

## Integrated Transport Policy - ABD responds

The Association of British Drivers replied to the government's Integrated Transport Policy discussion document with a detailed, point-by-point response bringing realism, common sense and practicality into the ring. Whilst the government's document seems to be a front for the promotion of mass transit systems, the ABD mounted a robust defence of road transport and the private car.

This document is particularly important because the government and the proponents of the "Integrated Transport Policy" are known to be actively anti-car and opposed to the freedom it brings. They are determined to remove that freedom - by restrictions and pricing - for barely concealed political reasons, in spite of the fact that some 68% of households have the use of, and are often dependent upon, private cars.

*More details inside on page 6*

## Prescott considers plan to build railway lines in motorway central reservations

Transport (or should that be Environment?) Minister John Prescott is reported to be considering a plan to build a high speed railway line along the Central Reservation of two key UK motorways as part of his campaign to get people to travel by train. The advantage is that the lines would be relatively straight, and therefore able to travel at much higher speeds. The journey from London to Manchester could be done in 1 hour 20 minutes instead of 2 hours and 30 minutes - a spectacular saving.

One wonders, however, whether he has noticed how narrow the Central Reservations are. It seems unlikely that this would be feasible without either widening the motorway substantially, or building an overhead bridge system.

*And think about the carnage which would follow the inevitable derailments. - Ed*

## £400 car park tax

The government aims to introduce charges for car parking that could cost the motorist between £400 and £1,000 a year. Charges would hit thousands of drivers who need to park at the workplace, in towns or even at out-of-town shopping centres.

The plans are backed up by justifications about it being "no longer possible to road-build our way out of traffic congestion problems" and about "protecting the environment and our children's health". The aim is to force drivers out of their cars and onto public transport whilst providing no viable alternatives.

However, there is no sound scientific evidence supporting the proposition that emissions from modern petrol-driven vehicles are damaging to health.

**Thought for the day**  
*"Facts do not cease to exist because they are ignored" - Aldous Huxley*

Public transport, however, pollutes grossly. According to 1997 National Environment Technology Centre figures, the average bus emits NOx gases equivalent to 39 modern cars; and particulates equivalent to 128 cars. There is mounting evidence that public transport vehicles like buses, taxis and diesel locomotives - using old, dirty 1950s technology - pose a serious threat to public health through their exhaust emissions containing 3-nitrobenzanthrone - the most carcinogenic compound currently known to humanity. Environmental groups estimate that traces of this material in diesel exhaust emissions contribute to up to 10,000 UK urban lung cancer deaths per annum.

Successive British governments have determinedly underinvested our country into  
*... continued on page 9*

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Issue 17, Winter 1997/98

£3.00

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## Beat the anti-car planners

You *can* beat the bureaucrats when they set about ruining your local transport environment with ill-considered "traffic calming" schemes and unnecessarily low speed limits.

Read how on page 10 of this issue where we publish possibly the most important article ever to appear on these pages. Then sharpen your pen!

## New Year's resolution

January 1st's good intentions will be a distant memory by the time you read this but here is a suggestion for what may be the most important resolution of them all.

Our campaign, for fair and just treatment of ordinary people wishing to travel by car, will only be won if:

- politicians are constantly reminded of their voters' views;
- local government bureaucrats are challenged every time they overstep the mark;
- media pundits are informed of the facts whenever they lapse into propaganda;
- the awareness of the general public is raised at every opportunity so they become alerted to the dangers to their individual liberty.

This is more likely to be achieved if as many of us as possible write and telephone as often as possible to politicians and the media. So make it your resolution to write or telephone to follow up any anti-car propaganda or measures nationally or in your own area.

Happy New Year!

# UK News Roundup

## TV speed obsession

Carlton TV's "How Safe is Your Car" featured a survey carried out by Brake. The survey involved interviews with 48 people who had been stopped for speeding, 43 in built-up areas and five on dual carriageways and motorways. The offences ranged from 37mph in a 30mph area to 122mph in a 70mph area.

Of the 48 drivers stopped 85% had not undergone training since passing their driving test, 10.5% considered themselves to be excellent drivers, 66.5% good and 23% adequate.

The drivers were asked to estimate the probabilities of a pedestrian being killed by being hit by a vehicle travelling at 40mph, 30mph and 20mph. The average of the estimates given by the drivers for 40mph was 67%, for 30mph it was 41% and for 20mph it was 20%. According to Brake the true figures are 90%, 50% and 10% respectively.

A Brake spokesman said: "There is a clear need for improvements in training about risks and the importance of compliance with speed limits, through training courses, advertising campaigns, literature and other media. Driver training and assessment techniques as practised by the employers of safety conscious road-users should be encouraged, along with more Government advertising campaigns. Drivers also need to be held more responsible for the consequences of their behaviour. Tough penalties and more policing are needed."

Brake executive director Mary Williams said: "In busy modern lifestyles, drivers often place factors such as getting somewhere quickly above concerns for the safety of themselves and others."

She went on: "This programme asks how safe is your car, but we must also ask how safe is your driving. It could be argued that the roads would be safer if all our steering wheels had spikes rather than airbags coming out of them."

These do not sound like the words of a reasonable, responsible person with a genuine interest in safety.

## Unholy alliance

The Centre for the Management of Traffic and the Environment, a new think-tank chaired by Steven Norris, former transport minister and now director general of the Road Haulage Association, has called for the introduction of road pricing.

Other members of the think-tank include councillor David Begg, Labour convenor of Edinburgh City Transportation Committee and Stephen Joseph of pressure group Transport 2000.

The centre has published two reports;

"Reducing Car Travel: The Limitations of Public Transport" by John Wootton, president of the Institution of Highways and Transportation and Rees Jeffrey professor of transport planning at Southampton University; and "Urban Road Pricing: Time for Action" by David Begg who is also professor of transport at Aberdeen's Robert Gordon University.

(Drivers should consider both reports to be virulently anti-motorist.)

On launching these two reports Norris said: "We need to give urgent consideration to the issues raised by road pricing. It is not the only way to tackle urban congestion - far from it. But, increasingly, communities around the world are looking to fiscal measures not only to finance new public transport and infrastructure, but also as a means of reducing urban traffic flows and managing demand. We cannot afford to walk away from the pricing issue just because it causes some local political difficulties. As congestion and pollution increase, we need radical solutions and pricing together with a package of other measures may well represent at least part of the way forward."

(David Begg sits on the panel of nine "independent" experts who will "help" the Government develop an integrated transport policy for a modern Britain.)

## RAC back on-message

The RAC's recent advertising campaign has received the 1997 Golden Turkey award from Campaign magazine. The advertisement and the agency have been given the boot.

On the same day that this news was reported, the RAC featured in the national news on Radio 4's Today programme, drawing attention to the fact that cars are not the major polluters that they are made out to be.

## Fleet industry slates Motorway tolling

VELO, the car leasing and fleet management group, has issued its eighth quarterly Fleet Insurance Report, drawn from a database of more than 110,000 vehicles and almost 30,000 incidents. The report showed that just 8.4% of all moving accidents occurred on motorways whereas more than 50% occurred on unclassified roads.

VELO MD David Voss said "These findings would suggest that careful thought needs to be given to installing tolls on Britain's motorway system. Motorists should not be encouraged to use other roads which are less safe. Increases in traffic congestion may also become apparent.

## The Association of British Drivers

**On The Road** is published by Pro-Motor, a company limited by Guarantee and registered in England under no: 2945728.

For contact details see:  
[www.abd.org.uk/contacts.htm](http://www.abd.org.uk/contacts.htm)

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# UK & World News Roundup

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## Manchester solicitor takes on speed humps

In the northern editions of the Daily Telegraph recently, a prominent report featured lawyer Tony Burton and his quest against speed bumps. Following damage to his car whilst negotiating one of these obstructive, unnecessary devices, Mr Burton placed an advert in Max Power magazine and received support from 120 similarly disgruntled motorists. He is now seeking a judicial review to establish that the DoT is "failing in its responsibility to keep the Queen's highway free of obstructions".

He is quoted in the Telegraph as follows: "Everywhere you go, local authorities are squandering taxpayers' money on sets of completely useless obstacles. They claim they save lives, but that is a complete load of rubbish - four wheel drive vehicles can go over sleeping policemen at 70mph." Hear, hear.

The ABD has contacted Mr Burton and provided him with the full range of arguments we use against traffic calming measures in our own campaigning. We wish him all the best in his campaign and hope he will join our organisation.

## Teleworking future still needs good roads

A report commissioned by the RAC predicts that teleworking will cut commuter traffic by 20% and video-conferencing will reduce gridlock by a further 10%.

The research was carried out by National Economic Research Associates, the Department of Business Organisation at Heriot-Watt University, and Critical Research. Edmund King, RAC head of campaigns, said that such trends have "a vital part to play in curbing congestion chaos."

The Critical Research survey of 300 business managers and directors suggested that about 50% of the people who *could* work from home some of the time would like to do so. However, 37% do not want to work from home. They would miss the social side of work.

Such trends do not mean that the government can continue the reductions in spending on the roads. The UK trunk road network is inadequate and dangerous now; it was 20 years ago and it will still be in another 20 years unless the cynical and irresponsible ripping off of road users is stopped. It is not too late to start to invest in good road transport system, it will pay handsome dividends in terms of economic growth, safety and environmental and social impact.

## Anti-car legislation alert

The latest National Road Traffic Forecast predicts 38% increase in traffic by 2016 and 84% by 2031. This is considerably lower than the last NRTF issued in 1989.

The new forecast takes into consideration a "real" increase in fuel duty of 6% annually until 2002. At this rate of increase fuel duty would be doubled in real terms by 2010.

A Friends of the Earth (Enemies of the People) spokesman said; "Only road traffic reduction and the Road Traffic Reduction Bill, can secure a long term solution to congestion and pollution problems."

