

SVDD cameras will not make roads safer

New camera system betrays "accident blackspot only" promises

New "SVDD" cameras, recently given Home Office approval for use on UK motorways, will do nothing to reduce deaths and injuries. All they will achieve is to accelerate the downward trend in driving standards attributable to the facile "speed kills" campaign, whilst creating a climate of fear for responsible road users.

Unlike Gatso cameras, the new system works by reading the number plate of every passing vehicle and timing it between two points up to a mile apart. An almost limitless number of tickets can then be issued by a computer linked to the DVLA registration database. It is alleged that they are to be introduced on the M2 in September, but the ABD has received conflicting information from sources within the DETR, the Highways Agency and the Police ranging from outright denial to confirmation.

When speed cameras were first legalised in 1991, assurances were given that they would be used as a deterrent to a minority of dangerous drivers at speed related accident blackspots, not for gaining mass prosecutions on open stretches of road.

The new SVDD cameras kill these already sick looking assurances stone dead. A system which works by measuring average speed over a mile cannot be used in an accident blackspot, only on open, unobstructed, high grade roads.

In fact, this system appears to have been designed with one purpose in mind - the rigid imposition of the 70mph motorway speed limit. Once this has been achieved, the motorway limit can then be reduced to 50mph on entirely spurious environmental grounds - a long term aim of the anti-car lobby.

There are no safety grounds whatever for introducing this system on Britain's roads. Our motorways are the safest roads in Britain and amongst the safest in the world. Most fatalities involve HGVs which are already mechanically limited to 56mph and so cannot be speed related. The ABD would urge the government to abandon any plans for these cameras and instead spend the money on improving the standards of competence of Britain's drivers.

Observation, anticipation and car control are all vitally important in safe driving, yet they are seldom mentioned in road safety campaigns. Instead the only message drummed into drivers is the simplistic "kill your speed".

Speed is only one factor in safe, effective driving - yet it is emphasised at the cost of all other elements, elements which are actually crucial to a driver's ability to use speed correctly. This obsession with speed and speed limits therefore shoots itself in the foot.

The revenue motive

It is worth recalling that "Metline" the in-house magazine of the Metropolitan Police stated in March 1999, "Speed cameras at present have their limitations but when these can be overcome they will be a sure winner for raising revenue".

**New address, tel. no. or email?
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Official lies precede SVDD announcement

For about a month before the official announcement in the media of SVDD, rumours of its existence were rife. Email systems around the country were buzzing as friends forwarded the leaked information to each other. So the ABD investigated. We 'phoned the Department of the Environment Transport and the Regions, the Metropolitan Police and the Highways Agency. All denied the existence of SVDD, just one week in advance of the story breaking.

Now where else was it that every rumour was given credence but government announcements were treated with contempt? Ah yes, the Soviet Union, wasn't it?

Accidental inflation?

The ABD has soundly debunked the oft-repeated claim of anti-car campaigners that "speed causes a third of accidents". Most recently (OTR, April 1999) we revealed that TRL report 323 found that excessive speed was a definite contributory factor in just 4.3% of accidents.

Unfortunately some government officials are not satisfied, even with the "one third" lie, and have indulged in a little inflation of the figures.

Richard Brunston, Assistant Chief Constable of Cleveland, was quoted in the Daily Mail as saying that "More than 3000 people die in road traffic accidents every year, *two thirds* of which are down to speed".

Whilst in Hampshire, Councillor Roger Morris, Chairman of the Basingstoke Road Safety Council was quoted in the Basingstoke and North Hampshire Gazette of 30th June as saying, "Speed is the predominant factor in *nearly all* road accidents..."

Such a poor grasp of the facts is surely unacceptable for public officials holding positions of authority and influence.

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Drivers to pay twice for NHS

Car insurance premiums are likely to rise by 17% following the Government's decision to "claw back" from insurance companies the cost of hospital treatment for road accident casualties. Since drivers already pay for the NHS through income tax and National Insurance Contributions this is not, of course, "clawing back" it is straightforward double-charging; yet another scam dreamt up by politically motivated, anti-car zealots in Whitehall and Westminster.

