

# NEWSLETTER



September 2011



Group's Web Address : [www.cardiffiam.co.uk](http://www.cardiffiam.co.uk)

# DIARY 2011

## **Thursday, 1st September 2011 at 7.30pm**

Group Meeting, Lisvane Memorial Hall, Heol-y-Delyn, Lisvane, Cardiff  
Sept – A presentation from Sergeant Gavin Morgan of Cardiff Police Driving school.

## **Thursday, 6th October 2011 at 7.30pm**

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING, Lisvane Memorial Hall, Heol-y-Delyn, Lisvane, Cardiff  
Chief Constable of South Wales Police, Peter Vaughan, will be attending.

## **Thursday, 2nd November 2011 at 7.30pm**

Group Meeting, Lisvane Memorial Hall, Heol-y-Delyn, Lisvane, Cardiff  
car technology – ABS, Traction control, ASR. If you're interested in learning more about the science behind these and other motoring terms, do come along!

## **December 2011**

XMAS MEAL – Details to be confirmed.

CONGRATULATIONS TO THE FOLLOING MEMBERS OF CARDIFF IAM GROUP WHO HAVE PASSED THE IAM ADVANCED MOTORISTS TEST

Mr Robert Stroud Observer – Peter Welch Examiner – Lyndsey Williams

## ***SPEED CAMERAS FAIL TO CUT ACCIDENTS***

*(with thanks to Robert Winnett, Conrad Quilty-Harper and Sebastian Payne, Daily Telegraph)*

Speed cameras have failed to cut accidents on many roads and have actually led to a rise in casualties on some routes, official figures show. Ministers fear that thousands of cameras have served only to raise millions from motorists, rather than improve safety.

The findings, from an initial sample of 75 local authorities, will prompt the Government to call on every council to publish detailed information on each speed camera site, including accident rates and how much has been raised in fines. Ministers hope that local authorities will succumb to pressure to remove the controversial devices if the information does not demonstrate that accidents have been cut.

Mike Penning, the road safety minister, said: "For the first time we are shining the light of transparency on the performance of speed cameras. People want to know that if their tax money is being spent on speed cameras that they are actually making their roads safer, not just raising money. People will now have the information to be able to hold their councils to account if they think that some cameras have actually made the situation worse, rather than better."

Since they were introduced in 1992, speed cameras have been installed at about 6,000 sites, generating an estimated £100 million in fines each year. After a request from the Department of Transport, 75 councils have so far agreed to publish all or part of their speed camera information, including accident rates, casualty rates and the number of motorists caught. Many statistics have been incomplete, making comparisons difficult, while some authorities failed to release a breakdown of data.

An analysis of figures produced by six local authorities showed that speed cameras have had a mixed impact. In Humberside, which has 89 speed cameras, there was no change in the number of accidents at a fifth of the sites, while the number of collisions rose at 17 of them. Of the 44 speed cameras in the Thames Valley, seven sites saw an increase in the number of incidents, with four-fold rise at a site in Aylesbury. Some speed cameras caught more than 60 motorists a day. In Cambridgeshire, four of the 47 speed cameras saw a rise in the number of collisions.

Mr Penning urged all councils to publish the data quickly. "Local residents have a right to expect that when their council spends money on speed cameras, they publish information to show whether those cameras are helping to reduce accidents or not," he said. "I would urge those councils which have not yet published their data to do so as soon as possible."

It is understood that officials from the Department of Transport will conduct a detailed statistical analysis of the data to assess the effectiveness of speed cameras in improving road safety. Ministers have already removed financial incentives that encouraged local authorities to introduce hundreds of speed cameras, with revenue now paid to the Treasury. Although Philip Hammond, the Transport Secretary, has signalled an end to the "war on motorists" his view is that some speed cameras can be beneficial if they are shown to reduce accidents.

Some councils scrapped speed cameras after the Coalition was elected only to quietly reintroduce some of the devices after accident rates increased.

## **HOW DO ACCIDENTS HAPPEN?**

*(with thanks to David Williams, Daily Telegraph)*

A study of more than 700,000 crashes in the UK has produced detailed evidence on the causes of road traffic accidents.



It's enough to chill your blood on the warmest day. You're driving along a familiar road on holiday or to work. But your progress is suddenly hampered by ominous signs; an ambulance screeches past and there's an unexpected traffic jam. You inch your way to the head of the queue and as you reach the crash scene it's impossible not to gawp at the tangled metal. You know that within hours, a police notice board seeking witnesses to a fatal accident will appear.

Always though, two haunting questions remain: what went wrong - and how can you make sure it won't be you next time?

