of Greater Manchester delivered their verdict on proposals to introduce a congestion charge in their city and the result was an overwhelming NO to the road pricing scheme in all ten council areas, with a clear majority of the population voting. This result was delivered in the face of a multi-million pound campaign in favour of the charge by AGMA (Association of Greater Manchester Authorities) and GMPTA (Greater Manchester Passenger Transport Authority), which stood to benefit from transport investment from central

government – but only if they could get the scheme through.

"This is a great result," said the ABD's Nigel Humphries. "The world was watching the people of Manchester and they have seen through the great government transport bribe and voted to reject road pricing. Surely this means the government must now abandon its back door plans to tax, track and inconvenience drivers with road tolls. The government must cease its determined campaign to charge us to drive on roads we have already paid for many times over."

•You'd hope Labour would have got the message and killed off its road pricing plans, but not so. You can read the DfT's documents for pricing trials at <http://tinyurl.com/6m3gku> – buried away on p136 is a reference to European Electronic Toll Service proposals and the associated CESARE project. The trial proposals the DfT is inviting are to be for a tag and beacon system compatible with other EU systems and that your vehicle's every movement throughout all the EU will be tracked (and charged for).

•Read more on this on p7

•Also see www.manchestertolltax.com

To join the ABD
call us now on
07000 781 544



The ABD campaigns for:

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

The price of oil has plummeted and our prime minister is on record as saying: "I want these price cuts passed onto the consumer, and passed on as quickly as possible." Hmm, so who has the greatest power to cut fuel prices; the fuel companies themselves or the Treasury, which trouses around three-quarters of the cash that drivers spend on fuel? Correct – it's the latter. It's also the latter which recently increased fuel duty by another 2p per litre...

Within weeks of taking up his role as mayor of London, Boris Johnson has scrapped plans to increase the congestion charge to £25 for some vehicles, will also remove the Western extension of the scheme, killed off plans for city-wide 20mph limits and rephased traffic lights to make the traffic flow better. The Greens are up in arms about it, protesting that Londoners need to be saved from themselves. Meanwhile Labour's transport spokesperson Val Shawcross claims the plans are "a huge disappointment for London's travelling public". She also said there's nothing about encouraging people onto public transport, but much on giving back road space and speeding up traffic lights in favour of the motorist. Doesn't sound like a huge disappointment to London's drivers then, who (unless I'm mistaken) make up a significant proportion of London's travelling public.

Green London Assembly Member, Jenny Jones is to lead a study which will look at existing 20mph zones in London, and whether more zones should be introduced or if there are more effective measures to reduce road casualties, such as borough- or London-wide default 20mph limits on all residential streets. London boroughs and TfL have the power to set 20mph limits on residential streets, and between them

have introduced almost 400 20mph zones in the capital. Do you think she might have made her mind up already about the outcome?

Following on from the note above, the Green Party in Leicester has succeeded in getting the City Council to agree to a roll out of 20mph limits for all residential streets, with the introduction of traffic calming galore. But wait; forcing all drivers to constantly brake and accelerate regardless of the conditions will increase exhaust emissions across the city, will it not? Doesn't sound very green to me!

**M o s t
stupid road user
seen in the past month:**
The woman in the black Corsa on the M5 south, who was sitting just inches from the bumper of the car in front, while eating a sandwich. You want more? All this was at night in foggy conditions, and she was driving along with only her sidelights on. Insane!

On the subject of Green Londoners, they're also furious over the fact that Johnson hasn't appointed any environmental experts to the board of the London Development Agency, a committee which oversees a budget of more than £650m a year. Green party Londoner Jenny Jones fumed: "Despite recognising that climate change is one of the biggest threats facing London, Boris has failed to secure the team he needs to deliver on his promise to cut carbon emissions by 60% by 2025. This can only add to fears that he will seek to cut spending on climate change projects". Oh dear; looks like the wheels are starting to fall off the climate change bandwagon.

Meanwhile, the seven local authorities of the West Midlands County propose using business rates to fund transport improvements as part of an American-style 'Accelerated Development Zone' or ADZ. If it were given the go-ahead, money from business rates would go towards local transport spending instead of directly to the Treasury. The West Midlands County could pocket £500m through a transport levy on



In this issue:

- 3-5 News
- 6 Missed opportunities
- 7 Forward charge
- 8-11 ABD Action
- 11 How to contact your MP
- 11 How you can help the ABD
- 12-14 Letters
- 14 Glossary of abbreviations
- 15 Information & member benefits
- 16 National & regional contacts

The next issue of *On The Road* goes to press on Monday 2 March. Contributions deadline is Monday 16 March.

Diary dates 2009

The following meetings have been organised for 2009; more details will appear nearer the time, but for now please try to keep the dates clear in your diary, so you can catch up with the ABD committee and fellow members:

•25 April	Members' meeting
•11 July	AGM

businesses. The levy has been welcomed by the Green Party but they're already warning that it shouldn't be used "to repeat past mistakes with road building but to develop high quality public transport instead".

The Government wants to ban drivers caught twice driving 20mph or more over the speed limit. Great idea because if it's going to introduce such a measure, a root-and-branch review of speed limits to ensure they're realistic must be part of the deal, right? Er, well, no it would seem that's not the case. So all those limits that have been reduced for political or environmental reasons will stand, and even though they may have dropped by 30mph, if you drive at what was considered a safe speed just a few years ago, you could lose half your licence. Welcome to UK justice in the 21st century.

On a similar note, a pattern has emerged in recent years; whenever relatives are speaking in the wake of a fatal accident, they always demand a reduction in the speed limit because "something must be done". Despite this, it's almost always the case that "in this case a reduced limit wouldn't have made any difference, but it might do for somebody else the next time". Sometimes all a reduced limit is the extent of any action, ensuring accidents will continue to happen – but sometimes things go further. For example, in the wake of a recent fatal accident involving a car and a motorbike in Hampshire the decision was made to improve visibility, upgrade signs, extend hatchings, enhance pedestrian islands, road markings and anti-skid surfacing while also reducing speed limits. If the roads are properly engineered in the first place, why then impede progress unnecessarily?

Chris Medd

Snouts in the trough...

Lord Turner, chair of the Financial Services Authority, was a trustee of the World Wildlife Fund, and a member of the Board of Advisors at Climate Change Capital, an "investment manager and advisor specialising in the opportunities created by the transition to the low carbon economy". Turner's colleague, Dr Samuel Fankhauser, is the managing director of IDEACarbon, which provides financial services in the carbon finance sector. The company belongs to the IDEAGlobal group, whose vice chairman is Sir Nicholas Stern. As the company's website says:

"Working with the key decision makers who are shaping the future of the market enables us to accurately predict market trends and provide tailored strategic advice to clients."

So the people who stand to profit from markets created by climate change legislation are instrumental in creating that legislation. Another

member of the CCC is Lord Bob May, who has been increasingly vocal about climate change politics in recent years. He said in the TLS last year that "there remains an active and well-funded 'denial lobby'. It shares many features with the lobby that for so long denied that smoking is the major cause of lung cancer." But if May is worried about 'well-funded' financial interests influencing the Government, he might well take a hard look at the CCC itself.

The small number of people who determine the UK's response to climate change are not independent, and appear to have professional, financial and political interests in both the escalation of the climate crisis, and legislation designed to prevent it. These interests and the wider establishment's political exhaustion are hidden behind the CCC's scientific authority – a virtue in accordance with climate change ethics.

•From www.theregister.co.uk

The ABD earns a commission from books bought via Amazon, if clicked through from the ABD website. Just visit abd.org.uk and click on the bookshop link for more

news

Next: PAYG fast lanes

According to the *Telegraph*, within months, officials will draw up plans to create a faster lane for those willing to pay for a quicker journey on the country's busiest roads during the rush hour. Drivers would pay up to 42p/mile to avoid the jams under a model being considered by ministers. Cars would be fitted with a transponder which fits to the windscreen and is linked to an account held by the motorist. A payment would be deducted each time the car passed an overhead gantry.

The plans will be included in a review of the road and rail network to be published early in 2009. It will also contain options to open up hard shoulders to all motorists free of charge at peak times in an attempt to keep traffic flowing. Another proposal is to build extra toll lanes on motorways for motorists who want to drive faster. Up to 500 miles of motorway shoulder has been earmarked for the proposals, including large sections of the M1, M6 and M62, along with the M27 around Southampton, the M4 and M5 near Bristol, and sections of the M23, M20, M3 and M4 that feed into the M25.

Money for nothing

£1bn of public transport fare cuts would reduce car travel by under 0.5%, according to the Royal Automobile Club Foundation's latest research paper *Public Transport Effects on Road Traffic: Potential and Limitations*. The paper finds that even with significant increases in investment, the scope for switching from private to public transport remains limited because different types of transport serve discrete markets.

Making public transport cheaper by increasing fare subsidies could reduce car traffic, but billions of pounds would be needed every year to have a measurable impact – and it's doubtful whether the public transport network could cope with a surge in growth. Also a new high speed train line from London to Glasgow would reduce motorway traffic in the corridor by up to 5-7%; but this costly venture, would mostly replace travel by air.

Driver tariff doubled

A driver responsible for a crash on Tyneside in which his friend was killed has had his sentence doubled. Dane Naylor, 33, died when he was thrown from the vehicle as it left the Coast Road near Wallsend in January. Daltrey Pearson, 29, was jailed for five years in October for causing death by dangerous driving and driving with excess alcohol. The Court of Appeal ruled that the sentence was too lenient and increased it to 10 years. Pearson had never taken a driving test and was twice the legal limit when he crashed.

Cashing in on carbon

Fresh from the devastation they have wrought on the global financial system, some of the world's leading investment banks met in London recently to discuss how they can cash in on carbon. But at least delegates and speakers at the *Cashing in on Carbon* conference were open about not trying to reduce emissions or helping the environment, as the event was purely to see how "investment banks can profit from an increasingly diverse range of carbon-related investment opportunities".

Particularly reassuring was the emphasis on "hybrid and complex carbon credit structured products", and how to identify investor demand for them in the US; "derivative/synthetic carbon products"; and "sub-index arbitrage strategies". Also, there was the chance to bone up on the basic options for "productising carbon" and of "access channels for producers ... speculators, proprietary traders and investors". Good to see that execs from Lord (Nicholas) Stern's company, IDEACarbon, were there, too. But it was all about saving the planet, honestly.

Youngsters in the black

A black box pilot scheme which saw young drivers being tracked by their parents has been made permanent. 40 young motorists in Staffordshire tried out the scheme, where matchbox-sized devices with electronic sensors inside were fitted to their dashboards. The journey results were then sent back to a website so parents could check how careful their children had been. Admiral Insurance is now offering 25% discounts to young drivers who sign up to the project.

The device works by its sensors picking up how fast the car is accelerating, braking and measuring the G-force as it goes around corners. Red, amber and green flags are flashed up to the driver – with the more red flags appearing, the more drivers should take care. It was introduced in Staffordshire where figures showed drivers aged under 25 were involved in 40% of accidents, but made up just 10% of motorists.

