

# On The Road

The journal of the Association of British Drivers

Issue 36 — June 2000

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## That'll do nicely

The Government made a £30 billion profit from road users last year, according to the British Road Federation. The Government raised £35 billion in road user taxation in 1999.

But only £5 billion was spent on the network itself and the £30 billion profit was up £4 billion on the previous year.

The Government is 'encouraging' motorists to use other forms of transport, but the report said 94% of all passenger travel in 1999 was by some means of road-based transport, a 1% rise on the previous year.

Of this 94%, more than five journeys in six were by car and taxi. The report also found that a third of incidents causing congestion were related to poor maintenance of the road network.

## Jail for safe drivers?

The Government is proposing that drivers caught going more than 30mph over the speed limit risk being sent to jail. The Home Office is carrying out a review of road traffic offences, and says it wants to reduce the estimated 2,000 road deaths caused every year by excessive speed.

Last year 3421 people were killed on our roads. The Government claim a third of accidents are caused by excess speed, so perhaps someone at the DETR needs to learn to use a calculator.

Road campaigners claim imprisoning drivers who travel at 30mph above the limit would prove an effective deterrent.

A Home Office and DETR consultation document on road penalties says: "The Home Office review of penalties for road traffic offences will determine the best way to make penalties for speeding more effective and, in particular, will consider how to punish those

## A common limit

The Countryside Agency is currently campaigning for a blanket speed limit of 20mph for all common land. It's supposedly being done to protect grazing animals from speeding drivers, but naturally the law won't take into account whether or not there's actually anything on the common – the limit will be in force 24 hours a day regardless.

If you'd like to voice your objections to this ridiculous proposal you might like to write to:

Helen Thomson  
Head of Community Development  
Countryside Agency  
19 Dacre Street  
London SW1H 0DH

I can't imagine there's many grazing animals in Dacre St – just like the average common!

who drive far in excess of the speed limit, including the possibility of creating a new offence."

The AA welcomed the proposals if they concentrated on drivers deliberately driving well above the speed limit – anybody accidentally doing so is okay, then.

The Home Office have said this is an ongoing review and there will be full public consultation before any proposals are translated into law – we'll be told what's been decided when things have calmed down.

§ A motorcyclist has been banned for three years and sent to jail for five months for doing over 100mph on a dual carriageway. Whilst he was inside, a girl from the same town as him was knocked off her motorbike by a motorist doing 30mph in a 30mph zone. She lost a leg because of the accident and the motorist got away with a £30 fine and no points. Why? Because the motorist wasn't breaking the speed limit.

## news

## Transport needs £200bn

Regenerating Britain's transport system will cost more than £200 billion over the next ten years, the Confederation of British Industry estimates.

This includes £79 billion on local transport, £62 billion on rail and £25 billion on trunk roads and motorways.

The CBI's spending preferences include:

- § £13.1 billion for road maintenance
- § £8.4 billion for new road schemes
- § £29.2 billion for enhancing the rail network and £22.3 billion for maintenance and renewal of the network
- § £6.5 billion for new trains
- § £4.2 billion for the Channel Tunnel high-speed rail link
- § £8 billion for airports and £1.3 billion for air traffic control
- § £3 billion on ports and waterways.

Mr Jones said more cash was "the only way to tackle the poor services, overcrowding, unacceptable congestion and concerns about safety".

## Roads to Hell

Roads in England and Wales are in their worst condition on record, following a 9% cut in spending since Labour came to power.

The standard of motorway surfaces fell sharply with sections beyond their design life and on the brink of rapid deterioration rising 13% to 148 lane miles – in the next four years this will be 290 miles. 1750 miles of A-roads are worn out.

In 21 council areas, the extent of worn-out urban road was estimated at more than 30% of the local network. In five authorities, this proportion was more than half.

Despite claims of increased funding for roads, spending has fallen in real terms from £2.1 billion in 1996-97 to £1.9 billion last year.

Local authorities are paying out almost £1 million a week in compensation to motorists, cyclists and pedestrians for vehicle damage or injury caused by poorly maintained roads.

## news briefs

**M**otorcyclists on Lincolnshire's roads are the target of a new campaign. Lincolnshire Police's BikeSafe 2000 scheme offers motorcyclists the chance to ride with an advanced motorcycle instructor to help improve their skills. Motorcyclists have the chance to see how their skills can be improved. The rider then attends formal courses before returning for a another assessment ride. Contact 01507 524432 (evenings only).

A European Transport Safety Council report has recommended the introduction of an electronic driving licence that would prevent unauthorised drivers from using a car. The smart-card would act as an ignition key, preventing the engine from being started unless the driver's personal details logged into the system allowed them to do so. An alcohol interlock is another possibility, along with speed limiters linked into the engine management system preventing newly qualified drivers from exceeding predetermined speeds. So much for education.

In the last three years fatalities have fallen by 29% on New York roads where the speed limit was increased from 55 mph to 65 mph. The injury rate in accidents on those roads went down by 5% and the total number of accidents dipped by 4%. The numbers were based on the 1,181 miles of highways where the speed limit went to 65 mph, including the New York State Thruway. A report on the raised speed limits in California shows the rate of fatal crashes has also declined significantly.

