

Labour adopts Tory transport policy

After hardly two months in office, the Labour Government has already adopted most of the Conservative's bankrupt transport policies - only more so - as they try to appease the "green" lobby. The proposals to tax and control you are already far advanced, which is not as surprising as it may seem, since many of them have been worked on and backed by the Civil Service for years. Current proposals include:-

1. Swingeing tax rises for company car users
2. A £500 per year tax on company provided car parking
3. "Smart cards" to charge drivers for access to urban areas, with charges increased during rush hours and when the authorities decide that air quality is "poor"
4. Motorway tolls (which Labour said it opposed in its manifesto)
5. Increasing petrol tax by 5% per annum over the rate of inflation
6. Introduction of speed cameras on motorways - and no increase in the discredited 70 mph limit
7. Taxation of parking spaces at out of town shopping centres
8. £100 fines for failing road-side emissions tests
9. Reducing road tax and raising fuel duty

10. Tight planning policies prohibiting car based developments.

The aim of the policy is to force motorists to use their cars less, but the result is sure to mean that many of the low paid - traditional Labour supporters - are forced off the road altogether.

Just in case you expected spirited opposition to anti-freedom measures from Her Majesty's Opposition, think again. Former Environment Secretary Gummer promised to support the measures, and even urged Environment (and Transport?) Minister John Prescott to make sure the words are backed by action.

On the positive side, Prescott is reported to be looking at introducing cleaner fuels such as American style "reformulated gasoline".

Road casualties lowest since records began

Despite hysterical Government propaganda, road casualties in Britain fell again last year, and have now reached the lowest level since records began.

There were 3,598 road deaths in Britain during 1996, around one-third less than the number 15 years ago; and serious injuries fell to 44,473. The number of slight injuries rose by 4% to 272,231, although part of this rise was undoubtedly accounted for by the fact that people were tending to suffer less severe injuries and thus no longer appearing in the "serious injury" category. The chances of being killed in a road accident in the UK last year were therefore 15,286:1 against.

These figures also again confirm that Britain's roads are the safest in the world, with death rates per 1000 million vehicle kilometres around one-half the level in the U.S.A. and Germany, considerably less than half the level in France and one fifth of the Portuguese level. In the case of the United States, this is despite the fact that many of the less liberal States on the Eastern seaboard have chosen to retain their oppressive 55mph and 65mph speed limits, and once again confirms the ABD's view that it is driving

standards, and not speed per se that determine accident rates.

Road safety minister, Baroness Hayman, welcomed the figures, but

Era of "Big Government" returns as politicians and bosses move to force workers out of their cars

A "green commuting" initiative has been launched, as Government, employers and the ever present "Green groups" gang up to tell commuters how they should behave. Employers involved in the schemes include Boots, Body Shop, Thames Water, DHL, Natwest Bank, Marks and Spencer and Merrill Lynch. Employee habits are changed by planning and staff discussions followed by sustained campaigns.

Boots in Nottingham have a voluntary scheme, involving car sharing, and 500 out of 6,000 employees signed up to the scheme in the first 6 months. Marks and Spencer provides more generous car allowances to those employees who chose cars which do at least 39 mpg, and Thames Water in Swindon provides a free bus service for employees.

Merrill Lynch adopted the most Draconian scheme, unilaterally reducing its car fleet in London from 800 cars to three: two pool cars and a chauffeur driven limousine, presumably used by the Managing Director who foisted the scheme on his staff on the basis that he

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wanted to bring the numbers of casualties down still further, by promoting safer driving, safer vehicles, and safer roads - and to tackle urban speeding (see separate article).

Ministers claim that the downward trend results from "a combination of safer

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New address, 'phone or e-mail?

Please notify the Secretary.
(See page 2 for details.)

Government policy more damaging than bombs

Politicians and the media were quick to realise that the aim of whoever caused chaos on Britain's motorways on 3rd April 1997 was to damage the economy. By planting bombs, and claiming the presence of other devices, the perpetrators caused severe disruption to business and inconvenience to travellers. It is widely recognised that this translates into a massive loss for the UK economy as a whole.

Yet the Government itself is to blame for the insidious, long term damage to the economy caused by its chronic failure to plan and build an adequate, strategic network of trunk roads. The lack of such a network causes congestion and delay, day-in day-out, year after year. This long term effect, though not as dramatic as the events of 3rd April, is likely to be more damaging.

For example, consider just the cut in roads expenditure announced in the November 1996 Budget. The Centre for Economics and Business Research estimates that this cut alone will reduce the Gross Domestic Product in the year 2000 by £838,000,000. The effect is cumulative: by 2010, GDP will be £4,294,000,000 lower and the economy will provide 47,000 fewer jobs than it would have done otherwise.

ABD spokesman for environmental issues, Julian Rowden, pointed out, "Excessive delays on our roads, whether caused by criminals or Government policy, not only add to business costs - which are all eventually passed on to the consumer, they adversely affect people's quality of life, increasing stress and intruding on family life.

"Furthermore, stationery or slow moving traffic causes much more pollution than relatively clean, free-flowing traffic thus having an adverse effect on air quality."

Road casualties lowest

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cars, the wearing of seat belts, and less drink-driving".

Left out of their explanation was the undoubted fact that the painfully slow, but steady progress in improving our road network by the construction of motorways, high quality dual-carriageways and

Civil Service links with anarchist group

The anarchist group 'Reclaim the Streets' reportedly see themselves as 'eco warriors', dedicated to 'winning back' towns and cities from the car and ending pollution. A pity no-one has told them that the latter is happening anyway with emission controls on cars. A pity they are too stupid to realise that the state handouts on which they live are paid for by the people in the cars. A pity they are handled with kid-gloves by the authorities who should be upholding the right of the public to pass and repass on the public highway.

RTS want cars banned from city centres, with hardliners seeing this as a first step towards the goal of outlawing all motor vehicles and rethinking economic activity based on zero growth. The group's leader is an Oxford graduate, Roger Geffen, aged 31. His father, Dr Terence Geffen, a former under secretary at the Department of Health, is reported to be "disappointed" when his son gave up work to become a full time protester, but who agrees with his ideas about cars. This is evidence of the supportive link between the very top of the civil service bureaucracy and the hardline eco terrorists that the ABD has long suspected.

111mph Biker *not* guilty of dangerous driving

A motorcyclist who was clocked travelling at speeds of up to 111 mph along a winding stretch of the A46 in Gloucestershire has been acquitted of driving dangerously by Gloucester Crown Court.

The prosecution alleged that travelling at that speed was by definition an act of dangerous driving, even though it was accepted that traffic was only moderate at the time. The motorcyclist, Mr Poole, must still face a charge of speeding.

by-passes as well as other engineering improvements have greatly assisted the fall. The drastic cuts in the road building programme under the last Government, coupled with the ominous signs that the present Government is likely virtually to eliminate what is left of it does not bode well for the future reductions in casualties.

The Association of British Drivers

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For contact details see:
www.abd.org.uk/contacts.htm

UK News Roundup

Angry drivers attack speed cameras

There have been at least several well publicized recent instances of the public taking direct action against speed cameras, often sited in inappropriate places, where they serve little function but to carry out law enforcement for the sake of it - and to raise lots and lots of money at the same time.

Theft in West Sussex

One of the £30,000 cameras disappeared from the village of Billingshurst, West Sussex, in March of this year. During a routine check, it was noticed that the camera had been sawn off at about head height, and removed.

Police believe that angry drivers were to blame, after the camera caught dozens of motorists entering the village. The camera was set at the end of a long straight set of road, where the limit drops from 60 mph to 30 mph.

Camera burned at Taunton

A speed camera in the Somerset village of East Lyng, just outside Taunton, was set alight earlier this year after catching many drivers. The camera was sited on the east bound side of the A361 as it passes through the village, where a 30 mph limit applies.

The camera was hidden around a left-hand bend in the road, where the road slopes downhill towards the edge of the village, very close to the speed de-restriction sign.

Camera pulled over in Somerset

A speed camera in Weston-super-Mare was demolished when one of its victims tied it to his rear bumper and drove away.

The ABD comments...

The Association of British Drivers, unlike so many "green" lobby groups, has not and will not condone criminal activity such as the destruction of speed cameras, but it is, perhaps, a measure of the frustration felt by many people that they are resorting to direct action of this kind. From the beginning, there has been virtually no debate about the merits or otherwise of using sophisticated electronic weaponry against motorists - or indeed about any other aspect of the war now being waged against the 30 million driving licence holders in this country and their cars. Neither politicians, nor most of the TV programme makers, nor most of the National Press - in all cases with a few notable exceptions - have allowed the public to hear the full story.

Camera survey

A survey carried out by Touchline Insurance on Speed cameras was reported in the Daily Mail of Monday 14 April. The findings of the survey were reported as showing that "roadside speed cameras are failing miserably both as a deterrent and in the punishing of offenders" - no surprise there, it is what the ABD predicted all along.