Now, for the first time, a startling new report, *Licensed to Skill*, has broken down what happens in those mysterious "lost" moments leading to road accidents, analysing who is to blame, what sex or age they tend to be – and what they did wrong. Using data gathered by police and spanning 700,000 accidents from 2005-2009, the Institute of Advanced Motorists (IAM) has analysed, in breathtaking detail, the anatomy of a road accident.

Unexpected findings emerged, not least the relative unimportance that speeding plays in road accidents that kill six people each day in the UK, leave 68 others seriously hurt and 535 with less serious injuries.

"It has been an eye-opener," says project manager Neil Greig, of the IAM. "Not just in terms of what causes an accident but in terms of dispelling some of the popular myths. For instance, if you look at Government campaigns they seem to say that speed is the number one problem. But illegal speeding – when drivers exceed the posted limit – accounts for only 13.9 per cent of fatal accidents. A bigger cause [15.9 per cent] is going too fast for the conditions – entering a bend too quickly, for instance – when you might well be under the actual speed limit."

But the biggest cause of road accidents in the UK today? The statistics are quite clear on this and it's "driver error or reaction". It's listed by police as a factor in more than 65 per cent of fatal crashes and the heading covers a multitude of driving sins many of which you're probably on first-name terms with. Topping the charge sheet is failing to look properly (the Smidsy factor – "Sorry mate, I didn't see you', relevant in 20.5 per cent of fatalities involving driver error), followed by "loss of control" (34 per cent) which, says Greig, often means leaving yourself with "nowhere to go" after entering a bend or other situation, too quickly. Other errors include "poor turn or manoeuvre" (12 per cent) and "failed to judge other person's path or speed" (11.6 per cent.).

Second biggest cause of fatal accidents, to blame for 31 per cent, is the "injudicious action", an umbrella term for "travelled too fast for the conditions' (15.9 per cent of those labelled injudicious), "exceeded speed limit" (13.9 per cent) or "disobeyed give-way or stop sign" (2.1 per cent)?

Third culprit in the daily gamble on who lives and who dies is "behaviour or inexperience" (28 per cent), which covers faults such as "careless, reckless or in a hurry" (17 per cent), "aggressive driving" (8.3 per cent) and "learner/inexperienced" (5.3 per cent).

The fourth main category is "impairment or distraction" (to blame for 19.6 per cent of fatal accidents) covering "alcohol" (a factor in 9.6 per cent of fatal accidents) and "distraction in vehicle" (2.6 per cent).

"What is just as telling though is the factors that, though they might be key in a small number of accidents, aren't all that significant," says Greig. "We see a lot of campaigning on issues such as diesel and deposits on the road but that only explains 0.8 per cent of fatal accidents, and being dazzled by headlamps, a factor in 0.4 per cent of fatalities."

Next time you venture out in bad weather, you might like to reassure yourself that slippery roads only factor in 10.9 per cent of fatal crashes involving road problems, while bad road layouts are to blame in 3.2 per cent.

But you should watch out more carefully for pedestrians. A separate heading shows that "pedestrian only, casualty or injured" accidents account for more

than 18 per cent of collisions, with (sound familiar?) 10 per cent of them "failing to look properly".

Delve further into the report and a colossal range of possible causes of accidents, 77 in all, emerges, including vision affected by the sun, vegetation or spray from vehicles and scratched windscreens. Of those motorists judged by police to have been distracted, only 0.8 per cent were using a mobile phone and 0.4 per cent had defective eyesight.

Other reasons accounting for 6.1 per cent of fatal accidents include "stolen vehicle" (1.1 per cent), "emergency vehicle on call" (0.3 per cent) and "vehicle in course of crime" (0.4 per cent). Vehicle defects are a factor in only 2.8 per cent of fatalities, with tyres mostly to blame (1.5 per cent) followed by dodgy brakes (0.7 per cent).

The overriding message? It's not your car or the "road conditions" that are most likely to kill you. It's your own driving. Men are more often 'careless, reckless or in a hurry', or 'travelling too fast for conditions'. Women are more likely to be 'inexperienced', but less likely to have been drinking.

Age is a factor. Older drivers more frequently fail to look properly while younger ones are more likely to be going too fast, either for the limit, or the conditions.

Time of day is important; between 7pm-7am 'loss of control' is the key factor while at other times, it's the familiar 'failed to look properly'. Motorists are more likely to be 'distracted or impaired' at weekends (17 per cent) than on weekdays (10 per cent).

"Drivers can learn a lot by reading this and if you take just one thing away from it," says Greig, "it's that paying a little more attention, taking that little bit more time to look properly, will save your life. Mostly, crashes aren't about cars going dramatically out of control and up in smoke. It's small errors suddenly having greater consequences. But if you are a good, trained driver, you can avoid becoming a statistic." And you'll get to that appointment on time, too.