Some High Wycombe hospital staff have been refused hospital parking permits. They will instead be issued with bus passes or told to car share or walk. Who they are supposed to share with is not specified.

The boss of a Stafford waste firm claims a cycle route at the back of his premises has led to an increase in crime costing him thousands of pounds. Jon Downing says break-ins at his compound have soared from three or four a year to nearly 20 in the past four months. He says crimes have increased since the former rail line was turned into a cycle path.

As many as one in 12 car drivers has fallen asleep at the wheel, according to a survey by the RAC Foundation. More than 60% of motorists said they had driven despite feeling sleepy - Government statistics show driver fatigue or drowsiness could be the main factor in up to 10% of road accidents. Let's hope that figure is more accurate than a third of accidents being caused by speeding.

A Plymouth mother has called for traffic-calming to be installed after her son was hit by a car's wing mirror when he crossed a road without looking first. Eight-year-old Ben Hunter was only bruised - his mother says it could have been worse so she wants speed humps installed in case someone is killed. Pedestrian crossing anyone?

Another eight 20mph speed limits could be introduced in Suffolk. But county councillors are being recommended not to introduce a blanket speed limit cut. The county council claims to have received at least eight requests from communities which want to see traffic speed cut and says there could be considerable demand for 20mph speed limits to be introduced in Suffolk's towns and villages.

Bus lanes in Southend will be ditched by the new Tory administration, it has been confirmed. Traders argued that if customers could not park because of bus lanes, they would not shop in the area and stores would be forced to close down. The Tories claim bus lanes are dead, saying they will look at the whole local transport plan to ensure it reflects the needs of Southend rather than the ideologies of central Government.

600 residents near the A46/A47 link road in Leicester could share compensation of more than £1 million because of an increase in vehicle traffic. The £4 million road had been on the drawing board for 70 years and was built to tackle congestion in east Leicester. Now 38,000 vehicles use it each day and local residents say their houses are worthless because of the noise.

Northumbria and Leicestershire police forces have launched campaigns to target drivers breaking speed limits. Leics are focusing on motorways - by far our safest roads. They claim to have had 21 fatalities on their roads so far this year, but how many on motorways? No mention of stopping people for tailgating, lane hogging or inattentiveness of course. The campaign has been welcomed by the AA.

Nottingham City Council wants to get rid of all free one-hour and two-hour parking spaces in the city. They say it's to reduce illegal parking and to improve the situation for vehicles parking legitimately. Apparently making a charge for on-street parking will help to keep Nottingham city centre vibrant. Translation please. Revenue generated by the charges would be used to employ parking attendants to enforce the scheme. It all makes sense now.

## national contacts

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# ignition

**T**wo recent episodes regarding speed limit campaigners have made me smile. A village in Devon and another in Berkshire campaigned for speed limit reductions and enforcement because of the unacceptable number of drivers travelling too fast through the villages. Most of those caught were the locals who did the campaigning, and the Devon bunch are now accusing the police of harassing them...

**We have two new committee members. Russell Eden and Dave Hammond have joined us as clubs contact and motorcyclist representative respectively. If you are a member of a car club – motorsport or classic – that might be interested in linking with us, please get in touch with Russell. There will be more on this in the next issue of OTR. Russell recently suggested a social evening in the west midlands, where he is based. Within minutes of his posting he had two replies – from people in other areas who wanted to do their own. So if you'd like to meet up with other ABD members for a social, let everyone know through OTR. . Meanwhile Simon Worby is**

**interested in having a Thames Valley meet, while Dave Razzell wants to do one for the Surrey area – especially somewhere around Horsham.**

We recently had an episode where two members corresponded with each other outside OneList, and one side got a bit carried away. While we wouldn't attempt to control what our members say to each other, please don't get carried away and say things that might offend or be misconstrued.

**Several years ago we arranged a discount scheme for ABD members joining Britannia Rescue. We didn't promote it much, but we have now renegotiated it. Although the ABD doesn't gain directly (we're not on commission), you can get 10% off by quoting your ABD membership number. Next time your vehicle breakdown recovery is up for renewal why not give Britannia a call?**

Please note our address changed last summer – some members are still writing to the old PO Box! The correct details are at the bottom of page 2.

door recently to say the village in which I live is having a 30mph limit imposed. I asked him why, his response being that they are trying to make the roads safer. I pointed out there's never been an accident on this road, and as nobody can do more than 30mph on this road anyway, it seems a bit pointless. He pointed to the Suffolk example, where blanket speed limits were imposed. When I said the accident rate had gone the wrong way since these limits were brought in he suddenly realised he had to be somewhere else. I don't object to the limit being reduced, just the massive expenditure throughout the county when there's no problem to be fixed.

**A man was killed in an accident near me recently. He lost control of his car on a bend and hit another car head on. Everybody was pointing fingers talking about the demon speed when the witnesses were saying he wasn't travelling that fast. But there was no shortage of people who knew the answer already. Now the investigation is complete, and it turns out there was virtually no air in one of his tyres. As the weight of the car shifted he lost control and was killed. Where are the campaigns urging you to maintain your car properly?**

I recently bought a copy of Top Car magazine. In the back is a directory of websites, among which the ABD is listed. The directory is categorised, and we're right next to the DETR in Government agencies...