Detailed findings were:

- Only 20% of motorists generally kept to the limits because of the risk of setting off cameras.
- 40% slowed down in marked camera zones.
- 60% made a mental note of sites and braked for them - thus interfering with their driving skills and distracting them from the task of hazard perception.
- A staggering one third of the 500 sample taken from Touchline customers claimed to have been flashed by a camera, with only 10% of these receiving a penalty notice as a result.

The article was written in a fawning, acquiescent tone with no questions raised as to whether this oppression of the motoring population actually served any useful purpose. No questions seemed to have been asked about this in the survey - if they were, they weren't reported on.

The Marketing Director of Touchline, one Jeremy Oakley, made the astounding and totally unsupported claim that "more than two in three motor accident injuries are caused by people driving at inappropriate speeds". The ABD is, of course, fully aware of the DoT rule of thumb that *one* third of accidents have speed as a *contributory* factor. Also, the DoT definition of 'inappropriate speed' is a

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Labour to force drivers back onto buses

John Prescott, Jaguar-driving Secretary of State for Environment, Transport and the Regions plans to publish a White Paper next year setting out its plans to "cut pollution, and reduce the emissions of greenhouse gases" - though he has made no mention of the fact that the proportion of the former emitted by cars is falling rapidly, nor the fact that the car is a very minor contributor to Carbon Dioxide emissions.

On the agenda are tax increases designed specifically to price you out of your car, and a programme to squeeze road capacity in towns, by reducing wider roads down to just one lane in each direction. Prescott praised the fact that so many drivers in Manchester and Sheffield now voluntarily use public transport to commute, but did not mention that both of those cities have invested in costly but popular, quick and efficient tram systems, whilst most towns and cities still have to rely on buses which are heavily polluting, unreliable, uncomfortable and slow.

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UK & World News Roundup

Britain retains shameful title as Europe's car crime black spot

Whilst the government spends millions on speed cameras to target drivers who travel "too fast" - despite our having the safest roads in Europe, Britain remains the worst place in Europe for car theft and vandalism - yet little is being done to curb it.

According to figures published by Eagle Star, cars are more than twice as likely to be stolen in Britain than in the next worst country. 22 cars were stolen per 1,000 in Britain in 1995, rising to 55 cars per 1,000 in Leeds - which once again makes it the shameful "capital of crime".

The figures for Scotland and Northern Ireland were markedly better with 15.5 and 14.5 cars per 1,000 respectively.

By comparison, in Austria only 1.5 cars per 1,000 were stolen, and 3 per thousand in Switzerland. However, the recovery rate for stolen vehicles was

higher in the UK, as many were taken by so called "joy riders".

Frustrated police in the UK describe the "revolving door", whereby young criminals are chased, caught, appear before Magistrates and serve a brief period of detention before going out to do the same all over again.

Professional gangs steal cars to order, many for export to other right-hand drive markets. Most popular with thieves are German cars including Audi and BMW, as well as VW's new Passat.

Drivers condemn road cuts

The Association of British Drivers utterly condemns the road cuts announced by Gavin Strang on Thursday 19th June 1997 as bad politics and bad economics.

When the simple question "Why?" is asked, there are no real answers, only excuses. There is no shortage of money: road users pay £25bn in taxes of which less than a quarter is reinvested in the transport infrastructure. There are no genuine environmental reasons: roads occupy about 1.6% of the land area.

The New Labour government, with its massive majority, has no need to appease the so-called Green lobby which consistently misrepresents facts and conceals its true agenda. Whilst in other areas such as education the Blair administration has shown a commendable degree of realism and the abandonment of old left-wing dogma, this has apparently not happened in transport.

Over 90% of passenger mileage and over 90% of freight tonnage goes by road and there is absolutely no prospect that a public transport system, however generously funded, could make much of an impact on these figures. Roads will remain a key part of the infrastructure of the UK economy.

ABD Chairman, Brian Gregory, said: "Gavin Strang's announcement is gesture politics of the worst kind. By failing to provide an adequate and safe strategic road network, the government is condemning industry to higher costs and individual voters to the continuing misery of wasted hours stuck in traffic jams.

"Cutting the road programme is bad economics because whilst there may be a short term saving, there would be a far greater long term boost to the economy by implementing an extensive, strategic programme of road improvement and building. Such a programme would not only provide employment itself but would remove the shackles from industry across the UK.

"Finally, the failure to provide safe roads will condemn many road users to injury and even death, as many accidents occur in known blackspots because of poor road design."

Privatised speed controls lead to sharp rise in speeding tickets in Germany

Germany may be the country of de-restricted Autobahns, but on the ordinary roads it is a different story. In one small area of Germany, Mittel Franken in northern Bavaria, 230,313 speeding offences were registered in 1996 alone. In contrast to the UK, however, a minor speeding offence involves a small fixed penalty fine, without penalty points being endorsed on the driver's licence.

One angry 24 year old driver wrote to the local authority in the south German town of Neustadt/Aisch to complain after receiving a ticket for driving at 36 kph (22.5 mph) along a road limited to 30 kph (19 mph). The town hall pen pushers rejected his complaint, and the Mayor Wolfgang Mueck was reported as saying "I have no sympathy with speeding drivers".

A host of German towns have now employed private contractors to carry out speed enforcement using hidden radar traps,

although officials must be employed to carry out the calibration. The result among motorists has been outrage, with complaints of "a campaign of terror against local people", and allegations of "sadistic pleasure from persecution".

Police admit that in some places up to half those caught have lodged appeals - many from off duty policemen anxious to avoid disciplinary action. The local Mayor in the town of Feucht said that a large majority of people are in favour of introducing speed restrictions, but that there is "massive resistance to speed cameras".

Camera survey

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speed that is too fast for the conditions but *within* the limit. Speed cameras, of course, do nothing to address this, in fact the ABD has long argued that they make this worse by encouraging people to drive unthinkingly at the limit.

It is worrying, to say the least, that such an ill informed individual is in a position of power in an insurance company and is allowed to spout such nonsense in the pages of a national newspaper without challenge. The Mail does not seem to have published any letter or article to correct the erroneous statement.

Sink Councils

It is worth noting that two of the three capped county councils, and the biggest overspenders of the three, were Oxfordshire and Somerset. These counties are, of course, two of the most profligate abusers of speed camera technology.

Coincidence, or evidence of an arrogant, patronising and self righteous frame of mind throughout? Make your own mind up!

Safety and Speed Issues

“Lies, Damned Lies and Statistics”

Paul Hemingway, ABD Roads and Traffic spokesman, shows how statistics have been abused by anti speed campaigners.

A key phrase in the anti speed campaigner's handbook that appears again and again is “A 1mph change in average speed causes a 5% change in accidents”. It is quoted ad nauseam in most Government anti-speed publications. Now to any reasonable human being who knows anything about driving, this statement is clearly absurd, yet it alone is used to justify most of the measures we are campaigning against. An ABD examination of its origins and a demolition of the arguments used to justify it is therefore long overdue.

It originates from a study published by the Transport Research Laboratory in 1994 called “Speed, Speed Limits and Accidents” (ref S211G/RB). This document contained no new research, but simply correlates the results of previous studies around the world, which were all involved with measuring the effect of a change in the posted speed limit.

Examples are quoted of accident reductions following the introduction of reduced speed limits going back to the 30mph built up limit introduced in the UK in 1935, and on the effect on average speeds of speed limit changes.

However, the only examples of accident and mean speed changes being compared at the same time are:

- Effects of temporary speed limits on Finnish motorways 1962-1976. All accidents.
- Temporary decrease in Swedish Motorway and Dual carriageway limits, 1989. Injury accidents.
- Danish built up area reduction in limit from 37mph to 31mph. All accidents.
- Introduction of 19mph zones in Hamburg, 1985. Injury accidents.
- Swiss speed limit reductions on motorways and rural roads, 1985. All accidents.
- Increase in accidents following increase in US limits from 55 to 65mph. Fatal accidents only.

A simple graph follows where the change in ‘before and after’ mean speeds in these six examples is plotted against the percentage change in accidents from one period to the next. A line is then drawn through the points which corresponds to a 5% change in accidents per mile an hour change in mean speeds. Thus the offending sentence is born.

**this argument is so full of holes
it is hard to know
where to begin attacking it**

Now this argument is so full of holes it is hard to know where to begin attacking it. To be fair to the authors of the report, they make many of these points themselves but, inevitably, these are lost when the politicians are looking for a simplistic solution to a complex and poorly researched problem.

Authors’ fundamental errors

The authors begin by making four fundamental statistical

errors with which any A-level student should be familiar.

Is there a scientific causal link to back up the apparent statistical relationship?

It is incorrect to assume causality from a statistical relationship. To illustrate this, take the assertion that wearing a baseball cap backwards is linked to a 20 point reduction in the IQ score of the wearer. A plausible statistical link. It would be obviously ridiculous to suggest that educational standards could be increased at a stroke by banning baseball caps unless it could be proven that the cap was the cause of the low intelligence rather than simply a symptom. If the ban went ahead anyway, the real causes of low achievement in school would be ignored and some rather more intelligent people would get sunstroke due to being forced to venture into the midday desert sun hatless. A ludicrous scenario? It is not far from what has been done to the motorist here!

