

## Motorway tolls are back on the agenda

The public don't like the idea, the Parliamentary Select Committee on Transport didn't like the idea; the AA condemned the idea, road safety campaigners were concerned, even the anti-car Royal Commission on Transport and the Environment and the Council for the Protection of Rural England expressed severe reservations, but the Government, driven by their Civil Service masters, are just ploughing on regardless.

Such is the arrogance of our Government, such is their utter contempt for the electorate, that Roads Minister John Watts has happily announced within weeks of a General Election that it still favours the introduction of Motorway tolls in this country. Notwithstanding that the motorist pays the Government £24 billion per year, but gets less than a quarter back by way of investment in our roads network, the Government wants more... a lot more.

Gone is the pretence in earlier Government publicity that the toll revenue would be used to expand the motorway network. That was all a lie, as we said at the time. It still says it wants to use some of the money "to improve the roads" (sorry, we still don't believe that) and to increase the cost of motoring to persuade more people to use public transport. This Government, full of

"free market" rhetoric, is actually hell-bent on "rigging" the market with the kind of socialist intervention that Militant Tendency would be proud of.

The only indication so far of toll charges is 1.5p per mile for cars and 4.5p per mile for HGVs, but hints have already been given that charges will be raised to discourage commuting - which will of course also maximise revenue. At those low levels, the tolls would bring in about £700 million per year - about the equivalent of 1p on a litre of petrol, which makes such an unpopular and dangerous move even more bizarre. In actual fact, charges are certain to start fairly low but rise rapidly.

Technical problems - and the fact that primary legislation will have to be passed by Parliament - mean that it is likely to be 2003

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## M25 variable speed limit trials

*The reality is less rosy than official reports would have you believe*

The results of the trial on the M25 of variable speed limits have just been announced.

The ABD has always been in favour of the concept of 'intelligent' signage to warn drivers of hazards, and supports speed limits where they are set appropriately for the prevailing road conditions.

However, this scheme has confirmed our worst fears about abuse of variable speed limits by the authorities, which are:

Limits are reduced when that is deemed necessary but not increased in good, light traffic conditions when it is perfectly safe to do 80 or 90.

True variable limits, as found on German  
... continued on page 2

### Thought for the day

*"If a lie is repeated often enough people will believe it"*

- Josef Goebbels

## "Heros" are villains

Hundreds of thousands of pounds worth of damage has been done to construction equipment in an arson attack on Costain's Newbury bypass site. In an incident largely ignored by the Press, which likes to portray the anti-roads thugs as some sort of heros, 500 anti-roads rioters stormed the site and set fire to construction equipment and site offices.

As a result of the attack in early January, large earth-moving equipment and an articulated truck were written off. A crane was badly damaged both by fire and by a quantity of sand which was put into the engine. 21 people were arrested by the Police.

## RAC ABDicates

The RAC, standing - (nowadays somewhat incongruously) for the Royal Automobile Club, the smaller of the two long-standing organisations originally founded to protect motorists' interests, has (like the larger Automobile Association) abandoned the overwhelming majority of its members and now declares itself committed to "mobility". Despite having millions of

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**Important: Check  
new and *changed* dates.  
See back page.**

## Car drivers lose out in local transport deal

The annual local transport funding awards have been announced by Sir George Young, and unsurprisingly given his membership of FoE, car drivers have got a raw deal.

A record £60m is to be spent on council road safety schemes, mostly involving deliberate obstruction of motorists with humps, chicanes, gateways and other so called traffic calming measures rather than the improved bend design and wider, better junctions that are so badly needed.

£79 million is to be spent on 65 areas in England who have submitted bids "designed to promote cycling, walking and public transport instead of the private car". Most of these involve cycleways, bus lanes and

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# UK News Roundup

## Huge Gatso revenue hike

270,000 drivers were caught speeding by GATSO cameras in 1995, compared to just 32,000 in 1993. With the number of camera sites multiplying fast, and Local Authorities and the Police trying to get their hands on some of the enormous revenue that these photographic cash machines generate, it seems certain that those numbers will continue to increase at a rapid rate.

Apart from enjoying the huge fine income (all of which currently finds its way to that great bottomless pit, The Treasury), we would not be surprised if some mean-minded pen-pushers in Whitehall have calculated that traffic levels could be reduced by 3-4% if 3 or 4% of drivers are disqualified from driving at any one time under the "totting up" procedure.

## Motorway traffic doubles

Motorway traffic in the U.K. has almost doubled since 1981. The U.K. now has the highest rate of car journeys, and lowest proportion of train journeys of any E.U. state. Despite this, car ownership rates remain well below average.

## M25 variable speed limit trials

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autobahns, educate drivers to match their speed to conditions and thus gain their respect for the lower limits by treating them reasonably.

Enforcement of these limits by speed cameras set only 10% over the limit is abhorrent.

It was promised on the introduction of cameras that they would be used only in speed related accident blackspots. In this case they have been used aggressively to police limits which are there not for safety but to increase traffic densities to avoid the expense of providing the adequate road system motorists are already paying over the odds for.

Drivers are thus losing their licences and livelihoods as a result of lack of transport investment, which is totally unacceptable.

Camera enforcement undermines respect for the scheme and encourages resistance tactics such as braking at the gantries which creates exactly the sort of stop start waves the scheme was designed to avoid.

With cameras set only 5mph over an unnaturally low limit, constant concentration on the speedometer is required at the expense of due attention to other traffic hazards. This undermines the genuine safety improvements

## British Road Federation warns of massive fall in road spending

Reported in Construction News: according to the BRF, local authority spending on transport will fall by 20% in 1997. The BRF has analysed local authority funding bids and found that these bodies have given up trying to sustain their transport budgets. The transport supplementary grant has fallen to £232 million in 1997/8 from £482 million in 1994/5.

Motorists can be assured that the budgeted reduction in spending on road building and maintenance will not be matched by a reduction in the excess motoring tax, the twenty or so billion pounds vehicle users contribute in excess of road spending to the Governments Black Hole.

The direct result of these cutbacks will be increased road accidents, injuries and deaths, and increased congestion and environmental nuisance. And all to provide a 1p reduction in income tax, to save John Major's discredited administration. at the next election

Give up now John. You know you are politically doomed.

resulting from the smoothing of the traffic flow and advance warning of stationary traffic.

2 Lane discipline is undermined by prominent instructions to 'stay in lane'.

Police and drivers groups have spent years trying to educate the 'Centre Lane Owners Club' to move over. This instruction totally undermines all these efforts.

ABD Roads and Traffic Spokesman Paul Hemingway said:

"My own experience of this section of motorway is of two heart in mouth experiences of near misses, both directly caused by the variable limit regime and associated cameras.

In the first, I was forced to brake sharply when the gantry in front changed suddenly from 60 to 50 at the same time as a car was closing rapidly on my rear.

On another occasion, a van pulled out into my lane, forcing evasive action on my part. He was unable to see me because I was forced by the uniform speed of both lanes to sit in his blindspot".

The authorities desire for petty enforcement and contempt for road users has done much to negate a potentially very positive contribution to road safety and ease of travel.

## The Association of British Drivers

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

# UK News Roundup

## More 20 limits planned

The Department of Transport has launched new initiatives to "force down the level of child pedestrian casualties on Britain's roads." The strategy is said to be to reduce the rate of child pedestrian casualties from its present figure of 1.3 in 100,000 to 1 in 100,000 by the year 2000.

As a first step, the government has allocated £1m to 19 local authorities for the creation of additional 20 mph zones. Many of these, naturally enough, are urban authorities - Birmingham, Bradford, Hackney for example - but there are some predominantly rural authorities too, like Suffolk. It is interesting, though, that 66 authorities put in bids for funding and only these 19 were approved; one wonders why, if the measures are so effective, children in the other 47 areas are considered less important?

The DoT's press release announcing these measures contradicts itself on their likely effect. In 'Notes for Editors', the department says that the reduction in accidents where these zones have been installed is 60% but the Road Safety Minister, John Bowis, claims a reduction of 70%.

Whatever the true figure - and one can never tell with the DoT - the ABD is obviously in favour of efforts to reduce child pedestrian accidents. But, once again, the government seems to be putting all of its faith in speed limits and "traffic calming" whilst no attention is focused on the real and only long-term way of reducing traffic accidents - better, more intensive training of all road users, not just drivers.

## Motorway tolls

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before the system goes into operation.

The likely system involves a ray-gun which will emit microwaves, detecting passing cars as they pass under gantries. Each vehicle will need a dashboard meter costing at least £30, and a smart card. Drivers will then receive a bill documenting every movement the driver has made during the month. Any vehicle without the necessary card, or where the card has run out of credit will be photographed and prosecuted.

Although it has not been admitted officially yet, it is certain that the data will be used to monitor speeds, with the aim of turning the 70 mph limit into an absolute one. Two companies are currently conducting trials on the M3, GEC-Marconi and Bosch Telecom, and the technology is now so sophisticated that it can detect two cars travelling bumper to bumper at 100 mph. Final testing will take place near Basingstoke, before the final decision is taken on proceeding with tolls. However, this is likely to be a formality.

## Government advisory group on the environment slates bus services ...

The "Round Table on Sustainable Development", an advisory group setup by the DoE, has produced a report highlighting the difficulties faced by bus travellers in obtaining information and completing any journey involving connections between buses or between buses and trains. Fares were also quoted as being too high, with a lack of through ticketing being an additional problem. This will come as no surprise to anyone who depends on buses or who has attempted a one way journey without their car recently. It contrasts with the situation in many European cities and in Toronto, Canada, where smooth bus/bus and train/bus transfers in pleasant, convenient surroundings with logical timetables and reasonable fares are the norm.

This is more evidence of the government's lamentable failure to invest the taxes raised from the milch cow motorist in proper transport infrastructure.

## ...but spouts more of the usual nonsense on cars

In a previous report, a spokesman for the same advisory group was expounding the usual FoE line about the motorist 'not paying the full environmental cost of his journey'. He made the mistake of going into more detail, splitting this into four areas, citing:

"Congestion costs to industry of £19bn" How can this be an environmental cost? It simply represents an input to an investment equation showing how much we need a better roads and rail infrastructure to ensure continued economic development. If this £19bn were to be added to the £19bn surplus from the motorist, we could probably solve our transport problems in the term of one

parliament.