This bill, which aims to set a target of cutting traffic by 10% by 2010, is being sponsored by Cynog Dafis MP and comes up for a second reading in January.

(Members are urged to write to their MPs to try to head off the passing of this legislation.)

## Environmental controls threaten Euro car industry

A report published by the Economic Intelligence Unit ("The New Car Market in Europe") predicts that the excess car making capacity in Europe will grow worse over the coming years, and blames higher taxes and the growing impact of so-called "environmental" controls on car use.

The authors of the Report expect car sales in western Europe to fall to 12.5 million cars in 2000, compared to 12.8 million cars last year. It anticipates that sales will peak this year at about 13 million units.

This report bears out the ABD's worst fears, expressed since our formation in 1992 - that eventually the effects of the Green madness will go way beyond driving enjoyment and mobility to strike at the very heart of our economy and prosperity.

## Petrol prices soar ... to 8p per litre!

De-regulation of the petrol market is set to revolutionise the sale of petrol in oil-rich Venezuela. State owned petrol stations have long been a by-word for poor service, but they are now being made into smarter friendlier places, with clean rest rooms and mini-supermarkets, as they prepare for competition from foreign owned petrol retailers for the first time in 20 years.

The number of filling stations is likely to double to meet demand, and the price of petrol is to be liberalised.

Prices have already risen ten-fold in the last year, reaching 70 bolivars (about 8 pence) per litre. Venezuela has about one vehicle for every two inhabitants.

## MEPs propose 10 year driver testing

MEPs are considering Euro legislation to ban drivers who fail a ten year driving test as part of a review of road safety. Mark Watts, MEP and member of the Euro Parliament Transport Committee said that the issue was being considered as part a wider examination of road safety issues. This would lead to the publication of a report in the spring.

ABD members should expect unpleasant news when this report surfaces.

UK experts have slated the proposal:

BSM Fleet Training MD Chris Reynolds said "I think such a measure would be inappropriate. They are right to highlight that something must be done, but the question we have is whether a blanket five or ten year test is the right approach."

According to reports in the media a spokesman for the IAM said that regular compulsory tests would be an administrative nightmare and achieve little.

Only the luddite Royal Society for the Prevention of Accidents (ROSPA) has supported the scheme.

## Trunk Roads review

The government requested views on its trunk roads policy. The discussion document was subtitled "What role for Trunk Roads in England?" and the ABD's response answered this in a forthright and constructive manner.

The full text of the ABD's submissions on trunk roads and the integrated transport policy can be seen on our web site.

## Highway Code review

Yet another review is under way, of the proposed changes to the Highway Code. Details from the Driving Standards Authority on 01234 743122; submissions to be returned by 31st January.

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## The SERA Conference

*A report on what Big Brother (and Sister) have got planned for you. Sit down before you read this. If you have a heart condition, skip it.*

The ABD attended a one day conference on integrated transport policy run by SERA, an organisation which now calls itself the "Labour Environment Campaign" as its proper title contains the word "Socialist" which is, of course, not encouraged by New Labour!

Since this group claims 90 MPs, 26 MEPs and no less than seven Cabinet Ministers amongst its membership, the ABD felt it to be very important to attend in order to gauge the pressures that the government are under from within their own party on transport issues. What we heard left us appalled but, sadly, far from surprised.

The conference opened with a speech from the Transport Minister, Gavin Strang, who, to give him credit, tried hard to be balanced and reasonable about the issues facing transport policymakers and to stress that the car still had a role. When he took questions, he was subject to a series of tirades from Friends of the Earth members trying to push him into a more extreme position - this was quite deliberate and a clear demonstration of the kinds of pressure tactics that FoE and others apply to politicians to convince them that theirs is the view of the majority.

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### **"The car is the last bastion of freedom - this must be overturned"**

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The formal speeches were supplied in the conference document. These are not verbatim transcripts, however, and the rhetoric deployed was at times considerably more extreme than that printed. The key general points to come out of this document are as follows:

#### **1. The incestuous relationships of the Key Players**

The vast majority of speakers have direct links with other organisations represented. Note the following links:

- John Stewart (SERA) - Roadpeace, Transport 2000, ALARM UK, Pedestrians Association
- Barney Stringer (CBI) - Transport 2000
- Stephen Joseph (Transport 2000) - ETA, SERA
- Ben Plowden (Pedestrians Assoc) - CPRE
- Kris Beuret (Social Research Assoc) - Leicester Pedestrians Assoc. (Note Leicester is trialling road pricing)
- Nicky Gavron (Local Govt. Assoc) - Roads versus communities debate, stopped road building in London
- David Begg (Edinburgh Council) - Member of "Strang Gang" advisory team. Note that Gavin Strang has an Edinburgh constituency
- Don Mathew (SERA) - FoE, Sustrans, Pedestrian Policy Group, "Slow Down"
- Lynn Sloman (Transport 2000) - ETA, EFTE, Streets Ahead, National Cycle Forum, National Walking Steering Group, Road Danger Reduction Forum.

It is quite clear that these individuals are all very active in

opposing car use on ideological grounds wherever it is to be found. All these groups (and others) are working together in a co-ordinated manner to extend their influence in politics, the media and the civil service, and have been for some time. They are quite deliberately proliferating the number of anti car groups in order to give the impression that there are far more of them than there actually are and to ensure that spokesmen can be provided on every issue.

#### **2. The car to be excluded from "Integrated Transport"**

The whole thrust of the speeches was not, as a reasonable person would expect, about ensuring that various modes of transport integrate together to maximise efficiency. No, the object is to exclude car use altogether by achieving a "modal shift" into other means of transport in order to squeeze the car out altogether.

#### **3. Generalisation of arguments**

Arguments which made some sense in urban areas - like the geographic impossibility of building new roads in some circumstances - were seamlessly generalised to cover all situations - i.e., no roads should be built at all.

#### **4. They are anti-car, not pro alternatives**

The emphasis is on making car use expensive, unpleasant or plain impossible by a variety of methods whilst paying lip service to making the alternatives more attractive. A Roadpeace member complained loudly that he had come on his bike and there were no secure facilities for it to be left, and that at a Transport 2000 conference he had attended recently had been the same.

#### **5. Compulsion, not choice, is the theme**

The undercurrent of all the speeches was that people should be forced out of their cars onto existing, inadequate public transport rather than any effort being made to offer a positive choice based on improvements in the alternatives.

#### **6. The abuse of safety**

All these groups are becoming increasingly open about their desire to use road safety measures as a tool to make car use unpleasant rather than to make the roads safer. Such policies are already being implemented by local authorities sympathetic to these views, and these are at the expense of, or even work against, proper safety measures.

#### **7. No call for application of funds**

The conference predictably failed to recognise the massive contribution made to the exchequer by motoring taxes. More surprising was their blind acceptance of the continuance of blatant underfunding of the whole transport infrastructure over many years.

It is quite clear from this conference that the Integrated Transport Policy is to be driven by these basic principles, principles that should strike fear and outrage into the hearts of every motorist. The ABD does not deny that transport problems exist, but it does most strongly assert that an anti car mentality is a futile, fatuous and backward looking pretext from which to start a rational debate on how to address them. They are, after all, problems born out of the massive success of an economy

# Safety and Speed Issues

based around personal mobility which has solved many other problems and created huge opportunities for many.

To reinforce this point, here are some direct quotes from the panel discussion at the end of the conference.

## Quotes from the platform

Kris Beuret - De Montfort University, Social Research Associates:

*"The car is the last bastion of freedom - this must be overturned"*

*"We have succeeded in making people feel guilty about using their cars - but they still do it"*

*"The Highways Agency should act as a management authority allocating permits to drive into towns. People should be made to wait at the perimeter until a space becomes available."*

*"People who live in the country say they need to drive into towns - I say its their own fault for living in the country."*

Councillor Dave Merrett, City of York Council:

*"We must reduce the convenience, ease and low marginal cost of car use."*

Lynn Sloman, Transport 2000

*"We must bring out the sticks as well as the carrots. We must sell the sexy cycleways and make car travel unsexy."*

*"We must make the car driver say "Pardon Me", not the pedestrian."*

*"Bristol could cut the number of cars coming in by 40% simply by using its existing powers to eliminate parking and raise charges. They won't do it because they are afraid they will lose business to other towns. We must legislate to compel all local authorities to take these actions."*

## Question from floor

A delegate made the following statement (to loud applause):

*"The right to free parking in the street should end. Terraced houses should be allocated only one chargeable parking space."*

The individual concerned was later seen leaving the central London venue by car.

## A demonstration, but of what?

*"The West London Speed Camera Demonstration Project" is the title of yet another report wheeled out by the authorities on the same "experiment" now referred to as a "demonstration".*

*Subtitled, "Analysis of accident and casualty data 36 months 'after' implementation and comparison with the 36 months 'before' data" the document is discussed here by Dr. Michael S. Bingley, B.A., Ph.D., C.I. Mech. E.*

This report covers an experiment to determine whether the introduction of speed cameras in an area of West London reduced accidents. To do this accidents were recorded over period of three years before the introduction of speed cameras and a comparison was made with accidents for a similar period after the introduction of speed cameras. Furthermore observations were made of accident rates in adjacent road networks without speed cameras as a comparison.


Accidents have been divided into fatal or serious and slight. A reduction of 69.4 % is claimed for the former while a 7.9 % reduction is claimed for the latter. Statistical methods are used such as the Chi-squared test of significance. What does this test mean? If an event takes place there is always the possibility that its cause may have been pure chance, in other words nothing that we can identify. The Chi-squared test is a statistical test applied to the data to give a numerical indication of the likelihood of an event being due to pure chance. The higher the number the less this is and the more likely is the event to be significant. The accident results quoted in this report are all found to be significant. So far so good; something is causing a change in accident rate. The report claims it is the presence of speed cameras. But could there be another reason?

