

On The Road

The journal of the Alliance of British Drivers

Issue 108
Summer 2013

Get stuck in at this years' open meeting

Every summer the ABD holds an open meeting for its members to meet the committee, find out what the group is up to and hopefully to get a few more volunteers to help us with our campaigning. This year the event will take place on 13 July, as usual at the Heritage Motor Centre at Gaydon, at junction 12 of the M40 in Warwickshire. Most of the ABD's work to improve the lot of the nation's drivers is done behind the scenes, but we always want to do more and this annual meeting is your chance to help us grow the group.

A key part of the day is a series of enlightening talks on key topics, with guest speakers. This year we've lined up tough-talking Godfrey Bloom UKIP MEP, whose straight talking approach is a breath of fresh air; the more political clout we can muster the better. Godfrey recently joined our patrons list, which is why his mug shot is on the front cover of this issue, as well as the last one.

Attracting support of Godfrey's calibre is essential to get the message across to politicians, and he will be well worth listening to while there will also be an opportunity to ask him questions.

We've also got the excellent Steve Haley lined up; his excellent book *Mind Driving* has been featured on our website for a while now. Steve has an evolutionary approach to learning to drive skilfully, especially with regard to hazard awareness, and



he joined the ABD to gain access to ministerial meetings; his story was featured in OTR recently.

We'll also have talks from Roger Lawson and someone yet to be confirmed, but the thrust of the meeting is for you to question us and provide us with support so our committee members can concentrate on core issues. Please make sure you take the time to turn up; doors open at 10.30.

To join the ABD
call us now on
07000 781 544



OTR 108

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The next issue of *On The Road* goes to press on Monday 16 September. Contributions deadline is Monday 2 September.

The day's agenda

Open to members only

11:00-11:20: AGM Proceedings

Open to all, including non-members

11:20-12:00: Open session: how can we grow ABD membership and support?

12:00-12:45: The Bloom Perspective on road safety (Godfrey Bloom)

12:45-14:00: lunch

14:00-14:30: A new slant on hazard awareness training (Steve Haley)

14:30-14:45: Plans for the Dartford Crossing - backdoor road pricing (Roger Lawson)

14:45-15:00: The Link between Road Casualties and Economic Activity (to be confirmed)

The day normally wraps up by around 15.30, but the museum and café remain open until 17.00.

The ABD campaigns for:

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

The Government is on the back foot when it comes to some motoring matters, but we need to keep up the pressure if we're to get our way...

You can donate any amount to the ABD's fighting fund at any time. Just contact the membership secretary (see p16) for more information...

Motorway man isn't going away...

It has been commented that the government seems to be on a charm offensive of late – a bland budget, fuel duty rises suspended and gestures over some controversial legislation. It must want to win the next general election, now just under two years away. And so do other parties; there's been increasing activity in candidate selection and preparing manifestos. Although strictly non-party political, the ABD wants to be where the action is, influencing candidates and their parties towards the best possible deal for Britain's motorists.

In 2009/10, the ABD shaped the Fair Deal for the Motorist campaign, and the rising tide of discontent saw shadow Transport Secretary Theresa Villiers promise to 'end Labour's war on the motorist. Correctly guessing that there would be a Conservative(ish) government, we met with her deputy, Robert Goodwill, shortly after that. Even though we had a good rapport, it seemed that some policy had already been set, even six months before the election.

The Conservatives identified 'Motorway Man' as the key swing voter whom they had to convince to win the election. Just a week before polling day, David Cameron gave a prominent interview, promising to do things very differently from Labour, and even hinting at a reduction in fuel duty. With its long run-up in faltering economic conditions, the election proved to be an anti-climax; with little to particularly inspire voters, no party was really a clear winner.

We know what's happened since. In the coalition stalemate, neither Villiers nor Goodwill got the key posts in Transport. The DFT carried on substantially as before, effectively leading the new ministers rather than vice versa. Over the past three years, priority has been on the Olympics then rail, even though five-sixths of national journeys are by car or van.

The ABD has managed to obtain meetings with ministers and DFT contacts. Although there are signs of some changes of attitude and a drip of concessions, for various reasons, the wheels of progress can move slowly.

Motorway Man has not gone away; far from it. According to an RAC survey in 2011, only 1% believed that the war on the motorist had been ended, and only another 8% felt it likely. Last year, an IFS-RACF report observed that historically Britain's 34 million drivers had not been a militant lot. However it added "But today everything is rather different", drawing particular attention to motoring costs and taxes.

Although there's been restraint on recent fuel duty rises, it's an open secret that the Treasury is eying already over-taxed drivers as a source of more revenue. It will be interesting to see what its 'Infrastructure Tsar', Lord Deighton proposes for the next Parliament; there may be developments



before the members' meeting.

OTR has chronicled the backlash of drivers in several parts of the country. When resourced campaigns like Fair Fuel are matched by local protests in leafy Barnet and Surrey (for example), the government must know there's a problem. MPs have raised parking as a key local issue, and there has been growing local resistance to the imposition of wind farms, based on green PC hype.

Opportunity knocks for the ABD. With its organisational renewal now out of the way, I can see the foundations for a game plan that will take us up to 2015. There's no harm being ambitious, but as a voluntary group, we realise what we can do will be dependent on what help we can get from you, the members, plus like-minded outsiders.

First there are some things that should be tackled nationally, like meetings with the political parties; Labour and Conservative policymakers are the obvious choices, but UKIP might be an interesting dark horse. Fortunately we have had initial discussions with all three camps.

Our antennae indicate (for instance) that business groups like the Federation of Small Businesses, Forum of Private Business, and RMIF (with a strong presence from filling stations) might be sympathetic to our message. We are most likely to get support from those who stand to lose from the war against the motorist. We also need to consider breaking the ice with groups like the Local Government Association, given the moves to localism, and maybe take the first steps to make groups like ACPO see things from our point of view.

We won't forget the media – both traditional channels and the internet. There is scope for articles on the main political blogs, getting features in the media, and to get one or more

national papers to support us. Experience has shown that there's also potential in the larger regional papers, and amazingly from motoring interest magazines. We contacted a cross section on one prominent issue and found that there was little awareness on it. They should have a definite interest in not seeing their readership priced off the road.

The good news is that the ABD has a wealth of research material and a punchy new leaflet, so perhaps it's a question of some intelligent targeting with what we've got, rather than reinventing the wheel. Other campaigns suggest that a direct marketing approach can work, but further detail is being kept back for the forthcoming members' meeting on 13 July.

Suffice to say that we're looking to involve volunteers in a number of basic tasks that can make it happen; some will need a little initiative, but nobody will be pushed into anything they're unhappy with. Full direction and support will be given. For instance, on a local scale, we could use some help from members towards identifying transport contacts and sending them approved ABD material. Another possibility is in helping us build bridges with independent councillors and residents' groups.

It's a fact of life that campaigning costs money, but you get out of life what you put into it. So we can always do with some help with fund raising ideas; and even better if there are those with relevant contacts or experience to offer.

I'm writing this article to set the scene for what should be a stimulating and involving AGM. If you haven't already put the date in your diary – please do come along on 13 July. If you can't make the AGM, but think you might be able to help, please contact Brian MacDowall to discuss without obligation; details on the back page.

Brian MacDowall

ABD chairman's election success

The recent county council elections saw some big changes in the representation of the parties. Amongst the new intake in Kent, where UKIP now forms the official opposition, is ABD chairman Brian MacDowall who topped the poll in his home town of Herne Bay.

Brian says: "The ABD maintains a strictly neutral approach to party politics when dealing with driving issues, as we have to deal with any of the political groups. However that doesn't stop individual members and supporters from seeking political office, if by doing so, they feel they can advance drivers' causes.

"A general election is only two years away; given the track record of the three main political parties, having a vibrant fourth political group is essential to see radical change being offered for drivers, i.e. no road pricing, a better deal on parking, correct setting of speed limits; the list is endless.

"I am both surprised and delighted to have been successful; county councils are usually the authority when comes to highways matters. I will be using my skills and experience from working with the ABD to try to improve the lot of drivers in Kent.

However, the workload since becoming a councillor is phenomenal, making huge demands on my time. As a result I will have to scale back my work for the ABD, which is why we need more members to get more involved, to help the group prosper".

Get stuck in, in Essex

For several years, Rowland Pantling has been campaigning on his home turf of Essex, but now he's moving away from the area and is looking for somebody to take over the reins. By the time this newsletter appears, he'll already have upped sticks and moved away, so if you'd like to take over, just drop Brian MacDowall a line (email him via brian.macdowall@abd.org.uk).

Ideally the role needs someone au fait with desktop publishing so that an Essex newsletter could be produced regularly. Recently, Rowland has been tackling Essex County Council regarding useless, traffic-jamming traffic lights in Colchester. They have, so far, resisted his efforts...

Want to get more involved? There are plenty of ways you can help the ABD to move forward. Just check out page 15 to find out how

Bristol business owner helps solve parking issues – and scoops £1000

Thinking outside of the box has won Doctor Peter Jones from Ashley Down a £1000 prize from the ABD as part of a citywide competition organised by the Federation of Small Businesses aimed at improving traffic flow and parking on Bristol's roads.

Peter, who runs Indigo Science, proposed that new parking patterns should be introduced which would see cars parked diagonally rather than broadside to the kerb. He said the scheme on selected roads in the city could double the number of spaces available.

