

On The Road

The journal of the Association of British Drivers

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abd.org.uk

The campaign continues apace

It's been another brilliant couple of months for the ABD, with several key meetings taking place, alliances being forged and new initiatives being hatched. Within these pages of *On The Road* you can find out about some of them, but because there's so much going on within the ABD, a separate monthly bulletin is now being distributed electronically, which you can read about to the right.

We're as keen as ever to get your input into what the ABD should be doing and how we should be doing it, so please delve into the

members' forums – and if you're not keen on using the web too much, get in touch with Brian Mooney or Brian MacDowall, whose contact details are on the back page.

On a less positive note, Roger Lawson is out of action at the moment; he's one of the ABD's key contacts in London and an integral part of the ABD. Currently laid up in hospital after an operation, he's out of action for a short while; here's to a speedy recovery Roger.



OTR goes Live

There's so much happening in the ABD that you can read regular campaign updates in the group's new monthly electronic newsletter *OTR Live*. It comes out between issues of *OTR*; you can read it online on the members' website or download a copy to print. To request access, please email website@abd.org.uk with your membership number and postcode as a means of verification.

First ever ABD lottery is drawn

The winning tickets have been drawn in the ABD's first ever lottery; a big thanks to everyone who supported the venture or made a donation. In the end there were eight prizes, including a racing game and three motoring books. The winning ticket numbers were: 12018, 00526, 11793, 07442, 13256, 10992, 03170, and 01145. Prizes have been despatched; particular thanks to Brian Macdowall for donating the first prize of £405.

The winner of the second prize bought their tickets from the ABD stand at the Motorhome show in Shepton Mallet, which meant that either Dave Barry or Keith Peat sold the winning ticket; well done lads! Our hard-working membership Secretary, Susan Newby-Robson, donated her third-place cash prize of £70 to the ABD; thank you Susan!

Thanks to hard work and generosity from members across the country, approximately £2000 has been added to ABD funds. Lottery promoter Brian Mooney said: "Launching a lottery during a recession and constant postal disputes caused us a few heart-stopping moments. ABD members have done a magnificent job, and we are almost certain to run another fund-raising exercise in 2010. If members have any good quality prizes they wish to donate or any ideas for a successful lottery theme, please contact me."

Official: casualty stats a fudge

More than two thirds of people injured in road accidents haven't been recorded by the DfT, the Government has admitted. Unveiling the figures for casualties on Britain's roads in 2008, the DfT conceded that figures provided by the police have dramatically underestimated how many people are being hurt as a result of traffic accidents.

According to the latest statistics, the police recorded 230,000 injuries on Britain's roads in 2008, but now the DfT believes the real figure is between 680,000 and 920,000; probably around 800,000. The higher figure has been calculated by taking into account information from other sources, including figures provided by hospital accident and emergency departments.

Up until now the Government has justified its road safety strategy – mainly speed cameras – on the reported drop in the number of people killed and seriously injured in accidents. It has claimed that it has now met its target of reducing this figure to 60% of the annual average between 1994-8. According to its latest figures, 2538 people were killed in 2008, and 26,034 were

reported to the police as having sustained serious injuries, a 6% reduction on 2007. However this assertion has been questioned with hospitals claiming to have dealt with around 40,000 serious injuries, a reduction of just over 2%.

The pattern reflects the trend of recent years. Police figures – known as Stats 19, based on the form filled out by officer on the scene – have fallen sharply. But the same is not true for hospital figures which for much of the decade have risen, only showing a slight decline in the past two years.

Meanwhile, Britain is still "some way behind" other countries in tackling road safety for child pedestrians, according to the National Audit Office, which has found the UK is fifth safest globally in terms of road deaths. But it's 11th out of 24 developed nations on pedestrian deaths and 17th on child pedestrian deaths. The Office's report *Improving Road Safety for Pedestrians and Cyclists in Great Britain*, claims the DfT is on track to meet its 2010 road safety objectives, but the government must set separate targets for those killed and those seriously injured as deaths are declining more slowly than serious injuries.

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The ABD campaigns for:

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

Dedicated civilian traffic management officers have begun patrolling the A55 corridor across north Wales in an effort to tackle congestion. The pilot scheme is designed to free up police for emergency responses. The new officers will have the same powers as police to stop, control and direct traffic. Hefin Lloyd Jones, A55 route manager with the North Wales Trunk Road Agency, said: "It's a trial for six months. Their key part is to assist North Wales Police in dealing with incidents on the A55, breakdowns or minor accidents. If North Wales Police are not available at certain times, they will be taking over smaller incidents. They won't be able to deal with serious incidents. They would play a support role. They won't be there pursuing, they won't be there to persecute or fine any motorists."

An interesting quote, which just begs the question; is his vocabulary more limited than he thinks, was it a Freudian slip – or did he know exactly what he was saying?

A driver from Swindon who fled after running over and killing a 17-year-old boy on Christmas Day has been sentenced to 21 weeks in prison and banned from driving for a year. Nicholas Love struck Christopher Garrod in the early hours of 25 December 2007. Swindon magistrates heard 25-year old Love fled the scene and made efforts to hide his car after the crash. Love admitted driving without due care and attention, failing to stop following an accident and driving without insurance. How can such a sentence be justice? Is it any wonder that anti-car groups are frothing at the mouth, demanding harsher sentences for reckless drivers. Then there's the lack of consistency; on page 4 you'll read of a motorcyclist banned for five years and jailed for nine months, for breaking the speed limit – even though he wasn't involved in any incident of any kind.



Earlier this year, the A4 in West London was brought to a standstill for nine hours. Such a major road wouldn't be closed too readily you would hope – especially as gridlock was caused for miles around, with other roads suffering badly from the knock-on effects. So why was such misery caused to the thousands of drivers caught up in their daily commute? Because a driver had crashed into a street lamp at 3.10am. Neither he nor his passenger suffered serious injuries, yet the road didn't reopen until 1pm the same day, because the crash site was declared to be a crime scene. This isn't the first time this has happened and it sure as hell won't be the last, but why is there no accountability when it happens? The knock-on effects are massive, yet no lessons are learned – it happens time and time again, nationwide.

Fascinating story about the Cabinet pecking order in the Daily Mail earlier in the summer. The focus of the piece was on how low a priority defence is for Gordon Brown; Defence Secretary Bob Ainsworth is ranked 21 out of 23 in the Cabinet. Of course that leaves two people below him – and wouldn't you know it, one of those is Lord Adonis, the Transport Secretary, the other being Culture Secretary Ben Bradshaw. Even the Olympics Minister was ranked rather more highly than Transport – what hope is there?

Another absorbing story, this time in *Local Transport Today*, on Portsmouth's 20mph zones, which were introduced in spring 2008 across 256 miles of the City Council's 274 miles of road network. Enforcement is by signs only, with average speeds dropping by 0.9mph across the network. However, 14 areas still have average speeds above 24mph, which is causing some consternation in the Council, and demands for further action to be taken. Crucially though, despite the Council being "cautiously optimistic"

We're often told by scam camera partnerships how "mistakes can't happen because everything is triple-checked by a human before any action is taken". We know these are nothing more than empty words and on page 6 you can see the proof; a catalogue of errors affecting thousands of drivers across the country.

The surveillance state had led to huge numbers of injustices in recent years; something that a friend of mine, Mike, has just realised to his cost. In October he was stopped by police for driving without insurance – even though he was fully covered. He protested his innocence but because he wasn't on the database, as far as the feds were concerned, he was driving illegally. It was a Saturday so his insurer was closed, but thanks to having all 17 of his cars on a group policy, he convinced the cops that he was indeed legal; they gave him a producer so he took his documents into the police station that afternoon.

The sergeant behind the desk was amazed that Mike's car hadn't been seized, claiming: "You're the only one I know of that hasn't had his car put in the compound. The problem is, many of those seized turn out to be insured – but that doesn't stop the owner having to cough up £150 to release it and another £25 per day in storage".

So, this time Mike 'got away with it', but just two weeks later he received a Notice of Intended Prosecution for jumping a red light. He'd been zapped by a camera for going through a stop light, 76 seconds after it had turned red. Mike had indeed done so – because he was directed by a traffic cop to do so. Of course the queue of cars behind him and in front had done the same thing, so something should have rung alarm bells when several dozen cars all broke the same law within a couple of minutes. Then of course there was the cop, clearly visible in the photo, standing in front of Mike directing the traffic.

You'd think all this would add up to a clear-

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The next issue of *On The Road* goes to press on Monday 15 March. Contributions deadline is Monday 8 March.

about the benefits of the scheme's success, KSIs have remained much the same since the scheme came into place. Which surely begs the question – what's the point of it all?

If you need further proof that the world has gone mad, and I somehow suspect that you don't, here's a gem from Nottingham. The City Council there has introduced marshals for one of its busiest zebra crossings in the city centre, as part of its bus Quality Partnership Scheme. Seems this crossing is so busy that too many pedestrians are trying to cross at any one time, leading to delays for bus users. So for the lunch hour each day between Monday and Saturday, these marshals 'regulate' the number of pedestrians crossing the road. I'm just going to have a lie down now...

I'd like to think that even though the ABD is frequently out on a limb because it doesn't worry overmuch about being politically correct, it does at least have policies that centre on responsibility. That's not the case for the Libertarian Alliance, which I discovered recently thanks to Brian Mooney; the LA for example wants all drink-drive limits abolished altogether. For this and other nonsense, check out www.libertarian.co.uk as well as www.seangabb.co.uk

Chris Medd

cut case in Mike's favour, but it seems not: the scam camera unit has chosen to prosecute despite Mike already entering into correspondence with them, explaining things. As I write this, Mike has a choice; he can pay the fine and take the points, or he can fight it. He's already taken advice and has been told he has a 75% chance of winning – so a 25% chance of losing. And it'll cost him £600 for professional representation. Of course he could represent himself, but he'd rather not.