What to do when you have an accident - the AA advises that you:

- \* Don't lose your temper even if provoked.
- \* Don't admit liability at the scene; you may be confused, and it may adversely affect the claims process
- \* Call the emergency services – you must if anyone is injured
- \* Call your insurance company who should give you guidance
- \* Make a note of where you are, road conditions, what happened
- \* Note other vehicles involved – registration numbers, makes, models
- \* Note who was involved – names, telephone numbers, addresses, insurance details
- \* Make a note of any witnesses who might confirm what happened

\* The Highway Code says you must give your details to anyone with reasonable grounds for requiring them. If you don't you must report details to police within 24 hours

\* Take pictures if possible; mobile phones are fine

\* If you suspect someone was breaking the law – speeding, using a hand-held phone etc – tell your insurer and the police

\* If you have been injured, deal with your insurer rather than any cold-call lawyers who might contact you

### ***PUBLIC WANT 20MPH LIMITS BUT NOT THE ENFORCEMENT, SAYS IAM***

Sixty-seven per cent of people think that 20mph zones should be used outside schools according to the latest poll of nearly 4000 people by the IAM.

A further 38 per cent think that they should be used on roads with amenities such as parks and shops, but only a quarter would like to see them made the default speed limit in all built-up areas. Forty-three per cent of people would like the road outside their house to have a 20mph speed limit, but opinion is split here as 39 per cent wouldn't.

Forty per cent of people think that this speed limit is best enforced by speed limit signs, leaving the police to enforce the limit and the public to comply. Measures to physically slow people down are less popular, with only 20 per cent in favour of safety cameras, and 21 per cent supporting a combination of measures including road humps and cameras. Respondents felt that enforcing the limit in 20mph zones should be of medium priority compared to other road policing duties.

IAM head of road safety Kevin Delaney said: "The IAM supports the selective use of 20mph speed limits where there is clear evidence that the risk of casualties will be reduced. But blanket 20mph speed limits or limits at inappropriate sites risk widespread disregard by drivers who do not recognise a necessity for them. Consultation with, and buy-in from, local people here is essential. Passive enforcement measures, such as speed bumps, are unpopular and active enforcement by police is unrealistic in the current financial climate. If lower speed limits are restricted to locations and times where there is an obvious need, responsible drivers, who are the overwhelming majority, will adhere to them without the need for enforcement."

Advanced motorist Rob Raikes, 66, said: "In Portsmouth where there is a city wide 20 mph limit, motorists have found that the average journey time has increased by a very small amount, and that the stress of driving has reduced by quite a large one. Our streets should be for people, not cars."

## **MOT TEST CENTRE RESULTS VARY WILDLY**

*(with thanks to Paul Hudson, Daily Telegraph)*

Several sites miss potentially dangerous faults as mystery shoppers take cars for MoT tests.



Research carried out by What Car? magazine shows that the results of an MoT roadworthiness check can vary wildly between test centres. The results raise concerns about the proposal to make MoT tests compulsory every two years rather than the current annual assessment.

Its mystery shoppers visited six garages within five days with a six-year-old Vauxhall Corsa that the RAC had inspected and rated as an MoT test failure. The car was inspected before and after each of the MoT tests, and was in the same condition for each test except for two replacement light bulbs.

The car's faults included common wear and tear items such as a track rod end ball joint, handbrake, exhaust and a broken brake pipe securing clip. There was also a chip in the windscreen and faults with the registration plate and the rear foglight bulbs.

Case study 1, chain garage in the Midlands. Test result: fail, Didn't note windscreen chip and broken brake pipe securing clip.

Case study 2, independent garage in the Midlands . Test result: fail , Didn't note windscreen chip and brake pipe securing clip.

Case study 3, independent garage in south-east England. Test result: fail, Didn't note windscreen chip and brake pipe securing clip.

Case study 4, chain garage in south-west London. Test result: pass, Passed after one bulb change.

Case study 5, independent garage in south-west London. Test result: pass, Passed after one bulb change.

Case study 6, independent garage, south-east England. Test result: fail, Didn't note track rod end joint wear, windscreen chip and brake pipe securing clip.

The MoT system is run by the Vehicle and Operator Services Agency (VOSA), a Government agency. The law requires vehicles aged three years or older to be tested annually. Some MoT testing stations are monitored only every three years.

"With so much disparity between different garages, we think the Government should scrap its plans for bi-annual MoT tests and focus instead on tightening the current system to ensure motorists stay safe," said What Car?'s editor in chief, Chas Hallett. "If the current MoT system is working properly, all of the test stations we visited should have come up with the same results for the same vehicle. Not all of the faults that our RAC engineer found were simple pass-or-fail points, but we have to be concerned when some of these areas were missed altogether. Motorists should be able to rely on the expertise of the tester."

