

Increased road casualties for 1997 show that "Kill your Speed" policy is a failure

This failure was predicted from the beginning by the ABD. Surely it is time to give more credence to the positive suggestions of the ABD and less to those responsible for failure

Latest published government figures show a small increase in the number killed on Britain's roads in 1997, after four years when the number of deaths remained stubbornly level. This constitutes a failure of the safety policy based on speed reduction that has been implemented over this period.

The ABD has consistently attacked this policy since 1992, predicting that it would eventually result in worsening road safety because it did not address the real causes of accidents, diverted police effort away from dealing with bad driving and undermined driving standards. We have also repeatedly demonstrated that much of the implementation of anti speed policy has been motivated by anti car environmentalist sentiment as an excuse to make life unpleasant for car drivers.

For nearly six years, the views of the ABD have been ignored, deliberately suppressed and therefore prevented from being put before the British public. People are dying unnecessarily on our roads because public debate about road safety has not been allowed and a half baked policy has been ruthlessly pursued without challenge.

Now is the time for this ruinous policy, senseless to anyone who knows about driving, to be abandoned, and for positive, sensible measures to help the vast majority of drivers improve their ability to recognise and respond to hazards to be put in their place.

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Highways Agency plans 50mph motorway limit

ABD Calls for resignation of Highways Agency chief, Lawrie Haynes

A Highways Agency plan to reduce a stretch of the M4 to 50mph and turn the fast lane into a bus lane has been discovered by the ABD. The plan, affecting 6.5 miles of the M4 east of junction 4, will run into the elevated section which will be reduced from 50mph to 40mph.

This is simply the latest in a long line of widely criticised speed limit reductions that the Highways Agency has applied with minimal notification and no consultation in the London area. The time limit for comments and objections to this scheme has already expired - not that the HA ever intended to listen to objections, anyway, as a phone conversation with an ABD member made clear.

It is the first of these unreasonable limit reductions to affect a full motorway, and sets a dangerous precedent - if they get away with this, the Highways Agency will then be able to introduce bus lanes and speed camera enforced 50mph limits anywhere they please on Britain's motorway network. And they will.

ABD Chairman Brian Gregory comments: "The Highways Agency should be about building and maintaining the proper network of high speed trunk roads that our taxes have paid for many times over. However, their recent glossy annual report shows that they are more interested in maintaining nature reserves, introducing bus lanes and reluctantly fixing a few potholes. Now they clearly have a policy of reducing speed limits on our roads to ridiculous levels, despite much research evidence showing this is counterproductive in road safety terms. Worse, they are introducing these limits by stealth, one at a time, to avoid the inevitable outcry. We have no hesitation in demanding the immediate resignation of Lawrie Haynes, the Chief Executive of the Highways Agency, on the basis that this organisation has grossly betrayed the trust of the British public."

A conversation was held on the telephone last week between an ABD member and a Mr Gooday of the Highways Agency. This member reports as follows:

"The speed limit reductions which will be permanent and extend from J4 (approximately 6.5 miles) are, according to Mr Gooday, for safety reasons. I asked him for details of his

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Thought for the day

"If any nation expects to be ignorant and free ... it expects what never was and never will be." - Thomas Jefferson

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Blood alcohol - no change

The main thrust behind the government's plan to reduce the legal limit for blood alcohol for drivers from 80 to 50 mg/l appears to have been removed. An announcement from Neil Kinnock stated that the attempt to "harmonise" BAC limits across the EU would be dropped.

This appears to be a small victory for common sense. However the proponents of this sort of change in the law have a habit of not taking "No" for an answer. The ABD must remain vigilant as the DETR confirms that no final decision has been taken about the UK limit.

For the record and for the benefit of new readers, the ABD does *not* condone drunk driving; we want to see safe roads and safe drivers on them. However the reduction from 80 to 50mg/l BAC was not supported by the facts. Such a change may even have had a negative effect on road safety. All is detailed in the report submitted to the government by the ABD. This is still available on the web site or by post from the Editor (send an sae stamped with 31p).

Some are more equal...

At the same time as exhorting the public to use their cars less and at the same time as planning ever fewer roads and ever greater restrictions on car use, the government is spending £000,000s of *our* money buying new cars for themselves! Why don't they use public transport?

UK News Roundup

Licence worth more than the vote

Young people value the right to drive higher than the right to vote.

In a recent survey carried out for the Chartered Institute of Transport, sixty per cent of sixth formers and university students said they considered that obtaining a Driving Licence was the most important symbol of coming of age, compared to 26% who preferred the right to drink alcohol and just 13% who ranked the right to vote at the top of their list.

When asked whether they would choose between having a Driving Licence or the vote, a whopping 76% said they would rather have the Driving Licence. This is despite all attempts by the "Greens" to try and present anti-car attitudes as trendy, and is sure to concern MPs.

The result should not really be a surprise: **a driving licence is seen to deliver freedom, whilst politicians seem to want to take it away.**

Planning madness at Reading, Berks.

Loony anti-car planning policies in Reading mean that new office facilities are only permitted one car parking space per 5,000 square feet of office space. The result is that few developers are keen to develop new offices. The town has many older blocks with good car parking provision and which are ripe for refurbishment. However, when developers applied for permission to refurbish one block with over 70 spaces they were told that they would have to halve the available spaces to 36.

The result has been a lack of interest in refurbishment, with many tatty offices staying unmodernised and often empty. As one local commercial agent said: 'who wants an office with, say 8,000 square feet of space, but only room for one car?' In the meantime, prices for out of town offices with parking are rising as commercial users flee from the restrictions.

Fuel price increases have little effect on car usage

According to a survey carried out on behalf of the AA by NOP, only 128 drivers out of a total of 435 had attempted to cut their fuel bill in response to tax increases introduced in the last budget.

An AA spokesman was reported to have said; "The vast majority of motorists simply cut back on some other item to absorb extra petrol costs. Phased hikes in petrol duty, supposedly intended to encourage fuel economy, have crept in with little or no effect on driving habits."

The Great British petrol price rip-off

Fleet News reported the following average industry unleaded petrol prices earlier this year. They are shown in pence per litre and are the prices at the pump before and after duty and taxes are applied:

Country	Ex taxes	Inc taxes
Belgium	14.4	56.6
Denmark	14.8	54.6
France	12.6	60.6
Germany	13.0	52.2
Italy	14.4	57.9
Luxembourg	14.3	40.8
Netherlands	15.8	61.9
Portugal	14.5	51.9
Spain	13.7	42.9
UK	12.2	66.0

Source OPAL Oil Price Assessments

London entry tax

The City of London Corporation wants to be among the first in the country to charge drivers for entry to the Square Mile - something which is likely to be legalised once the White Paper on Transport becomes law. The idea is to eliminate the 70% of traffic which is (in the absolute discretion of the Corporation) not essential, or which is merely passing through.

The proposals are reminiscent of Soviet Russia in the Cold War. The only surprise is perhaps that they have not yet asked for reserved lanes to Heathrow Airport, London City Airport, Waterloo Station and Surrey commuter-land so that senior members of the Establishment can drive around on congestion free roads without having to mix with the great unwashed.

Cameras would be installed to enforce the charge and prosecute non-payers, but most controversially of all, no charge would be levied on cars run by senior bankers, lawyers, accountants and others who have reserved spaces in the City, or on Chauffeur driven limousines, courier services, buses or black taxis.

If adopted, there would be no reason why the adjoining Boroughs should then not charge entry on City drivers who "are merely passing through" whilst exempting their own locals. Kensington and Chelsea could charge the "riffraff" from the rest of the country, whilst Brixton could charge the "wealthy nobbs from the West End". The whole point is that *all* drivers have *paid* to use the roads, and the City scheme is so outrageous that even the RAC described it as "elitist and unfair effectively to close off a section of London to create a private driveway for City businessmen".

The Association of British Drivers

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For contact details see:
www.abd.org.uk/contacts.htm

UK & World News Roundup

Germany - Greens back down

The German Green Party removes its pledge to increase petrol prices from its manifesto.

In the last issue of On The Road we reported on the collapse in support for the Green Party in Germany as a result of their pledge to increase petrol prices to Dm 5 per litre (£1-70) within ten years. With a General Election due in Germany this September, the German left-of-centre SPD Party, which had considered working in coalition with the Greens in the new Parliament, moved to distance itself from this pledge.

The leader of the Greens, Joschka Fischer, told the Party at a special conference that the threat to petrol prices had caused them to lose the trust of the electorate. With opinion polls showing a fall in support from 11% to 6% as voters took fright at the extremist anti-car policies, the Party dropped the pledge to triple petrol prices from its new manifesto.

Spain on the road for C21

Whilst British transport policy moves back into the Dark Ages, Spain is investing heavily in improving its road and rail networks. Unlike the UK, where motorway building has been financed by tax-paying motorists, much of Spain's motorway network was built with private sector finance with tolls charged to users according to distance travelled.

That policy dated back to the 1960s and 1970s when General Franco's dictatorship saw private sector finance as the only way to build a modern road network in a country that was still poor and backward by West European standards. The result was a network of toll motorways concentrated particularly in the Basque and Catalan districts of Spain.

After Franco's death Spain moved to a modern democratic system of Government. Mr Gonzalez was elected in the 1980s, and with an expanding economy and European assistance, the country embarked on a policy of building a network of high quality dual carriageways. In the libertarian 1980s, these were built on a toll-free basis, providing a high level of mobility to all regardless of wealth, thus avoiding the problems of "social exclusion" that expensive toll roads create.

A new centre-right Prime Minister, Mr Aznar, was elected in 1996, and he is anxious that the momentum of transport improvement and modernisation is not lost. He is working in partnership with the existing private toll road operators, with extensions offered to their toll concessions, permits to allow

construction of service areas and to build new accesses to the motorways.

These were followed by the announcement that ten new toll motorways were to be built, totalling 441.5 km (276 miles). In marked contrast to UK policy, these new roads are to be built as alternatives to the free-to-use dual carriageways that have now become congested as Spanish car ownership rates reach Northern European levels, and four of them are to be built on the edges of Madrid to provide fast routes into and out of the city.