It gets worse though, because here's what I think will happen. He'll take it to court and instruct a lawyer to represent him. He'll end up spending a packet on preparing the case, which will be dropped at the very last minute. As a result he'll get no points and fine but he will have to stand the solicitor's fees. I really don't think he can win – but the galling thing is, he's in this mess because he proceeded as instructed by a police officer. So much for innocent drivers having nothing to fear.

Electric cars: problem or solution?

It's feared that nationwide road pricing would replace fuel duty if the government's electric car revolution is a success. Ministers have unveiled a £250m plan, due to start in 2011, that would see incentives of up to £5000 for consumers to buy electric cars. But the Treasury currently makes around £22bn from fuel duty and £5bn from road tax (from which electric cars are exempt), and it will want to recoup lost revenue.

The government also faces a string of problems that will need to be addressed if the scheme is to take off; one issue is how to recycle or dispose of the batteries on a large scale.

Professor Nick Vaughan, head of automotive engineering at Cranfield University, warned that the current recycling system will not be able to cope and could take years to develop. "It doesn't look good from a recycling point of view," he said. "It's okay with small batteries for mobile phones, but when you scale up for cars it becomes a big problem and we simply don't have the recycling infrastructure in place at the moment. You would need to develop new technology and throw a lot of money at it; I doubt the government can do this by 2011."

Despite assurances that the current grid could cope with a dramatic rise in electric car usage, most power stations burn fossil fuels, which also emit pollution. Green energy sources like wind power are unlikely to generate enough power, leaving nuclear power as a likely candidate. It's estimated that if every car in the UK went electric then the country would need eight more power stations the size of the Sizewell B plant just to run them.

"There is a reduced carbon footprint in using



fossil fuel power stations but they are not ideal," said Vaughan. "By 2015 we would need an alternative to produce electricity and we couldn't make enough electricity from wind and wave power, so we would probably need more nuclear power."

•Officials from the OfT and Treasury officials are continuing to explore the potential for road pricing. "Crucial questions remain on feasibility, cost-effectiveness, privacy and the impact on real driver behaviour," says the OfT in its response to the House of Commons transport committee's report on road taxes and charges. It says the Demonstrations Project, which began in February, is furthering the Department's understanding of time, distance and place charging. Responding to another of the committee's points, the Department says the Government sees road taxes as "primarily revenue raising instruments", though they can also internalise the external costs of motoring (such as CO2 emissions, congestion, air quality, safety and policing). "The Government does not, however, set rates in order to meet any estimate of these externalities," it says.

Over-85s menace

Drivers over the age of 85 are four times more likely to have caused a crash than to be the innocent party according to new research. Researchers from the University of Nottingham's School of Psychology studied police information on 2007 reported crashes involving drivers aged over 60 for the years 1994-2005. Drivers under 70 appear no more likely to have caused any given crash than to have been the victim of another driver's carelessness. However, beyond this age the researchers found that blameworthiness increased, with the ratio of blame to non-blame reaching 4:1 for people over 85.

The researchers say older drivers seemed to have a lot of right of way violation crashes, with a notably high frequency of crashes when turning right onto a more major road. These were often associated with a failure of the driver to see an oncoming vehicle. The researchers note that other authors have suggested measures to cut intersection crashes such as the installation of traffic signals, four-way stop signs at complex intersections, larger signs, and better sign illumination.

London fines drop

The number of penalty charge notices issued to motorists in London dropped by 11% in the last financial year, according to figures released this week by London Councils. The number of PCNs issued in 2008/09 totalled 5,466,219. This is down 710,533 on the figure of 6,176,752 recorded the previous year. The figures cover PCNs issued for illegal parking, driving in bus lanes and moving traffic contraventions such as stopping in yellow box junctions by both the boroughs and Transport for London.

Parking offences account for 86%, or 4,689,309, of the tickets issued. These were down 11%. A two-tier system of parking penalties has operated in the capital since July 2007, with higher fines for more serious contraventions such as parking at bus stops, on pedestrian crossings, or in school safety zones, and lower fines for offences such as overstaying on a parking meter. The number of PCNs issued against motorists driving illegally in bus lanes has dropped 20% in the last year, while clamping has fallen by 80% from 48,753 in 2007/08 to 9,832 in 2008/09.

in brief...

•The UK's first £1000 rail ticket has been described as "scandalous" and "appalling value" by opposition MPs. The first-class return walk-up fare is from Newquay, in Cornwall to Kyle of Lochalsh, in the Scottish Highlands. The fare was unearthed in a survey by rail expert Barry Doe, who said that the price of long-distance journeys had risen by up the three times the level of inflation since privatisation in the mid-1990s. Doe claims the £1002 ticket had been available for £486 as recently as September 2008.

•Ken Livingstone is urging train passengers not to pay 'rip-off' fines after himself being let off a £20 penalty for travelling without a valid ticket. He says passengers are being unfairly victimised to boost train firm coffers and has even offered his services to work with lawyers to help 'to defend any other innocent traveller who is a victim of these rapacious rail companies'.

•The Highways Agency is facing legal action for allegedly failing in its duty of care to drivers along part of the A30 in Devon and Cornwall. A 40-mile stretch, between Bodmin and Okehampton, was closed on 21 January 2009 because of sheet ice. However, about 40 accidents occurred on the stretch before it was closed.

•The British public has become more sceptical about climate change over the last five years, according to a survey. Twice as many people now agree that "claims that human activities are changing the climate are exaggerated". Four in 10 believe that many leading experts still question the evidence. One in five are "hard-line sceptics". The survey, by Cardiff University, shows there is still some way to go before the public's perception matches that of their elected leaders.

•Reading Borough Council has just approved plans for a Low Emissions Zone in the town by 2013, to kick off a raft of measures aimed at 'discouraging' cars from using its streets. The Council is seeking £313m to spend on transport improvements, including £284m from the Transport Innovation Fund. As a result, it's likely that road pricing will be introduced in Reading town centre at some stage. Meanwhile, studies are being conducted on introducing an LEZ in Aberdeen town centre.

•West Mercia Police has officially abandoned previous guidelines to enforce speed limits according to casualty figures; it's now sticking mobile cameras up wherever it wants. It's citing "community concerns about speeding traffic" as justification for deploying cameras, rather than any accident history; good job all those rural villages are stuffed full of road safety experts.

•Cumbria's scamera partnership is crowing about a drop in fatality figures, which it's attributing to a policy of not signing any new mobile camera sites. It's also no longer taking into account the crash history (or lack of) when choosing mobile scamera sites, just as West Mercia has chosen to do (see story above). Good to see that the abolition of a national scamera partnership scheme has resulted in a free for all...

overseas...

Imposing a speed limit on Australian motorways has created an increase in fatalities. Up until 2007, rural roads in the Northern Territory, Australia had no speed limit. Claiming that speed limits were essential to saving lives, the state government imposed a 130kmh (80mph) limit on the Stuart, Arnhem, Victoria and Barkly highways and a 110kmh (68mph) speed limit on all other roads, unless otherwise marked lower. Despite the best of intentions, however, the number of road deaths increased 70% after the change – despite a drop in traffic levels.

"Our roads are safer, vehicles are safer, paramedics more skilled, drought affected roads are dry, the public have never been more aware of speed limit enforcement, penalties have never been tougher" RoadSense founder Harry Brelsford explained. "These factors should have driven the road toll lower than before. They have not, it is rising. Clearly more of the same is not only not working, it is killing people."

The Australian motorist rights group compiled the latest road fatality data provided by the Northern Territory Police. In 2006, the last year without rural highway speed limits, the road toll was 44. In 2008, with speed limits on all roads, the death toll grew to 75. The proliferation of speed cameras throughout the country has also increased the level of hazard faced by motorists. In all of Australia, the death toll decreased by nearly a third between 1989 and 1996 – without automated enforcement. In the next eight years following the introduction of speed cameras, 1997-2004, fatalities only dropped ten percent. Between 2005 and 2007, the death rate began to skyrocket.

"A major reason for the failure of the policy is the extreme focus on the dangers of above the limit travel to the exclusion of nearly all other risk factors" Brelsford said. "This implies that traveling below the speed limit is safe, leading to complacency, inattention and increased fatalities. Additionally, the current policy of hidden speed cameras has actually impaired driver awareness through adding to an increasing list of dangerous distractions."

•A driver has confounded Swiss police by committing 15 traffic violations in just over 10 minutes, officials say. The 47-year-old initially raced past an unmarked police car in heavy rain at 160kmh (100mph) before weaving close to other cars and the road's kerb. The serial offender clocked up further offences for speeding, driving on the hard shoulder, running a set of red lights and failing to stop for police. When finally pulled over by St Gallen police, he failed a drugs test. The unnamed driver, who lives near Zurich, faces a lengthy driving ban and a possible jail sentence when he appears before a Swiss court. "I can't remember a case this serious," a police spokeswoman commented. "It's remarkable."

Jailed for 166mph

Abiker has been jailed for nine months after being caught doing what is believed to be the fastest speed ever recorded on a Scottish road. Neil Purves, 27, of Cockburnspath, was detected by police as he travelled at 166mph on a 60mph stretch of the A702 near West Linton in the Borders. He had admitted a charge of dangerous driving in a previous appearance at Peebles Sheriff Court. Graham Walker, representing Purves, said he had been "seduced by speed". In addition to his jail term, Purves has also been disqualified from driving for five years.

Meanwhile, a motorcyclist who was clocked at 112mph on the A7 in the Scottish Borders has avoided a driving ban. Ian Dunsmore, 43, was caught travelling at almost double the speed limit. Selkirk Sheriff Court heard he had since put his 1000cc bike up for sale. Sheriff Jamie Gilmour said he took into account that Dunsmore had not put anyone else in danger and fined him £300 and put six points on his licence.