This was part of the competition run by the Bristol FSB which the ABD put up (partly funded by a generous donation from a benefactor) a positive transport solution to Bristol's transport problems.

Brian MacDowall, Dr Peter Jones, Guy Kingston, Bristol FSB coordinator



The FSB, in conjunction with the ABD, is in the process of approaching the council to get competition winners' ideas accepted by the notoriously anti-motorist Bristol council. Bristol, having been defeated over workplace charging – a recent TPA/ABD victory – is now proposing a congestion charge.

Peter said: "It's quite clear to everyone the



Brian MacDowall and Dr Peter Jones

city's traffic problems are getting worse year on year. I think angled kerb-side parking would greatly increase the number of parking spaces – on roads which are wide enough to take it. All this scheme would cost is a couple of tins of paint."

Peter Jones said he had kept his entry simple and it was not intended to fix all the city's traffic problems at a stroke. He said: "There has to be a radical rethink of Bristol's road network, but people wouldn't like all the changes to be made in one go. Many of the key roads in Bristol are suitable for such parking bays including Pembroke Road, Park Street, St George's Road, Berkeley Place, West Mall, Caledonia Place and the High Street Westbury-on-Trym."

City businessman Guy Kingston – who came up with the idea for the competition – said the competition to find Bristol's New Brunel had clearly inspired the public to think imaginatively. He said: "We had hundreds of ideas on every aspect of Bristol's transport system and Peter's scheme is clearly thought out and workable; enabling parking helps bring prosperity to the city".

ABD acting chairman Brian Macdowall said: "This has been a positive competition with the public coming up with what they want to see ease Bristol's traffic problems; Peter's scheme will help bring prosperity to the city, encouraging people to spend their money with local businesses. We challenge the council to act on this idea which, in this case, is easy to implement and at a very low cost".

A softer approach on the way from TfL?

On 2 May, I attended a meeting organised by TfL, which reported on the work of the London Mayor's Roads Task Force (RTF). About 150 stakeholders were represented, mainly from local government and public transport. Although the usual environmental, pedestrian and cycling lobbyists were out in force, others came from business groups (e.g. retail, small business). The main speakers were the Deputy Mayor for Transport, Isabel Deding and TfL Managing Director of Planning, Michele Dix. I was particularly interested in their views for two reasons.

First, to see if London was moving away from Ken Livingstone's dinosaur politics, and secondly, as during last year's Mayoral election, Deding's office confirmed to me that the Congestion Charge zone will not be expanded to anywhere else in London. Although Dix had been a promoter of the Charge, there was a definite change of mood over roads. The messages from her introduction included:

- ▶ Even-handedness on transport modes of.
- ▶ Although the 'living' dimension (use of space) is important, so is keeping London moving.
- ▶ Although the 'sustainability' dimension is important, so is unlocking growth.
- ▶ A reliable network is needed, with further measures to address congestion.
- ▶ Must get maintenance right.
- ▶ Challenge of population growth (further 40% foreseen in East London).
- ▶ Holistic thinking - big picture rather than implementing a set of piecemeal measures.
- ▶ A move away from complex Local Implementation Plans, micro-managed by TfL.

Dix stated that previously public transport had been the priority. Now there's greater ambition, and "billions of pounds" will be required to get roads on the same level as the tube network.

The Friends of the Earth delegate got in a floor suggestion towards reallocation of road space away from cars, as "a 20-30% cut in pollution would be necessary to meet air quality standards".

I got in my own question. Recapping on TfL's disastrous reallocation of road space with the pedestrianisation of Trafalgar Square, I simply asked if the Task Force would consider reviewing bus lanes that were under-utilised and caused congestion, and maybe allow cars to use them? This got a sympathetic reaction from the audience, and Deding confirmed that TfL would look at increasing capacity.

Any reallocation of road space would "depend on the consequence". If any road space was taken away for street cafés, etc, then new road space could be provided elsewhere in the network to make up for this.

Although Dix had said that TfL might want to "manage demand" at some times of the day,



Deding clarified that there was no political appetite for road pricing - noting that the population's personal finances were under pressure. She later said that new London tolls might be considered only if all other measures failed - a definite improvement from the Red Ken days.

One borough transport planner asked about traffic growth, noting that levels had declined over the past 10 years. Dix replied that they were aware of the trend, but had also noticed an increase in van traffic (for deliveries).

At the break, I recognised Prof Stephen Glaister of that well known Treasury support group, the RAC Foundation. Never one to miss the opportunity to plug new road pricing taxes on drivers, he tried to tell Deding her how much the government needs new sources of revenue. I introduced myself to her in his presence, remarking that most people felt drivers were already overtaxed.

I raised the case of the possible tunnel to replace the Hammersmith Flyover, suggesting that this should not be as 'tolled new capacity' as hinted by some in central government; I also reminded her that London pays more than its fair share of taxes to the government.

Deding seemed quite approachable, and told me that she had met with my council leader over how it might be paid for. LB Hammersmith & Fulham might well combine prime property development on the land freed up with developing the tunnel, which could be built without significant traffic disruption.

In the second session, Dix outlined a means of classifying road space and use in the new strategic framework. She expressed a preference for schemes that don't require capital investment. Deding added that TfL is looking at traffic management to avoid the need for a bus lane. A DfT delegate praised TfL's traffic management tool, SCOOT, that has improved traffic flow. Deding noted that since lane rental was introduced, the percentage of out-of-hours work went up from 30% to 90% and disruption to the network fell by a third.

Meetings such as these are a good opportunity for networking. In the break, I discussed freight issues with Martin Low, Westminster City Council's transport commissioner, and Natalie Chapman, Head of Policy at the FTA. She complained that loading restrictions are inflicting £1m a year parking fines on FTA members. We recapped on some of the research TfL had done before the Olympics on delivery efficiency; Low favours extending the lane rental principle to pavements to reduce road works disruption.

In the final session, several delegate groups looked at issues, problems and possible solutions from a Greater London town centre case study.

My group discussed Kingston upon Thames. Fortunately, we had a lower percentage of PC campaigners and government employees and a higher representation from business, retail and private transport. The Living Streets representative was a bit muted, and the Travelwatch anti-car voice was talked down

when he suggested reallocating road space away from cars. The TfL handouts offered a range of 'strategic measures', including restrictions on private vehicles, traffic demand management and traffic calming, but without being prescriptive.

Those familiar with Kingston contributed more points, which further diluted the influence of the PC lobby, and even the local authority delegates offered positive thoughts from their own areas. The discussion tended to ignore the handouts, and most of it was constructive (e.g. suggesting affordable parking, better signage, adequate space for deliveries). One local reported how congestion built up because of buses backing up on the gyratory system.

The session was run by a Mayor's Task Force member with support from a TfL employee; both were impartial and neither prompted any solution. Interestingly, when the thoughts of other groups were presented, there were only limited suggestions for 'modal shift' and 'tackling car use' and one even noted the importance of the car! All in all, developments were far more encouraging than might have been expected. A follow-up meeting is likely to be held in October

GLA/TfL reference documents

- ▶ RTF terms of reference and membership tinyurl.com/pxntmq3
- ▶ RTF response to consultation report: tinyurl.com/opydvp9

By Brian Mooney

ABD supports Barnet CPZ Action Group

The ABD is proud to have supported the Barnet CPZ Action Group over the past couple of years. The group is looking forward to its next court hearing, scheduled to begin on 2 July. Campaign Manager Diane Johnson advises that a member has obtained council papers under the FoI Act, and these reveal that the Council regards a Barnet CPZ Action victory at court to be "likely". Even so, the group welcomes any possible local support; more details on <http://barnetcpz.blogspot.co.uk>.

The group has run one of the most effective local campaigns, having regularly made national and local media coverage. By sticking to its guns, it has helped raise awareness of the problems CPZ residents face through being a captive market. After a bit of ferreting, the group learned that the CPZ charges the Council introduced were far higher than those recommended by its own consultants, and was able to claw back an

important concession when it introduced half-day visitor vouchers.

The Council has also not implemented some additional CPZ increases put forward by Councillor Brian Coleman before he lost his cabinet transport position. Councillor Coleman wanted to make CPZ residents pay £20 when they changed their car as well as wanting to charge for temporary parking dispensations when, for example, a resident uses a courtesy car for a few days. Following Coleman's sacking by voters at the 2012 London Assembly elections, the Council realised that these unfair policies risked bringing it into disrepute.

Coleman took the borough's drivers for granted by hiking parking charges on the High Street and removing pay and display machines. The resident-driver backlash over his damaging parking policies was the major factor behind his emphatic London Assembly defeat.

ASA forces scamera partnership climbdown

For years the ABD has challenged the Kent & Medway Safety Camera Partnership over the manner in which it's misused data in its publicity to claim credit for road casualty reductions when it couldn't be proven their cameras were responsible.

Road safety investigators and campaigners independent of the ABD have been analysing this nationally, resulting in complaints to the ASA concerning camera partnerships in Scotland, Humber and Kent & Medway. More may follow.

The result in Kent was that the ASA advised the withdrawal of misleading data. This consisted of publicising the raw reduction of accident numbers at camera sites (themselves ill-defined) in the expectation that readers would assume the falls were due to cameras alone, with no reference to the many other factors that play a large part.

