

TRL report: The truth about Speed and Accidents

The Department of the Environment, Transport and the Regions (DETR) regularly bombards us with "Speed Kills" propaganda, claiming that one-third of accidents are caused by excessive speed. Yet the self same DETR commissioned a report from the Transport Research Laboratory (TRL) in 1998 to devise a new system for recording contributory factors in road accidents (TRL Report 323). Its little known findings refute that claim convincingly!

Excessive speed a definite factor in only 4.3% of accidents.

The researchers looked at the way in which police forces recorded the contributory causes of accidents using the old report forms and found significant inconsistencies across the country (for example, attribution of excessive speed as a cause varied between 5% and 19% in two similar rural police areas). They then devised a new system of categorising accident causes and piloted the system with eight police forces.

Accidents were split into fifteen "precipitating factors" to evaluate what actually happened, then 54 different "causation factors" were offered up for the investigating officer to attempt to establish why the accident had occurred. Up to four causes could be entered on the form, and each could be identified as a definite, probable or possible cause of the accident.

The results are fascinating. In almost 3,000 accidents studied, excessive speed accounted for only 7.3% of the 6,000 causal factors, well behind observation and judgement related causes.

Even more tellingly, only 2,100 "definite" factors were identified, less than one per accident, showing the difficulty of establishing the cause of many accidents.

Excessive speed was only identified as a "definite" causal factor 126 times out of 2897 accidents - 4.3% of the total. So **"Kill Your Speed" ignores the causes of 96% of accidents!**

A very large number of the accidents where speed was identified as the primary cause involved loss of control - inappropriate speed - which is very different from the typical "enforcement" scenario resulting in prosecution.

As might be expected, the proportion of accidents in which speed was found to be a contributory factor varied considerably with the type of accident, but the highest recorded figure was 19%, in the case of fatal and serious accidents in built up areas involving a single vehicle. Even this is a long way below the one-third claim that is used to justify the draconian enforcement levels we are now facing.

Other fascinating results from the study concern pedestrian accidents: 84% of fatal and serious and 75% of slight pedestrian accidents were the fault of the pedestrian. Just 12% and 13% respectively were the fault of the driver for "failing to avoid the pedestrian", so even those percentages may

not necessarily be due to speed but to inattention or failure to see the pedestrian.

Brown's Budget hits drivers as predicted

And packs nasty surprises for everyone in the small print

Gordon Brown's Budget has been presented as a "budget for the family" and a "fair" budget, but closer examination by the ABD reveals it as neither.

Even Mr Brown's one concession to the motorist - the £55 cut in the tax disc for "small" cars - contains a cruel irony. The Mini, for many the definitive British small car, is not eligible for the reduction because its engine is too large. If the Mini is not a small car, what is, Mr Brown?

ABD Chairman, Brian Gregory comments "Gordon Brown has been very clever at presenting a rip off as a giveaway. But dig deeper and the facts become clear."

A budget for the low paid, or a tax bombshell?

The tax cuts for the lower paid, praised by the naive, are worth little when another huge step has been taken towards pricing mobility out of the reach of all but the wealthy.

This budget will force drivers to hand over a staggering total of £1,400 each in tax.

"These very real tax increases mean serious restrictions on mobility and freedom for some of the most vulnerable in society", says Mark McArthur-Christie, the ABD's Roads and Traffic Spokesman. "These taxes hit the people who struggle hard to afford to run their cars - the poor, pensioners, people in rural areas and families. But we all suffer. These tax hikes push up transport and delivery costs, and make our businesses less competitive". (Continued on page 3)

Issue 25, April 1999

£2.00

Inside this issue

Planning to eliminate your car	2
The Budget	3
"Small car" tax scam	3
Gatso Watch	4
Your letters	4
Campaigning - Milton Keynes	5
Pro-Motor News	6
Three Cheers	6
The Last Laugh	6

Trains full after modest growth in passengers

Proof (if any were needed) that Prescott's White Paper has not been thought through at even the most basic level comes from the latest crisis afflicting our long suffering railways. Despite thirty years of under investment and extortionate fares (double the international average), rail traffic grew by a staggering 8% last year, contrasting with road traffic which did not grow at all.