## **this report is a sloppy piece of work**

Many drivers tend to avoid speed cameras where possible by choosing different routes. This is not because they speed, quite the contrary but to avoid the sudden braking and skidding that is to be found close to the cameras. (The report comments on an increase in minor shunts where these cameras are.) It would be reasonable to suspect that there would be changes in traffic density near the cameras. It is possible that it is *this* which is responsible for changes in accident rate.

There are devices for measuring traffic density in terms of vehicles per hour. These could have been used before the installation of speed cameras and afterwards to give accurate information on traffic flow. However, there is no tabulation of traffic flow figures in this report. So the doubt exists as to exactly what it is that is responsible for the reduction of accidents. In other words this whole experiment is not rigorous enough. It takes a lot of hard work to make a proper experiment. This has not been done.

To put it simply, this report is a sloppy piece of work. Had this work been part of a Ph.D thesis an external examiner would have had every reason to refer it back for further work.

  
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# Integrated Transport Policy

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## The ABD's response

... continued from page 1

The ABD commented forcefully, with facts and figures to support their arguments, on the important issues raised in the Integrated Transport Policy (ITP) discussion document, including:

**Pollution.** Pollution attributable to cars is low and falling and gives no cause for restrictions on health grounds. By 2010, emissions of the four main exhaust pollutants will have fallen by 67% - 81% compared with their 1990 levels. If there is any cause for concern it is the level of particulates emitted by buses and other diesel-engined vehicles.

**Congestion.** Whilst some congestion will always occur at busy times and places, the excessive congestion experienced on many roads which has such an adverse impact on business and family life is almost entirely due to the gross and negligent under-investment in our transport infrastructure by successive governments. The UK, for example, has 3200km of motorway compared with 8000km in France to serve a population of similar size.

**Traffic Growth.** Earlier forecasts have recently been drastically down-graded, indicating that those originally responsible were either deliberately scare-mongering or were just plain wrong, as the ABD has said repeatedly. This clearly discredits the forecasts which are being used as an excuse to propose draconian anti-car measures.

These issues and many others are covered in detail in the ABD's 13-page document, showing that there is no excuse for the drastic restrictions and further taxation on motorists likely to be the outcome if the Integrated Transport Policy is implemented as proposed.

Julian Rowden, principal author of the ABD's response said, "It is important to note that while many of the proponents of the Integrated Transport Policy are actively anti-car, the ABD is not anti-bus, anti-bike or anti-train. The ABD would welcome the availability of clean, safe mass transit systems. Genuine improvements for cyclists, rather than the tokenist pavement-painting exercises, would also be welcome.

"However, there is no doubt that the motor car is not only the preferable means of transport for many journeys, it is often the best and sometimes the only means of transport. Not even unlimited resources thrown into mass transit systems would change this fact."

If Gavin Strang and his "experts" ignore this they will not only strike a blow against the liberty and mobility of individual citizens, they will imperil the nation's economy.

The ABD's full response can be seen on the web site at <http://www.deltacom.co.uk/abd/itp.htm>

## Members add their weight

Many ABD Members responded as individuals and some sent us copies of their letters. Without exception they were well-written and well-argued.

Some 5000 responses were sent in but requests for a breakdown of this number were refused. The responses are not going to be made public either - an ominous sign. Thus the battle is far from over and further letters to MPs, ministers and the media may well be needed.

## The Strang Gang

The introduction to the ITP by Dr Gavin Strang claimed that the review of responses and drafting of the white paper would involve a team of independent experts. Our investigations indicate they are far from "independent" and that any "expertise" they may have is unlikely to be helpful in creating a genuinely integrated transport system. The panel comprises nine members. They are as follows.

1. Phil Goodwin (Chairman). A professor at London University.

Whilst at Oxford University's Transport Studies Unit in 1994 he co-authored a report claiming that roads generate traffic: 10% in the short term and 20% in the long term. He thinks the M25 may have generated 40% more traffic. He has not explained why the M45 and Humber Bridge have failed to generate traffic. He has ignored the possibility that the different traffic growth on these motorways could be due to the fact that a lot of people live near the M25 and fewer near the Humber Bridge.

He assumes that traffic is A Bad Thing and fails to recognise that it is an indication of the economy at work. Although a self-proclaimed expert in cause and effect he has failed to appreciate the following sequence:

*traffic* ⇒ *economic activity* ⇒ *wealth creation* ⇒ *taxes*  
⇒ *salaries of academics*

Perhaps he thinks everyone could and should sit around in an ivory tower all day.

2. David Begg is an Edinburgh City councillor. Mr Begg makes his views clear; he stated on the "Today" programme on 14th October that it is not enough just to have good public transport, there must be major restrictions and financial penalties on the use of private cars. He is also a man of action and has already created schemes in Edinburgh where the residents are banned from owning cars.

3. Carmen Hass-Klau, a Professor of the University of Wuppertal and billed as a "traffic engineer". Credited with coining the phrase "traffic calming" this person is obviously also an expert in double-speak.

4. Stephen Joseph, Executive Director of Transport 2000. This organisation is vehemently anti-car. It supports cuts in the roads programme which lead to the deaths of innocent motorists on Britain's disgracefully inadequate network. It supports what it calls "direct action" (vandalism and trespass) to delay and seek to prevent much-needed road building projects.

5. Joyce Mamode of the Transport and General Workers Union, representing the transport trades unions. Clearly her focus will be more jobs in public transport and more members for her union.

6. Dr Susan Owens, lecturer in Geography at Cambridge University.

7. Charles Rice, Managing Director, P&O Transeuropean Holdings Ltd. At last, someone who has actually made a positive contribution to the economy. He has managed P&O's transport and distribution business across the UK and Europe with turnover approaching £1bn pa. However his interest is clearly that of a commercial heavy goods operator so he may, like RHA Chairman, Steve Norris, be only too happy to connive at anti-car schemes.

8. Michael Roberts of the CBI.

9. Bill Tyson, head of Greater Manchester Passenger Transport Executive. Closely involved with the Metrolink tram system, a supposedly privately funded public transport system, Mr Tyson remarked at its handover to the operators that government support would be essential, "Additional cash would be nice," he said. A hint of the tax-and-spend inclination of the majority of this panel perhaps.

The majority of this panel are clearly not "independent"; they have obvious vested interests in and clear dispositions towards mass transit systems. The chances are that they will propose severe anti-car measures; in which case the future prospects for the economy are dire. These people will be determined to shackle us with the dangerous and inadequate roads we already have plus extra restrictions and expenses to make doing business even more time consuming, expensive and wearisome. At the same time they will waste vast sums of public money on mainly tokenist improvements to mass transit systems which will benefit only the operators.

Their schemes will need to be opposed strongly and continuously if we are to preserve the freedoms established over generations.



## Experience changes respect for the law into contempt

Sir - I agree wholeheartedly with the views expressed by Lance K. Green in the Autumn 1997 edition of "On The Road". I too was brought up in an environment in which I was taught to respect the police and regard them as defenders of the public against crime. I am not bringing my young son up to think likewise. Why should we respect these officials, who, complacent about crime, seek only to get as many drivers as possible fined as heavily as possible and disqualified from driving for as long as possible?

Twice I have been a crime victim and twice the police simply took down the facts and took no action. In a previous job I held until recently, which involved maintaining security systems in police stations, I frequently gained "behind the scenes" insight into their ways of dealing, or not dealing, with crime. On one occasion, I witnessed many members of the public reporting burglaries. A policeman came to the counter, and repeated his lines: "Oh, well, on this occasion we won't be sending a policeman round to investigate, but we'll give you a crime number, and we'll let you know if anything happens."

It has frequently been their defence that they must uphold the law, whether it is reasonable or not; it is for Parliament to make or amend it; the police must simply enforce it. Now, they have developed into a pressure group seeking to widen the extent of the criminal law against drivers of motor vehicles, in addition to enforcing it. We have recently seen how they (ACPO) have mounted a pressure campaign to criminalise all drivers with a residual blood alcohol count of more than 50mg per 100ml, rather than 80mg as Parliament decided, and are now urging magistrates to impose driving bans (and consequently unemployment) on drivers who exceed 30 mph speed limits. This, if taken literally, would mean disqualifying almost all drivers, including themselves! This really amounts to an attempt to usurp the legislative function of Parliament, in order to extend the effective scope of the criminal law, so as to increase their score of drivers convicted. What are the police for?

*Name and address supplied.*

## Motorist's tax burden

Sir - I have for some time been incensed by the immorality of the burden of taxation borne by the motorist and our apparent willingness to pay 80% tax on fuel, £20 odd billion per annum in road fund licence and other iniquities. Mostly in ignorance of these facts I believe. Now we hear that John Prescott is to "start penalising private motoring". Start? It's been an annual sport since 1943. Naturally our motoring taxes are then distributed to the welfare state, housing and other willing recipients.

I am not yet a member of your organisation although I will be forwarding application forms today, having read of your existence in today's Daily Telegraph. In the absence of any meaningful representation by the pipe and slippers brigade of the AA & RAC I am proposing to compile a structured analysis of taxation on motoring and wonder if I can count on your assistance to gather the data and publicise it as widely as possible.

Mike Dunbar

*Readers who could assist with the taxation analysis should contact Mike by e-mail at Mike\_Dunbar@brescom.prestel.co.uk.*

*On The Road is always interested in publishing surveys relevant to motoring. - Ed*

## Snippets from the e-mail

The following was posted on section 1 of the "Earth" forum of CompuServe:

1) "From time to time I browse this forum. On several occasions I have seen Greenpeace propaganda, such as grossly exaggerated press releases on the dangers of waste incineration, plastics, global warming etc. As a professional environmental engineer I've seen Greenpeace's shoddy pseudo science and distorted factoids, designed to scare people, not necessarily to solve pressing environmental problems.