An ABD spokesman took part in a lunchtime 'phone in on Thames Valley FM on this issue. There was a great deal of support from callers about drivers being targeted yet again. The following points drew wide support:

- Why drivers? There are more deaths in the home than on the roads, so why not load home insurance too?

- Complexity. If a drunken cyclist crashes into a sober driver travelling at 30mph, who is at fault? This is a lawyers' charter to print money - cases could rumble on for months.

- This is just another example of the government having a go at drivers and taking money by stealth. The ABD is the only group standing up to them.

Free parking for MPs

MPs appear to have exempted themselves from the workplace parking charges soon to hit businesses and their employees across the land. A DETR spokesman denied this but the Bill says that "no penalty charge notice will be issued" in respect of non-payment of parking charges in the Palace of Westminster.

In Edinburgh, MSPs have each been allocated a parking place regardless of whether they want one or even own a car. For

UK News

a city which is as anti-car as Edinburgh, it is stunning that this is allowed when driving and parking for everyone else is being made more difficult.

Conference Report

Institute of Highway Incorporated Engineers Symposium 1999

Mark McArthur-Christie reports:

At the request of one of Thames Valley Police's traffic officers, I was invited to represent the ABD at the IHIE's national symposium on Speed Management. This was the IHIE's first event of its kind, and formed part of the Institute's professional development programme for its members.

Each speaker, ABD included, had the chance to speak for 30 minutes with the audience of around 150 having the opportunity to ask questions afterwards. The aim of the day was to hammer out a policy statement for the Institute and it was extremely encouraging that we were asked and had the opportunity to speak.

The symposium organiser booked me several months ago under the title of "Speed Management - Curse of the Driver" - a title I promptly changed to "The internalising of speed limits". My main points were:

* Transport and speed management have moved up the political agenda in recent years.

* The 3 Es of Education, Enforcement and Engineering have now focused almost exclusively on speed management, or on reducing drivers' speeds.

* The evidence for this emphasis is ambiguous, and even were it the case that the 1994 TRL report "Speed, Speed Limits and Accidents" was accurate in asserting that speed is a contributory factor to 26% of accidents, this still leaves 74% of accident causes unaddressed. Other evidence indicates that speed may, in fact, be a contributory factor in fewer accidents.

* There needs to be a clear shift towards internalising speed limits through improved driver education and training - starting with the driving test and continuing through drivers' road careers.

* We know that this approach works because there are many fleet driver training stats that show clear post-training accident rate improvements. Motorcyclists' accident rates have also decreased (except in the last two years) with better training.

* It is not possible to calm or camera every road; however, training and education internalise speed limits and, in effect, fit speed limiters to drivers' heads - they know where they can "make progress" safely and where they need to slow down.

* The only way to improve safety over the whole road network and for all drivers is

for safe speeds to become internalised rather than imposed from the outside.

The paper was received very well indeed with several delegates coming up afterwards with the general comment "we didn't agree with everything you said, but there was a lot of good stuff in there - let's meet up and talk at a later date." This included a Police officer and a number of county engineers and road safety officers - a couple from Suffolk! One delegate made the comment "we were expecting a bloke in a red suit and horns - but there was a lot of sense in your presentation".

Although there were many things I disagreed with at the Symposium I came away extremely encouraged by the fact a) that we'd been invited at all and b) that our message was far from lost on the delegates. I also made several very useful contacts for us to use in the future.

ITP Report

Busing it in Warwicks

Richard Dredge reports:

Warwickshire County Council recently delivered a leaflet called "Improved Bus Services" to householders. Believe it or not it does contain information about the genuinely improved bus services available to me. Before now there was no bus service at all.

For example, if I want to go to Malvern (about 25 miles away) I can now get a bus on the first Friday of every month, as long as I can get to the bus stop to catch the bus. The bus stop is only three miles away. There's no mention of prices, but I would doubt it would cost more than £10 for the return trip. The only downside that I can see (apart from the inaccessibility, infrequency, inconvenience and cost) is that I have to catch it at 9.20 and return at 1.15, bearing in mind the bus doesn't get there until 10.15. Three hours doesn't seem enough to go to town when you can do it only once a month.