Electric cars: the flaw

Gordon Brown has been busy advocating much greater use of electric cars recently. However, the lithium which is used in many rechargeable packs, is in danger of running out before long; experts say supplies of the metal could run low as soon as 2015. Those experts have been studying the huge salt flats in China and South America, where lithium is sourced, to see whether there is enough to cope with the anticipated surge in demand. With the growth rate for consumer electronics and battery-powered cars so high, they reckon that by 2015 there would only be enough left to run a total of 1.5m cars.

in brief...

•Overcrowding on trains has been abolished after Government officials changed the definition of the word. The DfT has rewritten the guidelines on the acceptable number of people standing in a carriage. Formerly, it was considered acceptable to have 10 people standing for every 100 seats but under new guidelines it's OK to have 30 standing passengers per 100 seats. Train companies will be able to pack in more passengers without their services being labelled 'overcrowded'.

•Paul Pearson has set up a new website at www.buslanes.co.uk, to help people fined for using bus lanes which aren't clearly marked. Pearson claims one illegal Knightsbridge bus lane netted £200,000 from 2000 fines, even though TfL knew the lane wasn't valid.

•Alistair Darling is still keen on backdating VED increases to 2001. However, Shadow Transport Minister Justine Greening has obtained documents from the treasury showing that vehicle emissions reduction are expected to be just 0.1%.

•The number of cyclists injured in England has increased by 23.8% in the past five years; 13,368 cyclists were admitted to hospital in 2006/7, up from 10,795 in 2002/3. In 2006/7, 1873 cyclists were injured after colliding with cars or vans and 129 were in accidents involving lorries and buses. 9191 were injured in incidents involving no other vehicles and 518 hit stationary objects. A further 208 cyclists collided with other riders and 89 crashed into people or animals.

•Dedicated cycling routes into central London and opening up bus lanes to motorbikes are among Boris Johnson's plans to improve transport in London. In a paper, *Way To Go*, the mayor stressed the importance of moving ahead with Crossrail and Tube improvements including air-conditioned trains.

•Commuters on London's trains face severe overcrowding despite inflation-busting fare rises. The National Audit Office claims passengers will endure cattle-truck conditions until 2014, when 1300 extra carriages and longer platforms are introduced. Some commuter fares could jump by 10% in 2009 year, with other tickets by up to 20%.

•A crackdown in Cambridgeshire on cyclists riding without lights has resulted in a search for a policewoman who was spotted riding with no lights while also talking into her radio. 170 cyclists were stopped and penalised for riding without lights within five days of the campaign being launched.

•Nearly 400 cyclists have been fined for flouting the law in the last three months as part of a crackdown on traffic offences in London. Most of the £30 fines have been given to cyclists going through red lights, with 296 handed out for this offence. Another 27 cyclists have been fined for riding on pavements, 48 for flouting other traffic signs and a handful have been fined for failing to stop for a police officer or riding without lights at night. The crackdown has also targeted motorcyclists and car drivers.

in brief...

•Four Croydon buses have been fumigated after becoming infested with cockroaches. Arriva is now conducting "additional checks" for the insects, after some were found on vehicles operating out of its Thornton Heath garage.

•SUV owners, led by Robin Cole, have set up a charter at www.4x4charter.com, to encourage environmental awareness and counteract criticism and attacks received online, in the media and in parliament. Cole comments: "A lot of ill-conceived ideas and misinformation exists about 4x4s. It's our intention to re-educate the public and set the record straight."

•The number of untaxed cars being clamped and seized in Wales has risen sharply over the past year. A total of 8240 cars were clamped for not displaying road tax in 2007/8, compared with 4990 the previous year. Of those, 2469 were crushed, up from 1840 in 2006/7, figures from the DVLA show. Officials said most vehicles crushed were of poor quality and low value, and in many cases were not roadworthy.

•Would-be cab drivers in Walsall could soon have to hold a 15-minute conversation with an examiner to prove their ability to keep passengers entertained on a journey. Similar to a school foreign language oral, the test will involve drivers discussing topics such as their favourite places in the West Midlands. But subjects will be mixed up to avoid drivers learning them parrot fashion.

•A teenager has successfully defended himself against a speeding ticket by convincing the court that his GPS was more accurate than a police radar gun. Shaun Malone, 18, was issued with a ticket after a police radar gun tracked him at 62mph in a 45mph zone. However, he appealed against the ticket because his GPS, which was installed by his parents to monitor his driving, apparently showed that he was driving within the speed limit.

•Westminster City Council aims to cut the number of tickets issued by 10% by warning drivers who park illegally. Wardens will also give directions to tourists and crime prevention advice in a bid to become more approachable. The council issued around 800,000 parking tickets in 2007, generating £41m.

•Stockport Council has accused Stagecoach of censoring its attempts to encourage people to vote against Greater Manchester's congestion charge in the local referendum. Council leader Dave Goddard said the company was censoring a legitimate information campaign. Stagecoach said the adverts conflicted with its support for the scheme.

•Portsmouth looks set to pull out of Hampshire's speed camera partnership, but it won't mean the end of the fixed camera. Earlier this month council leader Gerald Vernon-Jackson hinted at plans to scrap speed cameras. Instead, he wanted to use the cash to get police out on the city streets with mobile speed guns. But after initial talks with fellow council leaders he says the city could do both.

Drivers to face a no-win situation

Driver who challenge speeding fines should be made to pay their legal bills even if they win their case, ministers have claimed. The proposal would see successful defendants lose their century-old right to claim back their costs. A change in the law would affect many of the 1.7m drivers a year who take their cases to court.

It costs around £1500 to fight charges of speeding, illegal parking and other motoring offences. ABD spokesman Nigel Humphries commented: "This is against the common law and against the common man. If you prove your innocence you shouldn't have to pay for it."

The proposal comes in a consultation paper published by Jack Straw's Ministry of Justice. It says those before magistrates on minor charges

should defend themselves. The consultation paper is among a series aimed at cutting court costs and trimming the £2bn annual legal aid budget.

Currently a driver who wishes to challenge a minor motoring charge in a magistrates court is denied legal aid unless they're on a very modest income. But they can hire a lawyer and claim back the cost if cleared. Ministers want to withdraw this right, arguing that defendants do not need lawyers and can turn to court clerks for advice.

Under the proposals, Crown Court defendants will still be entitled defence lawyers on legal aid. But if they hire their own, more expensive, lawyers, ministers say they should not be able to claim the full cost back if they win.

Croydon scraps humps

Speed bumps have been permanently removed from two locations in Croydon following consultation with local residents. Croydon Council dug up the speed cushions as part of routine highway maintenance in the area. When it asked residents if they wanted them back the council found that in both places a majority were happy to carry on without them.

Now the council says it will carry on giving residents elsewhere in the borough the opportunity to say whether or not physical speed calming devices should be removed when resurfacing next takes place. Although the raised surfaces were originally introduced many years ago in line with residents' views at the time, public support for their retention has waned. Many residents said that not only were the cushions and humps ineffective at slowing traffic but they also caused noise and vibration.

Deaths record low

Road deaths have fallen to their lowest level since records began in 1928, according to DfT figures. Last year a total of 2946 people died – a 7% reduction on the previous year when 3172 died. The statistics show loss of control of a vehicle was a factor in a third of all fatal road accidents in 2007. The figures also showed there were 247,780 road casualties; 4% fewer than in 2006.

According to the statistics, factors in crashes involving younger drivers, particularly males, were more likely to relate to speed and behaviour. And contributory factors in cases involving older drivers were more likely to be related to vision and judgment.

The government's data also showed there were 460 deaths when someone was driving while over the legal alcohol limit in 2007 – an 18% drop on the 560 figure in 2006.

Most speeding convictions illegal?

A serious challenge to the legality of most speeding convictions since the early 1990s is gaining momentum. The issue concerns the process by which speed measuring devices that have come into use since July 1992 have been authorised. Since that date, the Secretary of State has no longer been empowered to approve the devices without laying a Statutory Instrument (SI) before both Houses of Parliament in each individual case. This has not been done, meaning that the evidence from these devices is not admissible in law.

The ABD's traffic management adviser, Malcolm Heymer, explains, "This is not a trivial issue or an attempt to exploit a 'loophole'. The purpose of the requirement to lay a SI before Parliament is so that speed measuring devices are subject to proper scrutiny. Those authorised since 1992 include laser speed meters, some types of which have repeatedly

caused concern that they can give false high readings. Had the proper procedure been followed, these devices might not have been authorised and drivers wrongly convicted."

The procedural error was discovered by Scottish community lawyer Robbie the Pict. The legal point has been argued in cases in Scotland and barrister Michael Shrimpton convinced Nuneaton magistrates in June to throw out a speeding case because the laser speed meter used to provide evidence had not been properly approved. Shrimpton is also acting in a case put before Kingston magistrates and there are more cases in hand in England, Scotland and Wales.

The legal point will ultimately be decided at Appeal. In the meantime, drivers who face prosecution for speeding may wish to request that their case is put on hold pending the outcome, or ask their solicitors to join forces with those involved in the existing cases. This would help force the pace and share the costs.



Fuel to grow on trees

A tree-living fungus that produces a substance similar to diesel fuel has been discovered in South America. Experts believe *Gliocladium roseum* could potentially be a completely new source of green energy. The fungus, which lives inside the *Ulmo* tree in the Patagonian rainforest, naturally produces hydrocarbon fuel similar to the diesel used to power cars and lorries.

Scientists were amazed to find that it was able to convert plant cellulose directly into the biofuel, dubbed "myco-diesel". Crops normally have to be converted to sugar and fermented before they can be turned into useful fuel. Professor Gary Strobel, from Montana State University in the US, said: "G. roseum can make myco-diesel directly from cellulose, the main compound found in plants and paper. This means if the fungus was used to make fuel, a step in the production process could be skipped."

Cellulose provides the fibrous supporting structure of plants. During biofuel production, cellulose from plant waste is first treated with enzymes that turn it into sugar. Microbes then ferment the sugar into inflammable ethanol. Nearly 430m tonnes of plant waste is produced from farmland each year around the world.

20mph plans scrapped

Plans for a blanket 20mph speed limit covering most of London have been scrapped. Ken Livingstone had encouraged councils to make a wholesale switch from 30mph to 20mph, but Boris Johnson says boroughs will only be allowed to create small local schemes, dashing hopes of a pan-London zone. The change of policy emerged as Lewisham launched a bid to become the first borough to set up an all-encompassing 20mph zone. It asked TfL to fund the venture, but Johnson rejected the bid on money-saving grounds.



He said he would support 20mph zones in residential areas where local people wanted them. But because of finite budgets, priority would only go to areas with a high number of accidents – especially those involving cyclists and pedestrians. The Green Party attacked his decision, claiming it would cost "hundreds" of lives.

Average scameras to go nationwide?

A new generation of speed cameras that can track drivers for up to 30 miles and cannot be dodged are being tested by police. The devices stop motorists evading a ticket by braking suddenly before a camera and then speeding up immediately afterwards. The new cameras could cover whole areas of cities or suburban housing estates, guarding any number of entry and exit points. They calculate a car's average speed – even if it makes a series of left and right turns down a variety of roads.

The cameras are already in use, but mainly on the motorways. They're now likely to appear on rural and urban roads, spelling the end for the 6000 yellow Gatso-style cameras currently in use. The cameras photograph a

number-plate as a vehicle enters the speed restriction zone, and then again when it leaves. The system then calculates the car's average speed between the two points. If it's higher than the speed limit, the driver is automatically sent a fixed penalty fine and receives three points on their licence.