"Why can't we see the articles of responsible environmental organizations like EDF or NRDC who use science and law and reason to overcome environmental problems. I'm sick of seeing this radical environmental Greenpeace propaganda *ad nauseum* on this forum, which is a disgrace to reason and environmental logic."

2) "Amen. It's amazing the lengths they will go to scaremonger their way into more donations. It would be great to see complete disclosure. The Oct 9 Pb and Cd report was a remarkable exercise in the disingenuous reporting of test results. Not only are they an insult [to the] intelligence, but the press folks don't acquit themselves very well by gullibly accepting GPs ridiculous claims."

## Highway man reveals all

Sir - As well as being an enthusiastic motorist for many years, I am engaged in highway and traffic engineering in a professional capacity. I work for the London Borough of Havering as its Transportation Planning Manager, which involves not only managing its programme of road safety engineering schemes but also advising the Council on matters of transport policy. I am fully aware, therefore, of the direction in which the majority of professional opinion is heading, which is essentially to deter car use.

Whilst I fully support the need for greater responsibility in the use of cars, particularly to consider the use of other modes for short journeys, I am becoming increasingly concerned at the threat of severe restrictions or financial penalties on motorists. I am also concerned at the increasingly strident demands by the 'safety' lobby for ever more restrictive speed limits, backed up by technological measures such as variable governors on vehicles. I have very strong views on the value of speed limits, which I will not elaborate here; suffice it to say that I believe the whole thrust of road safety law is heading in the wrong direction.

Malcolm Heymer

## Subscription too low?

Sir - I have been a member of the ABD for approximately two years and during this period have been under the impression that the annual subscription is pathetically low. So much so, I have wondered how the Association has been able to function effectively. All I can conclude is that there must be some generous members who are prepared to contribute more than their fair share of the finance.

Under the circumstances I am therefore proposing that at the next Annual General Meeting, the subscription should be raised to £25.00 per annum. If members wish for the Association to succeed in its goals and ambitions then they will be only too happy to accept this proposal as the way forward.

AD Wylie, Stafford

*Mr Wylie is correct in his assumption: many members contribute voluntarily over and above the subscription, some very generously indeed.*

## Government's mistake

Sir - The government's scaremongering claims that traffic volumes will rise 60% by 2031 is misleading. They wrongly assume that we will still travel to work then. This letter was sent by email, I did not have to get into my car to drive to the post office to send it! By 2031 I wish to be free to enjoy my motoring on a road system that has been adequately planned, constructed and maintained.

Dr Matthew Dakin, Birmingham

The views expressed by readers are their own and do not necessarily represent ABD policy.



## New or updated sites

This issue features sites which have been recently reported or updated, sites 225, 244 and 286.

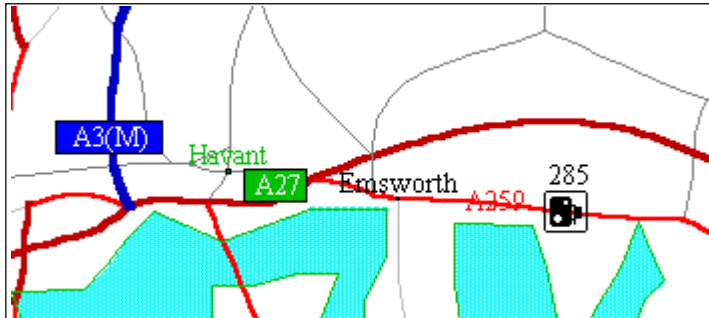
## Contributing to Gatso watch

Please report any sites known to you. Use copies of the form printed in previous editions of On The Road (omitted this issue to save space). If you have access to a computer and could supply the information on disc, please contact the Editor. If you have e-mail, that's even better. Don't forget, we are concentrating on motorways, trunk roads and other main roads.

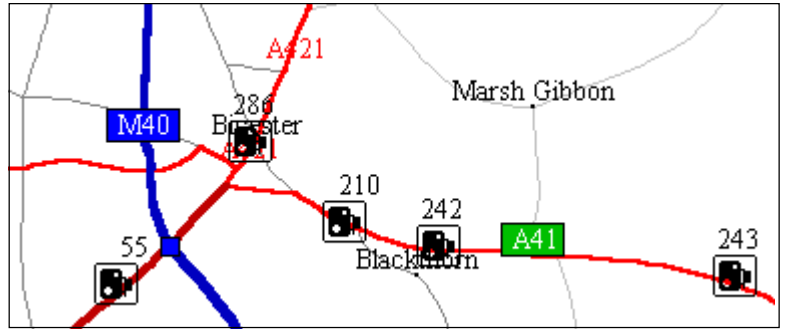
## Gatso Watch - the latest

Latest information on camera sites will be posted on the ABD's site on the Worldwide Web, <http://www.deltacom.co.uk/abd>. The site is available to the public so if you do not have access to the Web, tell a friend who does.

## The South Coast

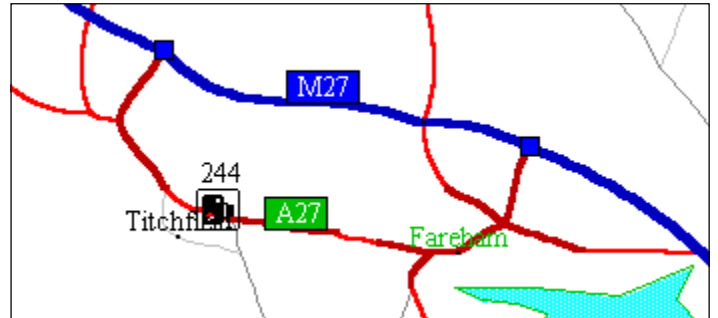


## Oxfordshire



## Essex - A12

There are two sections of roadworks on the A12 in Essex: north of Chelmsford and south of Colchester. Both stretches have been blanketed with cameras some of which are clearly temporary, having generators close by. The roadworks move from week to week and have a 50mph limit near Chelmsford, 40mph near Colchester.



### Important:

If you can correct or add to any of the information shown in Gatso Watch, please contact the editor.

Can you supply the missing speed limit values?

Can you fill in missing county names?

The limitations of the current mapping software are all too obvious. If you can suggest a better system, please contact the editor.

Maps produced in Microsoft Autoroute Plus © 1988-1995 Microsoft Corporation,  
Maps © Crown Copyright 85887M

### Disclaimer

This information is provided in good faith. However the ABD can accept no liability for errors or omissions.

Ref	County	Town	Road	Direction	Location	OS Map Ref	Limit
55	Oxon		A34	S	.75m S of M40	SP548184	70
210	Oxon	Blackthorn	A41	E	Just opposite the turn for Blackthorn		60
242	Oxon		A41	E	Just after the Launton turn, hidden by tree	SP621201	
243	Bucks	Kingswood	A41	E	Opposite the Plough and Anchor hidden by sign	SP686193	
244	Hants	Titchfield	A27	W	On island at W end of Titchfield gyratory		40
285	W Sussex	Southbourne	A259	W	Before village, just inside 30 limit	SU789050	30
286	Oxfordshire	Bicester	A421	S	Centre of road through the town	SP577216	30

## CAUTION: Why the ABD publishes Gatso Watch

Members will not need reminding, but "On the Road" is obliged, for other reasons, to mention that:

- The ABD does not condone the abuse of speed.
- Drivers should travel at a speed safe for the conditions and with due regard to hazards such as schools.
- Drivers should be able to stop within the distance they

can see.

- Drivers should observe the two-second rule.

However, the ABD deplors the abuse of Gatsos and other devices. That is, where they are deployed in locations where the speed limit is unrealistically low.



## Unmarked cars & mobile traps

The following unmarked patrol cars have been reported:

- M6 and M55 areas around Preston & Blackpool. Rover 4-series, light metallic blue, N567DVU.
- North Oxford on a dark blue Escort estate K 342 YFC, involved in a speed trap set-up.
- Stockwell, London and M25(?). BMW K100R motorbike. Black with panniers, the rider has black leathers and a white helmet.

The full list of unmarked cars reported to the Association can be seen on the Web site.

## Radar detectors

*A member recently enquired about an incident where his radar detector had been confiscated. The ABD's Gatso Guru replied:*

Regarding your meeting with the traffic cop, you don't mention whether the device was switched on at the time and showing an alert... here's why.

First, though, did you know that there has not (to the best of my knowledge) been a single conviction for use of radar detectors in cars? The relevant Section(s) of the Wireless Telegraphy Act 1949 which is/are said to be contravened by such use would be very difficult to prove - e.g. the traffic cop would have to show in court (by being in the car with you at the time?!) that the device was observed to be switched on and receiving radio signals not intended for you. Otherwise - no contravention of the Act!

Unfortunately police officers do try on this confiscation lark and (with all due respect) people fall for it. Would you believe the Metropolitan Police info. desk consider the use of radar detectors to be legal! Grey area or what? I have been in discussion with traffic cops - due e.g. to a diversion following an accident - when they were leaning in to the car to give me directions, with the detector in full view on the dashboard. Perhaps you could argue they were too busy with other things at the time, but it certainly shows inconsistency if nothing else.

Sorry to hear of your loss, no small financial loss at that. Perhaps a letter to the Chief Constable asking for the goods back would be in order, if the device was clearly switched off at the time, since you had committed no offence? Don't know what the validity of the disclaimer is - I guess it's used because the cops know that unless you 'voluntarily' hand over the unit they have no right to demand it.

## Challenge to Car Cos

At the Global Motor Industry Conference in London on 15 October, Maurice Saatchi warned of the dangers facing the car industry from various pressure groups against the car.

"If the industry doesn't tell its story, the anti car message will be the only one reaching the consumer", he said.