No cover for uninsured drivers

The parts of England with the largest number of uninsured drivers have been revealed in new research. The worst offenders were in Greater London, Merseyside and Greater Manchester, with 13%, 12% and 10% of vehicles uninsured, the research found. The Motor Insurers' Bureau (MIB), which compensates people in accidents with uninsured drivers, estimates over 1.7m people drove without cover in 2008.

The MIB is launching a campaign to warn drivers not to let their cover lapse. The group warned that people driving without insurance could have their vehicle seized and would be given a minimum of six points and incur a

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

London scamera woes

Just 15% of motorists detected speeding or jumping red lights in the capital in 2009 are likely to face prosecution. The figure emerged as TfL confirmed it is studying whether some functions of the capital's safety camera operations can be outsourced to the private sector. The idea has attracted a sceptical response from the Met.

In 2008/09, the capital's network of speed and red light cameras detected 539,234 offences from which the Met issued 304,324 NIPs. But for 2009/10 the police set a much reduced target to issue just 160,000 NIPs. That has now been halved to just 80,000 following TfL's decision to cut the amount of funding it gives the police for camera enforcement activities from £5.8m to £3m. Assuming that the same number of offences are detected this year as last year, NIPs will be issued in just 15% of cases.

£200 fine. It added that automatic number plate recognition technology, combined with information from the Motor Insurance Database, leads to as many as 500 uninsured vehicles being seized every day.

The MIB campaign is urging people not to consider avoiding paying for insurance as a means of cutting their motoring costs during the recession.

Ashton West, chief executive of the MIB, described the figures revealed by the research as "staggering; the number of drivers across the UK who were caught without insurance last year would fill Wembley Stadium more than twice over."

Drivers tracked three billion times each year

Police are using surveillance cameras to photograph three billion car numbers plates a year – the equivalent of 100 pictures every second, new figures have revealed. The ANPR systems are taking images of registration plates at a rate of 350,000 per hour, or around 6000 per minute. Figures

provided by 26 out of 43 forces in England and Wales showed they used the technology to take 1.82bn photographs of cars during 2008. The number is likely to be around 3bn across all forces – meaning 34m registered cars in the country are snapped up to 90 times each a year.

These latest figures - released under the Freedom of Information Act - show the number of images taken with the cameras has risen by up to 1000% from 2007. The ANPR cameras are placed on major roads and hidden in strategic locations such as ports, airports and on CCTV cameras in

towns. All information recorded on the cameras is then kept on the police database for a minimum of two years.

Police claim these details are needed for operational reasons such as tracking stolen cars and catching drug dealers and uninsured drivers.

But anti-surveillance campaigners claim the hidden devices are an invasion of privacy and are a sign of a "Big Brother state".

In Devon and Cornwall alone 64m number plates were read and stored last year after a network of cameras were installed in the area. Geoffrey Cox, Conservative MP for Torridge and West Devon, said: "It is a surveillance state in which people are being monitored and observed morning, noon and night. It is a Big Brother state which assumes and suspects that everyone, at any time, might commit an offence and so gathers evidence against you in advance. It is an unsettling symptom of something that has grown up without peoples' recognition, understanding and assent."



Cumbrian school madness

A school has sparked road safety concerns after insisting its pupils wear dark coats during winter. Parents of pupils at Dallam School in Cumbria were sent letters reminding them of the school's "high expectations" regarding uniform policy and telling them that "if a coat is worn, it must be dark coloured". But the letter has angered parents who say their children are being put at risk of being involved in an accident on their way to and from school. And it has coincided with the launch of a national THINK! road safety campaign that urges children to *Be Bright, Be Seen*.

"I was gobsmacked that we got this letter," said a concerned Dallam parent. "They seem obsessed with uniforms at Dallam. To get a letter saying that they have got to have dark coats – I just think it is absolutely ridiculous. What has happened to the policy of 'be seen, be safe'?"

Steve Holdup, head teacher at Dallam School, said: "We have a consistent school uniform policy to try to make sure that everyone maintains a good standard. We are concerned that they look presentable outside of school as well as inside. I'm very concerned about road safety and we would encourage parents to purchase fluorescent strips or belts, or trimmings on school bags, that would make them visible during hours of darkness on their way to school. However, wearing a bright or pink puffer jacket is not an appropriate method of making yourself visible on your way to school. This is a very happy school and young people feel most comfortable when they know precisely what is expected of them."

London parking madness

A doctor has lost a court battle over parking tickets issued to a scooter parked on his land - because a judge ruled he owns only the subsoil. Dr Richard Dawood, parks his scooter outside his surgery in Camden, north London, so he can react to emergencies. He was left with £10,000 legal costs and fines when a judge ruled the public had access to the strip of land, so the council could issue fines.

Camden Council said parking on the pavement caused an obstruction. Dr Dawood countered: "The idea that I should be harassed for using my own land is absolutely ridiculous. That Camden Council should occupy itself with me - when there are so many pressing matters they should be concerned about - is outrageous."

The appeal judge admitted he sympathised with Dr Dawood. Lord Justice Smedley's ruling said it was "eyebrow raising" and "counter-intuitive" that the fines should stand.

Dr Dawood's land is marked with potted plants and signs saying: "This forecourt is private not a public footway. Authorised parking only." For years he used it without a ticket. Tickets started to be given out after a Conservative-Lib Dem coalition took over at the council. The ruling means people could technically be fined by councils for parking on their own drives if not gated.

Dr Dawood continued: "The law as it stands is arbitrary and leaves it up to local councils. My experience with Camden has shown me that, without anyone realising it, an army of council officials have started doing a job no-one intended - interpreting the law."

in brief...

- If you were reassured by Theresa Villiers' recent proclamation that the Tories would be abandoning fixed speed cameras (in the event of being elected to government), don't be. What she actually said was that the number of new installations would be reduced, but SPECS cameras would still be used readily in roadworks and "on major roads where there is a specific road safety need". So pretty much anywhere then.

- Guide Dogs (for the Blind) has applied for a judicial review of a shared space scheme which is set to be unveiled on Exhibition Road in West London. The scheme will see kerbs removed, and it's this facet which is leading to the charity taking action.

- More 20mph speed limit zones should be set up around schools and built up areas, new guidance issued to councils in Wales suggests. The assembly government guidance will also look at crash rates on rural roads to see if limits there should be cut. Some road safety campaigners want ministers to go further and establish compulsory 20mph zones near schools.

- Network Rail is transporting 200 staff by coach from Reading to Coventry for a conference because of the high cost of train tickets, it has emerged. The rail operator has opted to shun train travel for road transport as it is more than £24,000 cheaper. If open return tickets were bought for all the staff it could cost up to £27,000 - £135 each. But coach travel, at £12 a head, will cost just £2400.

- An internal police inquiry has begun after an officer threatened to report motorists to insurance companies for leaving valuables on display. South Yorkshire Police said a community support officer devised and distributed a letter to drivers in Doncaster. A force spokesman said the letters had been destroyed and police had no intention of reporting motorists to insurance providers. Ch Insp Andy Kent said police would not contact insurance companies but officers would send advisory letters to the owners of any vehicles in which valuables were spotted.

- The London Borough of Newham is looking into whether some of its bus lanes should be turned into HOV lanes; it's also looking at the hours for which its bus lanes are in operation.

- Speed bumps designed to slow down cyclists are proving controversial in Islington. The humps have been installed on a 250-yard stretch of Douglas Road South, a residential street popular with cyclists.

- A web-based car sharing scheme has been launched which now means the network covers the whole of Wales. The project aims to match up car drivers and passengers willing to share a journey and split the costs. The new north Wales scheme links into three other car-share networks, which its backers claim makes Wales the first country to offer universal coverage. There are 350,000 people already signed up; for more, look at <https://northwales.liftshare.com>

Call to end clamping scam

Bounty hunter wheelclaspers are being paid £50 for every car they immobilise. Private firms are offering the service free to landowners - and are paying their workers commission from the charges they impose to free the vehicle. Norman Baker, the Liberal Democrat Transport spokesman who uncovered the figures, said claspers were being given an 'outrageous' incentive to immobilise vehicles for profit. His party has produced a dossier which shows firms touting for business.

One internet advert for a company named Crown Guarding, operating in the Hertfordshire area but giving only a mobile phone number as a contact, is offering £50 per vehicle commission. It sets a minimum target of 'five clamps per day' and is looking for a clamper 'prepared to work hard and who is hungry to earn money'.

The scandal coincides with a report from the RAC Foundation saying that clamping companies are acting illegally by imposing an exorbitant charge for releasing cars which have been clamped or towed away. The RAC says the law is wrong and 'open to challenge', and that it will support with its evidence any attempt to

challenge it in court.

Both the RAC Foundation and the Liberal Democrats are calling for car clamping on private land to be outlawed altogether, as has been the case since 1992 in Scotland where anyone trying it is guilty of 'extortion'. 'Private land' ranges from pub car parks to derelict lots in city centres and even land belonging to church buildings and community centres.

The Home Office is consulting on a review of clamping legislation and expects to issue a report which will propose compulsory licensing of clamping companies rather than simply their employees.

Baker said: 'It is outrageous that a private company, whose income may be directly related to the number of clamps put on vehicles, can demand huge sums from motorists who may well have committed no offence or infringed no parking conditions. It is quite wrong that there should be financial incentives for private companies to go round clamping vehicles. Clamping should be carried out only by public bodies such as the police or councils, or agents acting for them on a fixed-contract basis.'

rough justice

We're supposed to be reassured that mistakes can't happen in the fining of drivers – but it's all too clear that mistakes *do* happen, and sadly they're not a rare occurrence at all.

As we all know, drivers are guilty until they can prove their own innocence; it's only real criminals who have the luxury of being innocent until proven guilty. Whether it's fines for parking, speeding or using bus lanes, prosecutions are liberally thrown about, and thanks to electronic policing by camera, the inevitable consequence is one miscarriage of justice after another.

