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WALK



ANNUAL REPORT

THE PRICE OF GETTING KNOCKED DOWN

DANGERS OF DRINKING AND DRIVING
UNDERESTIMATED

PAVEMENTS NOW MORE DANGEROUS

TIME TO COPY THE JAPANESE

THE JOURNAL OF THE PEDESTRIANS ASSOCIATION



June 1980

Volume 3. No. 3

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Time to Copy the Japanese

The achievements of the Japanese in reducing deaths and injuries on the roads are as impressive as their successes in exporting electronics and cars. In the seven years up to 1977, their government and police managed to reduce deaths by nearly one half and injuries by about two fifths. Over the same period, the number of vehicles on the roads increased by a staggering 77 per cent to almost 33 million.

Since no other country in the world has put up such a remarkable performance, it is worth looking more closely at what the Japanese have done. The picture that emerges is a text-book example of effective government.

The story starts in 1970 when, after a decade of steadily increasing road casualties, 16,800 people were killed and very nearly one

Cover picture

A child is injured after a car had run into a crowd of mothers and children campaigning for a pelican crossing in Birmingham on April 18.
(Courtesy: Bromsgrove Messenger.)

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million injured on the roads of Japan. Bearing in mind that the population of the country in 1970 was about double Britain's, such figures may be put in perspective by observing that the Japanese death toll was somewhat more than twice ours and their injury total nearly twice as great. In other words, serious as the total road toll was, it was its increasing size that sounded alarm bells in Tokyo. Such were the trends, that it was clear the toll would mount much higher if nothing was done to arrest it.

Faced by this ominous prospect, the Japanese Diet in 1970 passed a Fundamental Law on Traffic Safety Measures and established a Traffic Safety Committee in the Prime Minister's Office. The Prime Minister in turn chaired the committee and appointed the director general of his Office as its executive head.

The Safety Committee undertook to give all government agencies concerned with roads and traffic new objectives and targets, and to direct resources to the same ends by means of five-year plans.

During the period of the first plan, which got under way in 1971, those killed in road accidents were reduced from 16,000 to 10,800 and those injured from 981,000 to 622,000. The second plan, which comes to an end in December, has as its objective "to maintain the decreasing tendency of traffic accidents" and laid down that "human life should take top priority under all circumstances".

By 1977 the toll of deaths had been further reduced to 8,945 and the injured to 593,000.

In both cases these figures are well below the corresponding levels in Britain after taking our smaller population into account. Had we been as effective as the Japanese in reducing road deaths between 1970 and 1977, our toll in the last year of that period would have been 4,260. In fact it was over two thousand more.

The moral of this tale is clear. Compared with other countries, we in Britain do not have a bad road accident record (in fact, Britain is in the top ten of countries with safe roads), but we are being left behind by the leaders. Although the latest figures show that deaths in 1979 were seven per cent down on the previous year and the lowest since 1958, the toll is still unacceptably high. Expressed in money terms, the losses in real resources, pain and grief amounted in 1977 to no less than £1,293 million.

A road safety committee in the Prime Minister's Office and national accident reduction targets would bring down that appalling cost. The Japanese, with their commitment to human life and their capacity for social organisation, have shown us how effective such an approach can be. It is time we copied them.

Terence Bendixson.

Life-Saving Energy Crisis

The provisional road casualty figures for 1979 released by the Department of Transport show that 7 per cent fewer people were killed last year compared with 1978. The estimated 6,300 fatalities are the lowest for any one year since 1958. The numbers of seriously injured fell by 3 per cent and of slightly injured by 5 per cent. Pedestrian casualties fell by 5 per cent, but pedal cyclist casualties rose by 6 per cent in spite of a 3 per cent reduction in pedal cycle traffic.

The Department of Transport makes a significant comment about this welcome drop in the overall number of road casualties. "The severe weather at the beginning of 1979," it says, "and the reduction in average mileage per car following rises in the price of petrol are thought to have contributed to this decline."

Could it be that some oil-producing countries are doing us a favour by holding the West's car-consumerist society to ransom over its lust for oil? It is a sobering thought that several hundred people in Britain today owe their lives to the unfriendly machinations of certain Middle Eastern politicians. And thousands more who have escaped injury have been spared their own personal 'energy crisis' thanks to this reduction in oil-powered mileage.

