

## Road spending programme decimated

**But no let-up in Exchequer's bid to bleed motorists dry!**

Some £200M has been cut from the 1996 road-building budget; with Government seeking private funding to "plug the gap".

At the same time, we motorists are being expected to stomach yet further increases in fuel excise duty and road fund licence costs.

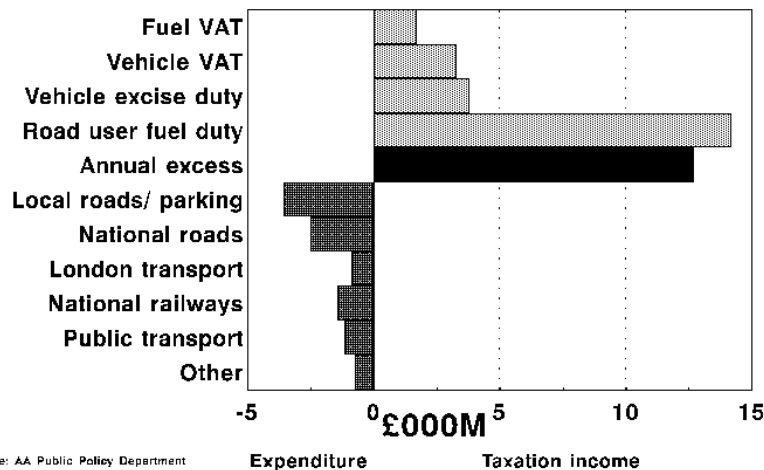
The Exchequer already annually nets a cool £13 thousand million clear from taxation of UK road users; *even after* subsidising London transport, National railways, public transport and other (non-road) transport-related spending to the tune of £4200M annually.

It's no wonder we have congestion problems, when successive Governments

have persistently underinvested in the UK road infrastructure: examining the international league of road construction spending, we consistently spend less on roads than *almost any* of our developed European neighbours. What road spending there is is predominantly on housing and industrial estates; instead of

... continued on page 2

### Where the money goes: Tax income & expenditure from Road Transport



## ABD Press Release scores a hit!

A recent ABD press release was published in "Auto Express" and "The European".

### "Tollways to Terror"

... is how Auto Express headlined the article and quoted: "Motorway tolls could sound the death toll for thousands of British motorists if plans to introduce the charges go ahead, campaigners warn. The controversial Association of British Drivers claims countries with toll roads have a much higher accident rates. And it warns the same will happen to Britain." Brian Gregory ABD chairman was reported to have said "Thousands of car and lorry drivers will divert on to smaller

roads rather than pay the toll. Even if only 10 per cent of drivers divert, there will be an extra 2,800 deaths and serious injuries every year - it could be as much as 6,000. If it's happening on our toll bridges then it's going to happen on the roads too. Drivers will pay more money in petrol and sit in traffic jams on clogged roads rather than pay the fees. France has an appalling accident rate, and its motorways are empty while local roads are busy."

... continued on page 3

Issue 9, Winter 1995/96

£3.00

### Inside this issue

The AA saga continues:

- Just who do they represent?
- Exploiting car crime victims

Your letters:

- Modest requests
- Humps and chicanes: are they legal?

Pollution and health:

- The "Global Warming" con
- Clean cars, dirty buses
- Pollution and asthma - latest report
- Road rage theory

Safety and speed

- Policeman speaks up for 90mph
- Accident causes - the truth
- Speed cameras - a questionable contribution to road safety

ABD Gatso watch

- Your help needed

Alternatives to the car

- Rail? You must be joking!

Good news!

- PPG13 backtracking
- US raises limits
- Tory think tank slams tolls

## Police driver training standards slip

The Association of British Drivers is highly critical of the decrease in Police Driver Training Standards as illustrated by a recent tragic accident at a Cambridgeshire roadworks; latest of a spate of accidents involving police cars.

"It is inexcusable", warns Brian Gregory of the ABD, "that British Police drivers were once regarded as the finest in the world, yet training standards have been allowed to slide to such an extent that their very essential work could be jeopardised." He further suggested that the problem is becoming endemic.

Since the early 1960's, the number of hours that the Police must spend in Driver Training has been progressively eroded by successive Transport

... continued on page 2

## Road spending

... continued from page 1

on our arterial national trunk roads and motorways.

Yet Government would have us believe that it is unable to match road transport investment with traffic growth. The truth is that it has never tried.

Road user taxation has grown by 2200% since 1965; traffic levels by 153%, the road network by a paltry 11%; mostly on housing and industrial developments as already mentioned.

Motorway length grew by a pathetic 4% in the decade to 1992. All our European neighbours are outstripping us in motorway construction: France 7450km with 2800km *more* (nearly as much as *the whole* UK motorway network) planned; the tiny Netherlands 2090km with 60km more planned.

The Confederation of British Industry's transport committee chairman, Robert Napier, has suggested that Government is investing £2 thousand million too little *annually* in the transport infrastructure to maintain parity with our European competitors.

### Hanson: poor roads produce *more* pollution

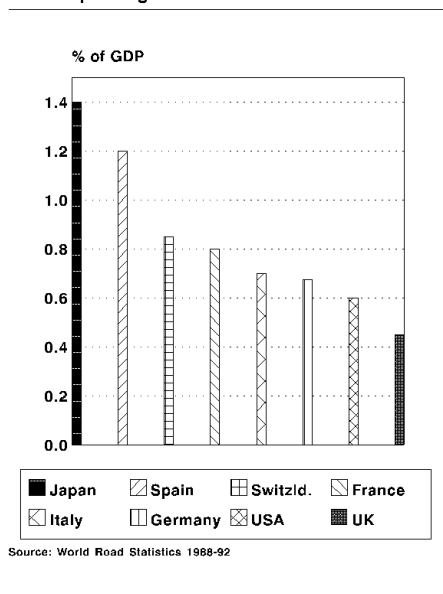
Lord Hanson, chairman of the multinational Hanson Group: pointed out (in a recent *Daily Telegraph* article) that bad, congested roads do not, in themselves, constitute a disincentive to car use.

He went on: "poor roads and traffic jams produce far more pollution and local environmental damage than free-flowing by-passes and motorways"; while : "It would be simply Luddite [to believe that] such technical advances [in road transport

emissions control over the last 10 years] will not continue, making motoring even cleaner and safer than it is in 1995."

Lord Hanson concludes by pointing out the electoral advantages of spending *more*, not less, on road construction. If the country's industrialists can see the light, why can't its politicians?

### Who spends what on Roads: Road Spending as % of Gross Domestic Product



### How the UK compares

The table shows current total lengths of motorway in km, and the planned new motorway to be built.

Country	Current	Planned
Germany	8960	1600
France	7450	2800
UK	3100	213
Netherlands*	2090	60

\*In relation to its land area the Netherlands has over four times as much motorway as the UK.

