

On The Road

The journal of the Association of British Drivers

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www.abd.org.uk

ABD goes to the top

The ABD took the driver's cause right into the corridors of power when we met recently with Roads minister Mike Penning at his Marsham Street headquarters. Last year's appointment of Brian Mooney as our media/lobbyist rep has paid dividends; Brian kept up a correspondence with Penning's office, eventually resulting in an invitation to discuss transport strategy with the Roads minister himself in late October.

Mike Penning got his driving licence at 17, has been a keen biker and a fireman as well, the latter meaning he's had to attend numerous RTAs which involved cutting people or bodies out of crashed cars. He appreciates that the government needs to "take the public with it" on road safety policy.

Also present at the meeting was Duncan Price, head of the DfT's Road User Safety Division while ABD chairman Brian Gregory was supported by Malcolm Heymer and Paul Hemingway. A huge amount of preparatory work (see further article on p8) went into forming an intended outline agenda that would



be discussed at the meeting. Topics included refocusing road safety away from the obsession with speed control by establishing a Road Accident Investigation Board, overhauling Highways Agency roadworks management with its over-reliance on speed cameras, selective retraining of the enormous number of main roads detrunked under Labour, plus taxation and road pricing.

The tight time slot allocated didn't allow coverage of all subjects, but we discovered Penning is very concerned about the casualty rate amongst young drivers and intends making the driving tests even harder, particularly for younger but, also for all drivers. He also wants to introduce national roadside drug testing.

We stressed how vitally important and beneficial post-test training would be, citing the Under 17s Driving Club as an excellent example; Penning was aware of this. He asked what would be our top two priorities. We responded with a return to using 85th percentile principles in speed limit

setting/enforcement along with the setting up of an independent, objective RAIB to investigate what really causes accidents and thus how we can most effectively minimise the number of them. Too much speed enforcement equipment manufacturer largesse is excessively biasing the current approach to road safety.

We also discussed roadworks speed enforcement, stressing that lower speeds should be immediately localised to the areas of high worker risk, and that extensive stretches with low risk subjected to substantially sub-85th percentile speeds, policed by cameras, increase driver frustration and fatigue. They also reduce concentration, unnecessarily extend journey times and elevate accident risk.

Penning is already demanding a reduction in arterial road closure times for police RTA investigations and is well aware of the economic downside of such extended closures. Malcolm provided a dossier of ABD literature and consultation responses along with *Mind Driving* by Steven Haley & J.J. Leeming's seminal *Road Accidents - Prevent or Punish?* Penning concluded by saying that the door is always open to us.

Transport a winner in CSR – but it's still not enough

Transport Secretary Philip Hammond claims to have secured the best capital settlement of any department in the Comprehensive Spending Review. But his comments came alongside a stark warning to local authorities that their cherished major transport schemes only stand a chance of being funded if costs are reduced or local funding contributions increase.

The outcome of the spending review sees the DfT's budget cut by 15% in real terms between 2010/11 and 2014/15. But capital funding will be cut by just 11% – far below the 29% reduction across the whole of

Government. The DfT's revenue budget will fall 21%.

Councils in England face having to make huge savings to transport revenue budgets because of a 28% cut in formula grant from the Department for Communities and Local Government over the next four years.

Reflecting on the DfT's settlement Hammond said: "I think we've done pretty well. The DfT faced the smallest reduction in capital expenditure of any Department and it now has the second largest capital budget in the Government."

Beneath the headline figures the settlement

has markedly different implications across the transport sector. Crossrail was the big winner – it will be delivered in full. The deal also protects Network Rail's five-year spending deal and the London Underground investment programme. But the Highways Agency's trunk road programme faces a big cut.

Local authority capital transport funding will also be cut and no new local major transport scheme starts are likely before 2012/13. Cuts to the DfT's revenue budget will see Bus Service Operators Grant reduced by 20% from 2012/13, a move expected to force up fares and prompt service withdrawals.

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The ABD campaigns for:

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

A very big thank you from everyone on the ABD committee to Robert Bolt, who has decided to step down from his role as Hertfordshire contact. For many years now Robert has attended hearing, meetings and conferences on behalf of the ABD and its members, reporting back to us, putting forward the ABD's point of view and making sure that our members have a voice. It's thanks to the efforts of active members like Robert that the ABD is currently on something of a high; if you think you could do the same for the ABD and its members, we're waiting to hear from you.

Rod King, campaign director of 20s Plenty for Us, is urging local authorities to make 20mph the default speed limit for residential roads and then decide which roads should be subject to higher limits. Emphasising that 20mph limits aren't simply a road safety measure, he said: "We need to think way outside the traditional road safety box. We know that a 30mph street will never provide the basis for encouraging active travel. We need to recognise that active travel and its consequent health benefits, better road utilisation, a less car dependent culture, lower noise and lower pollution are all valuable deliveries alongside lower casualties."

Incredibly, King said implementing 20mph limits through signs rather than physical traffic calming measures amounts to "social engineering" rather than "highway engineering" and also claims that the policy is supported by most drivers. Not sure how he justifies this approach – and where did 'active travel' come from?

In this column each issue I tend to mention what Brake has been up to, so apologies if it's wearing a bit thin and you think I'm just using this space to have a pop at a group that's hopelessly out of touch with reality. Anyway, they've been at it again, issuing a release in November claiming that



breaking the motorway speed limit is the reason why congestion is so bad. So nothing to do with inadequate capacity, people refusing to use lane 1 or the police closing arterial roads for hours on end. Stick to the speed limit and great swathes of congestion will magically disappear. Why does anybody take this group at all seriously?

Katie Price has been found guilty of not being in proper control of her pink horsebox after veering into another lane in Sussex. Magistrates were told two vehicles had to take evasive action when her vehicle drifted on the A23 as she texted. Price, who denied the charge, said the horsebox had drifted into another lane because she was a "woman driver". She said: I'm just not used to a lorry that big. I was probably a bit scared because it was on a motorway". There's no two ways about it; drivers like Price shouldn't have a licence if she says she isn't capable of driving safely. And since when has the A23 been a motorway? The clue is in the name love...

David Begg used to get a lot of mentions in OTR, but lately, despite him being chairman of the Commission for Integrated Transport, he's had a fairly low profile. As a mouthpiece for the public transport industry, CFiT is guaranteed to be somewhat biased with its recommendations. Anyway, the abolition of CFiT in the recent quango cull means Begg should be out of a job, but it seems not;



he's hiring himself out as an after-dinner speaker. And a snip he is too, at "£4000-7000". If you're tempted, taken a look at tinyurl.com/25nuwtz – maybe we should all club together, hire him, and have our bags of rotten fruit handy...

Bill Hollis noticed an interesting snippet on the web recently; HM Revenue and Customs briefed



cameras because of budget cuts – as well as the news that cameras will be returning en masses to the roads of Oxfordshire in 2011. In one of Brake's releases, it stated:

Speed cameras in Oxfordshire are to be reinstated on 1 April 2011 as early evidence shows that speeding has increased by as much as 400% at camera sites.

A new organisational structure is being put in place that will see Thames Valley Police taking over the cost and running of the cameras, funding it through fees from drivers sent on speed awareness courses.

Interesting that speeding has supposedly gone up by 400%; one would assume that it's been absolute carnage as a result, with collisions all over the place. Well, er, no; it seems there haven't

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The next issue of *On The Road* goes to press on Monday 21 March. Contributions deadline is Monday 7 March.

2011 diary date:

The ABD AGM will be held on 16 July. Further details to follow.

a small team of people to work out the value of an hour's time for anyone, whether working or not. You can download the full report from www.hmrc.gov.uk/research/cost-of-time.pdf – the key fact is that an hour of your time or mine is worth £14.20. So when you're next queuing for a few hours on a closed motorway, you can spend the time calculating the value of all those lost hours shared by you and the other drivers in the queue. And that's assuming that the £14.20 figure isn't woefully inaccurate of course, which it almost certainly will be...

As another year draws to a close, it's time to thank you for your support once more in what has been a busier year than ever. The ABD continues to go from strength to strength with more members giving more of their time than ever before. The result is a louder voice than we've had for many years – helped in no small part by the fact that Labour was finally thrown out of office back in May. As you'll see when you delve into this issue, common sense is starting to prevail in many areas. Let's hope that 2011 sees more of the same.

Chris Medd

If there are two issues that divide public opinion, and which are so over-run with vested interests that it's impossible to have a balanced debate, it's climate change and speed cameras. We're not afraid to tackle both in the ABD, with each subject very much in the public eye right now.

Press releases have landed on my desk from an array of technology suppliers keen to promote reduced speed limits, with their enforcement by cameras, as the way forward in road safety. Funny that; who could possibly argue successfully that there are vested interests at work where road safety is concerned?

Two of the triggers for the recent influx of releases about how more speed cameras are needed, rather than fewer, were Brake's road safety week and the announcement that some areas will see reductions in the number of

been any more crashes than usual – certainly nothing of note, anyway. So if 'speeding' has gone up by 400% yet there's no increase in accidents, where's the evidence that speed kills.