Incidentally, the leaflet covers the general area where I live. Although there are bus services each day from one or other of the villages in the locale, there is only one bus a week from my village. That goes to the smallest town anywhere in the UK (Tenbury Wells), which is nine miles away. The fact that it's only on Tuesdays, and that because there is only one bus there and one bus back you have a maximum of two and a half hours, it doesn't matter. That's because the place is so small there's nothing to buy and nowhere to go anyway.

ITP Analysis

Integrate: to bring together and blend into a whole. (Wordsmyth Online Dictionary)

Having given some thought to this I have come to the conclusion that our friend Mr Prescott either misunderstands the meaning of the word 'integrate' or has seriously misnamed his policy. Anyone

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www.abd.org.uk/contacts.htm

wishing to travel may choose from a variety of methods and, in a truly integrated transport system, each would have its own role to play. I would be the first to applaud if "School Run Mum" did not feel the need to block the roads with Discoveries and Volvos twice a day. I would also be more than happy to take the train when I go to London, as driving and parking in London is not something I particularly enjoy. Buses, I am sure, would have a valuable role to play if they could be prevented from belching out clouds of filth every time they pull away. They are useful for transporting children to and from schools, and moving people around large cities. Oh yes, in the ideal world, public transport would have an important role in a truly "integrated" transport system.

But, before those who want us all out of our cars start cheering and claiming that even ABD members are anti car, let me reinforce that an "integrated" transport system would also have plenty of room for the car.

In the first instance, it is utterly impractical to expect public transport to work effectively except to transport people from and to large cities, and move them around efficiently within those cities. In less populated areas there is not enough demand to make public transport pay, and the car is by far the most practical and convenient method of getting about.

In addition, if you want to carry luggage, it is far easier to put it in your boot than attempt to get it onto a bus or train. Many studies, published by the ABD, have also shown that the car is not quite the instrument of environmental Armageddon that the government would have us believe. Oh yes, the car has a valuable role to play.

Mr. Prescott knows these things. He also knows that public transport in this country is horrendously expensive, dirty, and inconvenient. I said earlier that I would be happy to take the train to London, but I don't. I don't because it is cheaper for me and my wife to drive to London and park for the day under Hyde Park than it is to take the train. I

don't because it makes me shudder when I step onto a train and look at the headrests, smell that unmistakable 'train' smell, and trip over a half full disposable cup of coffee. Buses are not dissimilar, in my experience. It is absurd to expect people to pay large sums of money for this level of 'service', particularly when you add in the fact that many people who commute to London don't even get the opportunity to rest on one of the revolting seats, as the trains are so overcrowded they have to stand.

But what does the government do to resolve this problem? It does not spend the vast sums of money raised from taxing drivers on improving the public transport system, subsidising it, and making people want to use it. It makes using the roads even more difficult and expensive by introducing road tolls and preventing access to city centres. Every budget sees an increase in duty on motor fuels. The motorist is being given plenty of stick, but where is the carrot? The government is only exacerbating any problems by adding to congestion, and increasing pollution by preventing the traffic from flowing freely: A bus lane on the M4? I rest my case.

An integrated transport policy, surely, is one in which each form of transport, including the car, is affordable and has its own role to play. Let us see Mr. Prescott investing some of the billions we give him each year on all forms of transport. It can work, but not the way he is going about it.

Dear Mr Prescott...

Open letters to John Prescott

Dear Mr Prescott,

I have noted with mounting concern the Labour party's growing anti-car stance. Under Labour I already pay an additional £130 a year in fuel taxes alone, despite there being no viable alternative to my car for my daily commute to work. Under Labour I am now faced with banded VED (I will pay more because I drive a large, efficient, environmentally-friendly diesel), taxes to drive in towns, taxes to drive on the motorway,

and, if your Integrated Transport Policy document is to be believed, taxes for owning a car in a town.

These central government plans are set alongside local authority measures you have encouraged, designed to restrict car use. These include traffic restrictions, higher car parking charges, closed roads, planning designed to cause rather than alleviate congestion and hardline parking enforcement.

In short, the car is being deliberately made as unpleasant to use as public transport.

I need my car. Because of the coincidence of a number of factors I am unable to live near my office, which is 35 miles away. If I wanted to use the bus I would have a total daily commute of 6¼ hours. This assumes the bus can be relied on to arrive at the stated times. The bus is no alternative to the car even for a basic single destination journey at set times - so how will it cope if I have to leave the office to travel to a meeting, perhaps carrying equipment?