## Ministers in transport policy U-turn

Press reports indicate that the Government's self imposed deadline for selling off the majority of the rail network by 1st April has been abandoned by ministers.

If only our "leaders" could abandon some of their other crazier mad cap schemes e.g. Road Tolls, Gatsos on motorways and dual carriage ways for instance ?

## Police driver training

... continued from page 1

Ministers. The excuse is the usual one of reducing budgets.

Unfortunately, a recent statistic released by the Metropolitan Police Federation in London, demonstrates that serious injuries and fatalities resulting from accidents involving Police vehicles have increased by **300% in just the last three years.**

### police vehicle accidents triple in three years

Gregory adds, "Whilst the ABD will continue to highlight the plight of all British motorists in the face of increasingly swingeing and unreasonable legislation, we simply cannot condone the lack, both of observation, anticipation and assessment of vulnerability, demonstrated by these recent, tragic incidents."

The ABD further urges the Minister of Transport both to *increase* budgets to Police Driver Training establishments, *not* to continue decreasing them; and to give more credence to advanced civilian driver training companies in the UK, in the light of the highly-publicised increase in 'negative attitude' reportedly exhibited by some drivers in the UK.

## The Association of British Drivers

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

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

## Subscription Time!

May we respectfully remind readers that it is time to pay 1996 subscriptions.

Thanks to those who have already done so, particularly for the letters of encouragement and the extra "fighting fund" donations.

The ABD is run entirely on a voluntary basis with all funds used for campaigning.

## ABD Press Release: Road tolls

The report quoted the ABD Press Release dated 01/08/95 which refers to international evidence which suggests that:

- a) higher accident rates and motorway tolls *are* linked, but
- b) there is *no* link between maximum speed limits and safety

The political pressure to introduce Motorway Tolls originally came from Brussels. However ABD members may suspect that in Britain our Government's desire to fund the awful black hole in the

economy *and* to deliver tax cuts may lie behind the proposal. EU Transport Commissioner Neil Kinnock, who was caught doing more than 100mph on the M11 a year or so ago, will present a Green Paper on road pricing later on this year. The issue is likely to become a political hot potatoe in those European states which do not have motorway tolls, these include Germany where the issue is controversial, The Netherlands whose parliament has recently rejected the issue and of course Britain.

## Complete Carp

Any readers unfortunate enough to have wasted their money buying "Complete Car" magazine for December will no doubt have been shocked to read the scurrilous attack on ABD Chairman, Brian Gregory.

Under the guise of interviewing him to learn about the aims and activities of the Association, the journalist first led him on a wild goose chase to find a Gatso for the obligatory photograph. Ironically, the siting of this particular camera is one of which the ABD would approve - at an accident blackspot.

Later the interview continued at Brian's house. In his article, however, this unspeakable reporter unleashed a torrent of cheap jibes and snide personal remarks about your Chairman and his family. Almost nothing was mentioned of the very serious issues about which the ABD is concerned, except in a dismissive manner.

This article was either the work of an inexperienced hack who had not listened, did not understand or could not remember the important bits and thus had to cobble together any old rubbish to meet the sub-editors deadline; or it was a deliberate attempt to discredit and marginalise your Association and its Chairman.

If anyone now feels compelled to go out and buy the rag anyway, we hope the "Complete Car" editor's desk will be deluged with appropriate responses!

To look on the bright side, as someone once said, any publicity is good publicity.

### International Motorway Safety Levels / Speed Limits & Tolls

Country	Speed Limit <i>Kn/h</i>	Tolls	Death Rate <i>perBnVKms*</i>
Holland	120	no	3.2
United Kingdom	112	no	3.8
Denmark	100	no	4.9
Switzerland	120	no	4.9
W Germany	NONE	no	6.0
USA	104&88	some	6.7
Belgium	120	no	9.5
Finland	120	no	10.2
France	130	yes	10.4
Italy	130	yes	12.7
Austria	130	some	15.7
Portugal	120	yes	39.3
Spain	120	yes	61.0

\* = Killed per 1,000,000,000 Vehicle Kms  
(1990 figures source: Auto, Motor und Sport).

## Gatso privatisation proposals - a gravy-train for ex-ministers?

A Home Office study is currently investigating the benefits of installing extra speed traps, with a view to privatising their operation, putting it in the hands of such trustworthy organisations as Group 4 Security.

Of course we all *know* that the study will conclude that extra Gatsos will be beneficial, despite their having generated just a 2% reduction in accidents compared with the 56% achieved by the recent M1 chevron experiment (as reported elsewhere in this issue of "On the Road").

Once again the real, cynical motive behind non-urban, non-junction versions of these devices is fully exposed to public scrutiny: they are there merely to separate the driver from his hard-earned cash for no better reason (in most cases) than that

he (or she) has driven - with no adverse road safety implications - at a speed in excess of an entirely *arbitrary* limit.

It is to be hoped that the British voter (who more often than not is also a British *driver*) reacts to this development in a similar fashion to Ontario's voters, who recently ousted the previous state administration in favour of an opposition committed to the abolition of speed cameras it characterised as no more than "a Government cash-grab".

But perhaps the most sinister development is likely to be that, a suitable

period of time *after* the privatisation of speed camera operations, some ex-Government (possibly Transport?) Minister or other will (totally coincidentally, of course!) find himself (or herself) on the Main Board of the company operating the cameras - and benefitting from massive profits, share option deals and various other pocket-lining perks.

But his (or her) *only* interest will, of course, be in improved road safety.

Give us a break! Do they really think we came down with the last shower of sleet (remember, this is a Winter issue!) See article about the application of Gatsos later in this issue.

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# The “Automobile Association”

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## Sympathetic ears needed!

Is it time to set up a telephone helpline, manned 24 hours a day for AA members? They could be feeling distraught and possibly suicidal having been betrayed by the organisation which is supposed to represent them and which they support with highly-priced subscription fees every year.

### The story so far

Recent issues of “On the Road” have reported how the AA may be compromising its independence by bidding for motorway traffic monitoring and related duties.

It was also reported that Simon Dyer, head of the AA, had exhorted motorists to abandon their cars in favour of other means of transport. Fine (perhaps), except that he took his chauffeur-driven limousine to London to make the pronouncement!

The AA Magazine of Winter 1995 carries an article headed “Lights Cameras Action” which informs motorists of the workings of Gatsos and other speed checking devices. However the tone of the article is completely submissive with no attempt to criticise the use of cameras for revenue generation. The article uses pejorative phrases such as “crackdown on speeding motorists” without any balancing comment on the imposition of inappropriately low limits by local councils.

*Now read on. Jonathan Newby-Robson, ABD Secretary, reports on recent activities of the AA and on his experience of discussing these issues with AA staff:*

## AA Upset?

### What is wrong with the AA?

Two recent press reports involving the country’s premier motoring organisation indicate a confusion in that organisation’s stance on speed enforcement and safety matters generally.