•RoSPA recently issued a release supporting scameras, on behalf of a 'road safety consortium':

- RoSPA
- The AA
- Association of Industrial Road Safety Officers
- Cyclists' Touring Club
- GEM Motoring Assist
- Institute of Road Safety Officers
- London Road Safety Council
- PACTS)•Road Safety GB

For a summary of why scameras are so great, read the consortium's release at tinyurl.com/23hrmaa

Common sense urged on parking

Caroline Sheppard, chief adjudicator of the Traffic Penalty Tribunal, has accused some local authorities of operating a "zero tolerance" approach to minor infringements, suggesting that drivers who are given parking tickets for petty breaches of the rules should be let off if they appeal against the penalties.

Sheppard complained that motorists are being punished for such offences as leaving one wheel over the white line of a car park bay, or failing to display their pay-and-display ticket correctly. In such cases, drivers whose penalties were upheld on appeal to town halls have subsequently had them overturned by the tribunal.

In 2009 the tribunal received more than 12,000 applications to overturn tickets. In more than 60% of cases it ruled in favour of the motorist. The intervention by the chief adjudicator comes after cases were highlighted in which councils have carried on issuing tickets in areas where they knew the signs were illegal.

Sheppard accused councils of failing to exercise their discretion when penalties were challenged, and called for "an outbreak of common sense" over trivial cases. She urged motorists to appeal against penalties if they think they have been dealt with unfairly or illegally. She said: "Motorists must appeal if they have any doubts over penalty charges. People want to explain but we only see what comes before us, so let us look at it."

The chief adjudicator said she's concerned that too many councils are failing in their statutory duty to give proper consideration to representations made by motorists contesting penalties, or to evidence offered in mitigation. She claims letters of explanation to town halls are

often dismissed with a standard response letter of one or two lines – a practice which suggests that their arguments "had not been considered properly or fairly". Many councils are "unwilling or unable to consider challenges based on mitigating circumstances", Sheppard said.

Mitigation pleas are common in cases where a ticket has been issued because of a failure to display a permit, disabled parking badge or pay-and-display ticket. Many councils have taken the "extraordinary" view that it's somehow "fairer" to reject all representations, she said. Adjudicators had seen this explained in letters of rejection in which council officials said it would be "unfair" on people who had paid a penalty charge if those who made representations were "let off".

Sheppard, a barrister, also criticised the rising number of appeals that councils fail to contest at the tribunal, saying: "I don't understand why local authorities reject drivers' representations and then go no further."

The tribunal, which covers all of England and Wales except Greater London, considers cases where motorists have received a parking ticket then appealed to the town hall, which has upheld the decision. It received 12,423 submissions last year, an increase of 11% on the previous year's figure. Of cases decided by the tribunal, 34% were won by the motorist because the council did not contest the case and a further 28% were decided in favour of the motorist after the adjudicator considered and rejected the council's arguments, meaning that 62% of all appeals were successful. In nine out of the past 10 years, the proportion of successful appeals has been over 60%.



in brief...

▶ The number of people killed and seriously injured (KSI) in cars has fallen by 9%, according to DfT figures. In the year ending June 2010, 10,350 car occupant KSIs were recorded, compared with 11,424 in the year ending June 2009. In the same period, traffic flow decreased by 0.9% and the number of fatal and serious accidents on all roads dropped by 7%.

▶ A 63-year-old man who was caught drink-driving on a disability scooter has been fined and banned from driving for two years. John MacLean of Ullapool, admitted drink-driving on various roads in the town. The court heard that the former council foreman was stopped by police and a roadside test showed that he was almost three times over the limit.

▶ The London Borough of Ealing has approved plans for further traffic light switch-off trials after declaring the first trials a success. Ealing's cabinet has approved plans for switch-off trials at five further junctions where the signals are believed to exacerbate traffic congestion. Councillors endorsed the permanent removal of lights from the two trial sites implemented last year; trials saw the lights switched off and mini-roundabouts installed. Traffic through both trial site junctions had increased and average queue length had been cut by two-thirds. Typical pedestrian waiting times were halved and no accidents were recorded.

▶ In the highly unlikely event that you're considering buying an electric car, the SMMT has put together a full buying guide for you, to help guide you through the various technologies. Among the 34 pages there's no shortage of info; download it from tinyurl.com/38fe5ge

▶ Thousands of streetlights in Suffolk are to be turned off at night as the county council seeks to cut costs and CO2 emissions. Between midnight and 5.30am, Suffolk plans to switch off many of the 40,000 lights that are less than six metres high. Exemptions will include lights at junctions and roundabouts, town centres, areas where there are road accident hazards, car parks, bus stops, pedestrian crossings, subways and selected other sites.

▶ A team of scientists has developed ultra-thin sheets of inorganic LEDs for implantation under the skin for biomedical applications, paving the way for bicycle lights worn under the skin. The LEDs are tiny and designed to monitor wound healing or control the delivery of drugs triggered by light in photodynamic drug therapy, but on a larger scale, light-emitting tattoos could ensure cyclists were always equipped for cycling after dark.

▶ Reading Borough Council is progressing plans to remove traffic signals from five junctions. The sites have been prioritised from a list of 29 locations drawn up following a public participation exercise held over the summer. Reading says removing the traffic signals will improve traffic flow in the town. Officers are continuing to assess the removal of traffic signals at the remaining sites on the list.

Train overcrowding to get worse

Overcrowding on trains in England and Wales will get substantially worse over the next four years despite rises in ticket prices, a report by MPs says. The Public Accounts Committee (PAC) said the DfT's own plans suggested targets for increasing passenger places would be missed. It blamed the failure on the absence of any requirement to improve capacity within train operators' contracts. The government says plans to improve the situation will be unveiled soon.

Chairwoman of the PAC Margaret Hodge said MPs were concerned that the "already unacceptable levels of overcrowding will simply get worse and ever more intolerable". Her report - Increasing Passenger Rail Capacity - said the fundamental problem was a lack of any incentive for the industry to supply extra capacity without additional taxpayer support.

Under their franchise agreements, train operators are required to use "reasonable endeavours" to give peak passengers "a reasonable expectation of a seat within 20 minutes of boarding", but there is no legal burden upon them to expand fleets or improve stations to achieve this. Instead,



There's still room on trains into Paddington...

the PAC said, it had fallen to the taxpayer to provide funds to Network Rail to carry out any upgrade work.

Over the past 10 years, rail passenger numbers have risen by about 40% and the industry is expecting demand to double over the next few decades. The DfT is 18 months into a five-year, £9bn investment programme to improve rail travel. Under the plans longer platforms are being built and there will be more carriages on services into London and other major cities during peak hours. But the Public Accounts Committee report says "this approach cannot go on indefinitely" and "alternatives must be found to meet the capacity challenge in the future".

Multiple roads casualties in wake of CSR

On the front page of this issue is an article about how well transport did in the Comprehensive Spending Review – but too much of the cash is going into public transport rather than private. Compared with the £18bn earmarked for rail investment over the next four years, the £4bn budget for trunk road major projects, capital maintenance and enhancements is miniscule. Capital spending on England's trunk roads will almost halve in the next three years, from £1.57bn in 2010 to just £877m in 2013/14 (in cash terms).

Transport secretary Philip Hammond has announced the 14 trunk road schemes that will start by April 2015, sharing the £1.4bn available for new scheme starts in the spending review period. Many are 'managed motorways' which include hard shoulder running, rather than traditional widenings:

- The A11 in Norfolk – dualling the final section of single carriageway between Fiveways junction and Thetford to complete a dual carriageway from the M11 Norwich

- The A23 in West Sussex from Handcross to Warninglid dualling

- The A556 Knutsford-Bowdon scheme to build a dual carriageway to replace the existing single-carriageway road

- The M4 and M5 north of Bristol – additional capacity using hard shoulder running through Almondsbury interchange

The following managed-motorway projects will also be undertaken:

- M1 between Derbyshire and Wakefield (J28-31, 32-35a, 39-42)

- M62 (J18-20 near Manchester and 25-30 near Leeds)

- M60 around Manchester (J8-12, 12-15)

- The remaining three-lane sections of M25 (J5-7, 23-27)

- M6 J5-8 near Birmingham

The Government has also canned eight schemes as they're "not realistically likely to receive funding" in either the current four-year spending review period or, indeed, the next one.



The M6 Toll road under construction. What a white elephant that has proved to be...

The casualties are:

- The £1.2bn A14 Ellington to Fen Ditton project in Cambridgeshire

- Three schemes on the A21 between the M25 and Hastings: Kippings Cross to Lamberhurst dualling in Kent; Flimwell to Robertsbridge dualling, East Sussex; and Baldslow Interchange, East Sussex.

- Two junction improvements on the A19 in Tyne and Wear at Moor Farm and Seaton Burn

- The A1 Leeming to Barton upgrade from dual carriageway to motorway standard in North Yorks.

- The A47 Blofield to North Burlingham dualling, Norfolk

Preparation work will continue on a further 14 schemes so they could start in a future spending review period:

- M1/M6 junction 19 improvement

- M25 junction 30 (A13 intersection)

- M6 junctions 10a-13 managed motorway

- A14 Kettering bypass

- A160/180 Immingham

- A19 Testos junction improvements near Newcastle

- A19/A1058 Coast Road junction just north of the Tyne Tunnel

- A21 Tonbridge-Pembury
- A27 Chichester bypass
- A38 Derby junctions
- A45/A46 Tollbar End near Coventry
- A453 widening near Nottingham
- A5-M1 Link road near Luton
- A63 Castle Street in Hull

The HA will review a further four schemes to ensure that the proposed design is the best possible, and to see whether there is benefit in dividing the work into smaller packages that can be delivered in sequence. These are:

- M20 J10a – a new junction at Ashford

- M3 J2-4a (Surrey) managed motorway

- M4 J3-12 (West London to Reading) managed motorway

- M54 to M6/M6 Toll link road

Meanwhile, the DfT has suggested public sector investment could be complemented by private sector toll roads. "Roads are traditionally the preserve of the public sector. However we are willing to consider proposals from private promoters who believe they have identified opportunities to develop Britain's infrastructure."