**This is my last OTR due to work commitments. Chris Medd is taking over, although I'll be helping a bit. He's promised not to change much, although he's got an exciting proposition for the internet users among you!**

**Chris Medd**

**Our first members' seminar is being held at the Gaydon museum on 10 June. Starting at 11.30am it will be a chance for you to to meet the committee, find out all the info you need for campaigning and you can also get more involved – if you want!**

My local councillor came knocking on my

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# campaigning

## ABD supports the BHS

by Nigel Humphries

You will find a leaflet produced by the British Horse Society in this issue. It contains advice for drivers when encountering horses on the roads – the BHS produces a similar leaflet for horseriders, and they will send you a copy on request.

The ABD supports road safety campaigns based on improving the attitude and knowledge of all road users, helping them to behave with courtesy and to anticipate likely problems when they encounter one another. Unfortunately, such campaigns are rare, with most using so-called vulnerable road users as an excuse to make life difficult for drivers on empty roads.

Sheila Hardy of the BHS focuses on attitude – it's shocking to those who understand the meaning of the words 'public highway' to hear her have to justify the right of horseriders to use it. It is more unfortunate that she needs to appeal to drivers' self preservation by describing the damage a large horse can do to a car in collision with it. But as drivers become more and more frustrated and angered by increasing restrictions, it is inevitable that attitudes will worsen rather than improve.

## An urban myth

by Malcolm Heymer

The Transport Research Laboratory has produced a new report (431) entitled *A low emission zone for London*. The report was commissioned by the City of Westminster, which has already declared its entire area an Air Quality Management Area because of its predictions that National Air Quality targets for PM10 (carcinogenic particulates) and NOx (nitrogen oxides) will be exceeded in 2005. Westminster is considering a low emission zone (LEZ), where only vehicles complying with strict emission standards would be allowed.

It commissioned the report to establish how effective that would be in improving air quality – the findings are highly embarrassing for the proponents of public transport!

In a nutshell, it says that, in 2005, medium and heavy goods vehicles and buses will make the largest contribution to traffic emissions of PM10 and NOx. It goes on to suggest that an effective LEZ should target certain categories of vehicle (i.e. buses and lorries) and that restrictions on cars are not warranted on air quality grounds.

This report has the potential to be to air quality what TRL323 is to 'speed kills' – that is to disprove all the propaganda.

Although it is specifically about London, the findings in general terms must apply to other large urban areas.

## Journey's end

by Dave Hammond

Saturday 16th April found me heading for the Cat and Fiddle Inn on the A537 in Cheshire for a road safety event I had organised on behalf of the Ace Cafe London Club. This eight-mile stretch of road, widely advertised as challenging and dangerous by the car and bike magazines who use it for road tests, saw 18 bikers killed or injured last year (as well as 10 car occupants).

The aim of the day was to present the pub with a copy of *Journey's End*, a 43-year old road safety poster that was hung at the Ace in 1957. The poster shows just the sort of riding that still leads to today's casualty figures.

Having got approval for my hazard awareness leaflet from the ABD committee I printed 50, bearing an ABD message and information, to distribute while I was there.

I arrived to find that Cheshire's Chief Road Safety Officer had turned up to support the event and was being interviewed by the local press. The press had got the time wrong and wanted the presentation at once – the reporter had another event to cover. As none of the other Ace members had turned up I gave him a leaflet to read.

By the time he had taken in the road safety message in the leaflet, I had talked about the poster and explained the involvement of the ABD, we had gained our first Ace member. On a Reliant trike at the end of a tow rope.

Guess which bike the reporter wanted in the photos? We rounded up the road safety officer, a policeman and some stray bikers and stood round the dead trike for the presentation picture. No landlord! A quick hunt finds that he's gone for a bath! No way is he going to be in the picture. Kidnap two barmen, and the photo shoot is soon over.

I gave out all 50 leaflets and some ABD membership forms. By the time I left there was one stray leaflet left on the bar, but it was being read by those ordering drinks. The messages of both the poster and the leaflet seemed to be appreciated by all – a successful day.

Four days later the press phoned to see if I had any printable comments about the first fatality of the year (a driving instructor) which happened within 24 hours of the event. Everyone wants to know where to buy the poster and the police have a growing pile of aerial photos that could be the originals of the poster.

## Moving forward

by Malcolm Heymer

Tony Vickers and I attended the DETR seminar launching a new road safety campaign, beginning on 1 June. Speakers included Lord Whitty, senior DETR officials and representatives of the agency which devised the campaign.

The strapline to the campaign will be THINK! road safety. The THINK! logo will appear on all adverts and publicity, with individual messages on specific issues such as drink-driving, speed, tired drivers and child safety. The speakers stressed the campaign is aimed at all road users, not just drivers, and will be based on persuasion, not nannying or finger wagging. The road safety messages will be positive rather than negative and, as the title of the campaign suggests, the intention is to make all road users think about road safety.