The Daily Telegraph carried a report on 3rd September “Deadly speed trap detectors”. The report stated that Andrew Howard, head of road safety at the AA, was reported to have said “Speeding costs 1,200 lives a year, and contributes to more than a third of road accidents. Speed trap detectors are dangerous and their sale should be outlawed”.

The Times carried a report on 9th September “AA on collision course over police over limits”. The AA appeared to say that if drivers were prosecuted for breaking the new variable speed limits recently

introduced on the M25 (see elsewhere in this issue) they should refuse to pay their fines. The AA seems not to know whether it is coming or going.

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## The AA seems not to know whether it is coming or going

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The ABD supports speed limits when and where they are needed, at the appropriate level. This means that in those circumstances when and where lives are lost, speed limits should be imposed at the correct level and enforced! However in those circumstances in which the loss of life is negligible, speed limits should be raised. (some ABD members would argue for complete removal).

In urban areas and minor roads speed limits are needed. However on good, motorway standard roads, speeds of around 95mph are safe in good conditions. This point is proved in practice in the former West Germany where most of the autobahn network is speed limit free and where the 85th percentile speed in free flowing conditions is 95mph (source a DoT official). This shows that when and where motorists are free to drive at their speed of their choice on safe roads in safe conditions no harm results. According to survey results most British motorway drivers would support a variable speed limit on motorways with an upper limit of around 95mph in safe conditions, and lower limits 50mph or less for adverse conditions.

In 1992 I contacted the AA, of which I was then a member, to find out what the position of that organisation was with respect to the introduction of the GATSO speed trap, the retention of the discredited 70mph M’way speed limit and the new unit fines. I was completely gobsmacked by the attitude of the AA people I spoke to. I found that the AA, if not actually supportive of these measures, was at least apparently acquiescent. Their attitude and demeanour was just as if they were DOT civil servants. It was this reaction to my enquiries which was instrumental to my joining and becoming active within the ABD.

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## AA attitude and demeanour was just as if they were DOT civil servants

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The AA appeared to me to be supportive of speed cameras and the retention of the M’way speed limit at 70mph. I argued that if technology was to be used on motorways to improve safety it should be primarily targetted at eliminating the multiple pile up. Any one with any common sense could see that speed cameras coupled with a fixed 70mph speed

limit would at best make no difference to the risk of these accidents but could actually make motorways more dangerous. The only way to tackle the problem was to impose limits in congested conditions and or bad weather at the appropriate level for the circumstances. The AA’s reaction to this suggestion was dismissive. I was therefore not surprised to read press reports which indicate that the AA is at loggerheads with the authorities over the new variable speed limit.

The road safety mafia (AA included) are wedded to the idea that high speed is dangerous in all circumstances, that fixed blanket speed limits are the only effective way to deal with the misuse of speed and are determined to re-educate (*brainwash - ed*) the motoring public to their way of thinking, hence GATSO. This may explain their attitude to devices which can detect speed traps.

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## AA instrumental in ripping off car crime victims

Astonishing as it may seem, the AA is involved in a scheme which means that car owners who have had their vehicles stolen suffer the further insult of having to pay £100+ to get their car back!

The scam, reported on BBC1’s Watchdog programme, works like this. The AA has contracted with many Constabularies to undertake the recovery of stolen vehicles. The AA then subcontracts the actual recovery in each case to a local garage.

In the cases reported in the programme, the stolen cars were parked normally (not dangerously), having been “borrowed” by the thieves. The garage contracted to “recover” the car in each case had to tow the vehicle a short distance (in one case just across the road!) For this “service” the victim was forced to pay over £100 - and his car impounded until he did so. The AA takes a cut (euphemistically described as an administrative fee) of £15 per recovery.

The Watchdog reporter further discovered that a motorist simply requesting a tow under normal circumstances from these garages would be charged about £35.

Presented with these facts an AA spokesman had the effrontery to insist that the charges were reasonable! He also said that it was up to the garage to decide what was reasonable and thought this was reasonable too! Readers will no doubt form their own opinions.



## One man's modest aspirations

Sir - There are three things I want as a driver:

1. *To be able to drive safely at an appropriate speed for the conditions without constant fear of falling foul of the law.* Inappropriate speed limits exist on all kinds of roads, but I fully understand why you concentrate on motorways - the lie is so big and repeated by government so often that it is virtually impossible to get a hearing with a commonsense viewpoint, so you are right to begin with the strongest case. Enforcement of too low limits on semi-urban roads is, I firmly believe, dangerous in itself as it distracts some drivers whilst putting others to sleep, eventually rendering all of them incapable of judging what is a safe speed. Child pedestrian injuries were up by 15% in Gatso crazy Berkshire in 1994, twice the increase in Hampshire which is mercifully free of these things.

Approaching the publicity problem from this angle, I have had some letters published but I feel I am a lone voice - your newsletter was tremendously encouraging.

2. *To be able to enjoy my collection of old cars for a few miles a year without silly regulations.* I am quite into classic 70's cars and a Director of an owner's club. Such clubs are well organised, ready made lobby groups fresh from the fight against continuous licensing, and this is why the anti-car lobby tries so hard to divide and rule. The SMMT falls straight into the trap by supporting scrappage bonuses and the 'smoking banger' argument for a bit of short lived financial gain and, conversely, the Classic car movement thinks it can gain brownie points by conniving with measures to prevent sensible enjoyment of far superior modern cars. Don't they get it - the anti-car lot hate all cars, new and old, and want to make all our lives a misery. We must unite against them.

3. *Even the most dedicated petrol head hates traffic jams, and I want sensible public transport available to avoid them.* Why do those groups like Transport 2000 have to be so anti car? Why can't they be pro public transport? Are they so paranoid they believe that trains can never compete with cars, or are they anarchists? All I want is to be able to leave my car in a secure car park and travel into the town by train for less than it costs to drive and park. They raise enough revenue from fuel tax to make this a reality without road pricing and with a sensible building programme, so why can't these people campaign for this and get off our backs?

Paul Hemingway, Aldershot, Hants

*Mr Hemingway has hit a lot of nails right on the head and no doubt voices the opinions of many people!*

## What's happening in your town?

Write to "On the Road" with news of what is happening (or not happening) in your town, village or county.

Short letters or longer articles - all are welcome!

If you use a word processor and could send a disc as well as a copy on paper this would be appreciated but is not essential; it's your views that count.

## Obstructing the Queen's highway?

Sir - I note with interest the request for information concerning 'traffic calming measures' in local areas and would invite consideration of those which have appeared in this area in recent months. In local villages traffic islands have appeared, without consultation, and it is mutually agreed, particularly by those who drive emergency vehicles that these actually represent a considerable hazard to road users. The deaths earlier this year of six teenagers in Eltham only serves to underline this possibility. To underline further the half baked 'research' which leads to these structures it has now been shown that 'humps' actually increase emissions due to the alteration in speed needed, in addition to presenting a hazard to ambulances etc.