Councils urged to ditch signs

Councils are being urged to get rid of unnecessary signs, railings and advertising hoardings in a bid to make streets tidier and less confusing for motorists and pedestrians. Communities Secretary Eric Pickles and Transport Secretary Philip Hammond are concerned that the character of the country's urban spaces is being damaged and have written to councils leaders calling on them to reduce the number of signs and other street clutter.

The Government believes that in some cases traffic signs and railings are installed by councils in the mistaken belief that they're legally

required. However, although some signs are required by law, Government advice is that for signs to be most effective they should be kept to a minimum. To help councils do this the DfT is reviewing traffic signs policy and new advice on how to reduce clutter will be published shortly.

Ministers want communities to inform local authorities of particularly bad examples of clutter as part of the Big Society in action.

Eric Pickles said: "Our streets are losing their English character. We are being overrun by scruffy signs, bossy bollards, patchwork paving and railed off roads wasting taxpayers' money that could be better spent on fixing potholes

or keeping council tax down. We need to cut the clutter. Too many overly cautious townhall officials are citing safety regulations as the reason for cluttering up our streets with an obstacle course when the truth is very little is dictated by law. Common sense tells us uncluttered streets have a fresher, freer authentic feel, which are safer and easier to maintain.

Philip Hammond said: "We have written to councils to remind them that it need not be this way - we don't need all this clutter confusing motorists, obstructing pedestrians and hindering those with disabilities who are trying to navigate our streets."

Govt to rely on tolls for new roads?

A private sector toll road could be built across Cambridgeshire, following the Government's decision to cancel a £1.2bn publicly-funded project to improve the east-west A14. Roads minister Mike Penning said the A14 Ellington to Fen Ditton scheme was unaffordable, requiring "over 80% of the budget" for trunk road improvements. The DfT added that the increased value of CO2 emissions in transport appraisal also means it's "no longer clear that the scheme offers acceptable value for money".

The DfT will now conduct a new study to look at all options for tackling congestion on the corridor linking Felixstowe and the Midlands. A spokeswoman said the study would consider "public options, such as the provision of additional road capacity, and private options, including greater use of rail freight. We will look at ways in which private capital can be harnessed to help with congestion along the

route, but the Government is committed not to introduce road pricing on existing routes during this Parliament," she added.

Meanwhile ministers are pressing ahead with plans for a new tolled road crossing of the Thames estuary to relieve congestion at the Dartford crossing that carries M25 traffic.

In the short-term, the DfT also plans to waive charges when there is severe congestion caused by hold-ups at the toll plazas. Then, from 2012, the DfT wants to introduce 'free-flow tolling'. "The detailed design of the project will need to consider how motorists will pay to use the crossing and whether there will be a need to retain a cash payment option," said a spokeswoman. "Potential options could include making such payments in advance at locations not at the crossing, via telephone or the internet."

Ministers have dropped the previous Government's plan to sell-off the Dartford crossing.

Scameras at heart of Italian fraud

Italy's financial police force, the Guardia di Finanza, has said that 10 individuals will go on trial along with another 300 public officials, police officers and corporate employees who face indictment for fraud, forgery and public corruption involving the use of red light camera and speed camera equipment. Salerno prosecutor Amato Barile kicked off the investigation known as "Operation Devius" in June 2009 with a series of dramatic raids in 120 cities that using the services of the private firm Garda Segnale Srl between 2007 and 2009.

The raids uncovered evidence that Velomatic 512 and Traffiphot III SR photo radar units bearing the same individual serial number were being used by different municipalities located hundreds of miles apart. Under Italian regulations, each camera used for issuing citations must be properly calibrated and approved. The "cloned" serial numbers helped Garda Segnale avoid the cost of testing individual units, and it also helped hide the

fact that several of its camera units were adjusted in such a way as to read speeds 6-19mph too fast, generating additional citations. Prosecutors also believe that some of these cameras were used in unauthorised locations, and their operators weren't properly trained. Municipalities ignored ministerial directives by entering into per-ticket compensation schemes for the cameras.

Police gathered 50 speed cameras as evidence as well as computers, software, banking records and other documents used to establish a chain of illegal business practices. A total of 100,000 tickets worth €13m were issued by the programs under investigation. Salerno prosecutor Amato Barile alleges that the mastermind behind the operation set up a chain of interconnected companies to compete for the photo enforcement contracts with municipalities. Although it would appear that five or six companies were involved in a bidding war for the municipal business, each one was part of the same organisation.

Change of focus for N Wales cops

North Wales Police has spent too long in the past chasing performance targets and handing out speeding tickets, its chief constable says. Mark Polin, who took over from Richard Brunstrom last November, has been trialling a new 'restorative justice' policy. The scheme allows officers to deal with certain minor offences without taking offenders to court.

Polin said he wants to improve confidence in the force. He said the scheme allowed his officers to focus on the things "that really matter" in their communities.

Training courses for police officers giving them guidance on the new approach are already

under way. Polin said the restorative justice scheme represents a change in emphasis for the force. He said: "Even if it's not the reality, the perception of the organisation is that we've been blindly pursuing speed enforcement tickets. This is about allowing our officers to focus on the things that really matter to our communities. It's about ensuring that actually our officers on the road policing unit don't think they have to sit on a slipway on the A55 to pursue tickets because they're being counted. It's about affording them the discretion and flexibility to actually work with our neighbourhood policing teams to respond to matters that truly concern our communities."

in brief...

▶ Designated drivers will be rewarded in thousands of pubs across the country as part of the Think! Christmas drink drive campaign. Think! has teamed up with Coca-Cola's Designated Driver campaign to offer drivers free soft drinks in more than 8000 participating venues as part of the Driver Friendly campaign.

▶ A motorcyclist caught riding at 153mph has been handed a 30 month ban and a 16-week suspended jail sentence. Andrew Darren Jones was spotted by an unmarked police motorcyclist on the A470 near Trawsfynydd, Gwynedd in August. He followed Jones at speeds of up to 120mph - and only caught up when he slowed to enter a village. Jones, 37, admitted dangerous driving and was also ordered to carry out 250 hours unpaid work by Dolgellau magistrates.

▶ An anti-smoking charity has called for a consultation on banning smoking in vehicles in Scotland. Ash Scotland made the call, along with 32 other recommendations, in a document which calls for a consultation on introducing legislation to ban smoking in vehicles and the development of "robust" intermediate and endpoint targets to reduce the effects of passive smoking in the home and in vehicles.

▶ Surrey County Council is to allow its local committees to set speed limits that the majority of motorists are likely to exceed. Surrey's current policy states that limits should only be lowered if the police and Surrey Highways agree that the new limit will bring average speeds "down to a level approaching the new limits". But Surrey's cabinet has approved a new policy that states: "A local committee may decide, exceptionally, to implement a speed limit which does not reduce speeds to a level approaching the new limit, although a new limit should always reduce average speeds." Surrey's cabinet member for transport will have to endorse a local committee's proposal if the new limit is not supported by the police and council officers.

▶ Councillors in East Lothian have ruled out raising speed limits on stretches of road where a review suggests existing limits are too low. The review, using the Scottish Government's speed limit guidance, identified 17 stretches of 30mph road that extend too far out of towns and villages. The review recommended that in each case the 30mph limit should be raised to 40mph. Senior transportation manager Brian Cooper said raising the limits would be "contentious" and East Lothian's cabinet approved the report recommendations that no change be made to the existing limits.

▶ A minicab driver fined for stopping on double yellow lines for less than two minutes has won a two-year legal battle against his £240 bill. Ahmed Makda was twice given £120 fines by Westminster council after cameras spotted him in Soho waiting for booked fares that didn't show up. His appeals were rejected but a High Court judge has ruled that the fines were an "error of law".

it's the limit

Local authorities around the UK are set to introduce far more 20mph zones – despite the fact that they're far from proven to cut casualty rates...

Towns and cities across Britain are planning to introduce 20mph limits, with Government backing, claiming they'll cut deaths on the road. However, an analysis of the UK's first city-wide scheme – in which the limit was lowered from 30mph to 20mph on all residential streets in Portsmouth, at a cost of £500,000 – found that it has not brought any significant reduction in the number of accidents. The number of people killed or seriously injured on affected roads actually went up, not down, after the limit was lowered.

Newcastle-upon-Tyne, Oxford, Edinburgh and Bristol have all introduced 20mph limits in their city centres since the Portsmouth scheme began in 2007. In Portsmouth, the new, lower speed limit applies to all vehicles, at all times, on 94% of the city's streets. It's not enforced by speed cameras or road humps, but relies on drivers to obey limit signs.