In principle it sounds good and is the way road safety should always have been promoted. How well the good intentions translate into practice is the big question. On the speed issue, it doesn't look encouraging – the negative *Speed Kills* is to be replaced with the positive *Less Speed Saves Lives* – two sides of the same coin.

The promotional video did at least include pedestrians in its target audience, so perhaps the intention to reach all road users is genuine.

There is to be a concerted TV campaign in June and again at quarterly intervals, with continuous radio and poster advertising for a whole year. The intention is to keep

reinforcing the message to stop people forgetting it.

Roger Peal, the DETR's Head of Road Safety, made the point that drivers need to be persuaded that speed limits are there for a good reason. He went on to say that we need to ensure that speed limits are there for a good reason. I spoke to him about this over lunch and asked about the new guidance to local authorities (LAs) on the setting of speed limits that was promised in the government's safety strategy. He said that they have now started work on it and he expects it to be ready "in a year or so". I got the impression that it is not being given a high priority. He also said that the new guidance would not be mandatory, so authorities can ignore it if they like, in the same way that they are ignoring the current guidance.

I said it was not acceptable for LAs to impose speed limits for political reasons and he thought that it would be obvious if LAs were doing so and could be ejected by the voters! Not quite in the real world I fear!

Tony also spoke to Roger Peal about enforcement and the injustice of being prosecuted for a first speed camera offence, when first offenders in most other cases are let off with a warning. Also, automatic enforcement makes no allowance for circumstances, unlike direct police enforcement.

Apparently Roger Peal saw the logic of Tony's points and said he would give them some thought – don't hold your breath!

The stated intention of the campaign is commendable but we need to reserve our judgment on the implementation.

# campaigning

## In the drink

by Nigel Humphries

Recent media coverage suggested the alcohol and rural pub lobby had beaten overwhelming support for the introduction of a 'one-pint limit' to combat drink-driving. Apparently the advice of police, magistrates and doctors was ignored.

Reports suggest a DETR consultation paper estimates that reducing the limit to 50mg would save 50 lives and prevent 250 serious and 1,200 slight injuries every year.

The paper says strong evidence exists to show that lower limits have led to improvements in road safety.

Comparisons are made with France, Sweden and Canada as well as a number of US and Australian states after limit reductions in tandem with other enforcement measures led to lower casualty rates.

Unfortunately the coverage generally didn't fully inform the public about the debate concerning the proposal to reduce the blood alcohol level permitted for driving from 80mg to 50mg.

On our website - [www.abd.org.uk](http://www.abd.org.uk) - is our response to the Government's consultation on the subject. There is evidence within the consultation paper itself indicating that a driver with between 50 and 80mg is no more likely to be killed or injured than a sober one - backing up the original study done in the 1960s which resulted in the limit being set at 80mg/100ml.

The RAC are against the limit reduction and the Canadian Government, far from cutting the limit as suggested, actually rejected such a cut. The AA are against the limit cut but would not oppose it because a majority of their members are in favour. This is very different from supporting it, as coverage implied.

People support the cut in the limit because they do not understand the difference between drinking and driving - which many of them do not do - and having residual alcohol left in the system. When this is made clear to them, they change their views.

In dealing with this issue public opinion in support of a cut has been quoted whilst at the same time continuing the misinformation which has led to this ill-informed body of opinion in the first place.

## Did you know?

UK regulations say that camera warning signs (which are the same for red light and speed offences) must only be used if there are indeed cameras deployed in the area. Trouble is, there is no definition of how wide that area can be, so you could in theory have one camera in a county and thousands of signs!

**The need for speed debate is to be held at the Royal College of Art, Kensington Gore, London SW7 on 11 July. Tickets £12/ £8. Tel: 0208 888 1206 for details**

## Camera action

by Brian Hunter

We have 2059 entries on our website's speed camera database, although 118 of these refer to duplicate, removed or red light cameras. Therefore the number of real entries is 1941 but some of these note multiple sites.

A recent AutoExpress asked police forces how many cameras they had. The UK total is 2467 not including seven forces who refused to say. These were Dumfries & Galloway, Northumbria, West Yorks, Leics, Suffolk, Wilts and Gwent. So our tally is not bad - probably at least two thirds of the whole lot. Humberside and Hampshire have no cameras at all - prime recruiting areas are Northants (from 0 now to 28 by the end of the year) and Notts who plan to go from 2 to 18.

## Exhibitionism

by Tony Vickers

Following on from the ABD's small stand at last year's two NEC classic car shows, we secured a much bigger stand at the April event.

With enough room for five cars and plenty of display material we generated a lot of interest over the two days.

Despite going to far more trouble with this stand than last year's, we had the same number of people join us. This was a bit disappointing, as not only did we have some splendid exhibits for people to look at but we also had a prize draw for anyone signing up over the weekend. We wrote to 50 companies (all motoring related) asking for their support, but only Autoglym donated anything - a valet pack.

Hero of the event was Alan Wesson who left Exeter at 3am to get his Ford 100E to the hall on time. Thanks are due to Keith Slarke who travelled up from Cornwall to help out - he didn't reveal his secret but he signed up more people than everyone else put together!