Professor Goodwin may tell you that stopping people travelling into cities to shop boosts trade, but using my car in Oxford has been made so inconvenient that, in common with many of my friends, I no longer spend money shopping there.

When I am forced to use public transport I am always disgusted at its unreliability, how filthy it is, how overcrowded it is and how extortionately expensive it is - I am even charged an additional £14 to travel from Oxford before 0900 - in other words, exactly when I need to. Your own Audit Commission admitted this earlier this year in its report "All Aboard". May I make a suggestion - without any sense of sarcasm, malice or irony? Please use public transport - just for a month - for all your journeys. Please experience at first hand the enraging powerlessness of waiting for a bus that is ninety minutes late with no means of contacting the bus company. Please see for yourself how you are forced to hand over a double fare because you want to travel before 0900. Try to plan your business day around having to allow more contingency than travel time because services cannot be relied on. Stand on the train because it is

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already so packed that you cannot move - let alone sit down to work. And perhaps worst of all, waste time you could be spending with your family because you are using a system of transport that simply does not work or fit in with life in the late 20th century.

Once you have done this you will realise why your anti-car policies - so popular with academics and transport planners - are so unpopular with ordinary people. It is quite simply because every penny on car taxes, every new car restriction scheme, every cut bus service, every late train takes away their choice, their money, their time and their freedom. Your anti-car plans have gone too far already - it's time to stop.

Mark McArthur-Christie

Dear Mr Prescott

I have just turned on the TV to find an interview with yourself in which your usual warning of imminent gridlock and (implied) worsening pollution were aired.

This was, according to data I have - some from the DETR itself - a misrepresentation of the truth. Statements made about the present situation and its causes during this interview were what you wanted viewers to believe, not what is actually happening.

1998's traffic survey showed that traffic on major urban routes had declined by 1% on the year, so gridlock is further away, not imminent. However I agree that car drivers like myself are experiencing longer delays, but this is due to DETR policy, both national and devolved. Local authorities, at the behest of the DETR through its policy devolvement, are closing more roads than ever, introducing unwanted pedestrianisation schemes which are opposed by people and ruining town centres (Stroud, Henley on Thames, Lichfield, Oxford and many more). Roads are being narrowed and obstructed with spurious but expensive road furniture, traffic management officers go in the press to say that making drivers' lives hell is their job and enjoyable (through 'gating' of traffic and introduction of traffic systems designed to cause delays for private transport), and the road repair backlog continues and is always badly managed. Hence the growing delays, due either to direct DETR policy or traffic mismanagement at local level.

We are told that air pollution is part of the reasoning behind your war against the motorist, yet the DETR's own data shows that air quality has been improving since 1991 and is forecast to go on improving well into the millennium with no sign of a downturn, due entirely to car emissions technology. Buses, on the other hand, your apparent favourites (M4 bus lane - ask the Prime Minister about that disaster) are filthy polluters. The National Environment Technology Centre has shown that an average diesel engined bus generates nearly 40 times the NOx gases as a single modern petrol engined car, and over 120 times as much particulate pollution. As buses run on average

at 20-25% capacity they are more of a threat to public health than cars will ever be, and we would all do more for the environment by driving our car.

Your Integrated Transport White paper appears to explain all this as you want to use transport as part of your plan to achieve a fairer and more inclusive society. This is just a euphemism (spin doctoring) for redistribution of wealth by stealth taxes, and indirect ones to keep to Manifesto promises. Unfortunately it is misguided and won't work. Firstly more and more people know about the spin factor and don't accept what the DETR says any more. Secondly all these hikes in fuel duty, road tax and parking fees will impact most on the lowest paid, who - like me - refuse to do the equivalent of visiting a launderette when we have our own washing machine.

The recent Audit Commission report 'All Aboard' showed that public transport under your leadership is a shambles. You are alienating tens of millions of car drivers, and a few newspaper articles saying how much you love cars like everyone else - love taxing their owners more like - won't wash. I am also pleased by the AA's recent campaign to tell motorists that in every £10 spent on fuel, over £8 (now £8.27 I believe) is tax. Disgraceful. At least now more people know the truth.