The analysis, carried out by the consultants Atkins on behalf of the DfT, found that prior to the reduction in the limit, an average of 18.7 people per year were killed or seriously injured on the streets covered. After the reduction this rose to 19.9 per year. Taking into account people with less serious injuries, overall road casualties fell by 22% after the scheme was introduced. However, over the same time period, there was a nationwide fall in road casualties of 14%. The Atkins report concluded "casualty benefits greater than the national trend have not been demonstrated".

Motorists' average speeds reduced by 1.3mph, from 19.8mph to 18.5mph, as a result of the scheme, according to the report, which tested speeds at 223 locations across the city. However, independent statisticians criticised the way that the figures had been calculated, and said the true reduction in speed could be smaller.

Professor Stephen Senn, an expert in statistics at the University of Glasgow, said: "The design of the report is very bad. Various statistical terms are used incorrectly and they've probably used the wrong statistical test. They haven't got a control group, which is pretty basic, and without which it is pretty naive to jump to conclusions."

Previous studies have found that 20mph zones, in which traffic-calming measures are deployed in addition to speed limit signs, produce bigger reductions in drivers' average speeds. Despite the new findings, Norman Baker, the Liberal Democrat transport minister, has given his backing to 20mph limits. He said: "This is about making our town centres more attractive places to live and work, and reducing carbon emissions by encouraging people to cycle or walk."

However, the push for new 20mph roadsigns flies in the face of separate Government guidance to local authorities which encourages them to keep street clutter to a minimum. The Portsmouth report stated that "sign clutter has been a problem at some locations".

Research has found that when pedestrians are



Drivers are clamouring for 20mph limits. Apparently.

hit by a vehicle at 20mph only one in 40 dies, compared with one in five at 30mph. However only 15% of fatal crashes and 5% of all accidents are caused by speeding.

Following requests from local residents, West Berkshire Council is making streets in the Queens Road area of Newbury a 20mph zone. The move follows the introduction of such zones elsewhere in the district, including areas in Pangbourne, Theale, Thatcham and Westfields in Newbury. The new zone will include Queens Road and the residential streets that run off it, extending to Boundary Road.

The call for a 20mph speed limit came from the Greenham Neighbourhood Action Group, as well as individual residents. Queens Road and adjacent streets are narrow with on-street parking, and some lengths of the roads do not have pavements. Also, some drivers tend to use Queens Road as a through route from the A339 to the A4, and the new speed restriction should help curb that. The existing speed cushions in Queens Road will help enforce the new limit.

West Berkshire Executive Councillor, David Betts, said: "Queens Road does not have a particular history of accidents and we want to keep it that way. It is a compact, residential town-centre area that lends itself perfectly to a 20 mph zone and we're pleased to be able to meet the wishes of residents by introducing the restriction."

Following installation of new signage and road markings, the new 20mph zone should come into effect around the end of October.

Meanwhile, the DfT has "unwittingly" misled the public over the benefits of speed cameras for the last four years. That was the shock admission by a DfT spokeswoman, when finally cornered by the Department's own research. She also said that they have finally agreed to put matters right by adding an explanation to future public statements.

The misinformation began with a report produced by the DfT in 2005. On the basis of

this report, it came up with the now infamous claim that speed cameras are directly responsible for reducing the level of killed and seriously injured (KSI) at camera sites by 42%. Yet its own evidence barely supported half that figure.

The claim has been repeated frequently by official spokespersons and road safety campaigners, and on the DfT's own Think! road safety website. It has also been regularly questioned by speed camera opponents, who point out that other effects should be taken into account. These include overall "trend" improvements in the KSI rate, other road safety measures put in place at accident black spots, and a statistical quirk known as "regression to the mean".

That last factor is important. Scientists and statisticians have long been aware that whenever something out of the ordinary happens – from a plague of frogs to a spate of road accidents – it's probably just that: a freak, a fluke, an anomaly. Anything that you do in that location after the event will look as though it makes a difference, but it hasn't. The figures would have reduced anyway.

When the DfT first started claiming such a high benefit for speed cameras, respected academics Dr Linda Mountain of Liverpool University and Mike Maher, Professor of the Mathematical Analysis of Transport Systems at Leeds, objected. The DfT took notice, and the 2005 report included an appendix supplied by this pair showing in meticulous detail how the effect of speed cameras was almost certainly less than half the 42% quoted.

Whole for many years the DfT has refused to acknowledge that the 42% figure may need to contain a rider, it has finally admitted that: "This was basically an oversight and it will be corrected."

So while in future, DfT websites will still contain the 42% claim, there will be further explanation – the Think! website has already been amended.

criminal act

If you're unsure about how convincing the arguments are behind man-made climate change, one read of this open letter will soon make up your mind...

The United Kingdom appears to be the only country in the world to have legislated against climate change. The Climate Change Act 2008 was enacted with only five Members of Parliament dissenting (in what Peter Lilley described as "a wave of self-righteous euphoria") and without any prior attempt at costing. Some time after enactment the Brown government announced that the provisions of this Act would cost some £404 billion over the next 20 years.

Thus, apart from the Finance Acts themselves, the Climate Change Act 2008 is by far the most expensive piece of legislation ever enacted by Parliament – and completely without prior costing.

Are you able to detail the precise scientific facts on which the Government is relying to justify expending the £20 billion per year required by the provisions of the Climate Change Act?

I recently asked my MP to obtain from the Climate Change Ministry a detailed and logical analysis of, and for correction of any errors of fact in, a paper (enclosed) I had written which questioned the part mankind played in our ever-changing climate. The Minister for Climate Change, in replying, did not deny that 95% of the greenhouse effect was caused by water vapour, only 4% by natural carbon dioxide and only a miniscule 0.117% by man-made carbon dioxide.

However, instead of a detailed analysis or repudiation, the Minister responded in general terms and relying for his clinching argument on the phrase:

"The overwhelming majority of climate scientists agree that climate change is a grave environmental threat".

Apart from his employment of argumentum ad populum, the Minister's claimed "overwhelming majority" seems to have evaporated markedly last month when a number of irate climate scientists forced the Royal Society into an almost unprecedented and humiliating climb down by having to withdraw its own formal publication "Climate Change – a Summary of the Science".

The Society's Chairman, Lord Rees, then issued a statement "There is little confidence in specific projections of future regional climate change". This is a telling swipe at the IPCC (International Panel on Climate Change), which has had to withdraw its dramatic forecasts on the melting of Himalayan glaciers, rising sea levels, flooding of the Netherlands and African crop failures.

The Royal Society's new guide now admits, "The size of future temperature changes and other aspects of climate change are still subject to uncertainty and some uncertainties are unlikely ever to be significantly reduced." What an astonishing and complete reversal of The Society's earlier stance. This sober

statement of uncertainty over mankind's involvement in climate change now differs markedly from the present British Government's melodramatic posture.

Undeterred by this fundamental alteration to the accepted science of climates, Britain's Energy Secretary, Chris Huhne, subsequently made his pitch that the UK Government wanted to foster "a third industrial revolution" in low-carbon technology with policies based

on cutting emissions of carbon dioxide and other 'greenhouse gases.'

So the Royal Society now openly admits it got it completely wrong but why does Chris Huhne have such difficulty in doing the same? His conviction is patent – but where are the facts?

Just what are the proven threats which our Government is trying to avert?

Every single hour the earth receives more energy from the sun than the entire human population uses in one whole year. The amount of solar energy reaching the surface of the planet annually is twice as much as will ever be obtained from all of the Earth's non-renewable resources of coal, oil, natural gas, and mined uranium combined.

As for our climate, within the last two thousand years outdoor grapes were grown in Cumbria and on occasions the Thames has frozen over. The poles have had ice caps for only 20% of Earth's geological history. Fluctuating sunspot activity leading to variable solar output, the Earth's wandering axial tilt and eccentricity of orbit round the sun and were all shown (Kepler, Milancovic) to be the causes of the Earth's cycles of widely changing climate and of the Earth's successive and massive glaciations/deglaciations. This, long before industrialisation and carbon were even conceived as possible causes for our climate's changes – changes far greater than those being presently blamed on carbon.

Whilst no one denies that the world's industrialisation has increased considerably the output of greenhouse gases, to ascribe the current phase of our ever changing climate to one single variable (carbon dioxide) or, more specifically, to a very small proportion of one variable (i.e. human produced carbon dioxide – 0.117%) is not science, for it requires us to abandon all we know about planet Earth, the sun, our galaxy and the cosmos.

The conclusion of the scientists responsible for the draft of the first report of the IPCC was that:

"None of the studies cited has shown clear evidence that we can attribute the observed climate changes to the specific cause of the increase in greenhouse gases."

This sentence was apparently omitted on political grounds by the IPCC staff from the published edition of the report and caused

the resignation of the scientists involved. As Professor Richard Lindzen of MIT said:

"Future generations will wonder in bemused amazement that the early 21st century's developed world went into hysterical panic over a globally average temperature increase of a few tenths of a degree and, on the basis of gross exaggerations of highly uncertain computer projections combined into implausible chains of inference, proceeded to contemplate a rollback of the industrial age".

TATA, the Indian steel conglomerate, is currently closing the Redcar steelworks with the loss of 1700 British jobs. It appears that TATA thus stands to benefit by some £600 million in EU Carbon Credits for stopping Redcar's "Carbon Emissions". TATA is currently expanding its steel production elsewhere in the world. Thanks to Chris Huhne the British taxpayer is now paying Europe to throw British workers out of work and, in the end, achieving nothing.