So, can this trend continue in future years? Well, no. Even with this modest growth, the rail companies are squealing that they cannot cope and that the system is falling apart. They admit that British Rail dealt with this kind of problem simply by putting prices up.

An ABD member's experiences confirm this - four friends tried to buy a weekend ticket to Sheffield from Birmingham recently and were told there were no spaces available, whatever time they wanted to travel. They ended up hiring a car, which worked out cheaper and was much more convenient! Now, of course, fares regulation has meant that the pricing weapon has been blunted.

It is obvious from this debacle that the rail network will be completely incapable of handling the number of passengers the government would like to see displaced from their cars by the outrageous proposals to charge drivers entering cities, as well as obstructing their journeys by "removing road space", threatening them with speed cameras and preventing them from parking at any reasonable cost at their destination.

So what plans are presented in the White Paper for huge investment of motoring taxes in rail infrastructure to solve this looming transport catastrophe? Almost nothing that wasn't already on the table.

And even if there were to be a huge investment in rail infrastructure, this would be useless for the majority of drivers, who, thanks to the car, no longer need to work in city centres and who live on housing estates built many miles from the nearest station where, of course, parking has been made as difficult and expensive as possible to discourage people from actually using the train. Take your bike on the train? Forget it!

It is becoming clearer all the time that this so called integrated transport policy is really just a soak the motorist policy dressed up in politically correct language. They know there is no real alternative to the car, so they are using groundless air quality and climate change scares, together with congestion that they themselves have largely created, as an excuse to raise as much money as possible.

Oxon roads dangerous

Three people were killed on Oxfordshire rural roads during the weekend of 27th February. Council spokesman Richard Dix pointed out in several radio interviews that many rural roads in the county fail to meet basic safety standards and that there is no money to repair them.

Why is there no money? Where has it all gone? - Ed.

Planning to eliminate your car

The Government has published one of the most hostile policy documents in years in the shape of the White Paper on the proposed "Integrated Transport Policy".

The Government's main concern is that drivers - that is most of the population - will get wind of what they are up to, so they are using the worst kinds of deceit and dirty dealing to bring about the changes they want.

Regular readers of On The Road will know that we have from time to time covered stories about the growing abuse of the planning system by local and national Government to achieve social ends.

But the Government knows that most drivers do not read about changes in the rules governing the granting of planning permission for new buildings and other developments, so they have quietly been changing the rules.

Until the early 1990s, the planning system existed broadly to ensure that the Green Belts were given a reasonable degree of protection, the National Parks were preserved, and valuable old buildings and areas of character were protected. The idea was that towns should develop in a planned and sensible way, provision made for landscaping, and adequate car parking provided.

Then suddenly everything started to change. First, the then Conservative Minister for the Environment, John Gummer, stopped

granting permission for new out of town developments. Next it was the turn of business parks that were to be forced to move into crowded town centres. Then leisure facilities.

There was a change of Government in 1997, but you may as well not have bothered to vote. The policy has continued as before, only worse. Just before the election we published an article predicting that if the Conservatives won, the Environment and Transport Departments would be merged into one. The Conservatives lost and Labour won, but the takeover by the Environment people of our transport policy went ahead anyway. It is therefore no wonder that there now isn't a transport policy at all.

Despite taking well in excess of £30 billion out of drivers pockets - making us the most highly taxed motorists in Europe - only a tiny £6 billion is being spent on transport of any description. Ever more may be taken in tax, but not a single extra pound is going to build roads or even to improve our appalling public transport system. Small wonder then, that even the AA has accused the Government of stealing.

Revised parking standards call for 80% reduction in parking provision

But, far, far worse is to come. The Government's latest publication is called "Transport Standards in the South East". It will affect every one of us. It means that, whereas a few short years ago, the planners would have insisted that a developer should provide adequate parking spaces on any new development, they will now insist that as little as possible will be provided.

Only ONE FIFTH of the existing parking provision will be allowed on new developments. This is not just work space parking, this relates to all new developments. So a new Sainsbury's that would now get 300 car parking spaces will only be allowed to build 60. The maximum allowed anywhere will be 20 car spaces per 10,000 sq feet. An office block which would now be built with 50 spaces will get a maximum of ten.