"Cost of Road Traffic Accidents" We have emergency services paid for out of our taxes to cover all accident situations. If this is seen as a cost of motoring that should be borne by the driver, then surely the cost of domestic accidents should go to the householder, sporting accidents to the player, industrial accidents to the employer and accidents caused by children to the parent. The concept of free health and emergency services would then be dead.

"Acid Rain" This is predominantly caused by sulphur emissions which only 1% come from cars. Most of it comes from coal fired power stations which generate the electricity to run, amongst other things, trains.

"Health problems caused by exhaust pollution" This old chestnut has been dealt with at length by the ABD before, with the 60% cut in the four main components of exhaust emissions, the 19% of PM10s caused by diesel (truck & bus) exhausts vs 5% from petrol and the refuted link between traffic and asthma being common themes.

## Government.Direct or Big Brother.Direct

The Cabinet Minister for Public Service - Roger "Let's put speedlimiters in cars" Freeman - was at it again recently. He announced proposals to install computer networks linking Government Databases to public access computer terminals, and thereby revolutionise the workings of Government through the elimination of paperbased forms. Civil liberty campaigners are warning that the infrastructure will allow the sharing of confidential information between departments. These developments herald the onset of a Big Brother style state. The Minister has apparently promised that one of the main

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# UK & World News Roundup

## Government.Direct

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aims of the proposals will be to ensure confidentiality, although the proposals do not contain any measures for protecting privacy.

The issues raised are similar to those confronted by concerned motorists. How do we use technology to improve our general well being for example: in reducing road deaths and injuries, but without harming our accustomed civil liberties and freedoms.

The use of modern technology in enforcement has the potential to make the state all powerful. Concerned citizens must therefore be ever on guard against the democratic process being subverted, by those working in Government hell bent on following their own mad cap agendas. The evidence of the recent past is not encouraging, witness speed cameras, road toll proposals involving individual electronic tags in vehicles, Intelligent spy cameras and computer networks that can track your movements in your car.

## Italic number plate ban

The Government plans to ban the use of non-standard type-face on numberplates, because they cannot, apparently, be read by speed cameras. (So they say - we give no warranties!) A new British standard typeface is likely to be introduced, but it has not yet been decided what this will look like.

## Car drivers lose out in local transport settlement

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improved pedestrian access, which in themselves are not necessarily bad, and some of the schemes do promote this positively, but when combined with the quaintly labelled 'parking restraint' and 'traffic management', show their true colours as part of a concerted strategy to make life unpleasant for the driver. Particular nasties lurk in various proposals:

Ashdown Forest want to "manage speeds on roads throughout the area" which means more ludicrous speed limit reductions and 'traffic calming'.

Teesside and Blackburn aim to 'reduce the need to travel', so forget economic regeneration there.

The West Midlands has "switched to a bus-based strategy" and so is the only package that has had an increase in resources this year. Thus the council has effectively been bribed to toe the party line on anti-car measures and to hell with local democracy.

Work on the Leicester Environmental Road Tolling Scheme is to continue.

Hull intends to use traffic calming as an

## Police cut back fight against car crime

The Metropolitan Police have decided to axe its specialised Stolen Vehicle Squad which investigates car crime, and has been particularly successful in the fight against "ringers" - thieves who steal vehicles and change their identity to make them difficult to trace - and gangs.

London comes third in the national table of areas affected by car crime (Leeds is top), and about one-third of the cars taken are never seen again. The squad of just four officers has been very successful in tackling this trade in misery, recovering vehicles with a value of £500,000 in each year of its existence. This year alone, the squad has found £100,000 worth of cars and a cross-border gang of European car thieves has also been discovered.

The Police have responded by saying that they have to lose 281 officers next year and "car crime is now no longer seen as a core activity". This is despite the fact that more than one quarter of all offences reported to the Police in 1995 were vehicle related, and the proportion of stolen cars which are recovered has fallen steadily in recent years.

'anti rat running' measure. Surely an admission that traffic calming is there to reduce traffic by making driving unpleasant rather than its supposed justification in terms of speed reduction.

Everywhere, the message is the same - if you want the money to spend on transport improvements, bash the motorist.

The only genuine road improvements in the whole document are four bypasses which get a reluctant mention: Stoke on Trent, Chippenham, Normanton and Rainworth, plus Ramsgate Harbour Approach Road. Meanwhile, increased funding is supplied to help strengthen bridges, doubtless to help Steven Norris' new friends in the Road Haulage Association bring even larger trucks onto the road. This is an object lesson in how to control the activities of local councils using funding as a mechanism. It is worth remembering how similar bandwagons in the 1960s led to a decimation of the rail network and the wholesale uprooting of the tram networks in Britain's cities - policies that have contributed to the congestion and poor urban public transport of today.

## IT Guru predicts 200 million tele-workers by 2016

Jack Nilles, the Californian "father" of "teleworking" has indicated (recent FT IT supplement) that if the developed countries around the world are to successfully make the transition to information-based economies, then flexible working practices will have to be applied on a much wider scale. He went on to suggest that the the the number of teleworkers is set to increase from a nearly zero base 20 years ago through the current c.20 million level, to some 200 million people by 2016. The implications for transport media (of all types) is clear: less people to be moved means reduced demands on the transport system - without the need for Draconian restrictions on personal mobility. The estimate for Great Britain (from a recent Autoglass survey) is 3 million teleworkers by 2000; some 15% of the working population. Why do we need a Road Traffic Reduction Bill?

## BBC News commitment to fight soundbite journalism

Head of BBC News, Tony Hall, has declared war on "soundbite journalism" in the context of the imminent General Election. Perhaps if enough people write to him supporting his stance, but in the context of environmental and road safety issues, then some balance can be restored and the emotive, excessively biased and anti-car, anti-roads handling of such issues can be curbed. The address is:

BBC News,  
Television Centre,  
Wood Lane, London, W12.

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# Safety and Speed Issues

## Speed - to limit or not

*Lance Green BA Dip Stats FSS presents a challenging view of speed limit policy. He is a long-standing member of the ABD and a Fellow of the Royal Statistical Society.*

We are all presumably agreed that we do not want Gatsos to enforce speed limits. We do not want the 70mph limit. Nor do we want the appallingly severe punishment handed out to drivers for purely technical offences. But what do we want in their place?

My view is that we should have no speed limits at all. The reason is simple, but universally misunderstood. When driving, determining an appropriate speed is crucial. A large number of factors must be - and are - taken into account when choosing a safe and suitable speed. These include road curvature, surface, and width, traffic density, parked vehicles, pedestrian presence and age, weather, time of day, and season. In a typical urban environment, therefore, the maximum safe speed varies between zero and 55mph plus.

For all the multitude of vastly different conditions, the posted speed limit is usually just one of two speeds (30mph or 40mph). It is absurd! On dual carriageways the argument still holds; but is much weaker, of course, because the variation in conditions is much less.

Please note that the above applies to all drivers - not just "the responsible", whoever they are.

Despite the foregoing, speed limits are so entrenched in conventional wisdom that proposing their abolition would not be understood or taken seriously by either government or media.

So what limits do we go for and where? Despite urban limits being by far the least sensible and almost universally ignored; they are paradoxically the most popular. We would not get far challenging them; though we can still campaign for the elimination of the ghastly Gatsos.

We are left, it seems, with the question of the dual carriageway limit of 70mph. If we simply recommend a higher limit (eg 90mph) we are simply repeating the folly of 1965. Then, half a committee plucked "70mph" out of the air. No attempt has ever been made to justify 70 rather than any other figure. As there is virtually no scientific evidence for any speed limits, we would have just as much difficulty defending a 90 limit as the DTp has with its 70. Of course a higher limit would be preferable, because fewer motorists would be caught and punished; but we could not claim that it had any more significance than the current. We could still support increases - were it on offer - but I do not believe that it should be our policy.

There has been much talk of the 85th percentile as a limit determinant. This theory states that the speed limit be set at the speed which only the fastest 15% of vehicles exceed. But, on close inspection, this theory is flawed. The essential questions here are:

- How far apart are these speed measurements to be made?
- In what weather, traffic, and other conditions are speeds to be assessed?
- Which vehicles are included?

Speed needs to be monitored continuously and adjusted to meet frequently changing conditions. Therefore, to answer (a) satisfactorily, speeds would have to be assessed every few

hundred metres at most. For broadly similar reasons, addressing (b), measurements would be required for sunshine, rain, heavy, medium, and light traffic, and so on. Considering (c), does one include HGVs, buses, or vans of various sizes? Making all these measurements would be hugely expensive and futile. In short, this idea suffers from the same problems as other speed limits - it does not adjust to prevailing circumstances.

## The German experience illustrates how unlimited motorways are safe

The German experience illustrates how unlimited motorways are safe. So, we are drawn inexorably to the view that motorway speed limits must disappear altogether.

Then there is education. Whereas the DTp seems to have a religious belief in the efficacy of speed limits and speed restrictions, opponents have an almost equal devotion to the cause of education. In both camps the fallacious argument runs "we did X and then Y happened, argal X caused Y". We must reject such an approach. In his book "Road Accidents: Prevent or Punish?" J J Leeming found no effect for either driver education or training. That was a while ago though. So, if there is hard scientific evidence, let us see it.

Returning, in conclusion, to the speed limit subject, we can agree, surely, that the level of speed limit enforcement should be scaled down. Such measures have, after all, nothing to do with road safety. We also agree that the whole question of road safety is given disproportionate attention. Much less than one per cent of all deaths occur on the road in the UK. Moreover, road mortalities have declined to an all time record low. We may be getting close to the minimum possible. We must ask therefore whether there is any point in further measures intended to reduce road deaths. The money would, almost certainly, save more lives if targeted on the National Health Service. ☹

*Views expressed in articles are not necessarily the policy of the ABD*

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## How to increase recruitment

Sir - Brian Gregory's article in a recent issue of Auto Car was superb, but we don't seem to be getting enough publicity and the 'greens' seem to be winning the propaganda war. Why? - when there are ten million plus motorists who must like and need their cars.

The cyclist lobby has worked wonders for itself especially given the tiny amount of cyclists that actually use their bikes as transport. I recently kept a watch on a cycle lane in Bath for 1/2 hour, mid morning, dry weather, not one bike went past and the cars were nose to tail. Where is the rationale? An extra lane for cars would have halved the pollution.