Sorry to tell you that your interview didn't convince me, except not to vote Labour at the next General Election.

Ann Rigby

Gatso Watch

New-style cameras on A14

On the A14 between Huntingdon and Cambridge some new front-facing cameras have been introduced, in addition to the two conventional Gatsos that have been mounted on the central reservation for some time. There are at least three in each direction, mounted to the left of the carriageway.

The camera boxes have two circular orifices pointing at oncoming traffic, one of which is red. There are speed measurement lines on the road - three quite close together like Truvelo - but these are located next to the camera and are not in the field of view of the camera orifice.

Speed Limits - How they are set and your Right to Object

The ABD has prepared an informative Action Pack which sets out in detail the process by which Local Authorities set speed limits, and the rights that every member of the public has to object to the imposition of new or reduced limits. The pack costs £5 to non-members, but is available free to members. Please send a large sae, stamped (26p) to: The Editor, PO Box 3151, West Bergholt, CO6 3JH.



A reader has sent the above photo of one of these devices. They are Truvelo systems and, as the cameras are "front-facing" with infra-red capability, the driver of the car will be visible in any photograph, thereby providing the proof that is not available from conventional Gatsos of who was driving the car.

The devices are likely to use digital imaging and OCR technology to read number plates. This is a very worrying change of technology and must raise even more questions about the potential abuse of the information that can be collected by these cameras. It could be that everybody gets photographed, regardless of any "offence". Thus allowing the authorities to build up a database of where everyone is at any time.

There are *huge* civil liberties implications here, not least the presumption that you're going to commit an offence, which runs counter to the British tradition of "innocent until proved guilty".

A1 gatsos

A member makes the following observations about the gatsos on the northern stretch of the A1.

Driving down the A1 last week, I was struck by a difference in the positioning of the Gatso cameras on different sides of the border.

Those in Northumberland seemed not too daft; there aren't that many, and they seemed to be in places that looked like they might well be accident blackspots.

In Scotland however the positioning seems crazy. There is one for example on a straight, flat bit of dual carriageway near Tranent; furthermore, the camera is largely hidden by a bridge. Many of the cameras are positioned such that they are on the only straight bits of road for miles around; presumably the intention is to deter any overtaking (or at least overtaking in the safest spots).



Parking charges and enforcement

Sir - With reference to Keith Ackermann's letter regarding parking, in the last issue of OTR, I would commend to him the recently published report of the Transport Committee for London (TCfL) which includes the observations of the Chief Adjudicator of the Parking Appeals Service. The theme of her report is that councils have a duty to act fairly and appellants have indeed won landmark victories when cases have been referred to the High Court for judicial review.

Bexley Council had a clause in the Order regulating its off-street car parks that required that vehicles be taxed. A motorist so penalised appealed to the Adjudicator and won, but the Council would not accept the decision and went to the High Court for a judicial review. At the High Court it was ruled that the Council was 'ultra vires' (acting beyond its powers) in insisting on the requirement. It was also pointed out that the Order said that vehicles must be taxed but the parking ticket said that the vehicle 'failed to display valid tax disc'. There was nothing in the Order to say that the tax disc must be displayed!

In another celebrated case a motorist appealed against Lambeth Council over undersized parking bays and won. So the message is that there is redress provided motorists are prepared to challenge unreasonable conditions and inefficient handling of representations.

The TCfL's report singled out for criticism obscure and ambiguous traffic management orders, unclear signing, and councils that did not properly consider motorists' representations in a timely manner. The number of motorists electing to go to appeal has risen much faster than the increase in the number of parking tickets issued in the Capital but still only represent less than 1% of tickets issued. Copies of the report can be obtained, free of charge, from the TCfL, New Zealand

House, 80 Haymarket, London SW1Y 4TE or by calling 0171-747-4777.

Those who think, as Mr Ackermann does, that Councils look upon motorists as 'wallets on wheels' should check out ProMaSS (Pro Motorists and Small Shopkeepers) at www.pro-mass.co.uk. ProMaSS wants to field candidates for the London Assembly next year on a ticket to revoke 'decriminalised parking' regimes enforced by local councils rather than the police. According to ProMaSS motorists are now seen by London local authorities as lucrative 'bounty' to be chased and harried at every turn in pursuit of profit. It also wants any money that is made by councils from parking enforcement to be invested in car parks for local shopping centres rather than traffic management measures or public transport.