VOSA responded: "MoT testers must be experienced mechanics and must hold a relevant qualification. Parts of the MoT test do have to be subjective and therefore rely upon testers to exercise their engineering judgement. It is refreshing to see that, when tester discretion is included, there is a large degree of consistency between the garages in your survey. However, a number of your findings have caused VOSA some concern, which we will address with the garages involved."

## **POTHoles REMAIN BRITISH MOTORISTS' BIGGEST GRIPE**

*(with thanks to Chris Knapman, Daily Telegraph)*

Despite additional funding to address Britain's pothole problem, crumbling roads remain the biggest bugbear for motorists.



Despite additional funding to address Britain's pothole problem, crumbling roads remain the biggest bugbear for motorists.

A third of drivers have damaged their car by driving through a pothole, according to the latest research from the Institute of Advanced Motorists (IAM), with a further 16 per cent claiming to have been involved in or seen an accident caused by a vehicle hitting a pothole.

Of the 2,600 people in the survey, 88 per cent rated pothole repair as the top priority for local council maintenance – with only 14 per cent classing their council's current performance as "good" or "very good".

IAM director of policy and research Neil Greig said: "Eighty per cent of those polled thought that local councils should work more closely together to increase efficiency, and with no loosening of the public purse strings in sight, it will take partnerships to ensure the backlog in road maintenance does not continue to stack up."

## ***NEW STUDY PROVES WORTH OF SUPPORTING ROAD SAFETY CHARITIES, SAYS IAM***

Investing in the work of road safety charities pays high dividends, according to a new report by accountants Baker Tilly. Their study on the social return on investment of road safety charity the IAM reveals that for every £1 invested in its work, the IAM returns £21 to society. A summary of the report is available in this month's copy of the IAM member magazine *Advanced Driving*.

The study has enabled the IAM to understand the social and economic value of its contribution to society — estimated to be £128 million every year. The figure was calculated by examining the effects of the IAM's work in reducing the number and severity of road traffic accidents — plus a reduction in the costs of motoring.

The benefit to society of people taking the IAM advanced driving and riding programmes is £39 million.

The fatality rate in crashes for advanced drivers is 0.9 per cent compared to 1.1 per cent for the wider motoring population. The serious injury rate is 10.75 per cent compared to 11.5 per cent for the wider population. The savings attributed to reducing the number and severity of accidents for IAM advanced drivers and riders is £37.5 million.

Advanced drivers and motorcyclists also achieve greater savings in motoring costs because advanced driving techniques reduce vehicle wear and fuel consumption. Many IAM members also benefit from cheaper insurance.

By training those who drive as part of their work, the IAM's corporate driver training company, IAM Drive & Survive, makes an economic contribution of an estimated £35 million. This is the outcome of training and assessing nearly 20,000 professional drivers. Training includes risk assessments, e-learning and on road training. Corporate training typically raises drivers' skills above those of the average motorist — but not to the same level as the advanced test.

Finally, by campaigning and by directly influencing the government and other decision makers on road safety issues, the IAM's policy, research and communications services provide an estimated £54 million in savings to the economy.

IAM chief executive Simon Best said: "This report demonstrates how independent charities contribute to society. Contributing £128 million to road safety is something to be proud of, especially as so much of our work is carried out by volunteers. And we never forget the side of our work that cannot be measured financially: the reduction in anguish for families and friends of loved

ones who suffer in accidents because of better standards of road safety.”

Report author, Jim Clifford of Baker Tilly said: “This report carefully maps the outcomes of the IAM’s important work and demonstrates an enormous contribution to public safety.”

### ***SAFETY TAKES A BACK SEAT TO STYLE FOR BRITISH DRIVERS***

*(with thanks to Paul Hudson, Daily Telegraph)*

More than half of UK drivers who need prescription lenses wear normal sunglasses at the wheel.



According to a new survey, only 27 per cent of Britons own prescription sunglasses and opt for style over safety when they get behind the wheel in the sunshine, while 53 per cent of the 1,000 people interviewed admitted to not owning prescription sunglasses and wearing normal sunglasses to drive in.

If drivers wear glasses or corrective lenses, the law requires that they wear them whenever they are driving. The DVLA requires motorists to be able to see from a distance of 20 metres, hence many motorists wear glasses for driving. However, fashionable sunglasses without prescription lenses can seriously affect vision, meaning increased risk.

Further danger comes from the potential damage poor quality sunglasses can do to eyes. In the survey, 36 per cent of survey respondents don't know if their sunglasses have UV filters. Without UV filters, the sun can potentially damage

eyes and further risk is posed on the roads when bright sunshine obstructs vision.

Brendan O'Brien, resident optometrist at GetLenses, which commissioned the survey, said: "The research is extremely worrying. Safety should never be compromised for style, especially when it comes to driving. We don't blame drivers, as often many people don't even consider prescription sunglasses. An ideal combination for glasses wearers during sunny weather is to consider daily disposable contact lenses. That way they have the best of both worlds – the chance to wear their favourite sunglasses without risking the safety of others and themselves."