Even better is the town of Bishop's Stortford where they have now virtually succeeded in cutting local north-south traffic totally. One route involves a lengthy wait for traffic lights which for over thirty years have had nothing done, the second route involves diversions around a pedestrianised street while the final route involves passing through a number of 'road pinches'.

Reading the law, however, prompts doubts about the strict legality of these changes which attempt to give priority to pedestrians in an area which, by Law, is defined as 'a place for the passing and repassing of vehicles'. Further, there is a requirement to maintain 'the free passage of the highway'. Perhaps better legal minds than mine might care to look into this.

Meanwhile, cannot a case for fairness in Government TV advertising be made? In both of two recent sets of adverts the pedestrians had not observed the requirements of the Highway Code. Officials should try reading their own publications and spend a little money reminding pedestrians of their obligations; not the current 'you [drivers] must accept that people do that' attitude. I have never seen one single word ever put out on this subject and as for prosecutions for 'jaywalking' forget it. The driver is always wrong.

T. Rumble, Saffron Walden, Essex

*Are there any "legal eagles" who could investigate the business of obstructing the highway? Do write and let us know.*

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# Pollution, Health and the Environment

## The "Global Warming" con.

The rabid environmentalist fringe, aided and abetted by politicians greedy for tax revenue, would have us believe that man-made CO<sub>2</sub> sources - and in particular Road Transport - are wholly responsible for the phenomenon variously known as "Global Warming" and the "Greenhouse Effect".

They conveniently neglect to consider the latest evidence from the 1st edition of Global Change Biology<sup>1</sup>, which shows that Road Transport constitutes only just over **one half of one percent** (actually six thousandths) of total annual CO<sub>2</sub> emissions from all sources.

Can these people really be suggesting that using your car is the cause of **all** our problems when Changing Land Use (for which read Third World de-forestation and defoliation) creates *nearly twice* as much CO<sub>2</sub> annually as Road Transport, producing 1.6 gigatonnes Carbon per year - which is still itself only just over one percent of the total annual emissions from natural sources of CO<sub>2</sub>?

This is backed up again by the same journal, in which it is clearly stated:

*"It is doubtful whether vegetation and climate are ever in equilibrium.....the climate alters the vegetational form and changing vegetation modifies the climate"*.

In fact, while the politicians, through the IPCC (Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Control) cling to the Global Warming concept, of 400 climatologists surveyed by Greenpeace in 1993, 350 considered the Greenhouse Effect Theory to be unsound. The remaining 50 were divided as to the possible effects *if* it did exist: as many thought temperatures globally could **fall** as thought they could rise!

All of the above was faithfully reported in the Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung of May 22nd, 1993.

In a recent letter published in November 1995's Chemistry in Britain, the eminent Chemist, John Emsley, had this to say about CO<sub>2</sub> and Global Warming:

*"The mechanism by which CO<sub>2</sub> behaves as a greenhouse gas is not the simplistic one of absorption-emission on which the IPCC bases its hypothesis... I refer the authors to J.Barrett's*

*on CO<sub>2</sub> and global warming and this flatly contradicts the IPCC/ Greenpeace view."*

Indeed, the very latest evidence (first published in the Journal of Atmospheric and Terrestrial Physics in June 1995 and subsequently reported by the Sunday Telegraph on September 3rd, of this year) suggests that cyclical variations in global temperatures are primarily influenced by changes in sunspot activity and hence by changes in the intensity of cosmic radiation and; crucially, that there is no Man-made contribution to the so-called Global Warming phenomenon.

## Nowhere did road transport get even the faintest hint of a mention!

The second most important source of temperature perturbations were meteorite strikes (alleged to have brought about the extinction of the dinosaurs) and volcanic eruptions. Nowhere did road transport get even the faintest hint of a mention!

<sup>1</sup>Schimmel, D.S, Global Change Biology (1995) 1, pp.77-91

<sup>2</sup>Henderson, A., & McGuffie, K., Global Change Biology 1, p.73

*recent paper on the subject for the correct mechanism (Spectrochimica Acta, 1995, 51A, 415)".*

He continues:

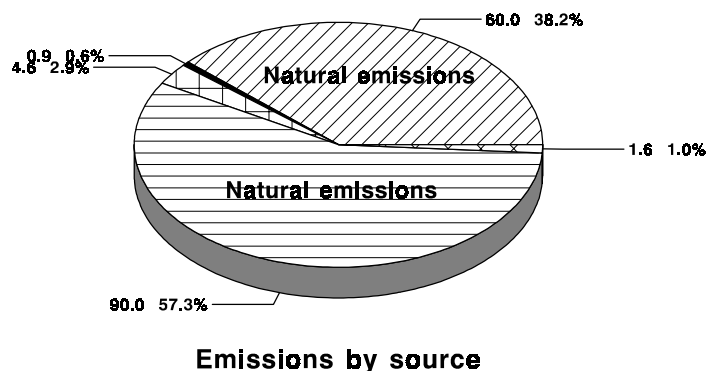
*"There appears to be little connection between the level of CO<sub>2</sub> in the atmosphere and the mean global temperature. In past ages, such as the Cretaceous, when CO<sub>2</sub> levels were in excess of 2000ppm, the temperature was more or less the same as now. Computer predictions which rely on such a connection [to predict global temperature trends] should, therefore, be treated with some scepticism."*

He goes on to say:

*"Like many chemists I find it hard to accept the global warming theory of IPCC and Greenpeace.....the many members of the European Science and Environment Forum are soon to publish their report*

## Annual CO<sub>2</sub> Emissions (in Gte/yr C)

Legend:  Land/Atmos.  Road Transport  Other Man Made  Sea/Atmos.  Land use change



Data Source: Schimmel, D.S, Global Change Biology, pp.77-91.

## Cars are cleaner: Now what about all those PSVs?

On the urban pollution front, the *car* has, of late, been unjustly pilloried by the Eco-terrorists. Cars produced for 1996 are emitting pollutants at *drastically* reduced levels compared with analogous 1970 models.

The following table shows the proportions of the key pollutants emitted by 1996 models compared with their 1970 equivalents:

Lead	0.0%
Carbon monoxide	7.5%
Hydrocarbons	6.0%
Nitrogen oxides	13.0%

These reductions are well illustrated by Ford's recent announcement that it would take 20 of their new model Fiestas to pump out as much CO, HCs and NOx gases as did one of the original 1970 Fiesta 1.3s.

### **New Fiesta twenty times cleaner than 1970s model**

Of course, we don't have 20 times as many cars in regular use now as we did in 1970, so there's only one trend total vehicle emissions can follow, and that's down.

And that is without assuming *any* improvements in engine and emissions control technology. Bearing in mind the progress made in this area since 1970, how much *cleaner* will cars be in 2020 than they already are?