The Government is trying to provide a balance between the tolled and free networks in order to ensure that they are affordable to motorists. One of the toll motorways has already been put out to tender, and there has been a great deal of interest in the others, and the roads may well just be the start of a wider motorway building programme financed by tolls.

the dual-carriageway building programme also continues

In the meantime, the dual-carriageway building programme also continues, underlining the way in which the Spanish authorities treat the "tolled" and "free" systems as complimentary to one another. In order to build more, private finance is being brought in. The roads are built by private companies that then "sell" the finished product to the Government when it is completed, payments being made over a ten year period, much like hire purchase. The result is that the cost is spread over many years, thus helping to balance the budget in the meantime. At present, fourteen major new roads are being financed in this way.

Spain also wants an "integrated transport policy" and is investing heavily in high speed trains. One highly profitable route already runs between Madrid and Seville, and others are planned for Madrid to Barcelona (which will then go on to the French border and link to the French TGV network) and Madrid to Valladolid. The Madrid-Seville route is very fast, so popular with business people that its opening actually caused traffic levels to fall on the parallel motorway.

These infrastructure projects underline the way in which the UK is going to be left behind in the early part of the next century if there is not a rapid return to realism in our transport planning. Public and private transport are all too often seen as alternatives to one another: the Spanish realise that they are not. A modern and successful country needs both if it is to survive, and the price our children will pay

for the current insanity will go way beyond the loss of freedom and personal mobility - it will hurt living standards and the very survival of the UK as an economic force in the world.

UK Government seeks to harmonise European planning policies

The UK Government is trying to achieve harmonised planning policies across Europe. Initially, the policy would be non-binding, but the idea is that eventually there should be binding agreements which would force cross-border consultation when developments were proposed near to national boundaries.

It is well known that the UK Government is using planning policies to squeeze and harass motorists, and force them to act in a manner which "green" groups consider to be "socially responsible". They now want to extend that thinking over a wider area.

Denmark has long followed extremely restrictive planning policies with a view to reducing car use, for example by not allowing out of town shopping developments. However, following completion of a new bridge linking Denmark to Sweden, retailers have built new facilities on the Swedish side. The Danes, who like using their cars just as much as everyone else when they get the chance, have naturally made the best use of their new found freedom, so they go shopping on the other side of the water. The Danish authorities are naturally angry about the fact that they can no longer control the lives of their people, and the British proposals would give them a way of re-asserting the control culture.

Although not quoted in the draft policy document, the thought of increasing numbers of British shoppers going to Calais to do their shopping in the excellent out of

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Transport Policy

AA calls for members' comments

The Automobile Association has called on its members to comment on the Government's transport White Paper. The Autumn 1998 edition of the member's magazine also included a number of facts which will be familiar to ABD members:

- According to a Government survey, two out of three motorists exceed speed limits in urban areas and more than half exceed the 70mph motorway limit.
- Slight and serious injuries increased by 3% in 1997 compared to 1996 according to DETR figures.
- Toxic emissions from vehicles in 1997 were down 30% since 1992 and down 5% compared to 1996.
- Taxes now account for 82% of unleaded petrol price. *[A tax rate of over 400% - Ed]*
- CO₂ emissions have increased by less than 5% since 1992, despite car mileage increasing by 10%.
- An NOP survey for the AA found that 78% of motorists oppose annual fuel duty rise of 6% above inflation, 64% strongly oppose it.
- A joint AA/CBI report, "Transport Links and the Economy", says improvements needed immediately in the transport infrastructure require an expenditure of £11 billion per year, £3 billion more than current spending.

The AA invites members to write in with their opinions on the transport White Paper; the e-mail address for said purpose is: motorist@theaa.com.

PACTS safety conference

Brian Gregory gives his view of the proceedings of the PACTS Road Safety Seminar 01/07/98 and the "Road Safety Strategy to 2010" conference at Church House Conference Centre Westminster, 10/07/98.

Introduction The proceedings were opened by Baroness Hayman who trotted out all the PC mantras on the evils of the car and the importance of encouraging walking and cycling and horse-riding (how's that for a comparatively exclusive and élitist past-time? Any pretext whatever will clearly be used to discourage driving).

Safety in an Integrated Transport Strategy A Burchell, DETR.

Mr Burchell followed on the PC bandwagon outlining how the government's ITP initiative embodied the principles of encouraging sustainable transport modes over non-sustainable ones, and that this needn't - with suitable (yes, you've guessed it, anti-motorist) measures - impinge adversely on road safety. There had apparently been 7,300 responses to the ITP consultation exercise; a report on which was in preparation. Burchell claimed the DETR had identified the following issues as key: Getting freight off the roads; Better facilities for pedestrians and cyclists; Traffic speeds; Road safety.

The main public concerns had been: Personal safety and security (women, the very young and the elderly); Protecting vulnerable road users; Standards of road design and safer vehicles

The criteria adopted by DETR in developing the ITP were (in descending order of importance): Safety, Economy, Environment, Accessibility and Integration

Enforcement was mentioned in the context of speed governors reducing speed limit non-compliance by HGVs. An aspect of concern was that if ITP were successful, reduced congestion might mean increased (car?) traffic speeds, and measures would (by implication) have to be put in place to prevent that. He concluded by mouthing the platitudes about modal shift, connectivity, encouraging cycling and walking etc. A suitably sycophantic and toadying performance all-round.

Casualty Reduction Targets Richard Allsop, University College, London.

There was to be a target for reduction in all injuries, and subtargets for fatal/serious and slight injuries. Allsop went into great detail on how they tried to specifically estimate the contribution to casualty reduction through (1) Anti drink driving measures, (2) Improved secondary car safety and (3) Improved road engineering initiatives then exclude their influence to estimate trends in casualties assuming they were kept constant. A downward casualty trend still resulted. They then re-ran various scenarios of walking, cycling, motor cycling and other road traffic and estimated casualties; firstly re-instating (1), (2) and (3), then adding additional initiatives amongst which were: Other vehicle safety improvements; Cycle Helmets; Reduced drink driving; Safer walking and cycling conditions; Improved child safety; Novice driver training; Professional driver focus (e.g. use of fleet managers to intimidate them to observe speed limits); Safety on rural single carriageways (40mph blanket limit); Reductions in speeds; Driver behaviour modification (i.e. brainwashing campaign from school age upwards).

The targets so generated would be documented for publication. There will be three-yearly reviews between now and 2010. However he did not divulge the targets themselves.

Role of Local Authorities & Highway Authorities David Harvey, County Surveyors Society; Richard Shaw, Surrey County Council; and Wendy Broome, Hertfordshire County Council.

Then followed three truly frightening presentations. Richard Shaw extolled the virtues of blanket 40mph rural single carriageway speed limits - notwithstanding my forcefully stating the result of the Suffolk experiment (fatalities up from 32 to 53 after the imposition of 450 new 30mph limits) - which Mike Jeans of Suffolk again deceitfully tried to deny. Of course, in their view, police speed enforcement needed to be the No.1 road safety priority. Then we heard all the eco-garbage about pollution and congestion. When they weren't proposing driver-bashing initiatives they were sycophantically manoeuvring to try to get more dosh out of Roads Minister, Baroness Hayman.

the Suffolk experiment - fatalities up from 32 to 53

During this session it came out on several occasions that there is indeed no unified basis for collecting and analysing accident statistics - the clear implication being - although never actually verbalised by the ethically challenged participants - that they just don't know what really causes road accidents. I interjected the Florida information (2% of accidents speed-related), PACTS own comments on the lack of data in this area and a tirade on car emissions and NETCEN bus pollution figures at the next question-and-answer session but I may as well have been talking to the wall as far as most of the attendees were concerned. Broome was so anti-car (You selfish, evil despoilers in your polluting tin-boxes type rubbish) that it would have been funny if it hadn't been so vitriolic, unreasonable and biased. She even suggested that the driver should be automatically held responsible (i.e. have to prove himself innocent) in any altercation with a more vulnerable road user. Also raised (and again later during the enforcement presentation by Manning of ACPO) was the point that the Court system would have to be suitably beefed up to cope with all the prosecutions that they were anticipating bringing. All the lovely lolly would be generated, they were - it appeared - already factoring into their budgeting processes. What we are talking about here has nothing whatsoever to do with road safety. It is quite simply the blatant exercise of state-legitimised extortion. And almost every citizen in the country will be the poorer - financially and liberty-wise - for it.

How can we reconcile targetted growth in walking and cycling

Transport Policy

with further improvements in road safety? Lynn Sloman, Transport 2000.

In comparison with some of the other speakers and contributors, Sloman seemed quite tame. Frankly the content of her presentation about the encouragement of walking and cycling in Graz and various other compact European towns was of marginal relevance. Government is targetting growth in these two areas which simply isn't going to happen. If they really believe people are going to abandon heated and air-conditioned cars in favour of rickety old cycles and Shanks Ponies they are living in Cloud-Cuckoo Land. Anyway, Sloman showed that growth in such pastimes needn't adversely affect road safety ... but then these towns have made the investment in adequate infrastructure that successive UK governments haven't been prepared to.

Making the worst as good as the best - How do we raise driving standards? Andrew Howard, AA.

Bluntly, this was a sop to appease the driver training lobby. Howard approached it like an after-dinner speech with lots of jokey comments. While possibly mildly amusing to the outside observer, I was frankly not in a laughing mood and found the tone of this presentation patronising, unconstructive and wholly dismissive of the value of driver training. In the end he virtually admitted that they didn't know how they could improve driver standards; the implication being it wasn't even worth trying. Naturally, of course, stringent speed limit enforcement got an overwhelming thumbs-up. With friends like him, the driver doesn't need enemies. The AA should stick to its pretentious claim to being the 4th emergency service - that's all they're good for.

How do we police the strategy? Paul Manning, ACPO.

To paraphrase Pitt the Younger, "Put away your driving licence, it will not be needed these ten years", was the upshot of this little interlude. Manning whipped up the audience into a frenzy of anticipated driver-oppression. There was to be a National Road Policing Strategy. Its stated objective was to reduce death, injury and damage on our roads. Very laudable. There would be no search for new and radical (i.e., effective) technologies. The "5% increase in casualties per mph increase in average speed" chestnut was given an airing. The Police Service would use camera enforcement, variable speed limits, visible and covert deterrence etc. to give the appearance of trying to achieve the stated objective.