According to the latest statistics from the Department for Transport, there was an increase of seven per cent in the number of road casualties in the summer of 2010 compared with the winter months. There is a 20 per cent increase in the number of people killed or seriously injured during summer compared with the winter.

### ***MILLIONS OF MOTORISTS ADMIT TO 'SAT NAV RACING' GAME*** *(with thanks to John-Paul Ford Rojas, Daily Telegraph)*

For any motorist trying to find the quickest route from A to B, satellite navigation is a boon.



To a surprising number, however, it is also proving a potentially dangerous challenge as they try to beat the estimated times the devices display with every route, a survey has found.

Millions of motorists are apparently racing against their satnavs and many are engaging in manoeuvres including overtaking on blind bends, tailgating, flashing their lights or gesticulating at other drivers to do so.

Until now, most complaints about the technology, which uses the Global Positioning System (GPS), have centred on heavy lorries being sent down narrow country lanes and drivers directed along roads that no longer exist.

But the devices give a minimum time to reach a given destination assuming the motorist travels at the maximum permitted speed along the suggested route. Beating the time, therefore, invariably means breaking the law.

Yet 7.2 million of Britain's 37 million drivers engage in the practice, the survey by Sainsbury's car insurance suggests, although only half would admit to breaking the speed limit. The results suggest nearly 150,000 drivers have been involved in a collision while "GPS racing" in the last year.

They also suggest that more than 320,000 of these drivers engage in risky manoeuvres such as overtaking on blind bends, while 240,000 have tailgated other vehicles and more than 160,000 have flashed or gesticulated at other motorists.

Drivers from Yorkshire and Humberside were most likely to admit trying to beat the satnav, with one in five confessing to it.

Ben Tyte, the head of car insurance at Sainsbury's, said: "We are encouraging drivers using this new technology to have the safety of any passengers, other road users and pedestrians at the forefront of their minds and not be tempted to become GPS racers."

Philip Gomm of the RAC Foundation said: "Drivers should treat their satnavs as guides, not gospel. We all know that real life gets in the way of the best planned journeys, and motorists need to leave enough leeway for unforeseen circumstances, rather than being intent on racing the clock. Breaking the law to try and beat a machine is not acceptable."

## **PLANNING CHANGES THREATEN MOTORWAY GRIDLOCK**

*(with thanks to David Millward, Daily Telegraph)*

Drivers are facing the threat of more motorway gridlock because of plans to overhaul planning laws, according to a new report.



Whitehall proposals to make it easier to build business parks near motorway junctions could make bank holiday style traffic jams commonplace, according to the Campaign for Better Transport. The influential environmental group has voiced fears that the proliferation of out of town office developments could lead to a series of bottlenecks.

Similar concerns have been voiced by motoring groups who are worried at the potential impact that a sharp increase in the number of business parks.

Underpinning the concern is a document known as the Government's draft National Planning Policy Framework which has scrapped the principle of encouraging offices to be built in town centres rather than on the urban periphery. Examining what has happened at existing business parks, the Campaign estimates that each development would generate an additional 8,000 car journeys a day. This would mean, if for example 34 new business parks were built along the M1, substantial delays as traffic built up.

For example a trip from St Albans, at junction 8 on the M1 to junction 47, the Leeds turn-off, would take 50 minutes longer than the current three hours and 37 minutes. The delay would be caused by the build up of traffic entering and leaving the motorway, pushing other cars into the middle and outside lanes.

"Far from helping economic growth, our research shows that the draft planning

framework could actually end up damaging the economy through increased congestion as new office developments move out of town centres and spring up next to motorways and other big roads," said Stephen Joseph, the Campaign's chief executive. No one wants to be stuck in bank holiday style jams twice a day just to do a day's work. We need to encourage new development, but not at any price and the expense of delays and congestion on transport networks needs to be fully considered when planning new developments."

Stephen Glaister, director of the RAC Foundation, agreed. "This sounds about right," he said. "We already have a major problem with junction capacity on our motorways. There is a forecast of 10 per cent population growth in some areas and unless we have a proper road network with decent capacity these kind of problems will happen."

Andrew Howard, an AA spokesman added: "I think it may make it harder for locals to work in local firms and there could be congestion with people driving out of town," he said. "There will also have to be some good traffic management to make sure that there is not traffic queuing on the motorway."

But a spokesman for the Department for Communities and Local Government defended the plans. "The bizarre, exaggerated hypothesis put forward by this group completely overlooks the reality of the reforms being proposed. The National Planning Policy Framework maintains strict protections and rules and makes clear that only sustainable development will be allowed."