Many other people gave up their time to help out - unfortunately too many to mention here. Once again David Bridge helped with display boards - without him our stands would look far less professional. If you're exhibiting anywhere check out his advert on p3. We also managed to get a Grinnall Scorpion direct from the factory - most people didn't know what it was, and it certainly generated a lot of interest alongside my 1961 Imperial, Alan's Ford, a Triumph Vitesse and an MGB.

The next event is on 4 & 5 November 2000, and if you would like to help or you have an interesting classic car that you would like to show please get in touch with me or Richard Dredge (details on p3/4).

## Greenpeace?

The following is an abridged article originally seen in the Mail on Sunday:

Dr Patrick Moore, academic and ecologist, was a founder member of Greenpeace - later its president. He helped create the direct-action campaigning style which made the environmental protest group famous throughout the world. But now he is appalled by what it has become.

He condemns the extremists who have taken over Greenpeace, and the celebrities who have flocked to support the rainforests campaign:

"Having spent half a lifetime courting danger and arrest, I now look at the mainstream environmental movement that I loved and can barely recognise it. Why? Because it has abandoned science to follow agendas that have little to do with saving the Earth.

"There were always extreme, irrational and mystical elements within our movement, but they tended to be kept in their place during the early years. Then in the mid-Eighties the ultra-leftists and extremists took over.

"The old agendas of class struggle and anti-corporatism are still there - dressed up in environmental terminology. What has been lost are the principles of the early environmental movement - campaigns should be based on valid research. We won public support because our protests were founded on logical, scientific arguments. That has been replaced by sensationalism, misinformation and never-ending conflict.

"The environmental movement continues to campaign on many fronts that are backed up by science. Nuclear waste dumping at Sellafield, excessive use of fossil fuel and toxic discharges are legitimate issues.

"But people and the environment have to co-exist. There are six billion people in the world who require things every day for their survival. It is no good wishing that there were no people on the planet, which is what many of these new activists appear to want. I think we are as much a part of nature as any other species.

"It is this cavalier disregard for scientific truth which has left me so disillusioned with Greenpeace.

"I spent years fighting for what I believed in, and felt that by about the mid-Eighties we had achieved the breakthrough. By then, most people agreed with us. Big business and government wanted to co-operate with environmentalists.

"To me, at that point it is logical to make the transition to working with people to find solutions based on science and reason. Our cause had become mainstream. But, of course, that's not what the activists wanted, nor did it fit in with their political agendas. Instead, we have an environmental movement that is run by people who want to fight - not to win."

**"we have an environmental movement that is run by people who want to fight - not to win"**

# letters



**If you would like to write to OTR please address your letter to Chris Medd at Tanglewood, Fox Lane, Menithwood, Worcs WR6 6UG or email [chrismedd75@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:chrismedd75@yahoo.co.uk)**

How can we get more drivers trained? How about campaigning for the Govt to fund training and retesting with a refund against VED? More training improves driving standards, reduces accidents and/or collisions, thereby reducing the claimed cost to the country of many millions of pounds.

Take my wife (please), as a typical driver paying £155 per annum in VED. If she took out the IAM Skills for life package it would cost her £75. She has the promise of saving on her insurance if she passes, but the IAM members in my group will tell her that the IAM insurance packages are not the cheapest on the market. She would get four magazines a year, each one full of adverts for insurance policies that she knows can be bettered. She wouldn't take the IAM test for any of those reasons, but she would do it for her own safety and the safety of our kids. Throw in a little financial incentive and then we have a different game altogether.

My opening offer is as follows:

Roll up, roll up, for the Great Driver Training incentive. Reduce the cost of your VED by 50% by taking a 90-minute driving test with a Police Class 1 driving examiner. Save 50% every other year as you successfully pass your re-assessment! Yes that's nearly £400 over 10 years folks!

If the DETR want safer roads they would have to listen to this. Comments please.

**Russell Eden**

Nigel Humphries is to be congratulated on his cogent analysis of 'decriminalised' parking enforcement (OTR April). But there are wider considerations.

One's view regarding the need for parking regulations changes from situation to situation. The view of a motorist parking outside a shop whilst getting a paper is likely to be very different from others caught in the resulting congestion behind him. At journey's end most motorists are convinced that they have the right to park in their own street, if not outside their front door.

The number of vehicles on the road rises but in conurbations the lengths of road on which to park them remains the same.

Local authorities would not introduce residents' parking schemes was it not for the pressure from residents. However, although local authorities have powers to make traffic regulation orders they are, without decriminalised parking enforcement, dependent on the police to enforce the schemes.

Many schemes are impossible to introduce because the police do not have the resources to enforce them. They have

never had much enthusiasm for parking enforcement and the traffic wardens always have been a bit of a 'Cinderella service.'

Decriminalised enforcement was introduced to relieve the strain on overburdened police resources and a magistrates' system already over-run with hearing appeals to road traffic offences. It also meant that local authorities would have responsibility for both the implementation and enforcement of parking schemes.