When mistakes are uncovered, some overpaid jobsworth can be heard spouting about how the error was a one-off thanks to rigorous checks being made; try telling that to Mike whose story appears at the foot of page 2 of this issue of OTR. Also try telling that to the group of drivers who appeared at Teesside Magistrates Court in April 2009, to have their speeding fines quashed. They were just 11 of over 750 drivers snapped by a camera on the A66 between Darlington and Middlesbrough

last April. Their alleged offences took place after the speed limit on a section of the highway was changed from 70mph to 50mph due to roadworks. But drivers said the sign advising of the new speed limit was placed after the camera, or wasn't there at all.

After hearing from prosecution witness, PC Karl Horowitz from Cleveland Police safety camera unit, District Judge Walker threw the cases out, and said no reasonable jury could possibly bring a conviction. He also told prosecutor Anne Mitchell the Crown's case was in "total disarray".

His damning comments came after a key prosecution witness failed to turn up, and defendants arrived at court without receiving crucial documents from the prosecution team. Figures showed there were only 47 speeding offences in February and 31 in March 2008, when the speed limit was 70mph past the junction. This rose to 756 offences when the speed limit was lowered in April; you'd think somebody, somewhere, might have picked up on this anomaly.

In their defence, the motorists said drivers were unaware of the change in speed limit because no sign had been erected. PC Horowitz confirmed the camera had often run out of film during the first two weeks of April, and was adjusted to only capture motorists travelling at 60mph or above so staff could keep up with the flood of prosecutions. He said he was certain the 50mph signs were in place on April 6 and 8, but admitted he failed to check on the day in question.

A spokesman for the Cleveland Safety Camera Partnership said: "It is the responsibility of the contractors and the Highways Agency for signage during road works. All we can do is check that the signs are in the right place when police officers are present at the scene."



While the episode in Cleveland was down to incompetence – of which there is plenty in evidence nationally – the things that scamera teams get up to can be much more insidious. In summer 2009, Southampton Crown Court threw out a pair of scamera citations after a retired veteran police officer admitted on the stand that he'd falsified official documents used as proof that the tickets were mailed within statutory deadlines. The court concluded that it was an abuse of process for a Hampshire and Isle of Wight scamera partnership employee to backdate documents; the employee said he was acting on direct orders from his superiors.

The case began around five years ago when Michael Halliwell received a NIP that had been dropped in the mail on 27 October 2004. Under UK law, police have just 14 days from the day of the alleged offence to send the notice. In this case, the ticket was mailed one day too late. A scamera employee solved this problem by creating a document that certified that the NIP was mailed on 26 October. Under questioning by Halliwell's attorney, Barry Culshaw, this employee admitted that he filled out the backdated certificate in February 2005.

Halliwell and a second motorist, Barrington Wells, had originally been fighting the NIPs on the grounds that the temporary 30mph signs had been illegally posted. The shocking testimony about the document forgery set aside any need to continue the argument based on signage.

Thousands of additional NIPs may be at risk of being overturned if lawyers can show that falsification of the proof of postage is a widespread practice. The defendants in this case are calling for the Independent Police Complaints Commission to open an investigation into police misconduct. In 2008, a similar inquiry confirmed that 545 innocent motorists had been

convicted of speeding based on falsely certified documents in Lancashire.

The incompetence continues in Essex, where the police force faces paying back £20m in speeding fines after a blunder meant tickets were issued illegally. Hundreds of thousands of drivers could receive refunds and have points taken off their licences as a result; they may even be entitled to compensation if penalty points cost them their jobs or if they took time off work to attend speed awareness courses.

The error involves part of the 1988 Road Traffic Offenders Act that says any civilian worker sending out penalty letters must have signed legal authority from the chief constable. It has emerged that an employee at Essex Police's enforcement office may never have received authorisation from Chief Constable Roger Baker. The force catches around 74,200 motorists a year on its 101 speed cameras, plus its hand-held and average-speed cameras. The mistake dates back four years, so could affect up to 300,000 motorists who have paid fines totalling around £20m.

In theory, the mistake affects only those who contested their fines in court. But lawyer Nick Freeman, known as Mr Loophole, said if the error is proved it could open the gates to motorists who opted to pay fines, as they had pleaded guilty unaware that the evidence was false.

However, Jeanette Miller, president of the Association of Motor Offence Lawyers, has warned it might be difficult to reverse penalties, even if the force had failed to follow the law. She said that while speeding cases have been won on the issue of authorisation, "often magistrates will find a way to rule that a ticket office employee has implied authority."

Essex Police refused to say how the problem came to light, only confirming that it had been discussed at a recent crisis meeting between senior officers and Essex CPS. A spokesman said: "We are investigating allegations of a procedural error relating to certain offences of exceeding the speed limit. We are liaising with the CPS to see if there is an issue and, if so, the extent of that error."

Meanwhile, North Wales Police are in the process of writing to around 300 drivers who were given speeding tickets in error. It followed the discovery that a mistake was made over speed limits on a stretch of road near Bala, Gwynedd. It was understood that the B4391 near the town's industrial estate had been reclassified to a 30mph zone in 1993. But following inquiries from a member of the public, it emerged that the regulation had not been made – and the limit was still officially 40mph.

All the speeding tickets date from 1 March 2009, when a mobile speed camera unit began operations in the area, after it had been identified as an area of concern. A police spokesman

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

explained: "At that time it was believed that the speed limit in force was 30mph following a revision by Gwynedd County Council in 1993 of the traffic order which had previously designated that stretch of the B4391 as a 40mph limit. Following an inquiry by a member of the public, Gwynedd County Council carried out a review of the relevant road traffic order and discovered that the original road traffic order had not been revoked."

In August, the council told police about the issue and speed enforcement activities in the area were immediately suspended.

"Despite a system of street lighting properly reflecting a 30mph speed limit, the section of the road was still in fact the subject of a 40mph speed restriction," added North Wales Police. The force estimates that between 1 March and 31 July around 300 drivers were captured on camera travelling over 30mph.

"Given that the original order had not been revoked by the council there was no basis to proceed with the enforcement of any traffic offences," said the police force. "Accordingly, North Wales Police have today written to the drivers involved to rectify the situation."

Officers say they are also investigating the legality of a "very small number" of other alleged speeding offences on the same stretch of road over the last five years. North Wales Police said all those caught up in the speeding issue will be given advice on what steps to take next, and are being asked not to contact the force on its general telephone line.

It's not just speeding fines that has thrown the system into confusion though, because a driver suspected of drink driving has had charges of failing to provide a breath sample dropped, in a case that could have implications for thousands of other drivers convicted of the offence.

Leon De Jager was astonished when he was charged with failure to provide a sample after blowing into a breathalyser machine exactly as was told by police. But the case was dropped after Driving Defences, a specialist road traffic law firm, proved that officers had incorrectly fitted a one-way valve into the breathalyser machine, making it impossible for the driver to provide a sample.

Every year thousands of drivers who are suspected by the police of driving while under the influence of alcohol are banned from driving because they fail to give a breath test at a police station. Failure to provide a breath test when asked by a police officer carries an automatic two-year driving ban.

De Jager, who had been stopped by police while driving back home from a friend's house late at night in May 2008, said: "I couldn't understand

it. It didn't matter how hard I blew, it didn't register my breath. The police thought that I was deliberately avoiding the test and charged me - I couldn't believe it. I even asked for another chance so that I could prove that I wasn't over the limit. But the police weren't interested. They said that I'd had my chance. They just wanted to charge me with failure to provide."

The case against De Jager was dropped in December 2008 when legal experts at Driving Defences asked to see the valve through which he had attempted to give the breath

test. A simple DNA test carried by the CPS revealed that he had been blowing through the wrong end.

Martin Hammond, a principal at the firm, said the case meant thousands more drivers may have grounds for appealing against convictions. The problem lies in the mouthpiece," he said. "It is designed to allow air to pass in only one direction. But we have shown that with a breath testing machine used by many of country's police forces, the mouthpiece can easily be inserted into the device the wrong way. This means that no matter how hard they try, it's impossible for innocent motorists to provide a specimen. If they are charged with failure to provide a sample, drivers can face more serious consequences than drink driving itself. Thousands of motorists could have been wrongly convicted and they can now appeal."

Some of the biggest forces in the country, such as the Met, use the same breathalyser. Out of 32 forces, five forces use a breathalyser with the same mouth piece. The others are Essex, Cheshire, Suffolk and Sussex. Eleven forces declined to say which type of breathalyser they use.

At least 17,189 motorists were tested across the five forces last year, although the number is likely to be much higher. The Metropolitan police used the kit to test around 12,800 people who were arrested after failing or refusing a roadside breath test.

Since 2001 around 8000 drivers a year have been banned from driving for failing to "provide a specimen for analysis (breath, blood or urine)". In 2007, the last year for which figures are available, 8232 drivers were banned.

Bus lanes are causing problems too, as more than 18,000 fines handed to motorists caught

driving in bus lanes in Manchester were illegal, the local authority has admitted. The drivers were all caught out by cameras between October 2006 and May 2007 – before they were approved for use in bus lanes. Manchester City Council believed the cameras could be retrospectively certified – but lawyers ruled it out. It could now face a payout of more than £544,000 to drivers who were caught. All bus lane cameras in the city have had DfT approval since 24 December 2008.

The uncertified cameras came to light during a review of its bus lane enforcement. People who think they have been issued with a penalty charge notice by one of the cameras during the relevant period has been advised to contact the council.

The grief imposed on drivers continues with parking fines worth £32,000 being written off by St Albans District Council, because of an error on a legal document. A tribunal investigating a claim against a £50 ticket ruled that it was invalid as legal wording had not been updated; the council has since decided to write off 1621 penalty charge notices.