Just where are the solid facts to justify this unproven creed that mankind is altering the climate? The Minister for Climate Change cannot supply them, he relies on argumentum ad populum and is now finding himself running short of populi. In short, the Government is spending a prodigious amount of money trying to act like King Canute in attempting to stem the vast primordial external forces that drive the constant and cyclical changes to our climate. Thus, whilst the Government is asking us to tighten our belts, are you really content for it to wager £20 billion a year on a theory, now formally deemed as uncertain by the Royal Society, that mankind is causing or even capable of causing alteration to the climate?

As Professor Reid Bryson, founding chairman of the Department of Meteorology at the University of Wisconsin, remarked:

"You can go outside and spit and have the same effect as doubling carbon dioxide."

Or, the Government can go on spending £20 billion a year and achieve precisely the same effect. However is this the best way to tackle the deficit or fund university education?

Yours sincerely
Clive Francis

The £400bn figure quoted in the letter is a gross underestimate (based on feeble arithmetic published by DECC). The correct figure is nearly twice as much – £768bn. Not of course that even the higher figure will dent the complacency of any of the MPs to whom you send the letter.

This is an open letter to the Chancellor George Osborn, from Clive Francis, taken from James Delingpole's eminently readable blog spot at tinyurl.com/37rv3gk

Making a difference in Kent

Thanks to the unstinting efforts by assistant Kent regional organiser Ian Taylor, (who lives in Dover), Kent ABD has secured a much higher profile. Ian has consistently persuaded local editors to publish his letters besides co-authoring reports on traffic congestion (a real problem in Dover with 2.3 million trucks using the port) and other driving topics.

Over time he has built up a useful number of contacts, one of which resulted in Kent ABD getting an invitation to attend a meeting organised by the Kent branch of the Federation of Small Businesses. This involved a county councillor, business leaders and transport groups discussing traffic and regeneration issues in Dover chaired by the local MP Charlie Elphicke.

The ABD was represented by Ian Taylor and Campaigns Director Brian Macdowall. At the meeting, the Dover and Deal MP fielded questions which included strong calls for improved road infrastructure, principally getting the A2 dualled (on the cards – and off again – since Jubilee Way was opened in 1978) to provide a permanent alternative route to and from Dover, and in particular the port. Also for further improvements to the inadequate A20 to eventually relieve traffic volume and congestion along the town section of that road, described as "the only by-pass that runs through the town centre".

Brian Macdowall dispelled the myth that there is no money for these works, pointing out that UK drivers provide approximately £50bn a year in taxes and duties equating to around a staggering £5.7m an hour, of which just, (at best), £10bn comes back to our roads.

He specifically requested Charlie Elphicke to lead a delegation to lobby the Transport Secretary and senior civil servants, who control the transport agenda, concerning our area's needs. He was backed in this by other participants,



The port of Dover

including a local restaurateur and Les Richmond (of the Dover A20 Action Group).

Further to this, Ian Taylor spoke of the A2 dualling proposals being cancelled as a result of the downgrading of the road by the now-defunct regional guango, and the need to get it upgraded again under the new arrangements as a strategic national road. He also expressed support (along with the meeting in general) for the construction of the Port of Dover's proposed Terminal 2.

Charlie Elphicke stated it was time to stop "hitting the motorist" – more than a decade of doing that had not significantly reduced car use.

Ian Taylor commented that he had waited most of a lifetime for town centre development: schemes that take years of preparation, to be continually proposed then fallen through or failed, a promise of the old political slogan of "jam tomorrow" – the only jam seen so far being traffic!

Since this meeting Kent ABD, in conjunction

with Les Richmond of the A20 Action Group, have produced a joint briefing paper which is going to the MP to provide him with ammunition for a meeting with the relevant minister (which could be Mike Penning) bearing in mind both the A20 and A2 are Highways Agency roads.

In addition this item will be on the agenda of Dover Harbour Board's next meeting; we're a member of their port consultative committee and we will be inviting the Board to join us in trying to get a meeting with the minister.

Ian deserves many thanks for his efforts; you too can achieve similar results starting by writing to your editor. They frequently receive negative comments about private vehicle owners and usage; you can challenge this and in the process build up contacts to pressure councils into a more positive stance towards drivers.

If you want any help getting started please contact either Brian Mooney or Brian Macdowall; (details on back page of OTR)

Driving expert: what does it mean?

One of the many subjects that has been thrown up recently by the ABD's Keith Peat is the issue of expertise on driving and motoring matters, and particularly road safety. This crops up in many posts, especially when Brake or PACTS are mentioned. Keith rightly points out that we are all working voluntarily and have no vested interests.

One of our greatest strengths is that, collectively, we can bring together a huge

wealth of technical expertise, experience and knowledge relevant to motoring issues and sharing that via the ABD is another great strength because we all learn from each other. We perhaps have more advanced motorists than any other apart from than IAM, and collectively fewer licence points than ACPO.

But how do we pull that together? We have traffic cops, lawyers, IT experts, highway engineers, statisticians, research scientists and more. All are relevant to motoring issues.

So how do we pull this together into something punchy? Any ideas? For starters there's the Profiles section under "About the ABD" on the website. Anyone who has volunteered for an ABD role can provide a bio if they wish. We also have the Org Chart on the members' site, and any member can offer to be a key issue expert on whatever aspect of ABD work they feel they can help with. But what more can we do?

John Ryle

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...

OK Yar(mouth)

In August I accompanied Geoff Luxford to a meeting with Brandon Lewis, MP for Great Yarmouth (Geoff's MP), to explain our concerns about speed cameras in general, and the unreliability of lasers in particular, leading to prosecutions of innocent drivers, plus the adverse effects on road safety of lowering speed limits below the 85th percentile level.

The meeting went much better than either of us could have dared to hope. Mr Lewis has been sceptical about speed cameras for some time and claimed that he had read most of the documents that Geoff had sent him. He has also done some track driving, so is aware that safety is not about driving by numbers. He is an enthusiastic driver and described himself as having a "Jeremy Clarkson attitude" to driving! He recognises that many speed limits are too low and hates speed humps.

So we were very much pushing at an open door and he said he was willing to take up some of the issues raised with his parliamentary colleagues. The documents we have given him should provide him with ammunition to use.

I mentioned that the ABD had arranged a meeting with Mike Penning in October (see separate report) and Brandon said that he knew Mike well, so he would talk to him before our meeting and lay the groundwork for us. We were given the impression that Mike Penning was likely to be receptive to the message we wanted to convey.

Interestingly, Brandon said that the problems we are likely to face are not with ministers themselves but their civil servants, who do not like having their long-held views challenged. However, he said Mike Penning is a no-nonsense chap who is not going to be deflected by his department's civil servants protecting their empires. Consequently, we need to ensure he has the facts with which to overrule the DfT mandarins.

Altogether, a very worthwhile meeting.

Malcolm Heymer

Turn off the light

John Ryle spotted an interesting video clip at www.wimp.com/trafficlights about a recent experiment to ditch traffic lights near Bristol. Turns out they were causing congestion rather than preventing it, so the switch off is being made permanent. As you'll have read in the news pages, there are various other traffic light switch offs taking place around the UK – at last.

Want to work for the ABD?

Determined, resourceful and optimistic? Want to join a winning team? Working with the campaign team, you could be helping to plan and manage campaigns, represent the ABD, and assist with a variety of admin duties to make the ABD an effective fighting force for Britain's drivers. Preference will be given to:

- Existing ABD members
- Those with campaigning experience
- Those able to easily get into London

Applications are welcome both from enthusiastic members and non-members willing to travel to meetings; non-members would be expected to join the ABD however. You will need to be highly motivated, able to use your own initiative and enjoy working with the ABD committee, members and the general public.

You would also have to be willing to regularly give your time to driving the ABD forwards; be reliable and able to work in an organised manner.

Money is not the chief motivation as the job will pay a nominal sum plus modest expenses; candidates are advised to have means of their own.

Should you be sufficiently enterprising in securing sponsorship for the ABD, any money over and above the sponsorship would act as your monetary reward.

Interested? Email a CV with your ideas and a contact number to brian.macdowall@abd.org.uk or phone 07930 113 232. Please also copy in the ABD's media/lobbyist spokesman Brian Mooney. You can email him via fairdeal@abd.org.uk or phone him on 07976 414 913 or 020 7385 9757.

Join the national committee

Your national Committee is always keen to increase our efficiency and effectiveness on the membership's behalf. We believe it is now appropriate to recruit two additional committee members. Key attributes are:

- An ability to function effectively and diplomatically in committee email discussions across a wide range of issues. Email and internet access are therefore essential.
- Become, after an acclimatisation period, one of our media spokespeople.
- The ability to attend around four committee plus (up to) two members' meetings a

year. However, it may be possible to consider a candidate who reports through an existing committee member.

If you are interested in accelerating the ABD's progress towards achieving its primary aim: a fair deal for drivers, please consider joining the ABD national committee. Please contact any of the following committee members:

- Brian Gregory (brian.gregory@abd.org.uk)
- Brian MacDowall (brian.macdowall@abd.org.uk)
- Bob Dennish (national@abd.org.uk)

Democracy in action. Or not

You may remember back in *OTR95* the story about seven-year old Sophie Johnstone campaigning for a reduced speed limit through her village, so she could have a kitten. Well Andy Dobson has written in with an update, to say that the local Liberal Democrats are running a "give us a minute" campaign as it takes "just one extra minute" to cover the stretch of road they are talking about. The police did a random speed survey and concluded there's almost no speeding taking place.