And he is right. These pressure groups have a firm grip on academia and large sections of the media. They are well represented in all three main political parties at both national and local levels. They have already taken great strides in their quest to convince public opinion that draconian restrictions on both car use and car ownership are essential for public health and the future of the planet. They are apparently unopposed.

But their argument makes little sense when subjected to rational scrutiny. They have convinced much of the public that air quality is bad getting worse when you as a car manufacturer know it is good and getting better due to the massive investment the industry has made in reducing emissions. They continually imply that cars cause childhood asthma when this is refuted in report after report. They distort the balance of evidence on global warming to create a scare story. They blame the motorist for congestion when poor planning and failure to invest the revenue from motoring taxes in transport infrastructure are the real culprits. They even promote the deliberate obstruction of drivers, often in the name of safety, to make car use unpleasant. All of this is bad for your employees, your customers, your company and your country - and its going to get worse without a voice of reason to counter these views.

As commercial companies car manufacturers and the rest of the motor trade are undoubtedly faced with a serious dilemma in dealing with such arguments in the public and political arenas.

There are three choices: silence, appeasement or outright opposition. If you stay silent, you lose the argument by default. Speaking out carries great risks - you will be accused of having a vested interest, of being uncaring and against the environment, public health and safety, even if what you say is the truth. Such publicity, of course, can do great harm to your short term interests. And, so, most commercial organisations opt to follow perceived public opinion rather than attempt to lead it, supporting arguments where they do make sense and portraying the image of a "responsible car company". This simply adds credibility to the environmentalists where they are wrong and allows them to portray the industry as constantly having to be shamed into reluctantly catching up with their ever increasing demands. One thing is certain, if they motor trade does not get off the fence soon it will be too late!

## Car Park Tax ... continued from page 1

traffic congestion problems. The UK invests less than 0.5% of GDP annually in roadbuilding and this figure is declining. By contrast, all our major European partners invest more, from 0.8% (France) to 1.2% (Spain).

To resolve our environmental and congestion problems, government needs to realise that the car is an integral part of transport in Britain and re-instate the hundreds of stalled or shelved town and village bypass schemes. These would take through traffic away from unsuitable urban centres and onto high-quality alternative routes, thereby reducing congestion and unnecessary emissions.

It's time to clean up public transport too; the government should apply the latest emissions regulations to (currently exempted) old technology public transport vehicles to get them off the road NOW for the sake of the health of all of us.

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# Campaigning

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## How to beat the anti-car planners

*Malcolm Heymer, ABD member and transport planner with a local authority, explains the system and what to do to counter those "traffic calming" measures, speed reductions and other nightmares.*

I have recently joined ABD because I am becoming increasingly concerned about the threat of severe restrictions and financial penalties on motorists. One particular area of concern, which I expect is shared by many members, is the spread of 'traffic calming' and unrealistic speed limits, particularly in rural areas. As a local authority transport planner and traffic engineer, however, I hope to be able to shed some light on the processes by which such schemes are introduced and the opportunities which people have to influence them.

### Speed limits

First, speed limits. Local highway authorities are able to set speed limits by making an order under the provisions of the Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984. For an order to be valid, it must first be publicly advertised, giving anyone concerned a period of time (usually three weeks minimum) in which to object. The minimum publicity requirement is an official notice in a local newspaper and notices posted on site. Some authorities also notify residents directly affected by letter, but they are not required to do so. The point is, *anyone* can make an objection to a proposed speed limit and the highway authority *must* give proper consideration to any objections received. This means that, if an objector raises issues which were not considered by the authority when it resolved in principle to set the speed limit, then those issues must be put before the elected members of the authority. A decision is then made on whether to proceed with, modify or abandon the proposal.

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### ***anyone can make an objection***

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The cynics amongst you probably think that this is just a formality, a rubber stamping exercise. Highway authorities have to take objections seriously, however, and give a reasoned justification for rejecting them, otherwise they could lay themselves open to challenge in a judicial review. This would obviously be a very expensive course of action and one which few individuals would be able to contemplate, but authorities are unlikely to take the chance, especially if an objection is submitted by someone who seems to know what they are talking about. A number of similar objections making the same points also carry more weight than just one.

The advertisement and objection process applies not just to the setting of speed limits but to the imposition of any form of traffic regulation, such as banned turns, weight limits and waiting restrictions. The skill from the traffic engineer's point of view is to anticipate the likely grounds of objection and to address them in the initial report to the authority's members, seeking their approval in principle. Any objections can then be dealt with fairly easily. I suspect that few highway authorities will ever have received a serious objection to a speed limit order, so a carefully worded letter could give them a nasty shock!

So what does this mean for those of us who are trying to preserve some sanity in our traffic laws? First, it means

keeping our eyes open to what our local highway authorities are proposing. The official notices pages of local papers may not be the most exciting read, but it is worth spending a few minutes a week scanning them for notifications of proposed traffic regulation orders. If you spot a proposal with which you disagree, you must submit your objection in writing, to the address given in the notice and by the published closing date.

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### **you must submit your objection in writing**

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In order to make an effective objection, it is worth knowing the grounds on which the authority is proposing to make the order. Local papers will often report the proceedings of Council committees in their editorial pages. These may give you advance warning of what is proposed, often weeks or even months before the official notice is published. Take note of any controversial proposals and go along to the local library, where the agendas and minutes of all Council committees are available for inspection. You should be able to take copies of any reports you need. If the official notice was the first you heard of the proposal, phone the relevant Council department and ask which committee made the decision and on what date. That will save you a lot of time at the library.

So, on what grounds could you object to a proposed speed limit? The Department of Transport issues criteria for the setting of speed limits, so one objection could be that the criteria have not been followed. A 1992 consultation by the DoT on speed limit criteria includes the following significant statement on the purpose of speed limits:

*"While the speed limit may apply some downward pressure on the speed of the fastest drivers, speed limits on their own do not reduce speeds significantly if they are set at a level substantially below that at which drivers would choose to drive in the absence of a limit."*

Official recognition, therefore, that speed limits are virtually worthless! Seriously though, this statement reflects the findings of many studies in the UK and around the world, which show that unrealistically low speed limits, far from reducing speeds, can actually have the reverse effect, as drivers treat them with the contempt they deserve. To back up its statement, the DoT recommends that speed limits should be set in relation to the 85th percentile speed of traffic, ie the speed at or below which 85% of traffic travels.

If the 85th percentile figure is more than 7 mph or 20% (whichever is the greater) above the proposed speed limit, then a higher limit should be chosen or physical measures introduced to reduce speeds. A highway authority should be able to demonstrate, therefore, that it has measured speeds on the road in question and taken the DoT's criteria into account.

I would also expect a highway authority to have analysed accident records for a period of at least three years. If there is no history of speed-related accidents, then what is the justification for the proposed limit? A sinister tendency is now beginning to emerge in some authorities for lower speed limits to be imposed, not for 'safety' reasons, but to deter drivers from using certain types of roads. Hence the area-wide 40 mph zones which have been introduced in some rural parts of Surrey. Kent is thinking along similar lines. I had the misfortune to attend a conference recently entitled 'Rural Roads - Getting

# Campaigning

it Right' (it could not have been worse named), which descended into an orgy of motorist bashing by 'professionals' looking for any excuse they can think of to impose ever more draconian restrictions on car use. The Director of the Environment of Surrey County Council actually said that he would like the national speed limit to be reduced to 40 mph on all B-roads and those of lower status! If you live in Surrey (or even if you don't), I suggest you write to him and let him know your views. His name is Richard Shaw, Director of the Environment, Surrey County Council, County Hall, Kingston upon Thames.

You may be aware of a case some months ago when a motorist successfully appealed against a speeding conviction on the variable speed limit section of the M25. The speed limit is normally varied automatically in accordance with traffic flows, but in this instance the Police had overridden the automatic system and imposed a 50 mph limit. The motorist was caught by a speed camera. He won his case on the grounds that the Police did not have the right to impose a limit which was not justified by the conditions pertaining at the time. I am not fully conversant with the legislation under which the M25 variable limit operates, but this case makes an interesting precedent which could be brought to the attention of a highway authority planning to impose an unrealistic limit.

## "Traffic calming"

So what about 'traffic calming' measures? Those which involve vertical deflections to control speeds (humps, cushions and speed tables) must be advertised and objections considered in the same way as speed limits. Horizontal deflections (chicanes, road narrowings, etc) require no such procedures and could be installed with no consultation whatsoever. In practice, local authorities will always consult local residents about traffic calming schemes but not, of course, motorists from outside the area. Once again, therefore, you need to keep an eye on local newspapers to find out what is proposed.

## A determined individual or group could, therefore, make an impact

A local authority's policies on managing the highway network will be contained in one or more public documents. County Councils produce Structure Plans, which provide a strategic policy framework. District Councils within the counties produce Local Plans, which set out detailed policies that must be in line with that county's Structure Plan. The London Boroughs and the newly emerging Unitary Authorities produce Unitary Development Plans, which combine the functions of Structure and Local Plans. All these policy documents are developed through a publicly accountable process. Draft versions are agreed by the elected members of the authority and then placed 'on deposit' in public places such as libraries and Council offices, providing an opportunity for the general public and a whole range of local and national organisations to make representations or objections to any of the draft policies. Objections which cannot be resolved by negotiation are decided at a public inquiry. Due to the scope and complexity of the documents, relatively few members of the public take the trouble to scrutinise the plans or object to them. A determined individual or group could, therefore, make an impact.

These Plans are reviewed regularly, usually every five years or so, although they seek to set a policy framework for a period of ten or more years. Even if the Plan(s) which cover your area are not due for review in the near future, it is worth acquainting yourself with them, to see whether the authority is proposing to implement traffic measures which contradict its own policies. Local highway authorities also produce an annual document called the Transport Policies and Programme (TPP), which sets out its plans for the following financial year. There is no statutory right of objection to this document, but there would be no harm in writing to your local councillors and the chairman of the transportation committee if you disagree with any of the proposals.