The tickets were issued at off-street car parks between 31 March 2008 and 5 November 2009. The council said officers usually budgeted to recover 75% of the fines. People who have already paid the fines are considered to have admitted liability, although since the error was revealed four people have submitted requests for refunds. The requests are currently being considered.

Neil Herron, founder of the campaign group Parking Appeals, said: "In 2004, when the council went from a criminalised to a decriminalised system, they didn't change the status and the wording on the traffic order to take into account that it's the driver and not the registered keeper who's responsible. It's a major, major blunder".

He said that he has written to Daniel Goodwin, the council's chief executive, telling him the council must suspend parking enforcement of off-street car parks. He has also asked for all pay and display machines to be covered up.

None of these instances of bureaucratic blunders is exceptional any more; mass prosecution (and persecution) by camera has led to one error after another – errors which often affect thousands of drivers. Look in any issue of *OTR* and you'll read about many more mistakes of the same magnitude and gravity but there's one thing you can be sure of. No matter how much time is wasted and no matter how many lives are thrown into disarray by the negligent actions of local authorities, it'll continue in exactly the same vein.



The ABD's new campaign directors, Brian Mooney and Brian MacDowall, have been busy on your behalf. Here's just a taster of what they've been up to over the past few months...

Battle lines drawn in London

In September, I was contacted out of the blue by the Evening Standard. They asked if I was willing to write a letter on behalf of the ABD about a breaking story. Apparently, the Mayor of London, Boris Johnson, was going back on his pledge to heed opinion on abolishing the Western Extension Zone (WEZ) of the Congestion Charge. However their story didn't quite sound right, so I decided to check. It took over two hours to establish the facts. By then it was too late for a letter, but at least we weren't 'on time but wrong' like another group I could mention!

Meanwhile furious Standard readers logged comments against Boris for 'adopting Livingstone's policies'. The Mayor's office blamed a crossed wire, but some quarters suspected that a 'leak' might have been arranged to test public reaction.

Two weeks later, the Mayor's Transport Strategy (MTS) was issued for consultation; deadline 12 January. Thirteen weeks isn't generous time-wise, particularly with the Christmas break, and a 350-page document to read! Fortunately, a long train journey gave me the chance to read the MTS, which contained several worrying proposals.

For instance, it sought to restrict car access to residential areas under the excuse of encouraging cycling. It hyped emission-based parking charges and other road user charges to get people out of their cars, and even floated the idea of London-wide road pricing.

ABD's London contact, Roger Lawson, also made time to read the document, and we both presented our views to a London members' meeting. ABD's Campaign Director Brian Macdowall had the idea of using a special newsletter to get ABD members to complain. London is seen as a test-bed for PC measures intended for wider use.

'OTR Live' came out in early November and was sent to all members on email nationally. As a one-off, a printed copy was sent to London members not on email, urging them to respond by post.

As part of our commitment to help more members become active, we produced two substantial webpages. The first was a compact

response to the worst points in the MTS; the second contained a number of standard letters that a non-expert could read and adapt. Think of it as a DIY response kit.

With these foundations in place, it was time to step up the attack! With Roger unfortunately sidelined with a health issue, and not readily contactable, I had to think of a game plan. In spite of one-off media coverage in October, very few people were aware of this consultation. This is a far cry from the



2008 consultation on the WEZ, marked by energetic debate and a campaign by the West London Residents' Association (WLRA).

WLRA had fought plans for the WEZ from the outset, but in spite of receiving the ABD's research, their Chairman Gordon Taylor stubbornly wanted a different type of road pricing. Fortunately, he seems in a minority of one on that in WLRA, so I approached their other leading members through the back door. They were pleased that the ABD was leading the current fight back.

I hadn't noticed much advertising; Boris's Transport for London (TFL) seemed to prefer keeping this consultation low-key and giving out biased consultation leaflets at roadshows. Unsuspecting readers were being invited to tick boxes rubber-stamping TFL's priorities, and answer a leading question on whether they supported 'fair' demand management – read 'road pricing'.

In what is clearly going to be a 'numbers game', the plan had to be to go for the widest possible publicity and the widest response. ABD came up with a punchy 'Daylight Robbery' leaflet [picturing a Boris-like

highwayman] to go out in thousands. To enable even wider response, readers of the leaflet were encouraged to ask for their own supply to give out.

Warmest thanks to ABD members who have helped us to get them out across London. Although we are covering as many areas as possible, the slice from North Battersea up to the Westway was picked as a special target area; many will be motivated to respond by the prospect of scrapping the WEZ.

Some of the Tories I approached for help didn't even acknowledge – could it have been not wanting to rock the boat with a Tory Mayor, or were they responding softly-softly? Time will tell...

An honourable exception was my local council, Hammersmith & Fulham, which used the front page of the residents' newspaper to seek consultation responses abolishing the WEZ.

This article is necessarily being written to OTR's copy deadline. Suffice it to say that we are about to engage with the media in a big way. Apart from sending letters to all the local papers, we approached various

motor magazines – none seemed aware of the consultation.

The battle will go to the wire in January, as we will be using the biased consultation and the formal ABD response as PR opportunities and a chance to approach TV and radio stations. We haven't forgotten those with something to lose like car dealers, residents' and business groups.

We will be urging what supporters we can muster to keep pushing the message to respond; never forget that advertising works through repetition. Someone under the cosh of a Christmas deadline might not respond in December, but they might when prompted again.

ABD has had to get together a campaign on a far shorter timescale than the Manchester referendum, but there is everything to play for. Sometimes you make your own luck.....

•Brian Mooney acts as London Media Spokesman for ABD. For London campaign information, see www.fairdealabd.org.uk/campaign.htm

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...



Big Mac on the move

ABD director, Brian Macdowall, has been travelling up and down the country on ABD business this year. So far he's been to Portsmouth (speed cameras), Cambridge (congestion charging), the north east of England (members' meeting) and London (strategy and members' meetings). Here he reports from his own neck of the woods (Kent) on a new parking campaign in the Medway towns.

"Towns with viciously enforced parking regimes are too numerous to mention. The Medway towns in Kent, (Strood, Rochester, Chatham and Gillingham) have, since they were formed into a unitary authority, imposed a crackdown on drivers. Acres of yellow lines have been added, restrictions apply from 8am to 10pm, seven days each week, while Smart cars, with what looks like a small periscope on the roof, roams the district from morning till night, photographing any parking infringement the operators can find without leaving the safety of their car. This occurs, even though the car itself is often parked illegally – and sometimes dangerously – parked. Discretion? Forget it; vicious enforcement is the order of the day.

As you can see from the enclosed press cuttings, residents are furious at the hardline treatment meted out to them. Local member, Pete Nassan, has consistently written to the Council and local media highlighting and complaining about the vicious enforcement system there.

Since the current ruling Conservative group on the council was re-elected with a larger majority, they have repaid voters' trust by buying a second Smart car to add to drivers' woes.

In the financial year 2007-08, revenue from notices issued by remote monitoring were £205,654, which the council claims goes back into road safety schemes. Meanwhile, parking across the towns generated £2,954,515 in the same year.

As Peter says: "CCTV cars don't tell people to move; they sit and wait until two weeks later, drivers get a notice in the post. They are not there to promote road safety, but to make money for the Council. There are so many empty business units, because people don't want to come here. Many people shop on impulse, but you can't be impulsive, if you're tied to a time".



Following the launch of the Fair Deal campaign, Brian Mooney and I designed a leaflet aimed at the Medway towns, calling for an end to the witch-hunt of drivers.

We listed several bullet points, calling for the first four hours of street parking to be free to encourage trade, scrapping the Smart cars and no charges for parking from 5pm to 8am.

Brian Mooney got 4500 leaflets printed which were delivered locally; this generated a response rate of about 35 per thousand, which is far in excess of what many advertisers running commercial campaigns achieve. The campaign also generated several articles in the local press and a high number of respondents to the campaign, which we are following up. We now have a meeting arranged with the leader of the opposition on Medway Council.

Parking is an excellent subject for Fair Deal campaigns generating a high degree of public support. If you have a vicious parking regime in your town and want to do something about it contact either Brian Mooney or Brian Macdowall as soon as possible. (See back of OTR)

in brief...

•If you've been caught out by Sheffield's poorly signed 'Wicker' bus gate, and been stung with a fine, look at www.wickerjustice.org, which John Simpson has written in about. It tells why the system is flawed – and why the local authority has had to suspend enforcement activities twice.

•**Nigel Humphries** appeared on BBC Radio Manchester recently to talk about proposals to introduce fixed penalties for careless driving. Nigel talked about an over-reliance on huge numbers of fixed penalties for absolute offences irrespective of the circumstances, which has alienated the public from the police; we want the police to target dangerous behaviour, but fixed penalties aren't the solution, as it downgrades careless driving to the same discredited level as speed penalties. Also, the charge is subjective - it gives the police the power to issue a fixed penalty to anyone whenever they like - and going to court is not an option for most because of the costs.

•**Malcolm Heymer** has spotted that in *Road Casualties GB 2008*, in the table on contributory factors, it shows that six fatal, 29 serious and 141 slight accidents had traffic calming as a factor. Perhaps 2008 was a particularly bad year, but the number of fatalities is high as a proportion of the total, compared with other causal factors. These figures are accidents, not casualties, so it can't be attributed to one accident with multiple fatalities. Presumably the figures refer to accidents happening at the location of a traffic calming feature and not those caused indirectly, such as through failures caused by repeated driving over humps or cushions. The relevant table is on page 44 of RCGB 2008; a summary of the report is at <http://tinyurl.com/yctnpau>

•**Chris Ward** has spotted some useful data at <http://tinyurl.com/ydzrqvg> – it's a list of causes of death in 2008 and 2007. The transport total is 2676, yet 3459 people were killed in falls and 3438 people committed suicide. Why then is the government so fanatical about road safety and when did we last see warnings about falling?