Pedestrian Liability

The Birmingham High Court awarded £12,226 damages in March against a pedestrian who caused a sudden stop to a bus and serious injury to a passenger.

About a quarter of the households in Britain have no insurance cover against liability of this kind. Such households tend to be made up of the old or the poor, and awards of damages against such people cause acute financial distress. They may find themselves having to pay year after year weekly sums of several pounds which they badly need for food or warmth.

The problem can be overcome in two ways. One is to implement the recommendation of the Royal Commission on Civil Liability and Compensation for

Personal Injury that a scheme of 'no fault' compensation be introduced for victims of road accidents and financed by a levy on petrol.

The other solution is to use more widely household contents insurance which, for a modest premium, can give accident cover of at least £100,000, as well as security against fire and theft.

The Association favours no-fault compensation for road accident victims and is urging the Government to introduce it. The possibility of offering members insurance against falls in the road and liability in the case of accidents is also being explored.

Top Speed Advertisements

Emphasis on speed in car advertisements has been upsetting some of our members of late. They see in some of the claims about performance made by advertisers for their models' performance a direct incitement to exceed the legal limit.

So who better to report the cases to The Advertising Standards Authority than John Braun, a former director of that body?

Mr Braun, who serves on the committee of the Pedestrians Association, analysed eight cases of alleged incitement to speed and reports that the complaints were upheld in six instances.

"This confirms my seven-year experience in administering the Authority," he said, "that a higher proportion of complaints are upheld than is generally realised and that the Authority is not biased in favour of the advertiser . . . As information to would-be purchasers, top speeds are allowed to be quoted. The 75 mph limit set by the Ministry of Transport may properly be used as a benchmark for fuel consumption statements or comparisons."

Because of recent complaints about car advertisements and the Pedestrians Association's interest, The Advertising Standards Authority is going to include an editorial advice note in its monthly bulletin.

Meanwhile the Pedestrians Association will consider this note, continue to monitor advertisements and complain officially whenever there appears to be an obvious breach of the Code and/or the guidelines.

Fewer Child Casualties

The Minister of Transport, Mr Norman Fowler, has said that the main reason for the fall in child pedestrian fatalities and serious injuries between 1968 and 1978 is increased road safety education and publicity. He also quoted the fall in the birth rate as being a factor contributing to this improvement. He was speaking at the joint conference of the Royal Automobile Club and the Institute of Road Safety Officers in March.

In the same speech, the Minister turned his attention to child cycling and attributed the fall in the number of deaths and serious injuries to RoSPA's National Cycling Proficiency Scheme. As with the birth rate, could not a contributory factor to this improvement be that fewer children are cycling on the roads among cars and lorries and more on the pavements?

Another Pavement Problem

A pavement problem even older than parking is the control of dogs — or rather the lack of it. With the motor lobby and dog lobby both so well organised, other views are sure of a hearing only so long as bodies like the Pedestrians Association and the League for the Introduction of Canine Controls are in business.

Just as the PA is not anti-car, so the LICC is not anti-dog. The League campaigns only against the nuisance created by dogs and is anxious to get the subject aired as much as possible in the media.

The LICC wants to see: pavements, parks and other public places free from dog excrement; dog wardens employed to catch strays and enforce the laws and byelaws relating to dogs; dog-owners persuaded to behave more responsibly; people to be made fully aware of the health dangers associated with dogs and their mess; implementation of the Department of the Environment's Working Party on Dogs, 1976, which recommended, among other things, a licence fee of £5 (at today's prices, about £9).

The Pedestrians Association has among its members car-owners, dog-owners and people who are both. The support of PA members for the League's

work is important if politicians are to be expected to sit up and take notice of the dangers, disturbance and inconvenience which can be caused on the pedestrians' right of way.

LICC's address is P.O. Box 326, London, NW5 3LE.

What is the pavement?

Mr Clifford Howell, the PA's Bristol Branch general secretary, recently appeared as witness in a pavement parking case. The defendant admitted that he had two wheels in the road. The other two, he added, were not on the pavement but on a run-in.

The run-in, he was informed by the Bench, forms part of the public footway and he was fined £5 with costs.

Readers will be interested to know that in the case Mr Howell reported the pavement includes the run-in.

"Everybody Walks"

That simple statement sums up just about everything the Pedestrians Association stands for: the need to promote the walking interests of everyone and combat threats to those who indulge in this basic mode of mobility.