## If people sit back and do nothing the anti-car brigade will win by default

**All this may sound like a lot of effort, and I suppose it is. If people sit back and do nothing, however, the anti-car brigade will win by default. There are an awful lot of academic and politically correct people in the transport planning business, out of touch with the real world, who have the ear of like-minded people in the Government. We need to make our voice heard now, before it is too late. Write to your local councillors and your MP, write to the Government ministers that matter: John Prescott, in overall charge of transport policy; Glenda Jackson, responsible for local roads; Baroness Hayman, responsible for road safety. Start to redress the balance! ☺**

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# Road Safety

## Blood Alcohol: The ABD's position

Until recently, the Association has not felt the need to make any comment on the law relating to blood alcohol levels or "drink driving". ABD members are responsible people who would not drive when their ability to do so was impaired by alcohol or anything else. Nor, for the sake of their families and themselves, do they wish to travel on roads frequented by drunk drivers. Thus, the ABD has no quarrel with the present 80mg blood alcohol limit.

However, following recent moves by national government and European civil servants, the ABD now feels compelled to take a position. The proponents of a lower limit of 50mg are attempting to justify it by using distorted accident figures which refer to "drink-related" accidents. These include accidents where someone other than the motorist had been drinking. Yet the blame is still attached, as if the motorist had been drunk. The ABD considers that this "smearing" of motorists is scandalous.

Furthermore, the statistics do *not* indicate that significant numbers of casualties would be avoided if the limit were reduced from 80 to 50mg. They show that most serious accidents involve people who are *way over* the existing 80mg limit. In other words the proposed new limit has no genuine safety purpose, it is another exercise in bash-the-motorist.

As a result, your Chairman wrote recently to Gavin Strang. The letter is reproduced below.

---

Dr.G.Strang, M.P.  
Department of Environment, Transport & the Regions  
Great Minster House, 76 Marsham Street  
London, SW1P 4DR  
November 19th, 1997.

Dear Dr.Strang,

Re.: Blood Alcohol Limit Reduction for Drivers

It is with some disquiet that I discovered that it is the Government's intention to reduce the blood alcohol limit for drivers from 80mg/100ml to 50mg/100ml for the reported reason that this will save 500 lives per annum.

On this basis it would appear that the DETR is suggesting that 500 deaths a year are *caused* solely by drinking and driving. But even cursory examination of the statistics shows that in some 500 fatal accidents per year, *someone* involved: the driver, a passenger, a pedestrian or a cyclist, had consumed *some* alcohol. In some cases this will have had some bearing on the outcome of events - in others it will not; and in many cases we will *never* know. The statement that "drinking and driving causes 500 deaths per annum" therefore patently has no sound basis in fact and is based on evidence which has been "massaged".

Meanwhile, some 5000 lives are lost in the UK per annum to post-operative infections in hospital, to male suicides alone; and over 4000 deaths per annum are the result of accidents in the home. Yet there are no high profile multi-million pound campaigns to prevent these equally tragic losses of life. Are hospital doctors to be hounded in the same way as is the unfortunate motorist for genuine errors of judgement? I think not. No driver deliberately sets out to have a serious or fatal road accident. Surely the objectives should be to engineer safer roads and train motorists better so as to *prevent* accidents, not punish them after they have *had* them?

According to AA statistics, in over 33% of accidents involving pedestrian fatalities between the hours of 10pm and 3am, the pedestrian has consumed alcohol *at least* up to (and frequently substantially in excess of) the legal limit for drivers. In such

cases alcohol may well have been a contributory factor. But this is perversely being used to justify further reductions in the blood alcohol limit for *drivers* under the "anything which cuts down road deaths is justified" slogan - whether or not it actually *will* have the desired effect. Does *none* of responsibility for the safety of pedestrians, cyclists and other vulnerable road users rest with the vulnerable road user him- or herself?

European Transport Commissioner, Neil Kinnock suggests that at 80mg/100ml blood alcohol content one has a 10 times higher fatal/ serious accident risk than at 0mg/100ml. Yet the only detailed large scale study (involving some 14,000 respondents) on this topic to date was in 1964 by Borkenstein et al (subsequently statistically interpreted by Allsop).

The Borkenstein study suggests that there is a 42% higher fatal/ serious accident risk at 80mg/100ml blood alcohol content than at 50mg/100ml. But 42% higher than what absolute risk-level? In the UK in 1995 there were 41,777 fatal or serious injury accidents in 435.3 thousand million vehicle kilometres driven that year. This means that the average sober driver (travelling 47km/day) has a 1.2 in 100 million chance of being involved in a fatal or serious injury accident on any given day. At the 80mg/100ml blood alcohol level this increases to 1.9 chances in one hundred million; or under one-third of the odds of winning the National Lottery. Surely this is an acceptable level of risk relative to the additional freedom that the slightly higher alcohol level permits so many people?

The very act of boarding an airliner *infinitely* increases the risk of dying in a 'plane crash relative to not boarding it at all, but most people consider that an acceptable risk. All through life we make trade-offs between risk and reward. Is the uncertain reward of *maybe* saving a handful of lives *really* worth the criminalisation of huge numbers of fundamentally law-abiding citizens who, in to all intents and purposes 100 million cases out of 100 million, are *not* going to have a fatal or serious accident. Is the concomitant misery, suffering, anguish and pain that the pursuit of this policy could cause really worth the gain?

---

Daily Accident Risk	1.24E-08	Avg.e.km/yr	1.72E+04
at 50mg/100ml	1.42E-08	Avg.km/day	4.72E+01
at 80mg/100ml	2.11E-08		

---

Blood Alc. (mg/100ml)	Median value	Rel. Accident Risk	Absolute Risk
0-9	5	1	1.24E-08
10-19	15	0.92	1.14E-08
20-29	25	0.96	1.19E-08
30-39	35	0.8	9.93E-09
40-49	45	1.08	1.34E-08
50-59	55	1.21	1.50E-08
60-69	65	1.41	1.75E-08
70-79	75	1.52	1.89E-08
80-89	85	1.88	2.33E-08
90-99	95	1.95	2.42E-08
100-119	110	5.93	7.36E-08
120-139	130	4.94	6.13E-08
140-159	150	10.44	1.30E-07
160 and over	160	21.38	2.65E-07

---

Lottery win odds	7.14E-08
Lottery win odds / 80mg Accident Risk	3.39

---

There is a further consideration: the current UK alcohol limit has broad public support and is perceived as "fair". My own experience of nearly two years stay in France, spanning the blood alcohol limit reduction (to 50mg/100ml) period, was that with the imposition of a reduced limit lacking public support, the

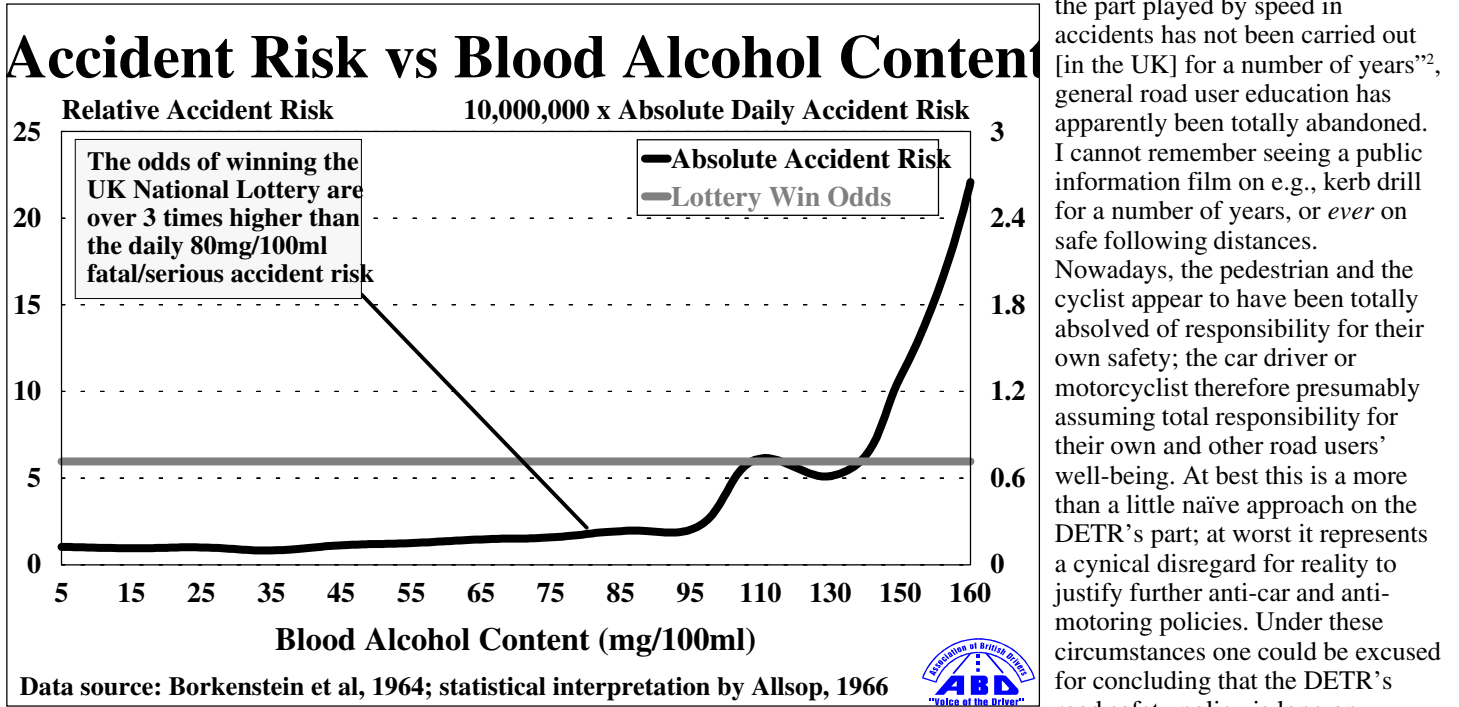
# Road Safety

“may as well be hung for a sheep as a lamb” attitude rapidly began to prevail amongst a proportion of the French populace. This is likely to be the case both with the die-hard drinkers who do not respect the current limit, and may adversely influence others who consider a further reduced limit too harsh. This is without mentioning the economic effects on rural pubs and on social life in rural communities.