Local authorities are obliged to make parking operations self-financing but they may only introduce restrictions with the objective of "securing the safe, expeditious and convenient movement of traffic". Parking charges "must be set for traffic management reasons, such as to ration available space and ensure that there is a rapid turnover of parking places, rather than to maximise revenue." (*Traffic Management and Parking Guidance for London - Government Office for London - February 1998*).

Nigel Humphries is not the first to say that decriminalised enforcement is just another government ploy to get more money from motorists. This argument is persuasive given that councils are dependent on a significant number of motorists parking illegally, and paying fines, in order to 'balance the books.' However, without parking restrictions gridlock would be a frequent occurrence. This would not only affect motorists but also vital services like fire tenders, ambulances, delivery vehicles and even dust carts, to mention but four. Effective enforcement of waiting restrictions is vital to ensure that such essential services are able to function efficiently.

This is demonstrably in the public's best interest rather than 'blatantly against' it as he asserts.

Police enforcement, through the traffic warden service, never did an effective job. Decriminalised enforcement might not be a perfect system. However I would argue that it has many more benefits than disbenefits and is infinitely superior to the 'old' system. This is not to say that the way that authorities carry out this function should not be kept under scrutiny.

## New contact details?

**If your phone number or e-mail / postal addresses have changed since you joined the ABD, have you notified us? Please let us know straight away if your contact details have changed, as we sometimes need to get in touch with members.**

Parking regulation, like many other things in life, becomes more complicated with the passage of time. It is no surprise that motorists should find it confusing. It was for this reason that I decided to offer on-line help at [www.parkingticket.co.uk](http://www.parkingticket.co.uk). I am pleased to say that it is already proving its worth.

**John Squires**

It is difficult to argue with statements like 'Speed is a main factor in x% of accidents' because they are careful not to specify what they mean by 'speed', stationary vehicles tending not to collide.

The first occurrence of this figure appears to be in the US during debates about the national 55/65mph limit. The National Highways Agency said that a third of accidents were speed related, but this turned out to include all accidents where somebody involved was exceeding the limit; irrespective of the cause of the accident, every accident where speed was excessive for the conditions, irrespective of whether they were exceeding the limit; and all accidents involving factors deemed to be 'speed related'.

These factors included, (among others), overtaking, careless lane changing and driving below posted minimum speeds!

Hertfordshire road safety dept claim around 35% of accidents to be speed related but produce this figure by including 'misjudgement of the speed of others' in speed related. According to last year's figures these apparent misjudgements accounted for 21.8% of accidents, whereas excessive speed within the limit accounted for 13.6%. The number of accidents involving vehicles exceeding the limit seems to have been too small to mention.

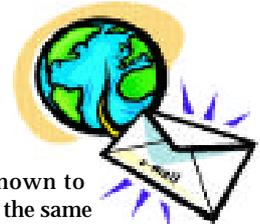
The oversimplification involved in our opponents' figures is illustrated by the fact that even if as many as a third of accidents involve vehicles exceeding the speed limit, this would imply that the minority of drivers who obey the limit are having the other two thirds of accidents!

**Andrew Bent**

I have just spent two weeks in Norway. It is a beautiful country, but driving there is not to be recommended. They have ridiculously low speed limits everywhere, combined with a forest of speed cameras - which means that almost everybody complies with the limits.

# letters

**Opinions expressed in the letters pages are personal views and not necessarily those of the ABD  
Letters may be shortened to allow the inclusion of as many contributions as possible**



Even on major routes the limit is 80Km/h (50mph), going up to 90 for short stretches. However, even on these routes there are long stretches where the limit is 70, 60 or even 50Km/h (guess where the most cameras are).

In built-up areas the limit is 50, falling to 30 in residential areas. It's about as much as anyone can do to stay awake at the wheel.

With a population of around 4 million they have an annual road death toll of between 400 and 500 – which is proportionally more than double that of the UK.

**Peter Hattingh**

Some of you may have received a questionnaire from your local authority, relating to the Local Transport Plan which they are currently formulating. I've just received one from West Berks council. Many of them include the inevitable lower limits, more enforcement of speed limits, and more traffic calming. It also contains a few glaring errors which I have corrected – take the opportunity to do the same if you can.

*Pollution:*

Since 1992 and the introduction of catalytic exhaust converters, emissions of nitrous oxides has fallen by 65%, particulates 62%, carbon monoxide 61%, hydrocarbons 56% and benzene 51%.

Whilst it is a fact that exhaust emissions are of concern to the general public, it is wrong to suggest that the private motor vehicle is responsible for poor air quality, perceived or otherwise. Non-catalysed vehicles, of an ever-decreasing number, and diesel engines produce far more worrying amounts of carcinogenic material. Instead of attacking the use of the car as 'dirty', why not campaign to convert the remaining buses to cleaner LPG.

This would drastically improve the town

centre environment. There is one blatant untruth that sometimes rears its ugly head – the statement that "pollution from exhaust emissions contributes to poor air quality and has been linked to respiratory diseases such as asthma". This is pure nonsense. Professor Emeritus Stanley Feldman (Charing Cross and Westminster Medical School 1995) has made these public comments (letter to London Weekly Times 03/02/95):

"In the last 40 years the level of air pollution has decreased dramatically. Nevertheless the incidence of asthma has risen."