They then quoted poll responses in favour of cameras from the same people they've deliberately misled. Now, the ASA says it has "forced" KMSCP to remove the statement "Since the introduction of safety cameras in Kent and Medway, the number of people killed and seriously injured at camera sites has been reduced by 72%".

Terry Hudson, ABD organiser for Kent added:



"The ABD has long argued that camera partnerships, with local authorities, police and magistrates all involved, represent self-perpetuating empires with a conflict of interest that works against drivers and justice - and we have called for their abolition".

This victory isn't the only one in recent weeks, as ABD committee member Malcolm Heymer has also been celebrating after speed camera maker Vysionics was forced to reword its advertising after making misleading claims.

Vysionics claimed that SPECS installations "on average reduce KSIs (Killed and Seriously Injured casualties) by more than 70%". The clear implication of this wording is that the entire reduction in casualties was due to the cameras alone. As Malcolm pointed out to the ASA, this couldn't be the case.

As a result, when the ASA looked into the matter, it sided with Malcolm and told Vysionics that it had to amend the wording on its advertising - something which the company has now done. While such victories may seem minor, it's important that we keep up the pressure; it's essential that we stem the drip feed of propaganda. For more on this story, check out the PR we released; it's online at www.abd.org.uk/pr/806.htm

The ABD has a new leaflet for you to give to friends in a bid to get them to join. Meanwhile, there's been much activity in Derbyshire and Lincolnshire...

North Wales is wondering whether pedestrianised town centres are a good idea – and homes are more than twice as dangerous as roads, says RoSPA...

Fun and games in Derbys

ABD member Reg Oliver is at loggerheads with his local Council (Derbys) over a 9000-strong petition in 2006 for the removal of speed humps. Reg located the Council meeting minutes on the petition and found that speed had been nominated as the biggest issue, this information coming from some Liverpool academics. The minutes ran to three pages yet no other subject was mentioned and no questions asked. Reg tracked down the official causation figures for that year for Derbyshire; they contradicted what was being claimed. As a result, Reg has been pursuing the matter for the past 12 months; his aim is to request the Chief Constable bring charges against the relevant officer at the Council. Any advice would be welcome.

Now, the Council and local camera partnership have constructed a mobile camera site (block paved) next to the entrance/exit of an engineering company, which has made the area highly dangerous when the vehicle is operating. Reg took it up with the chief inspector of road policing who said that after reviewing the site they would only operate on weekends – when presumably the engineering company isn't operating.

Another key issue is that of cost; there are mobile camera sites within 300 metres either side of the newly constructed one – both of which are still in operation. This new site though zaps drivers as they come over a brow; from this we can assume the other sites haven't been as lucrative as the partnership had been hoping...



Order your new ABD leaflets

So, who sticks up for drivers? When you get asked this, or you see an opportunity to help friends, family or contacts fed up with the harsh treatment of drivers, a leaflet explaining the broad aims and objectives of the ABD is a more than useful weapon to distribute.

The ABD's new leaflet provides an attractive, informative read on what we're doing to assist drivers. We are - as far as we can tell - the only group publicly standing up for drivers.

Keep a few leaflets handy and see if you can get any local businesses to display them. Several members have left them with local businesses with very positive results.

To get your copies write to:
Brian Moon
Toybox
9 Forge Close
Uckfield
Middlesex TN22 5BQ

Obviously postage will be an issue when requesting lots of leaflets; please send Brian your full contact details including phone number; he will then advise you of postage costs (there's no charge for the leaflets), so get ordering and spread the word. You can also phone Brian on 01825 764162; that number is also our general enquiries line for the public if they have driving issues they want to raise. An answerphone will take messages, but someone will get back to callers as soon as possible; this number is quoted



The value of getting stuck in

Our super-busy North Lines/East Yorks rep Ray Spalding sprang into action following a request from BBC Look North to appear on a news bulletin slot over people parking on grass verges in Immingham, with the council proposing to enforce a by-law with fines.

As is often the case with such issues, the views of a couple of residents were aired – they complained strongly about tyre tracks ruining the verge – before Ray was asked for the ABD's view. The response, predictably, was that the ABD is against fines being levied on drivers who already pay huge amounts of tax to own and run a car – the council should provide more parking spaces as well as consider the situation for visitors who need to park. Are they to be fined as well? Its bread and butter issues like this which interest local people and Ray supplied an intelligent and positive answer creating a good impression. He got just 20 seconds on air but it's enough for a quick riposte and for our name to enter viewers' minds as someone providing a positive answer to a common problem.

As usual, over the past few weeks we've fielded requests from a number of local radio stations and media outlets from a variety of places. Typical of these was one where committee member Ian Taylor dealt with a call from the *Liverpool Echo*; the Mayor of Liverpool has ordered more money to be spent on repairing

potholes, so the road surfaces there must have become an embarrassment. Ian praised the move but pointed out that merely filling potholes often leads to problems later on; it's better to dig up and relay stretches of road to give taxpayers better value for money in the long term.

Ian was also on the ball with a request from BBC Radio Sussex about a massive proposed extension to 20mph limits by the anti-motorist Green council in Brighton which intends to spend another £1m on expanding the present two-mile 20mph zone to the entire Brighton & Hove urban area – something which represents a trebling in size.

An interview originally scheduled for around 8am was cancelled at the last minute only for Ian to get a call later that day asking him to appear on the drivetime show at 5.30pm. Ian comments: "I was allowed to have my say almost uninterrupted – although I didn't get the time to say absolutely everything but I did get the main points over. I presented stats demolishing the safety argument, raised the issue of the risk of less attention by pedestrians and cyclists, spoke about the 'natural speed' of roads and also touched on the disrespect for limits instilled when politicians lower them too far. I also talked about the need to improve training for all road users including youngsters, who need to take some responsibility for their own safety".

Ian plays a vital role within the ABD, speaking up on behalf of drivers. If you'd like to join the band of volunteers working for other ABD members, get along to this year's members' meeting (as detailed on the front cover) or contact any of the committee members listed on the back page.

Wales reconsiders pedestrian zones

Welsh councils are being asked to look again at pedestrian zones amid concern they're deterring shoppers. The Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors (RICS) says towns need to find new ways to attract people. They should make them easier to get to and easier for car drivers to navigate around, it says.

RICS members met recently to discuss what should be done to make town centres more accessible and get more people spending there. One town the group says could benefit from a review of pedestrianisation is Colwyn Bay. One of its main shopping streets, Station Road, has been free of traffic since the 1980s.

Pedestrianisation is a factor behind one trader's decision to shut up the family shop after 135 years. Philip Arundale, who runs a greengrocer set up by his great grandfather there in 1878, has decided to close and concentrate on deliveries instead. The ban on traffic from his street is partly to blame.

"Pedestrianisation has been a big nail in the coffin," he explained. "Fruit and veg is heavy. People don't want to be carrying bags of veg to the nearest car park. When cars could come down the street, people just used to pop in. We've really campaigned against pedestrianisation the whole time. But now it's too late. It's terribly sad."

"I've been here all my life, and my father,



grandfather and great grandfather before me. We'll be carrying on with just one member of staff and focusing just on deliveries - it's a shame."

Richard Baddeley, a surveyor in Conwy county and a member of RICS in north Wales, said towns like Colwyn Bay, Holyhead, Rhyl and Holywell have all had pedestrianised areas for some time, but now need to think of new ways to get people spending.

"Shopping has changed. High streets have changed. There are now out-of-town shopping centres - they're a draw for people," he said. "One out-of-town shopping centre near north Wales - Cheshire Oaks in Ellesmere Park - has increased its turnover by 22% this year."

"The key issue is accessibility. Small and medium-sized towns need to think about how they attract cars in the future with improved parking and making the shops more accessible. It will not put the clock back, but improved accessibility may attract new independent retailers."

Conwy council said it looked at whether to reopen Station Road to traffic a few years ago, but almost everyone who replied to the consultation said things should stay as they are.

Anglesey council said it is looking in detail at how many people shop in the centre of Holyhead. Dewi Williams, Anglesey's Head of Highways and Waste Management, added: "The issue of pedestrianisation in town centres is one which provokes considerable debate. While we have no plans to change the current arrangement in Holyhead at the moment, we will be happy to consider the outcome of a public consultation that a local community group is planning on holding in the near future. The Holyhead town centre master plan currently being undertaken may also inform us of the benefits of any proposals."

Official: homes are far more dangerous than roads

Britain's homes are now far more dangerous than its roads, with more than twice as many people dying in mundane accidents like trips and falls than in crashes, according to a new report.

In the early 1990s more people died on our roads, but since then the number of accidental deaths in the home has risen by more than 50% to about 5000 a year, RoSPA has found. Over the same period the number of road deaths has fallen by about a third, to around 2000.

Tom Mullarkey, the charity's chief executive, said even though large numbers were being "wiped out in their prime" he had been "stonewalled" on the issue by top health officials. Mullarkey said: "Deaths on Britain's roads have thankfully come down markedly in recent decades, but that hasn't happened by chance. It has been due to a systematic road safety strategy led by the DfT, with the support of many partners such as RoSPA. The DfT has done a great job. Sadly, there has been no equivalent approach to safety in the home for over 20 years."

Slips, trips and falls account for the majority of such deaths, while another significant cause is carbon monoxide poisoning. More than half of

those who die in home accidents are under 65, according to the Office for National Statistics, while about 30% are under 45.