ABD Chairman, Brian Gregory, recently participated in a Radio 5 late-night phone-in programme on cars and urban pollution. He reports that:

"Even the Fiends (sorry, Friends) of the Earth spokesman involved had the decency (not always, in my experience, exhibited by those with extreme environmentalist views) to admit that buses and taxis are a bigger urban pollution problem than are cars.

### **Cuttings request**

Relevant cuttings from newspapers, magazines and professional journals will be greatly appreciated. The wider the coverage the better.

Please record the source and date in the margin.

"He blamed Government transport de-regulation; massive overproliferation of bus companies and consequent lack of investment by bus operators in this hyper-competitive area."

Whatever the cause, the question that remains is this:

If between them, Government and the Whitehall bureaucrats can't find the backers to invest in *both* cheap, clean, efficient public transport *and* in an adequate road infrastructure from the *annual £19 thousand million excess* they already take every year from road transport sources; why on Earth should we be so empty-headedly gullible as to believe that the situation would improve *at all* if they took *yet more money* from the motorist????!!!!

The thinking man's (or woman's!) motto must be:

"Care for the environment: plant a bureaucrat - preferably six feet under the next road scheme he has the grace, at last, to sanction!!!"

## **It's official: Exhaust fumes do not cause asthma**

A two year study by the Department of Health and published in November has concluded that air pollution does not cause asthma. It may exacerbate the symptoms *for those who already have the disease* but it does not cause it.

So the search for the cause continues; the Chief Medical Officer, Dr Kenneth Calman, said that research would now be concentrated on other possible causes including the effects of tobacco smoke, poor ventilation and diet.

The investigation found that incidence of asthma was just as high in country areas as in towns. That is, there is no correlation between levels of vehicle exhaust and incidence of asthma.

It also found that whilst, air pollution levels are steady from month to month, there is a seasonal variation in asthma; and that peaks of asthma are not associated with any

increase in air pollution.

All of which is in accordance with the numerous other studies reported previously in *On The Road*. These facts give the lie to the hysterical reaction of the anti-liberty lobby who attempt to invoke the car as the cause of asthma and every other ill of modern society. It will be interesting to see whether some of the media, who notoriously take the side of the pseudo environmentalists regardless of the facts, do actually take this report on board.

*If not, 'phone or fax the offending channel!*

## **Raging over breakfast?**

Much has been made recently of the (reported) growth in the phenomenon known as road rage. It may come as a shock to the system to learn that our drive toward purportedly healthier eating may be a contributory factor.

Italian research (reported in the *British Medical Journal* in June 1995 and in *Chemistry in Britain* in September 1995) indicates that low blood cholesterol levels are invariably found in those hospital attempted suicide admissions who had sought to use the more violent methods, such as hanging and drowning.

It is believed by the researchers that low cholesterol levels may lead to the suppression of the level of serotonin in the brain; leading to depression and poor suppression of violent impulses.

Other studies have also identified low cholesterol levels in people with aggressive behavioural disorders. There is now a growing body of evidence that people switching from blood cholesterol enriching foods, such as bacon, cheese etc. to a "healthier" low-fat diet may increase their chances of death by violence.

Analysis of the results of previous attempts to reduce the coronary death rate through reducing blood cholesterol levels has revealed that the fewer heart disease deaths were counterbalanced by increases in suicide rates and deaths through other violent means, *such that the overall mortality rate was unchanged.*

This begs the question: is our modern, low cholesterol, low fat diet making us more prone to lack of patience, loss of temper, fits of violence etc...?

In other words, if you were to forego your bowl of muesli, high fibre brown toast and skimmed milk for a plateful of bacon, fried eggs and black pudding, washed down with full cream milk, would your blood cholesterol go up and your risk of exhibiting road rage down?

I guess we'll never know!!!

# Safety and Speed Issues

## “Space not Pace” victory

ABD Chairman, Brian Gregory, has welcomed the results of the two year study by the Transport Research Laboratory (TRL) of the effect of the following distance chevrons on the M1 motorway in Leicestershire and Northamptonshire. Multi-vehicle, shunt-type accidents have fallen by 42 percent; and single vehicle, avoidance-type accidents by 89%.

Overall, accidents have fallen by 56%, and the TRL estimates that the cost of the experiment is some 80 times *lower* than that of the cost (£1.6M) of the accidents prevented by it.

### accidents have fallen by 56%

Says Gregory: “The ABD welcomes evidence which supports what we have been saying to the DoT for several years now: it is lack of *space* (i.e., insufficient following distances) and not too much *pace* (i.e., excessive speed) that kills on our motorways and dual carriageways.

“The available evidence amply demonstrates that improved driver training has a much more profound effect on accident rates than does ever more restrictive, intrusive and ultimately counter-productive anti-driver legislation.”

For example, since the progressive winding down of police driver training began in 1969, police accident rates have *increased* from one accident per 80 thousand miles driven, to a current one accident per 20 thousand miles driven.

Gatso cameras have, meanwhile, “delivered” a statistically insignificant

2% decrease in accidents, compared with the *56% fall* in accidents achieved in the recent M1 experiment.

The M1 chevrons require that drivers keep a separation of at least two clear sets of chevrons (80m) from the preceding vehicle, corresponding to the Institute of Advanced Motorist’s *Two Second Rule* (“Only a Fool Breaks The Two Second Rule”).

Covering 80m in 2 seconds equates to a 40m/second velocity. *This, in round terms, equals 90mph.*

One wonders why the DoT continues to peddle the fallacy that 70mph is the “maximum safe permissible speed”, when their following distance recommendations clearly indicate recognition of a different *practical* motorway speed limit.

### driver education always achieves better results than driver persecution

What is also clear from the preceding evidence is that, in terms of road safety, driver education always achieves better results than driver persecution.

## Constant speed a factor in motorway accidents

The Association of British Drivers has recently uncovered further research into the causes of road accidents. This research indicates that travelling at a *constant* speed on Britain’s urban and motorway road networks is a major contributing factor to both serious injury and death statistics.

It is suggested that the well-publicised M4/M5 coach incident, and up to *60%* of all motorway accidents, and many other ‘unsolved’ motoring incidents could be explained by the onset of the phenomenon known as *micro-sleep*.

### constant speed creates lack of concentration

The theory is that constant speed creates lack of concentration, even boredom, and hence dissociation from the process of driving. When this occurs, *micro-sleep* can prevail. Put simply, this is when the mind goes into a ‘sleep’ mode; whilst physical functions, such as hands on operating controls, continue.

It is worth noting that observation skills decline. Mental stimulation is the key to avoiding this and it is not just a problem affecting driving on British roads: Nevada freeways in the United States, with a rigidly applied 65mph speed limit, have a fatality rate over three and a half times higher than the largely speed limit-free former West German Autobahn network. Nevada also has an appallingly high single-vehicle accident rate. *Micro-sleep* is the most probable cause.