Is the sample representative?

It has been assumed that because a graph neatly fits these six examples then the same must be true of all roads. To be valid, a survey must be chosen at random from a representative section of the population. The six studies are all related to speed limit changes and so most certainly do not come into this category.

Are the same things being measured?

Since three studies refer to total accidents, two to injury accidents only and one just to fatal accidents, how they can be justifiably plotted on the same graph is beyond comprehension. Also, they relate to different road types - how can what happens in residential Hamburg in 1985 have anything to do with Finnish motorways in 1962? Add to this a myriad of different measurement techniques and other factors and you have an appalling mishmash which says little of value.

Is the result consistent with trends in the general population?

Any survey has to be questioned if it comes up with results



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Safety and Speed Issues

that are inconsistent with trends observed in the whole population. These trends show a steady fall in accident rates and casualty rates throughout this century despite huge increases in free flowing traffic speeds. More specifically, injury accident rates fell by 30% in the UK during the 1980s whilst road speeds increased.

If the violation of general statistical rules such as these are not enough, some of the specific logical errors in this study damn it even more comprehensively.

The irrelevance of using average speeds

1. Injury accidents only happen once for every 1.8 million kilometers driven in the UK. This makes them, at worst, a once in a lifetime experience for even a high mileage motorist. An accident results from an exceptional combination of circumstances, and certain demographic groups, locations and conditions drastically effect accident rates. What relevance can the average speed of the whole vehicle population have to such rare events?

2. They do not say how the average speed is measured. Almost certainly it will be done at certain specific points on the road by laying two temporary sensor tapes across the road. Since no road, even a motorway, has an identical spread of hazards along its entire length then a valid test of speed changes vs accidents can only be made within a very short distance of the test sensors themselves and not on the entire road. The number of accidents at these points will almost certainly be statistically insignificant. Moreover, the hazard distribution will vary along the road with traffic and weather changes, resisting any attempt to even this out. To illustrate this, take a country road made up of straights and bends which can only be taken at 40mph in the wet. Most accidents will happen on the bends at night in wet weather and speeds on the straights in good conditions will be irrelevant.

The pitfalls of using changes in accidents

1. Quoting the percentage change in accidents makes no sense unless it is related to the absolute accident rate. Take the Spanish Motorway death rate of 61 per BnVkm against the Dutch 3.2 per BnVkm. These motorways all have the same 120kph limit! It is not hard to imagine similar measures resulting in a fall in deaths in Spain but a rise in Holland because of totally different accident causation mechanisms.

2. The locations for many of the tests could have been chosen because of either a statistical blip (admitted in the Swedish study) or a genuinely high accident rate on those particular roads. In the former case the accidents could have fallen anyway, in the latter a reduction in limits may well have been necessary for genuine safety reasons. Generalised conclusions cannot be drawn without absolute statistics.

The insanity of combining the two

If this 1mph 5% law was true, the average speed on the Spanish motorways would have to be 60mph faster than that in Holland, and the West Germans would have to be travelling slower than the Americans. Hmmm!

All of this illustrates the sheer futility of using macro statistical techniques on subject matter where it is impossible to isolate variables and where the incidents in question are both rare and subject to complex causal factors. ⓪

Government continues failed road safety policies

Less than two months after coming to power, the New Labour Government has adopted the failed policies and tired rhetoric of the Tories in concentrating on the enforcement of inappropriate speed limits, to the exclusion of improvements to driver training, road conditions and signage.

New Labour was elected on a ticket of Education, Education and Education, yet less than two months into their term their attitude towards drivers is characterised by Ignorance, Oppression and Persecution.

Paul Hemingway, Roads and Traffic Spokesman for the Association of British Drivers, explains: "Gavin Strang and Baroness Hayman are threatening to accelerate the last Government's policy of road safety through arbitrary speed enforcement. This policy has *failed* to have any significant impact on casualty rates. They are using the same tired rhetoric as the Tories, quoting numbers like '1200 killed by speeding' - a number which has been plucked out of the air and which has absolutely no basis in scientific fact."

The anonymous "Government Spokesman" has been quoted as saying that the Government recognises that drivers will not respect limits that are set too low and urges Local Authorities to review such limits upwards. But, at the same time, Gavin Strang announces that he "will not bow to pressure to increase the 70 mph motorway limit", which is the most inappropriate of all, motorways being the only category of roads in the UK where the *average* vehicle speed is above the limit and also being the safest to travel on. If a minister cannot follow his own advice, how can he expect Local Authorities to do so? This contradictory position makes it certain that the current policies of introducing inappropriately low limits will continue - limits which a Suffolk coroner recently cited as a factor in two fatal accidents.

Meanwhile, the police are using the language of extreme prejudice in describing those who break the 30 mph speed limit as "ape-like males who cannot grasp that speed kills children". But almost all motorists break the 30 mph limit, mostly in places where the "government spokesman" has admitted the limit is wrong and should be revised upwards. Enforcement is concentrated in these areas and, justified by this kind of alarmist rhetoric, has become an end in itself and so increasingly disconnected from the very safety it is supposed to promote. Thanks to this approach, those upright citizens who request police action to curb genuine speeding on their road are most often caught out themselves in totally safe circumstances whilst the dangerous drivers get away with it. So the police are making apes of us all and monkeys of themselves.

In fact, out of 18,138 child pedestrian casualties in 1995 on "built up roads" (defined as those with limits of 40 mph or less), there were 106 fatalities - around half of one percent. When compared to the government assertion that "only" 5% of child pedestrians are killed at 20 mph, it is clear that speed is manifestly not killing children. If it was, the proportion of fatalities would be vastly higher.

The Association of British Drivers has been campaigning for years for a common-sense view on road safety which encourages higher driving standards, as Chairman Brian Gregory points out:

"It is obvious to anyone who knows about driving that almost all accidents are caused by failure to perceive a hazard and respond to it correctly. Any effective road safety policy must be geared towards improving drivers' ability in these areas, together with signage to help identify hazards on the road. Current policy involving only the setting and enforcing of bad speed limits actually undermines this process, reduces the skill levels of the driving population, and encourages a negative attitude to genuine safety measures. It is very disappointing to see the New Labour Government perpetuating and even encouraging this criminal irresponsibility."



New weapon?

Sir - Driving home today I saw a couple of cars (unmarked) parked in a layby on the A41 eastbound between Bicester and Aylesbury, about 1/2 a mile from the Marsh Gibbon (seriously - it's a lovely village) turning.

The chaps with them appeared to be policemen in civvies, and seemed to be using a Muniquip handheld speed camera (the type that looks like a hairdryer) and a couple of other smaller cameras mounted on tripods.

There were calibration marks in the road, facing the oncoming traffic. I stopped in the same layby and was about to get out and ask them what they were doing when they packed up shop and drove away. Looks like a warning might be in order that Thames Valley are trialling new equipment on this stretch.

Mark McArthur-Christie

New member

Sir - I joined the ABD last month and I was very impressed with the newsletter. I joined after reading the "right kind of road rage" article in the September 1996 issue of Top Gear Magazine.

I was wondering if you have contacted Max Power Magazine and asked them to mention the ABD. I have read Max Power since it started four years ago and not only does it have the biggest readership of any car magazine in Britain, the readers are particularly likely to spend money on their cars and are keen to protect their rights. I feel sure that if we could get a mention in Max Power Magazine, our membership would increase substantially.

I would like to be actively involved in campaigning, although I cannot attend meetings as I live in the far north-east of Scotland. However if there is anything I can do to help please contact me.

Andrew Thomson, Moray, Scotland

Thanks for your comments and suggestions, we'll be in touch. - Ed.

The wrong kind of noise

Sir - When I watch a motorsport programme, or indeed, anything to do with cars I want to be able to hear them. If it is rally cars, I want to hear who keeps his foot buried to the floor and who lifts off for a fraction. I want to know what a Ferrari sounds like when Jeremy Clarkson destroys an expensive set of tyres.

If I want to listen to the long-haired twanging guitars (which I don't) I would listen to Radio 1. Why do the boffins on Top Gear drown out almost everything, including their own reporting team, with this silly noise?

Hugh Bladon, Weston-super-Mare

Hear, hear. - Ed.

Full frontal flash

Many recent enquiries by letter and e-mail have questioned the operation of Gatso cameras. In particular the ones that seem to flash on-coming traffic.

Sir - I can explain this phenomenon - but only after past phone calls to the AA Legal Beagle and the Camera Enforcement Officer at my local nick.

Apparently *dummy* Gatsos are capable of detecting both passing *and* oncoming traffic travelling at "illegal" speeds (usually at 10 or 15mph over the limit, or greater), due to their ability to interpret both positive and negative Doppler shifts in the reflected beam. *real* Gatsos only flash passing traffic, and twice, as we all know.