It is not quite Nazi Germany or Soviet Russia here ... yet

Operation Victoria was mentioned. Manning noted that Royal Sun Alliance (who stand to make a bomb out of increased premiums on all the drivers who will be caught by this unwarranted campaign of oppression) were jointly sponsoring this initiative. One delegate (a police officer) piped up with "Your speeding is delaying my hip replacement by putting you - or your accident victim - in my hospital bed" (round of applause). Egged on, a second (West Yorkshire) Traffic Officer commented that: "Possession of a driving licence is a privilege. If a lot more people had them taken away more easily then we'd get better road safety". (Second round of applause and time to reach for the sick-bag). Another one made some comment about "instilling fear" and ensuring that drivers were afraid to exceed speed limits - however inappropriate and badly set. It is not quite Nazi Germany or Soviet Russia here yet but it is not far away now.

How do we ensure the support of local and national politicians? Robert Gifford, PACTS.

Mr Gifford said that road safety wasn't sexy. He had sent out 129 questionnaires to the 625 (or whatever) MPs and received just 29 responses. He had asked questions on tackling speeding, driver training, the drink-drive limit, safety league tables (by county) etc.

Fourteen MPs were in favour of compulsory cycle helmets (to which Mayer Hillman was opposed unless drivers were forced to wear them, too), 12 thought a reduced BAC was a good idea; 12 daytime running lights; 6 were in favour of speed limiters with 10 opposed and 7 undecided. Most of them overestimated the number of road deaths by 50 to 100%. Gifford suggested that the government should appoint a Road Safety Minister and summarised by giving all the delegates a verbal back-slapping for being such jolly good chaps.

Neither he nor the assembled company seemed concerned when I asked about ensuring the support of the general populace. I tried to make the point that road safety is a two-way street; all road users were responsible for ensuring their own safety and that limits needed to be respect-worthy and realistic. I was wasting my breath. Malcolm Heymer made this point much better in his letter to Baroness Hayman on the symposium by pointing out that there were similarities to the Health and Safety at Work Act: the motorised road user (like the employer) could be as responsible as you like but this was all to no avail if the vulnerable road user (like the employee) obdurately refused to be.

Surprise, surprise

The world conference on transport research held in Antwerp earlier this year heard that car drivers are less likely to change their habits than previously thought. Peter Bonsall of the University of Leeds and his colleagues in the University of Newcastle discovered that there was a large difference between what motorists say they do and what they do in practice.

They discovered this through new research which was new in the way that it used real money. First the volunteers filled out questionnaires to determine their intentions to pay as you drive, then the same volunteers were asked to take place in trials involving simulators and trials on the road. Thirty volunteers were given £20 each at the start of the trial and a charge was deducted from this amount whenever they drove past certain points in the city. The vehicles were tracked by use of GPS. To reduce the charges the volunteers had several choices, they could take less direct routes, travel at less congested times or even take public transport. At the end of the experiment all the volunteers could take home any money left.

According to the questionnaires 44 per cent of the volunteers would travel before peak times and 22 per cent would not alter their driving habits. But when the trial took place it was discovered that two thirds of journeys remained unchanged, the most popular alternative which affected a quarter of the journeys was to take the less direct route.

Basically what this study says is that charging motorists extra to drive in a city centre may not be effective at easing congestion but it is a good way of raising a little extra cash for local authorities.

Further reading "Money no object" by Mick Hamer, New Scientist, 25th July 1998.

Guess who pays for "research" like this and junkets for academics! - Ed.

"Speed Limits - How they are set and your right to object"

The ABD has now printed a very useful Action Pack which sets out in detail the process by which Local Authorities set speed limits, and the rights that every member of the public has to object to the imposition of new or reduced limits. The pack costs £5 to non-members, but is available free to members. Please send a large sae, stamped (26p) to: The Editor, PO Box 3151, Colchester CO6 3JH.

Campaigning

Birmingham jams present recruitment opportunity

Birmingham City Council recently decided to impose bus lanes along the Tyburn Road, a dual carriageway and major commuter route into the city, which includes part of the A38. ABD member Chris Ward tells how he decided to 'seize the day'.

In May I had by chance been in Leeds on the day the "2+ lane" was opened. The local paper carried a photo showing a half-mile traffic jam in lane two and one car in lane one. It occurred to me then that this presented an excellent opportunity to hand out leaflets to motorists; they would already be angry at such a ridiculous scheme, and thus be more likely to respond to an ABD leaflet.

I had intended to hand out leaflets on the day the bus lanes came into force, but despite signs claiming the work would take three weeks, they sprang them upon us after just one week. This happened to be on the same Monday that Johnny2Jags gave his little speech in Parliament, and the same Monday that all the schools in Birmingham broke up, both pure coincidences of course.

That afternoon, I went to Birmingham Central Library and checked the minutes of the Transport and Technical Services Committee, and discovered that at least 54% of those who had responded to the council's consultation exercise had opposed the bus lanes. I say at least because they classified 3% of the responses as "qualified" without saying whether they were for or against (and I know mine was definitely against!). Needless to say the council decided to ignore public opinion and put the bus lanes in anyway.

In the evening I designed an A5 sized leaflet with a large title "Fight the bus lanes!", bullet points, and the ABD logo and contact details. The following day, I had a thousand leaflets printed at a cost of £35. This was for photocopied leaflets at a high street print shop. Doubtless I could have found a better price by shopping around - but speed was of the essence.

That evening I chose a spot on the approach to a roundabout at the end of the Tyburn Road where there is usually a short queue of traffic. This location enabled me to target drivers living in the north-western suburbs of the city. There is a newspaper vendor here which was helpful as cars are used to stopping - certainly I ensured that everyone who bought a paper also got an ABD leaflet!

One disadvantage of standing on the central reservation of a dual carriageway was that I was usually only able to reach cars in lane two, this being only 50% of the traffic. Despite this, in between 16:25 and 18:15 I handed out some 350 leaflets.

Plans for Wednesday evening were put on hold due to rain - I figured that drivers would be less likely to open their windows, and besides, both the leaflets and I would get soggy!

On Thursday evening I stood at some traffic lights where the A38 turns off the Tyburn Road to head out of the city. This was not such a good location. More vehicles passed through the traffic lights than stopped at them; which, as I could only reach one lane, meant that less than 25% of vehicles could be approached. Drivers also seemed less receptive, possibly due to the fact that unlike the roundabout, they did not always stop at the lights. This was also much more tiring than the

roundabout as I had to acquire eyes in the back of my head to see the lights changing, and constantly walk to and fro with the traffic light phases. As a result I was only able to hand out about 250 leaflets over a similar period.

On both occasions, the majority of drivers were happy to accept a leaflet. Cars with open windows were very useful, hardly any refused a leaflet, but to be fair it was already half in the car! I also found that saying "hello", or "afternoon" made people more receptive.

Of those people who said anything to me, the vast majority were positive, generally expressing either pleasure or amazement that someone was standing up for the motorist. There were only three negative comments and these were along the lines of "I'm not bothered about the bus lanes".

A significant number of people initially refused the leaflet, but I discovered that if I held it up so they could see the title, they immediately raised their eyebrows and couldn't get the window open fast enough.

Some drivers were totally unreceptive. There were those who had obviously seen me several 100 metres back and decided I was trying to sell them something - they stared blankly ahead refusing to even look at me. I soon learned to ignore them too. Equally unworthy of attention were those who shook their head and then refused to look at me or the leaflet.

There was undoubtedly what I termed the "sheep effect". If one driver refused a leaflet, the one behind was likely to do so as well. Conversely, if I could get a driver to accept one, everyone behind would follow suite!

The most bizarre incident was the woman who on seeing me offer her a leaflet, immediately slammed the door lock on and sat rigidly staring ahead; I decided to put it down to care in the community.

Occasionally even the best plans sometimes encounter a "slight technical hitch", in my case a girl in a French registered car who couldn't reach the window winder!

I subsequently found myself to have some 400 leaflets remaining. I decided against repeating the exercise due to the problem of undoubtedly targeting some of the same drivers I'd already given a leaflet to. So I decided to approach some of the petrol stations along the road. The attendant at the first station I approached was most interested, and expressed concern at the effect the bus lanes were having on his profits. As a result he was happy to take all of the remaining leaflets, which he duly placed on his counter.

The following week I spoke briefly with a journalist from the Birmingham Metro Newspaper, as a result of which an article entitled 'Drivers Slam Bus Lane Plan' appeared in that week's edition. The article was fairly well balanced, it mentioned the ABD, and quoted several points from the leaflet including that the bus lanes are intended to take road space from private cars so as to create congestion. The article was accompanied by a photo of some unrelated congestion with the caption 'Congestion - do bus lanes cause it or relieve it?' The comments made by the city council were basically the usual denial of being anti-car.

As a result of this exercise, the ABD has received numerous enquiries, resulting in several new members joining. I would definitely encourage other members to take advantage of any anti-car schemes which may be planned in your area. We can turn these anti-car schemes to our advantage by alerting more drivers to the threats on their freedom, and encouraging them to join the ABD.

Congratulations to Chris Ward on this initiative!

Chris also administers the ABD electronic mailing list and runs a pro-car web site which is linked-to from the ABD site. He can be contacted on email: chris@waverider.co.uk



Global cooling

Sir - June has been one of the wettest and coldest for some time, and July has shown little improvement. The diagnosis: global cooling. To overcome the problem rapidly, I recommend that local authorities declare the remainder of July a compulsory car use month, where pedestrians and cyclists are charged on entry into towns and cities unless they are carrying a passenger or have a cubic capacity less than John Prescott.

Bernard Abrams
Cheltenham, Gloucestershire
abrams@rmplc.co.uk

Call for action

Sir - You should organise a demo to block streets around Parliament at the time of the next budget and refuse to move unless the taxes are reduced. I know all my friends would come.

More strength to your elbow. Steven Norris is trying to split lorry drivers from car drivers. He is the ministry's representative on the RHA and not a conduit for them into Whitehall. We have to fight back hard against the bunk and junk science that is solely intended to make the motorist feel guilty, whilst the government carries on taxing us to the hilt.