### **PINK PANTHER CAR UP FOR GRABS**

*(with thanks to Mike Torpey, motoringforce.uk.net)*



It's one of the most iconic vehicles in film history and the original Pink Panther car is expected to fetch between £50,000 and £100,000 when it goes under the hammer next month.

Known as the Panthermobile and created in 1969, it was designed by Hollywood vehicle stylist Jay Ohrberg, best known for having produced the likes of the Knight Rider KITT, Back To The Future DeLorean, three generations of Batmobile, Dukes of Hazzard General Lee and Starsky & Hutch's Ford Gran Torino.

The Pink Panther car was understood to be owned by Ohrberg until auctioned four years ago by COYS, when it was bought for £88,000 by the current owner. The vehicle is in totally original condition, though at 42 years old it would benefit from some sympathetic restoration, and though the engine isn't currently running, it was believed to be working when the vehicle was sold in 2007. Nor is the car street-legal as it doesn't come with a Swansea V5.

Sale is via an online auction starting on Sunday, September 4, to coincide with the car's appearance at the Chelsea Auto Legends Show on the same day and the auction – conducted by auctioneers Robson Kay via [bidspotter.co.uk](http://bidspotter.co.uk) - ends at 1.00pm on Friday, October 14.







## **SKY HIGH INSURANCE CREATES ROAD SAFETY HAZARD FOR YOUNG DRIVERS**

The IAM is calling on insurance companies to overhaul their systems for calculating prices for young drivers, after finding that a search for car insurance quotes for an average 17 year old driver revealed the cheapest annual premium to be £7,091.38. The top price quoted was just over £9700.

This particular search – made on a popular price comparison site – was for the fictional ‘Tom Stevens’, with a date of birth of the 03/03/1994. He has held a full licence for one month, and was requesting insurance on a 2007 1.1l Kia Picanto. He lives in the London Borough of Richmond upon Thames and claimed the car would be parked on the road. He has no previous claims or convictions and is in full-time education with a part-time job, and requested cover just for ‘social’ use.

Once Tom had been driving for a year, his cheapest quote dropped to £2528.55, on an otherwise like-for-like basis.

IAM director of policy and research Neil Greig said: “Young drivers can only learn safer driving by practising it, but huge insurance premiums risk pricing them off the road. The challenge for the government, the insurance industry and road safety experts is how to balance the need for experience with the very real risk that young drivers pose to themselves and other road users. When an insurance premium is matching university tuition fees, innovative thinking is needed to reward the safest young drivers or spread the cost in a more manageable way. Many young people will need a car to get to work and there are serious implications to the economy of young people who are unable to afford to drive, and to road safety if drivers simply choose to forgo insurance.”

## **FEAR OF SEEMING WEIRD PUTTING PEOPLE OFF CYCLING**

*(with thanks to David Millward, Daily Telegraph)*

The fear or seeming “weird” is putting people off cycling to work, an academic study has found.



A three year research project has discovered that not fitting in, alongside “squashed helmet hair” and turning up “hot and sweaty” for meetings are the biggest deterrents for using a bike to commute.

Successive Governments have invested £150 million to promote cycling as an environmentally friendly way of travelling. But there appears to be a long way to go before the public is convinced, according to the study funded by the Engineering and Physical Sciences Research Council.

“I get called the bag lady, because I walk everywhere and I have quite a lot of stuff with me,” said Steph, a respondent from Leeds. Lara, also from Leeds, complained: The helmet is a problem for me, because I just think it would make my hair a little squashed.”

Meanwhile Joe from Leicester added: “I probably would cycle if I didn’t worry so much about image and public opinion – me arriving at a meeting hot and sweaty.” Sally from Worcester observed: “You do get a sense of some people thinking oh, you’re a bit weird because you’re going up on the bike you know. A bit odd.”

The study approached 15,000 people and received just over 1,400 replies. Some of the respondents were interviewed in person and accompanied on their usual journeys to work.

“Most people prefer not to stand out as different, but tend to adopt norms of behaviour that fit in and reflect the majority experience,” said Prof Colin Pooley of Lancaster University, who led the study. “In Britain, travelling by car is the default position for most people – over 60% of all trips are by car- and car ownership and use is seen as normal. The significance of such issues in

influencing people's everyday travel decisions should not be underestimated. Campaigns to promote walking and cycling as normal and something accessible to all and not dominated by super-fit or unusually committed specialists should also be adopted."

However Norman Baker, the local transport minister, was sceptical about the would-be cyclists' concerns. "Cycling is absolutely mainstream and it is quite old fashioned to suggest otherwise," he said.

### ***IS THIS THE END OF THE CAR?***

*(with thanks to Clint Witchallsm The Independent)*

The decline of driving in Britain may have reached a tipping point. At least that's the idea behind the theory of 'peak car'.