I am working on a website to disseminate information on parking regulation and new developments in parking. I hope eventually to be able to offer advice to motorists who want to challenge parking tickets which they feel they have unfairly received. It will be at www.parkingticket.co.uk - watch this space.

John Squires

Double payment for NHS

Sir - The original idea of the NHS, as I understand it, was to provide free treatment to all who needed it, for which we all pay tax. I have no problem with that, and I'm quite happy to pay the tax and NI. Now, however, we *still* have to pay the original tax and NI, AND we have to pay for the job ourselves (through insurance), *and* we have to pay tax on that, so instead of paying one lot of tax and getting something for it, we're now paying for it ourselves and paying *two* lots of tax for which the government gives us sod-all in return!

And don't forget we now pay tax on insurance premiums, so the government gets an additional benefit. Is it my imagination, or is something wrong somewhere?

Chris Lamb, Staffs

Let ministers lead by example

Sir - Could not the ABD challenge all cabinet ministers to do without their cars (or taxis) for a month? Their security guards could accompany them on the bus/train. We have seen two of them do it as a gesture. Let them do it for real.

Lance K Green

Big Brother's ways

Sir - I have recently been nicked for 100 mph on a deserted Mway at 0100 hours in clear and dry conditions. This was the M5 between J5 and J6 using a laser gun from an over bridge. The police seem to be concentrating on this area at night. This is likely to be a ban irrespective of my 50k miles average per year over 32 accident free years. Yet the Police are anxious for the co-operation of the General Public ... they certainly know how to alienate their law abiding supporters!

The new cameras shortly to be introduced will OCR your number plate and hook up to DVLA for the registered owner; this will happen only if you exceed the limit. There is nothing to stop all traffic, irrespective of speed, being recognised and logged by these devices. So every movement one makes can be traced. Since these devices are likely to be operated by contract with operating companies, if you have a company vehicle, the registered owner could pay for information on the location of the vehicle at any time.

Interestingly, allegedly during the testing of this device by the Police some years ago, DVLA would not release registered owner details on a staggering 5% of plates recognised. Who are these owners and why are they apparently not subject to the same constraints and surveillance as the rest of us?

Who said George Orwell was wrong?

Dave Cowdell

Not the Association of British Drivers! - Ed.

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A fine (anti-car) city

I thought you might be interested to hear about more anti-car lunacy, this time in the City of Norwich.

Just over a year ago one of the main roads through the city centre - "Castle Meadow" - was closed to all but buses and pedestrians. This was an "experimental closure" to last for one year. I must admit I was slightly suspicious when large expanses of tarmac at both entrances to the road were painted red to ensure no one could mistake it for anything but a bus lane, but nonetheless an experiment it apparently was.

What did this closure achieve? Well, buses travelling along this road at rush hour probably gained a couple of minutes by not having to queue along with the cars. Fair enough, but the queues along here were never especially bad, and I might also add that the buses effectively had their own bus lane along the inside of any traffic anyway.

Pedestrians were probably less at risk too, although the area is not particularly pedestrian-heavy because the main shops are concentrated in other pleasantly pedestrianised areas of the city and in the shopping mall which tunnels underneath the road in question. A pedestrian crossing is also provided above ground to keep things safe for those on foot.

Meanwhile, the remaining traffic was forced to detour along the only other available route, merging in with other traffic already in this area. This bottleneck caused appalling queues, sometimes leading to previously clear junctions much further back through the system becoming blocked. People spent longer in their cars, going nowhere fast and creating more pollution.

Twelve months later on I'm sure you can guess the outcome of this experiment. Yes, the experiment quietly becomes permanent, even though a survey conducted for the City Councillors revealed that just over half of the small number of shop owners on the road in question and a vast majority of pedestrians - yes, pedestrians! - questioned in the area said they would prefer to see cars allowed through again!

Still, Councillors know best, eh?

Ian Eveleigh.

Campaigning

Norfolk

Alan Dale, one of our more active members, has been campaigning on various issues since well before the ABD was founded.