There must be some way we can get the truth across. Hugh Bladon gave me some of your fact sheets when he visited me in Bath recently. ABD 1.1 "The Environment Scapegoats" is excellent as was Hugh's reply to the whole page of drivel in the Daily Express recently. He mentioned facts like 20,000 miles of motoring equally 20 hours using a lawn mower and I believe Jeremy Clarkson recently quoted "One Fiesta ten years ago pollutes more than twenty today". If these are facts, they are very powerful and we need to push them home at every opportunity. A user friendly leaflet stating just two or three similar facts to hand out or put under windscreens would help a lot.

David Uwins

*Such literature is available. Members should contact the Secretary to request copies for distribution.*

## Write to On The Road!

This is *your* Newsletter! Write to the ABD with your experiences, observations and opinions. Letters or longer articles are welcome. If possible, send electronic as well as paper copy, to The Editor at:  
PO Box 3151, Colchester, CO6 3JH.

## Accidents - the true causes

Sir - I cannot refrain from expressing my great pleasure at - and agreement with - Paul Hemingway's excellent article on accident causes (OTR 13).

It reminded me forcefully of the late great JJ Leeming's approach. He said that accidents generally have multiple factors associated with them; and it is all too easy to dismiss an accident cause as drink or speed or whatever. In fact Leeming recommended an inquiry - broadly similar to Paul's - after every road accident.

This is just the sort of logical, in depth, approach needed for road safety.

Lance K Green

## Likely recruit: John Prescott?

Sir - It is quite amazing that all this pressure, legislation and excessive taxation is directed against the British motorist by the very people who are only serving to cut their own throats. There is no doubt that just about every member of the Government, the Civil Service, local Councils, the police and the environmental lobby, holds a driving licence and relies mainly on a private car for all their mobility.

Just to highlight this point I enclose a press cutting from the Yorkshire Post about John Prescott, Deputy Leader of the Labour Party, who has again fallen foul of the law by driving too fast. If we are to believe the Press and the opinion polls, Mr. Prescott may soon be a powerful member of the next Government; probably a government who natural inclinations are even more anti-motorist than the Tories.

"John Prescott fined for speeding on M62

"Labour deputy leader John Prescott has been fined after driving at nearly three times the recommended speed limit down an icy motorway. The Hull East MP was caught doing 80 mph on a wintry M62 when police had switched on 30 mph signs because of the

dangerous conditions. He was fined £40 for exceeding the compulsory 70 mph limit and received three penalty points.

"A party spokesman said: 'He was running late for his Saturday morning surgery last week and didn't want to have his constituents, particularly elderly people, waiting in the cold for him. He was spotted and both he and Humberside Police now consider the matter closed.'"

In 1991 Mr. Prescott was banned from driving after speeding at more than 100 mph on the M1.

Perhaps this is the right time to acquaint Mr. Prescott with some of the facts of motoring list, as monitored and published by the ABD, and to enlist his support for our objectives. After all, the vast majority of voters are drivers, and every party is looking for that extra angle to maximise their support.

The man in question does, I believe, drive a Jaguar, just like every socialist working man and keen environmentalist, and no doubt chose this car to help him stay within the speed limits.

Mr. Prescott is not renowned for his reticence, and if his bluff manner and apparent sincerity are genuine, then he must surely support our objectives.

Peter Horton

## Photocopier needed

**The ABD is run entirely on a voluntary basis. Funds are limited. To assist with the campaign we urgently need a photocopier.**

**If you can help, with this (or other equipment or your time) please contact the Secretary.**

## Royal Anti-car Club

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fee-paying, car-owning and driving members who expect it to defend their interests, the RAC no longer feels it appropriate to put its craven head above the parapet so to do. It now believes that road transport, and the private car in particular, is just one of several alternative forms of transport. It is in favour of the use of other transport modes than the private car wherever possible. So much for the "New Knights of the Road"!

Never mind that over 80% of car journeys are unavoidable, work-related ones. Never mind that public transport can never match the unrivalled flexibility and the go-where-you-want, when-you-want freedom offered by the private car, is inefficient, dirty and additionally, on a per vehicle basis, produces disproportionate quantities of the most dangerous PM10 emissions. Why then is the RAC so keen to continue taking private motorists' membership subscriptions, yet not prepared to fight the motorist's corner?

The fact is that there is now only one real motorists' organisation in the UK: the Association of British Drivers. This is the only organisation which is not frightened to challenge the emotive, unscientific rantings

of the eco-terrorists and the weasel-words of the revenue hungry bureaucrats and politicians.

The ABD alone is prepared to tell the truth about road safety, about road transport and air pollution, about road-building and about the real benefits and costs of motoring. Anyone who needs to use a car for work, anyone who enjoys the freedom of motoring as part of their leisure pursuits, anyone who enjoys driving and wants to continue to enjoy it, anyone who wants to ensure that that legacy of freedom of mobility can still be enjoyed by their children, should resign from the two moribund motoring organisations, whose fires are out and whose day is past, and join the ABD now.

# ABD Gatso Watch

## CAUTION: Why the ABD publishes Gatso Watch

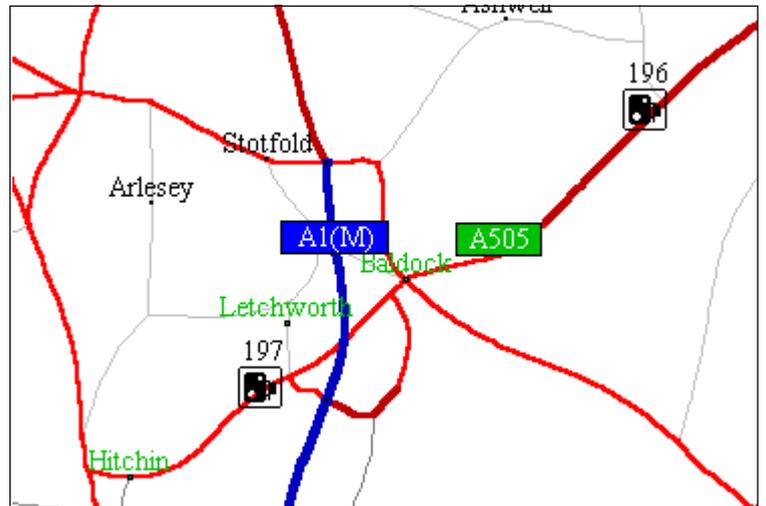
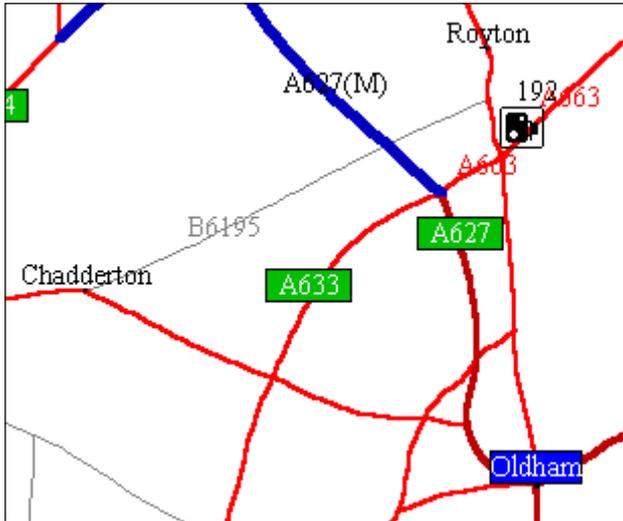
Members will not need reminding, but "On the Road" is obliged, for other reasons, to mention that:

- The ABD does not condone the abuse of speed.
- Drivers should travel at a speed safe for the conditions and with due regard to hazards such as schools.

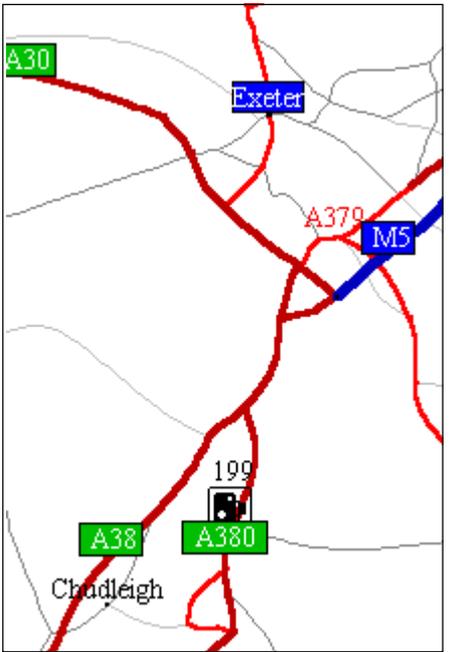
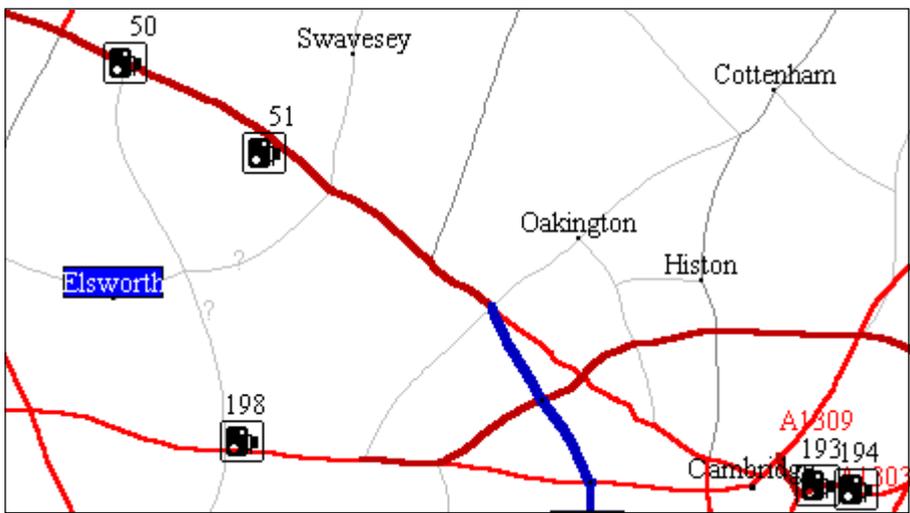
- Drivers should be able to stop within the distance they can see.

- Drivers should observe the two-second rule.

However, the ABD deplores the abuse of Gatsos and other devices. That is, where they are deployed in locations where the speed limit is unrealistically low.