The environmental lobby has been proved wrong time and time again. Their alliances with most of the left wing groups is perhaps the most enlightening. The left's basic dilemma is that capitalism has not fallen on its knees and they now see that alliances must be formed with eco warriors, Reclaim the Streets etc, in order to force its collapse.

All of this is based on the most dishonest science available. The attack is on the individual with the intention to force a collectivist mentality on people. They are in fact a modern day religious movement - we are all inherently evil, destroying the planet etc, and must be made to repent our evil ways. Tomas de Torquemada would have been proud of them!

Brian Baker

Write to On The Road!

This is *your* Newsletter! Write to the ABD with your experiences, observations and opinions. Letters or longer articles are welcome. If possible, send electronic as well as typewritten copy.

"Safety" policy failure, more evidence

Sir - You will remember my report in OTR about the farcical meeting of Chelmsford Borough Council, when Committee members ignored the Essex Police Inspector who urged caution in the use of speed limits. I was at that meeting to support my objection to one of their silly proposals which, of course, they decided to go ahead with anyway.

Well, the new limit came into effect about two weeks ago and I happened to drive along the road this afternoon. About half way along was one of those yellow boards asking for witnesses to a serious accident, which happened just five days ago - about a week after the new speed limit came into force. How ironic.

Malcolm Heymer, Essex

Policing, 1922 style

Sir - The Birmingham Post of 21 July 1998 featured a reprint of some news stories from 1922.

This is taken from a report on the speech made by the Chief Constable of the Birmingham Police Force at a meeting of the Midland Car Club on 1st Dec 1922:

"A new Motor-car Act was coming along as well. The Act of 1903 was out of date. The section limiting the speed to 20 miles was to be abolished. There was to be no speed limit, for to put the limit at say 20 miles suggested to some motorists that that was the speed at which they were habitually at liberty to travel. In Birmingham he could say now that the old Act was likely to come to an end, they had never laid a police trap. When the 1903 Act became law he issued instructions to the police that they were not to prosecute persons under the speed limit section, but to rely entirely on the first section dealing with driving to the common danger."

If only our senior police officers were as sensible as they were 76 years ago!

Chris Ward

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.

Speed Limiters

The following letter was part of open correspondence on the ABD's email mailing list. An earlier correspondent had written: "A speed limiter makes sense if the vehicle can go faster than it can cope with in terms of braking and handling, as is the case with an HGV..."

Sir - Modern HGVs are very well braked and handle extremely well. (There is no theoretical reason why a lorry shouldn't stop in the same distance as a car. In practice this isn't achievable, although trucks now stop much better than they used to, and new technology like disc brakes and electronic brake control should make them stop even faster.) In the hands of a competent driver exercising the reasonable standards of care and attention which we expect from all road users they are perfectly safe at around the 60mph motorway limit.

Having driven over 150,000 miles in limited trucks, though, I can state categorically that limiters are dangerous, mainly because of the fatigue and inattention they cause in drivers. In the first year of their compulsory fitment to trucks and coaches the number of HGV drivers killed went up 24% and the number of PSV drivers killed went up 67%. The EU is planning to fit them to cars, and they're looking for 62mph. (Yes, sixty two!) No matter how good the vehicle's brakes, if they're not applied because the driver is half asleep and hasn't realised that he's heading into danger then they are 100% inefficient!

I'm convinced that the answer to most road safety issues is education and training of road users (mainly drivers, but also horse riders, cyclists, pedestrians, and the parents of the small children I see roaming the streets unsupervised, apparently desperately looking for a car to knock them down), rather than electronic gadgets and over-zealous policing. We know, of course, that all these measures aren't introduced to improve road safety, but to make life unpleasant for drivers in the hope that we'll give up driving.

Chris Lamb (Cybertrucker)

Chris operates a website about speed limiters at <http://members.tripod.com/~Cybertrucker/index.htm>, or you can link to it from the ABD site, <http://www.abd.org.uk>.

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



Road Rage

Alasdair Maciver, a visitor to the ABD web site, sent the following missive. The ABD receives many letters, particularly from new members, about the woes which beset drivers on British roads today as they attempt to go about their legitimate business. Those letters often cover similar themes (unsurprisingly). However what follows seems to express extremely eloquently - and to go more deeply into - exactly what is wrong on our roads and why it has gone wrong.

I love driving. I love the feeling of being in tune with my machine on the open road, knowing my limits and driving within them - the thrill of cornering, changing gear, accelerating freely, overtaking. But I hate driving. Real driving, like being stuck behind someone on a dual carriageway because you're not allowed to overtake on the inside, having to fight to protect your road space from those without any lane discipline on roundabouts, being trapped in tailbacks on trunk roads because nobody will overtake, having to go easy on the right pedal because of unrealistic speed limits. We are all aware of this paradox. Even without the Green debate, or the congestion issues, driving is not as much fun as it used to be. So what has gone wrong?

I learned to drive in Sutherland, in the far North of Scotland, and my formative years were spent driving thousands of miles for my local Roads Department on single track roads. This taught me courtesy. To survive driving long distances on single track back then it was necessary to give way to both oncoming and following traffic. Each time you did you were usually rewarded with a smile and a wave. It became second nature not to hold anybody up and also to expect to not be held up yourself. Even the tourists could be persuaded, eventually, to pull over and let you past. You see, speeding was not an issue. The standard of the road meant that speed limits were not critical - you would simply drive at the limit of the road, the car, or yourself. (Whichever was the lowest if you were sensible.) Now most of my driving is commuting between a typical small town and a typical small city. My journey of twenty miles takes in the usual blend of heavy traffic, dual carriageway, trunk road, roundabouts, traffic lights, and speed limits from 20mph to 70mph. After four years of this my driving has deteriorated to an unacceptable standard. I now expect every driver to do something that will annoy me, and I drive accordingly. Everybody is my enemy. I fly off the handle at the most innocuous of driving errors. I tolerate nothing. I know the rules, I know how to drive properly, I don't hold people up, I know how to get through the traffic and help it flow as efficiently as possible. All I expect is everybody else to know all these things as well. Of course there are a proportion of drivers that have no inkling of any of this and so the incompetence of the few has led to me becoming progressively frustrated, culminating in my current unacceptable state of mind. I know I have to be more tolerant, and I know I have to take steps to modify my driving behaviour before I do something stupid. However, I will not accept all the blame for what has happened to me and I think it is time to speak out and criticise the drivers that created this Frankenstein in the first place. Public opinion is being manipulated against certain types of driving, to try to influence perceptions of acceptable and unacceptable driving behaviour. However, attention has been diverted away from areas where we should be trying to make improvements and general driving standards are deteriorating as a result. Let me explain.

The single worst experience I have had behind the wheel of a car was the hour I spent driving the last twenty five miles of my one hundred and sixty mile journey home after a weekend break. The road was the A96, a notorious winding single carriageway trunk road of over one hundred miles that connects Inverness and Aberdeen - and which has no viable alternative route. I caught up with a convoy of cars - no lorries, buses or tractors - meandering along at 25mph. I was ninth in the queue. Conditions were horrible. It was a dark stormy night, very windy and lashing rain. Because we were moving so slowly the natural gap between cars was too small to allow an

overtaking vehicle to pull back in. I had to wait until the cars in front of me overtook, or overtake all eight cars in one go - or take the chance that the drivers in front of me were alert enough to drop back and let me pull back in if I tried to overtake. To cut a horrendously long story short, despite dozens of clear opportunities, nobody did overtake. This gave me no confidence in the awareness or abilities of the drivers ahead of me to risk overtaking them a few at a time. Twenty five miles and one hour later I eventually got a sufficient overtaking opportunity to allow me to get past all eight cars in one go. This was on my home town bypass, and by this time my sanity was at risk and my judgement questionable. The headlights of the convoy stretched as far as the eye could see - well in excess of a hundred vehicles trapped on a strategically important trunk road at 25mph. The car in front was - you've guessed it - not a Toyota, but a Mini Metro. (Apologies to all you Metro drivers out there that actually know what you're doing!) There are three aspects to this which show how driving standards have deteriorated. Firstly, there are a growing number of drivers that will amble along at an unacceptably slow speed regardless of how many vehicles they are impeding. I cannot understand how anyone could feel sufficiently self important to be capable of knowingly holding other people up. Unfortunately popular opinion seems to be that these drivers are doing nothing wrong and any driver behind becoming impatient is a threat to society! Secondly, with enthusiastic motoring becoming a thing of the past, fewer and fewer drivers are either able or willing to carry out a simple overtaking manoeuvre. For instance what proportion of drivers now know how to change down a gear to find better acceleration? Thirdly, in a traffic convoy everybody seems to be guilty of switching off and simply following the car in front. They drive too close together to allow following cars to overtake safely - but wake up with a fright to flash lights and sound horns if anybody has the audacity to try!

This incident, along with my commuting experiences, focused my attention on general driving attitudes. Through media reporting, magazine articles, letters to newspapers etc, I have become aware of a disturbing trend. People believe that speed causes all road accidents. Speeding - like drink driving before it - is now the socially unacceptable face of motoring and has become the scapegoat for every other aspect of bad driving. For instance, two letters to my local paper immediately spring to mind. In both of them the writer explains how after pulling out to overtake on a dual carriageway, a car in one case, and a motorbike in the other, "appeared behind them from nowhere flashing their lights and sounding the horn - obviously going far too fast". Both writers blamed the following vehicle for nearly causing an accident, accusing them of speeding. However, it is clear from reading the letters that the writer was guilty of changing lanes whilst being unaware that there was a vehicle in his blind spot overtaking him. One of the writers was venting his frustration after getting absolutely no sympathy from relating his story to the police! Even after being told what he had done wrong he refused to accept that he had been responsible for the incident. It staggers me that somebody could be so totally oblivious of his own mistake that he writes in to the local paper to berate his unfortunate victim. But then we don't see adverts on television showing how dangerous it is to change lanes without checking whether it's actually safe to do so. Around the same time I wrote to the paper myself to point out that there is a lot more to bad driving than just speeding. My letter was published and I was rewarded with one letter of support, but many more that criticised my "boy racer mentality" and irresponsible attitudes. The majority seem to disagree with me. So, why has speed become everybody's scapegoat? Well, we do see the emotive, no expense spared, "kill your speed" adverts on television. We're all aware of the speed cameras appearing all over the road network. All the road safety campaigns concentrate on reducing speed. Speed, they tell us, is wrong.