Approval for the new generation of cameras is imminent. It will be up to local authorities to decide whether to buy the system.

•Electronic signs that sense when a car is speeding, before switching traffic lights further down the road to red, forcing it to stop, are to be introduced in Britain. The system, already in use as a traffic calming measure in Spain, will be installed on Camden High Street in North London.

Swindon bails out of scamera scheme

Councillors in Swindon have voted to stop funding the town's speed cameras. The town's borough council is to be the first in England to withdraw funding for fixed cameras. The revenue from fines generated by the cameras goes to the government, but the Conservative-led borough council pays £320,000 a year to maintain them. Councillors say new measures are needed as road deaths and injuries have begun to rise, but police claim the cameras have helped cut accidents. The nine-member council cabinet voted unanimously in favour of withdrawing from the Wiltshire and Swindon Safety Camera Partnership.

Councillors decided the £320,000 it puts into the partnership would be better spent on other safety measures like warning signs and street lighting. They said the number of people killed or seriously injured on Swindon's roads had begun to rise in the last two years and new strategies were needed. Peter Greenhalgh, the Tory councillor who proposed the idea, claims the current road safety policy isn't working. "The DfT annual results show that nationally only 6% of accidents are caused by people breaking speed limits yet almost 100% of the government's road safety money is being invested in speed cameras," he said.

in brief...

•Scameras in Birmingham could be replaced by electronic warning signs; city transport bosses are to roll out of 31 of them in a bid to improve road safety. The move marks a step change in policy.

•Plans have been unveiled to look into the possibility of shelving mobile cameras in Northants. Council leaders say the cameras could be scrapped due to a perceived lack of public confidence in them and concerns about their effectiveness in improving road safety. They say they will investigate alternative measures to continue to reduce accidents.

•Motorcycles will be allowed to use the majority of the capital's bus lanes, Boris Johnson has said. The scheme is one of the mayor's manifesto pledges. From 5 January, motorcyclists can use the lanes for an 18-month trial period.

•Most roads in Cromarty are now covered by a 20mph speed limit. The Highland Council claims this is now the first village in Scotland with a fixed 20mph limit.

•Thousands of motorists are at risk of being fined up to £1000 because they're driving without a valid licence. They risk prosecution after failing to spot that their photocard licence expires after 10 years and has to be renewed – even though drivers are licensed until the age of 70. The fiasco has come to light a decade after the first batch of photo licences was issued in July 1998.

•There's a new independent transport website live at <http://transportcrucible.com>, with news on transport issues and links to relevant groups and bodies.

•An ambulance was clamped outside London's Royal Free Hospital while the driver helped a seriously ill patient inside. The driver had left the ambulance for just one minute; when she returned, the clamp was being applied. The warden said he'd remove the clamp after payment of a fine of over £200. The private clamping firm involved defended the decision.

•The DVLA is still selling names and addresses of motorists to wheel-clamping firms without carrying out checks on their background and credentials, despite a pledge by ministers to introduce tougher controls. Three years ago, the Government said more would be done to prevent data on car owners falling into the hands of rogue parking firms.

•Addenbrooke's Hospital's car park in Cambridge has brought in £1m in fees from patients, staff, and visitors in six months after increasing charges. Charges increased recently by 30p to £1.80 for an hour's parking and £15 for eight hours – up from £12.50 in 2007.

•Embassies in central London owe more than £1.5m in unpaid parking fines, including one Sudanese diplomat who owes £37,000 for 349 separate tickets and two Afghan diplomats who owe almost £30,000 for 271 separate parking infractions. Among the worst offenders are diplomats from Sudan, Kazakhstan, Afghanistan, Egypt and Saudi Arabia.

missed opportunities

A government committee blows the chance to make a real difference while TfL feeds untrue propaganda to secure victory – and fails. It must be UK transport then...

Transcom fails to get the message

As reported in *OTR88*, in May Malcolm Heymer gave evidence on behalf of the ABD to the House of Commons Transport Select Committee inquiry into road safety. The committee finally published its report at the end of October. While the report makes some welcome recommendations, overall it is a missed opportunity to acknowledge and reverse the failed policies of the last 15 years. The report's main recommendations include:

- Greater use of 20mph speed limits.
- More action to tackle drink/drug driving, with a possible reduction in the blood-alcohol limit.
- Consideration of a graduated licensing scheme and restrictions on young drivers, to curb their high rate of accident involvement.
- Establishment of a road safety survey and road safety commission, to establish the real numbers of road accidents and monitor progress towards achieving casualty reduction targets.
- Establishment of a national target for reductions in road deaths, separate from targets for serious and slight injuries.
- Action to tackle the level of child road deaths associated with deprivation.

The committee has at last recognised that the Government's claims about meeting its 2010

casualty reduction targets are based on unreliable official figures for serious injuries. Police accident records show year-on-year reductions, while those from hospital records show no significant change for 10 years or more. It is for this reason that the committee recommended a road safety survey be set up, to find out the true position with serious and slight injuries, and the creation of an independent commission to monitor progress towards meeting road safety targets.

Having established that the claimed reductions in casualties are bogus, it's amazing that the committee made little effort to explain the abysmal progress in road safety over the last 15 years compared with earlier trends. There's no mention of speed cameras, despite these being the main focus of recent road safety policy. Members of the committee seem unable to grasp the importance of setting speed limits at levels that command respect, as pointed out by the ABD and some other witnesses. Instead, they have listened to those organisations that want to reduce speed limits even further.

Indeed, the report misrepresents the views of the ABD and others who pointed out current policies are failing. In a direct reference to the ABD's evidence, the report says:

Relatives of those killed in traffic collisions call for radical measures whilst restrictions on the rights of individuals to take risks are often strongly resisted by some motorists.

This appears to be a wilful refusal to accept that current policies could possibly be wrong, or that those who criticise those policies could be motivated by anything other than self-interest. The ABD doesn't condone risk taking but stands up for safe and responsible use of the roads.

The political nature of road safety policy is confirmed in the first paragraph of the report's conclusions and recommendations, which commends the Government:

...for recognising that road safety needs to be integrated with other important policy objectives such as promoting good health, reducing carbon dioxide emissions, tackling deprivation and improving quality of life.

These political and social engineering objectives have nothing to do with road safety, but drivers are being obstructed, penalised and bullied to achieve them, and this has been done falsely in the name of road accident victims. In the meantime, the real causes of accidents are ignored because they don't suit the policy agenda.

publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm/cmtran.htm

Local government in misinformation shock

TfL made a string of false claims and incorrect figures to boost its chances of keeping the western extension of the congestion charge. Much of the information given to those taking part in the recent consultation was misleading or wrong. TfL also ignored or misrepresented damning evidence from its own research about the effects of the extension on business, emissions, local bus services, and congestion, overlooking a finding by its own researchers that "the rapidity of the deterioration in traffic conditions inside the western extension has been striking".

In its main leaflet for the consultation it claimed that the impact of the charge on the area's businesses has been "mixed" or "broadly neutral.", even though its own research found "deteriorating business performance" inside the extension zone, compared with improving performance in a control group of businesses just outside it.

The same research found a "more pronounced" trend of falling retail sales in the extension zone than outside while the number of people who shopped in the western zone during the week had fallen by 2% but that there was a rise of 1% at the weekend, when the charge doesn't apply.

TfL's leaflet also claimed that the charge has "helped to reduce vehicle emissions"; its research found that "it has not been possible to identify a



clear congestion charging effect on measured air quality" and that "no clear scheme impact on air quality from either the original central or western extension zones can be discerned". TfL claims that the charge has "encouraged people travelling in the area to use public transport". In fact, its research shows that "frequency of residents' travel by car was largely unchanged".

TfL also claimed that the net revenue loss to transport in London from scrapping the extension would be £70m; its own documents show that extending the charge to the west gained only £14m of extra net revenue in its first year. Even Ken Livingstone, in an Assembly answer in February, claimed that the net revenue loss from scrapping the extension would be "£45-55m" - and that was on a basis including revenues from the so-called "gas-guzzler" charge of £25, with no residents' discount. Many residents in the

western extension zone own such vehicles. Since this scheme has now been scrapped, the expected revenue loss would now be much less.

TfL also claims that congestion in the extension zone is broadly the same as it was before the charge, yet its own research shows that congestion is significantly worse in each month than in the corresponding month before the charge was introduced. Congestion in January and February 2007, for example, the last months before the introduction of the charge, was 3.1 minutes per kilometre. Congestion in January and February 2008 was 3.35 minutes per kilometre.

TfL says the other single most important factor in the rising congestion is the adjustment of a traffic signal timing at Grosvenor Place in Victoria. However, this traffic signal is not even within the zone, but is on the "free" road running through it.

TfL's leaflet also claims that there has been a reduction in traffic, with 30,000 fewer cars entering the extension each day, but research shows that about a third of those cars now divert round the edges of the zone. There are a further extra 3000 daily car movements in the original central zone as residents in the western extension use their discount privileges to drive into the West End. The total number of car journeys cut by the western extension is thus only 17,000; little more than half that claimed.

forward charge

In the wake of the Manchester defeat there are signs that some cities are going cool on the idea of introducing charging schemes; but it's not over yet...

After massive defeats in Edinburgh and Manchester, you'd hope that any ambitions to introduce road pricing in the UK have been killed off for now. Not so; 15 UK councils are implicated with an EU-funded organisation which advocates underhand and undemocratic means to railroad through road pricing schemes in the face of massive public opposition. CURACAO (Coordination of urban road-user charging organizational issues) states that its aim is "to create the conditions for reaching the tipping point for the widespread adoption of road pricing in European Urban Cities". CURACAO names Bristol City Council as one of its key partners, with Notts, Derbys, Leics, and their Three Cities, Tyne and Wear, Durham, Cambs, Cardiff, Plymouth, Shropshire, Belfast and TfL as all involved. CURACAO advises councils to use various tricks to push through road pricing schemes, including:

- Promising low charges then rapidly increasing them once the scheme is in place.
- False 'trial periods' to make people think the scheme will be re-evaluated when there is no such intention.
- Avoiding referenda at all costs.
- Using a psychological trick called dissonance theory, to make people believe that road pricing is inevitable and that "resistance is futile".

CURACAO labels opposition to road pricing as 'irrational' and warns of civil disobedience over the loss of 'personal mobility'.