Mullarkey claims accident prevention is "sidelined" by an NHS culture that focuses almost exclusively on treating people rather than avoiding harm. Such attitudes go to the top, he argues, with some in the Department of Health not seeing it as their responsibility. He said: "Since her appointment in 2010 as Chief Medical Officer, Dame Sally Davies has stonewalled all our attempts to discuss the subject of accident prevention with her. It is only very recently that she's expressed any sort of interest in the importance of preventing accidental injuries."

This, he said, was "a source of huge frustration". Although accidental deaths only cause one in 50 fatalities, he said they often wipe decades off people's lives in a way that chronic diseases usually did not. "Accidents from all causes now result in a bigger loss of life in the under 60s, in terms of years lost, than anything except cancer," he argued, citing ONS data. "People are being wiped out in their prime. Yet the issue is being largely ignored by the Department of Health, which apportions

meagre resources to accident prevention."

While it's important to tackle heart disease and cancer, which account for billions of NHS spending, he said many cases are "genetically pre-determined and cannot be prevented, only treated". By comparison, accidents are "100% preventable".

RoSPA is advocating routine home safety advice for new parents from health visitors, and a programme advising the elderly on how to 'danger proof' their homes. Local trials have proved effective, according to Mullarkey.

A DoH spokesman denied the problem is being ignored. He said: "Accident prevention is a key part of our approach to improving public health - that's why we have given funding to RoSPA to produce advice on how best to prevent accidents and injuries. To reduce the number of falls and to help older people live independently after a fall, the Government is investing £785m through the Disabled Facilities Grant for aids and adaptations which are crucial to help people stay in their home for as long as possible. From April 2013, local councils can give specific public health budgets which can be used to tackle the health priorities in their area – this could include accident prevention."

For years the spectre of road pricing has been raising its ugly head, and it refuses to go away. Modern tech makes it easier than ever to introduce...

What's on the mind of Chris Medd, OTR editor. This issue; Rod King is decorated, a life-saver could cost us dear, and there's trouble up North...

Road pricing refuses to go away

As this issue of OTR goes to press, there are rumours that there will be a Government paper out with infrastructure charging proposals at the end of June. A key figure to watch will be the former Olympics supremo Lord Deighton, now the Commercial Secretary to the Treasury. He has been appointed towards getting UK infrastructure investment. One negative pointer is that he used to work for 'climate capitalists' Goldman Sachs, who advised on introducing road pricing abroad. Another is that his current employer, the Treasury, is keen on finding new ways of squeezing money out of drivers.



HGVs are likely to pave the way for distance-based road charging

Two recent nudges came from the EU, which has long wanted road pricing to help pay for its uneconomic Galileo satellite. 29 May saw the release of annual country-specific economic recommendations. European Commission documents talked up weaknesses in the UK transport networks and pushed road pricing schemes in the name of tackling road congestion. They added that private sources of funding would be needed, backed by government guarantees. Another recommendation was towards prioritising

public spending towards infrastructure.

By coincidence, the *Daily Mail* the next day reported a speech by Treasury minister Danny Alexander, indicating that the Chancellor will funnel cash from day-to-day departmental budgets into major projects. *Local Transport Today* (31 May) reminded us that in 2011 the European Commission pushed for EU-wide road pricing – on all vehicles on all roads. How this might address the EU's moan at "high unit costs in transport" in the UK is not explained.

A DfT source says EU Transport Commissioner Siim Kallas has now indicated plans to bring

forward a proposal on road charging this summer, including the possibility of mandatory distance-based HGV charging and some diversion of toll revenue for the Trans-European Transport Network. This could trump the government's wish for a time-based HGV charging system, and be the Trojan horse to get in a more intrusive system, linked to Galileo. Cynics would note that once UK-wide technology is working, it could be extended to cars.

Official material seen by the ABD includes repeated assurances that the government is opposed to the introduction of road pricing by the EU. This

must be balanced against the possibility that this can be introduced over our heads, particularly with greater majority voting from 2014. September's German elections could be important, as there is some feeling that Angela Merkel, who has so far opposed road pricing for cars, might be replaced by a socialist-green coalition.

As one of the justifications for punitive road pricing is carbon emission reduction, it is disturbing to note proposals to spend a massive 20% of the long-term EU budget on 'climate related' initiatives.

Of course, there's always the possibility that the government might seek to introduce a UK-badged road pricing scheme. On Christmas Eve, the *Daily Mail* reported that the Chancellor favoured this, but with massive opposition to this 'electoral suicide' in Cabinet from senior ministers like Michael Gove, Philip Hammond and Theresa May. An unnamed source is quoted that "Cameron only wants it if there are no losers and it's hard to see how you can get to that point. People are concerned about it across the board".

The PM also has concerns that motorway tolls would push traffic onto minor roads in the countryside. Under the previous Major government, this was a key reason for road pricing proposals falling. Plans to put tolls on certain lanes – "Lexus lanes" – were reported to have been abandoned because of lack of public support, although these were probably never more than ideas floated to test the temperature of the water. Even so, I have seen direct evidence of civil servants recently looking at means of selling road pricing to the public.

With the government nervously eyeing the 2015 general election, it will ignore public opposition at its peril.

Brian Mooney

DfT seeks views on EU powers

The DfT is seeking views on the extent of European transport powers, which could inform a future Government's attempt to renegotiate the UK's relationship with the EU. Transport minister Simon Burns said the UK-wide consultation would not lead to any specific policy recommendations but could "provide a constructive and serious contribution to the wider European debate about modernising, reforming and improving the EU". It's part of a wider balance of competencies review announced by foreign secretary William Hague last summer.

"The EU have very wide-ranging competence to legislate in the field of transport, constrained only by the principles of subsidiarity and proportionality," the consultation explains. Europe has legislated extensively on rail, road, aviation and maritime transport. "The EU has so far not exercised its competence to act directly in local transport matters or in relation to cycling policy," the DfT adds.

The EU specifies that all member states must accept lorries up to certain weights and size, and it sets maximum rates for lorry charges. EU regulation of private motoring has been more patchy, says the DfT, mostly focused on road safety and matters such as emissions and noise. Member states have resisted EU action on matters such as motorway speed limits and charging regimes for cars. However, the European Commission outlined in 2011 its aspiration for EU-wide road pricing.

"The Transport Commissioner [Siim Kallas] has indicated plans to bring forward a proposal on road charging in summer 2013, including the possibility of mandatory distance-based HGV charging and some hypothecation of toll revenue for transport spending including on the Trans-European Transport Network," the DfT explains.

The deadline for responses is 6 August and the outcome of the review will be published this winter.

You can read overleaf how Rod King, founder of the 20's Plenty campaign, has been honoured 'for his contribution to road safety. Around the time he was being honoured, his campaign was sending out a press release which stated that:

Road danger's costs include £10bn in casualties, £10bn in non-injury crashes and £16bn in suppressed exercise. That equals £36bn, or about £570 per head pa in the UK. For a one-off cost of £3 per head, local authorities can introduce wide area 20mph limits. This has been proven effective for safety and quality of life. See a summary of the evidence at tinyurl.com/kykzqoj

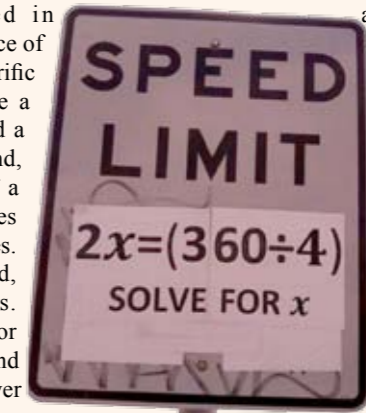
What I'd like to know is, what is 'suppressed exercise' and how do you put a value on it?



I got my second parking ticket recently, which isn't bad considering I've been driving for 25 years. It was in North Wales on a remote road which features pay and display parking for keen walkers like myself. Not that any parking spaces are provided as such; you just cough up your £4 for the ticket then park on the side of the road. Having scaled Snowdon I came back to find that my car – along with around 100 of

the 150 or so cars parked in the area – had got a ticket. My assumption is that because my wheels straddled the white line painted along the verge, I was 'causing an obstruction'. Not that there were any signs to say this was verboten of course. What really galled me was the way the ticket suggested I was being favoured by being able to get a 50% discount by coughing up quickly. I could appeal of course, but it would doubtless take several hours to save 35 quid, so like the other 100 drivers I suspect, I just paid up and put it down to experience. Not that I'll be rushing back to support the North Wales economy any time soon.

The European Commission has revealed its eCall system (see p13) which was first proposed in 2002 and expected to be commissioned in 2009. On the face of it, eCall is a terrific idea. Cars have a GPS system and a mobile phone and, in the event of a crash, it automatically generates a call to the emergency services. But once the system is fitted, it can have many purposes. All the elements are there for continuous vehicle tracking, and behaviour monitoring. Go over



Spotted (online) - a new design of speed limit sign. Maybe we should adopt this - but with a far trickier equation...

Chris Medd

Absolutely fascinating news story in the Huddersfield Daily Examiner; many thanks to Richard Huddlestone for spotting it. A tragic case that doesn't really need comment; the original piece is online at tinyurl.com/l6qrm6k. This story sums up just what a mountain we have to climb, for common sense to prevail when it comes to tackling road safety on UK roads. It really is quite incredible the unshakeable belief that some have in traffic calming and cameras as a cure-all for our road safety problems...