Any new development that attracts a large number of people will only be allowed in town centres. These will include retail, leisure, and industrial. No new large hotels are to be allowed anywhere in suburbs or rural areas - only in town centres.

The document dismisses public demand for more parking, on the basis that "car use and car dependency may be widespread, but that does not convert them to the status of need". The Parking Standards document is not intended to be for consultation, and what is more the Government has signalled that it wants the parking restrictions imposed in all local authority areas within a year, nationwide.

Do not be fooled just because you see new developments going up which offer more generous parking. They will be using planning consents that may be five years old or more.

The changes are not being accompanied by any extra investment in public transport. The British Property Federation said that few

The Association of British Drivers

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

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

companies were willing to accept restrictions on space available for their staff, so local economies are likely to suffer damage.

Urban cramming compulsory

It goes further. A century after leading social reformers started the trend towards "Garden Cities" - to get the population out of huddled, crowded, treeless urban jungles into green, clean suburbs, the policy is being reversed. Even residential development is to be pushed into town centres. And only high density housing will be allowed. According to John Prescott "millions of people living in suburbs crave the excitement and convenience of cities". If this is the case, why the need for planning guidance forcing developers to build in city centres?

The average modern housing estate will seem green and spacious compared with the new developments the Government is going to insist upon. They will be urban cramming at its absolute worst. Whereas local authorities used to insist on proper parking provision, some of the new housing will be "car free". Forget leaving your car at home - there won't be anywhere to keep it. The architects of the new social control would rather you didn't have one at all. You will be a lot easier to control and manipulate then.

One local authority has already stipulated that an estate of new houses should be built without driveways or garages, and parking provision is to be provided in small courtyards away from the homes. The idea is that using your car should be inconvenient. The effect will be that the cars will be vulnerable to that scourge of late Twentieth Century life, car thieves and vandals. Women and the elderly will not like going to park or collect their cars during the hours of darkness, and will thus become prisoners in their houses.

This policy dates from 1984 when the then Conservative administration presided over the publication of a Royal Commission Report on Transport and the Environment. It recommended these policies, and we have been moving that way ever since. The *stated* aims of that document are not limited to traffic reduction or anything so mundane. The document dismissed the entire British car industry - employing an estimated 2.3 million people - in two paragraphs, but spent a whole chapter about the changes it wanted to see in society; a return to "local communities" which would not have the mobility that we enjoy. Under the authors' vision people will not be able to travel around much at all - not even by public transport. It is easy to reject this as not to be taken seriously - just as the Germans once viewed a little known and little read book called "Mein Kampf" by one Adolf Hitler.

The other conclusions one comes to are that (a) it doesn't matter whether you bother to vote at all, or for whom, and (b) that it is not the puppets called Ministers who call the shots: in true "Yes, Minister" style, it is the senior Civil Servants who run the show. A

life at boarding school, college life at Oxford or Cambridge followed by the Ivory Towers of Whitehall, leave these people singularly unable to comprehend what real life is like. They commute by train and have never done a real job in their lives, so it should not surprise us that they have no more comprehension of why the rest of us might possibly want or need a car than they have as to why this country has sunk so far economically during the 20th century.

Planning laws cut growth by 1.5%

According to management consultants, McKinsey, UK growth could be raised by 1.5% per annum if planning restrictions were relaxed, thus making it easier for companies to adopt world-class business practices.

Their report, published late last year and entitled "Driving Productivity and Growth in the UK Economy" says that the UK could be averaging 3.5% growth pa instead of a meagre 2%. This would allow the UK to achieve US levels of gross domestic product - and thus ultimately living standards - within 10 years. Government tax revenues would rise by £45 billion, average disposable income would rise by £2,500, and there would be a large number of extra jobs created.

But the report claims that tight planning regulations are preventing UK businesses from expanding.

The Budget

A budget for the low paid, or a tax bombshell?

(Continued from front page)

McArthur-Christie continues: "Drivers are already paying far too much tax - but this is just the start of the government's tax plans for drivers. Soon we'll be charged for driving in towns, in the country, on motorways and even for parking at the office. Car taxes should be ring-fenced and spent on improving the UK's transport infrastructure - not used as a stick to drive motorists out of their cars and onto an inadequate public transport system. The government now treats drivers' wallets as public property and cars as piggy banks on wheels. Gordon Brown's new taxes are not pro-environment or pro-public transport, they are simply anti-car."