Also if two cars are travelling too closely, e.g. one is tailgating the other trying to overtake (badly) and is partly across the road centre line, then a *dummy* Gatso facing them may interpret the wider reflection as an HGV and, if they are travelling at an "illegal" speed for an HGV, they will get a single flash too even if they are both below the limit for smaller private cars.

Finally, a car travelling the opposite way may accelerate when it thinks it is out of the range of a *dummy* Gatso and, being mistaken, will get a single flash. If this car passed another vehicle (facing the camera) then the driver of this car may not be aware of the events and think the flash is for them. Perhaps it is if both are above the limit plus 10 / 15 mph.

Only the Truvelo system (as on the Cambridge - Bedford road, and locations in the SW) is set up primarily to detect and record oncoming traffic, as we know. This can be permanently set up - as in the Cambs / Beds village - or mobile, with cables over the road and a van parked on the verge ahead with a camera operating out of a window. The worst form is the type where the cables are sunk under the road, as with permanent sites, but where a plug by the road allows the detecting vehicle to come and go... *very* difficult to spot.

The police say that the momentary shock and dazzle of a frontal flash at dusk or night is less of a risk than the continuous dazzle of a main beam headlight from oncoming traffic, and on balance is acceptable.

Hope this helps to explain what's going on.

Bernard Abrams, Cheltenham

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.

Snippets from the e-mail

A journey by bus

I don't usually travel on a London bus, train yes, but on this occasion myself and two friends thought it would be more convenient due to the lack of parking facilities at our intended destination the Imperial War Museum. We decided to bus part way, driving to Streatham, parking up and catching the bus to Kennington, where we would be dropped outside the Museum.

Driving was no problem, parking up no problem, catching a bus difficult, a 30 minute wait, all buses terminating or not going that far. Eventually a bus turned up, overcrowded, smelly and dirty. But it did get us there.

After a rather nice day we walked back to the bus stop. Unfortunately our nice day was to end there. A drunken tramp with a large bottle of red wine decided he was not going to leave myself and friends alone. He was very abusive and frightening, not a policeman to be seen and no bus.

When the bus did turn up, we told the bus conductor he should not let this man on. But he did, and the tramp staggered upstairs whereupon a fight broke out and the red wine was to be seen cascading down the outside of bus.

Our bus then terminated leaving us stranded and we walked the rest of the way.

We all agreed that our day had been ruined by the start and finish of our journey. I shall be writing to Glenda Jackson to tell her that I've tried her buses and quite frankly she can keep them.

Susan Newby-Robson, London

... once is enough

Sorry to hear about your abortive trip to the IWM - I've got happy memories of researching in the library there (and a rather good pub just across the way...).

You've found out what our Labour friends Tony, Gav and Glenda want us to be stuck with whilst they're being whispered around in their Rover Sterlings. The Labour attitude of "it's OK, they can take the bus" is fine - on a dry day with no drunks, plenty of time and nothing else to do. When it's slinging it down on a Saturday night and the last bus out of Oxford is packed to the gills with tanked up yobboes I'd give Luvvie Glenda about two minutes before she called the chauffeur. But for the rest of us who have the choice of this or the new Oxford parking Nazis, it's cheaper to take the bus than land a £40 fine for desecrating the city with the evil car (taxes be upon it).

During Anti-Car Week (sorry, Car Free Week), I took the bus from Witney to Oxford. 35 miles apart, driveable in 40 minutes. Should've been easy, but that's another story!

Mark McArthur-Christie, Witney

Report: a bumper quarter

This has been a bumper quarter for reports of camera sites. We must thank the many members of the public who have contributed information via the ABD Web site. Several stalwart ABD members have also gone to the trouble of sending in extensive detailed information; for example the survey of the A40 from Cheltenham to Oxford below.

Unfortunately, this bumper crop also is indicative of the frenetic haste with which our townhall dictators are erecting the wretched things.

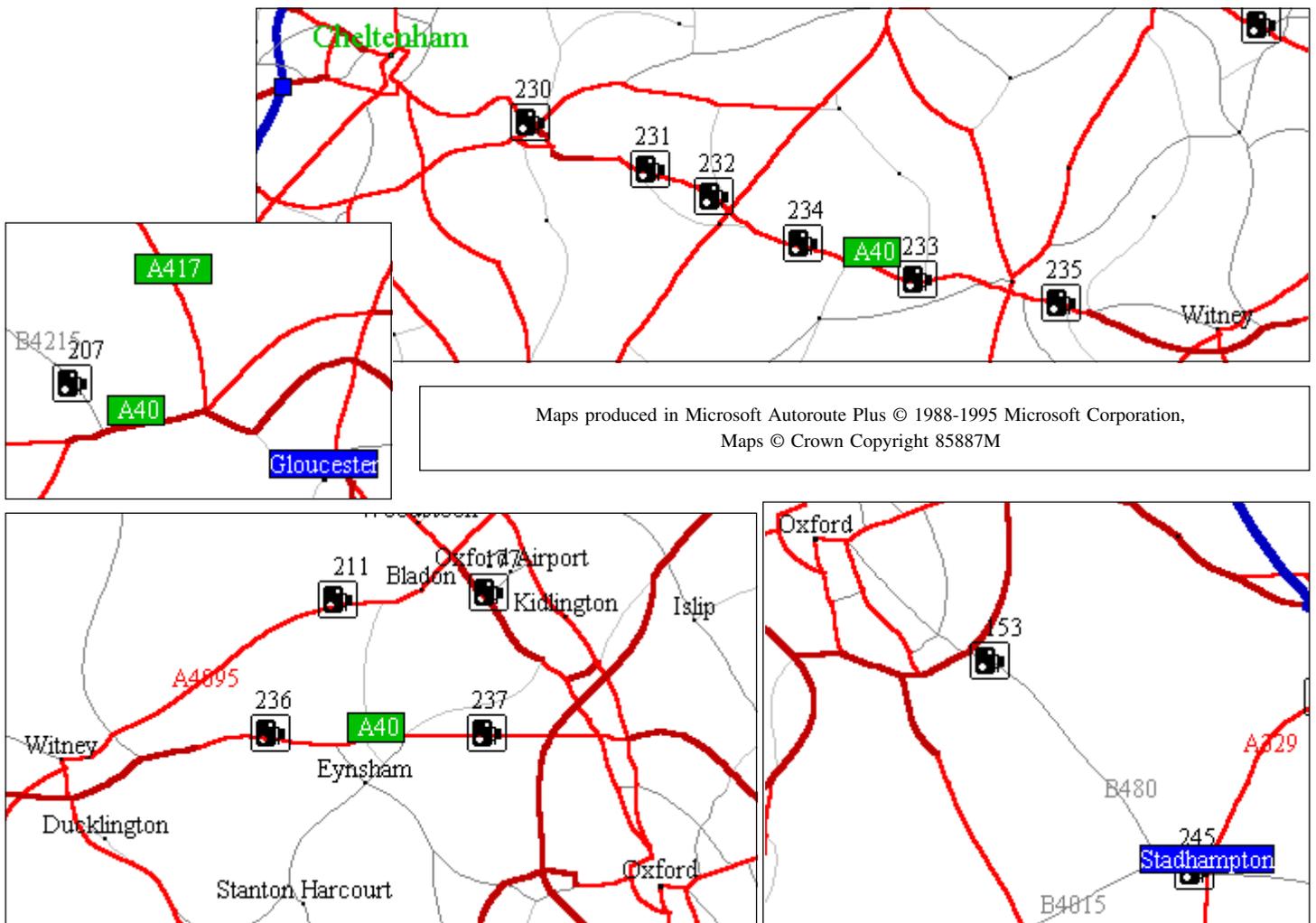
Contributing to Gatso watch

Please report any sites known to you. Use copies of the form printed in previous editions of On The Road (omitted this issue to save space). 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.