Maps produced in Microsoft Autoroute Plus © 1988-1995 Microsoft Corporation,  
Maps © Ordnance Survey 1994



Ref	County	Town	Road	Direction	Location	OS Map Ref	Limit
50			A14	R	8 miles from M11 junction on central reservation	TL315681	70
51	Cambridgeshire		A14	R	1m NW of Bar Hill junction on central reservation	TL345663	70
192	Lancashire	Oldham	A663	E	600yd from exit roundabout of A627(M)	SD911067	40
193	Cambs	Cambridge	A1303	B	between B&Q and Coldham's lane roundabout		
194	Cambs	Cambridge	A1303	W	Between 'Racehorse' pub. and Cambridge United		
196	Herts	Royston	A505	E	Nr Kelshall turn in trees uphill		
197	Herts	Letchworth	A505	B	Multiple, Uncertain		
198	Cambs		A428 (old A45)	W	By Bourn airfield		
199	Devon		A380	N	On crest in wooded area, left of road		70

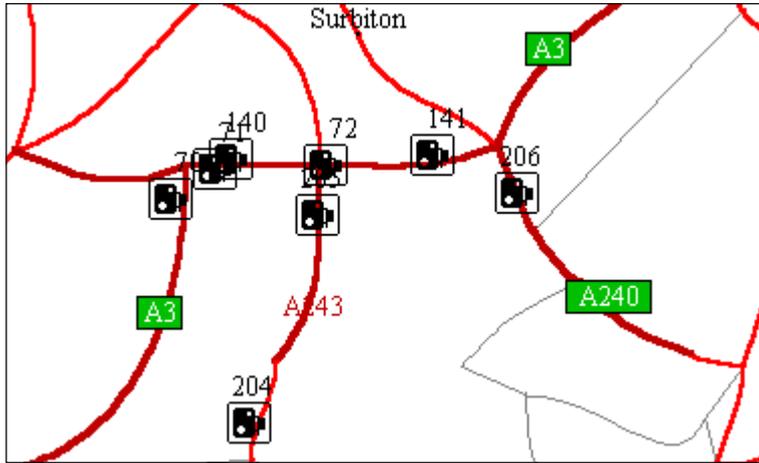
## Contributing to Gatso watch

This issue includes several new cameras reported by members. Also several have been reported by visitors to the ABD Web site; we hope they will join soon. Meantime, please report any sites known to you (use copies of the form printed on a later page). If you have access to a computer and could supply the

information on disc, please contact the Editor. If you have e-mail, that's even better. Don't forget, we are concentrating on motorways, trunk roads and other main roads.

## Gatso Watch - The latest

Latest information on camera sites will be posted on the ABD's site on the Worldwide Web, <http://www.deltacom.co.uk/abd>. The site is available to the public so if you do not have access to the Web, tell a friend who does.



**Important:**

If you can correct or add to any of the information shown in Gatso Watch, please contact the editor.

Can you supply the missing speed limit values?

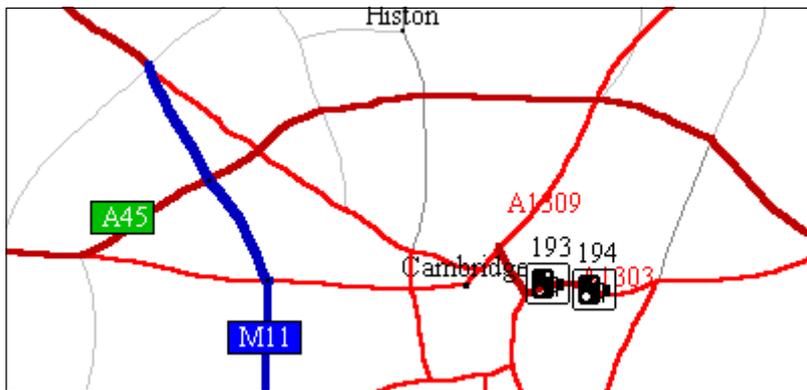
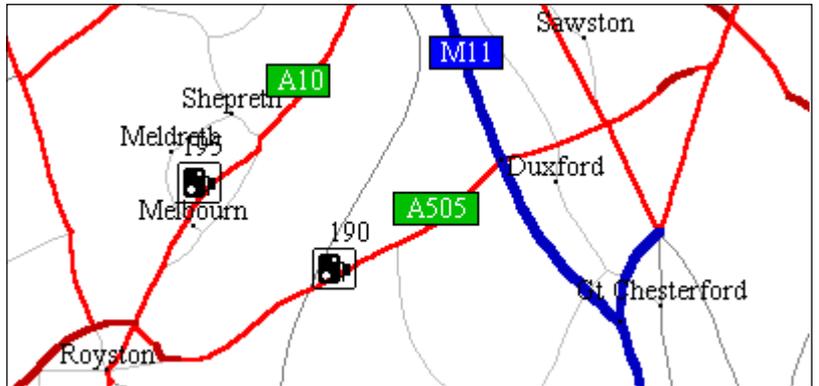
Can you fill in missing county names?

The limitations of the current mapping software are all too obvious. If you can suggest a better system, please contact the editor

### Unmarked cars

The following unmarked patrol cars have been reported:

- Witney, Oxfordshire, January, metallic grey Cavalier 2.0i saloon L680 HFC - a Bucks plate.
- M4, near Heathrow Airport, March, dark green Ford Mondeo, M492 LYP



Maps produced in  
Microsoft  
Autoroute Plus  
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Microsoft  
Corporation,  
Maps ©  
Ordnance Survey  
1994

**Disclaimer**

This information is provided in good faith. However the ABD can accept no liability for errors or omissions.

Ref	County	Town	Road	Direction	Location	OS Map Ref	Limit
70			A3	NE			70
71	London			SW		TQ172651	70
72	Surrey		A3	W	before A243 exit, Hook Underpass, behind sign	TQ183654	70
140	Surrey	Surbiton/Hook	A3	NE	verge as dual carriageway leave open country	TQ173652	70
141	Surrey		A3	NE	verge, just after junction before Hogsmill River	TQ194669	70
190	Cambridgeshire		A505	W3m W of M11	J10 (Duxford air museum)	TL418433	60
193	Cambs	Cambridge	A1303	B	between B&Q and Coldham's lane roundabout		
194	Cambs	Cambridge	A1303	W	Between 'Racehorse' pub. and Cambridge United		
195	Cambs	Melbourn	A10		Uncertain		
204	Surrey	Chessington	A243	N	before Chessington, 100yds before 30mph limit		40
205	Surrey	Hook	A243	R	Just south of A3, centre of dual carriageway		30
206	Surrey	Tolworth	A240	R	0.5 mile south of A3, centre of dual carriageway		40

# ABD Gatso Watch

**Camera Notification Form** Please photocopy, complete as fully as possible and send to PO Box 3151, Colchester CO6 3JH

Your name: ..... ABD Membership No.(if known) .....

<b>County</b> <i>Example entries:</i> <i>County, if known.</i>	<b>Road No</b> <i>E.g. A1</i>	<b>Road Name</b> <i>E.g. Great North Road</i>	<b>OS Map Ref</b> <i>Please give this if at all possible! E.g. AB123456</i>	<b>Speed Limit</b> <i>E.g. 60mph</i>
<b>Town</b> <i>If in or near a town</i>	<b>Direction</b> <i>N S E W, Both or Reversible</i>	<b>Location</b> <i>Description of location up to 60 characters.</i>		<b>Category</b> <i>Speed or Traffic light</i>

<b>County</b>	<b>Road No</b>	<b>Road Name</b>	<b>OS Map Ref</b>	<b>Speed Limit</b>
<b>Town</b>	<b>Direction</b>	<b>Location</b>		<b>Category</b>

<b>County</b>	<b>Road No</b>	<b>Road Name</b>	<b>OS Map Ref</b>	<b>Speed Limit</b>
<b>Town</b>	<b>Direction</b>	<b>Location</b>		<b>Category</b>

<b>County</b>	<b>Road No</b>	<b>Road Name</b>	<b>OS Map Ref</b>	<b>Speed Limit</b>
<b>Town</b>	<b>Direction</b>	<b>Location</b>		<b>Category</b>

<b>County</b>	<b>Road No</b>	<b>Road Name</b>	<b>OS Map Ref</b>	<b>Speed Limit</b>
<b>Town</b>	<b>Direction</b>	<b>Location</b>		<b>Category</b>

<b>County</b>	<b>Road No</b>	<b>Road Name</b>	<b>OS Map Ref</b>	<b>Speed Limit</b>
<b>Town</b>	<b>Direction</b>	<b>Location</b>		<b>Category</b>

# ABD Membership Application

## Application to join the Association of British Drivers (the operating name of Pro-Motor)

Title: Mr./Mrs./Ms./Dr./Other (Please specify)	If you have been convicted of any motoring offence within the last 10 years, please give details. (Pro-Motor reserves the right to refuse membership to any persons convicted of dangerous or reckless driving, drunken driving, and similar offences.)
Initials:                      Surname:	
Usual First Name:	
Address:	
Postcode:	I/We undertake to contribute such amount as may be required (not exceeding £1 for individual Members or £2 for joint Members) to the Company's assets if it should be wound up while I am/ we are Members, or within one year if I/we cease to be Members, for payment of the Company's debts and liabilities contracted before I/we cease to be Members, and of the costs, charges and expenses of winding up, and for the adjustment of the rights of the contributories among themselves. I consent to becoming a Member of Pro-Motor.
Home Tel                                      Fax	Signature:
Office Tel                                      Fax	Joint member's name:
E-mail	Signature:

### Subscription rates

Membership subscription is £15.00 per year if you pay by cheque or postal order.

If you pay by Standing Order the subscription is £12.00 per year. The same amount covers single membership or husband and wife membership.

Members are invited to make additional, voluntary "Fighting Fund" donations all of which will be used for campaigning.

Please make your cheques or postal orders payable to "Pro-Motor" or complete the Standing Order authority below.

Subscription to be paid:	£.....
Voluntary "Fighting Fund" donation:	£.....
Total enclosed/authorised:	£.....

### Bank Standing Order Authority

#### Customer and Account details:

Name of Bank: .....

Branch Name: .....

Bank Address: .....

Sort No: .....Account No: .....

Account Name: .....

#### Payee Details

Please make the following payment(s) to :  
**PRO-MOTOR LIMITED**  
 Lloyds Bank, 2 South Parade, Weston-super-Mare, BS23 1JL  
 Sort no: 30-99-51    Account No: 1411943

Amount of payment: £.....

Amount in words: .....

Date of Payment(s): .....monthly/annually\* until further notice.

Customer's signature: .....Date: .....