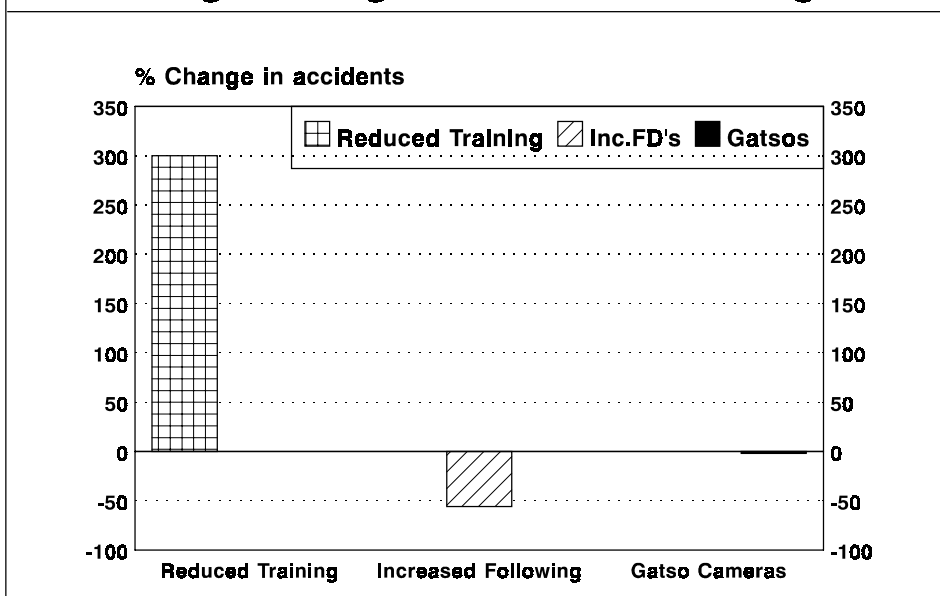
### observation skills decline

Here in the UK, the Police refer to speed-governed coaches and commercial vehicles as “Cruise Missiles” for similar reasons. During holiday periods, many British drivers can be lulled into *micro-sleep* on continental roads.

The real key to ameliorating this very serious problem, as well as more enlightened speed limit policies by the powers-that-be, is for drivers to invest in

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## Percentage Change in Accidents arising from:



# Safety and Speed Issues

## Now that's a fair cop, Guv!

Sussex's Chief Constable, Paul Whitehouse, has called for a 90mph motorway limit, in conjunction with tougher penalties for those who break it. Whitehouse considers the 70mph limit unenforceable (Hear! Hear!) and commented: "We should set limits we can be sure of enforcing, say 80mph on motorways... We can all recognise that there are times when it is safe to go at 90mph and dangerous to travel at 40mph".

Last year's motorway death rate is the lowest on record, 157 deaths in 66.7million vehicle kilometres driven (MVkm). This is equivalent to 2.35 fatalities per 1000MVkm.

And this is despite the fact that over 50% of drivers ignore the discredited 70mph limit. It demonstrates the irrelevance of this limit; and is, at last, recognition of the importance of having a respect-worthy motorway limit from *someone* in authority.

Whitehouse admittedly goes on to say: "Then if you are going to exceed the limit, you will lose your car".

### too low a motorway limit will produce a negative payoff

However, bearing in mind that a recent BSM survey has shown that more road deaths result from travelling at 35mph in a 30mph limit than do from driving at 100mph on motorways; and since we *already* have extremely harsh penalties in place, maybe we shouldn't be too worried about this latter comment by the Chief Constable.

It is also worth remembering that a similar attempt by the French authorities to intensify driver persecution through excessively stiff penalties has just failed

### Constant speed menace

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further driver training. All drivers have a responsibility to themselves, and to others, to address the problem *before* it arises.

The ABD is an active supporter of the concept of variable speed limits, but feels that far too heavy an emphasis is being placed, counterproductively, on arbitrary speed restrictions and the use of electronic monitors and cameras to enforce them. This will ultimately kill and injure even more people through the decline in driving standards.

due to the strength of the opposition.

With the proliferation of Gatso, laser, 'Trafipax' and other anti-speeding devices currently occurring, it will undoubtedly become easier to *enforce* speed limits, but international evidence shows that setting too low a motorway limit will produce a negative payoff in declining driving standards and increased incidence of micro-sleep, boredom- and fatigue-related deaths and injuries.

Far better to enforce *safe following distances* if casualty reductions really *are* the aim. Existing camera technology could easily be adapted to enforce the Two Second following distance Rule.

Chief Constable Whitehouse's comments contrast starkly with the essentially money-grabbing Oxfordshire anti-speed campaign. They represent a refreshing breath of realism on the part of at least some of the law enforcers, and are to be applauded.

## Speed cameras - a questionable contribution to road safety

ABD Chairman, Brian Gregory has strongly condemned the increasing use of speed cameras at non-junction locations. Says Gregory: "Evidence generated on speed camera operations by the Government's own Transport Research Laboratory clearly states that cameras *only* have a statistically significant effect in reducing fatalities and serious road injuries in the vicinity of road junctions (through preventing accidents arising from red-light runners).

Outside this very specific application, they have no casualty reducing benefits; and their only function is in generating fine revenue".

This view is borne out by further evidence from around the world. For example, the Canadian state of Ontario has recently banned the use of speed cameras. Michael Harris, the leader of the Ontario Conservative

administration, had this to say about speed cameras:

*"Photo radar is an Orwellian cash machine"...*

*"Technology is becoming the accuser in our society"...*

*"Photo radar is a Government cash grab"...*

and these admissions are from a politician - clearly, one of the few honest ones! Mr.Harris favours road traffic law enforcement by police patrols able to "assess traffic situations and intervene when necessary".

Evidence from Australia is equally damning. Relatively soon after their introduction in the various Australian states, promises were made that cameras would only be located at accident blackspots and would be signposted (does this sound familiar?).

This lasted about six months, before the signs were removed and ever more devious methods were devised to disguise the traps (including the use of bogus broken-down vehicles).

Shortly thereafter, the Victoria Police Association was able to negotiate a 10 percent increase in police numbers and a 25 percent increase in salaries - on the basis that this could be funded entirely from increased speed camera revenue.

An internal police report leaked to the media at the same time dismissed the idea of placing speed cameras at accident blackspots, saying: "Insufficient numbers of motorists would be booked, making the cameras of little fund-raising benefit".

Signs of this entirely revenue-motivated approach are already appearing in Oxfordshire, which currently raises some £4.1m per annum for the Treasury from speed camera operations - and is lobbying hard for the right to recoup some of the revenue from its Nazi blitz style campaign.

This, of course, runs totally contrary to the principle of natural justice - that those involved in the judicial process should have no financial interest in it.