Alan runs an organisation called the Roadcraft Advice Patrol Service, and it is because of his letter writing that Brazil's rainforests are shrinking! Alan has contacts (and many run-ins) with just about every group in the Norfolk area - if somebody wants to do something road related Alan will be on the case instantly. He has been involved in

talks with Norfolk County Council, the Countryside Agency, the British Motorcyclists' Federation, the East of England Development Agency and his local MP, David Prior. As well as these Alan has been negotiating with local branches of the CPRE, IAM, the constabulary and also the Eastern Daily Press - at least this paper has a couple of correspondents who are happy to take the ABD line on local traffic and road issues.

It's obviously not just Alan who is struggling to make any headway in his campaigning, but his tenacity is certainly something to be admired. As with all campaigns, the greater the input the louder the voice - so if you are from this area a few letters to the local media wouldn't go amiss; especially the Eastern Daily Press who are generally indifferent to Alan's approaches. He campaigns on all ABD issues, but concentrates on road safety issues, road space allocation and exploding the car and the environment myths.

Because Alan writes so many letters he gets quite a few in return. A recent one from Norfolk Police admitted that the only way of moving forward is to educate drivers rather than impose unrealistically low speed limits - the problem is that they are being over-ruled by politicians at all levels. Unless motorists shout louder the politicians will only listen to groups such as Transport 2000BC and the Pedestrians Association - not renowned for speaking up for the motorist.

We all know about Helen Brinton's Country Lanes Bill, but Norfolk County Council want to bring their own scheme in, called the Quiet Lanes Project. One presumes the lanes will be quiet because they will be deserted for most of the time. As usual the briefing paper talks about the project going ahead only if there is support for it, then assumes for the rest of the paper that it will all go ahead without any opposition. In the briefing paper supplied, the Council talk of "encouraging verges or hedges in some places where none exist now" and "more sensitive management of those hedges and verges that

ABD - Drive for Membership

The Government is taking decisions which affect you as a motorist. Your liberty and your wallet are under sever attack now!

It is vital that we build on the current public mood against the government and its policies.

So encourage your friends and colleagues to join the ABD and help in the campaign to protect our freedom from further assault.

Contact the Membership Secretary or get the application form from our web site (contact details are on page 2).

do exist". They also say that "more careful management of verges and their cutting would help to affect driver perceptions of Quiet Lanes (and hence speed) and benefit the environment." So it would seem that they are abdicating their responsibility to keep hedges cut, as by doing this everybody will be forced to slow down as they can't see anything!

The document continues by saying "road closures would be used (probably sparingly) to prevent through traffic" and goes on to say "junction layouts would be adjusted to deter (or warn) traffic from turning unnecessarily into a Quiet Lane". It's good to see our road network is in safe hands.

With vociferous groups like the Cyclists Touring Club, Sustrans, Transport 2000 and CPRE involved it's a pretty safe bet that they won't take no for an answer. This is why Alan needs help in his campaigning - a lone voice in the wilderness won't be heard above all the shouting made by the opposition!

Pro-Motor News

Meetings

The ABD meeting scheduled for September 18th 1999 has now been rearranged to **October 9th 1999** and the November 6th meeting has now been scheduled for **December 4th 1999**. Both these meetings are at The Heritage Motor Centre, Banbury Road, Gaydon. Agendas and times will be available nearer the dates.

Web sites

The official e-mail address for National Motorists Association Australia Inc. is now aussiemotorists@justicemail.com.

There is an interesting little survey about road traffic signs at

<http://www.aerg.sunderland.co.uk/roadsigns>

This is a research project by Sunderland University to "see if poorly designed signs are causing accidents".

ProMass is an excellent, pro-car site at

www.pro-mass.co.uk

ABD Member C S W Gould has an excellent letter in this month's Classic Motor Monthly which you can see at

<http://www.classicmotor.co.uk/letters.htm>

The Last Laugh

The summer edition of Advanced Driving contains a letter from a police driver called A Hayes, containing the following remarks: "Speed limits are not set by picking a number out of a hat. They are set for lots of reasons, and a speed that 'you' think is safe is obviously not, otherwise the speed limit would be higher."