Something weird is happening," says Phil Goodwin, professor of transport policy at the University of the West of England. "Car use in Britain is on the decline, but no one is exactly sure why." Goodwin says we have reached "peak car". If he is right, this has important implications for how we design our towns and

cities, and where public money gets allocated.

Goodwin has been building his argument for peak car in a series of articles in *Local Transport Today*. His evidence includes that fewer young people are learning to drive. Between 1992 and 2007, the number of 17- to 20-year-olds who held licences fell from 48 per cent to 38 per cent, and for 21- to 29-year-olds, the number fell from 75 per cent to 66 per cent. Also, there has been a decline in private transport's share of trips from 50 per cent in 1993 to 41 per cent in 2008. And, according to Lynn Sloman, director of Transport for Quality of Life, between 2004 and 2008, car trips per person went down by 9 per cent and car distance per person by 5 per cent.

Of course, this doesn't amount to incontrovertible evidence of the beginning of the end for cars – it could be a momentary blip, an aberration – but it would be foolish not to have this debate now, given the paucity of Government funds, and given the long planning horizon of most public works.

The Department for Transport (DfT) is working on the assumption that between 2003 and 2025 traffic across Britain will grow by 25 per cent and traffic in London will grow by 23 per cent.

"If the future is going to be on a different trajectory to the path predicted by the Department for Transport, then that has a very big impact on what types of infrastructure are invested in," says Sloman. Over the next few years, Sloman, Goodwin and the Institute for Public Policy Research will be poring over National Travel Survey data in order to "dissect the peak". They will analyse the national aggregate figures to try to understand who is reducing car-use, where it is happening and the types of trips that are being reduced.

The science fiction writer William Gibson said: "The future has arrived; it's just not evenly distributed." If one thing is clear from an initial analysis of the data, it's that the future has arrived in London.

"The picture for the whole of Britain has been quite stable since the mid-1990s, but London is a very interesting case," says David Metz, visiting professor at the centre for transport studies at University College London. Metz, a former chief scientist at the Department for Transport, explains that the population density of London has been going up, but the number of car trips per day has stayed steady. In other words, car journeys per person are falling. "This reached its peak in the early 1990s, has been declining ever since and it's projected to go on declining as the population keeps growing," says Metz.

It's not clear yet why London and a few other places are experiencing a fall in car-use, but a number of social trends, transport policies and technologies appear to be having a cumulative effect.

One seemingly obvious candidate to explain peak car is the rise of the internet, as the two phenomena began in the early 1990s. Before the internet, hardly anyone worked from home. Today, many people who have an office job work from home at least one day a week. If everyone works at home one day in five, that's a 20 per cent reduction in traffic. Only, it's not that straightforward. As Goodwin points out, commuting journeys are a good way of preventing cars from being used during working hours. When a car is at home, it's available for other members of the household to use. While the net effect is still positive, it isn't big enough to explain peak car. Internet shopping has also made a small dent but, again, not a big enough dent to explain the numbers.

Petrol prices have also had a modest impact. There is an inverse correlation between petrol prices and traffic – when petrol prices go up, traffic levels go down. But petrol will have to get a lot more expensive before people abandon their cars in significant numbers. "In the long run, people accommodate the rise in petrol prices by buying more economical cars," says UCL's Metz.

Metz and Goodwin believe that a movement called "new urbanism" may partly explain the drop in car-use in cities such as London. New urbanism – to cite the movement's website – promotes the creation and restoration of diverse, walkable [sic], compact, vibrant, mixed-use communities composed of the same components as conventional development, but assembled in a more integrated fashion, in the form of complete communities.

"There was a period of about 20 years when the population of London declined as people moved out to the country, to market towns," says Metz, "but that trend has gone into reverse over the past 20 years and you've got fashionable inner city areas, such as Hoxton and Shoreditch, the heart of digital enterprises. That is all quite helpful in terms of becoming less car-dependent, making more use of public transport, walking and cycling."

There is some evidence that this is happening in Leeds and Manchester, which experienced inner-city decline, leading to low-rent property, then occupied by artists and entrepreneurs. As mentioned before, fewer young people are learning to drive, possibly because of the cost of learning and the steep cost of motor insurance in that age group.

My daughter is 20 and lives in south London. Of her extended group of friends, only two have driver's licences. "Seeing how stressful driving can be is off-putting," she says. "Also, I know people who had a car but had to sell it because London's so expensive."

At the other end of the age spectrum, the elderly – the fastest-growing demographic in the UK – have a big incentive to abandon their cars: free bus passes.

Other transport policy is also having an effect. The introduction of controlled parking zones through most of London makes it all but impossible to find parking during the day, and the Congestion Charge zone has made it expensive to travel through central London. At the same time, there has been a strong investment in public transport – specifically rail travel.