What people have failed to grasp is that in the fight to improve



accident statistics speed is targeted because it is easier to make drivers slow down than to improve their driving skills. As a result it has become acceptable to cut people up and generally drive without consideration for other road users. The police are slowing people down to make bad driving safer. On my home town bypass there is an enormously expensive electronic advance warning sign which, when there are no particular hazards up ahead, loudly proclaims, "Drive Safely. Reduce Speed". This is of course ignored by the drivers that break speed limits but gives a huge pat on the back to the drivers that amble aimlessly along creating tailbacks. If it wasn't so pathetic it would be funny. It is possible to drive safely at 80mph. It is possible to drive dangerously at 40mph. The sign does nothing to encourage sensible and competent driving or reduce the driver frustration that caused so many of the accidents which led to the erection of the sign in the first place. There is another less obvious reason why speed is perceived as the main evil on our roads. It comes from the reporting of road accidents. The media are not allowed to explain how an accident happened because this would lead to apportionment of blame. This in turn would prejudice possible criminal proceedings against the drivers involved, and would also be unwelcome to the insurance companies. Therefore a certain mystery surrounds accidents. We see the photograph of the carnage, read about the tragic loss of life, but nobody tells us how it happened. With this lack of explanation most people seem to assume that speed was the cause, rather than merely a factor. Nobody considers that there may have been a lack of due care and attention, or simple driver error, or indeed some calamitously stupid piece of driving. Streetwise drivers can see an accident coming, they are aware of the likely situations where accidents can occur. However, there are too many drivers out there that are accidents waiting to happen. They make the same mistakes day in, day out and have no idea what they're doing wrong. The truth is that very few accidents are caused by excess speed. But yes, nearly all of them would be avoided if everybody drove at 20mph.

When you weren't looking somebody took the moral high ground from the enthusiastic, competent drivers that actually know what they're doing and gave it to the frustrating ones that haven't got a clue.

Don't get me wrong. I'm not against improving road safety. I'm all for taking every reasonable step to reduce the number of deaths and injuries on our roads. Nonetheless, with the hysteria surrounding the fight to make our roads as safe as possible, nobody tells us that there are fewer deaths on our roads each year than there have ever been - despite the fact that there are more cars on our roads than ever before. I also read a recent report which states that Britain now has the lowest number of annual fatalities per thousand drivers in the whole world. But there we have it. It has become socially unacceptable to be an assertive driver who knows where he's going and wants to get there. It is acceptable to drive at 40mph on trunk roads, block the overtaking lane on dual carriageways, change lanes without checking your blind spots and generally prevent the free flow of traffic. Discourtesy rules. Defensive and aggressive driving has taken over. And if you want to redress the balance and strike a blow for common sense then I'm afraid you're too late. When you weren't looking somebody took the moral high ground from the enthusiastic, competent drivers that actually know what they're doing and gave it to the frustrating ones that haven't got a clue. I appreciate that speeding is not tolerable any more. In fact, in towns and villages it is deplorable. I accept that I have to toe the line. All I want now is to be

allowed to "make best possible progress with regard to speed limits and driving conditions," (I'm sure this expression used to be in the highway code, but I can't find it anymore!), and to be afforded the simple courtesy that I offer to others. But I can't even have that. No, we have to reduce ourselves to the lowest common denominator - drive to the standard of the worst drivers on the road - and all because nobody will criticise the ones who are so unskilled and lacking in awareness, confidence and courtesy that they should not be allowed on the road in the first place.

When I learned to drive it was quite acceptable to drive like you enjoyed it. Now the world has changed and it is frowned upon to treat motoring with anything less than measured sobriety. With the debates over the environment and congestion I think it is safe to say that the world will continue to change at a greater rate each passing year. There is already a growing feeling of guilt to be endured with car ownership and use. However, it's not a question of there being too many cars on our roads - there are too many people on our planet. And that's another argument entirely.

So if, like me, you enjoy driving according to my first definition, you had better make the most of it while you can.

Alasdair Maciver, BSc, CEng, MICE., Aberdeenshire

And we'd better keep up the campaigning! - Ed.

"I Need My Car, You Don't Need Yours"

ABD members attended the above-named debate at the Institution of Civil Engineers. Malcom Heymer reports as follows.

The motion being debated was "This House believes that a 10% reduction in road traffic can and should be achieved by the year 2010". The proposer of the motion was Roger Higman of Friends of the Earth, seconded by Ken Huggett, Road Safety and Traffic Manager of the Royal Borough of Kingston upon Thames. Opposing was Bert Morris, Public Affairs Director of the AA, seconded by Roger King, SMMT Director of Public Affairs and Acting Chief Executive.

Roger Higman trotted out all the usual arguments about air pollution and health, global warming etc. The 10% reduction he wants is on 1990 levels, so it would actually represent a reduction of 30% or so on predicted levels for 2010. Bert Morris and Roger King both picked up on this and Roger King in particular gave a very spirited defence of the car. As an ex-MP he is clearly used to putting an argument forcefully in public. It was particularly pleasing to hear him point out the inconsistencies in the Government's policies on energy, including the reduction in VAT on domestic fuel and the support for coal, whilst penalising road users.

When the debate was thrown open to the floor, Mayer Hilman was in particularly rabid mood, suggesting that rather than a 10% cut in traffic, nearer 90% was needed if the planet was not to suffer disaster as a result of the global warming caused by the carbon dioxide emitted by cars! Furthermore, he didn't see why the lack of alternative transport modes was any reason for not introducing such drastic cuts! I was able to make the point about man-made CO₂ emissions being only about 5% of the total, with cars making up less than 20% of that. I also pointed out that the 'greenhouse effect' was an unproven theory and it is now being suggested in some quarters that sun spot activity is a more likely cause of climate change - it was clear that this fell largely on deaf ears, however. Brian also made a good point about previous Government promises to spend money raised from transport users on the transport system being broken consistently over several decades, so no one would believe a similar promise now.

The final vote at the end was, not surprisingly, in favour of the motion, at 45 - 11. Our only consolation was that it would have been 45 - 8 without the three of us!

Gatso Hall of Shame

This is the last of three cases brought to the attention of the ABD by one member. They illustrate how the full weight of the state's Big Brother technology and bureaucracy are being brought to bear on completely innocent and honest people who were not even driving the vehicles allegedly caught by cameras.

Case Three: Who was the driver and who cares?

In the summer of 1996, my colleague and I were working out our notice with our employer. As part of our duties, we visited customers in the Southampton Area. Our usual routine involved meeting at the regional depot in Purfleet, Essex, and sharing one of our company cars for our journey. My colleague chose to leave his car at the depot. The main employee car park is a favourite haunt of car thieves. As the driver on the company insurance policy has to pay the excess on every claim then it is not surprising that most people park in the depot. The problem with doing so is that it is a company requirement to leave the keys with the duty supervisor. Company cars are generally used as run-arounds for anyone needing transport, so the driver always runs the risk of returning to find a full ashtray and an empty tank. However this is preferable to paying out of your own pocket for new window glass and a radio.

The Company had taken an "if you don't like it, leave" attitude to some employees' comments on certain operational changes. My colleague and I had taken the second option and found better jobs. This had made us a bit unpopular with the senior management.

It was a surprise when, three weeks later, a traffic fine relating to a Gatso camera appeared in my colleague's mail. It had by then done the rounds of the leasing company and other divisions, before finding the authorised driver for the vehicle. On checking, my colleague had been paying for a meal in Hamble Village by Barclaycard just ten minutes before. As the speed was 77mph in a 50mph limit (and not Mach 4) then it was impossible for him to have been there. He was now in his last week of employment and everybody at the depot told him that his car had only been to the bank, not the 30 mile journey needed to have been in front of the camera.

it was impossible for him to have been there

He advised the Court that he could not identify the driver and advised the Company of the circumstances. He was told by the Company that it was his problem and they would not support him.

Once he had left the Company he was truly on his own. My colleague spoke to the Officer responsible for Traffic Enforcement Cameras and was surprised by the reply: "Look mate, you can save yourself a lot of heartache if you send us £40 and the licence of your Great Uncle John (who does not drive any more). We will endorse it, take the cash and you can forget it." When my friend tried to explain he was told that they were not really interested in the facts.

Being a man of principle, he was still fighting the matter when I last spoke to him and is, by now, very much out of pocket.

Dates for your diary

ABD meetings have been planned for 19th September and 7th November 1998. All meetings are to take place at The Heritage Motor Centre, Banbury Road, Gaydon, Warwickshire CV35 0BJ. The venue is situated just off J12 of the M40. Meetings generally commence at 10.30 am, with a break for lunch. All members welcome. Dates and venue subject to change.

ABD meets ACPO

In March 1998 the London Evening Standard published an article sensationalising the presence on the ABD web site of a list of unmarked patrol cars. It was suggested that this might jeopardise genuine police undercover work. Although this has now been discounted, at the time, as a gesture of goodwill the ABD agreed to withdraw that page from the web site. The ABD committee determined to attempt to open a constructive dialogue with ACPO about issues of mutual concern. What follows is the report of the ABD committee members who met two ACPO committee members in July.

A meeting with two members of the ACPO Traffic Committee was eventually arranged for 7th July. We were confronted with Keith Bailey who is Assistant Secretary to the Traffic Committee and Hugh Alford who works in the same office and who is, incidentally, the ACPO representative on PACTS. The latter was not present for the first 20 minutes or so and we had initially to deal with Bailey on his own.

It was obvious right from the start that Bailey belongs to the "we are right and you are wrong" school. He had little sympathy with anything we had to say. At one stage, when we suggested, in connection with the speeding Chief Constable who had a lapse of concentration which allowed him to get off scot free, that there seemed to be one rule for them and another for the rest of us, said Bailey started shuffling his papers and getting up in order to terminate the meeting there and then. It was more than obvious that that is what he would have liked to do and more than obvious also that they were there under sufferance. To this extent they started making noises about having to be elsewhere at midday, which was clearly not true, so they did not have to listen to us for too long.