A carbontax-whetheryouemititornot

But the unfairness of the budget doesn't end there. From 2000 cars will be taxed according to their carbon emissions. Someone who does 1500 miles a year in an elderly Range Rover will emit less carbon than another driver doing 30,000 miles a year in a Ford Fiesta. But the former will be taxed much more heavily under these proposals.

A budget for the family?

It gets even worse when we examine Brown's claim to support the family. He is taking away the married man's allowance and replacing it with a children's tax credit, which

sounds reasonable for families - until you realise that as soon as the combined income rises over £32,335 then this tax credit begins to erode. What has this got to do with motoring? Simply that a £20,000 company car, even if it is a totally necessary business tool, will now incur a £3000 taxable benefit, rising to at least £5000 when the mileage based reduction is finally abolished. This means a working family only has to earn £28,335 before the child tax credit begins to erode.

Stamp Duty - another tax on mobility

The Government's decision to further raise stamp duty on house purchases is yet another tax on mobility. On a £300,000 house (not unusual in many places), that means £7500 in stamp duty. Stamp duty at this level is a huge disincentive to move house, maybe closer to one's place of work.

This mobility tax just shows how the Government really doesn't care about reducing commuting distances and congestion. It just wants an excuse to raise revenue.

"Small car" tax scam

1100cc cutoff chosen deliberately and cynically to maximise revenue

Research by the Association of British Drivers shows that Gordon Brown's £55 road tax reduction for "small, fuel efficient cars" is simply a public relations exercise which will benefit very few owners whilst leaving many more drivers of small, fuel efficient cars frustrated, caught a few c.c.s above the cutoff point. Figures uncovered by the ABD show that:

- There were 98,702 cars registered in 1998 with engine capacities below 1000cc, which qualify for the £55 reduction. This is only 4.39 percent of the total 2.2 million car market.
- Only *two* cars, both old model VW Polos, were registered which had engines between 1000 and 1100 cc, so Mr Brown is giving nothing away by setting the threshold at 1100cc rather than an apparently much meaner 1000cc.
- In stark contrast, a total of 113,954 cars - 5.1 percent of the market - hit the streets with engines *over* 1100cc but *below* 1150cc.

This cynical trick means that there are more new car owners missing out on the reduction by less than 50cc than there are benefitting from a lower road tax which is supposed to reward small car owners. These unlucky new car owners are hardly driving gas guzzlers, either. Cars which fall victim include:

- The diminutive Fiat Seicento and Punto at 1108cc
- Rover's 211 and 111 models, as well as all Metros sold since 1990. Their sin? An 1120cc engine!
- Most Citroen Saxo and Peugeot 106 models, which come in at a positively decadent 1124ccs.

The Renault Clio, at 1149cc also misses out, showing the truth in its new advertising slogan. Size does indeed matter.

These are all modern, fuel efficient and clean cars, offering the minimum acceptable standards for family motoring. It is scandalous that they fail to qualify for the new tax break.

"The new tax banding sets a dangerous precedent," states Mark McArthur-Christie, ABD Roads and Traffic Spokesman. "It means the government can hike taxes year on year for the 95% of drivers who fall outside this new tax net - yet who drive clean, modern vehicles. Modern cars are 99% clean, yet drivers are forced to pay more and more tax each year, just to stay on the road."

542% tax on fuel

The Budget includes new rates of fuel duty as follows:

Fuel type	Duty, p/l
Unleaded	47.21
Leaded	52.88
Diesel	50.21

This means that for a litre of unleaded at 67.9p, 10.11p is VAT, 47.21 is fuel duty, the actual cost of fuel is 10.58p. So the total of taxes is 57.32p; an effective tax rate of 542%.

Never can the phrase "legalised theft" have been a more accurate description of a tax. A tax on working, a tax on freedom, a tax on what is a basic necessity of life for the great majority of households.

Scandal of subsidy for gross polluters

At the same time as ripping off the drivers of clean, fuel-efficient cars, the Chancellor dished out massive subsidies to the operators of some of the worst-polluting vehicles on the road - the buses. For every litre of Diesel they use, the government pays them 35.07p.