Another major difference exists between the UK and French blood alcohol situations: the scale of penalties: exceeding the 50mg/100ml limit in France attracts the addition of three points

increase in non-urban fatalities for a colossal outlay brought about by the pernicious application of Gatso cameras in Oxfordshire!). Again there appears to be no intention to widen the coverage of this highly educational and cost-effective form of accident prevention, while Gatso cameras proliferate (with little to no correlation to the actual location of accident blackspots as originally promised) like an electronic Black Death epidemic.

And what of general road user education? In its obsessive preoccupation with portraying speed as virtually the sole culprit in *all* accidents, despite the fact that “a detailed study including



on one's licence, not a three-year driving ban and probable loss of job. Even with over 80mg (our current limit) the French driver loses only six points of his or her 12-point licence entitlement. Indeed, even if a French driver loses all 12 points through alcohol-related offences, he or she can attend a two-day driving rehabilitation course, get four of them back and go on driving again.

With this 50mg/100ml proposal, we are one step further along the slippery slope to becoming a society so obsessed with totally eliminating risk, that we will soon be subject to so much regulation that no-one will be permitted to do *anything*. Man did not reach his current pre-eminent position on this planet through a “no-risk” strategy. The long-term result of such an approach can only be damaging to human development.

And if risk is indeed abhorred in the road transport context, why is it, for example, that transitional, spiral curvature (tightening radius) rural bends are allowed to remain in profusion in the British Isles? Some 30% of rural accidents occur on bends; around 80% of which are completely preventable through conversion to circular bend curvature<sup>1</sup>. Motorcyclists are particularly susceptible at this type of lethally deceptive bend because once the selected line through it is chosen, the motorcyclist cannot alter it. The benefit of such bend curvature changes? 500 fewer deaths and over 4200 fewer serious injuries per annum. The DETR at present sees no need to address this issue; despite transitional bends being outlawed in California for example.

Or take motorway following distance chevrons. Trialled on the M1 in Northamptonshire; they resulted in a 56% decrease in accidents for minimal outlay (compare that with the 31%

the part played by speed in accidents has not been carried out [in the UK] for a number of years”<sup>2</sup>, general road user education has apparently been totally abandoned. I cannot remember seeing a public information film on e.g., kerb drill for a number of years, or *ever* on safe following distances. Nowadays, the pedestrian and the cyclist appear to have been totally absolved of responsibility for their own safety; the car driver or motorcyclist therefore presumably assuming total responsibility for their own and other road users' well-being. At best this is a more than a little naïve approach on the DETR's part; at worst it represents a cynical disregard for reality to justify further anti-car and anti-motoring policies. Under these circumstances one could be excused for concluding that the DETR's road safety policy is long on

revenue-generating enforcement and short on life-saving education.

Isn't it time that ever more stringent and onerous (but ever less effective) restrictions on individual liberty to *allegedly* to improve road safety were allowed to give way to more pragmatic and *effective* approaches such as the three (road user education, bend curvature and following distance chevrons) illustrated above?

Otherwise the DETR risks appearing as an organisation wholly committed to the achievement of the maximum degree of suppression of individual liberty; for the sole reason that the technology exists to enable it, and for the exercise of the power entailed in so doing. This will inevitably provoke a response at every turn questioning its motives in promoting such measures; resisting and opposing them, forcing it to justify its aims objectively and scientifically in minute detail at every turn. Such a climate can only be counterproductive in terms of the achievement of the DETR's casualty reduction aims.

Yours sincerely,

Brian Gregory.

<sup>1</sup> Stewart, D. & Chudworth, C.J.; *Traffic Engineering & Control*, February 1990, pp.88-93.

<sup>2</sup> P.A.C.T.S. booklet: “Taking Action on Speeding”, 1996

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# Pollution, Health and the Environment

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## “Green” revelations on Channel 4

**Channel 4’s “Against Nature” programme on global warming was a damning indictment of the environmental movement and its shadowy supporters in the insurance industry.**

The “greens” portray themselves as powerless, but principled, valiant crusaders against the vested interests of “Big Business”. The top 12 US “green” organisations have an aggregate annual turnover in excess of \$1 billion. In the UK alone over four million people are members of one environmental organisation or another.

On the global warming issue, the “greens” say that global temperatures have risen by about 1°F in the last hundred years. But according to Piers Corbyn of the South Bank University Meteorology Department, they use the 1880s as the base point for their temperature plots: one of the coldest periods in recorded human history. In consequence, any subsequent period will appear to be relatively “warm” in comparison. Furthermore, all the warming they use as evidence occurred in the pre-1940s period; before industrialisation and heavy fossil fuel use became widespread.

Satellite-based temperature measurements over the last 20 years show no evidence of global warming; indeed Southern hemisphere temperatures have in fact been falling!

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### no evidence of global warming

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The “greens” say urban air quality is deteriorating in the developed world. Nothing could be further from the truth. Air quality has been improving for over 40 years in the advanced industrial world; and is probably better than at any time in human history. In the last 25 years the United States population has increased in size by 30%; its economy by 100% and the number of cars there by 100%; yet emissions of the major pollutants: carbon monoxide, nitrogen oxides, ozone, particulates and volatile organic compounds are 30% lower than they were 25 years ago.

Much of the funding of the green movement comes from the insurance industry; which in the 1960s, 70s and 80s extended low-cost cover in high-risk areas like California and Japan - which institutional policyholders were only too keen to accept. Recognising subsequently that property prices were spiralling ever upward and that the cost of claims in the event of a natural disaster would be ruinous, the insurance industry began looking for a get-out-of-jail-free card; a scapegoat.

Enter the environmental lobby and its global warming circus. If it could be argued that man’s activities were causing climate change and possibly therefore influencing other natural phenomena, like earthquakes, tidal waves, hurricanes etc. then the insurance companies could legitimately argue that their existing cover arrangements were unfair and that Governments (and hence the taxpayer) should foot at least some part of the bill for claim settlement. So, the insurance industry’s apparent Saul-like conversion to environmentalism is nothing more nor less than hard-headed commercialism.

But even in their crass self-interest, the insurance companies presumably do not realise the agenda to which the green lobby is working. The “greens” believe that the very ethos of Western capitalist society is wrong; they are petrified by the acceptance of constant change and progress necessitated by it. Brainwashed by its own dogma that scientific progress is “bad” and retrogressive “back to nature” concepts “good”, the New Luddism that is 1990s environmentalism is prepared to see nearly nine million children a year sacrificed to the great god of “green-ness”.

In the developing world 250 million people a year are infected by waterborne diseases like dysentery, typhoid etc. 10 million of them a year die; and 3.9 million of those are children. According to the World Health Organisation, 1½ billion people in the developing world suffer semi-permanent exposure to ‘dangerously unsafe’ air quality, caused by the combustion of wood and cow dung as heating

and cooking fuels.

This results in a further five million infants annually succumbing to respiratory illnesses. In many cases “green” politics have a hand in these totally preventable fatalities.

Green lobbying is stalling the progress of essential hydroelectric power schemes which would address these two major causes of infant mortality in the developing world by providing: (a) clean drinking water and (b) cheap electric power for heating and cooking. The “green” justifications? Firstly, these people are better off not being tainted by the “evils” of Western European style progress; and secondly, “biodiversity” will be preserved.

Try asking the parent whose child has just died of dysentery or chronic diarrhoea or bronchitis, whether he or she wants better quality water and cheap power at the risk of being “tainted” with Western materialism; or to continue living in a daily Hell-on-Earth, life-and-death struggle to survive which the distorting lenses of deranged environmentalists rose-tinted spectacles succeed in translating into an idealised, idyllic environmental shangri-la.

As for biodiversity, environmentalists are now actively supporting the enforced relocation of some of the Third World’s human inhabitants to make way for animals; in order to “preserve biodiversity”. As one environmental commentator on the Channel 4 “Against Nature” programme observed: “when people begin to treat animals like human beings, it’s only a small step to start treating human beings like animals”.

But the proof of the pudding really is in the eating, as they say. In the developed industrial world, average life expectancy is some 20 years higher than that in the developing world; and some 35 years higher than in the poorest areas of it.

Which do you believe is best? Living to your eighties in relative prosperity and wealth while indulging in Westernised mildly conspicuous consumption; or, for the sake of perpetuating environmental dogma, condemning millions of developing world children to death in infancy or to a life-long struggle against abject poverty through to a death in middle age brought on by insanitary and unhealthy living conditions? I rest my case. ☹

## Most carcinogenic substance known to man emitted by buses

A scientist at Kyoto University has isolated the most carcinogenic substance ever found, 3-nitrobenzanthrope. He found that an increase in deaths in built up areas was linked to this compound. This substance is found in the exhaust emissions of diesel engines.

## A22 Dead end

The ‘Daily Telegraph’ has recently reported that one of the victims of the Government’s freeze on roadbuilding has been a £20m section of the A22 near Eastbourne. The road is being built to link in with a sorely-needed bypass round Polegate, which routinely experiences queues of cars waiting for 30 minutes to cross the town centre, but because the bypass has now been frozen there will be nothing for the new road to link into.