Gloucestershire - Oxfordshire



Ref	County	Town	Road	Direction	Location	OS Map Ref	Limit
153 ...	Oxon	Blackbird Leys	B480	R	centre of road by Rover garage	SP555035	30
177 ...	Oxon		A44		Junction for Airport	SP467147	
207 ...	Gols	Highnam	B4215			SO792194	30
230 ...	Glos	Andoversford	A40	E	At junction with A436, central reservation		
231 ...	Glos	Hazleton	A40	E	Near end of sweeping left bend		
232 ...	Glos		A40	W	0.5m from A429 rndabt		
233 ...	Glos	Barringtons	A40	E	Near the Barringtons turn off		
234 ...	Glos		A40	B	One each side of the Little Chef on the 'Traveller's Rest' stretch.		
235 ...	Oxon	Burford	A40	E	1.5m after A361 rndabt, nr sign for Swinbrook		
236 ...	Oxon	Barnard Gate	A40	B	Between signs for Barnard Gate on top of rise		
237 ...	Oxon	Oxford	A40	W	Two miles from Vauxhall City Motors roundabout on Oxford ring road.		
245 ...	Oxon	Stadhampton	B480	W	Near to mini roundabout	SU599979	

CAUTION: Why the ABD publishes Gatso Watch

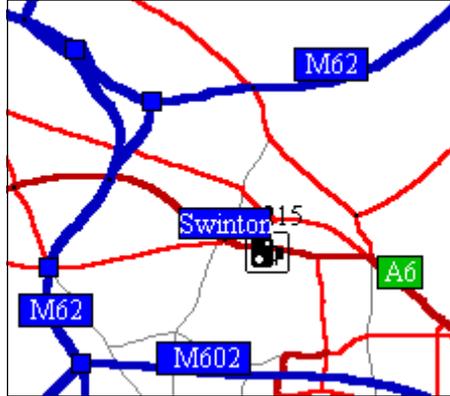
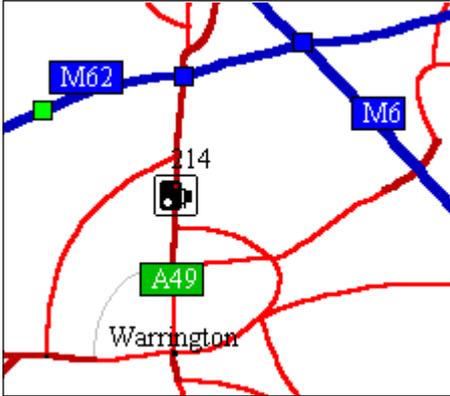
Members will not need reminding, but "On the Road" is obliged, for other reasons, to mention that:

- 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.

The North-West



Important:

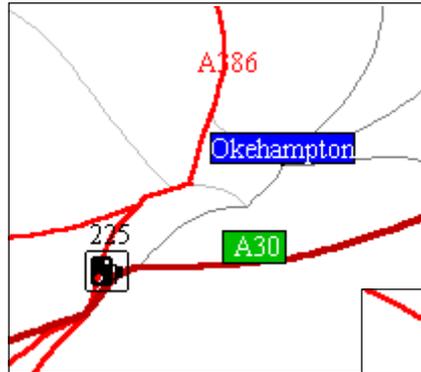
If you can correct or add to any of the information shown in Gatso Watch, please contact the editor.

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

The South-West



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	Cat
130	Devon	Exmouth	A376	S	Between Elvis Road and Stephenson Road		30	
199	Devon		A380	N	On crest in wooded area, left of road		70	
214	Lancs	Warrington	A49	S	Between college and fire station		40	
215	Lancs	Manchester	A580	E	Various			
225	Devon	Okehampton	A30	W	Immediately after an overbridge at the bottom of a dip.		70	
226	Cornwall		A30	W	After the low rail bridge, after the Newquay turn.		60	
227	Cornwall	Launceston	A30	R	Central Reservation at junction.		70	
228	Cornwall	Launceston	A30	R	At the bottom of a big dip. Junction is for a depot.		70	
228	Devon		A30	R	In one of the villages between Honiton and M5 J29			

High Performance Motoring

Two days in pursuit of driving excellence

ABD Chairman, Brian Gregory, puts his money where his mouth is and submits to two days of rigorous instruction.

February 20th and 21st, 1997 are two days that will remain engraved on my memory for some time. Having been saying for some time that the ABD supports driver education, not driver intimidation, it was only a matter of time before I stumped up the courage (and the readies) to put my money where my mouth is.

How? By spending an intensive two days receiving advanced tuition from John Lyon, the most highly qualified civilian driver in the UK and the Managing Director of British Driver Training Ltd., aka the High Performance Course.

To say it was money well spent would be an understatement. John commenced by stressing that the hot-housing technique of diving straight into two days intensive 1:1 tuition was not his preferred approach.

This is primarily on the grounds that the average pupil (and I certainly qualify as a very average pupil!) needs about three weeks to begin to assimilate and put into practice each separate aspect of the High Performance Technique.

He normally recommends a half-day evaluation session, then follow-up sessions at periodic intervals afterwards as the most cost-effective method in terms of pupil education and cost.

Unfortunately, living as we do in Northern France at present, the staged option wasn't a feasible one, so the frontal assault approach it had to be!

I was certain that my driving technique could stand improvement. Two days with John confirmed my suspicions.

In friendly, but persistent and constructive fashion, John proceeded to highlight all those niggling little faults that twenty years of driving experience and several defensive driving courses had nevertheless allowed to creep in.

Poor steering technique; too fast an approach speed into bends, secondary braking (often the result of trying to retain my customary - but still too high - approach speed and having to respond to John's urging me to reduce it), incorrect order of control selection (gearstick after declutching instead of before), incorrect cornering line, failure to make adequate progress under acceleration and a tendency to want to take higher gears too early were just some of the areas which benefitted from attention under John's watchful tuition.

Need I go on?

John also recommended double-declutching (a black art with which I'm grappling currently!) on down-shifts, to bring forward the braking period and lower that approach speed.

John also highlighted the importance of positioning of the vehicle and observation; reading the road and looking for all possible hazards when e.g., overtaking - not to forget the blind offside exit.

Most overtaking manoeuvres resulting in accidents occur not head-on, but when the vehicle overtaking runs into a vehicle turning left out of a blind exit on the overtaking car's offside.

On our way across various counties he also pointed out several instances of extremely - apparently almost deliberately

- misleading junction and bend designs; something both we and John have taken up with the DoT - but to no avail.

It almost seems that the faceless Whitehall grey ones want a proportion of drivers to lose their lives to add credence to the "Speed Kills" campaign; when in fact, on scientific examination, this does exactly the opposite.

Don't run away with the idea that this was two days of unremitting criticism of my driving coupled with hazard identification tests; it wasn't.

All the time John was relating stories of his lifetime in racing, and subsequently in driver training: from sessions teaching high speed avoidance and anti-hi-jack techniques to people he wasn't allowed to mention who aren't supposed to exist, to ferrying Juan Manuel Fangio into Central London, John is a veritable compendium of motoring history.

I particularly liked Fangio's response when John admitted regretting not having progressed his motorsport career as far as he might have done. Fangio pointed out that he (John) was taking the less selfish course in teaching others than Fangio himself was in merely competing; and I for one am eternally glad that he did.

He also told a lovely story concerning one particular circuit where the Clerk of the Course, Eric Broadley, was not noted for his sense of humour. The man concerned was out inspecting the course and John out testing a car during a visit by the racing driver, Graham Hill.

Egged on by Graham (whom he'd stopped to pick up after a mechanical failure), with John working the foot pedals and Hill the steering wheel, they had feigned a loss of control and charted a sufficiently close and erratic-appearing course in Broadley's direction to "shave the bobbles off his pullover" and cause the said Clerk to beat a hasty retreat to the safety of the verges and hedges - not improving his demeanour one whit!

less driver intimidation and more driver training is the correct course

On Day One we had visited the Millbrook test facility to use the high speed bowl and the hill circuit for a demonstration of, and tuition in, high speed driving techniques.

John gave a truly awesome exhibition of high speed car control on the hill circuit which will live in my memory forever. Not just for the astronomical speed at which he circulated it, but also because John was treating the hill circuit like a normal road and observing appropriate lane and cornering discipline and the hazards present (they were white-lining part of the circuit the day we were there).

After that, circulating Millbrook bowl at an indicated 130+mph with John in control seemed positively tame - until I tried it - with a blustery cross-wind toward the apex of the banked circuit I rapidly lost interest in going much above an indicated 115mph.

After a pleasant overnight stay at the Dower House Hotel in Woodhall Spa, Lincolnshire, it was Cadwell Park circuit before breakfast on the second day to take in more high speed driving techniques - then more on-the-road cross-country tuition en route to the MIRA test facility for some skid control work.

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Motoring and the Media

“Panorama” spearheads anti-car propaganda campaign

On 17th March 1997 the BBC's Panorama programme was on the subject of Road Transport...

The BBC's Panorama programme on 17th March was long on propaganda and short on facts. It featured speakers with an almost exclusively anti-roads standpoint. It quoted only facts which seem to support the dire contentions of the programme. It chose examples of road and rail transport which seem to illustrate the anti-road viewpoint but which in fact do exactly the opposite.

Most alarmingly it used subtle, propaganda style methods in an attempt to brainwash the public into regarding the forthcoming restrictions of the Road Transport Reduction Bill and other measures as inevitable and necessary.

The programme totally failed to recognise that road transport is the lifeblood of the economy and that mass transit systems could never, even with unlimited investment, provide for the diversity of journeys necessitated by the modern economy.

Traffic levels

The programme quoted the seemingly dire prediction that the number of cars “on the road” will grow by about 50% from present numbers to 32 million by 2025. The programme failed to mention all the following facts:

- Britain has fewer cars per 1000 people than our main European competitors: France, Germany and Italy, not to mention the Benelux countries.
- Britain's roads cover only 1.6% of our land area and we have less motorway, relative to geographical size, than France, Germany, Italy, Switzerland, Belgium and the Netherlands.
- 80% of those eligible to drive already have licences, so with a stable population, the maximum growth in drivers is 25%. The growth in car numbers by 50% (if it happens) is irrelevant as it simply reflects the fact that households will have more cars, possibly including ownership of small city cars. Each driver will only be able to drive one car at a time.