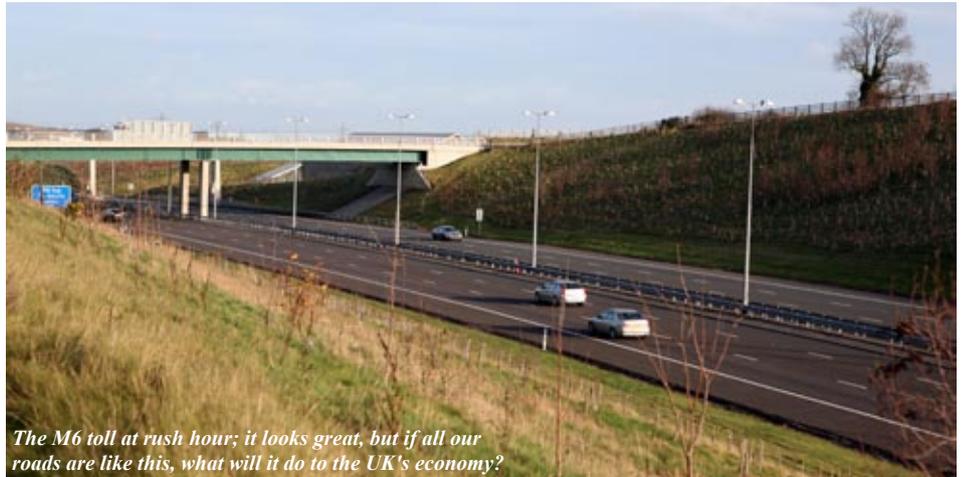
Despite this, common sense is beginning to break out in London. The first signs were an announcement that the western extension of the congestion charging zone is to be scrapped, following a public consultation in which 67% of respondents, including 86% of businesses, said they wanted the extended levy zone lifted. The charge was extended to most of Westminster and Kensington and Chelsea in west London last February and the earliest it can be removed is by spring 2010.

Johnson commented: "Londoners have spoken loud and clear, and the majority of people have said that they would like the scheme scrapped. One thing everybody should be assured of is my determination to make it easier for Londoners to get around our great city."

The Labour party was quick to claim that the decision was "against the interest of Londoners" while the Green Party's Jenny Jones said Johnson's decision was "bad news" for "everyone who breathes London's air" and could lead to higher fares to make up for lost revenue.

Meanwhile, paying to get into the New Forest is the stark reality that faces residents and tourists if a far-reaching and controversial blueprint for the future of the area gets the go-ahead. There are no limits on how much drivers will be forced to pay, no restrictions on how often they will have to dip in to their pockets, and it could be rolled out in just a year's time.

If approved it would be the first time that a



The M6 toll at rush hour; it looks great, but if all our roads are like this, what will it do to the UK's economy?

national park anywhere in the country would charge people to enter.

Reading is also looking at introducing some form of charging for people who work in the borough but live outside. Finding a form of road charging that excludes Reading residents from any cost is an ongoing priority for the borough. A recent commissioners' report said: "We believe it should be possible by the use of resident exemptions or concessions, non-peak retail concessions and a focus on the times and links which cause maximum difficulty in the peak, to develop a scheme which encourages non-car journeys to work and encourages traffic with no business in Reading to use alternatives."

The response – which has yet to be approved by councillors – was that "Reading is also clear that consideration of any charge should only be progressed if it ensures that it will exclude Reading residents from any charge."

In the past lead councillors have balked at any suggestion to charge people who live outside the borough but work in Reading and have spoken only of through traffic "with no business in Reading" as likely candidates for charging.

However lead councillor for planning and transport Tony Page is on record as saying: "This council's administration is only willing to contemplate road pricing or tolling on the basis that there will not be any charge for Reading residents, including greater Reading residents, going about their daily business. Our objective is to deter through traffic, including the substantial numbers of lorries using Reading as a shortcut."

The commissioner has also recommended the redevelopment of Reading station, in co-operation with Network Rail, in a way that discourages car access. Worryingly, council officers have so far agreed to the proposals which would appear to be the result of anything but a clear focus on an integrated transport strategy.

However, all these local schemes could pale into relative insignificance if the government forges ahead with plans for national road pricing – something which it is still investigating at massive expense. Not content with simply forcing drivers to fork out once again to use

roads for which they have already paid heavily, there are plans to link any charges with CO2 emissions. As a result, the thirstiest cars face paying tolls up to double those for the most efficient vehicles.

Drivers already face the prospect of pay-as-you-drive charges of up to £1.50 a mile, but the stealth tax for the thirstiest cars could see their owners paying up to this figure. Transport minister Paul Clark recently told a road pricing conference about plans for tolls on specific lanes of existing motorways or hard shoulders. On top of the basic pence-per-mile charge floated for this scheme, he refused to rule out an additional toll for cars that emit the most CO2.

Clark told delegates that ministers are looking at a range of road-pricing options, including tolls for specific single motorway lanes, with initial trials into road-pricing to start early in 2009. When asked specifically if they would include a charge relating to CO2 emissions, Clark said: "Options are open to us. There's a whole range of things going on across the globe aimed at meeting congestion and emissions policy."

Clark repeatedly declined to rule out introducing a CO2 element to road tolls. He stated simply that the Government was looking at schemes around the world and "undertaking a number of studies."

Meanwhile, the Transport Department's civil service head of road pricing said a "green" surcharge on road tolls was "not frontline but an option". Derek Turner of the Highways Agency, which is leading the single-lane motorway road-tolls initiative, conceded there is the "opportunity" to introduce a CO2 element to tolls, in blueprints sent to councils bidding for funding.

Telecommunications firm TSystems is already set to start testing a satellite pay-as-you-drive tracking system imminently, using volunteers in East Anglia. It said it would be simple to add an extra charge for CO2 emissions on each car tracked by satellite or roadside beacon. A spokesman said: "It's a straightforward case of adding in another item for charging. In Germany the dirtiest lorries pay 50% more than the cleanest. But it could be double. The Government decides."

The ABD feeds into the Transport Committee's study into how much drivers pay, while a newsletter is launched for members of ABD Kent.

Drivers: do we pay enough? Err...

Malcolm Heymer has been busy (as usual), this time drafting the ABD's evidence to the Transport Committee's inquiry into taxes and charges on road users. With a limit of just 3000 words it wasn't possible to go into great detail on any one aspect, but hopefully it will prove to be of some benefit to the UK's drivers. Our views were sought on:

- What taxes and charges are currently paid to government by road users, how much revenue do they raise and how does this compare with national and local government expenditure on the roads network and ancillary services?
- What is the impact of the current charging regime on individuals, businesses and the economy?
- Do the taxes and charges paid by motorists capture the external costs of congestion, local air and noise pollution, accidents, and CO2 emissions? Would it be desirable for them to do so and, if so, how could this be achieved?
- Should the primary purpose of taxes and charges on motorists be to raise revenue to cover the costs of the road network, to reduce traffic and congestion, to minimise the negative social and environmental impact of transport, or some combination of these?
- Does the current system have different impacts



on different categories of road user? If so, is this fair?

- What alternative methods of charging for road use are available, such as road pricing in town and city centres and on the national road network, lorry road-user charging schemes, switching charges between fixed charges (such as Vehicle Excise Duty) and variable charges (such as fuel duty)?
 - Should foreign-registered vehicles pay for access to the UK's roads and if so, how? How closely enforced are the rules governing re-registration of foreign-registered vehicles which are brought permanently to the UK and the consequent liability for VED?
- Submissions had to be in by 29 September.

RoSPA gets it wrong on scameras

The ABD's Nigel Humphries recently appeared against RoSPA's Kevin Clinton on BBC London to talk about speed cameras. Considering both groups want better road safety, you'd think both spokespeople would be in agreement on everything, but sadly it wasn't to be. If established, vocal safety groups can get things so wrong, is there any hope of making our roads safer?

Clinton asked with incredulity how speed cameras could possibly cause accidents, even though the safety arguments against scameras have been around a long time and are well documented. Worryingly, it smacks of someone trying to suppress arguments to which they have no answer by denying them publicity, much as Brake and others are doing with their policy of refusing open debate on road safety matters.

Also, the arguments made by Clinton in favour of cameras were, like all camera apologist arguments, statements that are true in some extreme circumstances but which actually bear no relation to the real world of speed limits and camera deployments and so are deeply misleading. Clinton claimed that people who break the speed

limit are more likely to have accidents. Of course this depends on which speed limits and by how much they're broken; for example, someone travelling at 90mph in a residential road is likely to crash. However, were the motorway limit to be reduced to 50mph to reduce emissions, this would not suddenly make people driving at 70mph more likely to have a collision just because they were now breaking a limit.

Research shows that the safest drivers on the road are those travelling at the 85th percentile speed, so the new DfT policy of setting limits at the 50th percentile speed means drivers breaking a limit are less likely to crash than those travelling at the limit. This is basic stuff that Clinton should be familiar with, and which should be obvious to anyone who drives a car in a thoughtful manner. However, Clinton's biggest faux pas was to state that "we have to get away from the idea of drivers judging for themselves what is a safe speed". On this basis we must assume that shortly, RoSPA will cut all its advanced driver courses as drivers should no longer be encouraged (or even allowed) to think for themselves.

ATM: the future

Once again Robert Bolt has been busying himself attending forums on behalf of the ABD. One of the latest was a gathering in Coventry where the Highways Agency gave a presentation on Active Traffic Management Control, currently on the M42 but planned for expansion to other motorways. The key points were:

- ATMC is the future according to the HA, for reducing congestion on motorways. It's 20-25% of the cost of widening and can be done much quicker.
 - The aim is to cut congestion and improve reliability of journey times by increased use of the hard shoulder.
 - When the hard shoulder is in use the current maximum speed limit for all lanes is 50, but there are plans to increase it to 60.
 - When the hard shoulder is not in use normal rules apply although variable speed limits can be used on the normal running lanes.
 - Whole area is covered by CCTV and gantries are spaced so that one is always visible. The control centre is manned 24/7.
 - Vehicles don't break down as much as they used to, so the hard shoulder is not needed so much for breakdowns.
 - Under ATMC, emergency vehicles don't need a hard shoulder. Any lane can be reserved for emergency vehicles to reach an incident by means of overhead gantry signs closing the lane to all other traffic.
 - Emergency refuges are placed every 500 metres or so, breakdowns should try to reach one of these refuges. Refuges are usually next to overhead gantries and have a loop to tell control when a vehicle enters them, also a phone and CCTV coverage.
 - These refuges are deep enough away from the hard shoulder to allow work to be carried out on the offside of a vehicle without the need to close the adjacent running lane – as is required by elf and safety for hard shoulder offside work.
 - Causes of congestion are 10% road works, 25% accidents, 65% volume.
- Next applications are to the rest of the Birmingham area, then across the country. The major problem with certain motorways is where they have already been widened and the hard shoulder is not continuous, for example at bridges where the decision was taken not to widen the bridge but to eliminate the hard shoulder there. To make best use of ATMC the bridges would need to be widened to give a continuous hard shoulder.

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

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

Trouble oop North

John Ryle has been busy getting involved in a local campaign against proposals to replace disc parking with charges in some of the market towns in Hambleton. With around 20,000 signatures on a petition and over 200 demonstrators outside Northallerton town hall when the final decision was taken by Hambleton DC, they ignored the protests and voted to introduce charges – then sneaked off through a side door.

However, working in the background, it was found that the land in Stokesley that HDC wanted to impose charges on did not belong to them, but to the Manorial Lands Commission under the trusteeship of the parish council. The parish council was won round (as were neighbouring parish councils who supported them) and refused to allow the district council to proceed.

In a classic case of throwing toys out of the pram Hambleton DC then threatened to withdraw services from the town. That is still up in the air. I don't think Stokesley would count as a battle in what Malcolm Heymer describes as the War On The Motorist (more just a border skirmish perhaps). However, while I fear we may have lost Northallerton (we're still researching who legally owns that land), if there is a lesson here it is that when councils attempt to attack drivers with parking charges it is always worth asking your local history society to research who owns the land. You may find some interesting answers if talking of our older market towns or villages.