"From a carbon perspective, it gives us some hope," says Sloman. "There has tended to be an assumption on the part of policymakers that it's just not possible to change people's travel behaviour to less carbon-intensive means of travel but, actually, if people are changing their travel behaviour already, perhaps we can support that kind of change in behaviour by going with the grain of what people want to do." When Goodwin looked at the charts of public transport use in the last century, he saw strong and rapid growth of rail, buses and trams, followed by an abrupt and precipitous drop.

There was a vicious cycle as cars came to prominence. Each increase in car-use accelerated more car-use, because the quality of public transport declined. New towns, such as Redditch, were designed specifically with drivers in mind. Increasing car-use had an effect on the way cities were laid out. Small, local destinations closed and were replaced by bigger, more distant ones. Shopping centres, schools and hospitals began to be located away from the centres, so people needed cars to access them.

The \$60,000 question is: will the process work in reverse? Will we see a virtuous circle of declining car-use coupled with increasing use of greener modes of transport: our legs, bicycles, trams, trains and buses?

"If people are moving back into the inner cities and central areas, then you're getting people choosing to live in areas where the public transport tends to be better and the parking difficulties tend to be worse, and you could easily imagine a virtuous circle," says Goodwin.

Towns such as Groningen in the Netherlands, which embraced the new urbanism and paved over the town centre, have enjoyed an environmental and economic turnaround. Sixteen years ago, a six-lane motorway ran through the centre of the town. Today, 57 per cent of Groningen's denizens travel by bicycle – the highest proportion in the West – and the town has seen its rents climb as people clamour to live in this now sought-after place.

"The general view of transport is that mobility increases with income," says Metz. "As incomes grow, everyone travels more and historically this was the case up until the mid-1990s in Britain. However, there is emerging evidence here and in other countries that car use per capita has been flattening off. Growth has been coming to an end. And if that's true generally, it's quite important. It helps in terms of the impact of the transport sector on global warming."

If car-use per capita has peaked and is going to level off or decline, we can start to rethink and redesign our towns and cities so that they become more attractive; and that includes those new towns which were specifically designed with cars in mind.

"I don't see any reason for assuming that the car, considered as a metal box inherent to the physical movement of one or a small number of people, is going to be the way that societies organise themselves forever," says Goodwin. "Eating miles is not an end in itself; it's a means of participating in activities of one sort or another. And if there are other ways of participating that don't eat so many miles, what's not to like?"

## GROUP COMMITTEE

### **Honorary President**

His Honour Judge Crispin Masterman

### **Chairman & Hon. Treasurer**

Kieron Malloy, 1 Mill Place, Lisvane, Cardiff, CF14 5TF Tel : Cardiff (029) 2075 9770

e-mail : chairman@cardiffiam.co.uk

### **Vice Chairman & Secretary**

Jonathan Coldman, 25 Murrayfield Road, Birchgrove, Cardiff, CF14 4QW

Tel: Cardiff (029) 2061 7106 e-mail : secretary@cardiffiam.co.uk

---

### **Membership Co-ordinator**

MEMBERSHIP ENQUIRIES / SUBSCRIPTIONS / CHANGE OF ADDRESS

Mrs Lisa Singh-Roberts, 9 Llandraw Road, Maes-y-Coed, Pontypridd, RCT, CF37 1EU,

e-mail : membership@cardiffiam.co.uk

Tel: 07800961154

---

### **Associate Co-ordinator & Observer Training**

Richard Furneaux, 17 Bron Las, Penpedairheol, Hengoed, CF82 7TB Tel: (01443) 831216

e-mail : observercoordinator@cardiffiam.co.uk

---

### **Webmaster**

Kevin Roberts, 9 Llandraw Road, Maes-y-Coed, Pontypridd, RCT, CF37 1EU,

e-mail : webmaster@cardiffiam.co.uk

---

### **Newsletter Editor**

Ian Kolvin, 21 Bangor Street, Roath Park, Cardiff, CF24 3LQ

e-mail : newsletter@cardiffiam.co.uk

---

### **Grant Aid**

George Grant, 6 Church Street, Ynysybwl, Pontypridd, CF37 3LD Tel : (01443) 790143

e-mail : grantaid@cardiffiam.co.uk

---

## GENERAL COMMITTEE

Linda Harrington, 12 Bronwydd Avenue, Penylan, Cardiff, CF23 5JP Tel : Cardiff (029) 2046 3851

George Grant, 6 Church Street, Ynysybwl, Pontypridd, CF37 3LD Tel : (01443) 790143

Viv Colwill, 47 Beech Tree Way, Greenacres, Nelson, CF46 7NU Tel : (01443) 451463

David James, 2 Chapel Street, Abercanaid, Merthyr Tydfil, CF48 1RX Tel: (01443) 692115

Norman Dutfield

Shaun Seabrook

Bob Natton