Thus the programme gave more weight to speculation than to fact. Why? Because the scare-story enables them to promote and justify the idea of drastic restrictions and heavy taxes on personal mobility.

Road congestion

The programme makers permitted speakers to state without challenge the Big Lie: “roads generate traffic”. Naturally they did not go on to show the Humber Bridge, widely hailed as a white elephant because it is so lightly trafficked, nor the M45, a little known spur off the M1.

High Performance Motoring

... continued from previous page

John was somewhat disappointed that, apart from offering excellent traction, at the limit my Cavalier 4x4 is virtually idiot-proof (the main reason I bought it!); a resolute understeerer; when it gets out of its depth it just understeers; lift off and it understeers less, more power and it understeers more.

No lift-off oversteer, no lurid tail-slides on offer here, just progressively building understeer. At least you get to see what you're going to hit (or more exactly avoid - after the session with John!).

At the end of the two days I had plenty of food for thought, and am even more convinced - as is John with years of experience to back it up - that our aim of achieving less driver

Instead, the programme chose to highlight the M25 and the M6 through the West Midlands as examples of how traffic has reached what the programme makers clearly think are unacceptable levels for which the road users themselves are to blame. In fact what these examples actually illustrate is the half-century of incompetence of the planning authorities.

Any transport network, be it road, rail, electricity or water requires two features if it is to be efficient: redundancy and stratification. Redundancy means the presence of alternative routes; stratification means the separation of local and long distance traffic. The M25 and M6 examples show how the planners have totally ignored these principles leading to the massive waste of time and resources borne by individuals and businesses who have to use a chronically inadequate road system.

what is remarkable is not that it is busy, but that it works at all

Given that the M6 near Birmingham takes a sizeable chunk of West Midlands local commuter traffic, much of the traffic from SE England to the NW and nearly all of the traffic from England to Scotland, what is remarkable is not that it is busy, but that it works at all.

Public transport

The programme chose two examples to attempt to show how things should be done but again they backfire when put in context.

The express rail link to Heathrow airport is being built at a cost of £400m. It is obvious that this link should have been built years ago. When so many people converge on a single point, mass transit systems make sense and Heathrow has been appallingly served compared with other European airports. That the link is only now being built illustrates yet again the incompetence and short-sightedness of politicians and planners.

The London Underground also makes sense for a large, densely populated metropolitan area. A huge £17bn per year in taxes on road users is available but not spent on transport-related projects such as re-signalling the Underground. Whose fault is that?

However, neither of these systems, nor any conceivably like them, can cater for the huge number and variety of journeys that are not to Heathrow or a major city centre. The proponents of mass transit systems are fixated on a past when people lived *en masse* in a densely packed suburb, worked *en masse* at a labour intensive factory or office and therefore could travel *en masse*.

We no longer live in such an economy: people live all over the

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intimidation and more driver training to reduce accidents is absolutely the correct and only effective one.

John and I are keen to strengthen the links between the HPC and ABD. To this end, avid OTR readers will recall, John invited ABD members to attend the recent HPC Open Day at Bruntingthorpe Race Circuit last April 12th.

My closing advice to you is, if you can afford the time and the money to take an HPC course, do it. I will again, sometime soon, I hope! ☺

For those interested in more details on HPC, John Lyon's address is:

High Performance Course / British Driver Training Ltd.,
Wellesbourne House, Wellesbourne, Warwicks., CV35 9JB.
Tel.: 01789 841229.

Pollution, Health and the Environment

Government seeks 20% reduction in carbon dioxide emissions by 2010

A special General Assembly of the United Nations has been called to discuss reductions in Carbon Dioxide emissions by industrialized countries over the period 2000 to 2010, and follows the so-called "Rio Summit", held in Brazil five years ago. Last time our politicians committed the country to reducing Carbon Dioxide emissions back to 1990 levels by 2000, a tough target which the U.K. is set to meet - almost uniquely in the industrialized world.

Now the new Labour Government is set to agree to go much further, threatening to tie us to a reduction in Carbon Dioxide emissions by 20% by 2010. Government officials say that half of those cuts "will have to come from the transport sector", by which they actually mean cars.

Since only 19% of the U.K.'s man-made Carbon Dioxide emissions come from all transport, the only way to meet the target of a 10% reduction of the overall total would be to cut transport emissions in half! Even allowing for the fact that cars are likely to become significantly more fuel efficient, there would have to be a reduction in traffic levels in the order of 30-50% if those targets are to be reached, especially as there is likely to be

an increase in emissions from public transport.

Just as happened with the last Treaty, signed by the outgoing Conservative administration, the commitment is certain to be made with the minimum of public debate, and in an atmosphere of semi-secrecy as politicians pander to the tiny but vociferous "green" lobby.

By comparison, the remaining 10% savings are to be made by reductions in energy consumption by homes and businesses - the sector which is responsible for 81% of our emissions. No mention was made of increasing the supply of power from renewable non-fossil sources, as in most other advanced nations, so the cut backs are certain to involve a reduction in real living standards

for most U.K. residents.

The justification for the cutbacks is the theory that the rising levels of Carbon Dioxide levels in the atmosphere are likely to lead to a rise in global temperatures. Those levels are being caused to rise by a combination of an increase in emissions of Carbon Dioxide into the atmosphere by industrial countries and reduction in the planet's ability to absorb it by the destruction of the world's forests.

The theory of global warming remains unproven, but even on the basis that it does exist, it is interesting to note that the destruction of the earth's lungs - the Amazonian rain forests - has actually accelerated since Brazil hosted the last U.N. summit on climate change. Now that is something to ponder when you are finally forced to pawn the family car to get a bus pass.

The following statistics on Carbon Dioxide emissions put the "problem" in proportion:

- Percentage of all Carbon Dioxide emissions emitted by Nature: 95.5% (approximately)

Panorama

... continued from previous page

place and work all over the place. No mass transit system could cope with the variety of journeys. We certainly need a public transport system: the road network. Its lack of adequacy at the moment is a measure of the failure of our political leaders and planning authorities to discharge their duties. To attempt to restrict the free movement and employment of people would drastically reduce the efficiency and wealth-creating ability of the economy.

It is notable that while most motorists are quite happy to see provision of mass transit systems, even with subsidies paid out of taxes, the proponents of those mass transit systems are often actively and vindictively anti-car. This reveals more about their political leanings than their competence as planners.

Restrictions on travel

Speakers as diverse as Sir George Young and staff in a traffic control centre talked with glee about restrictions they were planning. Deliberate abuse of the traffic light system to create jams rather than facilitate free flow of traffic is planned for the West Midlands.

Sir George Young, now claiming to be a *former* member of FoE, revealed that the government (nominally Conservative at the time of the broadcast) favours the use of road tolling to force motorists to pay again to use a road they have already paid for many times over. He ignored the fact that the petrol pump is a highly effective road-use charging system. He ignored the fact that congestion is its own built-in deterrent to travelling at a particular time unless you absolutely have to. Thus the further cost of tolling will simply be passed on to the consumer and thus twist the inflationary spiral.

In spite of the lip service paid to road safety, Sir George also did not mention the fact that every country with road tolls has a worse road safety record than the UK.

A Birmingham Councillor spoke enthusiastically about denying planning permission for car parking spaces in office developments so as to leave the streets free for "essential car users". Guess who the essential users will be.

The propaganda element

Apart from the selective use of facts, the use of unsubstantiated statements and wild exaggeration (Steven Norris referred to "infinite" traffic growth) and the total absence of balancing comment, there was a more subtle element to the programme.

No speakers were called to state the importance of an efficient road system to the economy

No speakers were called to state the importance of an efficient road system to the economy. No speakers were called to counter any of the anti-car rhetoric. Only a few carefully chosen people had anything positive to say: Margaret Thatcher (ex-Prime Minister), Cecil Parkinson (ex-Transport Minister) and a retired civil engineer. The aim was clearly to use their status as "has-beens" (no disrespect intended, other than by the programme makers) to imply that the need for road development was a thing of the past.

There was also some monochrome footage of the opening of the first motorway, interviews with politicians etc, carefully chosen to seem quaint, even ridiculous. Again subtly to imply that roads are a thing of the past.

Throughout this programme, hardly any mention was given as to why all those people were sitting in those traffic jams day after day. The implied assumption was that they were there unnecessarily and selfishly. In fact they are there through economic necessity; if there was an easier way to get to work or make a living they would choose it. It is a measure of the extreme arrogance of those in government (local and national) and in the broadcasting media to be so damning of ordinary people going about their business. The people, moreover, who pay the wages of every politician, government officer and BBC journalist.