A teenage paperboy died after coming off his bike which had faulty brakes, an inquest heard yesterday. Declan Newsome, 15, was "pedalling like billy-ho" as he came down the steep Hopton Lane in Upper Hopton. A car in front stopped to let another come through and Declan didn't see it until the last minute, the Bradford inquest was told. Declan tried to swerve around the car but clipped its rear light and he lost control, hitting another car before coming off his bike and striking his head on the road. He wasn't wearing a helmet. He was airlifted to hospital but died three weeks later. Coroner Roger Whittaker, recording an accidental verdict, described Declan's death as a terrible tragedy and said no-one

was to blame. After the hearing Declan's devastated parents Kenneth and Harriet Newsome called for speed cameras or speed bumps to slow drivers in Hopton Lane. Mr Newsome, 69, of Trinity Street, Mirfield, said: "I hope the powers that be see the trauma that we have been through and get something done. Our son was safety conscious and looked after his bike but he

lost his life, his career, his future. I want Declan never to be forgotten and something positive to come from his death." The inquest was told how the accident happened at about 7.35am on July 9 last year. A post-mortem examination found Declan, a prefect at Castle Hall Academy in Mirfield, suffered a fractured skull and a severe brain injury. He died in Leeds General Infirmary when his life support machine was switched off on July 30. Builder Donald MacMillan, of Scholes, Holmfirth, was driving his Suzuki Wagon R down Hopton Lane, when he overtook Declan. A short distance down the narrow road – which has a one-in-eight gradient – Mr MacMillan had to stop behind a parked car to allow other cars to come up the hill. He told the inquest how Declan was "pedalling like Billy-ho" with his head down.

Mr MacMillan, who was stationary with his handbrake on, said: "I could see him coming from behind and as he got close he lifted his head and saw me there. He was only 6ft or 7ft away. I could see him brake and the handlebars shaking." Declan clipped the back of the Suzuki with his handlebar and struck the side of a VW Golf coming up the hill.

Opinions expressed are personal views and not necessarily those of the ABD. Please note letters may be shortened.

Write to OTR: Chris Medd, PO Box 2228, Kenley, Surrey CR8 5ZT or send an email to otr@abd.org.uk

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

I read recently in a news story that "the Government is still wrestling with the issue of how to pay for improving the country's road infrastructure."

Here's a clue. Between £8-10bn a year is spent on Britain's roads. Yet £46-£50bn a year is taken in taxes on motorists. The £40bn or so difference is wasted on wind turbines, increasing overseas aid and EU contributions, unwanted foreign wars and daft projects such as HS2 - and I'm sure you can think of many more examples. That's why there isn't the money to pay for Britain's roads...

Tim Stewart

For a long time I have been frustrated by the ABD's fixation with climate change as a cause on which to campaign. If we are honest with ourselves, we all know that the world's climate has changed in recent years – what nobody knows is whether the reason is a natural cycle or man-made. Carbon dioxide emissions from vehicles may be one of several factors, but there seems to be no definitive answer on this. So can the ABD please not get involved with this problem and instead focus only on true motoring issues? Please remember that we are the Alliance of British Drivers, not Meteorologists!

Peter Leverkus

(You've only got to read the article on page 8 to see why we need to keep exposing the climate frauds for what they are - Ed)

'The law is an ass' once again, this time in the Chris Huhne/Vicky Pryce case. An incident of minor triviality and personal vindictiveness has been hijacked by the legal fraternity. Ask the public what they want the courts and the prison system to be dealing with effectively and most will refer to crimes of violence, burglary, major fraud, etc. Judges are having to avoid sending people to prison because they are grossly overfull. Yet here we have a 10-year old trivial case (statute of limitations?) brought as a

It seems that London may soon adopt widespread 20mph zones.

Whereas there may be a place for some 20mph limits, blanket zones will compromise road safety. Drivers must legally take due care for other road users and adjust speed to the conditions. Professor Wann of Royal Holloway College has warned against blanket zones, as drivers become less likely to comply.

Scarce funds would be better spent on measures that will actually make roads safer, such as eradicating potholes, which benefits cyclists, too. 20mph zones are sometimes justified because pedestrians hit at a lower speed are more likely to survive. However it would be better to educate them in proper road safety, particularly in using designated crossing places, to prevent them being hit at any speed.



Give us a quote

"Road crashes are not accidents; the use of the term 'accident' undermines work to reduce road risk and causes insult to families whose lives have been torn apart by drivers taking risks on roads."

Brake, 'the road safety charity'

personal vendetta.

There are no victims in speeding offences and it is difficult to spot one in this 'perverting the course of justice' case, except for the two protagonists. No, the ones keen to pursue cases like this are the lawyers and judges keen to protect their lucrative situation and very happy to use the court system, at others' expense, to play out their dramas.

The ironic outcome is that the person who set this whole case off, Vicky Pryce, has got her come-uppance, and will even spend longer inside than her ex-husband as he will receive a discount to his sentence.

One does also wonder whether this case would have been pursued so assiduously if it had not initially been related to a motoring issue.

David Hall

(This came in just as OTR107 was going to press - Ed)

The recent RAC report which claims drivers assume road pricing is inevitable (see page 12), is nothing but thinly disguised propaganda. David Bizley is a director of the RAC Foundation, whose top dog, Professor Stephen Glaister constantly pushes road pricing – hardly surprising for a former Ken Livingstone protégé known mainly for being a rail enthusiast. What's he doing heading up a motoring group?

In Manchester, 79% voted against road pricing. The latest poll there put opposition at 80%. Nearly two million signed the national petition against it – and only 5000 signed the petition in favour – yet civil servants are trying to push it. Is it to help the EU pay for its overbudget Galileo

If this means parents taking responsibility for their children, and training them not to dash out, then good. The way gratuitous 20mph zones are sold might give a false sense of security to young pedestrians in crossing faster roads; remember that they can still be killed by traffic legally travelling at 20mph.

A culture of mutual respect and consideration between road users can only be a good thing. Having drivers' eyes glued to their speedos rather than the road ahead is not.

If you're London-based, lobbying the following would potentially prove worthwhile:

▶ **Deputy Mayor for Transport, Isabel Dedring, City Hall - www.london.gov.uk**

▶ **Your GLA member/local council**

▶ **The local media.**

Brian Mooney

military satellites, or just to extort more tax out of drivers?

If the Government wants more revenue, it should end the tax breaks on bogus charities like the RAC Foundation and the Campaign for Better Transport.

Steve Anderson

I read recently in an article on climate change, that "we can keep on producing as much CO2 as we like if we also return as much tree cover as there was 50 to 100 years ago. This will extract CO2 from the air, and if an area the size of the Sahara was covered in trees, in the next 10 years, we'll definitely have no problems for our grandchildren".

That is exactly the sort of misinformation that the greens use, based on select data, rubbish data, or no data at all. By the end of the First World War less than 5% of the UK land area was covered in forest; since then with a slight blip during the Second World War, that figure has been on a rising curve and now stands at about 12%.

So, we have over double the tree cover our grandparents had, and it's quite likely that we will increase that again for our grandchildren. So using the theory put forward in the article, we're sorted, our grandchildren are sorted, and we can get back to producing low-cost energy using our fossil fuel resources, and provide jobs for our grandchildren in wealth-producing industries, such as aluminium smelting, steel production and base chemicals.

David Ollerton

When our profligate government has priced the private motorist off the road, just who is going to pay the taxes that support the ring-fenced inviolate Foreign Aid budget of £11bn a year, which is growing every year by 3%-5%? Who is going to pay the ring-fenced inviolate £63m a day going to the EU that grows by about three times the rate of inflation each year?

Chris Bond

Environmentalists make a lot of noise about reducing CO2, but almost nothing about adaptation to the rising temperatures, especially given that we are insignificant in terms of CO2 production – we will always be a passenger to the 'impending doom' created by countries beyond our control.

The only result of 'green' policies seems to be well-off people enriching themselves without actually doing anything effective to save the planet. As far as I can tell the green lobby is no less about making money than the fossil fuel industry.

Frank Whitty

From July, the police will be able to fine you and endorse your licence much more easily than they currently can. Changes in legislation mean the feds can pull you and fine you for not using the lanes on the motorway correctly or tailgating (travelling too close to the car in front).

Predictably, there are many who reckon drivers are being seen as an easy target by the police, who "should be out tackling genuine crime". But are such claims justified when it's all these relatively minor transgressions of the law that lead to collisions, congestion and frayed tempers?

At this stage it's easy to think we're all going to be fined several times a week just for getting behind the wheel, but of course the reality will be very different. There's been a significant reduction in the numbers of traffic cops over the past few years, and while regular bobbies on the beat would be able to police urban roads, when it comes to motorways it's only the traffic police who can do it. So it's all very well the police having the powers, but do they have the presence to actually make a difference?

There's also the issue of whether the new rules are fair; as long as the police don't get carried away with their powers, I'm sure this is a positive move. I suspect action will be taken only when there's a blatant breach of the law; drivers can still appeal against a fine and if a case is marginal the police aren't going to want to be seen to be heavy-handed. However, one of the new offences is failing to use the lanes correctly on a roundabout; how many times have you had to dive across at the last minute, because of poor

The RAC Foundation's report/accounts for 2012 came out recently; you can see them at tinyurl.com/m6qdmzl. In them, road pricing research is listed under 'charitable activities'! Intriguingly, the RACF's key themes for the year include:

Mobility: maintaining and enhancing mobility as well as access through better integration of transport modes and innovative solutions (e.g. information technology and car clubs). Protecting consumer rights (parking, crime, costs, etc).