BBC's easy ride for road pricing advocates

When the ABD recently received an enquiry from the BBC *Today* programme about road pricing in Cambridge, asking us to participate in an early-morning recording there, we managed to arrange the local Chamber of Commerce man at short notice. John Bridge gave a good account of the blackmail proposal, while Graham Hughes of Cambs County Council (whose 'independent' report pushed road pricing) was equivocal.

However the BBC then turned to Prof Glaister

of RACF who gave a slimy plug for road pricing, using insulting comments like "If you don't charge, you don't get sensible use". Apparently, the problem was that the government hadn't explained itself well, and pay-as-you-drive road pricing would 'restore trust'. The BBC then wheeled out Louise Ellman MP of the Transcom committee, who talked up 'voluntary' road pricing as an alternative to existing taxes without much explanation.

The BBC gave both Glaister and Ellman an easy ride. You would have expected an opponent of

road pricing to have been in the studio, but even though the BBC was in contact with me only the day before, they didn't mention this debate to me. A quick look at http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/uk_politics/8165606.stm suggests that Glaister has parroted the Transcom report's line on trust. The page is worth reading for the strange comments alone. But make no mistake; road pricing is still very much on the agenda, and the government still hopes to soften up the public by whatever means.

Brian Mooney

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

ABD in major Goodwill gesture

After a round of correspondence, Brian Macdowall and I met with Robert Goodwill MP, the Shadow Roads Minister to put the ABD point of view across. The meeting was basically exploratory, so we're not making hard and fast conclusions. Time pressure on the day meant that our slot had to be squeezed into about 30 minutes, so it wasn't possible to cover a wide range of topics in depth.

In introducing the ABD, we mentioned media demand both for interviews and help in tabling questions to other panellists; our influence is greater than our numbers. I recalled with pleasure our Chairman's article in his local paper, the *Yorkshire Post*.

There was near agreement on a number of points; we struck a chord on getting roads opened more quickly after an accident, and the need for highways authorities to repair potholed roads properly in the interest of all road users. Quick fixes may appear cheaper, but cost more in the long run.

He was quick to denounce the Nottingham Workplace Parking Levy as a tax on employment, and only seemed to favour road pricing for trucks. He strongly favoured a scheme that might address the "government losing £400m a year in revenue because foreign trucks don't fill up in the UK" – he felt that such a scheme would require foreign trucks to pay something for using our roads, and might be linked to an essential user rebate on fuel duty or VED.

When quizzed about this raising suspicions of wider road pricing moves, he denied that there were plans for comprehensive road pricing, mentioning the '1.8 million' petition and 'political suicide'.

There was less agreement on speed limits; although he favoured raising speed limits for trucks on slower roads, he seemed to like the ATM experiment that would maintain flow in rush hours, albeit at 50mph. This implies more average speed cameras. He seems less keen on 20mph zones, but unlike his predecessors, will not consider an 80mph speed limit on motorways.

Although he did not support 'shared space', he was looking forward to Boris Johnson's 'traffic management' experiments in London, and as a cyclist, welcomed some of the cycling measures. He seems to listen to Boris's adviser, Kulveer Ranger, and particularly to the DfT/Highways Agency line; pre-handover chats often take place in the run-up to a general election.

We extended our time ration by ten minutes, so must have made some impression. I will also be taking up his invitation to keep writing to him. First, I would like to know the truck scheme will level the playing field between UK/foreign hauliers; if a rebate is given only to UK hauliers, would it be ruled as against EU law, like the 'Britdisc' proposal? Secondly, if 'comprehensive' road pricing is not party policy, how would he reconcile comments favouring tolls reported against Shadow Transport Secretary Theresa Villiers and Shadow Construction Minister Mark Prisk?

The window of opportunity before the party manifesto is finalised might be quite tight, so we may need to move fast if we are to influence policy. Making best use of road capacity and achieving value for money are burning concerns. I welcome any reasoned suggestions, so please feel free to contact me.

Brian Mooney

The ABD is busier than ever making contacts and lobbying on your behalf. This is just a tiny fraction of the meetings since the last issue of OTR.

Building bridges

Peter Roberts, from the Drivers' Alliance recently met with the ABD to explore areas of cooperation in order to get wider publicity for drivers' causes. This resulted in a study showing that spending on the railways is virtually the same as for the UK's road network. A subsequent Taxpayers' Alliance press release brought sharp criticism from the Campaign for Better Transport and other rail groups, including Network Rail.

But the DA research was very thorough; for years anti-motoring groups (including the Government) have constantly produced so-called 'research' or studies, pretending that rail pays its way. As Peter says: "Is it no coincidence then, that companies operating public transport services fund lobby groups who regularly call for road pricing, congestion charging, parking restrictions with heavy handed parking enforcement, lower and rigidly enforced speed limits, road closures and traffic calming measures all designed to increase the cost of running a car and make the use of a car less attractive".

We intend to capitalise on this prejudice against drivers in the run-up to the general election as part of our *Fair Deal for the Motorist* campaign.

After all who is it that pays £46bn a year and gets just £8.3bn back? UK drivers, that's who – and we want a fair deal. We don't instead want to be subsidising infrastructure improvements in public transport when our own infrastructure – the UK road network – is so appallingly under-developed.

- www.fairdealabd.org.uk
- www.driversalliance.org.uk
- www.taxpayersalliance.com

The charities that are less independent than you might think...

Following on from a similar article in the last OTR, the Taxpayers' Alliance has been delving further into the murky world of lobby group funding and came up with a big list of taxpayer funded campaigns which should be cut. So the next time you're told that an independent body is overseeing something, see if they're on this list, which shows tells all about just how much cash they're getting from the government. For the full report, take a look at www.taxpayersalliance.com/tfipc.pdf

Think tanks:

New Economics Foundation: £601,518
Demos: £553,004
Institute for Public Policy Research: £350,330
New Local Government Network: £117,972

Campaigns for health policy/lifestyle changes:

Alcohol Concern: £515,000
Sustain: £380,508
National Heart Forum: £315,000
Action on Smoking and Health: £191,000
Living Streets: £150,000
Family Planning Association: £130,000
Alliance House Foundation and the Institute for Alcohol Studies: £76,236
Consensus Action on Salt & Health: £23,500

Environmental campaigns:

Sustainable Development Commission: £4.1m
Forum for the Future: £1.6m
Campaign for Better Transport (Transport 2000): £417,210
The Climate Group: £186,523

Friends of the Earth: £153,994

The Green Alliance: £137,120
UK Public Health Association: £84,090
People and Planet: £73,833
Women's Environmental Network: £25,725
Islamic Foundation for Ecology and Environmental Sciences: £3,500

Trade associations:

Local Government Association: £14.8m
NHS Confederation: £7.0m
Association of Police Authorities: £1.4m

These groups do some real work for the public sector, so the figures above are only the membership subscription fees from public sector organisations paying for representation).

WeatherAction: why Copenhagen is a fudge

On 28 October, Malcolm Heymer attended a conference in London organised by Weather Action, which produces long-range weather forecasts based on an understanding of the influence of solar magnetic activity on the Earth's weather and climate. Its founder, astrophysicist Piers Corbyn, is a leading opponent of the man-made climate change hypothesis. He chose the date for the conference to mark the first anniversary of the Climate Change Bill passing its third reading in the House of Commons – a date he has dubbed 'Climate Fools Day'.

The purpose of the conference was to present the scientific evidence refuting the claim that CO2 emissions are causing global warming, and for Piers to explain a little about the solar weather technique used by Weather Action to produce its forecasts. Several eminent scientists gave presentations, and remote contributions were made by Joe D'Aleo of the American Meteorological Society and Dr Kirill Kuzanyan, a Russian solar physicist who gave his presentation from Beijing! A message of support was read out from Viscount Monckton.

Physicist Peter Gill explained that only 26 gigatonnes (Gt) of CO2 enter the atmosphere each year from human activity, out of the 770 Gt that exchange annually between the oceans and atmosphere. There are 2,700 Gt of CO2 in the atmosphere in total. He also claimed that the real concentration of CO2 in the atmosphere in pre-industrial times was 335 parts per million (ppm), not the 290 ppm claimed. The difference is because of known under-recording of CO2 concentrations in ice cores.

Professor Philip Hutchinson, an energy expert, gave a bleak prognosis about Britain's future energy security. He described the government's current energy policy as based on faith, hope and charity – faith in renewable energy, hope that the Middle East would remain stable and Russia would not turn off the gas tap, and charity that other countries would sell us energy (no doubt at exorbitant prices) when faith and hope failed! He explained that there was more oil in the North Sea that could be recovered, but oil companies do not find it commercially viable to look for it

under current government terms. He predicted major blackouts from 2016. The only hope of plugging the energy gap in the time available was to build more coal-fired power stations, but there was little indication the government would be prepared to face down the greens.

Naturalist David Bellamy explained how he and fellow presenters Julian Pettifer and Robin Page were sacked by the BBC for their rejection of man-made warming. Polar bears were increasing in numbers, not declining, largely because of good wildlife management. He and other conservationists had managed to persuade the Inuit not to shoot the things! He described the recent 'bedtime story' alarmist TV commercial as 'absolute trash'. (At the time of writing, over 650 complaints about the advert had been received by the Advertising Standards Authority.)

Joe D'Aleo stated that sea level rise had levelled off since 2005. His very informative website is at www.icecap.us. Kyrill Kuzanyan explained the difficulties of predicting the intensity of future solar cycles. His best estimate was that the period of cooling we are currently entering would be similar to that of the Dalton Minimum of the early 19th century, rather than the Maunder Minimum of the 17th century that produced the Little Ice Age. Even so, there was likely to be a general cooling until 2030 or beyond, to 1970 levels or below, and temperatures would remain below those of the recent peak for at least 100 years.