Below are some gems uttered by Anne Mortlock, Oxfordshire's County's Road Safety Officer, in a recent interview with Times Reporter, Stuart Wavell:

*"We reckon there are so many camera sites that the whole county is a speed camera area"....*

*"They (warning signs) could conceivably all be in one part of the county".*

This in answer to Wavell's comments about the apparent absence of any warning signs - because cameras and warning signs are rotated randomly, so the signs could be miles from

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# Safety and Speed Issues

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## Speed cameras

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the cameras.

*“Drivers don’t know what the speed limit is... Even if there were [speed limit signs], drivers [would] ignore them...”*

*“Besides, the Highway Code makes the rules quite clear, notably the frequency of lamp-posts indicating a 30mph limit...”*

*“There are loads of clues...”*

Need we say more? This is not some game of intellectual Cluedo. There are lives - and people’s livelihoods - at stake here.

### **There are lives - and people’s livelihoods - at stake here.**

Instead of concentrating these devices at known accident blackspots, Oxfordshire politicians’ and civil servants’ limitless hunger for revenue and power has already brought the county’s use of speed cameras into total disrepute (as the ABD has been prophesying would be the case since 1991).

It may soon be possible to gauge the honesty and integrity of assurances given by other senior DoT officials and Police Officers about the location of UK speed cameras generally when the National Speed Trap Map becomes available in early 1996, as it will also show the location of known accident blackspots.

One is drawn to the inevitable conclusion that there are likely to be many red faces at Marsham Street, around the various Local Authority Offices - and possibly even at some Constabularies - when this document breaks cover.

The DoT and some more zealous Police

## **ABD Gatso watch**

The Association has decided to determine the position of every camera site on the motorway and trunk road network. Members will be notified of camera sites initially via On The Road. The Association is also in discussions with The Clever Map Company concerning possible collaboration of a national map of cameras and accident blackspots.

However, the scheme depends on *you!*

All members should report (as accurately as possible, of course) the location of camera sites known to them.

Write to the Secretary: Mr JL Newby-Robson, 12 Shelford Rise, Upper Norwood, London SE19 2PX.

Officers have made extravagant claims for the injury-reducing powers of speed cameras: Oxfordshire (where else?) recently claimed a 37 percent decrease in fatality accidents and a 60 percent decrease in serious injury accidents since speed cameras were introduced three years ago.

### **the two London areas boasting the greatest reductions in road casualties have no speed cameras**

To put this hype in perspective, the two London areas boasting the greatest reductions in road casualties have no speed cameras.

No doubt junction-located cameras have played a very large part in achieving the claimed reduction in fatal and serious injury accidents in Oxfordshire, since accidents at junctions are by far the commonest ones; and it is in these very locations (and only there) that cameras are effective.

These claims for speed cameras away from junctions conveniently ignore two very significant factors, however.

One is the substantial progress being made by the motor manufacturers in the areas of passive and active safety; through body and chassis design, provision of impact bars and airbags etc. - all of which make massive contributions to the year-on-year reductions in our annual road accident toll, despite little sign of any turndown in the actual number of annual road accidents.

The second relates to the fact that drivers divert to avoid speed cameras. All of the quoted evidence is in favour of them is based on reductions in the number of fatalities and serious injuries.

Such reductions have to be taken in the context of the number of vehicle miles driven - more commonly expressed in fatalities and

serious injuries per 1000 million vehicle kilometres (per 1000MVkm).

The DoT and TRL have consistently fought shy of quoting the comparison of fatality and serious injury rates for camera equipped roads versus their camera-free analogues. There are two likely reasons.

One is that the numerical casualty reductions quoted for camera-equipped roads are arising from the fact that motorists are diverting to avoid them; thereby reducing the number of accidents by reducing the volume of traffic - without having any positive effect on the safety (in fatalities and serious injuries per 1000MVkm) of the roads concerned.

The second reason is that a “before and after” comparison of adjacent, non-camera-equipped roads will show an increase in fatality and serious injury rates because of these increased traffic volumes. There is hard evidence from studies on London speed camera operations to back up this suggestion.

In other words, the improvements in safety for camera-equipped urban roads being trumpeted from the rooftops by the DoT are being achieved at the expense of decreased road safety on adjacent routes.

Unless the DoT is proposing blanket coverage of all UK roads with constant, intrusive Cold War Communist style surveillance (which cannot, of course, be ruled out), this will remain the case.

### **Communist style surveillance ... cannot ... be ruled out**

Far more effective ways of reducing our road accident toll already exist, through:

- (1) Much greater emphasis on continuous driver education and training; and
- (2) The provision of new dual carriageways and motorways in preference to cheaper (but more dangerous) single carriageway roads, and the upgrading of the maximum possible number of existing major roads to such standards.

Returning to speed cameras, it is said that: “The camera never lies”.

Sadly, it seems that some politicians, some senior civil servants and some law enforcement officers are not blessed with the same unfailing qualities of integrity and sense of fair play, and are exhibiting a degree of economy with the truth of which Josef Goebbels himself would have been proud.

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# Alternatives to the Car

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## The alternative - public transport?

Unlike the opponents of the motor car who apparently want to see its total demise, the Association of British Drivers is not “against” public transport. The Association does *not* campaign for the abolition of buses and trains. It does not campaign for people to be compelled to drive when they could walk or cycle instead.

This is in stark contrast with the anti-car, anti-freedom lobby of pseudo environmentalists who continue to peddle a line of discredited theories in an attempt to convince people that “four wheels is bad”. Unfortunately the gullible, arty types who run most of the radio and television media lap this up. They then use their undoubted presentation skills to convince an ill-informed and unthinking public.

“Ban the car and use public transport!” is their cry but just how feasible would this be? No doubt many readers have anecdotes about how, if they were to use public transport, a day’s work would take a whole week. Let us have your stories! In the meantime let’s look at how public transport is shaping up to the task.

## Railway prices out passengers

The South Wales and West Railway earlier this year increased fares by 56% deliberately to discourage travellers from using the railway! So successful was this railway that it experienced “an extreme demand situation”. (How many small business in recession-hit, over-taxed Britain would like to suffer such a fate?) It responded to the emergency, not by running more trains, and taking the money while the good times lasted, but by imposing swingeing increases to persuade travellers to find another way.

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### “We restructured the prices ... to suppress demand”

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As David Horne, Pricing Manager, put it: “We restructured the prices of season tickets in an effort to suppress demand”. Now how can a dynamic economy succeed if that is the standard of public transport we are to expect?

The railway’s excuse was that it would be too expensive (at £100k per carriage per year) to hire more rolling stock. But this raises more questions than it answers. Were they making maximum use of the stock they had? If they had taken extra rolling stock could they not have filled it by imaginative marketing? If there was genuine competition in the hire market for rolling stock, would the cost have been lower? We should know!

And if that was a fair price, is it not a good idea to know that too? It might even indicate that investing in road transport would provide better, cheaper transport for all!