MPs: know your enemy

Paul Biggs has been doing some digging on which MPs support the idea of personal carbon credits; they're listed below. You can find more at www.parliament.uk/parliamentary_committees/environmental_audit_committee/committee_members.cfm

As Paul comments, no doubt all those MPs with several homes and expenses, paid for by taxpayers, will be exempt from all this 'personal carbon trading'...

- Tim Yeo
- Martin Caton
- David Chaytor
- Nick Hurd
- Ian Liddell-Grainger
- Linda Riordan
- Jo Swinson
- Joan Walley
- Gregory Barker
- Colin Challen
- Martin Horwood
- Mark Lazarowicz
- Shahid Malik
- Graham Stuart
- Desmond Turner
- Phil Woolas

ABD Kent

One of the most active and committed ABD members is Kent-based Brian MacDowall, who works in partnership with Ian Taylor and Terry Hudson to keep the media informed of what's going on in their patch while also running the ABD Events team. As industrious as ever, Brian has taken it upon himself to launch an ABD Kent newsletter, to keep local members informed about what's going on as well as entice potential members to sign up.

Says Brian: "The ABD is a collection of individuals scattered across the UK, and keeping members informed and involved is done mainly through OTR. Anyone who joins may never hear from a regional or local organiser, which makes it a lot harder to encourage such people to renew their membership, let alone get involved. As a result, in Kent we started a small newsletter which has grown to its present size and format; the latest edition runs to 13 pages".

Crucially, the newsletter shows that members are campaigning to improve things in their area; being focused on local issues is essential in this regard. While feedback comes only occasionally, the newsletter has helped to maintain and improve contact between local ABD members. Roger Lawson has had similar results with his excellent newsletter for London members and while compiling such a publication takes precious time, it's an invaluable way of recruiting and retaining members – so if you're thinking about doing something similar, just do it!

Free GW DVD

Roger Helmer has just published a DVD entitled *Straight talking on climate change*. He argues that climate alarmism is misplaced, pointing out that the world has cooled in the last ten years (and cooled sharply in 2007); that increases in atmospheric CO2 from current levels will have a trivial impact on climate; and that the policies proposed to mitigate climate change and cut emissions will certainly cause vast economic damage, but will have little impact at all on climate. The DVD is available free of charge from his UK office at:

*Boswell House
9 Prospect Court
Courteenhall Road,
Blisworth
Northamptonshire NN7 3DG*

Or e-mail pressoffice@eastmidsmeps.co.uk

in brief...

•**Malcolm Heymer** recently received an email from the transport reporter of *The National*, an English language paper in the United Arab Emirates. The government there is fitting speed limiters to taxis to restrict them to 120kmh, and the reporter wanted to know our views on speed limiters. Malcolm explained the reasons for our opposition and sent him plenty of online ammunition to use. The ABD continues to go global!

•**Ian Taylor** has been enjoying two books about climate change which are easy reads for the layman, published in America and available through Amazon (go via www.abd.org.uk). The books are *The layman's guide to understanding the global warming hoax* by Leo Johnson (Red Anvil Press) and *A climate crisis a la gore (the real profit pushing the perception of man made global warming)* by Paul F Spine (Stand in the Gap Publications).

•**Brian Mooney** recently got an article on *The war against the motorist* into *Freedom Today*, which you can read at www.fta.net/the_freedom_association/files/30819.pdf – *Freedom Today* goes out to about 5000 people, including MPs, MEPs, media researchers and libraries.

•**John Simpson** wrote in with an anti-speeding group on Facebook, at www.facebook.com/group.php?gid=5321192715&ref=nf – take a look if you can stomach self-righteous sanctimony!

•If you want to have your say on parking provisions and restrictions in Birmingham, look at www.birmingham.gov.uk/parkingpolicy.bcc where you'll find an online questionnaire. Deadline for responses is 31 December 2008.

•**Keith Peat** recently wrote to Robert Gifford, who runs PACTS. The latter stated that: "We cannot ignore the four annual evaluations of the effectiveness of speed cameras. These conclude that, even allowing for regression to the mean where it is possible to identify this issue, deaths, serious injuries and – most importantly – speeds have fallen." Now there's an interesting way or ranking those three things...

•Currently, you have the right to service and repair your vehicle if you want, but in 2010 that right could be removed. If you don't want to see the competitive service and repair environment disappear, make sure you register your support by signing the online petition at www.r2rc.co.uk

•If you're looking for an easy-to-read set of arguments against climate alarmism, take a look at <http://tinyurl.com/5ftf4p>

•**Paul Biggs** has been getting busy online, setting up environmental pages galore. Check out:

- <http://climateresearchnews.com>
- <http://abdmercia.blogspot.com/>
- <http://climaterealist.blogspot.com/>

Want to get more involved? There are plenty of ways you can help the ABD to move forward. Just check out page 11 to find out how

Climate change is just the latest in a range of scare stories from the Greens, while one county forges ahead with a raft of speed limit reductions despite massive opposition – from the police.

Environmentalism: we've seen it all before

There's nothing new under the Sun; environmentalist scare stories have proliferated in the past, as they do now. Not convinced? Then let's look at some environmentalist predictions they'd prefer we forget:

- In 1969, environmentalist Nigel Calder warned: "The threat of a new ice age must now stand alongside nuclear war as a likely source of wholesale death and misery for mankind."

- Also in 1969, CC Wallen of the World Meteorological Organisation said, "The cooling since 1940 has been large enough and consistent enough that it will not soon be reversed."

- In 1968, professor Paul Ehrlich, Al Gore's hero and mentor, predicted there would be a major food shortage in the US and "in the 1970s, hundreds of millions of people are going to starve to death." Ehrlich forecast that 65m Americans would die of starvation between 1980 and 1989, and that by 1999 the US population would have declined to 22.6m.

- Ehrlich's predictions about England were gloomier: "If I were a gambler, I would take even money that England will not exist in 2000."

- In 1972, a report was written for the Club of

Rome warning that the world would run out of gold by 1981, mercury and silver by 1985, tin by 1987 and petroleum, copper, lead and natural gas by 1992.

- Gordon Taylor, in his 1970 book *The Doomsday Book* said Americans were using 50% of the world's resources and "by 2000 they will, if permitted, be using all of them."

- In 1975, the Environmental Fund took out full-page ads warning: "The World as we know it will likely be ruined by the year 2000."

- Harvard biologist George Wald in 1970 warned: "Civilization will end within 15 or 30 years unless immediate action is taken against problems facing mankind." That was the same year that Sen. Gaylord Nelson warned, in *Look* magazine, that by 1995 "somewhere between 75% and 85% of all the species of living animals will be extinct."

- In 1885, the US Geological Survey announced that there was "little or no chance" of oil being discovered in California, and a few years later they said the same about Kansas and Texas.

- In 1939, the US Department of the Interior said American oil supplies would last only another 13

years. In 1949, the secretary of the interior said the end of US oil supplies was in sight. Having learned nothing from its earlier erroneous claims, in 1974 the US Geological Survey advised that the US had only a 10-year supply of natural gas. Now, according to the American Gas Association, there's a 1000-2500-year supply.

Some food for thought:

- In 1970, when environmentalists were making predictions of man-made global cooling and the threat of an ice age and millions of Americans starving to death, what kind of government policy should we have undertaken to prevent such a calamity?

- When Ehrlich predicted that England would not exist in the year 2000, what steps should the British Parliament have taken in 1970 to prevent such a dire outcome?

- In 1939, when the Department of the Interior warned that we only had oil supplies for another 13 years, what actions should President Roosevelt have taken?

- What makes us think environmental alarmism is any more correct now that they have switched their tune to man-made global warming?

Mystic Met

You don't have to go back very far to see scientists' predictions that have failed to materialise. The Met Office is the official UK Meteorological agency and a key promoter of climate alarmism, which claims that simulation models are now accurate predictors of both global and local effects of stimuli to the climate, such as volcanoes and CO2 emissions. If the models are so reliable, the Met Office should be able to get the general trends right for the British weather, but here are some of the notable recent predictions from the Met Office press releases starting on 4 January 2007:

"2007 is likely to be the warmest year on record globally, beating the current record set in 1998"

11 April 2007: "there is a high probability that summer temperatures will exceed the 1971-2000 long-term average of 14.1°C ... there are no indications of an increased risk of a particularly dry or particularly wet summer."

The *Guardian* ran a story on 31 August revealing that the Met had announced that summer 2007 was the wettest on record with "normal temperatures".

10 August 2007: the Met Office announces new climate models, which include modelling of "the effects of sea surface temperatures as well as other factors such as man-made emissions of greenhouse gases, projected changes in the sun's output and the effects of previous volcanic eruptions". The same press

release forecast that "2014 is likely to be 0.3°C warmer than 2004."

In fact, global temperatures in 2007 dropped nearly 0.8°C according to satellite data, one of the sharpest drops on record. In order to hit the Met's 2014 prediction, there will have to be a large increase over the next few years.

So how is The Met Office doing in 2008 with the new models?

On 3 April the Met made its annual UK summer forecast: "The coming summer is expected to be a 'typical British summer', according to long-range forecasts. Summer temperatures across the UK are more likely to be warmer than average and rainfall near or above average for the three months of summer."

29 August: The Met Office reported that the summer of 2008 was "one of the wettest on record across the UK."

The current cooling trend is set against a background of rapidly rising CO2 emissions. According to the latest data released by the Global Carbon Project (GCP), CO2 levels rose by 3.5% a year between 2000 and 2007, compared with the 2.7% projected by the IPCC. During the 1990s warming trend, emissions rose by only 0.9% a year.

So how can we believe predictions for 2014 or longer, when the Met Office has so much trouble predicting the weather and temperatures a few months in advance? Climate models can be useful diagnostic tools, but they aren't crystal balls.

Goodwill hunting

In June, Keith Peat and Malcolm Heymer met with Robert Goodwill MP, the Tory Shadow Road Safety Minister; he used to drive chemical tanker lorries, so has a good idea of what happens in the real world on the roads, unlike most of those involved in setting road safety policy.

A wide range of road safety issues were covered, including the knock-on effect on safety of closing motorways for long periods while accident investigations take place. Goodwill said this issue was to be raised in the House of Commons by Christopher Chope MP. He also said it will be Tory policy to raise the lorry speed limit on single carriageways from 40 to 50mph to reduce the danger caused by frustration in drivers caught behind lorries. He further wants to raise the motorway speed limit to 80mph, but believes this should be enforced by average speed cameras. Keith and Malcolm suggested this would not be necessary or desirable, but we may need to educate him further on this!

Our two also emphasised the need for the right sort of education and training, and particularly instilling the right attitudes and beliefs, as propounded in *Mind Driving*, a copy of which was given to Goodwill, along with a copy of Leeming's book. He also received a copy of the ABD's evidence to the Transport Select Committee and our submission for raising the motorway speed limit. Hopefully Goodwill now has a better idea of what the ABD is (and, just as important, is not!) and we will be able to build on the relationship. Let's just hope he isn't shuffled to another portfolio too soon!