Sophie's petition got 381 names (but is being called into question as some of the names are dubious/duplicated). Andy has started a "Keep it 40" petition but wasn't allowed to place it in one of the locations where the 30 petition was placed. So much for democracy,

although this played into his hands since he could then claim a lack of democracy.

An in-depth speed survey was performed some 18 months ago and the 85th percentile speed was 48mph, so Andy made the case for the limit being raised to 50mph at the Parish Council and got a load of daggers back. After much wailing and nashing of teeth, and pressure from lots of sides, and a speed check (which revealed that no-one was really speeding), the next stage was that the Parish Council attached a tear off voting sheet to its last newsletter. The result (so far and subject to final totals) is that 78 people want the 40mph retained and 8 want a change to a 30mph limit. Difficult to argue with democracy, but it probably won't die, as the usual suspects will keep at it.

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

The ABD has a very active London group, led by long-established campaigners Roger Lawson and Brian Mooney. With their own website (www.freedomfordrivers.org), the group is highly vocal, issuing press releases throughout the year, plus its own newsletter. On this page are just three examples of the group's recent campaigning; to get more involved, get in touch with Roger or Brian (details on back page).

Parking greed

The ABD has recently examined the level of parking charges in London, and the enforcement of these charges, and has concluded that parking charges are now wildly excessive and that they are being used by London councils to generate massive profits at the expense of road users. They use these profits to subsidise other areas of their expenditure, and particularly the Freedom Pass and other concessionary fares.

Similarly, moving traffic offences such as bus lane infringements, yellow box junction penalties and other similar offences are growing rapidly (mainly by the use of camera systems) as councils seek to raise money to cover other budget shortfalls.

Roger Lawson, ABD London Region Co-Ordinator had this to say: "We looked at a number of London boroughs and obtained their revenues and costs under the Freedom of Information legislation, and some boroughs are generating outrageous profits. In addition, they are ignoring past legal judgments that dictated that they should not make profits from permit parking schemes".

It is clear that there is little democratic control of these charges because the public simply do not know what is being done. There is no consistency between boroughs and the profit motive is resulting in unjust levels of charges. Enforcement is driven not by compliance levels but by the desire to rake in as much cash as possible, while council parking departments build empires by introducing more and more controlled parking zones, ever more complex parking schemes and the use of cameras to spy on road users.

▶ A detailed report on the data collected from London boroughs, and an analysis of the financial implications is at www.freedomfordrivers.org/Profiting_from_Parking.pdf

▶ Data on the revenue and costs from the boroughs of Bromley, Camden, Greenwich, Hammersmith & Fulham, Kensington & Chelsea, Richmond and Westminster were obtained and have been published at www.freedomfordrivers.org/Borough_Parking_Profits.htm

▶ That there has recently been a public consultation on the general level of PCN charges in London which may be increased further as a result – see: www.londoncouncils.gov.uk/Transport/Transportpolicy/APCConsultation.htm

▶ The ABD's response to the consultation is at www.freedomfordrivers.org/Parking_Consultation_2010.pdf

Reducing the congestion charge con

The Association of British Drivers welcomes the announcement by Mayor Boris Johnson that the Western Extension of the London Congestion Charge will definitely be terminated on 24 Dec 2010. The ABD ran an active campaign in support of scrapping the Western Extension in conjunction with the West London Residents Association and others - see www.freedomfordrivers.org/WesternCon.htm for details. Although we can't claim all the credit for the success of this campaign, this shows that the ABD can have a significant influence on events.

Roger Lawson, ABD London Region Co-Ordinator had this to say: "The Western Extension was truly a Congestion 'Con'. It did not reduce traffic congestion, did not improve the environment, and was simply a way to divert cash from road users into the hands of Transport for London". It was also a very expensive and inefficient way of taxing road users – after two years and three separate consultations, it was certainly time for Mr Johnson to follow through on his election promise".

To quote from Mr Johnson's announcement: "The Western Extension to the Congestion Charge Scheme was unpopular when it was introduced, has remained unpopular, does not fully achieve what it set out to do, and is perceived to be a disincentive to businesses in the WEZ which deserve encouragement, particularly in the current difficult economic climate".

The ABD would like to see the same logic applied to the main Congestion Charge which has not been a success. Traffic congestion has returned to what it was before the Charge (really a "tax") was introduced. Indeed it's got so bad

that TfL have even stopped publishing annual reports on the scheme so we can see the latest trends - the last report was published in 2008.

We suggest the main Congestion Charge should be scrapped and it is unfortunate that the previous Mayor entered into a multi-year contract that would make doing so particularly expensive. The Congestion Charge is going to be £10 from the new year, when it was argued that the initial charge of £5 would suffice. And still it contributes only a very small proportion of the amount needed by TfL to support public transport. Even central Government has realised that London's profligacy, based on massive sums provided by taxpayers across the whole country to run London's buses and underground, cannot continue. They have cut the funding to London in the spending review announced on the same day as the above announcement so that TfL's budget will be slashed by £2.2 billion. Bus and tube fares will go up, while services will be reduced, and that is the inevitable outcome of a transport strategy that was totally misconceived and contrary to what Londoners wanted.

But scrapping the Congestion Charge would at least be one way of removing the needless bureaucracy and the inconvenience to road users in having to pay the charge.

▶ For the announcements from the Mayor and the several hundreds of pages of reports from TfL on this subject, see www.london.gov.uk/who-runs-london/mayor/mayoral-decisions/md695

▶ For our submission to the last consultation on this issue see www.freedomfordrivers.org/Westcon_ABD_Consultation_Response_2.pdf

▶ For more general background take a look at: www.freedomfordrivers.org/WesternCon.htm

Turning off the lights

Labour GLA Member Valerie Shawcross has written a misleading letter to some London newspapers about the removal of 145 traffic lights and pedestrian crossings in London. Here is what I said in response:

"The letter from Labour GLA member Val Shawcross concerning the removal of 145 traffic lights was surely misleading. There is no suggestion that pedestrian crossings will be removed – simply that the traffic lights controlling them will be removed along with traffic lights at junctions which are unnecessary.

I suggest 145 is a trivial number and it should be much larger. There are about 5000 traffic lights in London, and they grew rapidly during the regime of the former Mayor. I would like to see about 1450 removed, not 145! That could include three in Chislehurst where I live which are totally unnecessary and cause major traffic congestion.

The removal of the proposed lights is only being undertaken after a very close review of the safety issues. No traffic lights are proposed for removal which might increase accidents.

The letter from Ms Shawcross is an attempt to stir up needless controversy and distort the facts, when removing many traffic lights would be a positive step to reduce traffic congestion, avoid pedestrians being delayed and with no downside to road safety."

Please respond in a similar vein if you see her letter in your local newspapers. You can also write to Ms Shawcross directly on this issue to valerie.shawcross@london.gov.uk as she is wanting to hear your views. I suggest you also copy your local Greater London Assembly member (don't know who that is? Go to www.london.gov.uk/who-runs-london/the-london-assembly/members

Roger Lawson

Check out the members' website at www.members.abd.org.uk, for info on the groups' structure, key contact details, campaigning info and much more

The chairman gets his hands dirty

I was interviewed recently by Peter Levy on his lunchtime show, on BBC Radio Humberside. Levy was clearly pro-road user charging as he thinks it would save him money 'cos he doesn't drive very much or very far. I pointed out that it'll cost £60bn to install and around £7bn per annum to run on DfT's own costings. I also wasted no time in pointing out that these figures would be in addition to the £50bn raised each year through existing road user taxes – which overwhelmingly don't get spent on roads.

Based on previous experience (such as the road fund licence becoming Vehicle Excise Duty and any road spending pledges which are conveniently forgotten, anyone who imagines anything else is living in Cloud-Cuckoo Land.

Then there's the matter of that small proportion of £50bn being spent on roads of the wrong type, such as the 60,000km of housing and industrial estate roads built in the last 35 years compared with only 1400km of motorway and a paltry 120km of A-roads.

I also stressed that fuel taxation is already the perfectly progressive road user taxation: it's unavoidable (if you want to stay legal) and the further, the faster and the less fuel-efficient the car you drive, the more you pay. It couldn't get any simpler.

Levy took the line that road user charging is unavoidable – his line was taken straight from the RAC Foundation's report on the same subject. I quickly told him that it's anything but unavoidable; 80% of road users are opposed to it and road pricing would be electoral suicide for any administration that tried to impose it.

Soon after this episode I found myself being interviewed about the reduction of the blood/alcohol limit. I was supposed to have been up against Brake, but ended up against Carol Whittingham, who described herself as a road safety campaigner having lost her son to a driver marginally over (85mg/100ml) the limit, who lost control on a bend and crashed head-on into her son's car. She wanted a zero limit.

I went into all the reasons why this isn't practical, pointing out that the vast majority of alcohol-related RTAs involve road users who are substantially above the current limit (and the problem is worse among cyclist and pedestrian fatalities than for motorised road users.

Lowering the limit would only succeed in criminalising safe drivers who aren't going to have RTAs the following morning, while encouraging those who already flout the law at 80mg to take a 'might as well be hung for a sheep as a lamb' attitude.