Each bus emits more PM10 pollution than 128 cars yet not only do you have to suffer the congestion caused by buses, not only do you suffer your ventilation system filled with their carcinogenic particulate smoke, you have to subsidise them!

International News

Montana submits to PC

Montana's sensible law which required motorists to drive in a "reasonable and prudent manner" has been changed. The new law sets the limit on interstates at 75mph both day and night. The limit on two-lane roads will be 70mph in the daytime and 65mph at night. Trucks will be restricted to 65mph and 60mph at night on two-lane roads. Speeds on Highway 93 through mountainous western Montana will be limited to 65mph both day and night. The Montana Supreme Court ruled in December 1998 that the law was too vague and thus unconstitutional.

Apparently, a motorist brought the original case after he was charged with breaking the 'reasonable and prudent' speed law by driving at around 120mph. It was the vagueness that was (officially) the problem. Obviously the krakokrats have been panting to introduce a limit ever since the end of the 65mph national limit, but they had to resort to this legalistic tactic because Montana drivers steadfastly refused to start having more accidents just because the speed limit was abolished.

Road progress?

While road building and maintenance is a last resort in Britain, even the teetering economy of the former Soviet Union sees the vital necessity of such expenditure. Reported in *Plastics and Rubber Weekly* on 26/02/99, it seems that a 60km length of the main motorway link between Moscow and Western Europe has been resurfaced with a granulated styrene-butadiene-styrene elastomer reinforced bitumen capable of withstanding the extremely wide temperature range spanning the region's Summer and Winter conditions. What are the chances of such far-sighted investments under the car-hating government of modern-day Britain?

I'll tell you: absolutely none. A colleague who is in discussions with the local Environment Agency recently told me that the EA officials had admitted, off the record, that road projects whose objective is to improve traffic flow are automatically placed at the bottom of the priority list. Top of the list come those which prevent (or - like speed camera installations - can be presented as preventing) fatalities and casualties. Next come "environmental" projects which deliberately slow or obstruct traffic.

So as the former Soviet Union struggles to throw off the shackles of one form of totalitarianism, the government of the United Kingdom is seeking to impose another, eco-totalitarianism, on its population.

Gatso Watch

A68 Scotland

This road is becoming littered with Gatsos. Those marked * were erected in February 1999. There is some advance warning - all are protected by around 50m or more of Armco.

Northbound:

NT 68915 08496 at Huntford;
NT 67866 13328 at Camptown;
NT 61094 28027 * before layby on right;
NT 59507 29735 * at end of layby on left;
NT 57186 37963 * 300m before Earlston;
NT 56428 41602 250m after layby on right;
NT 53839 46800 * 400m before Lauder, hidden behind a road sign;
NT 46961 58508 on straight on Soutra Hill, 200m before dip;

NT 45106 59568 * at Soutra Farm, 200m before B6368 junction on right;

NT 35585 66873 * at Fordel Mains, 100m after Esso station on right.

Southbound:

NT 38075 66076 at A6093 junction left (Haddington);

NT 41560 62085 250m after layby on left, hidden behind a road sign;

NT 51186 52002 * opposite farm;

NT 52512 48181 * Lauder, 200m after 30mph NT 58112 31878 on Newtown St Boswells bypass;

NT 62338 26598 * opposite entrance to Lilliardsleaf Caravan Park;

NT 65619 21840 * 100m after entrance to Jedforest Rugby Club, hidden in trees;

NT 66578 14816 * 200m after Cafe, hidden in trees.

M4 bus lane

The Highways Agency have started work on their M4 motorway bus lane scheme by instigating a 50mph limit from J3 eastbound to the elevated section. This is indicated by temporary signs at present. Our correspondent counted *three* new Gatso cameras the evening of 26th February complete with road markings, although none were live at that time. They soon will be however as there is very little work activity to justify any reduction which provides a brilliant opportunity for raising cash from the unsuspecting motorist.

The ultimate plan is to install cameras on overhead gantries which I guess will enable them to limit the car lanes to 50mph whilst allowing buses and taxis to proceed at 60.

Police camera maps

According to *Top Gear* magazine, Devon & Cornwall Police and Plymouth City Council have published a map showing where the city's speed cameras are!