"We are right and you are wrong" - ACPO

Hugh Alford was a much more agreeable person who appeared to have some sympathy with our line of thought whereas Bailey would like a Gatso every 100 yards of every road in the country and everything in the world would be marvellous.

We made an attempt to portray the ABD for what it is - an organisation concerned about the way road safety is treated by the police as well as conveying our many thoughts on the other aspects of motoring which have little to do with the law. We had prepared an excellent set of slides covering all the various arguments and handed a copy over for them to review afterwards. We would have liked to go through each slide in turn but it was pretty obvious that they would have had an extremely limited concentration span. There is so much to cover that you can only scratch at the surface.

We came away feeling pretty depressed. Had it not been for the fact that we were in London for the PACTS meeting that afternoon, I think we would both have felt it was a waste of time, money and effort.

In a follow-up letter I thanked them for our interesting meeting and suggested that we would like a further meeting to explore other issues. I also suggested that we would like their Chairman, Paul Manning, to be present. I have yet to receive a reply.

54% of drivers exceed Motorway limit

According to the Government's latest research, 54% of car drivers exceed the UK's archaic 70 mph motorway speed limit in good conditions and when traffic is free flowing. And guess what their response is? The Government has ruled out any increase in the limit. They say we need more "education and enforcement".

No, Nanny, what we need is a realistic speed limit !

How can they say "more" education? There has been nothing remotely educational about government messages to drivers. - Ed.

Speed and Safety

UK Road Deaths point to government policy failure

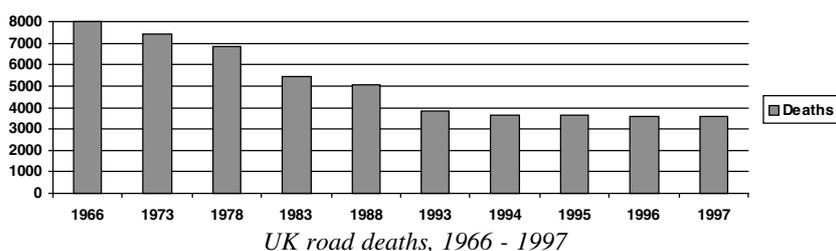
(Continued from front page.)

The graph below shows that road deaths fell steadily from their post war peak in 1966 right up until 1994. These safety improvements occurred in the face of a vast increase in the number of cars. Several factors were crucial:

- Huge improvements in active and passive safety of vehicles;
- Road construction and re-engineering to produce better, faster and safer roads;
- Decline in mileage by vulnerable groups like cyclists and motorcyclists;
- Reduction in drunken driving;
- Sensible policing mainly aimed at dealing with careless and reckless behaviour.

However, since 1994, the fall in road deaths has ended, despite ongoing

improvements in vehicle technology, with airbags, child seats and rear seatbelts becoming much more widely used over this period. Some genuine road engineering improvements have also continued, ironing out accident blackspots by improving junctions and opening bypasses. In 1997, the number of deaths actually showed an increase.



The Nature of Safety Policy

Since 1992, road safety policy has focused on speed reduction as its primary means of attempting to reduce casualties.

This has been justified using nothing more than a few catch phrases which are insupportable from a rational viewpoint, and a very few convenient and shallow statistical studies selected from around the world. Speed reductions have undoubtedly been achieved, but casualties, which fell whilst road speeds were increasing in the 70s and 80s, have not fallen as these speed reductions have been enforced.

The "Kill Your Speed" Campaign has been pursued by three main methods:

- Enforcement by automatic cameras and police activity;
- Reduction of speed limits in both urban and rural areas;
- Introduction of "Traffic Calming" obstructions.

All of these actions have been accompanied by grandiose claims for their effectiveness at local level. Regularly, we hear, fatalities fall by up to 70% when one or more of these measures has been introduced.

But if these measures were really so successful, why has the overall death rate not fallen? These much vaunted measures have *failed* to deliver the promised casualty reductions.

There are only three possible answers to this question:

1. The statistics that show local falls in accidents where these measures have been taken are misleading, sometimes deliberately so.
2. The measures simply move accidents from one place to another.
3. Only a few of the measures are used where they can do any good, the rest being spurious and politically motivated.

All of these are true to some degree, so explaining the casualty conundrum. The ABD has examples to illustrate each of these points.

Why has "Kill your Speed" failed?

Choice of speed is undoubtedly a vital factor in safe driving, and this is particularly true when approaching hazards such as bends, junctions, crests and parked vehicles that require a reduction in speed to safely negotiate them. It is the failure to see, recognise and respond to such hazards that is the key causal factor in almost all road accidents. Conversely, improving skills in this area equips drivers to avoid most accidents, even those that are, on paper, the fault of the other driver. This is the basis of all defensive and advanced driver training.

Telling drivers "Kill your speed" in specific situations where the wrong speed is likely to cause danger would be good, if they were told why. But what is actually happening is that entirely pointless and unrealistic speed limit reductions are being introduced across the country by both the Highways Agency and local authorities, in

complete violation of sound road safety advice on speed limit setting which has been accepted and proven to work over many years, often ignoring the advice of local police, intelligent residents and road safety professionals alike.

Enforcement of speed limits has become more and

more concentrated on locations where it is perfectly safe to exceed the posted limit, leading to most "speeding" convictions being applied in safe circumstances. Drivers are thus discouraged from setting their speed properly according to the road conditions, so no-one should be surprised when they are unable to do so in hazardous situations.

Concentration of police resources on pointless speed enforcement has also reduced their ability and desire to deal with bad driving (prosecutions for careless and dangerous driving have plummeted whilst speeding convictions have soared) further undermining driving standards.

When was the last time a *sensible* education campaign aimed at improving standards was run by government? It is, of course, very difficult to give sensible advice about, say, safe overtaking without accepting that speed limits may be broken when that advice is followed. Just one more way in which the speed limit obsession works against real road safety.

But why is a so obviously flawed policy being pursued?

Friends of the Earth and other groups opposed to car use have always maintained that speed limits should be set at very low levels and rigorously enforced in order to make driving unpleasant. These groups have extensive influence in local and national government and are therefore setting road safety policy according to their own anti-car agenda.

They have been allowed to get away with it for one reason, and one reason alone: the ABD has been prevented from engaging them in public debate and exposing the obvious flaws in their arguments.

It is a matter of great concern that the British media, which is supposed to be free and which has a reputation for sound investigation has failed to allow this debate to happen.

Advertising in OTR

All advertisements in "On The Road" are placed by members who provide substantial assistance with running the Association. Some of them also offer discounts to other members.

Support the advertisers and you support the ABD!

Speed and Safety

UK Drivers among safest in Europe

British drivers are among the safest in Europe, according to new research. The survey examined the number of motor insurance claims in different EU countries.

French drivers file nearly twice as many claims a year as the British, and the Spaniards nearly three times as many.

As British drivers make fewer claims than their European neighbours, they do not have to pay as much for their motor insurance. The average cost of motor insurance in the UK was £231 compared with a European average of £290. Frenchmen pay £313 to insure the average car, Germans pay £364, the Irish pay £486 and the Swiss pay a whopping £537.

Over the past seven years insurance premiums in France, Germany, Italy and Spain rose on average by 19%. But the cost of insurance in Britain has tumbled by 8% over the same period - mainly as a result of stiff competition between insurers.

Greece is the only European country where comprehensive motor insurance is not available. It is one of the cheapest countries to insure a car. The average is just £92, but that merely covers third party only insurance, which is all most Greek drivers buy.

White Paper announces review of speed limits

A review of speed limits has been announced in the Government White Paper on an "Integrated Transport Policy". The White Paper specifically states that the new speed policy is to take "account of the contribution of reduced speeds to environmental and social objectives as well as to road safety", and is to "examine how the best practice in engineering, enforcement, education and publicity can be developed". And the "aim will be to develop a practical and cost effective approach which meets our wider policy objectives" - for which read ever lower limits, and more profit-making speed cameras which can finance the reign of oppression that Prescott has in store for us.

This is to be the subject of a consultation exercise, and the Government has ominously specified in the White Paper that it will consult widely "including those environmental groups that have not been involved in road safety matters". This will enable all the bigoted anti-speed, anti-car extremists to have their say and then be used to justify the next anti-car obscenity that Prescott has planned.

We will naturally also be responding on behalf of the motorist to the Consultation process in due course, even though there was no reference to the views of motoring groups being canvassed.

PACTS & Motorway Tolling

Hugh Bladon reports on the July meeting of the Parliamentary Advisory Council on Transport Safety.

At the meeting of PACTS on 7th July, which Paul and I attended, we staggered through the agenda under the chairmanship of Peter Bottomley, getting to the point of AOB which he missed out and started on an introduction of the Labour member who had come to talk about the Integrated Transport System White Paper (as it happens, since the paper had been delayed yet again the poor man had to make his apologies and say that he could not speak about it after all - much laughter from the floor!).

I had to interrupt said Bottomley and ask about AOB, whereupon he said "Oh, is there any?" to which I replied "Yes, there certainly is!". I gave a short reminder of the time last year when I first raised tolling as an issue and expressed my surprise that PACTS had no policy on this proposal by the government. I said that we had prepared a paper on the subject which we wanted the Road Environment Working party to examine and to come back to the Council as a matter of urgency at the meeting on the 17th November.

I then produced from under the table the 25 copies needed for each member of the working party to have a copy. The way this happened worked well in our favour since there was a general hush in the room once I had interrupted Bottomley. Unfortunately Paul was out of the room while all this took place as he was acting as teller for a vote which was taking place at the same time but we both managed to speak to the chairman of the working party afterwards at the tea and sticky sandwiches jolly.

We await your report of the November meeting with bated breath! - Ed.

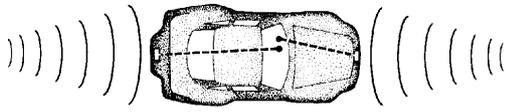
ABD Meetings

All members are welcome at meetings. These are held at the Heritage Motor Museum, Gaydon, Warwicks (just off the M40 J12).