### Symptom of a chronic malaise

Of course, the anti-car lobby will say that this particular event is due to privatisation; that if the railways remained nationalised and had suitable levels of “investment” they would succeed.

Well they have had their chance. After several decades of nationalisation and having had billions of pounds of taxpayers’ money for their toys, what have the BR boys got to show for it?

There are the electrified lines, like the Norwich line where the wires come down far more often than the Diesels broke down. Torn-down cable causes much more disruption as well.

There are the new trains with doors that won’t open in the wrong kind of snow, traction systems which won’t work with the wrong kind of autumn leaves, coupling systems which don’t and loos which flush the wrong way when the train enters a tunnel.

There is the kind of customer relations attitude which ensures that, whenever things go wrong, there is never, ever a member of railway staff of any seniority to carry the can. Nor, if they can help it (and who can blame them?) are any junior railwaymen to be found either.

All these problems stem from management attitude and the lack of an accountable management structure. So further investment in British Rail would have been about as profitable as throwing money into a black hole.

The new railway companies must now show what they can do. It will be interesting to see whether any of the anti-car people actually put their money where their mouth is and invest in rail. I think we know the answer though, they’ll only invest if it’s your money or mine, not their own.

## Rail resorts to road

The poor old South Wales and West Railway hit the headlines again this year when it abandoned its trains and put its passengers on buses for the journey between Bristol and Severn Beach. A Council subsidy of £122,000 per year was apparently not enough to keep the service going when the track operator increased the charges to £283,000 per year.

### Bus service costs a *quarter* of rail costs

The same arguments about the railways and competition can be made in this case as in the previous one. But the key fact is this: the alternative bus service provided costs only £30,000 per year. On what grounds could the Council possibly justify paying four times the price just for people to use rail rather than road? The ratepayers of Bristol will actually make a saving as a result!

## ABD Meetings

### All members are welcome at meetings.

These are held at the Mundy Arms Hotel, Mackworth Village, Derby.

Future dates: 24 February 1996, 13 April.

Meetings start at 10.30 am.

Minutes of previous meetings are circulated to attendees and are available to members. Contact Jonathan Newby-Robson for copies.

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## Just how risky are our roads?

### (Read on if you dare!)

Listening to the anti-car lobby and the so-called road safety experts, you'd be forgiven for thinking our roads are very dangerous places. In 1994, there were, according to Road Accidents Great Britain, 3650 deaths on British roads.

Now, that's still 3650 too many, but it's important to retain a sense of perspective: *over 4000* people died in accidents in the home in 1993.

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### more died in the home than on the roads in 1993

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Let's be clear: every single human endeavour involves some element of risk. The key is to reduce risk to an acceptable level; it can *never* be eliminated.

Now let's look at the *actual* risks.

In 1993, 3493 people died on the UK's non-motorway roads, on which nearly 360 thousand million vehicle kilometres (000mvkm) were driven. That works out at 9.71 fatalities every 1000 million Vkm; or one death every 103 million vehicle km (64 million miles). Suppose you drove eight hours a day every working day, 45 working weeks a year, at an average 55mph. That means you would travel a colossal 138,600 miles per year.

On that basis it would be 464 years before you'd cover the

64 million miles and therefore be likely to be involved in a fatality accident. The Grim Reaper would have got you from old age or illness long before that!

If we look at motorways, the safety situation is even more astounding. The number of annual UK motorway deaths is very small, and considerably lower than the number of people in the UK who die of Paracetamol overdoses every year.

Last year there were 157 deaths on UK motorways in 66.7 000MVkm driven; that's 2.35 deaths per 000MVkm or one every 266 million vehicle miles.

Suppose you are a real eager-beaver sales type who travels 8 hours a working day, 45 working weeks a year at a steady 85mph. That's a cool 214200 miles in a working year.

On that basis it'd be 1242 years before you'd have covered 266 million miles and be likely to become a fatality!

It appears that some of the "experts" believe that we are all only truly "safe" in a totally controlled, sterile, zero-risk world - which is automatically, therefore, a better one. This is only true if you are also prepared accept that in a risk-free world, *no-one actually does anything.*

People who hold such views should consider the following quotation:

*"Security is mostly a superstition.  
It does not exist in nature ... life is either  
a daring adventure or nothing."*

Written from the heart by Helen Keller, someone who would probably have loved to have been able-bodied enough to have taken *a few more* acceptable risks!

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## Three Cheers!

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### Sheds ride roughshod over PPG13

John Selwyn Gummer's disastrous Policy Planning Guideline 13 (PPG13), which we have already extensively reviewed and criticised in previous newsletters and in ABD factsheet ABD3.1, has been superseded.

PPG13 sought to prevent the construction of *any* further out-of-town retail development, and to bring about the dramatic scaling-down (via redevelopment over to "other purposes") of all in-town car-parking facilities - thereby forcing you to abandon your car and to use non-existent or at best inefficient, erratic and highly-polluting public transport.

It was predictably (and justifiably) roundly lambasted as naïve and ill-considered by the out-of-town retail chain operators.

A watered down version has now been released: accepting crucially that: (a) town-centres should have "attractive, affordable and secure car parks"; while (b) the preferred town-centre and next-best edge-of-town sites may not always be available to outlets "selling bulky goods or requiring large showrooms".

Thank God common sense occasionally prevails over increasingly nonsensical bureaucrats and politicians!

### US Congress scraps national speed limit

The US Congress has voted to scrap the national speed limit leaving the US states free to set their own limits on major roads for the first time since 1974. The limit was originally introduced at the height of the Arab oil crisis in order to save fuel. The limit was set at 55mph, the optimum fuel efficiency speed for cars at the time.

We in Britain suffered a similar measure, 50mph in our case, reinstated at 70mph when the crisis ended. However in the US the limit was retained until the late eighties when it was raised to 65 mph outside urban areas, excluding a minority of states mainly in the puritan east which decided to retain the old 55mph limit.

It will be interesting to see if any of the more libertarian minded west coast states raise their state highway limits above 65mph following this deregulation. Watch this space.

### Season's Greetings

Wishing all our readers a  
Happy Christmas  
and a good year's motoring in 1996!

### Conservative think tank slams road tolls

A spokesman for the Centre for Policy Studies was reported in the Times on the second of October to have said "If electronic tolling is not seen as fair, there is a very real risk of civil disobedience. Many motorists might decide simply to ignore the law and drive on motorways without paying the tolls. The Government would be quickly overwhelmed by the number of violations and could have no choice but to abandon the system.

The experience of the poll tax might not be entirely irrelevant. Even if successful charging can be achieved 99.99 per cent of the time, there could be 300,000 spurious violation notices a year.

Given the technical demands of communicating with an on-board device at speeds of 90mph on a congested road, reliability of 95 per cent or less seems more likely. This implies 100 million potential violations or more."

At least it is gratifying to see that a semi-official body has recognised realistic motorway speeds!