Name in block letters: .....

\* Please delete as appropriate.

### Send to:

Send this *whole page*, with cheque or authorisation for your subscription, to the Secretary at the address below.

Why not request more application forms to enrol your friends? Please send ..... application forms.

How did you hear about the ABD? .....

.....

The Membership Secretary  
 PO Box 181  
 Bridgwater  
 Somerset  
 TA6 3YT

**Please photocopy and distribute this form as necessary, or request copies of the separate ABD flier and application form from the Secretary or the Editor.**

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# Motoring USA

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## They Keep Lying To Us

*The following article is reproduced, unabridged, with the kind permission of James J. Baxter, President of the National Motorists' Association of America*

In the mid-1970s, the U.S. Department of Transportation told us that the 55 mph speed limit saved 9000 lives in one year. They didn't tell us that they changed the way they counted fatalities. They didn't tell us that most of the supposed life-saving took place on roads that had been previously posted at 55 or lower. They never acknowledged the impact of the oil embargo and economic recession on discretionary travel. The government and self-anointed safety organisations gave 100% of the credit to the 55mph National Maximum Speed Limit. They lied to us.

When the National Highway Safety Administration went on a holy crusade to mandate high-mounted, centered brake lights, they claimed a 50 per cent reduction in rear end collisions. Recent analysis of the effect of these brake lights indicates a possible reduction of five per cent. In other words, they are statistically insignificant. They lied to us.

One of the few benefits motorists obtained from the "oil crises" was the ability to "make right turns on red". The insurance industry immediately cranked out a study that said that "right turn on red" was responsible for a dramatic increase in right turn accidents. What they didn't bother to tell anyone was that "right turn on red" substantially reduced other types of intersection accidents. This more than compensated for any increase in right turn accidents (and probably accounted for the reduction in rear end collisions that were attributed to high-mounted, centered brake lights in error). They lied to us.

Every time a state legislature considers raising the state speed limit, the insurance industry shows up and says: "you raise the speed limit and insurance rates will have to go up to pay for all the additional accidents and injuries". Allstate Insurance just announced a 47% increase in profits from their auto insurance line for the second quarter of 1996. They still lie to us.

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### Allstate Insurance just announced a 47% increase in profits

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We have accused the insurance industry of supporting under-posted speed limits, so they can surcharge safe motorists' insurance premiums on the basis of arbitrary speeding tickets. The industry denies this and replies that surcharges are an insignificant part of their income. That is, until a state legislature says a policy holder can't be surcharged for just one ticket. When the New Jersey legislature was considering just such a bill, insurance company lobbyists claimed their profits would be cut by 25 per cent. You decide which story is true.

For close to 20 years, the federal and state governments and organisations like SADD, MADD, RID and various other anti-drinking groups have implied or outright claimed that 50 per cent of all highway fatalities are caused by "drunk drivers". Only under the heat of knowledgeable scrutiny do they admit that they have no idea how many fatalities are caused by "drunk drivers". However, they do know that the number was never 50 per cent. It isn't now 40 per cent, nor 30 per cent, and in fact, may not approach 20 per cent.

By using meaningless terms like "alcohol related" government and advocacy groups have deliberately distorted this issue to perpetuate their own agendas. Here's what these people really know and choose not to publicize: drinking related citations constitute 7 per cent of the citations issued as a result of accidents. While difficult to measure, suicides are a major component of what are considered "alcohol related" fatalities. Pedestrians and bicyclists with measurable alcohol levels in their systems, who die in transportation accidents are included

in the popularised "Killed by Drunk Drivers" P.R. campaigns. Even though an accident victim or participant may have some alcohol in their systems, it may have played no causative role in the accident. Is this telling the public the truth?

This past Winter, NHTSA (The US National Highways Transportation Safety Authority) issued a propaganda piece to discourage state and legislative action that would raise speed limits. One of the more egregious misrepresentations was a statement that the fatality rate on the German Autobahns was six times that on the U.S. Interstate system. This was so flat out, off the wall wrong that we knew it had to be an unintended error, not just the usual junk science stuff that the NHTSA pumps out on regular basis (Interstate and Autobahn fatality rates are almost identical).

When local papers started to regurgitate the NHTSA data, we went into action. We had our Washington, D.C. representative visit the NHTSA offices for the purpose of having the agency issue a retraction of the Autobahn statement. We had already informed NHTSA of their error. Not only would NHTSA not issue a retraction, they tried to defend the bogus numbers they publicized! These people are supposed to be the experts and they can't even recognize an absurd error in their publicity. No wonder they thought the 55mph limit saved 9,000 lives in 1974.

After we presented a report from the German Embassy, and another report produced by, of all people, the Insurance Institute for Highway Safety, that proved and documented our claims, the responsible parties at NHTSA admitted that maybe they didn't quite publicize the right data. This all started eight months ago and the NHTSA still hasn't issued a retraction.

Maybe they aren't lying to us after all? Maybe they're just too dumb to know the difference? ☹

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## Motoring in the United States

*Bob Morrow, a correspondent we "met" on the Internet, gives a snapshot of motoring in the land of the free. He is associated with the US National Motorists Association but writes here on his own behalf.*

I'd like to give a little perspective about driving in the USA. Many people are truly amazed at the size of this country. The largest state (Alaska) covers 571,000 square miles. The state of Wyoming has more cars than people.

Over here, motorways are called Interstates. There are 42,000 miles of Interstates, enough to go around the world about one and a half times. The longest is Interstate 90, which covers the 3,091 miles between Boston, Massachusetts and Seattle, Washington. At 75 mph, it would take you 41 hours to cover that distance.

Average price of a car in 1995 was about £11,000. Most cars today are kept for 7 years, and the average driver covers 12 to 15,000 miles each year. The average cost of one US gallon (3.8 litres) of gas is 75 pence. There are very few diesel (paraffin) powered cars here.

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### one US gallon (3.8 litres) costs 75 pence

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The typical "Yankee land yacht" no longer exists. The average car and engine size is much smaller than it was 15 years ago. Today the average engine is a V6 of about 3.5l. State registration fees do not take engine size into account.

In some states registration fees are flat, such as £33 for two years in New York. Other states charge you a percentage of the car's value. In Montana, the registration fee is 2.5 percent of the purchase price, so the registration fee for a new car that costs £7,200 will be £180 for the first year and slightly less for each subsequent year as the car's value drops.

Vehicle fuel economy is measured by miles per US gallon. Today's  
... continued next page

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# Motoring, UK

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## Excuse me Nanny, I'm a grown-up now

*Mark McArthur-Christie's view of motoring in the UK in the '90s.*

Every morning when I step out of the door, I can feel Nanny wagging her pudgy carbolicky finger at me and tutting, her starched apron fluttering indignantly as I get the car out of the garage and drive away.

I know this because every time I open a newspaper, switch on the radio or pick up a magazine, Nanny's there, telling me that I'm a bad boy and that "something should be done." My sin is driving and even worse, enjoying my driving, and more heinous than that, enjoying driving - sssshh, whisper it - FAST. Forgive me, Father, for I have sinned.

To be a driver and a driving enthusiast in the oh-so-politically correct 1990s is to rank right up there on the public hate scale with mass murderers and politicians. Every day, Nanny leads me to believe, I slaughter thousands of fluffy white bunnies with exhaust smoke, cause the English countryside to be laid waste in tracts for bypasses and single-handedly wipe out colonies of happily dribbling toddlers by driving through housing estates at the reckless speed of just over 20 mph.

The car is evil, no two ways about it. Nanny doesn't like it - and mark my words, in Britain, when Nanny doesn't like it, something will be done. Unfortunately, something is being done - but, as ever, exactly the wrong something.

Now don't get me wrong - driving three inches from the bumper of the car in front is plain downright dangerous, stupid and possibly fatal - but Gatsos aren't going to stop it. Overtaking round a blind bend on the crest of a hill isn't exactly going to win you prizes for intelligence - but if you do that sort of thing you won't be prevented from doing it by a few speed bumps and civic flower tubs - you'll just see how fast you can jump your "Escorwt Exarfreeoi" over them. God help the emergency services.

I'm sure I'm not the only one who has seen someone brake

### Motoring in the United States

*... continued from previous page*

cars get about 25 miles per gallon, with some as high as 40 or more. Due to our pollution laws, you haven't been able to buy a car with a manual choke since the 1960s. Also due to our pollution laws, cars started using catalytic converters and unleaded gas (gas without lead) in 1975.

About 20 states require an annual safety inspection. Those states that don't do not have a higher accident rate. Since only 2 percent of all vehicle accidents are caused by unsafe/broken equipment, safety inspections are unnecessary.

About 25 states require two license plates. The others require only one, on the back. All are reflective. Each state's design is different, and there are some that are very colorful.

Driver licenses are issued by each individual state. All licenses are standard credit card size (2" x 3"), have your picture on them and are good for only 4 or 5 years at a time. However, you are not required to take a test when you renew your license, so why not make them good for life?

Driver's education classes are not taught by professional drivers and they don't even teach people how to change a tire. New drivers are not required to have "L" plates on the car.

Many gas stations now have credit card machines built into the gas pumps, and nearly every station is self-serve. In some places you must pay for the gas before pumping it, but those stations are the exception. ☹

from 40mph to 20mph a few yards from a Gatso, only to speed up again once they've passed it. But doesn't a headline like "4,000 speeding motorists trapped by Oxon cameras" make great PR - oh yes, we're tackling the problem. Sorry Nanny - you're not, you're just tinkering with the symptoms of a far greater malaise.

What I'm saying is that we've lost just a teensy bit of perspective in our endeavours to become a society that is totally free from risk. Nanny has decreed that risk of any sort is now utterly unacceptable and as a consequence, we're losing sight of the fact that risk is biologically, psychologically and mentally necessary to our well-being. Combine this with a political system that thinks it can legislate on how many potatoes I eat every day (3 egg-sized ones in case you'd forgotten), and how many pints of beer I'm allowed to drink, and the wonder is, why we went for Gatso cameras and not driver training and education.

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### we're losing sight of the fact that risk is biologically, psychologically and mentally necessary to our well-being

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Whilst the powers that be - of whatever political persuasion - believe that we can't think for ourselves, and fail to train us so that we can make our own choices, is it any wonder that speed bumps, road narrowing, traffic "calming", 50mph speed limits and Gatsos are springing up like triffids?