But the RACF is a strong advocate of road pricing – which does anything but improve mobility, as it prices people off the road.

Sarah Manvers

According to the *Daily Post* "Go Safe have a rigid site selection criteria and enforce only where there is evidence of collisions and excessive speed or excessive speeding and risk to road users in the community".

I wonder how that claim squares with the multiple visits to the Bryn Sannon road which has until recently been national limit at 60mph, now reduced to a too-low 30mph.

Also, I've just chanced upon an interesting

signing or confusing markings?

The bottom line is that drivers can be very lazy and selfish and it's these actions which contribute to traffic failing to flow smoothly. I rack up thousands of motorway miles every year and it's become the norm for drivers to sit in the middle lane for mile after mile at 60mph, while the inside lane is empty.

It only takes somebody to go for an overtake doing just a couple of mph more, and the tailbacks quickly grow. What many drivers fail to accept is that lanes 2 and 3 are for overtaking only, and if they're not overtaking a slower moving vehicle they should be in lane 1.

Then there's the issue of using a mobile phone; in an age of cheap bluetooth devices just why would you do this? How many times have you seen professional drivers chatting on their hand-held mobiles? If they can't be bothered to invest in a £20 piece of tech, what hope is there for the rest of us?

And what about seatbelts? These are proven to halve your chances of being killed in a crash, yet tens of thousands of drivers think it's an imposition to have to wear one – young drivers are those least likely to bother belting up. What's all that about then?

Whether or not the new powers will make a difference remains to be seen, but the fact is that there are many motorists who don't take driving seriously. In most cases their below-par driving is because of a bad attitude rather than because of any lack of ability – maybe the threat of some swift justice might make a difference.

Lee Farley

document at tinyurl.com/d7gpd5u – it's the ACPO guidelines for speed awareness courses. It says prosecutions should be triggered at 10% + 2mph, yet we still hear of drivers being done below that speed. No proof of that yet seen.

Alwyn Davies

I know of somebody prosecuted for 34mph in a 30 limit - Ed



Tim Yeo makes over £100,000 per year from green investments, while lobbying the government for subsidies on behalf of the industry. Back in 2009 Boris Johnson was lobbied to introduce an age limit for London taxis; Boris agreed and brought in new rules. Cabbies now needed to buy their new taxis from somewhere, but who could possibly provide them? Answer: Eco City Vehicles, which could supply the capital with hundreds of new cabs at around £30,000 each, making the company a fortune. And who is Eco City Vehicles' chairman? One Tim Yeo MP...

Albert Muggidge

The RAC Foundation report (see p13) which claims that speed cameras cut casualties is dangerous nonsense; it isn't possible for cameras

OTR glossary

- **ACPO**: Association of Chief Police Officers
- **ANPR**: Automatic Number Plate Recognition
- **Brake**: Vocal anti-car group
- **CBT**: Campaign for Better Transport (previously Transport 2000)
- **CPRE**: Campaign to Protect Rural England
- **CPS**: Crown Prosecution Service
- **DfT**: Department for Transport
- **DVLA**: Driver & Vehicle Licensing Agency
- **EC**: European Commission
- **ECHR**: European Court of Human Rights
- **FoI**: Freedom of Information (Act)
- **FTA**: Freight Transport Association
- **Gatso**: Speed camera that measures a car's speed at a single fixed point.
- **IAM**: Institute of Advanced Motorists
- **IPCC**: Inter-Governmental Panel on Climate Change (pushes man-made CC view)
- **ISA**: Intelligent Speed Adaptation
- **KSI**: Killed or Seriously Injured
- **LTP**: Local Transport Plan
- **MART**: Manchester Against Road Tolls
- **NAAT**: National Alliance Against Tolls
- **NIP**: Notice of Intended Prosecution (usually a speeding ticket)
- **RHA**: Road Haulage Association
- **PACTS**: Parliamentary Advisory Council on Transport Safety (of which the ABD is a member)
- **PCN**: Penalty Charge Notice
- **Scamera**: Speed camera
- **SPECS**: Speed camera that measures a car's average speed between two or more points.
- **TfL**: Transport for London
- **VAS**: Vehicle-activated sign

to cut accidents by anything like 25%, because speeding doesn't cause that many. Crucially, the report admits there's no identifiable relationship between speed reductions and casualty reductions! To anyone who can think straight, this confirms that it's not the speed reductions that led to accident reductions, but something else entirely.

That something else is regression to the mean, which Allsop claims to have adjusted for but has not - because he gets the timings wrong. Unlike Dave Finney, who put considerable effort into establishing the site selection periods, Allsop assumes they were the three years immediately before camera installation. But there is normally a delay of a year before cameras go live due to data acquisition, logistics etc. When Allsop thinks his three-year period excludes data from the site selection period, it almost invariably does include at least one year and often more.

My own analysis of 200,000+ examples – not 10, 50 or 100 – shows that almost all of the observed falls at qualifying sites occur in the first year after they qualify - and before cameras would have been in operation. I've analysed so far Scotland and Humberside - and the above is clearly true in both areas. Not only are they claiming credit for falls before their cameras were switched on, falls were minimal after they had been switched on!

Idris Francis

in brief...

► In March, Richmond council, in south west London, shut one of its roads to all traffic for a fortnight – to allow toads to cross safely to a nearby pond to breed. Bath and North East Somerset Council has closed a road on the outskirts of Bath for six weeks while toads were crossing. Richmond Council admitted to uncertainty over breeding season dates, saying: "it will be difficult for us to predict exact dates and times".

► The Local Government Association has called for all "restrictions on council tax" to be removed, paving the way for big increases plus the abolition of the single person discount. Connected with this, the LGA claims that some local authorities may have to slash their budgets for fixing potholes, increase bus fares and switch off streetlights overnight. However, money intended to fix potholes goes into a single local government pot, and (English) local authorities don't have to spend the DfT funding on maintenance or give an account to DfT for it...

► Cycling campaigners are calling for a new law in Scotland to make motorists automatically at fault in an accident. Under a 'strict liability' law, drivers would be held responsible in the civil courts for all accidents involving cyclists - unless they can prove they were not to blame. A strict liability law would see the introduction of a hierarchy based on the vulnerability of road users. It would also mean that cyclists would be held automatically responsible for accidents involving pedestrians. Apart from the UK, only Cyprus, Malta, Romania and Ireland do not operate a system of strict liability for road users.

► Islington Borough Council has agreed to pay back 11,000 wrongly issued penalty charge notices, served over a four-month period for violations at a pinch point designed to slow down traffic. Drivers were fined using CCTV evidence for entering a restricted lane on Drayton Park, opposite Arsenal's Emirates stadium. But after one driver appealed, the council was forced to admit it didn't have the proper consent for the changes made last November. The restrictions have been suspended while the council seeks planning permission.

► Islington made the ninth largest parking surplus of the 33 London boroughs, with a 2011 profit of £5.6 million, according to RAC figures.

An Australian man has been charged over allegations he let a seven-year-old boy drive him home while he was drunk. Police stopped the car when it drove past without its headlights on. They saw the boy at the wheel and the man in the passenger seat, police said.

► London now accounts for about half of all bus journeys in England, according to TfL. Passenger numbers reached an estimated 49.5m journeys between 28 April and 4 May, the highest number since before 1960. Annual patronage has risen by about 60% since 2000 to around 2.3bn, partly fuelled by London's population growing by one million between 2001 and 2011.

If you have a cutting you'd like to have included in OTR, please send it to Chris Medd – contact details are on page 16.

TfL sets out plan to cut casualties

TfL has put together a road safety plan which aims to cut the number of KSIs on London roads by 40% by 2020, compared with a baseline of the 2005-2009 average. KSIs fell 57% in the decade to 2010, measured against a 1994-98 baseline. But TfL says progress in reducing overall KSI casualties has slowed in recent years. Vulnerable road users now account for 76.6% of all KSIs in the capital: pedestrians 35%; motorcyclists 21%; and cyclists 20%. Car drivers and passengers account for 18%.

The plan suggests limiting lorry access to some parts of the city, at certain times of day (as in Paris and Dublin) while 20mph speed limit compliance is another focus. A key proposal is that speed awareness courses should be offered to drivers caught exceeding 20mph limits; currently they're available only to motorists exceeding speed limits of 30mph and above.

The plan talks of a need for a "renewed focus on speed management in town centres around London", with variable speed limits suggested. The only variable limits currently in use in the UK are on managed motorways or Scotland's mandatory part-time 20mph limits outside some schools.

TfL is also pressing for changes to the DfT's

Traffic Signs Regulations and General Directions (TSRGD) governing the enforcement of Advanced Stop Lines for cyclists. It's illegal for a cyclist to enter an ASL box on a red light if they don't use the feeder lane, which makes it difficult for the police to enforce drivers infringing ASLs as they'd also have to enforce the law against cyclists. TfL says TSRGD should therefore be amended so that the first stop line applies only to motorised vehicles.