Allegedly this is to counter claims from motoring organisations that cameras are used to raise revenue.

Police forces elsewhere are said to be considering doing the same.

Letters



Rally?

Sir - Why don't we take a leaf out of the lorry drivers' book and have a mass protest rally?

I'll volunteer to run over Prescott if he appears in the middle of the road.

RD French

Sir - I have just found your web site, and I agree with everything I've read so far. If anyone wants to organise a drive to Whitehall or Westminster like the farmers' march, I'll be first in the queue.

This idea has been mentioned in a couple of letters to car magazines, but I'm serious.

There are enough interested car drivers out there (illustrated by the number of car magazines and, increasingly, TV programmes) to make this happen.

The government seems to think it can do what it likes regardless of the truth, plain logic, or what the population wants or thinks. I for one am fed up with this, and I think it's time to do something.

I am a member of the Institute of Advanced Motorists, and as such recognise the need for safety in driving, but this and constant mis-information and propaganda from those in power are totally separate things.

I drive a B-reg Austin Maestro (not through choice, I have to stress - I'm an impoverished student!), so if I enjoy driving that, I mean business!

Something needs to be done, I'm sure Top Gear, Evo, Car, Autocar, to name just a few, would help with publicity and organisation.

Please, do something! I'm only 18, I don't want to be living in a country that stigmatises car use by the time I'm able to afford a decent car!

Russell Bennett

What do other members think about taking part in a rally? - Ed.

Truckers reflect wider anger

Sir - Demonstrations by road haulage firms in London reflect a much wider anger in society. All road users are suffering as a result of policies which lead to 85p in every £1 spent on fuel going straight to government coffers. The economic catastrophe awaiting this country is real, as the impact extends way beyond HGVs since costs are added to all goods transported by road. What makes matters far worse is that the claimed environmental benefits of these painful policies are illusory; any government serious about reducing carbon dioxide levels would not put transport at the top of the list - buildings emit twice as much.

Moreover there is mounting evidence to show that the minuscule 0.6% of global emissions due to transport isn't to blame for any climate change. Independent scientists at UK universities have established that varying solar radiation and particle fluxes are driving climate change, findings ignored by politicians and the environmental lobby. The reasons are clear - ministers find it difficult to resist spending other people's money, while environmentalists are increasingly motivated by social re-engineering.

Bernard Abrams

New danger

Sir - The Gatso-festooned A68 in Scotland (Carter Bar - Jedburgh - Dalkeith) became more dangerous today with the switch-on of the Gatso camera sites. Only around half of the 18 (soon-to-be 20) camera locations have anything in the box, the remainder have at least an oscillator and flash, with only one (and never more than two) with an active

camera. You take your chance, or you pay your money

As an aside, and whilst overheard pub conversations are never usually verifiable for factual content, another "accident" where "speed" will be determined to have been a major causative factor has happened. The "fact" that the prime reason for the crash (as reported by the individual involved) was that he stood on the brakes when he saw the Gatso, lost control and somersaulted his car into a field, will probably not appear on the police report.

Brian Hunter

Rail death rate worse than roads'

Sir - Having read Keith Walker's letter in OTR (January), I had a look at the "rail deaths" website myself.

I read it as 48 deaths on the railways *plus* 14 on level crossings and 265 trespassers/suicides, making a total of 327 deaths on the railways.

Given that the railways only managed 38 billion passenger kilometers in 1996 as opposed to 620 billion on the roads, this would require 5335 road deaths for the roads to be as dangerous as the railways. The actual number of road deaths was around 3600.

Nigel Humpaway

Sir - We read that Lord Whitty is determined that his new targets for the reduction in deaths and serious injuries on the road will be "at least as challenging" as those set in 1987.

Why single out road deaths? Why not have targets for the reduction in deaths and serious injuries in the home, from suicide, from lung cancer etc etc?

Roger Holmes

Campaigning

Milton Keynes

ABD member, Peter Davies had the following article published in a local paper to counter the proposals of the MK Council.