•www.robertgoodwill.co.uk

Scamera help needed

Solicitor Michael Pace has been in touch with Keith Peat, with an interesting plea. Michael says:

"You may be interested in a case I am running at the moment with regard to travel cameras. This one on the A1 at Grantham coming north. My client says he was blinded by white light. The type approval says the camera must have a magenta filter [to stop drivers being dazzled]."

"I have the prosecution under pressure to disclose the full spec for the filter, and the date of its last replacement. A filter manufacturer has shown me a magenta filter which has been tested in a 'fadometer', showing how they lose colour and in fact has supplied me with one that has gone clear. On that basis we say that it does not meet the type approval! So no evidence of an offence."

"The opposition is fighting hard though; I could do with knowing whether anyone else has run this defence so I can liaise with their solicitor and expert. Its going to be a dirty fight as usual!"

Michael.Pace@andrew-solicitors.co.uk

Think of a number...

Dave Bodecott has recently been doing an 80-mile round trip each day to Whitehaven hospital from Penrith; it's the journey from Hell with poor roads, difficult overtaking and some very slow traffic. The road towards the hospital in Whitehaven has a sign saying 1245 casualties in 5 years, which is one casualty every weekday for five years. Guessing the statistic must be untrue, Dave delved deeper by contacting Amey Mouchel, which maintains the road in question. The company's Michael Parry responded to Dave's query by stating:

"I had some involvement with the casualty total displayed on the A595 route. The sign was provided for the Cumbria Road Safety Partnership, and they are responsible for its management. The signs have been used to indicate the total number of casualties for the period covered and refer to the entire length of the route. i.e. Carlisle to Dalton in Furness. This results in the high "eye catching" casualty total you noticed".

So not very truthful at all then...

Spanner in the Works

Warwickshire County Council is pushing ahead with plans to reduce speed limits on almost every rural A and B-road in the county, despite strong opposition from the police and members of the public. But it isn't cutting the limit on the Fosse Way, the only road where the accident record is bad enough to warrant a full safety report in its review. This is of national importance because Warwickshire is one of the first local authorities to review speed limits under the requirements of the DfT's Circular 1/2006 *New guidance for setting local speed limits*, due to be completed by 2011. This document legitimises moves from councils to cut speed limits on the flimsiest of premises, including suggesting that limits should be cut to the average speed of traffic.

Despite the usual low-profile consultation, Warwickshire's proposed 125 speed limit reductions have received 40 formal objections, many from the police. However, a council spokesperson has indicated that the views of residents and councillors take precedence over the opinions of the police.

But DfT Circular 1/2006 states: "It is important that traffic authorities and police forces work closely together in determining, or considering, any change to speed limits."

The proposed speed limit reductions can be viewed at www.warwickshire.gov.uk/Web/corporate/pages.nsf/Links/F446059189B4303A802573C40057A12D

This link shows that the only road report under the speed limit review which Warwickshire's safety professionals are prepared to put their names to (The Fosse Way) is pretty much the only road in Warwickshire where a speed limit reduction *hasn't* been proposed.

In recent years, Warwickshire has already endured a plethora of speed limit reductions below what would be considered reasonable. The accompanying increase in the use of automated speed limit enforcement has resulted in a 16-fold increase in speeding fines issued in the county between 1997 and 2006. There will be a further period of "consultation" prior to implementation by March 2009, but we all know how useful such exercises tend to be.

•<http://abdmercia.blogspot.com>

in brief...

•**Keith Peat** took part in an interesting discussion on Radio 5 recently, debating whether or not there should be fresh tests or an automatic driving ban once drivers had reached a certain age. Knowing this could be a minefield, Keith focused on how great British drivers are. Despite covering around 300bn miles between us each year, the road death rate is lower than accidents in the home and much lower than unnecessary NHS deaths – which offered an interesting (and unexpected) perspective. Bob (aged 41) came on calling for youngsters and the over-70s to be retested – it didn't take long to see that for some reason he'd left his own age group out of the problem!

•**Paul Biggs** has been delving into Staffordshire's traffic policing and has discovered that despite the failure of the county's 260+ speed cameras to have any positive impact on road fatality trends, 94% of the £2.4m 'road safety grant' is being spent on maintaining speed cameras. The effect of the speed camera programme on the number of traffic police has been devastating: in 1998-9 there were 208, but that was slashed to just 34 for 2007-8, a fall of 83.7%.

•**Ian Tapp** subscribes to the West Yorkshire scamera partnerships newsletter, SCA_N, in which it was recently stated that: "False emails poured into the website; as a result, the Have Your Say opinion poll appeared not to provide an accurate reflection of what 'real' people really thought." No doubt the results are now 'adjusted' to take that into account.

•When Swindon cut its funding for scameras, ABD spokesman **Nigel Humphries** was in demand. Nigel supported the abolition on the grounds that cameras catch safe drivers, encourage reduced limits which criminalise reasonable behaviour and undermine the law, which is a two way street; citizens should comply but authorities should apply sensible laws. Meanwhile cameras don't target dangerous drivers who are illegal or untraceable All fair enough you'd think, but he got a rough ride in places!

•**Roger Lawson** submitted a formal response to the the Western Extension Consultation which you can read at www.freedomfordrivers.org/Westcon_ABD_Consultation_Response.pdf – it clearly did the trick as the extension is to be scrapped.

Contact your MP

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 shadow ministers are listed at conservatives.com

How you can help the ABD to grow

- Speak to Bob Dennish about becoming a regional contact/support your existing contact
- Speak to Robin Simmons (p16) about volunteering to help at events
- Are you a car club member? Then get your club to support our affiliation scheme, which is run by Robin Simmons – whose contact details are on the back page
- Donate to the ABD's fighting fund. Get a form from the membership secretary
- Make your spouse a joint member

- Subscribe to ABD-Action (see email groups on p15)
- Get your friends to join – they can sign up online at abd.org.uk
- Write to your MP regularly, reminding them of their duty to stand up for drivers
- Take the time to reply to anti-car articles and letters in the local press
- Complain about proposals for traffic calming and speed limit reductions. Few people do, which is why they happen.

letters

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

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

The powers that be are attempting to bring in legislation that will require drivers to use headlights whilst driving during daylight hours. This will, they say, save lives although motorcyclists will lose any advantage they had plus it will make pedal cyclists and pedestrians all but invisible. Also, this will inevitably lead to drivers using more fuel with the average additional usage per driver being in the region of 60 litres. Not a lot on an individual basis I grant you but across the total population it'll add up to hundreds of millions of litres of fuel annually!

M Paul Lloyd

It may sound a bit off-the-wall but I'm convinced that the proliferation of SPECS systems will lead to more deaths from heart attacks. I find that when I'm driving on a SPECS-controlled stretch of road I'm much more tense than at other times. There's a natural tendency to want to make progress and often the traffic conditions mean this can be done safely. However, you know that even a small amount over the speed limit will probably result in a fine and points. The tension that this causes is considerable. It must be considerably worse for those who are on the road a lot as part of their job.

I was once talking to a marshal at Silverstone during one of the historic race meetings. I was surprised to hear that a fatal accident is often the result of the driver having had a heart attack whilst driving. The crowd would see the car leave the circuit at a bend and assume that the driver had "lost it". But the investigation would show the driver had a heart attack on the straight and been dead before the corner. Most of these incidents are put down to a more mature driver (as many of them are) and the stresses involved in racing.

George Layton

Can we put to rest that myth that driving in Europe is somehow better than Britain? Agreed there is often less traffic, but the same nasty, greedy, anti-mobility bureaucrats that rule our lives have plenty of European counterparts. Generally speaking we show Europe the way; once speed cameras, high fuel prices, pay & display, congestion charging and the like have been proven in Britain, they'll be adopted by other European countries. That's why it's so important that we fight the British government

The speed camera is once again being sold as a magic answer to road safety, reincarnated as SPECS average speed cameras. SPECS cameras were installed on 32 miles of the A77 in July 2005. Three years later we have the familiar before and after claims. Three years prior to installation there were 13 deaths and 52 serious injuries, three years after installation the figures dropped to 7 and 34 respectively. The total number of accidents fell 19%, average speeds have fallen by 5-6mph, and the number of vehicles exceeding the speed limit fell by 66%.

But wait! Before you resign from the ABD to join Brake, there's something I left out. Accompanying camera installation were a number of significant safety engineering measures including selective road widening and re-alignment, passing lanes, improved junction layouts, improved signing and lining, and educational programmes.

Now, which measures will get the credit? Cameras or engineering/ education? This would make a good basis for a PR, with the snappy title: 'Seeing through SPECS.'

Paul Biggs

Give us a quote

"Man is a credulous animal, and must believe something; in the absence of good grounds for belief, he will be satisfied with bad ones"

Bertrand Russell

on every issue; if it fails in this country, others will be less keen to adopt those policies. We seem to be the only country in Europe with an ABD type organisation; let's hope our efforts prompt others to follow suit.

Terry Hudson

My wife and I recently went to the peak district for the first time ever. Fantastic countryside, but every few hundred years was yet another sign with a wretched camera on it. If I were the National Trust or local tourist board, I'd have something to say as they created a real eyesore.

Bill Hollis

PS: the best pork pie in the world can be found opposite the pie shop in Bakewell!



Using daytime running lights (DRL) will increase accidents. Austria scrapped the compulsory use of DRL from January this year after a two-year experiment which saw casualties rise sharply. When headlights were originally made compulsory in Austria, fatalities soared by 12%; they've now fallen by 5% and motorcycle accidents by 25%. The Austrian Ophthalmological Society says this is because the human eye and brain can't interpret 'traffic relevant objects' when screened out by dazzle.

In the first six months of 2007, following Poland and the Czech Republic's compulsory use of DRL, fatalities in both countries shot up by 17%. In Bulgaria, they increased even more, while Spain, which doesn't require DRL, showed a 13% fall in road casualties.

Various organisations, including the Association

If I were to advertise a woman's cosmetic claiming it made the user look 20 years younger, or I advertised a man's aftershave claiming that using it meant you would get to sleep with hundreds of these younger looking women, the ASA would be quite annoyed if I could not substantiate these claims scientifically.

Yet didn't the Dft admit that the mortality figures at different speeds are just a theory? Yet they don't just advertise this theory, they teach it in our schools. They similarly advertise the mantra speed kills when the TRL's own figures cannot substantiate it. Why is government propaganda seemingly exempt from the rules that advertising must be legal, decent and truthful?

John Ryle

of Drivers Against Daytime Running Lights, the Cyclists Touring' Club, The Rambler's Association, Living Streets, the RSPCA and The British Motorcyclists Federation are campaigning against this EU directive (www.dadrl.org.uk)

William Loneskie

If a recent *Telegraph* report is accurate, Labour's speed penalty proposals are merely a money-saving exercise, unsurprisingly. Magistrates already have the power to award six penalty points for 'excessive speeding'. All that will happen under the proposals is that it will now be lawful to award up to six penalty points under a fixed penalty, thus saving the ministry of justice money. Add in the separate proposal that a defendant will not be able to claim his costs if successfully defending himself in court, if he chooses to go to court rather than accept the six-point penalty, and you start to see the wider agenda.