TfL also wants to promote the use Intelligent Speed Assistance – in-car or mobile phone devices that would alert drivers when they're exceeding the speed limit. TfL has developed a digital speed limit map of London that, it says, can enable a "revolution" in Intelligent Speed Assistance technology.

A number of new road safety bodies are to be set up in the capital. A road safety steering group for London will oversee road safety policy and practice. Its membership will include representatives from the Metropolitan Police, London boroughs, the Local Government Technical Advisers Group, the freight industry, vehicle manufacturers, and academics. A road fatality review group will seek to learn lessons from fatal accidents.

NSL to become 40mph?

Speed limits on many rural roads in England could be cut from 60mph to 40mph under government proposals. The reduction should be considered by councils on roads with "many bends or junctions", the DfT says in draft guidance. Some 49% of road deaths in 2010 in the UK took place on single carriageway rural roads with a 60mph speed limit.

The vast majority of rural single-carriageway roads are subject to the national speed limit of 60mph. Under the plans, which are open to public consultation, a reduction to 40mph should also be considered where there is "substantial development" or where there are "a considerable number" of horse-riders, pedestrians, cyclists and motorcyclists.

A reduction to 50mph would be considered for "lower quality A and B roads" with "a relatively



high number" of bends or junctions and where mean speeds are already below 50mph. DfT figures for 2010 show that 68% of road deaths in Britain took place on rural roads.

- The draft guidance: tinyurl.com/c7yp9nk
- The consultation: tinyurl.com/cypbtmt

RAC: road tolling is inevitable

A new survey by the RAC claims that 55% of drivers believe road tolling is inevitable. While the Coalition has ruled out tolls on the existing road network during this side of the election, no promises have been given for the second half of the decade. The survey of over 1500 motorists claims that drivers would be willing to pay to use motorways and drive into cities if VED and fuel taxes were cut.

Said the RAC's David Bizley: "The report suggests motorists would prefer to see a higher share of motoring taxation levied on those things over which they have greater control – such as

whether or not they choose to drive into city centres or use a particular motorway."

In all 29% backed motorway tolls, while 21% opposed them. A third of drivers backed congestion charging to drive into cities – twice as many as those who were against the idea. But drivers are still unhappy their taxes aren't ringfenced to repair and improve the country's roads, with only 22% of the £40bn they contribute to the Treasury being spent on the network. The survey also found that 84% believe the roads are deteriorating in condition; a rise of 15% on the previous five years.

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RACF: Cameras cut crashes in brief...

A new report by the RAC Foundation claims that speed cameras cut collisions and casualties, even after the effects of other influences such as trends and regression to the mean are taken into account. The report was authored by Professor Richard Allsop of UCL.

Allsop's report emphasises the need to separate the impact of the cameras from the statistical phenomenon known as regression to the mean, and the wider trend in collisions and casualties within the local authority area. Allsop divided the data into three time periods: years in which the camera was present; the last three years before the camera was installed; and any period of more than three years before the camera was installed. He says the regression to the mean influence is likely to be seen in the three-year period before a camera is installed, as this is a period when the

number of collisions may have influenced the decision to locate a camera at the site.

Allsop compares numbers of collisions in the operational years with the number of collisions in the years more than three years before cameras were established for a group of camera sites. The data is measured relative to the total number of collisions in the partnership area in the year concerned, to take account of wider trend effects.

Using a statistical model to analyse data from Warwickshire, he reports: "After camera establishment, the number of personal injury collisions had fallen by 25% (with a [95%] confidence interval from a fall of 35% to a fall of 13%) from the numbers more than three years before camera establishment."

- The report is at tinyurl.com/lbw4s4z
- See Idris Francis' letter on p11

Kent Police caught out

Kent's police chief has admitted there was a "distortion of activity" by the force in some areas of the county to achieve crime statistic targets. Ian Learmonth was facing questions from the police and crime commissioner (PCC) after a report found one in 10 crimes had been inaccurately recorded. Previously, he'd attended a public meeting with PCC Ann Barnes. She expressed her anger after the report found an "institutional bias" towards chasing crime targets.

It found 25% of crimes recorded as "no-crimes" were wrongly classified, among them rapes and robberies. Learmonth told

Barnes: "There was a distortion of activity in some areas around the county to achieve the numerical targets that they've been set. Is that against the law or are they doing something that's breaking or breaching the law? No, it isn't, because these are offences that are taking place so we're investigating the offences. Is that the activity that we would want them to focus their attention on? No, it isn't."

And that, folks, is what happens when you insist on setting targets for everything. Poor decisions are made - and procedures twisted, in a bid to hit those all-important targets...

EU unveils eCall M6T traffic drops

The EU plans to insist every new car on the road by 2015 includes a mobile device that phones home after a crash is set to become reality, after the European Commission signed off draft legislation to enact the scheme. Assent from the European Parliament and Council of the European Union is now required, but little opposition is expected.

The idea behind the scheme, known as eCall, is simple: when a car crashes, an on-board device that combines a GPS and mobile communications device will contact Europe's 112 emergency services number. By automating that call, legislators expect emergency services response will be faster, which will mean lives will be saved. The EU claims that installation of the eCall in-vehicle system is estimated to cost "much less than €100 per new car".

According to EU officials: "eCall units are not traceable and when there is no emergency (its normal operational status) it is not subject to any constant tracking. As it is not permanently connected to mobile networks, hackers cannot take control of it."

Traffic on the M6 toll road has dropped by 40% in seven years – and the head of the region's local transport authority says it hasn't relieved congestion on the M6 around Birmingham. Geoff Inskip, chief executive of Centro, the West Midlands transport authority, has called on the Government to take the M6 toll road out of private hands, so it can be put to better use.

When the £900m road was completed 10 years ago it was hoped the 27-mile stretch would relieve traffic congestion around Birmingham with around 74,000 vehicles predicted to use the road each day. But thanks to the high cost of using it, just 34,360 actually do use it. There have been eight price rises in the decade since the toll road opened in December 2003, when a car could travel on the road for £2. HGVs were charged £10 for use of the road before the charge fell to £6 the next year only for prices to begin rising again in 2005. A trip by car now costs £5.50; HGVs are charged £11.

► Rod King, founder of the '20's Plenty for Us' campaign, has been awarded an MBE for his services to road safety. Rod King has been campaigning since 2000; he set up his campaign in 2007. King commented: "We are moving from a past tradition of accepting that motor vehicles could dominate where people lived, worked and shopped into one where we share the streets more equitably and enable people to choose to walk or cycle without fear of fast traffic".

► Manchester City Council is to use £500,000 of its public health budget to fund the implementation of 20mph speed limits on residential streets. Since April, councils in England have had a statutory duty to improve public health. Manchester already has 140 miles of 20mph roads.

► Campaigners are calling on the DfT to cut the cost of introducing 20mph limits by abolishing the requirement for repeater signs. "With so many places now adopting 20mph as the right limit for residential roads it seems wrong that these should be treated as if they are some abnormal limit for residential roads and require regular 20mph repeater signs," says campaign group 20's Plenty for Us. "It would be far more cost-effective to simply sign the exceptions. This already happens for 40mph and 50mph limits, why can't it be done for 30mph limits?"

► The new Parking on Private Land Appeals (POPLA) service has upheld just over half the appeals lodged by motorists who have received parking charges issued on private land. POPLA was set up last October and is run by London Councils on behalf of the British Parking Association. It considers appeals from motorists across England and Wales who have unsuccessfully challenged operators for imposing a parking charge on private land.

► The DfT is believed to be planning to revise its road traffic forecasts for London, having conceded that the currently predicted growth is unrealistic. The National Road Traffic Forecasts published early last year featured a central estimate of 43% road traffic growth in London between 2010 and 2035. Some transport planners questioned the forecast, saying it was wildly at odds with the stable or declining traffic levels recorded in recent years.

► Consultants have questioned the Government's electric vehicle strategy, saying there's little prospect of EVs becoming widespread any time soon. "Whether the degree of public investment in electric vehicles is appropriate, given their current prospects as a viable form of transport for ordinary people, is ... the subject of considerable debate," says Ricardo-AEA in a report on road fuels funded by the RACF and UK Petroleum Industry Association. The Government is encouraging EV purchases by funding the installation of charging points and offering subsidies of up to £5000 on the vehicles. The consultant says petrol and diesel are likely to remain the dominant road fuels for at least the next 20 years and that the "lion's share" of emissions reductions from road transport during this time will come from improvements in the efficiency of internal combustion engine vehicles.

in brief...

► Pedestrians are at fault for most accidents they're involved in, according to accident reports compiled by the police. Road Safety Analysis analysed the contributory factors to accidents involving a pedestrian casualty, recorded by police forces from 2006-2011. The research was commissioned by PACTS and funded by the IAM and the Safer Roads Foundation. The study found that pedestrian contributory factors were recorded by the police in 78% of collisions, with only 28% of collisions having any driver error attributed. A pedestrian failing to look before crossing was a contributory factor in 60% of incidents and in 25% of instances the pedestrian was recorded as being "careless, reckless, in a hurry". Report authors Richard Owen and Tanya Fosdick claim the most effective way to cut such collisions "would be to reduce vehicle speeds or provide better segregation"...

► Plans to replace the Hammersmith Flyover with a tunnel have been given the thumbs up from the public. A group of prominent west London architects has revealed initial drawings of how the land above the A4 could be used should TfL decide to demolish the crumbling structure and adopt the 'flyunder' plan.