Piers Corbyn explained how bursts of particles and ultraviolet radiation from the sun affect the Earth's weather. Standard meteorology regards the climate as a closed system and ignores these external influences. For this reason, conventional weather forecasts become progressively less reliable more than 48 hours ahead. The solar weather technique involves studying past solar events and the weather patterns that were generated by them, and compares these with current solar activity to create forecasts.

Piers also explained that the moon had an influence on the 60-year cycles of warming and cooling, although the precise mechanism was still being investigated. He believes that recorded climate changes can only be explained by a

combination of the 22-year solar Hale cycle and the cycle of the moon's changing orbit around the Earth.

The final speaker was Northern Ireland MP Sammy Wilson, who had been Environment Minister for the province until he was the victim of a vote of no confidence because of his sceptical views on man-made warming. He confided, however, that he had received the support of the Pope, but he did not often publicise this as he is a Unionist MP!

A huge amount of information was presented at the conference in a fairly short time, so it was impossible to make detailed notes about everything. By the time this article appears in print, hopefully most (if not all) the presentations will be available on the Weather Action website (www.weatheraction.com). Anyone interested in the subject is recommended to take a look for themselves.

Just gotta get a message to you...

As a national campaign group, staying in touch via email is an effective way to get our message across. Since the electronic version of OTR started going out, many more of you have been in touch updating us with your current email address. This is very important, especially when long-running postal disputes cause delays to the posting of printed OTRs; this happened to us in 2009, when several members didn't receive a notice about the AGM until the Monday after the meeting.

Notice was published in *OTR91*, issued in March, and an email was sent out four days before the event on ABD Action. Proofs were dispatched to the printer in good time. This underlines how important it is that the ABD has a current valid email address for every member so we can notify you of any last-minute changes. If you haven't been in touch with us for some time, please notify the Membership Secretary of your current email address and any other contact details.

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 Brian MacDowall (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 Terry Hudson – 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.

Last year, the number of deaths caused by drink driving went up rather than down. One quote I've seen in response to this was: "It is disappointing to see a five per cent rise in the number of people killed in crashes involving illegal alcohol levels, particularly in a year which saw overall road deaths fall by nearly fourteen per cent", by Eleanor Besley, policy and research officer with the Parliamentary Advisory Council for Transport Safety. She added:

"I dare say it is a blip and we hope that last year's figures represent the real trend and that drink related road deaths is still on a downward curve."

Is that the basis of Labour's road safety policy then - hoping for the best?

Also in response, Theresa Villiers is quoted as saying: "Labour's over-reliance with speed cameras has left their strategy for preventing road collisions seriously flawed. Drink driving is one of the most important road safety issues where cameras simply cannot help."

I hope she remembers that if/when the Tories get elected.

From the ABD forum

The real cost of trains is the opportunity lost; something usually overlooked. For example, even in central London and in the peak hour, the surface rail network is, in highway terms, scarcely used. Some 250,000 surface rail

Give us a quote

"In the last hundred years the car has done more for human freedom, I venture to suggest, than the aeroplane, penicillin, the telephone and the contraceptive pill put together."
Boris Johnson, 2007

commuters alight at central London terminals in the peak hour. There are 25 pairs of tracks. Hence the flow per inbound track is 10,000. The 10,000 could all find seats in 150 75-seat coaches, sufficient to occupy one seventh of the capacity of one lane of a motor road the same width as required by a train. Outside the peak the network is a place of dreams – go visit the platforms of any central London terminal at lunch time.

Paved, this 10,000-mile long network would remove countless lorries and other vehicles from the unsuitable city streets and rural roads that they now clog, all crushed rail commuters would have seats and at one quarter the cost of the train.

The idea that the railways are too narrow is silly. On the approaches to towns and cities there is usually width enough for four or six lanes. A double-track railway offers a clear width of 24 feet in tunnels, the same as the carriageway of a trunk road. Elsewhere the level width is 28 feet except on bends where it is wider.

Paul Withrington, Transport-watch

I'd like to comment on the letter from Dave Razzell in *OTR93*, which criticises the IAM. The IAM is, as far as I know, the only organisation which actually improves driving competence. The overwhelming majority of drivers have had no input into their driving skills after taking the driving test; as a result, there is never an opportunity to address bad driving habits and attitudes which build up over the years.

I recently passed the advanced driving test at 73, and I was taken aback at how many such habits I had without realising it. Now, I am proud to sport the IAM logo on my windscreen as I know that I am a better, safer driver. Ask drivers to rate their competence behind the wheel and a majority will rate themselves as 'above average' or 'good' which is, of course, a statistical nonsense, but it does highlight the fact there is a clear need for further input to driving skills. For my part, I would like to see all drivers take the IAM advanced test. Yes, Dave, everyone involved in transport has an obligation to keep our roads as safe as can reasonably be expected, but it is only drivers, motorcyclists, cyclists and

Those of you who drive in Oxfordshire will know that Oxfordshire County Council frequently uses 'traffic calming' as a speed reduction measure and to discourage drivers from using certain roads. The Council calls roads like these - the roads people use to get to work, to go shopping and home to their families - 'rat runs'.

In my own village in West Oxfordshire we have had 'calming' imposed on each of the four 'rat runs' into the village. The reason? Pressure from some residents that traffic was too fast. Accident history certainly didn't give a reason for engineering measures - 12 injury accidents in 5 years, none speed-related - but 'fear of speeding traffic' was thought significant enough to justify pinch-points and chicanes.

According to some villagers, Bampton's calming has caused more crashes in its first six months than the village had seen in five years. It certainly caused many column-inches and minutes of airtime discussion in the local press. Interestingly, the Council denies there have been any crashes. They also claimed a full risk-assessment has been carried out, verifying the scheme's safety.

The results? We don't know. No surveys were carried out before the calming was imposed, so it's hard to measure the results. What we can see is the broken glass, bits of bodywork and scraped posts in the traffic calming. So, with a success like Bampton behind them, the County Council wasn't shy about imposing a similar scheme (this time with speed bumps too) in Crawley. This is a rural area with a few houses, a village pub and a



small road leading to the ruins of Minster Lovell Hall, a historic monument.

Crawley, like Bampton, has no history of speed-related crashes, but 'fear of traffic' was a concern for some residents. This was enough for the County Council to install the concrete, posts, lights, signs and humps in the pictures. They also imposed more bumps, a chicane and narrowing on the 1:6 hill leaving the village.

The new scheme was quick to claim its first victim, less than three months after it was imposed. As far as I'm aware this is the first crash in Crawley for some years. You can see the results in the pictures. Some local residents are already worried about how many more cars will crash on the humps, particularly as the Council has placed the scheme on a steep, narrow lane which often isn't gritted in winter. As a motorcyclist, I have strong views about the scheme; although we're technically 'vulnerable road users', the views of riders don't count when it comes to motorcycle-unfriendly calming.

It seems odd that these safety schemes, designed

to slow vehicles through conflict, cause crashes instead. It seems equally odd that attractive, historic, rural villages, often with significant conservation areas, merit the same grey concrete, steel posts, galvanised streetlights and tarmac as urban areas. The lack of statistical and scientific basis for the schemes seems even odder.

The default response from most Councils now appears to be "stick in the limit/calming/bumps/camera and damn the evidence or drivers' opinions." In neighbouring Buckinghamshire a consultation exercise on imposing a 40mph limit on a clear, straight length of previously national speed limited road was split 50:50. The Council's response? "Because there was no clear majority view in the consultation responses it was felt that the views of the local community should be given particular consideration and that a 40mph speed limit be introduced." So, there we have it. Sound scientific, unbiased evidence.

One wonders whether the politicisation of road safety might have some influence. After all, a councillor faced with a committee of residents railing about 'fear of speeding traffic' rapidly sees voters fleeing to his rivals. This means he must do something and, more importantly, be seen to be doing something. Of course, shared space schemes would be far more effective in reducing speeds and enhancing the environment. But one can't help but suspect - as another apparently spitefully designed bump scheme is imposed on Wallingford in Oxfordshire - if the aim of some schemes is more to punish 'rat running' drivers than reduce speeds.

Mark McArthur-Christie

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

I received an interesting ABD mailing this morning, Mon 20-7-09. It contained OTR92 and the AGM notice for the meeting which took place the previous Saturday. This is a serious matter, as it means that an ABD member not on email would only get notice of the meeting after it took place. May we know when these letters were sent out; it should have been in time for them to arrive at least two weeks before the meeting, and preferably four weeks beforehand.

Peter Morgan

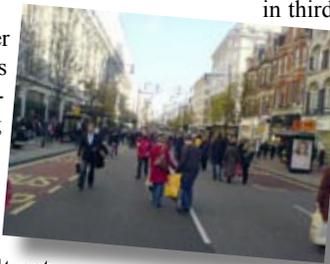
pedestrians who cause accidents so we must not be lured into regarding motorists as saints.

Chris Morris

Member of IAM and ABD

I can't disagree with what you say Chris, and as an ex-Iam Observer I think the group does good work. However, I left the IAM in 2008 because of its political correctness. The final straw came when it came out very much in favour of Intelligent Speed Adaptation – a technology which will take control away from the driver. More recently, the IAM supported Government proposals to introduce blanket speed limit reductions which will see 20mph and 50mph limits all over the place. If that isn't the IAM losing sight of its core aims, I don't know what is. Ed

On Saturday 5 December 2009 the West End was transformed into a huge car-free pedestrian shopping extravaganza in the traffic free shopping day London event. For only the fifth time in London's history the whole of Oxford Street



was closed to traffic for a day of entertainment, shopping and festivities. After considerable success in the previous traffic-free shopping days, the pedestrian shopping day returned again for the 2009 Christmas season. Letting pedestrians reclaim Oxford Street and Regent Street, the traffic-free shopping day London event promised to be a day of hassle-free shopping for Londoners. There was lots of entertainment on show including a range of VIP treats, games and activities for kids and families, and the very best live music. Nearby Bond Street also joined in with shopping promotions and special events.