If you believe the Labour Government's Integrated Transport White Paper and our Council's Sustainable Integrated Transport Strategy, the motor car is responsible for the complete despoiling of the planet over the last 100 years. And they would have us believe that traffic over the next few years is going to grow to the point where the entire country is gridlocked. Therefore, get on the bus, the train, your bike, walk, but don't use your car. To enforce their views we have a whole host of "sticks" being proposed to go with the "carrot" which means that those in authority are hell-bent on forcing us out of our cars. Let us debunk a few myths:

1. "The motor car is entirely responsible for global warming." *Wrong.* If you believe the so-called "Global Warming Theory", you will know that the principal "Global Warming Gas" is Carbon dioxide. The stuff that comes out of all of our noses as

we breathe out. 95% of all Carbon Dioxide emissions come from precisely that. Of the other 5%, the man-made sources, less than 20% (that is less than 1% of the total) comes from the petrol engine. And what is the most natural way of dealing with Carbon Dioxide? Let nature take its course. Stop tearing up our countryside. A few years ago, two Danish Climatologists proved that over 85% of the variations in the Earth's average temperature since the late 15th century are due to natural variations in the Solar Cycle. But this study has been suppressed. Why?

2. "Our roads are heading for gridlock in a few years time." *Wrong.* A favourite of the Transport and Highways Committee Chairman. He points to one Saturday just before Christmas - when everybody is trying to get into the City Centre and we know just how inadequate the parking is there anyway. In order to achieve the level of traffic growth the pundits are talking about it would be necessary for every man, woman and child from the ages of 8 upwards to drive 2 cars simultaneously for approximately 36 hours each day. The calculations the statisticians use are fundamentally flawed.
3. "Public Transport is much more environmentally friendly." *Wrong.* A diesel-engined bus emits 39 times more poisonous Nitrous Oxide gases and 128 times more carcinogenic PM10 particulates than the average petrol engined motor car. Back in 1992, SAAB proved that a modern, catalyst equipped motor car that is well maintained actually cleans up the air as it drives along. Again, the results of this study are not widely known.
4. "Speed Kills." *Wrong.* It is the inappropriate use of speed that kills. Rather than a hectoring, nannying approach of imposing blanket speed limits that are inappropriate for the type of road they are on, more needs to be done to improve driver education and training. That would be money better spent than on criminalising the motorist.
5. "We must not build any more roads because traffic volumes will just increase to fill these new roads up as well." *Wrong.* Where exactly do all these extra cars come from? Out of thin air? Drivers will choose the quickest, most convenient route and if that means switching their journey onto a new by-pass, then that is what they will do. "Extra" traffic does not magically appear just because there is a new road somewhere any more than a couple will decide to have a baby just because the Council has widened a pavement!

Cllr O'Sullivan and his 50mph grid road speed limits are just the start of measures even more draconian than ever before to make life so intolerable for motorists that we won't want to drive our cars. With that will come the ending of our freedom, meaning state control

of when, where and how we travel. This is the policy of totalitarian socialism, not of a democracy. Not since the Red Flag Act was repealed in 1896 has there been such an attack on the private motorist and I for one am not just going to sit back and let it happen! Let the silent majority speak!

MK Survey

Peter also conducted a survey; the questions and responses were as follows:

1. Do you think that the current transport system in MK works well? (So far, majority NO)
2. Do you think that the current system of keeping the grid roads for cars, motorcycles, buses and lorries and having the separate Redway system for pedestrians, cyclists and horses is sensible? (So far, majority YES)
3. Would you be happy to see more of your Council Tax spent on improving lighting and security features on the Redways? (So far, overwhelming majority YES)
4. When MK was built, it was designed around the car. Do you believe that the current state of public transport encourages people to leave their cars at home? (So far, overwhelming majority NO)
5. One of the suggestions when MK was being planned was for a system such as a monorail or tramway around the city. Do you believe that MK would benefit from having such a system today? (So far, overwhelming majority YES)
6. Would you be willing to see car parking charges in the City Centre increased in order to pay for more parking space to be provided? (So far, overwhelming majority NO).

Peter Davies is an adviser on Transport Issues to the Milton Keynes Conservatives. He has previously worked as a journalist for a motoring magazine and currently travels over 30,000 miles a year by car.

Pro-Motor News

In-touch On-line

Are you on the internet? The ABD operates an internet mailing list. By posting to a single address your message is relayed to all the other members on the list.