I also highlighted the recent stuff we discovered about certain fruit juice/ bread combinations producing temporary breath alcohol levels close to 50mg/100ml, even though the road user had consumed no alcohol. However, most of the phone respondents seemed to be in the zero limit camp and didn't want to be confused by the facts...

Meanwhile, I recently came across a satisfying and very readable demolition of the man-made climate change scam, by a former adherent to the theory; you can read it online at tinyurl.com/2eewzwp. It should be mandatory reading for every schoolchild and politician.

Brian Gregory

PACTS surprises

I recently attended a PACTS meeting on behalf of the ABD. Things kicked off with a presentation by a chap from the Sussex Safer Roads Partnership, and despite the assumption that this would be a cue for 30 minutes of speed propaganda, the focus was actually a very well presented talk on the group's campaign to get people to wear seatbelts. To get the gist of what was discussed, take a look at www.embracethis.co.uk where you can see a short film created at a cost of £47,000. It's proved a huge hit all over the world.

There was little of interest in the main body of the meeting but one pleasant surprise was the RAC Foundation's representative who said that there really ought to be fewer points awarded for the more minor speeding offences. He claimed to know of several people who had accumulated nine points and who were in danger of losing their licences, whereas if they had received only two each time they would be OK. This revealed somebody else who was pretty annoyed at having been not just done for minor speeding in Gloucestershire and Herefordshire (he has also attended a speed awareness course) but he was also done for doing 24mph over Tower bridge, where the limit is 20.

There was some discussion about the drink/drive limit and Peter Bottomley expressed some reservations about lowering the limit to 50. He said that in Australia (I forget which state) where there had been a reduction in the limit this had failed to have the desired result and he suggested that since there appeared to be 2.5% of drivers over the limit there as opposed to 0.3% over here he thought it would not be effective.

Hugh Bladon

ABD website moves – but it's still in the same place

The ABD website is moving to a new host; indeed it should have happened by the time you read this. We've been with the previous host since we first set up our website in 1996. Unfortunately the original company has been taken over several times, and service has now deteriorated to unacceptable levels. Our new host offers some additional services, such as mailing lists, which we will be looking at over time to see how we can enhance our internet presence.

Once it has moved, they website will become available at the address of <http://abd.org.uk> as well as <http://www.abd.org.uk>

The ABD member's site will move too, but you'll still be able to use the same address (<http://members.abd.org.uk>) and login credentials.

Members who have volunteered for specific roles in the ABD will now be able to have a dedicated ABD mailbox for email if they do not want their ABD email address simply redirected to

their personal email address. This mailbox can be used as POP3 or IMAP4, and can also be accessed via webmail. Contact Chris Ward if you haven't already responded to emails about this.

Those of you who run local pages for us can now move those pages to our server if you so wish, so that we look after hosting issues and cost. You will still be able to update your pages. If you have any questions please contact Chris Ward via website@abd.org.uk

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.

I've just flicked through *OTR97* and came across the article comparing energy use between cyclists and car drivers. I feel compelled to respond after reading this hogwash. Talk about trying to drive a wedge and trying to marginalise us, the motorists again. I say that because there are so many holes and assumptions in this article that the anti-car lobbies will have a field day with it.

As far as I remember people don't need fossil fuels to make them move. I am a cyclist and I love driving my car too but such articles which attempt to baffle the reader with bucket science and figures (to three significant figures!) smacks of someone who should get out more. Maybe get a bike?!

Please don't do it again as I might feel compelled to give up my membership.

Mike Hon

This letter should have appeared in OTR98, so apologies for the delay. I felt the article was contentious too, but I'm not here to act as a censor; the letter was submitted and was duly published. Ed

A news item today tells us that the government is to abolish the M4 Bus Lane and quotes the Transport Secretary Philip Hammond saying: "Nothing is more symbolic of Labour's war on the motorist than the M4 bus lane." It is ironic that, on the same day, the price of petrol and diesel has been raised yet again by the implementation of a Labour-planned duty increase.

VAT rises to 20% in January 2011, and this will of course be applied to motor fuels, which are already taxed to an extortionate degree by the immoral practice of charging a tax on a tax (the VAT is levied on the fuel's cost as well as the duty). I seem to remember, when the Conservatives were seeking election, reference to the war on the motorist included a promise to keep fuel prices under review and to introduce a scheme to raise or lower duty against variable oil prices to preserve price stability. In allowing this fuel duty increase to go forward it appears that this was just another political false promise. Does this government really care about fairness for the driver?

I represent a very rural constituency where public transport is often patchy or non-existent; therefore the majority of country folk need to run

I have mixed emotions about clamping. My office has four parking spaces directly outside the building. In central London, that's as rare as hen's teeth. I'm a reasonable bloke, and so put up a sign saying "No Parking Monday 00:01 to Friday 23:59". Since no-one was at the office over the weekend, why not be a good neighbour and give up some free parking?

Trouble is, some people were just incapable of reading that sign and would park there during the week for no good reason than they wanted to. Challenging them as they parked up started out as a simple sheepish apology

Give us a quote

"Driving laws should be based on sound science, not the results of opinion polls that were, in any case, subject to the way questions were asked."

The ABD's Malcolm Heymer

Speaking to the House of Commons Transport Select Committee

14 September 2010

Brake has been at it again, this time with the aid of *This Morning* on the TV. A young girl was telling the harrowing story of her boyfriend who was struck and killed by a drunk driver. As she related her tale she slipped in the fact that the drunk driver was in a stolen car which was being pursued by the police. The result of this episode was that Julie Townsend from Brake and *This Morning* are calling for a zero limit on drink driving.

Predictably the result of the poll was 88% in favour. The only public responses read out were in favour and at no point in the

programme was there any opportunity to state any arguments against reducing the limit.

I emailed the programme saying that a drunk driver in a stolen car being pursued by the police was not a straightforward case of drink driving and should not be used as an example of why the drink driving alcohol level should be reduced.

I also said that the programme didn't say whether the drunk driver was over the current limit or not (presumably he was), so reducing the limit was very unlikely to have changed what happened.

Sean Corker

a car, particularly as services in the countryside such as village shops, pubs, banks and medical services continue to be closed down. To make matters worse, fuel prices in rural areas are invariably a few pence a litre dearer than in town and impact heavily on people whose incomes are generally lower than average.

Appreciating the straitened circumstances of the nation and the need to reduce the deficit, it should not be beyond the wit of the government to help the rural areas by a fairer tax policy in the areas described above.

Peter Horton

I think we all know that at the moment (date as post) Scotland is not doing very well as regards the weather. But I loved this quote from Scotland's Transport Minister who claimed that the weather advice the authorities had been working on recently 'did not meet the requirements'.

Would that be the same weather advice, and from the same idiots, that ministers would have us believe when they lecture us on climate change? They cannot even get the next couple of days right but we are expected to believe their 50-year forecasts.

John Ryle

and departing; as they returned, usually a shrug of the shoulders, mumble apology, and drive off. Latterly, either way, just foul-mouthed abuse.

I'm not allowed to use parking poles. I can't legally block them in, so what can I do? I have to use clampers, because yes, I can give them a ticket, but it has no statutory legal value, and to pursue it I would have to take it to court, at greater cost to me than the value of a ticket. Even with using clampers, and with appropriate, clear signage, I still get at least one chancer every week, guaranteed...

James Duff



A Tesco driver gets stung while trying to deliver

Why is it that common sense almost never prevails when it comes to parking inspectors? Twice over the last month, I have been held up for 10 minutes by a truck picking up an illegally-parked car in the Hammersmith & Fulham district. The irony in each case was that the car, although parked illegally, was not disrupting anybody, while the truck blocked both directions of traffic for 10 minutes during evening peak hour in a busy part of London to remove it. When the enforcement is worse than the original infringement, the system is broken.

John Price

RSS Ltd (Road Safety Services) was set up by the serial speeder Chief Constable Meredydd Hughes to make money from drivers, who had the audacity to defend themselves. RSS Ltd supplies alleged expert speed camera witnesses at a fee and then demand thousands of pounds of costs from the poor victim. Do the police behave like this for really anti-social offences too?

Well Lincolnshire Police have now paid out £35,080 of our money to RSS Ltd, and Notts Police (in 2010 alone) another £21,731.50 – and for what exactly? What is RSS Ltd for, apart from making about £750k a year (my estimate) plus expenses from the beleaguered British Driver!

Keith Peat

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

I recently downloaded the DfT business plan and it shows how strong the LibDem influence is. The DfT's first priority is to "deliver the Coalition's commitments on high-speed rail", with its second priority to "secure our railways for the future".

The third priority is to "encourage sustainable local travel and economic growth by making public transport (including light rail) and cycling and walking more attractive and effective, promoting lower carbon transport and tackling local road congestion." The detailed programme under this priority includes funding of major transport schemes. So it seems even the strategic road network should now be considered as appropriate for only local travel, with rail to be promoted

In the pages of *Local Transport Today*, the ABD was recently criticised for its low membership. We were accused of being unrepresentative of drivers, and that bigger 'driver groups' are more representative. But the reason why 12 million drivers join the AA is to receive breakdown cover. While ABD membership is below 2000, it compares well with the likes of the Campaign for Better Transport (CfBT) while the RAC Foundation (RACF) consists of a little over 20 people and has no members at all – yet it's never accused of being unrepresentative of drivers.