Next meetings November 7th, 10.30 am.

Minutes of previous meetings are circulated to attendees and are available to members. Contact the Secretary for copies.

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Action Pack

Speed Limits - how they are set and your Right to Object

A 12-page document with all you need to know to oppose the setting of unnecessarily low limits by local authorities:

- an explanation of the procedures
- action checklists to help you prepare
- details from relevant DoT documents
- a sample letter of objection.

This action pack has been prepared by Malcolm Heymer, ABD member and transport planner. To receive a copy send a large, stamped (26p), self-addressed envelope to The Editor, PO Box 3151, Colchester CO6 3JH. Non-members should also send a donation of at least £1 (cheques payable to Pro-Motor Ltd).

The Environment

EU plan to cut CO₂

The EU has agreed cuts in carbon dioxide emissions of 8% across Europe. The UK is bound to cut emissions by 12.5% over the next 10-14 years, although the British Government has said that it will "voluntarily" force its citizens to cut emissions by 20% over the period.

Under the deal, France will be allowed to maintain the existing levels of emissions, whereas Greece, Spain, Ireland and Portugal will all be allowed significant increases. The main losers are the UK, Luxembourg, Germany and Denmark all of whom are very reliant on fossil fuels for providing heat and power.

Germany is confident that it can meet its target as it continues to clean up the environmental mess left in the former East Germany, while Luxembourg expects to meet it by rationalising its steel industry.

Unfortunately there is as yet no coherent strategy as to how this can be achieved in the UK, especially as the British Government has just put together a package to assist the coal industry - the "dirtiest" fuel as far as carbon dioxide emissions are concerned. There is much talk of the "Transport sector" taking the brunt, by which they mean that the policy can be used as a justification for anti-car measures. Yet, as regular readers know, cars only produce a tiny fraction of the gas - about 14% of the total of man made emissions in the UK compared to 54% from homes and industry combined.

Volvo pioneers anti-ozone cat.

Volvo is planning to introduce a smog-busting version of its successful S80 range of cars next year, initially in California. The system involves putting a special coating onto the radiator which converts ground level ozone (O₃) into oxygen (O₂) as the car drives through the air.

The system, known as "PremAir" will add about £50 to the price of the car, becomes more and more effective as the speed of the car and the temperature of the water in the radiator increase. In favourable conditions, as much as 75% of the Ozone passing through the radiator will be converted back to oxygen.

It is some time since On The Road reported on the class-leading Saab which sucks pollutants out of the air and produces exhaust gases which can be cleaner than the surrounding air itself. Now Volvo has taken the whole game on a further step. Driving your car may soon actually help to *reduce* ozone levels.

Ozone is one of the favourite subjects of the anti-car whingers, what will they find to moan about when we've cracked that one? - Ed.

"Pollution causes asthma" (not)

On the surface it seems like a plausible statement as asthma and other allergies has always to follow in the wake of wealth and modernisation. If you believe the environmentalists it is because of air pollution coming from industry and transport. This follows through until you look at the figures.

For example, where is there a higher incidence of asthma, in the generally clean and unpolluted towns of southern Sweden or in the heavily polluted towns of Poland? It must be Poland. No it is in Sweden which has a far higher incidence of asthma and it is higher in most of the western world and it is on the increase.

Thirty years ago asthma was rare, now 20 to 30 per cent suffer in countries such as Britain and Australia. So if it is not the nasty horned beast of legend called the car, then what is it. Well the latest theory goes along these lines. In the west we have developed an obsession with cleanliness and our day to day contact with bacteria is a lot lower than it would have been fifty years ago. Since during our evolution which took a rather long time, when a child was born it was thrust into a world of dirty caves and washing done with a big rock in

Congestion - the real causes

According to a report by Trafficmaster published earlier this year, congestion is caused mainly by accidents and poor road maintenance. Traffic jams are *not* in the main caused by excess traffic volume. Almost half of all congestion is caused by accidents and about a third is caused by road maintenance and car breakdowns.

Car exhaust does not kill - even if you try...

According to a report published recently in the ONS's quarterly Population Trends bulletin the increasing use of catalytic converters in cars, a statutory requirement from 1993, has led to a steep drop the male suicide rate.

Catalytic converters remove most of the poisonous carbon monoxide gas from car exhausts. This reduction has made it much more difficult to commit suicide by inhaling car exhaust fumes.

The report stated that the introduction of the catalytic converter had led to the biggest change in British suicide patterns since the replacement of poisonous coal gas with non toxic natural gas in the 1970s, which was also followed by a substantial drop in suicides.

... but "traffic calming" obstructions increase pollution

A report has been published by the Transport Research Laboratory entitled, "Traffic calming and vehicle emissions: A literature review". It contained the following information:

Results from tests in the UK showed that, at a constant 30mph, roads with road humps caused increases in CO of between 70% and 80%, HC (unburned hydrocarbons) of between 70% and 100%, and CO₂ of between 50% and 60%. On the other hand NO_x (oxides of nitrogen) were reduced by between 0% and 20%.

"The studies of the effects of traffic calming based on single sections of road have produced a wide range of results. This is particularly evident in the case of nitrogen oxides, for which some studies have shown decreases of up to 30% while other studies have shown large increases."

"It is not immediately obvious why this is the case, nor why discrepancies have arisen between 'single-road' studies and area-wide studies.

"The single-road studies did show a consistent increase in fuel consumption and emissions of CO and HC due to traffic calming, although the HC data is limited and wide variations in the changes of CO emissions were recorded."

the river down stream of a few dead wildebeest only today are children born into sterilised bottles and whiter than white biological super powders.

The immune system evolved with this and used it to our advantage by using this constant attack to keep its complex chemical links and immune cells running. If you remove this stimulation especially during infancy things go a little haywire.

If a baby were to be raised in an environment of no social interaction or affection its brain cells would fail to make the proper connections and the child would grow to be mentally impaired and incapable of speech. If you deny an adult any emotional or intellectual interaction they decline mentally. It is thought that the same happens with the immune system according to new thinking by various scientists.

Further reading: "Let them eat dirt" by Garry Hamilton, New Scientist 18th July 1998; "Give us this day our daily germs" by G.A.W. Rook and J.L. Stanford, Immunology today March 1998; "Hay fever, hygiene and household size" by D.P. Strachan, British Medical Journal Vol. 299

Driving Skills

Time: a priceless asset

The AA, once an organisation for motorists, has urged its members to stick to the 70mph speed limit to save fuel. ABD Chairman, Brian Gregory, responds.

So a car cruising at 85mph uses 25% more fuel than one doing 70mph, does it? Well, it also takes 21.4% less time to travel any given distance than the slower car. As far as I - and a very large proportion of other motorway users - are concerned, that's a fair trade; a marginal increase in fuel consumption for a significant increase in time saved.

Let's be very clear here: the only asset any of us really have in this life is time. Fossil fuels are either renewable or replaceable (by new technology), but time is irretrievable and irreplaceable.

If you travel a significant distance annually on UK motorways (and many people do), let's say 25% of your working year (8 hours a day, 10 (5-day) working weeks a year), that's 400 hours. At 70mph that's 28000 miles (not unreasonable). At 85mph that takes 329 hours, saving 71 hours - nearly 3 days. That's three extra days to spend with your family doing things you want to do, or (if you're a workaholic), three more working days to generate more business and hence more economic activity.

And please don't try to play the spurious road safety card. The current death rate on UK motorways is 2.24 fatalities per 1000MVkm; one death every 279 million miles. It would be 9964 years before our 400 driving hours a year 70mph driver would travel that distance. For the 85mph driver clocking up the same number of driving hours it would take 'only' 8205 years to be involved in a fatal accident. Old age or illness will have taken its toll long before that! The above takes no account of the fact that DETR/ Highways Agency statistics show that you can reduce your motorway casualty accident risk by 56% by observing a safe (in good weather, minimum 2 seconds) following distance.

Ultimately it comes down to this: which is more important; the freedom to use your precious, irreplaceable time as you want to, or as other, mean-minded people with a control-freak mentality would wish, to artificially restrict it? As L.J.K. Setright once said: 'Time is Life. Speed [responsibly used] Saves it'.

Brian has been too conservative. Many people do 40k per year. And 71 hours is waking hours. At 16 waking hours per day, that's 4.4 days-worth of time per year to use constructively. - Ed.



Contact the Elderly

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Car Drivers required to drive elderly people to tea one Sunday afternoon a month.

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M4 bus lane

... continued from front page

research justifying this to which, of course, he had no answer. Had he checked statistics from abroad concerning the effects of ridiculously low speed limits? Answer no. What was the level of accidents that they were trying to reduce? He didn't know, apart from a half hearted attempt at referring to the discredited 'West London camera experiment', which, of course, is supposed to have virtually eliminated fatalities in this area.

When I asked him what the HA was doing sponsoring this sort of scheme he admitted that the main idea was to 'discourage people from using their cars'. When I suggested that by taking his logic to its conclusion they might as well stick a 50mph limit on all motorways and bring the country to a halt he commented it wouldn't be a bad idea. Such people are determining road strategy!" So we have it - initial insistence that these restrictive measures are safety related, absolute failure to back up this assertion with facts, research or even logical argument, and final admission that what the Highways Agency is really about is "discouraging car use" by making it unpleasant.

Brian Gregory had this to say about the attitude displayed in the above conversation: "How can the public tolerate such ignorance and arrogance from an organisation that is supposed to be providing a public service? This is not the first time one of our members has had a similar experience on the phone to this agency. For the HA to insist publicly that something is justified by safety but privately to admit that it is really about making it unpleasant to use cars constitutes more than a simple lie - it is the cynical, politically motivated use of those killed in road accidents as pawns in an irrational war against the motor car."

"Worse," continued Gregory, "is that this scheme will impact directly on safety. Coaches will use the nearside lane in free flowing traffic, then cut across to the bus lane at high speed as traffic brakes ahead. A major accident is inevitable in this scenario."

There is no logic to this scheme at all - apart from the safety aspects, there is currently no commuter bus service along the M4 for this scheme to benefit, only shuttle services from Heathrow that should be replaced by the new rail link. So, once again, the motorist is being inconvenienced in a totally negative way without any thought being given to alternatives. But we have come to expect that.