Until and unless the gravity-defying air car of the science fiction novel becomes reality, politicians, planners and broadcasters must realise that the car is here to stay. Any attempt to stifle its use will amount to an assault on the personal liberty of individuals and the economic efficiency of the United Kingdom. ☹

Pollution, Health and the Environment

- Percentage of all Carbon Dioxide emissions emitted by Man's activities: 4.5%
- Percentage of Carbon Dioxide emissions from road transport globally: 0.6%
- An average house in the UK emits 9.6 tonnes of Carbon Dioxide per annum
- A modern or well insulated house emits 5.1 tonnes of Carbon Dioxide per annum

By contrast, an average car emits just 3.6 tonnes of Carbon Dioxide during an average year's driving. ⓪

***The Association of British Drivers:
publishing the statistics that
"They" don't want you to know.***

Engineers propose radical underground motorway network for London

A consortium of engineers headed by Dr Khoury of the Imperial College of Science, and supported by leading companies such as Amec and British Telecom, have proposed that a network of underground motorways should be constructed in London.

The roads would be built by boring deep under the ground to minimize surface disruption, and would involve both radial and orbital routes. The benefits to life on the surface would be enormous, with the possibility of providing enhanced facilities for pedestrians, cyclists and public transport without depriving the capital of vital road space. Long distance surface traffic would be greatly reduced, yet vehicular access would be improved.

The cost of constructing the system could be financed by tolls. While the idea may still be too forward thinking for the UK's blinkered transport planners, similar projects are under way or planned in Paris, Stockholm, Singapore and Tokyo.

VOC Abatement

Engelhard has commercialized so-called regenerative catalytic oxidation (RCO) systems, developed to destroy volatile organic compounds at lower temperatures and with lower energy requirements than conventional incinerators. It reports that the RCO system is already gaining acceptance in applications such as printing, coating, automotive, and forest products. (Chemical Week, December 1996)

Composite Crash

The U.S. Council for Automotive Research (USCAR, Dearborn, MI), which manages

collaborative research for Chrysler, Ford, and General Motors, says it has developed the first composite automobile front end that can be mass produced and that meets U.S. crash safety standards. Whereas traditional metal buckles and folds, USCAR says the composite front end absorbs a 35 mph collision with a "controlled crush". The composite front end, which weighs 25% less than its steel counterpart, is formed from braided glass fibres wrapped around polyurethane foam and reinforced with a Dow Chemical vinyl ester resin. ICI and Owens Corning are also developing composite car parts with USCAR. (Chemical Week, December 1996)

Global Climate Trading

In December 1996 Chemical Week reported U.S. State Department officials as saying that international trading of global warming credits among industrialized countries would help countries meet binding goals for reductions in greenhouse gas emissions, which are the subject of international negotiations (CW, Dec. 4, p. 16). The plan garnered quick support from the Environmental Defense Fund (EDF), which developed an analogous sulphur dioxide pollution credit market to help power plants to meet the requirements of the 1990 Clean Air Act amendments. "Reduction obligations that use emissions trading enable fast and economical pollution cuts," says EDF international counsel Annie Petsonk. Nevertheless, EDF says the U.S. has failed to advance specific emissions reduction targets or timetables for the global warming treaty.

Automotive Catalysts

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.

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.

Europe Debates Tax

Chemical Week reported in December 1996 that the European Commission was denying reports that it had already laid out proposals for an excise duty for oils and other sources of energy. Industry members anticipate a tax of up to 5% of the sales value of an end product. A commission spokesman said, "I wouldn't tell [the chemical industry] not to worry, but the whole process hasn't been decided." The European Chemical Industry Council says it remains totally opposed to any energy tax.

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Motoring, USA

The following article by the NMA's President, James J. Baxter is reproduced essentially unabridged from the November/ December 1996 issue of the National Motorists' Association News.

“Traffic calming”: What it really means

From the never-ending invention of euphemisms comes the phrase, “traffic calming”. This is the polite term for a collection of anti-motorist tactics designed to obstruct traffic and “Balkanize” neighbourhoods. Under-posted speed limits, irrational stop-signs, speed bumps, rumble strips, one-way streets, “no-turn” intersections, and mistimed traffic lights have all been applied to discourage the unwashed masses from using various urban and suburban streets.

New techniques include throwing up roadblocks, obstructing lanes with islands of plants, and adding parking in what were previously travel lanes. Some cities have even hired “traffic engineers” to create and implement new traffic constipation procedures.

While all this has a strong NIMBY tinge to it, I have to admit that some of these neighbourhood preservation advocates have a legitimate gripe when (what are supposed to be) residential streets are carrying Interstate-like traffic loads. Something was wrong, but I couldn't put my finger on it, until now. Traffic calming has become so popular among local officials because it allows them to avoid solving real traffic problems while appeasing the community's squeaky wheels.

On this latter point, a recent Wall Street Journal article hit the nail right on the head. Mr. Walter Kulash (one of a “small band of radical traffic engineers”) made this statement in explaining the political success of traffic calming: “A lot of people are furious about tampering with their ability to drive fast, but they aren't organised. And, it would look really bad (to complain). They aren't about to show up at a (public planning) meeting”. Well, he's got that right.

The squeaky wheels, the people who live on the streets and in the neighbourhoods with too much traffic (at least for their liking) are there at the public meetings. And they stay in the city's face until something is done to appease them. If you doubt their success, just look at the thousands upon thousands of idiotic stop signs that seem to multiply on their own in every town in America.

But why are residential neighbourhoods suffering the onslaught of non-resident commuter traffic? Is it because the “powers that be” are unwilling or unable to correct traffic problems on major thoroughfares? Is it because they don't have the expertise or the political will to do what needs to be done to expedite the smooth flow of traffic into and around their communities? Are there ulterior motives intended to make auto travel impractical and inefficient (like energy crises gimmicks intended to force people to use buses)?

Let's think about this. The city under-posts the speed limit on a major arterial street, they mis-time the lights so that the traffic flow is constantly interrupted, they make no effort to control school bus routes during commute hours, and for good measure, they run a regular speed trap; Lo and behold, what do people do who have to get somewhere...? They change their

route! The only alternative may be residential streets.

In simple terms, resistance to traffic flow on the main streets causes motorists to look for routes with less resistance, often residential and neighbourhood streets. Traffic calming counters this shift by increasing the resistance to traffic flow on residential streets in an attempt to force traffic back to the major thoroughfares.

A more enlightened approach would be to *reduce resistance* on the major arterial routes and attract commuters back to the streets intended to handle “through” traffic. This is exactly what happens when speed limits are raised on major highways. The higher speed limits increase the capacity of the highway, create smoother traffic flow, and shorten journey times. Guess what, motorists abandon the secondary roads and use the Interstates.

As a final insult, “traffic calming” is being touted as a means to revitalise the economic dead zones known as “downtown”. It has been noticed that busy shopping areas in certain cities have slow, congested traffic. Therefore, it is postulated that creating traffic congestion will spur economic activity. This is a correlation only the brain-dead would make.

If cities provide convenient access and free parking (eliminate the parking police gestapo so popular in urban areas), reduce property and business taxes, and toss out utopian city plans and millionaire building codes, the more enlightened urban leaders might encourage businesses and shoppers to return to their cities.

When you hear or read about “traffic calming” in your community, know that what is really happening is that legitimate traffic improvements are being ignored and the wheels are being put in motion to limit your mobility, waste your time, and increase your travel expenses. Let the “experts” know that you're not buying their propaganda.

Brian Gregory writes:

James Baxter's article, although reviewing the US situation, contains criticisms of the actions and of the integrity of the rag-bag alliances of politicians, so-called environmentalists and self-proclaimed (but often totally unqualified) road safety “experts” which are equally applicable here. These people are responsible for bringing about, slowly but surely by creeping economic strangulation, the death of the UK economy. Their real - as opposed to declared - motives need careful examination; Are they, for example, in the pay of some of our economic rivals overseas?

Certainly, in the UK, one of the most recently trumpeted successes of “traffic calming”, the West London Gatso speed camera experiment, merely demonstrated exactly what James Baxter suggests: the 43% fall in accidents at sites equipped with cameras (a fall of 43 fatal/serious injury accidents compared with expectations) was almost exactly balanced by an increase above expectations of 42 fatality/serious injury accidents as motorists diverted to less suitable alternative routes. Had the TRL measured traffic levels across camera-equipped and camera-free areas, they would have found substantially reduced levels at the former and substantially increased ones at the latter. Accident rates (measured in killed and seriously injured persons per 1000 million vehicle kilometres) for non-junction locations at the two different site types (camera equipped and camera-free) would no doubt have proved to be almost identical, showing speed-camera equipped roads to be, at best, no safer than camera-free ones. Indeed Oxfordshire's recent experience - a 31% increase in fatalities contemporaneous with its speed camera offensive - suggests they may actually be less safe. ⓧ

Public Transport

An alternative to the car?