John Hatton

Recently I had to visit Preston, where the standard of driving is unbelievably bad. Signalling is rare, tailgating very common, as is sudden lane changing to queue jump, lane discipline is non-existent; roundabouts are used to overtake other vehicles by surprise on whatever side the opportunity arises. Is it any coincidence that a town whose bureaucrats have treated drivers as enemies for 30+ years now has an extremely low standard of driving?

Simon Butler

Today's *Daily Mail* contains a story on a freak hailstorm in Ottery St Mary yesterday. Embedded within it is this claim:

For the first time, scientists have proved that mankind is to blame for the warming of the Antarctic. The study by the Met Office used temperature records from the last 50 years

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

I was astonished when recently Gordon Brown and Alistair Darling had the nerve to visit Land Rover and Jaguar facilities in the midlands, after introducing taxes aimed specifically at deterring people from buying their vehicles. It's like beating someone up, then going to visit them in hospital afterwards! If this had happened in France, they would have been pelted with eggs.

However, at least when buying a new vehicle, you have the choice whether to avoid the new green taxes. For those of use who have vehicles registered after 2001 with emissions

in new computer models. The results showed that the collapse of the ice shelves cannot be explained by natural variations in weather. The report in Nature Geosciences means that man-made climate change has now been shown to be taking place on every continent.

Models can't 'prove' anything, as they contain assumptions that may be (and almost certainly are) wrong. In any case, the collapse of the ice shelves has little to do with changes in 'weather' and more to do with ocean circulation. Those whose livelihoods depend on MMGWT are getting increasingly desperate.

Malcolm Heymer

What seems to me ridiculous (and a clear sign that the policymakers don't understand what they're doing), is that they base the concept of 'excessive speeding' on the speed over the limit, where it seems they consider 20mph over the limit as dangerous. However as we all know, there is a world of difference between 50mph in a 30 and 90mph on a motorway, yet they classify them as the same 'extreme' speeding offence.

If they had half a brain they would at least use a percentage over the limit as the basis for dangerous behaviour. Seems to me like another piece of poorly thought, spiteful legislation brought in for money saving and revenue raising reasons.

Tim Wright

I recently read an article on greener driving which claimed that:

the average car consumes 38% more fuel at 70mph than it does over the same distance

According to RoSPA, home accidents result in more than 4000 deaths and 2.7m people going to hospital in the UK each year (www.rospa.com/news/releases/2008/pr596_14_03_08_home.htm).

Contrast that with 500bn vehicle km travelled and 3000 deaths, plus 250,000 injuries on the roads. It puts things into perspective – then there are hospital deaths and injuries from medical negligence and infections. Then the Transport Select Committee has the nerve to claim that road casualties are the public health problem and a scandal. Road safety has been hijacked for use in the anti-car agenda and revenue raising – that's the real scandal.

Paul Biggs

greater than 225g/km we would have been slapped with a bill for £430 next year. The values of these cars has already made them unsaleable.

The absurd thing is that the likes of Jaguar and Land Rover cars face a future threat (2010) of £940 first year tax, and £440 thereafter for new cars; they're now asking for a £1bn government bailout. So the government is trying to dissuade drivers from buying these British built cars and then having to bail them out.

David Derrick

at 50mph. At 60mph it uses 34% more than at 40mph. The average driver travelling at 90mph on a motorway will spend £1.20 more on fuel every eight minutes than a driver travelling at 70mph. The 90mph driver will have travelled further in that time but will still be spending 40% more per mile than the 70mph driver.

As an extremely well qualified automotive engineer I can assure you that the above paragraph is motor industry propaganda aimed at costing the motorist more. Perhaps the greatest sin is the advice given is to change up at 2500rpm (2000 in a diesel) which is misleading. An internal combustion engine is at its most efficient at the revs where maximum torque occurs; the trick is to select a gear which comes close to the said revs at your desired target speed. An engine drinks fuel at any revs significantly below maximum torque whilst at moderate (1000) revs above peak torque, fuel consumption does not increase significantly. The theory that creeping around at 40 saves fuel is complete nonsense; it's all about work done times efficiency (only 30%) multiplied by the time taken.

The real measure of fuel consumption is grammes per kilowatt hour; the longer it takes you to get there the more fuel you will use. The most efficient average speed for a modern car is around 60mph; after that air resistance comes into play. However, dependent on vehicle design, air resistance can fall as the vehicle goes faster and builds up its own near perfect streamlining.

Furthermore, if you chug around at 40mph in top gear, carbon deposits are likely to build up in your engine leading to reduced fuel efficiency over time. Similarly, if you have a turbo, its life is likely to be significantly reduced driving at prolonged low revs while driving on full throttle in too high a gear risks blowing the head gasket, not to mention placing unnecessary stress on the crankshaft bearings and con-rods.

G Pye

Not wishing to expose myself to the wrath of other members or condone uninsured driving, but uninsured, like speeding, does not always mean dangerous. It's easy to lose one's licence and be tempted to drive on for the sake of genuine family commitments. We don't have any figures to say what uninsured drivers are genuine hardship cases and those, that just do not give a damn. Perhaps one could argue, that those who

Shorts

On the news this morning some councils are turning off street lamps to save money and prevent global warming despite reports of increased crime and accidents. At the same time plans for SPECS cameras on every road are being considered, which cost a fortune to install, use power 24/7 yet are justified for dubious 'safety' reasons...

From the ABD forum

The price of oil may have fallen in dollar terms, but so has sterling. A barrel of oil at \$88, when you translate that from the current \$1.60 to the pound is the same as \$132 a barrel when the exchange rate was \$2.40. Which explains the slow decline in prices at the pump.

Sandy Wood

A reader comment in the Mail piece coined a lovely phrase - Tax Guzzler. One that I think that we should use. It will stick.

Brian Mooney

According to my local council's road safety officer, they believe that almost all the car occupant fatalities in Bromley in recent years were down to people not wearing their seat belts.

Roger Lawson

Hoon voted in favour of the forthcoming punitive VED increases, yet he drove 3500 miles on his family holiday. How does that square with Labour's policy on unnecessary journeys? One rule for them...

Dave Razzell

Greenpeace has an annual budget of US\$272m and WWF has US\$487m; Robson Green gave his £1m for unchained melody to Greenpeace and they didn't even thank him!

Paul Biggs

The argument that building new roads encourages more driving is laughable. When did anybody hear of a new road opening and think "Here's a new highway, I'll go and spend loadsamoney on fuel, wear down my tyres and waste a few hours of my life driving up and down just for the hell of it? New roads fill up because the old ones are inadequate and underfunded.

From the ABD forum

I'm 76 years old and my wife is 71. We both have maximum no-claims bonus and our two cars, which cover under 5000 miles between them annually, are insured only for us to drive. Three years ago I was paying just £112 to insure the cars (third party fire and theft); that figure is now £142. When I asked why the premium has gone up despite my driving record, I was told that after reaching 65 years of age, my premium would go up by 5% each year. Welcome to rip-off Britain!

S Wroe

Have you tried comprehensive cover? It's often cheaper. Ed.

The Essex Police force is claiming to be enforcing speed limits by helicopter; if so, this is illegal and it could win them or their helicopter pilot two years or more in jail for endangering the safety of an aircraft and/or endangering the safety of persons on the ground. They were caught and warned about this some years ago.

It comes down to the Air Navigation Order, which is roughly the Road Traffic Act of the skies. This requires – absolutely – that an aircraft when following a 'line feature' (road, motorway, railway, canal or coastline) shall keep or track well to the right of the said line



feature. This is to prevent head-on collisions with opposite direction traffic.

In Air Traffic Control (ATC) controlled airspace (where ATC would not allow such police action, three or four miles of separation is required. In uncontrolled airspace one half-mile is the accepted safety norm; that's equivalent to 3000 feet, which is well outside the 700-foot number-plate reading capability of the police helicopter cameras! The enforcement branch of the CAA would be very interested in hearing all about what Essex Police have been up to.

Sent via the ABD website

have been banned for trivial driving offences and hence uninsured, might drive with more caution, for fear of getting caught?

From the ABD forum

I've been having a look at the Final Local Implementation Plan, as presented by Tower Hamlets? FLIPPING heck! There's talk of more bicycle parks at hospitals - is that so chemotherapy patients, those needing hip replacements and those requiring dialysis can cycle in for treatment? Plus there are proposals for more cycle parks at shopping centres, no doubt so people can hang their carrier bags on the ends of their handlebars and then wobble unsafely home...

From the ABD forum

Last year I cracked the sump on my VW Passat while going over a speed hump in a 20mph zone. I was not breaking the speed limit. I claimed for the damage from the Watford/Herts council on the basis that the hump had been hit several times before and that I was not doing anything wrong. It claimed the hump met all regulations and that it was regularly inspected and maintained, although a copy of the inspection report barely stated that the hump existed.

I found a document by the TRL (*Project report 18, road humps for controlling vehicle speeds*) that gives details of recommended dimensions. The hump at Watford was too high by 10% (10mm) and the top was too short by one metre. On presentation of this information, I received a cheque for the sump replacement. They don't give up without a fight - it took me about six months to get a result.

From www.honestjohn.co.uk

A couple of years ago the traffic lights on the roundabout over junction 4 of the M40 (known as Handy Cross) were rephased, resulting in the lights on one of the minor roads feeding Handy Cross having the red extended and the



green cut to as little as eight seconds. It didn't take long for people to start jumping the lights out of frustration at the extra congestion this caused. The situation lasted for about 18 months or so and then the lights were rephased again, with the green phase made much longer. Almost immediately, the red light jumping ceased and is now back to being a rare occurrence. Do the supposedly clever people who control these things have any inkling of human nature?

Chris Burmajster

To rub phosphoric acid into the motorcycle wound, government has announced that motorcycle testing will need to encompass a 'stop and swerve test', both at 18.63mph (30kph) and 31mph (50kph) meaning that purpose-built off-road sites have to be built. The result of this is to reduce the available test centres from 230 or so at the present, to 66 – for the entire UK! The demand for testing already outstrips existing provisions. These new regulations were due to have come into being at the end of this September just gone, but MAG lobbying for more suitable test sites has delayed its implementation until 30 March 2009. Had they been implemented in September, there would have been just 40 test centres in the UK with suitable facilities.

How easy would it be to give up on this economical form of transport due to obstructive and expensive legislation (with EU origins) and ongoing stealth taxing.

Derek Reynolds

To those who advocate a zero alcohol limit for drivers: alcohol is produced by the action of yeasts on sugars. We are told by nanny that we have to eat five a day. If you eat any ripe fruit, the natural yeasts on the skin will have started to act on (ferment) the fructose and the fruit will contain alcohol. Zero is almost impossible.

This natural process explains why at this time of year I get drunken blackbirds (funny) and drunken wasps (bad news) after they have partaken of my windfall apples.

John Ryle

OTR glossary

- ACPO: Association of Chief Police Officers
- ALG: Association of London Government
- ANPR: Automatic Number Plate Recognition
- Brake: Vocal anti-car group
- CbFT: 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
- ECHR: European Court of Human Rights
- FoI: Freedom of Information (Act)
- 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)
- Scamera: Speed camera
- SPECS: Speed camera that measures a car's average speed between two or more points.
- TfL: Transport for London

6 PANEL	
PORTABLE DISPLAY SYSTEMS	
FROM	
£250	

**SIMPLE & LIGHT
IDEAL FOR FUNDRAISING**



23 The Capstan Centre, Thurrock Park Way
Tilbury, Essex RM18 7HH
Tel 01375 850300 Fax 01375 851099

Gibson Forge Associates

If you need to arrange any of the following (or similar), contact ABD member Martin Forge on 01252 660 126 to discuss your requirements without obligation. Not only will you get great service, but the ABD earns a commission on any work undertaken.