"Childhood asthma is a bigger problem in the green fields (than in cities)."

"...as far as the scientific evidence goes, pollution does not cause bronchitis or asthma, nor does wearing a so-called anti-pollution mask do anything except identify the wearer as a sucker."

The situation is summed up well by Dr Kenneth Calman, Chief Medical Officer, Department of Health Study on the Causes of Asthma:

"Air pollution does not cause asthma ... there is no correlation between levels of vehicle emissions and asthma incidence."

Misinformation and bad science should not form the basis of any local transport plan.

The car should be integrated with other means of transport and not excluded. This means cheap and secure parking at train stations, for example.

All road users should respect all other users. This can only be achieved using positive road safety messages instead of the negative *Speed Kills* one. Remember the "Think Once, Think Twice, Think Bike" campaign of the late 1970s?

The car is not the environmental disaster it is frequently made out to be. It is the chosen mode of transport for very obvious reasons, not least being the lack of a useable alternative. Develop usable alternatives and don't persecute car users when no sensible and affordable alternatives are available.

**Damon Green**

I was alarmed to read an article in a recent 'Daily Telegraph' that referred to the police's apparent practice of lurking in pub carparks to fit adhesive stickers to drinkers' cars with a view to later singling them out for stopping and breathalysing/whatever.

I am very concerned about this development and would ask that

this be made known to our members, at the same time requesting that any other information known about this be brought to my attention. Please contact me if you have any information on the email address below.

**Steve Lyden-Brown**  
[marlin@marlin.screaming.net](mailto:marlin@marlin.screaming.net)

**What we are talking about here is a presumption of guilt, just because one's vehicle is parked in a certain place leading to being singled out, and that is totally wrong. It's like the disproportionate use of stop and search without reasonable suspicion on certain socio-economic and racial groups – totally unacceptable.**

**The way for the police to target drunken driving is to stop erratic or careless drivers, breathalyse those involved in culpable accidents and act on intelligence from those who see drunks getting into cars when they are unfit. If they go further than this, they risk losing support - and bear in mind the proportion of road fatalities that are drink related has not fallen in ten years – Nigel Humphries**

I recently read that the Government is committed to working with the local authorities of South East Manchester to develop a transport strategy that meets the needs of the area's residents and business needs. This means looking not just at the car and congestion but how all forms of transport – buses, trains, Metrolink, walking and cycling can be made to work together.

The decision in the Roads Review to detrunk and withdraw the A6/A523, the A6(M) Stockport North/South Bypass; A555 Manchester Airport Link West and the A555/A523 Poynton Bypass from the national trunk roads programme defined the area covered by the S.E. Manchester Study to be the quadrant of Greater Manchester and North Cheshire bounded by the M56 in the West, the A57/M67 in the north, and the Wilmslow/Macclesfield area in the south.

I would urge you to write expressing your views to:

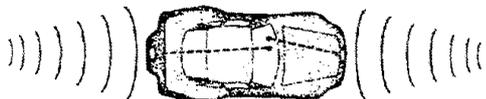
**SEMMS**  
c/o WS Atkins  
Television House Mount Street  
Manchester M2 5NT  
[semms@sdgworld.net](mailto:semms@sdgworld.net)

or look at [www.gov.nw.uk/semms.htm](http://www.gov.nw.uk/semms.htm)  
Associated with this is the West Midlands to North West Conurbation Multi Modal Study (or MidMan Study) details at [www.m6corridor.com](http://www.m6corridor.com)

**Roy Milnes**

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## Radar defence systems



For the very best advice on purchasing a portable or installed radar/laser detector, speak to the experts...  
For a free information pack contact Networx Ltd at

20 Hillhouse Farm Gate  
Lanark  
Lanarkshire ML11 9HT

Tel 01555 666 444  
Fax 01555 66 33 44  
[networx.ltd@dial.pipex.com](mailto:networx.ltd@dial.pipex.com)



**20% discount for ABD members!**

## ABD in the media

Each week the ABD appears in the media. Sometimes it's because of our press releases, but increasingly it's because we are the first port of call for media organisations who want the motorist's perspective. While this list is far from exhaustive, these are some of the media appearances the ABD has made over the last month.

A more complete and up to date list of media appearances can be found by logging on to the ABD web-site. If you see the ABD mentioned in the press please let Chris Ward know about it ([chris@waverider.co.uk](mailto:chris@waverider.co.uk)) or put them in the post to Chris Medd (see page 4 for contact details). Please note that an email address will have the "@" symbol in it — many of the 'email addresses' given to us are actually web-site addresses.

Nigel Humphries appeared on BBC Radio Leicester against a presenter who wasn't very well informed. When he demanded an example of a speed limit set too low Nigel suggested 20mph limits outside schools during the 23 hours a day plus weekends and holidays when it was not needed. There was then familiar argument shift. What was wrong with putting up with a bit of inconvenience because we all live life too fast? He didn't get away with this at all — accepting the safety argument is not justified then coming back with another political argument to support something that was supposed to be about safety.