Tomorrow's World (7 May 1997) featured an item on an entirely new type of public transport called Personal Rapid Transport (PRT) or similar, which is currently under development in Massachusetts. This system was billed as one that would "get people out of their cars", reduce pollution, and cut congestion.

In this system, on entering the station, the traveller chooses his destination by touching the appropriate panel on an electronic screen. Once the selection is made, a voice informs the punter that a passenger unit (or "car") will arrive in two or three seconds. And so it does! The two seater "car" will then deliver the customer by the fastest available route.

Instead of fixed gauge railway tracks, PRT uses a sort of guided road where the individual carriages are steered by arms on the right and left of the road that extend to pull these units in the required direction. Even overtaking is possible. PRT is centrally computer controlled to ensure that all goes smoothly according to plan and that the customers are transported in the shortest time. The method of propulsion was not stated (as far as I can recall) but is almost certainly electricity.

Compared to other forms of public transport, it has great advantages. The route is optimised. More important, waiting for the "cars" to arrive and the horrible business of changing are completely eliminated. Moreover, one has total privacy and may choose one's own music and open or close windows according to taste - all for about US\$2.00 per trip. As a replacement for the train, it scores a knock out.

Even in this role, however, I see a problem. Families or parties of three or more would need multiple units. Moreover two adults accompanying more than two children could not be accommodated without at least one child travelling in a separate carriage. I imagine, however, that this difficulty could be circumvented by offering optional larger "cars".

As for cutting congestion, though, I have my doubts. If as many use PRT as currently travel by car, this new system is set to become almost as congested. There may be some gains from the computerised optimisation; but the essential problem of too many people in individual containers would remain. In any case traffic lights are already providing some measure of control on the road. The latter can be extended by more sophisticated signalling schemes.

The PRT system is presumably electrically powered. Am I right in thinking that the efficiency of such motors is much lower than that of the internal combustion engine? If so, then it is hard to see how air pollution can be reduced by PRT. It would, of course, move it out of town to the power stations; and that is a benefit. But - with British urban air quality improving rapidly - this is likely to be happening in the USA and elsewhere too. Air pollution is thus a battle which we are winning. So all PRT can do is hasten that process at the expense of generating more pollution elsewhere. The system is surely much too demanding to be run solely on otherwise waste off peak power.

PRT also suffers from the following disadvantages when compared to the motor car.

1. One has to get to the station from which one wishes to travel and from the destination station to one's real destination - ie, the familiar door to door problem.
2. Only one child per adult can be accompanied.

3. As with all public transport - because the customer is not totally in charge of the vehicle in which he rides - he cannot detour to visit shops etc on the way to the selected destination.
4. The customer does not drive, choose, or own the unit. A car is something to enjoy. No public transport can ever replace it.

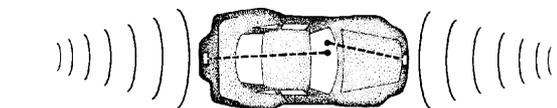
To conclude, as a replacement for passenger trains PRT is a runaway winner. But it can never supplant the motor car.

Unmarked cars & mobile traps

The following unmarked patrol cars have been reported:

- London Met. patrolling Limehouse Link tunnel, 30mph stretch, Black Rover 800 Coupe
- M5 Avon/Glos maroon or brown Vauxhall Senator
- A40 Glos / Forest of Dean routes, blue Vauxhall Cavalier
- A66 Middlesbrough, Cleveland, grey Toyota Corolla
- A428 Cambs. The entire stretch of road between Cambridge and Caxton Gibbet is signed, and the police regularly use mobile cameras from the laybys along this stretch, usually targeting West-bound traffic.
- Aylesbury, Bucks, white Peugeot 406 saloon, P865 AWL.
- M11 Cambs, dark blue Rover M622 VJE
- A30 near Okehampton, Devon. Hand-held radar used near an overbridge at the bottom of a dip.
- Thornton/Crosby, Liverpool, white Renault L578 VCR (could be UCR)

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Association of British Drivers in the press

Following a superb start to 1997, the second quarter has been a little quieter in terms of Press coverage, with motoring issues temporarily drowned out by the General Election. However, the Association of British Drivers received good coverage in *Classic Car Weekly*, earlier in the year, with an article entitled "Traffic Reduction Bill Wrong and Misguided", and the ABD was also mentioned in "Driving" Magazine.

On the 23rd April ABD Chairman Brian Gregory was quoted in the *Daily Mail* concerning the RAC's betrayal of motorists "...It smacks of political correctness in the face of green lobby groups...Perhaps the RAC should now be named the Republican Anti-car Club. That's the signal they are sending to their members".

On the 22nd April a letter by ABD member Mike Bingley was published in the *Telegraph*, mentioning the ABD, and criticising the RAC.

A letter from OTR Editor Stephen Dommett was published in *Autocar* on the 23rd April, suggesting that the various frustrated motorists who had letters

published during the preceding weeks, join us to add their voices.

We also got a mention in *The Times* weekend supplement "Car '97" where we were referred to us as the "Association of British Motorists".

Member Mark McArthur-Christie was successful in getting a letter published in the *Daily Telegraph* on the 26th May, in support of a superb article by Auberon Waugh in that paper on the 1st May, in which he cursed the menace of the Gatsos which now litter the beautiful County of Somerset. He described the speed cameras as "designed to irritate, exercise power and impose subservience for its own sake", and then used to enforce "rules drawn up by the stupid and uneducated, and administered by those with a grudge".

Again, we suspect that there may have been other mentions for the ABD, but we simply cannot trawl every publication. If you know of an article where the ABD has been mentioned please let us know.

Once more, we will be sending out a series of Press releases, and look forward to further Press coverage.

Goodwood Festival of Speed

The ABD's second year at Goodwood turned out to be as eventful and enjoyable as the first. Spirits were barely dampened by the nearly two inches of rain which fell during the three days. Some four thousand leaflets were handed out to visitors, many of whom were astonished to find an organisation campaigning for their interests as motorists. A fuller report will be included in the next issue. However your Committee would like to make particular mention of the help provided by member, David Bridge.

David's company, PEP Limited, provided exhibition display stands which meant that our pitch looked altogether more professional than last year. He helped us set up the stand on the Thursday (in the rain) and waded through the quagmire on the Sunday to assist with the break down. Thanks again, David!

PEP can be contacted on 01375 850300.

The Last Laugh

Mark McArthur-Christie unearths some dark secrets in the dentist's waiting room.

It was a visit to the dentist that finally gave me the answer. I've always wondered why it is that some days every driver seems to do the same stupid thing. Four people cut you up on consecutive roundabouts, six idiots try to overtake on blind bends, that sort of thing. Well now I know. In the dentist's waiting room, on the table in the middle and nestled under the Bumper Boer War edition of *Reader's Digest* was a magazine called "Moron Motorist Monthly". Apparently it's the journal of the Association of Moron Motorists, an organisation dedicated to causing chaos and irritation on the UK's roads.

The magazine listed a number of different things to try on different days. For example, Tuesday May 6th was listed as "National Take-up-One-and-a-Bit-Parking-Spaces Day". Now those of you who aren't lucky enough to have that most precious and elusive of all perks (and about to become a bloody sight more elusive if the eco-twits get their way), a car parking space, will know what I

mean. Imagine the situation...

After driving around for three weeks trying to find a space, you finally glimpse one in the distance. Foot down, you career towards it.

It's a miracle – no double yellow lines, no waiting limit – but some moron has parked with exquisite care – taking up precisely one-and-a-bit spaces. There should be space for two cars, but oh no, matey has positioned his car so that there's not quite enough room. The real pros park so that you think you could almost squeeze in, and you have a go, only to give up in utter frustration after 20 attempts. Look carefully and you'll see a copy of *Moron Motorist Monthly* on the back seat.

Like all good magazines the cover of *MMM* is plastered with headlines for articles like "Road Rage – how to be the leading cause" and "Middle lane hogging - advanced techniques". And sometimes there is even a photo of the Association's president – about 65, with a tweed jacket and a trilby hat, standing proudly next to his immaculate two-tone beige, 70s hatchback. I think the magazine's motto

was "I've never had an accident in my life, but I've seen plenty".

The articles prove what I have suspected all along – there's a whole group of people out there dedicated to irritating the hell out of other drivers. As I was waiting for the dentist, I took the liberty of tearing a few pages out of *MMM* especially for readers of *On the Road* – I've reproduced them below...

Roundabouts: Causing Chaos, for beginners. Roundabouts present the Moron Motorist with many opportunities. Perhaps the most effective at causing maximum irritation is the "Clear Roundabout Brake".

This consists of approaching an entirely clear roundabout at a normal speed (say 30 or 40 mph) and then suddenly slamming on the brakes for absolutely no reason whatsoever. With a bit of luck, the driver behind will stand his car on its bonnet in the attempt to stop. At this point you should turn around and wag your finger at the other driver and shake your head disapprovingly. This manoeuvre is even better if you can then move off as soon as another car does come onto the roundabout, causing them to brake too.

Mark's appraisal of MMM will be continued.