The county council put up half of the money for the road on the understanding that the bypass would be built but now it will remain unused, a road to nowhere, until the government unfreezes the road building programme - which, in the prevailing anti-car climate, seems unlikely.

Apart from the waste of taxpayers’ and council tax payers’ money involved, this arbitrary decision pays no heed whatever to the genuine problems faced by the inhabitants of Polegate and will further exacerbate local labour shortages which the county council attributes, in large measure, to the length of time it currently takes to commute in the area.



# The Campaign

## Taking on BBC Radio: *Your* help is needed

I am sure many ABD members listen to the Today Programme on Radio 4 in the mornings, and share the anger and frustration felt by the committee at the blatant anti car bias displayed on this once objective arm of Britain's media. Every other day, environmental groups or the safety establishment are allowed on the programme to ply their wares without any opposition. Instead of being subjected to the full force of questioning and probing that the presenters are capable of, they are egged on to ever more extreme anti car positions. We regularly hear falsehoods such as "cars cause asthma", "air quality is bad and getting worse", "restrictions on car use are essential", "speed kills", "cars are killing the planet through global warming" and so on presented as unquestioned fact, even assumed by the presenters.

So why are the ABD not there arguing the case for a more rational, scientific approach, you are entitled to ask? The truth is we have tried. We frequently fax, phone or write to the Today programme advancing these arguments and challenging them to allow our point of view to be put forward. We are ignored. Most of the committee are reaching the point where their doctors are forbidding them to listen to the Today Programme because of what it does to their blood pressure!

The time has come to take things further. To do this we need your help to build a case to present to BBC senior management and broadcasting watchdogs to the effect that BBC Radio in general and the Today Programme in particular are making the news, not

reporting it, distorting the truth and failing in their obligation to provide balanced reporting.

What we need is someone to record the programme and make transcripts of all items relevant to ABD campaigning areas. We already have several tapes of relevant items, but we need to be more systematic. We find the best way if you cannot listen all the way through is to record the programme every morning (it lasts from 6.30 to 8.45) and then look for items you or others have heard. Ideally, the transcripts would be typed on a personal computer and supplied on disc, but the main thing is to get them down on paper somehow, even if they are hand written.

*Anyone who can help, please contact Paul Hemingway on 01905 371349*

### If you are *not* on the Internet...

... you must be heartily sick of all the references to the Worldwide Web, e-mail and so on in this newsletter! Your editor offers you half an apology - but only half. The fact is (and your committee have only discovered this themselves in the last year or two) that the Internet is rather useful - to put it mildly.

Via the Worldwide Web you can access the press releases of the Department for the Environment Transport and the Regions, together with their consultative documents on Integrated Transport and Trunk Roads. You can find information and propaganda on

global warming and the environment. In fact you can search for information on any subject that interests you.

Using the electronic mail facilities you can send and receive dozens of messages for the price of one postage stamp. You can write to ten people as easily as to one. A lively discussion takes place between ABD members on e-mail.

Finally you should note that those who seek to destroy the freedoms you enjoy, take care to equip themselves very well with the latest technology.

## A way forward

*Lance Green muses on the motorist's plight.*

Feminists have often noted that women are the only minority group to constitute fifty percent of the population. In the same vein, we may also wonder at the strange combination of events which has resulted in motorists being one of the few persecuted *majorities*. Part of the reason that this has been allowed to happen is (of course) that most drivers do not really care about cars, and often see others at the wheel as fools or knaves rather than friends and brothers. If a car overtakes them, then he is an idiot in a hurry. If he is impeding their progress (even just by occupying the space of road ahead) then he is a dawdling old fool. (Looking back on it, in my driving days I must have embodied both categories within a short interval. I used to take the bends quite slowly; then - as the road straightened and cars behind hoped to pass me - I would put my foot down hard and zoom ahead.)

The bottom line here is that those of us who are keen on cars and want to use them as freely as safety and responsibility permit, form a persecuted minority. By their very nature, minorities wield little power. This is especially true in countries like Britain, where the first past the post system is used in parliamentary elections. One defence exists, however, which enables minorities to gain more leverage on decision making. They can work together to make common cause. I must stress, at this point, that some groups are intrinsically evil, and must be ostracised. These include racists, terrorists, and child molesters, of course. The difficulty here is that one ABD member's cuddly bean is another's devil worshipper.

Where do we draw the line? And some of the other groups may even consider us beyond the pale. These are two problems to overcome. But I believe that we can get together, for our mutual benefit, with shooters, smokers, and perhaps fox hunters; all of whom have recently been victims of knee jerk, simplistic, and populist reactions. Other knowledgeable people who abhor unreasoning actions could also come aboard.

Let us give it a try.

### E-mail address?

Do you have an e-mail address? A lively correspondence takes place among members. Just notify the Secretary via 100740.2032 @compuserve.com and you'll be copied-in.

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# Pro-Motor News

## Welcome to new members

This issue will be read by many new members, thanks to publicity for the ABD in Autocar, Car Magazine and other sources. We extend a warm welcome to all new members and hope you will play an active role in the campaign.

Do write to let us know your views and to keep us informed of developments in your own area. All members are welcome to attend the bi-monthly meetings. These are currently held at the Motor Heritage Museum, Gaydon, just off the M40 in Warwickshire.

This venue offers very good facilities and Members are also able to visit the Museum.

## Dates for your diary, 1998

Meetings have been arranged for the following Saturdays:

- February 7
- April 4
- June 6 (including AGM)
- September 19
- November 7

The ABD is taking a stand at the Goodwood Festival of Speed for the third year. The event is open to the public from June 12 - 14.

From past experience this event can be thoroughly recommended. There will be exotic motor cars by the dozen and prospective new members by the hundred!

## Office equipment needed

**The ABD is run entirely on a voluntary basis. Funds are limited. To assist with the campaign we urgently need a various items of office equipment.**

**If you can help, with this (or with your own time) please contact the Secretary.**

## The Last Laugh

### Moron Motorist Monthly

*Mark McArthur-Christie continues his revelations from Moron Motorist Monthly.*

#### The Monday morning junction trick

For this to work really well you'll need a busy Monday morning, ideally about 8.30 when the rush hour is at its height. Lurk in a side turning or a lay-by until you spot a queue of cars approaching on the main road – then pull out. This needs split second timing. Once you've pulled out, make sure you accelerate at a pace that would make a snail convinced he had a chance of overtaking. Then, to add the finishing touch as the first of the livid queue of cars behind goes to overtake – speed up. Just enough to stop them getting past, but not enough to get a move on. About 45 mph is about right. Finally, turn off about a mile down the road from where you started, making sure you slow to a crawl before turning.

#### The Speed Camera Slammer

This is similar to the technique we use for roundabouts. Again, it's a simple method of making every other road user's life difficult. Now that every single stretch of "A" road in the UK has a speed camera the opportunities are boundless. First, make sure you're driving at the all-purpose moron driver speed of 46 mph (see later), then wait for a queue of cars to build up behind you. Because none of them will have the faintest clue what their stopping distances are, they'll all be bunched together with only a few feet separating them. Perfect. Now wait until you pass a camera and brake sharply from 45 mph to 25 mph. Have a laugh watching the chaos in your mirror as the following cars swerve across the road in an effort to avoid hitting each other. Ah, road safety at its best.

#### All-Purpose Moron Driver Speed

After years of deliberation your committee has finally settled on the perfect speed for

causing greatest annoyance to other drivers - 46 mph. This speed has been carefully calculated using the following considerations:

- it's slow enough to hold other drivers up;
- but fast enough so they can't overtake;
- and downright dangerous in towns!

Just imagine the irritation you'll cause. Some poor driver crawls along behind you on an "A" road for miles, completely unable to overtake. Then, being a decent driver, he slows for a 30 mph limit past a school – while you bowl off into the distance at 46 mph. Maximum frustration for minimum effort.

Your committee has decided that the APMDS can be increased slightly on straight lengths of road to prevent other drivers overtaking. However, Moron drivers are only permitted to increase their speed just as the overtaking driver pulls level with them, preferably with an oncoming car approaching. More advanced Morons may wish to experiment with slamming on the brakes and swerving on very mild corners.

In the unlikely event that you encounter a vehicle in front of you, then the APMDS can be ignored and you should follow as closely as possible with your headlights full on. Of course, having ABS means you'll be perfectly able to stop in two yards at 60 mph. Honest...

*There were plenty more articles in this vein, along with a whole range of adverts. The ads ranged from self-blanking mirrors to use when pulling caravans (so you can't see how many cars are stuck angrily behind you), to bulk packs of stickers to obscure your vision from every window. My favourite ad was for a small black plastic cover you can use to obscure your foglight warning lamp, so you can have your foglights on all year round without being bothered. Unless you count the angry gestures and flashing lights of other drivers, of course. Perfect.*

*So at last I know why there are so many appalling drivers out there. It's nothing to*

*do with the fact that many of them turn their brains off every time they turn their car's ignition on – it's all down to Moron Motorist Monthly. It must be, mustn't it? ☹*

### Department of what?

Clumsy in name and unsustainable in concept, the Department of the Environment, Transport and the Regions has unveiled its new logo. It looked vaguely familiar and a quick flip through a well-thumbed Highway Code confirmed our suspicions.



Yes, it's the skid sign. The DETR was clearly designed to keep John ("I'll do 90 in my Jag but the rest of you can't have two cars per family") Prescott too fully occupied to be a thorn in Mr Blair's side, but perhaps it is symbolic of the way transport policy is skidding into a ditch.

Then again, could it indicate that New Labour, keen to curry favour in Brussels, is contemplating switching the UK to drive on the right?

The two strands are purple and green, perhaps they represent the government cuddling up with the greens.

Or perhaps it portends how the Strang Gang will twist the facts in the forthcoming white paper.

Send any other suggestions to the editor on a post card.