The mailing list enables members to get the latest facts and figures to use in any campaigning, and provides a forum to seek advice and pass on any useful information you acquire. You'll also receive a copy of ABD press releases as they go out.

If you're not able to attend the meetings, it's an excellent way of getting in touch with other members around the country. For those who would like to get more actively involved with the ABD, it is invaluable.

You can suspend the receipt of mail if you are away, and can unsubscribe at any time. On average, you should expect to receive about ten messages per day.

In addition to the main list, a secondary mailing list provides a forum for general non-urgent discussion of driving issues.

If you would like to join the list, please send an e-mail quoting your full name and ABD membership number (as shown on your membership card) to
abdml-owner@onelist.com

Coy's Historic Festival, Silverstone

Have you got an interesting car that the ABD can borrow for display? We are hoping to attend this year's Coy's Historic Festival (Silverstone July 30 - August 1) and the NEC classic car show (November 6 & 7). If we go as a club we are allowed to have a stand free of charge, but we must have some cars on display. If you've got anything classic, or modern but interesting, please contact Richard Dredge, tel: 01584 881212, e-mail: richardredge@clara.net

The ABD needs You!

Have you got time to spare, that you could give to the ABD? We need Regional Representatives to act as local contacts and campaign leaders for ABD members in their areas. Your name, locality and telephone number (and or email address) will be published in "On The Road" under a new Regional Groups Section. Members in your area will be encouraged to contact you to form local campaign groups. All paid up members are issued with and are identified by valid membership cards. Only holders of these are allowed to act on the ABD's behalf. If you are interested please write to the membership secretary - details on page 2.

Web sites

The **blue poles** of the Trafficmaster system continue to raise interest among our web site visitors. Here is a site dedicated to the "Big Brother" aspects of technology:

<http://www.spy.org.uk/trafficmaster.htm>

For recent international **accident rates** see:

<http://www.bast.de/irtad/ENGLISH/WE2.html>

For a press release by Sussex Police about their new **speed trap vans**, see:

<http://www.sussex.police.uk/news/story3.html>

In fact you can see all the UK police sites at their index at:

<http://www.police.uk>

Three Cheers

No backer for Road Traffic Reduction Targets Bill.

Remember last year the greens got their dreadful Road Traffic Reduction Bill through Parliament despite determined and effective ABD opposition? (Part of our press release was read out in the Commons by the then

Tory transport spokesman Chris Chope). The price of Government support, however, was the removal of any actual number for percentage traffic reduction. After this, the bill, if not a toothless tiger, was one very much in need of a visit to the dentist. The green response? A new bill to reintroduce this target! This shows what a waste of time it is negotiating with these people. However, following the ballot for private members' bills, no backer could be found for this new traffic reduction bill. So there are still some MPs with their heads screwed on, after all.

RAC supportive on speed

The RAC's Edmund King has been doing some bedtime reading - of ABD literature. He obviously liked what he saw, because he was quoted recently in Autocar regurgitating our line on speed with commendable accuracy. The Government's £3.4 million Speed Kills campaign was based on "flawed logic", said the RAC, and the emphasis should be on *inappropriate* speed in relation to the conditions. The motorway limit should be raised to 80mph and 20mph limits should operate outside schools, triggered by flashing lights during peak hours only, and not be introduced in all urban areas. Well done, Mr King, you are almost there! Take the next step and realise that inappropriate speed is usually a result of poor observation and hazard perception and you will be ready to strike a real blow for the motorist, for genuine road safety and against the miserable anti car lobby.

AA fuel tax campaign

Following research which showed that most people were simply unaware of the (then) 400% tax levels on motor fuels, the AA have mounted a leaflet campaign in conjunction with the Petrol Retailers Association. Small leaflets were dispensed at petrol stations carrying the message that for every £10 spent, £8 is tax. The AA is to be congratulated on this simple but effective campaign.

"No charges" - Archer

Lord Archer has promised not to use Government legislation to introduce congestion charges in London. "Drivers have already paid for their roads many times over," he said.

The Last Laugh

The London Evening Standard for 5th March contained a quote from a cyclist which originally appeared in "London Cyclist":

Cyclist: "I loathe pedestrians; I loathe them with every fibre of my being, every follicle I can command, every cell at my disposal."

It's amazing what you can get away with when you're politically correct.