Paul Biggs

I recently read in a professional journal that "Road speeds are determined by road and traffic engineers." If only that were true! Speed limits are now set by politicians with no understanding of their correct use, and road safety 'professionals' are increasingly less likely to have a highway or traffic engineering background, so do not understand the science of speed limit setting either.

I worked in local government as a highway and traffic engineer for over 30 years, so I'm well aware of the pressure applied to elected councillors by vociferous residents for lower speed limits. Many of these demands are based on grossly exaggerated claims of vehicle speeds, which are not supported by speed surveys.

Over-regulation is not merely a nuisance. It is often counter-productive even by the standards of those promoting it. Here is an example and some studies to back up my assertion.

Four years ago Wellington, New Zealand reduced speed limits from 50 to 30km/h (30 to 20mph) to improve pedestrian safety in an area with a lot of bus traffic. Bus-pedestrian collisions increased. Apparently bus drivers drove slowly, obeying the new speed limit and pedestrians took that as an invitation to walk into traffic.

A Federal Highway Administration study found that painting crosswalks on busy, four-lane urban streets with traffic faster than 35mph increased pedestrian accidents. Pedestrians who used those crosswalks

for all long-distance trips! Perhaps the DfT should be renamed the Department for Public Transport.

Also under this priority is completion of the traffic signs policy review. I am involved in this as part of the DfT's 'sounding board' to comment on proposals. I have just sent comments on a couple of papers, one concerning signing of cycle routes and facilities, the other proposals for revising the Traffic Signs Regulations and General Directions. If anyone would like to see the proposals and my comments on them, just get in touch with me; the review is due to be completed by May 2011.

Priority 4 is to "tackle carbon and congestion on our roads". This includes some good



And why was it reduced?

Without professional advice based on a sound knowledge of how speed limits should be used, it is not surprising that councillors often capitulate.

Speed limits set below the 85th percentile lead to frustration, a high level of non-compliance, and even an increase in the highest speeds. Consequently, accidents can increase rather than fall. Studies used to discredit the 85th percentile principle for speed limit setting, by claiming a relationship between average speeds and accident frequency, do not withstand statistical scrutiny.

The almost fanatical belief in the value of lower speed limits is illustrated by an example in J J Leeming's seminal book on road safety, *Road Accidents: Prevent or punish?* A parish council

were more likely to get badly hurt than pedestrians who crossed similar streets without crosswalks.

A recurring theme is the danger making people feel safer than they really are.

Suppose we mandated better tyres. With these you can brake harder and turn sharper to avoid a collision. It's obvious that you would get into fewer accidents with better tyres. It's obvious, but it's not true.

The effect is called 'risk compensation'. The study used anti-lock brakes instead of better tyres. Drivers with ABS are more likely to tailgate and drive aggressively, relying on good brakes to save them. Pedestrians are more likely to walk in front of slow-moving buses than fast moving buses. Pedestrians are more likely to walk in front of fast-moving traffic

points, such as working with the Home Office and police to open roads sooner after incidents and opening the M4 bus lane to all road users. Also itemised is responding to the North Review on drink and drug driving law, which will take until June 2011! Also, "develop a new strategic framework for road safety" is due to be completed by April. Perhaps this is why Mike Penning was interested in talking to us...

Malcolm Heymer

•The DfT's business plan is online at: tinyurl.com/32epj93

•There are also plans for agencies such as DVLA and Highways Agency: tinyurl.com/285n3r7

wanted a 30mph limit, which was resisted by Leeming (the County Surveyor) and the police. The council eventually forced the issue by installing street lighting, thus creating the speed limit. Accidents increased. When Leeming reported this to the parish council, the response was: "We don't care if accidents have increased, we have got our speed limit!"

Such irrational thinking and dismissal of evidence is still prevalent today. It's turning the safest drivers – those who would naturally travel at around the 85th percentile speed – into criminals if they continue to exercise their speed adjustment skills. The principle adopted by the Arizona Department of Transportation in regard to setting speed limits should be applied in Britain also: "The normally careful and competent actions of a reasonable individual should be considered legal."

Malcolm Heymer

The nation faces a budget deficit of at least £150 billion, equivalent to £6000 for every household in the land. The national debt plus other Government liabilities is around £2200 billion, which is equivalent to £90,000 per household.

In these unprecedented circumstance it is folly to pursue transport projects, such as Crossrail and High-Speed rail, which will require subsidy from

when "protected" by a stripe of white paint.

Not all safety-motivated changes are good, and not all are bad. Driving is a lot safer than it was 50 years ago, and we're going places faster. Obviously something has worked. The problem is, it's hard to predict which changes have their intended results and which do something unexpected.

Drivers and pedestrians are human beings, not robots. Most of us are comfortable with the risk of everyday life. You can not program our behaviour directly. You can only influence it indirectly.

Next time you hear about some "obviously" good law, ask yourself what's going to happen when it meets the real world.

John Carr

National Motorists' Association

the taxpayer on a massive scale. In that context we have written to Lord Adonis when still the Minister for Transport and copied the same to the present Government. To see those letters and the reply log on to www.transport-watch.co.uk/sample-letters-to-mps.htm

We also present:

•A data summary and commentary for HS2 at www.transport-watch.co.uk/hs2-reports.htm, which shows that the justification for the proposals is deeply flawed

•A new commentary on electric cars at www.transport-watch.co.uk/topic-31.htm. The paper shows that, rather than being an environmental benefit, the electric car may turn out to be precisely the reverse. Certainly it is premature to base policies on the advice that the Government presently enjoys.

*Paul Withrington
Transport Watch*

A councillor near me has had a Freedom of Information request to try to determine the effectiveness of a speed camera refused. A Bradford Council official has told him: "I believe that there is great potential for harm to be caused by the release of such statistics into the public domain."

Cllr Mark Pullen, of Haworth, Cross Roads and

Safety engineering manager Eric Bridgstock, of Evans Grove, St Albans, has spent the last three years conducting independent and unfunded research into the effectiveness of speed cameras.

As a result he has built a national campaign to remove them on the basis that there is evidence that they have a net negative impact on road safety despite claims to the contrary.

Last month the county council revealed that it would be reducing the number of street lights and the current bus provision in a bid to save money.

But funding will continue for the Herts Safety Camera Partnership with Cllr Stuart Pile, the executive member for highways and transport, claiming that the latest figures show that there is a reduction in the number of people killed or seriously injured in collisions at camera sites.

But Mr Bridgstock, who advised both Swindon and Oxfordshire councils before they switched off their cameras, maintains that Cllr Pile's comments are misleading.

He pointed out that the 64.4 per cent reduction in fatalities and serious accidents promoted by Cllr Pile was not an annual fall as it appeared but the apparent reduction since cameras were installed – anything up to eight years ago.

He explained that cameras were always installed immediately after a high number of crash/injuries which meant the incident rate had to fall and that other factors, including under-reporting of injuries, improvement in vehicle

Stanbury Parish Council, made the request – as a member of the public rather than a councillor – as he was struggling to acquire details about the camera, which is on Halifax Road, near its junction with Worstead Road.

He had asked Bradford Council to say how many days the device was operational between January and August 2010. He also asked the council to reveal how many tickets were issued to offenders within the same period. However, the reply from casualty reduction analyst Stuart Robertshaw said although the information did exist, it could not be released.

The response stated: "For speed enforcement to be truly effective there must be the perception that the chance of being recorded is high at all sites. Releasing site specific data may identify those sites where a motorist is more likely to be caught exceeding the speed limit or failing to comply with a traffic signal.

"This may, in turn, reduce the effectiveness of those sites where motorists perceive there is less chance of being caught, resulting in an increase in speeding and speed-related incidents and casualties."

You'd think such data was a matter of national security; these blokes just love building their empires, don't they?

Steve Wright

design and drivers choosing alternative routes to avoid cameras, influenced the numbers and gave the impression that they were much more effective than they were.

Mr Bridgstock has also discovered that there were 49 deaths on the roads in the county in 2001 – the year before the Herts Safety Camera Partnership was formed – and that number was exceeded in four of the following six years.

The decision to continue funding cameras was taken at a panel meeting early last month at which Mr Bridgstock was present.

He said there was no debate about funding, even though he had sent clear evidence of its failure to councillors.

He was also critical of the county council's late recognition of the value of Vehicle Activated Signs which independent reports had shown to be as effective as speed cameras which cost 50 times more.

Mr Bridgstock said that despite the evidence he had produced, he had been consistently ignored by the county council and what answers they had produced were weak.

He added: "Refusal to debate is an admission that they have lost the argument and a reason to continue hounding them. Their position is ultimately unsustainable."

Robert Bolt



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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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

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

Forum

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

Website

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

OTR – go electronic

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

OTR in cyberspace

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

Speed limit objection packs

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

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

Help out

ABD publicity material

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

ABD merchandise

Via Zazzle, the ABD has a store where you can buy promotional and campaigning items. The ABD earns a small commission on sales; log on to www.zazzle.co.uk/theabd and if you order something, please click *Join fan club* on the Store front page to help promote us.

Affiliated organisations

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

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
ICIPS (Choice in Personal Safety)
Citroen Car Club
Driver Awareness
Jaguar Drivers' Club
INO2ID

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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