ABD activities summary

We hope that you will see from these pages that your subscription is being applied to fight for *your* right to drive your car:-

- * membership of the Parliamentary Advisory Council on Transport Safety
- * membership of the US National Motorists' Association (who successfully lobbied for the removal of the Federal 55/65 mph speed limits)
- * publication and distribution of On The Road, our lively newsletter which is packed with information about what we are doing, what the Government is planning to do, and what our enemies are up to
- * "Act-Write-Now" campaigns, helping you to lobby on critical issues, and to fight mis-information
- * issuing Press Releases
- * talking to journalists, and taking part in Radio and TV broadcasts
- * preparing written responses to Government consultation exercises
- * regular meetings - *to which all members are invited.*
- * car stickers
- * booklets - including our latest "Speed Limits - How they are set and your right to object", which is available free to members
- * high profile participation at Goodwood Festival of Speed and other campaigning

Transport - Beyond the White Paper

Malcolm Heymer reports on a seminar held in London this year.

This seminar, held on 1st July, about the likely direction of transport policy following the publication of the (then) forthcoming White Paper was largely predictable, but a few points of interest emerged.

One of the speakers, Adrian Sinclair (a film maker apparently, not a transport professional) described how residents in an area of Leeds had "reclaimed" their street by unilaterally closing it to traffic, turfing it (yes, as in grass) and holding parties and other social events in it. This was done with the apparent acquiescence of the Council and the Police. When the Police pointed out that it was illegal to close a public highway without going through the statutory processes, the organisers said they were going to do it anyway and the Police backed down!

a blanket 20mph limit in urban areas

In the particular circumstances of the area in question, which has terraced houses with roads front and back, it might be perfectly reasonable to seek closure of the road at the front of the houses to traffic, if that is what the residents want, so that it can be used as a play area, social area, etc. To do so without following the correct processes and being allowed to get away with it is entirely another matter. After all, the Ramblers Association are quick to condemn land-owners who block public footpaths and they insist on exercising their right to walk along them, even if they have no desire to get to the other end. A case of one law for them and another for us.

Perhaps the most useful contribution was from Professor Phil Goodwin, who chairs the transport advisory panel to the Government. He indicated what he thought would be the main provisions of the White Paper and, given his position, it is a fair bet that he is not far wrong!

1. The main theme will be integration between all transport modes and with land use policies.
2. On roads, the predict and provide philosophy will be abandoned and there will be targeted reductions in traffic growth.

3. There will be a commitment to the importance of public transport and a reversal of its long term decline.
4. The principle will be accepted that road space should be re-allocated from cars to give pedestrians, cyclists and public transport priority, where required.
5. There will be no re-nationalisation of rail or re-regulation of bus services, although there will be some changes.
6. There will be no large increase in resources for transport, but there may be some improvement.
7. There will be a presumption in favour of charging road users to cover the costs of environmental damage and the revenue raised will be kept locally.

a blanket 20mph limit on country lanes

He also referred to the debate at the ICE the previous afternoon (see page 9) and repeated the argument he made then that it was relatively easy to prevent traffic growth which had not yet occurred; it was much harder to reduce traffic already existing to earlier levels. The AA and SMMT had argued that reducing traffic growth in a future year to below 1990 levels could only be achieved by draconian curbs on the freedom of people to use cars, given that the 10% reduction demanded by Friends of the Earth etc actually meant a reduction of about 30%, compared with what would otherwise be expected in 2010. Funny how that argument seems remarkably like what we were saying to William Hague before the Third Reading of the Road Traffic Reduction Bill!

Stephen Joseph was entirely predictable in his list of demands for anti-car measures, including 20 mph speed limits to benefit cyclists and pedestrians and lower speeds in rural areas.

a 40mph limit on rural A-roads

The middle part of the day was spent in a series of workshops. There were six themes altogether, but delegates could only attend one in the morning and one in the afternoon. I attended the workshop on traffic restraint in the morning, the main part of which was a presentation on the results of the Leicester road pricing experiment. This pilot scheme concentrated on one radial route into the city only and the participants were all

volunteers, who were given enough money each month to pay to use their cars every day if they wanted. If they chose to use another mode or a different route, the money saved they could keep. This is somewhat different from a real life situation, where people's own money is at stake. A 20% reduction in car use was claimed to have taken place, but the organisers acknowledged the limitations of the experiment and trying to extrapolate it to the city as a whole. They reckon they need a further 3 - 5 years' research before the systems could be introduced full scale.

The afternoon session I attended was about "reclaiming the streets" and covered the measures introduced in the centre of Edinburgh to remove traffic and the prospects for "Home Zones". The latter was the more interesting and the more unacceptable - not only would residential roads in these zones be subjected to 10 mph speed limits, pedestrians and cyclists would have priority over motor traffic and the proponents want legislation which would mean that any driver in collision with a pedestrian or cyclist would be deemed guilty unless he could prove his innocence. In other words, the existing de facto position would be enshrined in law! It was also stated that the cost of implementing a Home Zone in a single street would average £30,000 and the Dutch, who have about 6,500 of them, are now looking at British traffic calming methods because they are finding their own designs too expensive!

a reduction in the motorway limit

The presenter of the Home Zones session, Tim Gill, is from the Children's Play Council, a member of the Slower Speeds Initiative. He believes that the White Paper will announce a review of national speed limits and it is obvious which way he wants that to go. Remember that the SSI wants a blanket 20 mph limit in urban areas, a blanket 20 mph limit on country lanes, a 40 mph limit on rural A-roads and a reduction (unspecified) in the motorway limit.

The seminar was rounded off by the closing remarks of Stephen Joseph, who called on the motor manufacturers to diversify if they want to survive. He believed that the arguments of the AA and the motor industry would soon be consigned to the dustbin of history and he was warmly applauded. **We have got a lot of hard work ahead of us.**

Pro-Motor News

Welcome to new members

A very warm welcome to new members, and congratulations on joining the UK's leading motorists' lobby group! Unlike other motoring organisations, the ABD has never been afraid to say what the others won't say.

The ABD: Standing the test of time

The ABD was originally founded in 1992 by a small group of motorists who were becoming deeply concerned about the emergence of a new anti-car attitude by the Government at that time. Our membership has grown steadily since then, and so has the scale of our task. The anti-car movement is now well and truly connected to the establishment, and we should be under no illusions that we face anything other than a long and hard fight to protect our freedoms. The ABD has now stood the test of time, and will fight for our rights for as long as it takes. *We are here for the long haul.*

The ABD: representing outstanding value for your money

Joining the ABD costs just £15, or £12 if you pay by Standing Order. That is less than the price of half a tank of petrol per year.

We are entirely funded by members subscriptions and donations. If it wasn't for *your* generosity the ABD could not exist. Fighting a campaign is very expensive, from the cost of printing and postage, to membership fees for various organisations, to the cost of attending conferences on transport which provide vital information about what is really going on, important contact with people who are on our side (even though they can't always admit it publicly), and an all-important public profile.

We are very fortunate in that many members give generous amounts of time and expertise in fields ranging from computer technology to stuffing envelopes without charge. Many active members do not reclaim expenses on a range of costs that they incur



The ABD stand at the Goodwood Festival of Speed 1998, before the crowds (and the rain) descended.

on the ABD's behalf - but we still need more funds if we are to fight effectively.

Following publication of the White Paper on Transport, the need for a coherent voice for Britain's drivers is greater than ever. Your support is vital! Above all, your subscription buys you a voice - because, believe us, *as far as the authorities are concerned you have no voice on your own.*

The ABD needs You!

The ABD is run entirely by volunteers, almost all of whom have to fit ABD activities around full time jobs, or running their businesses. Not for us the full time sinecures at Local Authority Environment departments where the next blow to your freedom can be planned on a generous salary, or the dole cheques that the DSS hands out to the parasites who try to obstruct the construction of the nation's vital infrastructure.

With a steadily rising membership, and with daily attacks on our freedom and wallets to be defended, the work involved is increasing fast. Whatever skills, facilities, professional knowledge - or simply enthusiasm - that you can contribute, the ABD will be more effective as a result.

If you can offer to help in any way, please contact the ABD. See page 2 for addresses and other contact details

Goodwood winner

At the 1998 Goodwood Festival of Speed, the ABD offered a prize as an incentive to join at the show. The prize, kindly donated by John Lyon of the High Performance Course, is a half-day assessment drive with HPC. The winner is Mr. P.R. Carpenter of Croydon, Surrey to whom we extend congratulations.

The Last Laugh

ZIL for Hull plan denied

His Worship the Royal Highness the Deputy Prime Minister the Minister for the Environment Transport and the Regions the Right Honourable MP for Kingston upon Hull (John Prescott) has denied rumours that the Russian car manufacturer ZIL is to be relocated to his constituency. ZIL has suffered severely since the fall of Communism in Russia, and is in financial difficulty.

According to rumours heard in Whitehall the plan was that the new plant would build 300 of the lengthy bullet proof limousines every year to supply him, other Ministers and senior officials with the vehicles. These vehicles, together with the usual fleet of

motorcycle outriders, would be permitted to use Bus Lanes and thus speed Very Important People past the huddled masses in their Ford Escorts. The plan, as described in the original draft papers would have included a Bus Lane all the way up the M1 motorway, which was described as being "a measure to reduce traffic and give priority to public transport".

The plant would have created 500 jobs under Labour's New Deal in an unemployment blackspot.

However, a spokesman said that the plan was simply untrue and that the alleged paper did not exist. Following the takeover of Jaguar by Ford, Bentley by Volkswagen and of Rolls-Royce by BMW, there is now no

British owned manufacturer of limousines, and it had been thought the Government were looking for an alternative source of cars that "were in keeping with their status".

Bananas

The Daily Mirror reported recently that whilst we have all heard of NIMBYs (Not In My Back Yard protestors), there is also a more virulent campaigner called the NOTE (Not Over There Either).

The most extreme environmentalists of the lot are BANANAs. We knew that anyway, but it stands for Build Absolutely Nothing Anywhere Near Anybody.