As I said, I believe that speeding in a 30mph limit (where it's reasonably imposed) is stupid - but why not educate the driver to see why rather than slapping him 3 points and a £40 fine when he gets it wrong? If you're lucky enough to get stopped by a traffic officer, you'll at least get an explanation of why 50mph in a 30mph zone isn't very clever - but given the woeful underfunding and undermanning of the police, your chances of being Gatsoed are rather better. And if you think it's bad now, just wait until speed enforcement is privatised...

Cameras, humps, restrictions and ridiculous speed limits do not stop dangerous driving - they stop fast driving. But which is more dangerous, the cretin who persistently intimidates other drivers by driving on their bumpers and undertaking, or the trained, alert driver running at 80mph on an open A class road? How many accidents are there in Formula 1 each season in comparison with just a week on the roads? Speed is not the problem.

How about this as an idea - and before you dismiss it as the ravings of a young whippersnapper barely turned 30, give it a thought: Let's not legislate any more, maybe even throw out a few rules, let's chuck the cameras away, flatten the humps, take out the restrictions and do a little training and education. Let's make ongoing training a condition of retaining a driving licence, and start (horror of horrors) incentivising good driving rather than doing the good old British thing of penalising bad driving.

Of course, Nanny won't buy it. If people can think for themselves, she's looking down the business end of what the personnel people call an "involuntary career break". Maybe she could take up smoking, start drinking scotch, learn to bungee jump and take over Jeremy Clarkson's slot on "Top Gear" instead... ☹

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# Pollution, Health and the Environment

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## Lib.Dems & FoE to drive you out of your car

A Private Member's Bill proposing Government be given powers for legislated reductions in road traffic had its second reading in January 1997 and was passed unopposed. Although described as "gesture politics" and said to be unlikely to come the statute book, citizens should not be lulled into a false sense of security. This whole anti-car movement, although driven by activists such as FoE, has the tacit backing of most of the unelected bureaucracy and media pundits who actually run the country. For them, Westminster politicians (of whatever colour) are so many puppets to be manipulated.

The Road Traffic Reduction Bill proposes that Government and local councils implement strategies to reduce road traffic by 5 per cent on 1990 levels by 2005 and by 10 per cent by 2010. These reductions are alleged to be essential to improve air quality and reduce congestion. The Bill is sponsored by Bath MP, Don Foster, but is being drafted for Mr. Foster by Ron Bailey of Friends of the Earth (Tel.: 0171-490 1555, ext.1414).

Prior to the second reading, the Bill received little media coverage. It is the work of a tiny minority of eco-terrorists and is only receiving political support because there is an all-party conspiracy in favour of bleeding the motorist as a means of avoiding politically unpalatable increases in direct taxation to fund the ever-burgeoning social deficit.

It is also - and most crucially - flawed on scientific grounds: All the currently available evidence shows that emissions from petrol road vehicles play no significant role in the growth in the incidence of breathing disorders. Air quality is now better than at any time in the last 100 years. Road transport emissions peaked in 1990, are falling dramatically - and will continue to fall - whatever the rate of traffic growth. By 2010, even assuming no further improvements in emissions abatement technology; road transport emissions will be around one-quarter of their current levels. A modern car is so clean that driving from Stockholm to Rome and back - twice - emits no more VOC's than does the use of one-and-a-half litres of conventional solvent-based gloss paint!

The reason for the ever-present congestion on Britain's roads is not primarily traffic levels: Government claims it is impossible to build enough roads to satisfy the growth in traffic, but the truth is that it has never tried: Britain has over many years invested a lower proportion of GDP in transport investment - and in roads in particular - than any of its major European partners; and indeed than many of the emerging, less developed European nations. A recent independent report graphically illustrated that the quality and quantity of Britain's roads, relative to our traffic levels, has now declined so far as to put us on a par with Poland and Greece.

These latter nations can legitimately claim

- unlike the UK - that they have experienced explosive traffic growth in recent years. For the UK's deceitful, incompetent politicians and bureaucrats there is no hiding place: our traffic problems lie fairly and squarely at their doors.

Seeking to cap traffic growth in some misguided attempt to court favour with the Greens will do no more than seal our fate as a nation in steady economic decline; indeed, accelerating the slide; while all our major European rivals will outstrip us and we are even left behind by the likes of Greece and Poland. It will cut no ice with the electorate when they realise that their future economic prosperity is being sacrificed at the altar of Green (in this case definitely meaning naive) Political Correctness.

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## London air pollution linked to higher death rates

A five-year study in London reported in the British Medical Journal Anderson, HR et al (1996) BMJ, Vol 312, pp.665-669 has reported a positive correlation between air pollution and urban mortality rates.

The report suggests that the daily mortality rate correlated positively with higher levels of ozone and black smoke; the effect for ozone being most pronounced in Spring and Summer.

An increase in eight-hour ozone levels from 4 to 36ppb (parts per billion by volume) was reported to result in a 3.5% increase in total mortality rate.

With regard to black smoke, a 10µgm-3 rise in concentration was associated with a 1.1% increase in mortality.

The report then goes on to allege: "the possibility that much of the population is currently experiencing levels of pollution which are capable of adversely affecting the lung"

Paradoxically, another BMJ report Buchdahl, R et al (1996), BMJ, Vol 312, pp.661-664 suggests that (besides high levels) exceptionally *low* levels of ozone also triggered increases in frequency of asthma

attacks and that their is probably an optimal level of ozone of around 20ppb for asthma sufferers.

Three questions come to mind: firstly, high levels of ozone in the UK are almost exclusively associated with very calm weather, which we only get in when it is either extremely hot or intensely cold. Have these workers tried correlating these mortality increases with those observed in areas where ozone and black smoke are absent but the intense heat or cold are still present? My guess is that mortality rate there (as in the ozone and black smoke affected urban areas) will show a similar positive correlation with temperature at either end of the normally encountered temperature scale: high and low

Secondly, how many of the unfortunate fatalities were smokers, or had been in their younger days? While in not wishing to alienate ABD members who happen to be smokers, the prediction is that within 25 years tobacco-related illnesses will be the largest single cause of mortality (smoking being a frequent contributor to heart problems).

Thirdly, still I'm afraid, on the smoking theme, what is the relative damage done by standing all day in traffic fumes exceeding WHO health guidelines, compared with smoking (and inhaling) just one cigarette? Sadly, the cigarette wins in the health-risk stakes.

The aim here isn't to discriminate against smokers, rather to stress the freedom of choice aspect: we are in danger of being nannied out of doing *anything* because it's bad for us by the self-appointed experts who propound the so called "precautionary principle" - which amounts to an "if there's any risk at all don't do it!" philosophy.

Perhaps we should give up breathing at all; after all, breathing precedes every known case of fatality; stop the breathing and you prevent the fatality!

## Better cats round the corner

Chemical Week reported in December 1996 that Johnson Matthey (JM) plans to commercialise a new generation of automotive catalysts that are able to tolerate temperatures in excess of 1,000 C. The precious metal catalysts are scheduled to be introduced in 1998-model cars.

The catalysts are designed to help reduce hydrocarbon emissions immediately after an engine is started, when the catalyst is still cold, according to Barry Cooper, vp. and technical director at JM's Catalytic Systems Division (Wayne PA). Because of their ability to withstand relatively high temperatures, the catalysts can be placed closer to the exhaust manifold than conventional catalysts. As a result, the catalytic converter heats up more quickly after the engine starts.

... continued next page

# Pollution, Health and the Environment

## Coatings industry also feels weight of unreasonable legislators

The Coatings industry is under intense pressure worldwide to reduce its emissions of VOC's (Volatile Organic Compounds). In the United States, the Environmental Protection Agency has proposed a target of a 20% reduction from 1990 levels to be achieved by January 1st, 1998. The fact that the proposed regulations do not concern themselves with hazardous, but merely total, VOC emissions shows that here - as in the persecution of the private motorist, it is much more important to appear to be doing something to improve the environment than to actually be improving it.

The main difference is that the penalties for those industrial concerns failing to achieve compliance by the required date will be proportionately much less stiff than those imposed on the private motorist: industry contributes to political parties and it doesn't pay to "bite the hand that feeds". Motorists - in other words private individuals and electors - clearly don't count.

## Academics demand steep rise in petrol prices

A group of Cambridge based researchers have demanded that the Government acts to raise the price of petrol in order to reduce Carbon Dioxide emissions, as well as to shut more Coal fired power stations. If the advice is taken, petrol would cost at least £1.14 per litre of unleaded by 2010 in real terms (as opposed to an average of about £0.61 today).

The AA, however, called on the Government to encourage an intensive campaign to encourage energy efficiency, especially for buildings. That, of course, is exactly what the ABD has called for for years.

## Better cats

... continued from previous page

JM is also testing with carmakers a new generation of automotive catalysts to better control nitrogen oxides (NOx) emissions. One approach to more fuel-efficient cars is the use of "lean-burn" engines (that run at substantially reduced fuel: air ratios) for prolonged periods. Conventional auto catalysts, however, have difficulties controlling NOx emissions under such conditions. JM is developing catalysts that capture the NOx during lean operations; the NOx is then released and reduced to nitrogen when the engine runs rich. Such technology, says Cooper, could be ready for commercialization in Europe by 2001.

## "Environmentalists" fight Cumbria-NE link road

Two environmental groups are fighting plans to build a by-pass around the town of Kirkby in Cumbria - and they are simultaneously demanding that a 7.5 tonne weight restriction is imposed on all the roads in the area, including the busy A685 trans-Pennine route to the North-East.

The new by-pass would relieve traffic congestion in the town of Kirkby, and remove from its streets the 700 heavy goods vehicles that currently travel through it every day.

However, if the bypass is cancelled and the weight restriction imposed, only HGVs requiring access to the town could use the road. Others would be forced to take a 23 mile detour. The Freight Transport Association calculates that it would cost hauliers up to £1.5 million per year, harming the competitiveness of local businesses.

## Household chemicals "no threat" say medics

A recent report by the Medical Research Council Institute for Environment and Health suggests that formaldehyde and Volatile Organic Compounds (VOCs) are "potentially a hazard, (but) there is no evidence that they pose a risk to health at the levels typically found in UK homes".

Formaldehyde given off by chipboard, insulation and household cleaners can cause sensory and airway irritation.

Indoor levels of 0.02 - 0.025mgm<sup>-3</sup> were observed compared with an estimated sensitisation threshold around 0.1mgm<sup>-3</sup>.