An interview for BBC Radio Leeds which was supposed to be used this morning about a new helpline that Leeds City Council have put in to help drivers caught in congestion caused by their road closures.

Their line was that they were encouraging people to use mobile phones whilst driving, which is obviously contrary to recent campaigns.

## Press releases

Each week the ABD sends out press releases to over 240 media organisations. Does your local paper have an e-mail address? Do you know a journalist or politician involved in transport issues who has never heard of the ABD?

The ABD sends out press releases via e-mail, and we are always looking to increase our circulation. We already cover the main national and regional publications — but new e-mail addresses are coming out all the time.

If you know of anyone who you think would benefit from receiving our releases, please let Chris Lamb know their e-mail address ([c.a.lamb@staffs.ac.uk](mailto:c.a.lamb@staffs.ac.uk), or ring the ABD press line on 0870 444 2535).

If you would like a copy of a press release please get in touch with Chris Medd. Once sent our press releases are put on the web-site — if you don't have the facility for this we will be happy to post you a copy.

**11 April**

Blunkett in a spin over school run

**27 April**

TRL says no need to restrict cars because of air pollution

**3 May**

Westminster riots linked to anti-car views

**9 May**

Global cooling — but the motorist is still mugged

**17 May**

Is anti-speed policy hurting police morale?

## Web-sites worth visiting

Web-sites worth visiting are frequently pointed out to us. Below are some of the ones we've either discovered recently or visit regularly because the content is interesting — if you know of others please let us know.

<http://www.reclaimthestreets.net/>

This is the perfect example of how to attempt to prove that black is white. RTS claim on its website that the Mayday actions in London were a peaceful demonstration that involved building a peace garden. Apparently the day consisted of "creative positive action". Try telling that to McDonald's.

[www.tuftufclub.com](http://www.tuftufclub.com)

A dutch site, with a link from our own website, that focuses on conditions for drivers in Holland — especially speed cameras.

[www.stars.broadnet.co.uk/](http://www.stars.broadnet.co.uk/)

Find out about training children about using roads safely. It also has a roads forum.

[www.lowerfueltax.btinternet.co.uk](http://www.lowerfueltax.btinternet.co.uk)

A site concerning petrol prices. The site allows people to express their views, download template letters and find their local MP to send the letters to.

[www.surreycc.freerve.co.uk](http://www.surreycc.freerve.co.uk)

Details on a disastrous traffic calming scheme with the chance to comment

<http://sense.bc.ca/research.htm>

The site for Safety by Education Not Speed Enforcement. Some very useful information here including more graphs than you can shake a stick at!

[www.detr.gov.uk/email.htm](http://www.detr.gov.uk/email.htm)

The DETR have added a massive list of their e-mail addresses to their website. If you want to correspond with them take a look here.

[www.leicesterequal.co.uk](http://www.leicesterequal.co.uk)

Motorists in Leicester have a new website on traffic levels and public transport in the city.

[www.ringroad.fsnet.co.uk](http://www.ringroad.fsnet.co.uk)

Russell Eden (the ABD's new clubs contact) has produced this new website pointing out how unworkable the madcap schemes put forward for Stourbridge are.

## Member services

### Chauffeurplan

If you are unable to drive for any reason you may find Chauffeurplan's service invaluable. Offered by Longford Insurance, it's an insurance policy against losing your licence or car, with a 10% discount for ABD members. If you would like to find out more please contact Hugh Bladon (details on page 4) who will send you a leaflet. Alternatively call Chauffeurplan on 0800 24 24 20.

### Do you have e-mail?

When the ABD is asked to invite its members to respond to consultations we sometimes need to contact a lot of people in a short space of time. If you have an email address please subscribe to ABD Action, allowing us to save a lot of time and money in doing this. You can add your name to the list by sending an email to [abd-action-owner@egroups.com](mailto:abd-action-owner@egroups.com) stating your full name and membership number.

### ABD T-shirts

If you would like to help publicise the ABD, why not buy a T-shirt with our details on? The white only T-shirts are top quality with a small ABD logo on the front and the logo, web-site address and telephone number on the back, along with the slogan "Don't let them drive you out of your car".

You can order one from ABD member Colin Gardom, for £10 (£10.50 for an XXL) including P&P. Write to ABD T-shirts at 39 St Mary's Gate Chesterfield Derbyshire S41 7TH Tel: 01246 230 005

### Legal representation

The ABD is currently compiling a database of solicitors who are prepared to represent drivers. If you know of somebody who is prepared to help our members please get in touch with Chris Medd, whose contact details are on page 2.

### ABD publicity material

If you would like copies of the ABD leaflet please get in touch with Susan Newby-Robson (details on page 2), and she'll send you what you need. There's also a limited stock of car stickers available. Flyers and posters are due soon.

### Speed limits — how they are set and your right to object

The ABD has prepared an informative action pack which sets out in detail the process by which local authorities set speed limits, and the rights that every member of the public has to object to the imposition of new or reduced limits. The pack costs £5 to non-members, but is available free to current members. Please send a large SAE (27p) to Steve Dommett PO Box 3151 West Bergholt CO6 3JH