► The AA has said a Nottinghamshire village which has eight different speed limits in just over a mile of road may be confusing drivers. The village of Ashby de la Zouch, on the Nottinghamshire-Leicestershire border, has seven different limits between itself and the next village of Hathern. A further speed limit lies in the opposite direction on the A6 towards Kegworth. The county council said it had imposed the limits "for safety reasons".

► Shoppers in Cambridge are finding it cheaper to park illegally in the city centre and pay a fine than to use an official car park. The cost of parking in the Grand Arcade shopping centre on Saturdays, over five hours, costs £26 from 0900 to 1700. Parking fines are £50, reduced by half if paid within 14 days, making it cheaper for shoppers by £1. The annual turnover generated by parking fees is worth about £9m to the city council.

► A "cycling barometer" could be fitted at a junction in Cambridge to count the number of bikes which pass through. The continuously updated results would be displayed on electronic screens at the Gonville Place junction. Its aim is to promote the "benefits of cycling in the city" to motorists stuck in traffic along Parker's Piece. The £11,000 proposal is a Cambridgeshire County Council scheme but would require approval by Cambridge City Council to go ahead. About 2% of adults in England usually travel to work by bicycle, with the highest proportion, 18%, being in Cambridge, according to the 2011 Census.

Newham admits £350k error

Parking tickets were illegally issued by a dozen cameras over at least two years, a London council has admitted - but it refuses to refund fined drivers. Local authorities are only allowed to use cameras authorised by the Vehicle Certification Agency (VCA). But a Newham Council internal report shows between 2011 and 2013 it issued 6840 tickets from unauthorised cameras - making £350,000. The council says previous cases show it does not need to repay drivers.

By law, only camera models that have been specifically authorised by the VCA can be used by councils. Otherwise authorities might use cameras that are not of a high enough calibre to be relied upon for evidence. But Newham Council was using cameras that did not have approval. When the problem came to light in February 2013, it commissioned accountancy firm PricewaterhouseCoopers to carry out an audit of how many unlawful tickets it had issued. The report, which covers tickets issued in the years 2011-2012 and 2012-2013, reads: "Compliance is high (97%); however, due to the volume of parking penalty charge notices issued even a small percentage of non-compliance will have a significant impact on the council's finances. Clear instructions should be issued to the parking contractor only to use certified cameras for the identification of parking offences."

With regard to two of the unauthorised cameras, the report detailed: "The parking contractor was instructed not to use these cameras to identify offences. However, 151 PCNs were issued." The audit recommended the council improves the accuracy of its camera register and monitoring of the private companies it uses to enforce parking.

The council has now cancelled all the

parking tickets that were unpaid, writing off a total of £347,376. But it's refusing to refund any drivers who settled the unlawful fines straight away.

Paul Pearson, of ticket appeal website Penalty Charge Notice, said: "If the cameras are uncertified they can't be used for enforcement - that's the law. The law is there to make sure cameras councils use are fit for purpose. They are relied on for evidence, otherwise councils could use any old camera. They should contact the motorists who've paid their fines, apologise and offer a refund. They expect us to abide by the rules, but when they're caught they seem to be above the law. It's disgraceful conduct."

Chaos beckons in Hammersmith

Encouraging cycling is the justification for TfL's latest cycling extravaganza, creating major transport disruption around the Olympic Park area, in central London and a number of West London boroughs. RideLondon on 4 August will see 20,000 amateur cyclists ride their bikes. The amateur event will be followed by an elite race with approximately 150 cyclists.

Hammersmith & Fulham Council is one council warning all residents to expect a wider impact than in last year's Olympic races, with significant transport disruption throughout the day, thanks to major roads and bridges being closed to traffic. These include parts of the A4 and the Hammersmith Flyover. It's advising residents only to use their car if it's absolutely vital. More at tinyurl.com/lmynn9

20mph zones across London?

A 20mph speed limit could be introduced on almost all residential roads and high streets in London by the end of the decade, according to the mayor's transport advisor. Motorists could be restricted to 20mph within the M25 on all but a major arteries into the capital, according to Isabel Deding, deputy mayor for transport.

Supporters of the limits - in place on 19% on the capital's roads - say it has benefits for road safety and improves quality of life for residents and encourages cycling and walking. Deding said of a London-wide 20 limit: "It could be realistic by 2020. It could be one of these things like smoking (in public places) where suddenly we get to the stage where we can't believe it would ever have been OK to drive above 20mph. I live in a residential road in

Camden that isn't 20mph and I think it's absurd that this small road has cars bombing down, it is ridiculous."

Islington recently became the first borough to impose a 20mph limit on all the roads it controls and other central London councils including Camden are consulting residents on the same borough-wide policy. It's thought these central London councils will set off a chain reaction with Westminster, the City of London, Southwark and Lambeth possibly also adopting the 20mph limit.

Setting speed limits is a matter for individual councils which control 95% of the roads and 70% by volume of traffic with the remainder - mainly A-roads - controlled by TfL. These mainly A-roads are likely to stay at 40-50mph, at least on their outer London stretches. However the mayor will incentivise a shift to 20mph through funding.

Stay informed

Social media

Keep abreast of ABD-related news, and what the ABD is up to on a daily basis, by following us on Twitter (twitter.com/TheABD) or 'liking' us on Facebook (www.facebook.com/associationofbritishdrivers). Please retweet or share one of our updates occasionally to help promote us to your followers or friends.

Forum

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

Website

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

OTR on ipad

If you have an iPad and want to read OTR on it, it's easy. Once you've downloaded OTR from the members' site, just drag the OTR file to the 'Books' Library in iTunes, then sync your iPad. OTR will appear on the 'PDFs' collections page in iBooks.

OTR in cyberspace

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

Speed limit objection packs

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

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malcolm.heymer@abd.org.uk

Help out

ABD publicity material

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

Affiliated organisations

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

Complain

Object about proposals for traffic calming and speed limit reductions. Few people do, which is why they happen.

Facebook

Follow us on Facebook at www.facebook.com/associationofbritishdrivers where you can comment on posted articles, find out about press articles you can comment on, and by sharing some of our updates, encourage your friends to support us too.

Fighting fund

The ABD has a fighting fund to which you can donate any amount at any time. You can also donate by standing order if you wish to give a regular sum. Please contact the membership secretary for more information; she'll send you the relevant form to fill out.

Joint memberships

These are free and help us to increase the size of the group easily. If your partner/spouse isn't a joint member, please sign them up if you can - just contact the membership secretary to do so.

Local/regional contacts

Have you been in touch with your local co-ordinator recently? Advise them of anything local you see, find out how you can help campaign locally. You can find out their details on the members site (<http://members.abd.org.uk>). If there's no local co-ordinator for your area, perhaps you can take on the role - more details on what is involved can be found on the members site.

National committee

The ABD's national committee is always keen to increase its effectiveness, which means getting more members involved. An ability to function effectively and diplomatically in committee email discussions across a wide range of issues is essential, and ideally, after an acclimatisation period, new recruits would eventually become a media spokesman too. There are usually around four committee plus (up to) two members' meetings each year, which you'd ideally be able to attend. If you reckon you could get involved, just contact Brian Gregory (brian.gregory@abd.org.uk), Brian MacDowall (brian.macdowall@abd.org.uk) or Bob Dennish (national@abd.org.uk) and they'll do the rest.

Twitter

Follow us at <http://twitter.com/TheABD>, where you can stay up to date on what's happening. Find out about press articles you can comment on and retweet our posts to spread the word. You can also use Twitter to update us on things you see, if you make sure we're following you. If you're in Essex, Herefordshire, Kent, North Wales, North West, Rutland, Scotland, South West of England, Staffs, Surrey, Sussex, Warwickshire or the West Midlands, we have a local Twitter account too: <http://twitter.com/TheABD/local>

Write to the press

Take the time to reply to anti-car articles and letters in the local press. Not only do you get to respond to information already published, but you may be able to get a debate going - and could even become a local point of contact.

Contact your MP

Write to your MP regularly, reminding them of their duty to stand up for drivers. MPs are listed by name & constituency on the Parliament site (parliament.uk/directories/directories.cfm). Many MPs have their own email, but if you use the Parliament webpage to email them, it's involved. It's often better to check their constituency website (if they have one) for contact info. Make sure you state clearly you're a constituent to get priority in a reply. Conservative ministers are listed at conservatives.com

national & regional contacts

We are always pleased to hear from members who can offer support or need help. But remember that the ABD is a voluntary organisation – funded only by its members' subscriptions – and is staffed by unpaid volunteers who do their best to help members. **So please, no phone calls after 9pm!**

Affiliated organisations

- ▶ American Automobile Club
- ▶ BMW Car Club
- ▶ CIPS (Choice in Personal Safety)
- ▶ Citroen Car Club
- ▶ Driver Awareness
- ▶ Jaguar Drivers' Club
- ▶ National Motorists' Action Group
- ▶ NO2ID

- ▶ Parkingticket.co.uk
- ▶ Professional Drivers' Association
- ▶ Repeal the Act
- ▶ Safe Speed (safespeed.org.uk)
- ▶ South East Lotus Owners' Club
- ▶ Subaru Impreza Drivers' Club
- ▶ The Independent Porsche Enthusiasts' Club
- ▶ Triumph Stag Enthusiasts' Club

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