- Will writing
- Powers of Attorney
- Partnership agreements
- Shareholder agreements
- Deeds
- Trusts
- Probate services
- Deed poll name change

Members of the Society of Willwriters



information & member benefits

Save money

Books discount

ABD members get a 12.5% discount and free postage from Haynes Books. For a free catalogue you can email emma_isaacs@haynes-manuals.co.uk and identify yourself as a member of the Association of British Drivers – not ABD as it confuses their computer. Give your membership number, name and address. The ABD website also has a bookshop section. A link is shown on the main page of our website at abd.org.uk The ABD Bookshop operates in association with amazon.co.uk which give us a referral fee for all books purchased via our website.

IAM discounts

The ABD has negotiated a special rate for the IAM Skill for Life programme - everything you need to prepare for, and take, your advanced driving test. ABD members over 26 will be entitled to a £5 discount, reducing the price to £80. This is in addition to the £10 discount for under 26s. The IAM manual *Pass Your Advanced Driving Test* is available to ABD members at a 25% reduction (£6).

Breakdown recovery

If you quote your ABD membership number when joining Britannia Rescue you'll get 10% off your membership.

Chauffeurplan

If you lose your licence you will find Chauffeurplan's service invaluable. Offered by Longford Insurance, it's an insurance policy against losing your licence or car, with a 10% discount for ABD members. Call Chauffeurplan on 0800 242 420 for more.

Ferry tickets

Book Ferry tickets online using the ABD website and we earn a small commission which helps boost our fighting fund.

Number plates

If you are in the market for a personalised number plate, Simply Registrations is offering special rates for ABD members. Go to simplyreg.com or contact james@simplyreg.com for details.

Protective film

Rhino Protect is offering ABD members a 15% discount on its range of stone chip protection film. To obtain the discount, phone 0870 803 0187, give them your membership number and request a 15% discount. See rhinoprotect.com for more.

Will making

Everyone should make a Will, to make life easier for those you've left behind in the event of your death. You can arrange for the ABD to benefit from a legacy of whatever size your estate can afford. For advice on making a Will, contact Gibson-Forge – see the advert on p14. In drawing up the document, make sure that the legacy quotes the legal name, number and registered address of the ABD for the avoidance of confusion. These are: *the Association of British Drivers (an operating name of Pro-Motor, a company limited by guarantee and registered in England under Company Number 2945728) and whose registered office is 4 King Square Bridgwater Somerset TA6 3DG.*

Stay informed

email groups

We sometimes need to contact as many members as possible in a short space of time. If you have an email address please subscribe to ABD Action, allowing us to do this. You can add your name to the list by sending an email to abd-action-owner@yahoogroups.com stating your full name and membership number. You can also subscribe to the ABD forum to take place in various discussions. If you'd like to join send an email to abdml-owner@yahoogroups.com, stating your name and membership number. abdml subscribers will automatically be added to abd-action as well and if you've got a bit more time available you might like to subscribe to ABD-Chat, which has a higher rate of postings. To subscribe to this just send an email to abdchat-subscribe@yahoogroups.com

Website

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

OTR – go electronic

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

OTR in cyberspace

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

Speed limit objection packs

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

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

Help out

ABD publicity material

If you would like copies of the ABD leaflet, flyer or poster please get in touch with Susan Newby-Robson (details overleaf), and she'll send you what you need – but please don't over-order as printing costs are high. There's also a limited stock of car stickers available.

ABD merchandise

Help publicise the ABD with a group polo shirt or a golfing umbrella. They cost £20 apiece (including P&P) and you can order them from Susan Newby-Robson, whose details are overleaf.

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 Robin know and we'll endeavour to sign them up.

Business cards

Business cards are available from the membership secretary if you're representing the ABD.

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

Joint memberships 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.

national & regional contacts

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

Affiliated organisations

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

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

MEMBERSHIP SECRETARY:
SUSAN NEWBY-ROBSON
 PO Box 2228, Kenley, Surrey CR8 5ZT
 Tel 07000 781 544
 membership@abd.org.uk

CHAIRMAN: BRIAN GREGORY
 Tel 01642 589 373
 brian.gregory@abd.org.uk

COMPANY SECRETARY:
JOAN BINGLEY

TREASURER: HUGH BLADON
 Tel / fax 01934 628 136
 hugh.bladon@abd.org.uk

WEBMASTER: CHRIS WARD
 webmaster@abd.org.uk

AFFILIATIONS CO-ORDINATOR:
TERRY HUDSON
 clubs@abd.org.uk

OTR EDITOR: CHRIS MEDD
 otr@abd.org.uk
 PO Box 2228, Kenley, Surrey CR8 5ZT

MEDIA SPOKESMAN:
NIGEL HUMPHRIES
 Tel mobile 07764 377 346
 nigel.humphries@abd.org.uk

ENVIRONMENT SPOKESMAN:
PAUL BIGGS
 environment@abd.org.uk

EVENTS CO-ORDINATOR
TERRY HUDSON
 surrey@abd.org.uk

Also Brian MacDowall (see Kent area for details)

IAM LIAISON: NICK FEARN
 nick.fearn@abd.org.uk

PRESS RELEASE CO-ORDINATOR
CHRIS LAMB

MAILING LIST ADMIN
DAVID LEGGE

CON. CHARGING SPOKESMAN
BRIAN MOONEY
 brian@london-motoring.org.uk

REG. CONTACT CO-ORDINATOR
BOB DENNISH
 Tel home 01367 252 477
 national@abd.org.uk

These are the main contacts and their key contact details. For a complete list of contact details, visit the members' website (details on page 15)

AVON & SOMERSET: BOB BULL
 Home 01275 843 839
 avonandsomerset@abd.org.uk

EAST BERKS: ANDY CUNNINGHAM
 Home 01252 876 958
 eastberkshire@abd.org.uk

BIRMINGHAM: PAUL BIGGS
 Home 01827 262 709
 Mobile 07769 691 281
 birmingham@abd.org.uk

BUCKS: ANTHONY SMITH-ROBERTS
 Home 01296 670 988
 Mobile 07801 506 411
 buckinghamshire@abd.org.uk

CAMBS: SEAN HOULIHANE
 Home 01763 246 953
 Mobile 07796 135 046
 cambridgeshire@abd.org.uk

CHESHIRE: NORMAN JOHNSTONE
 Home 01925 290 720
 Mobile 07751 355 799
 cheshire@abd.org.uk

CORNWALL: JOHN HATTON
 cornwall@abd.org.uk

DENBIGHSHIRE: CHRIS BARRETT
 Home 01745 334 186
 Mobile 07704 011 074
 denbighshire@abd.org.uk

DERBYSHIRE: ROBERT PARNHAM
 derbyshire@abd.org.uk

DORSET: MARK MACHIN
 dorset@abd.org.uk

ESSEX: ROWLAND PANTLING
 Home 01206 571 538
 essex@abd.org.uk

GLOUCESTERSHIRE: COLIN ROSE
 Home 01242 678 163
 Fax 01242 662 826

SOUTH GLOS: PAUL HANMORE
 Home 0117 947 5814
 southgloucestershire@abd.org.uk

HERTFORDSHIRE: ROBERT BOLT
 Home 01727 810 700
 Mobile 07733 225 355
 hertfordshire@abd.org.uk

KENT: TERRY HUDSON
 Home 01227 374 680
 kent@abd.org.uk

KENT ALSO: BRIAN MACDOWALL
 Home 01227 369 119
 Mobile 07930 113 232
 brirod@tiscali.co.uk

KENT ALSO: IAN TAYLOR
 Home 01304 203 351

LINCOLNSHIRE: KEITH PEAT
 Home 01507 441 638
 lincolnshire@abd.org.uk

MANCHESTER: SEAN CORKER
 Mobile 07736 836 163
 manchester@abd.org.uk

NORFOLK: PETER HAMMOND
 Home 01603 438 530
 Mobile 07768 905 855
 norfolk@abd.org.uk

NORTHANTS: MARK HALL
 Home 01327 351 407
 northamptonshire@abd.org.uk

READING: DAN CRESWELL
 Home 0118 921 2644
 reading@abd.org.uk

SOUTH YORKSHIRE: PAUL OXLEY
 Home 0114 236 3630
 southyorkshire@abd.org.uk

SHROPSHIRE: JOHN EVANS
 Home 01952 272 025
 shropshire@abd.org.uk

SOMERSET (SOUTH): TONY EVERARD
 Home 01749 674 093
 somerset@abd.org.uk

SOMERSET (NORTH)/BATH: PAUL HANMORE
 Home 0117 947 5814
 banes@abd.org.uk

STAFFORDSHIRE: PAUL BIGGS
 Home 01827 262 709
 Mobile 07769 691 281
 staffs@abd.org.uk

STOCKTON-ON-TEES: DAVID BOTTERILL
 stockton@abd.org.uk

SURREY: PETER MORGAN
 Home 020 8645 0926
 surrey@abd.org.uk

SUSSEX: PETER MORGAN
 Home 020 8645 0926
 brighton@abd.org.uk

WARWICKSHIRE: PAUL BIGGS
 Home 01827 262 709
 Mobile 07769 691 281
 warks@abd.org.uk

WILTSHIRE: JULIO WILDEBOER
 Home 01666 610 002
 wiltshire@abd.org.uk

WOLVERHAMPTON: ALAN MACEY
 Home 01902 620 032
 wolverhampton@abd.org.uk

NORTH YORKS: PETER HORTON
 Home 01765 602 873
 northyorks@abd.org.uk

WEST YORKS: ANDY LANGTON
 Home 01484 387 618
 westyorkshire@abd.org.uk

ABD LONDON

LONDON: ROGER LAWSON
 Home 0208 467 2686
 roger.lawson@abd.org.uk

SOUTH LONDON, HANTS, ISLE OF WIGHT: PETER MORGAN
 Home 020 8645 0926
 southeast@abd.org.uk

BRENT: JOHN BATCHELLOR
 Home 020 7328 6989
 brent@abd.org.uk

EALING: PAUL HEMSLEY
 Home 020 8998 4806
 ealing@abd.org.uk

HAMMERSMITH & FULHAM BRIAN MOONEY
 Home 020 7386 1837
 hammersmithandfulham@abd.org.uk

HOUNSLOW: HILLIER SIMMONS
 Home 020 8748 4777
 hounslow@abd.org.uk

SOUTHWARK: LES ALDEN
 Home 020 8693 5207

ABD SCOTLAND

EASTERN: BRUCE YOUNG
 Home 01968 660 428
 lothian@abd.org.uk

NORTHERN: ALASDAIR WOOD
 Home 01971 502 080
 highland@abd.org.uk

WESTERN: PETER SPINNEY
 Tel/fax home 0141 956 5842
 stirling@abd.org.uk

ADMIN/WEBMASTER: JOHN BAIRD
 Home 01698 300 384
 john.baird@blueyonder.co.uk

national
local & regional