Presumably the idiots in charge expected families with lots of children or presents to carry to leg it whereas they might have stopped for a

In court, if someone has a good case they present the facts. If they have a poor one, they attack the credibility of the other side's witnesses. I'm a scientist by training but not a specialist climatologist, and I have an opinion. But my view is not relevant.

What I see is most climate sceptics trying to argue based on the facts and the alarmists using every trick in the book to silence them – preventing open debate, misrepresenting

OTR91, published in March, gave warning of the date of the AGM, while an email was sent out four days before the event to everyone on ABD Action; such an exercise proves how important it is that the ABD has a valid email address for as many members as possible. Importantly, the last edition of OTR was delivered extremely late thanks to the Royal Mail, which appeared to sit on some copies for a fortnight before delivering them. The proofs were despatched to the printer in good time and everything was despatched from the printer in good time. Ed

taxi outside Hamleys? They should have called it mobility-free day, as even buses were taken off the road. Probably not good news for those who had to lug their load to a bus stop 10 or 15 minutes away.

Brian Mooney

The press has carried reports recently of a fatuous proposal by Labour MP Colin Challen to reduce the national speed limit to 55mph, because he seems to think that this would effect a reduction in vehicle emissions.

I think we should be able to prove that a modern car is actually more economical and produces less emissions for a given distance, if driven faster. My 2009 car has six gears and I've found that the engine runs at 1500 rpm at 30mph in third gear, at 40mph in fourth, at 50mph in fifth and 60mph in sixth.

Therefore the car would cover 10 miles at 60mph in 10 minutes in sixth gear. At the other end of the scale, it would cover 10 miles at 30mph in 20 minutes in third gear, thus running the engine at the same rpm for twice as long and so using twice as much fuel for a given distance.

I challenge anyone to find a flaw in this argument, and so I recommend that the ABD should use this approach when opposing speed limit cuts on environmental grounds. "Go faster to save fuel."

Now there's a slogan to upset all the busybodies and control freaks!

Peter Horton.

Boris Johnson may have to ban cars from central London for an unspecified number of days in order to ensure Britain's capital city hits mandatory EU requirements on clean air. If the targets are missed London could be hit by a fine of £300m - costing the average London council taxpayer £15 more for one year.

opponents' arguments, claiming vested interests are the motivation for scepticism, drawing false parallels with areas where sceptics were wrong (smoking), claiming a false consensus, marginalising and ruining individuals who stand in their way.

This scientific totalitarianism is only possible when the press fails in its duty to force a debate – which is why ABD members must intervene.

Paul Biggs

Shorts

The June issue of Government Computing mag features David Cameron on government waste. He gives an example: "the £90,000 wasted on pot plants in the Department of Transport" Either that was a misprint ('potted'?) or we now know what hallucinogenic substance our decision makers have been on!

Brian Mooney

I took a call from BBC Radio Bristol this morning. They thought I was the spokesman for the Association of Bus Drivers! I've never driven a bus and the last time I went in one was, I think, 1965!

Hugh Bladon

There is currently an advert on LBC Radio claiming that asbestos kills more people in a year than are killed on the roads, never heard that before but it must be right I heard it on the radio!

Robert Bolt

Boris is talking about banning cars from central London, to meet clean air requirements (see letter to the left). How about bus & lorry free days instead? Better still, do what our European neighbours do and ignore the laws we don't like?

Chris Burjmaster

Apprently, 10 times more money is spent on road safety than suicide prevention, even though more people kill themselves than die on the roads. There were 5377 suicides in the UK in 2007, according to the results posted online at <http://tinyurl.com/nm3n4>; how much in the UK is spent on suicide prevention?

Chris Ward

The driving manual says the average driver's reaction time is 1 car length for every 10 mph (0.75 secs). On the BBC website there's a great way to test your average reaction time – but it

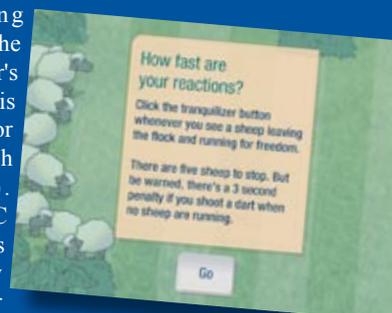
can be very addictive! Even more interesting is to note your average result after a few goes and then repeat the test after you've had a couple of drinks but would still be under the breathalyser limit. The test is at <http://tinyurl.com/45ddg>

John Ryle

Yes - beware, this is addictive! Ed

I discovered recently that traffic wardens typically get paid more for doing their job than a front-line soldier in Afghanistan. Only in this country eh? A land fit for heroes...

Gary Stoke



Please support the companies who advertise on the ABD website (abd.org.uk): we earn commission from your purchases

The Mayor has drawn up his own clean air strategy involving planting more trees, "retro-fitting" buildings and charging lorry drivers. But he admitted: "If we cannot get the emissions down by the means we outline then we may have to have traffic-free days. That is, I think, an exciting thing."

Boris is getting worse! If he thinks HGVs choose to ramble through his city on a whim, rather than being there because that's where the freight receiver is, he's more out of touch than I could have believed. And as for banning certain types of vehicle at certain periods, presumably the EU thinks it's OK to simply move the emissions around so they're not recorded in the capital but rather at power stations etc?

Here's an idea - how about rent and business rates-free days to compensate for the downturn in trade for all of the little shops (which create employment and pay taxes) which have instantly lost a big chunk of their passing trade?

Allan Dodds

My better half and I went to Cambridge last weekend to see a Felicity Kendall play. The theatre advised her to use Trumpington Park n Ride (whose brochure said it would be 'effortless').

As it was her turn to do the driving, I let her make that decision. The queue turned out to be over 200 people long, and the buses roughly every 10 mins on a cold day. We only got on the third bus as nobody ahead of us was prepared to stand, so let us ahead of them.

After the show, it bucketed with rain, and we had a similar wait in town. The queue on the

pavement blocked pedestrians crossing the road and coming out of shops.

Although £2.20 wasn't bad for about 6 hours' parking and two bus rides, MBH said she's sue the brochure publishers under the Trades Description Act!

The transport authority staff said that the queues were only bad because it was a Saturday before Christmas. I suppose it never occurred to them to organise extra buses?

From the ABD forum

When I was a Road Safety Officer we could see that pedestrian accidents were caused by pedestrians. They walk or run onto the highway used by motor vehicles, yet we continued to penalise drivers wherever possible. Why?

We had the means to do it. Cameras, lasers, Truvelo, VASCAR etc. We couldn't influence pedestrians at all, so we didn't.

Reducing speed limits to ridiculous levels is like asking home owners to board up their windows each night in case someone throws stones at them. We live in a world where risk is normal and acceptable. Who wants to live a risk-free life which is monitored and penalised to death?

The answer? Scrap speed limits. Have flashing amber lights when hazards are high such as in school hours. Then only punish drivers, cyclist and pedestrians (yes that's right cyclists and pedestrians) who are in breach of either a road sign or use the highway inappropriately.

Don't punish everyone each time some prat abuses the privilege of road use.

Chris Williams

According to the Stern Review:

"Preliminary calculations suggest the current social cost of carbon with business as usual might be around \$85/tCO2 (year 2000 prices), but along a trajectory towards 550ppm CO2e, the social cost of carbon would be around \$30/tCO2 and along a trajectory to 450ppm CO2e around \$25/tCO2e."

On 7 November 2006, a week after the Stern Review was published, the ABD issued a PR in which it calculated that drivers were paying fuel tax that was at least five times the high end estimate of \$85 per tonne of CO2 emitted recommended by Stern. At the time, this equated to about £240 per tonne of CO2 emitted. The situation was even worse if the low end \$25 per tonne was used.

The RAC Foundation performed a similar calculation in a 2009 report entitled *Carbon prices: The right charge for motorists?* Professor Stephen Glaister of the RACF said: "The picture is utterly chaotic. The Government has to fully and clearly explain to confused motorists just how much of what they pay in duty is actually a green tax. It then has to explain what is done with the money to help save the planet. In the national accounts - the Blue Book - the Government claims all fuel duty and road tax are environmental charges. Yet that means

drivers pay many, many times their fair share towards the cost of mitigating climate change. And that cannot be right. If on the other hand - as is widely accepted - a large proportion of the tax raised from motorists goes into other areas of Government spending, then exactly what proportion is spent covering CO2 emissions? Much greater transparency is needed on what the charges truly represent. Nor must climate change be used as a convenient excuse to load motorists with further fuel taxes...

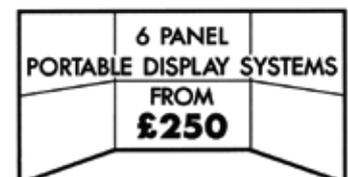
The report concluded:

"Is the motorist paying too much for carbon? The answer appears an unequivocal "yes", if, as in the official national accounts, motoring taxes are regarded as "environmental taxes". In most cases the orders of magnitude are large - in the region of 5-20 times larger than the shadow price of carbon and in some cases even more extreme. Charges on motorists are not purely based on CO2 emissions, but it is clear that the motorist is more than covering the cost of any emissions and in most cases several times more. Furthermore, those same emissions are often covered by a number of different taxes and charges, so in effect motorists are paying for the cost of carbon several times."

Paul Biggs

OTR glossary

- ACPO**: Association of Chief Police Officers
- ALG**: Association of London Government
- ANPR**: Automatic Number Plate Recognition
- Brake**: Vocal anti-car group
- ChFT**: 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
- VAS**: Vehicle-activated sign



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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, so if you have email please subscribe to our 'ABD Action' mailing list. 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.

Forum

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

Website

The main ABD website (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

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