In line with US Environmental Protection Agency findings, there were also found to be over 200 individual VOCs in indoor air, given off by paints, adhesives, air fresheners, gas appliances etc.

Typical levels were 0.2 - 0.4mgm<sup>-3</sup>; some **ten times** the levels found outdoors.

Isn't it *peculiar* that indoor levels are thought to pose "no risk to health" yet outdoor concentrations averaging ten times lower levels are being associated with increased levels of mortality by some environmental groups?

Who do you think is telling the truth; the medical profession or the eco-terrorists?

## Telegraph Message: "We are all being killed by the way we live"

The Daily Telegraph reported the above salutary headline on September 24th of this year.

The upshot of this article, outlining the findings of a World Health Organisation report, was that non-communicable illnesses: cancers, heart disease, strokes, injuries and mental illnesses have already overtaken infectious diseases as the main causes of premature death and illness in industrialised countries, and are set to do likewise in developing ones also.

By 2020 "self-inflicted", non-infectious causes "will account for 73% of all deaths".

It is alleged in the article that heart disease will be the "leading global cause of disease burden" by 2020.

What seems hardly surprising to me is that, given that we all have to die of something eventually, if infectious diseases have been (temporarily?) tamed by medical science, then logically, the proportion of fatalities accounted for by non-infectious causes must rise dramatically.

The good news, however, is twofold: the road accident - a major non-infectious cause of death and injury in other countries - is steadily slipping down the UK rankings.

To end on a cheerful note, by 2020 average life expectancy worldwide will be 71 years, with the average for women in industrialised countries being 88 years.

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# Speed and Safety Issues

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## No bloodbath from higher US limits

The dire road casualty predictions of the US Anti-speed Nazis have proved groundless. Road safety "experts" had predicted an extra 6400 deaths would be added to the 40,000 annual US road death toll as a result of the increase in US freeway speed limits to normally 70 or 75mph. So far, no discernible rise in casualties has occurred; indeed, several States have reported decreases: one of 28%!

The recent US freeway experience should, of course, come as no surprise, especially to the Americans themselves. The conclusions of the United States' own Federal Highways Administration Report, FHWA-RD-92-084, on the topic of speed limits and accidents had this to say:

- Motorists do not conform to speed limits they perceive as unreasonable.
- Speed limits lowered to levels perceived as unreasonable result in lower compliance and increased accident rates.
- Speed limits increased to levels perceived as reasonable result in improved compliance and reduced accident rates.
- No operational or road safety benefits arise from imposing speed limits perceived by drivers as unreasonable.
- 85th to 90th percentile speeds (at or below which 85% to 90% of motorists travel under freeflow conditions) generally represent reasonable upper limit bounds. (On UK motorways the 85th percentile speed is 85mph.)

The real objectives of so-called road safety measures, as we in the ABD well know, are actually quite different - as the recent M5 camera report in the last issue of "On the Road", and a recent Daily Telegraph article have already signalled. Far from wanting to save lives, the true aim of the power-crazed Whitehall bureaucrats is to place yet another unreasonable stricture on the citizen and to have another opportunity to relieve him of his hard-earned lolly. Never mind that the road safety effects are likely to be negative: it's the cash that counts, after all!

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## Everyone's getting the Hump...

### ... but is government getting the message?

*Patricia Bole comments on the proliferation of speed humps.*

A growing number of our roads, both through city centres and in residential areas, are beginning to resemble ploughed fields, as an epidemic of road humps are being introduced, presumably to slow down the traffic. But where these humps have in the past been a reasonable way of reducing speed on university campuses and hospital sites, they are now being introduced by local authorities at an alarming rate. In some cases they appear to be causing havoc to both the health of the driver and the vehicle.

In north London, a driver has been compensated for a broken exhaust pipe as a result of road humps that are in breach of DoT regulations despite the refusal of the authority's officials to accept liability. They say that they paid out the money because it would have been more expensive to contest the claim.

Brian Simpson, who launched the Campaign Against Road Hump Madness, said that he was amazed at how steep the ramps are, being so severe that cars travelling at more than 2 or 3 mph are subjected to a massive jolt that can break exhaust pipes, damage suspension and cause a lot of pain to people with spinal and arthritic problems.

In September 1995, there was a victory in Twickenham, where the residents forced their Council to remove humps due to the noise emanating from bottle-laden lorries clanking over them. There are

other reported incidents that which are just as ludicrous - the scheme in Hampshire, for instance, where there had been no reported accidents until the humps were introduced. Within weeks, there had been five or six accidents there.

Mr King of the RAC says that many councils put the humps down in the wrong places and to the wrong specifications - apparently some councils have even gone out at night to slice the top off humps that are too high, because they had so many threats from motorists.

In Cardiff it has been reported that two bus passengers have suffered injuries, in separate incidents, as a result of the busses bouncing over traffic calming measures. One of the passengers suffered a broken spine.

Is it not time that we, the motorists, said enough is enough? Road humps are fine where they are really necessary and do the job without causing damage to spines and exhaust systems; *but* more control is needed to prevent local councils introducing them simply to be seen as politically correct. Perhaps America has the right idea, where road humps are prohibited on bus routes.

Ironically, traffic calming measures seem, in the main, to have exactly the opposite effect from that intended. The slowing down and grinding through the gears which humps and chicanes are designed to cause, creates pollution noise and aggravation - so let's give the hump the heave-ho.

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## Coroner condemns unnecessarily low speed limits

The Coroner for West Suffolk recently had to give verdicts on the victims of three fatal road accidents on the A134. In each case the victim was a car driver. This road has recently been subject to the imposition of lower and more extensive speed limits and the Coroner, as part of his verdict, said that the new speed limits may have been a contributory factor in two of the fatal accidents.

The Coroner referred to speed limits in a number of specific locations, naming one place (the village of Bradfield Combust with a double bend and a junction) where the 40mph limit was reasonable but extended too far either side of the hazards. He recommended that 50 limit signs should be placed where the current 40 signs are, with new 40 signs closer to the hazards.

He referred to other villages (Sicklesmere and Alpheton) and remarked "I don't think there is any doubt whatsoever that 30mph is ridiculously slow to compel drivers to go through those two villages."

### **"Unnecessary speed limits are detrimental to safety for various reasons..."**

The coroner went on to explain, "Unnecessary speed limits are detrimental to safety for various reasons, they reduce the opportunity to overtake, thereby causing drivers to try harder at other times, they cause traffic to bunch, they cause frayed tempers, they cause delay which makes drivers try harder at other times to make up time.

"Another unfortunate effect ... is that each unnecessary speed limit leads drivers to think that speed limits are imposed arbitrarily and therefore makes drivers less likely to observe speed limits when they ought to."

Considering drivers' attitude on the road, the Coroner said, "A driver with a frayed temper is not going to drive anything like as well as one who is calm and relaxed... Drivers should of course concentrate on staying calm and relaxed and they are at fault if they do not do so,

... continued next page

# Goodwood Festival of Speed

*Alan Capell of the Mazda MX5 Owners Club, looks back at the 1996 Festival and anticipates this year's eagerly.*

Brought together by his vision, hosted, and under the close direction of Lord March, the Goodwood Festival of Speed must rate as the greatest motoring event in the British calendar.

The 1996 event brought together many differing aspects of motoring to commemorate the centenary. From horse drawn carriages and early wooden coaches with crude engines tucked underneath replacing pure horse power, the robustly constructed Edwardian sports racers, to stylish grand touring cars, motorbikes, over 160 classic racing cars from all eras. Maserati, Cooper-Climax, BMW, McLaren, Bugatti, Ford, ... the list was almost endless, the speed trials, off-road rally events, the Thrust SSC, plus exhibitions and traders.

Crowds filled up over the three days of the Festival. Friday was fairly quiet and relaxed but by **S u n d a y**, Goodwood park was teeming as thousands jostled their way between exhibitors' marquees, trade stands and art exhibitions, with the speed trials roaring up the hill through its centre. TV cameramen perched upon the mansion roof, and in telescopic cranes high above the course which gave excellent coverage to the events which via two massive screens.

I had considered attending the festival on a budget ticket of £25 for the three days, but instead I decided upon the more costly option - Membership of the Festival, giving access to grandstands, the house, the winners' enclosure and party, and the horse racing evening.

Day One saw the preparation of the sprint competitor's racing cars and motorbikes in the paddock area, along with further arrivals of vintage and concourse show cars, all jockeying for position and pushing forward through the crowds towards their exhibition areas. Brooks auction was underway in the marquee to the rear of the house, offering automotive

spares, Ferrari race engines, etc, followed by a wide selection of prestige and rare cars and light aircraft.

The Festival had something for everyone interested in motoring and speed, the hubbub of the paddock, the speed trials, the tranquillity and the garden party atmosphere to be found in Cartier's enclosure which featured a live jazz band. Richard Noble was there to promote the Thrust SSC land speed attempt. Assembled there were possibly the most valuable collection of automobiles gathered in one place - America's Blue Crown Special valued at £1.4 million, Miller Golden submarine £1.4 million, three GT40 Le Mans cars £1 million each, MV Augusta's £1/2 million, Mercedes Silver Arrow - not to mention countless Ferraris.



*One of the hundreds of stunning vehicles at the 1996 Festival*

Sunday being the busiest day, I had set my alarm at 5:30, and was up for an early start for the 40 mile run down through Sussex. On route it was obvious that many people had the same intention. With crowds streaming into the Festival, my Member's ticket seemed to have

been a good idea as we headed for our reserved parking area near the members' grandstand, offering a relatively peaceful area well positioned on the first bend.

Celebrities were everywhere - in the crowd, driving the cars, interviewed on the TV screen, commentating, - Murray Walker, Derek Bell, Jeremy Clarkson, John Surtees leading the racing bike speed trials, etc, etc. By 9:30 viewing in the paddock was impossible, the marshal was frantically pushing at the crowds in order to clear a path for cars edging onto the track.

## **The Festival had something for everyone interested in motoring and speed**

Although the weighty 11.2 litre Peerless Green Dragon of 1904 and capable of over 100mph stuttered to a halt, its race helmeted driver appearing rather inappropriate in this vintage racer, and the land speed record breaking 1907 Metallurgique Maybach powered by its WW1 Zeppelin aero engine remained a static display, and are difficult to compare with the McLaren F1 whose full power could not be unleashed within the confines of the track, all were evocative of the quest for speed, and engineering excellence.

Sunday evening culminated in the presentation of trophies and laurels at the mansion, where we met many of the drivers: Jonathan Palmer, Sir Jack Brabham, Stirling Moss and our host Lord March. What more can I say, for those of you who missed last year's festival, except "See you this year". ☺

## **Coroner condemns limits**

*... continued from previous page*

but none of that alters the connection there can be between an accident and an unnecessary speed limit."

Speaking of speed limits generally, the Coroner, drawing on his own observations as a motorist said, "When a high percentage of drivers ignore a particular speed limit, everyone says how terrible that is and how awful drivers are. None of them stop to think, or if they do they do not say so publicly, that there might be something wrong with the speed limit." He went on to say that he thought the A134 would become safer if more reasonable limits were set and intends to make a representation to Suffolk County Council to that effect.

## Leading journalist espouses ABD views

News of the World motoring editor Mike Rutherford is not afraid to speak his mind, and he does so liberally in *Auto Express* on 10 January with "15 things guaranteed to make Motormouth Mike mad in 1997".

You may not like the alliteration, but you will like his pet hates:

- Tailgaters - why don't the Police concentrate on this instead of minor speeding and parking offences?
- Gatsos - little to do with preventing accidents, it's their money making ability that counts.
- Greenies - blinkered, deceitful hypocrites
- Inappropriate Speeders - totally unacceptable to do more than 30 in a residential street.
- Private parking attendants - Vultures... in neo Nazi uniforms... who should be cleaning toilets."

It is good to see we are not alone!

## ABD Web site

The Web site continues to be developed as time permits. There is now an index to press releases and these are available to journalists (and the public) for reading and downloading.

Camera locations have been added to the web site as new notifications come in (many, now from non-members who have found the site). It is clear that web "surfers" are able to find the ABD site easily via the search engines and links from other motoring sites.

ABD Chairman, Brian Gregory has prepared computer-based presentations on

Safety, Speed and Pollution. These will run on PC systems running DOS, Windows 3.x or Windows 95. You can download them from the web site, or have them on floppy disc.

The web site now has a membership application form which visitors can print out and send straight in. Eventually we hope to progress to fully on-line joining.

## Other motoring sites on the Worldwide Web

### The US picture

Bob Morrow of the NMA writes:

Here's a good site to look at for a glimpse of the traffic ticket scam here in the states. The state in particular is Ohio, and they are by no means unusual. It's a long series, so plan on spending some time at the computer if you want to read all of it. Make sure the printer is full of paper if you want to print it out.

<http://www.dispatch.com/news/special/wheelsofjustice/wheelsofjustice.html>

### Canada

If you used the link on our web site to try to contact SENSE, you may have been unsuccessful. Try again with URL:

<http://sense.bc.ca>

SENSE have recently enjoyed victory in court case over a photo radar ticket; details can be found on the web site.

### General motoring

The Autolink site is a comprehensive page of links to other sites such as car manufacturers, motoring organisations, Formula 1 teams and drivers etc:

<http://www.autolinkuk.co.uk>

## Media Successes for the ABD

1997 has got off to a flying start. In early January, Traffic spokesperson Paul Hemingway and the ABD were quoted in *AutoExpress* magazine. Paul highlighted the disrespect which excessively low speed limits breed, leading to danger. The imposition of unreasonably low limits has led to one Coroner, Bill Walrond, criticizing Suffolk County Council's speed limit policy which he has named as a contributory factor in causing road accidents. (See separate article).

The ABD received a mention in *Autocar* magazine two weeks running (Late News 15th January) and on the News page (Road users slam "green" traffic bill") on the 22nd January. Both pieces concerned the "Road Traffic Reduction Bill", which aims to reduce traffic flows by 5% of their 1990 levels by 2005, and by 10% of the 1990 level by 2010. (See separate article).

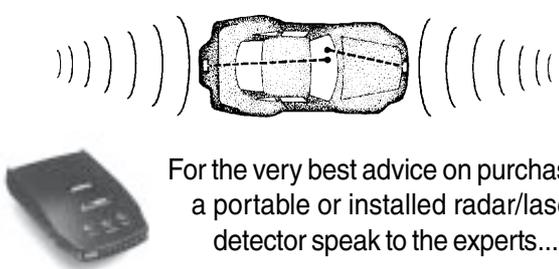
The *Surrey and Hants Star* newspaper published a major article on the 16th January, also slamming the "Traffic Reduction Bill" and once again offering its support to the ABD.

Paul Hemingway spoke on London's *News Direct* programme on Thursday 23rd January, and his recorded interview was broadcast to thousands of listeners across the Greater London area during the morning rush hour, and repeated several times. Again, the topic centred on the Road Traffic Reduction Bill, and Paul stressed the need for positive choice, including the car. Paul also questioned the suitability of Sir George Young as Minister of Transport, in view of his membership of the anti-car and anti-transport "Friends of the Earth" pressure group. "It is a bit like appointing a member of CND to be Minister of Defence", Paul said.

A newspaper called "*Small Business News*" (printed by the Small Business Bureau, and distributed nationwide) has published a half page article in its February edition about the ABD entitled "Lib/Greens aim to drive you out of your car", including a photograph of Chairman Brian Gregory, full details of our aims, and our address. Better still, the article is supported by an article about the findings of search into "car dependence" by the RAC Foundation for Motoring and the Environment entitled "Why we all need cars", and a short comment from newspaper editor Alan Franklin (of the *Surrey and Hants Star*).

The ABD was also praised in the February edition of *Performance Car* magazine, in which the Editor, Brett Fraser warned his readers of the Australian experience where GATSO cameras are used to enforce speed

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### The big picture

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### E-mail address?

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## ABD Media Successes

... continued from previous page

limits to the letter (even 0.5km over the limit is enough to get you a ticket). His advice was that his readers should join the ABD "otherwise fast cars and hard driving will soon be a thing of the past". We are extremely grateful to all publications who have carried our stories, but we are particularly grateful to Brett Fraser for his support.

Many new members have joined us following the **Performance Car** editorial, and enquiries are still pouring in.

Hundreds of people have now visited our Web site on the Internet, and that too has led to further enquiries and new memberships.

There may well have been more Press successes for us - we simply cannot scan every publication. If you spot a mention of the ABD anywhere, please let us know!

More Press releases are on the stocks, and there are some potentially exciting opportunities coming up for media exposure in the coming weeks and months. Watch this space...

ABD Member, Lance Green had a letter published in the **Daily Mail**, 24th February countering the general anti-car attitude of officialdom particularly in respect of air quality and road safety.

## Welcome to new Members

We offer a warm welcome to all new members. All members, old and new are welcome to come to our regular meetings (dates below). Please also get involved - this is YOUR organisation. We desperately need people who can help by giving time, skills or resources to conduct our campaign and make it more effective. Whether you can write articles, help print leaflets, advise on Public relations or stuff envelopes your contribution will be welcome!

## Dates for your Diary:

### ABD Meetings

The usual venue for all meetings is The Plough, Denham, Bucks. at 10.30 a.m.

Saturday 22nd March 1997, Denham

Note: 5th April is *cancelled*.

Saturday 19th April 1997 - (provisional venue Calais, details to be announced)

Saturday 7th June 1997, Denham

Saturday 16th August, Denham

4th October

6th December

Venues to be announced, but at least one will be held in the Midlands to make it easier for members in the North and Midlands to attend. We hope to arrange one meeting at the offices

of HPC, who offer high performance driving courses, at Wellesbourne later in the year.

### Other dates

12th April, The High Performance Club invite ABD members to their open day at Bruntingthorpe.

20 - 22 June, Goodwood Festival of Speed. We plan to repeat our highly successful "pitch" at the "Festival of Speed" at Goodwood, home of the Earl of March. Last year's event raised our profile, and led to hundreds of enquiries and many new members joining us. It was also an extremely worthwhile event to attend in its own right. We hope to see you there, and will be pleased to have more volunteers to help.

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## FACTS, The Parliamentary Advisory Council on Transport Safety

Hugh Bladon and Paul Hemingway attended the meeting of the above organisation on the 5th March in the House of Commons. A report on this meeting will appear in the next issue of OTR. It is intended to try to get a place on at least one of the committees as soon as possible so that we can have a greater influence on the thinking of this important body.

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## Three Cheers!

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## Coroner condemns low speed limits

The unnecessary deaths of two drivers in separate accidents on the A134 is a tragedy, but it has to be good news that someone in a position of authority, West Suffolk Coroner, Bill Walrond, has had the courage to speak out on the folly of imposing unnecessarily low speed limits. Read the full report of his verdicts on page 15.

## A30 Honiton bypass goes ahead

The route of the new dual carriageway bypass for Honiton is now going ahead following the successful eviction of the anti-roads protesters from the tunnels dug under the site. Several protesters were successfully apprehended at the local pub, where they were spending their dole money!

It may be a source of some interest to tax-paying ABD Members that the DSS apparently considers that the protesters are "available for work", and thus eligible for

benefits even when they are obstructing the lawful business of building a road that has been approved by our democratically elected Ministers, and which has cleared every legal process, including a Public Inquiry. Perhaps this could be borne in mind when you are next told that there is no money to mend the potholes that now make our roads look like those of a former Communist state!

The good news, though, is that the Government has now approved the dualling of a further 14 miles of the A30/A303 Honiton to Ilminster road on the Devon/Somerset border. This road, sandwiched between dual carriageways on the London/South-West Trunk Road, has one of the highest casualty rates in the two counties. On this stretch of road cars jostle with caravans and tractors, and overtaking is hazardous.

Predictably, Friends of the Earth accused the Government of "appalling arrogance while protesters risked their lives", for approving the scheme. To say nothing of the "appalling arrogance" of a bunch of scrounging eco-terrorists who think they have the right to hold the nation to ransom!

## People of York score victory over Council

The people of York have just won an important victory over their own Council over plans to build low cost housing on an important and popular town-centre car park. As a result of overwhelming opposition, York Council has been forced to abandon a scheme to close the Marygate Car Park in the city.

213 objections were presented to the Council, backed up by a petition with 19,000 signatures. City traders and the local Chamber of Commerce were incensed by the proposals, saying that the car park was needed to promote business and tourism, and they formed the Marygate Action Group to co-ordinate their response. The car park is the most accessible one for visitors entering the city from the north, and lies only a few minutes walk from the heart of the shopping centre and tourist attractions.

It just goes to show that democracy does work in a small way when people take it upon themselves to fight for commonsense. We congratulate the people who took on the might of the Council and won.