The statement is made by the Association's representative for Merseyside, Mr Norman N. Forbes, in a leaflet published by Merseyside County Council.

"Walking is the most universal form of travel there is," writes Mr Forbes, "but in today's cities it is frequently dangerous and can be generally unpleasant. Drivers are too often inconsiderate and park on pavements, causing danger to pedestrians in their domain."

Entitled *How Much Do You Value Your Life?* the leaflet reprints the pedestrians' section of the Highway Code, the Green Cross Code and other guidelines as regards crossing the road.

During 1980, Merseyside County Council is campaigning for concentrated efforts on the part of all road users to reduce pedestrian casualties. *Walk Safely* button badges are available from local road safety offices in the area.

Pavements Now More Dangerous

One out of 14 pedestrian casualties takes place on pavements and verges

The pedestrian's right of way is more likely than ever before to be the scene of road traffic carnage. This disturbing trend is revealed in a study of official road accident statistics published over the past five years.

In 1974, one out of 20 pedestrian casualties involving a road vehicle took place on a pavement or verge. In 1978, the latest year for which figures are available, the proportion had increased to one out of 14.

It was during this period that implementation of the pavement driving and parking ban contained in section 7 of the 1974 Road Traffic Act was continually delayed. At length, October 1, 1980, was announced as the date for making the ban operative, but last July it was deferred indefinitely by the Government following representations from the police and local authority associations.

Yet it was during 1974 and 1978 that Government statistics showed a rise in the percentage of pedestrian casualties taking place on pavements and verges from 4.9 to an all-time high of 7.1.

The total of 4,970 pedestrian casualties on pavements and verges quoted in *Road Accidents Great Britain 1978 (HMSO 1980)** is in addition to the figures for those who tripped and fell over pavement surfaces broken by road vehicles and those who were hit on the carriageway after stepping down from the kerb to overtake pavement-parked vehicles.

A review of *Road Accidents Great Britain 1978* appears on page 25.

*Inclusion of these pavement tragedies in a publication entitled "Road Accidents" implies that they took place on the *highway* and that they were *accidents*!

What Pavement Hazards Mean for the Blind

When a policeman sees a motor vehicle parked on the pavement, does he issue a warning or take steps to prosecute the driver?

According to the National Federation of the Blind, "most pavement parkers are neither warned nor prosecuted. The police react as if pavement-parked vehicles do not exist . . . as if drivers of vehicles on the pavement are committing no offence under section 72 of the Highway Act 1835."

This point has been made in a circular letter to Chief Constables by Mr Ernest

Patterson, road safety officer of the Federation's northern area council.

Similar letters have been sent by the Federation to motoring organisations and local authorities, drawing attention to the hazards experienced every day on the pavements by his members.

According to Mr Patterson, the blind and partially sighted get to know the location of permanent obstructions such as lamp posts and parking meters, but temporary obstructions such as pavement-parked vehicles can completely disorientate them, sometimes making them believe they are out on the carriageway.

Mr Patterson, who is a member of the Pedestrians Association, points out that one out of 15 pedestrian casualties involving a road vehicle takes place on the pavement.

Police Ignore Pavement Parkers to Arrest Woman with Push-Chair

A pregnant mother was arrested and questioned for more than an hour at a police station in Farnborough, Hants, because of a car's broken wing mirror.

While wheeling her five-year-old disabled daughter in a push-chair, Mrs Maureen Berger had to squeeze past a line of pavement-parked cars. The mirror fell off one of the cars when she accidentally brushed against it.

When a policeman called on Mrs Berger with the car-owner, she said that

what she had done was unintentional. She explained that she couldn't go to the police station because she had to collect her three-year-old son who was being looked after by a friend. The policeman then said, "Madame, I have arrested you." She was taken to the station where she made a statement and was eventually allowed to return home.

Mrs Berger, who was expecting a baby in three weeks' time, has complained to the police in the past about parked cars.

Another London Borough Joins Pavement War

Notices warning motorists that it is an offence to park on pavements are going up in the London Borough of Barnet. A regular council patrol is checking streets plagued by pavement parkers.

The situation in one of the worst affected areas of Barnet — Florence Street — was reported in *Arrive* (June 1979). A local resident had been fined £130 for scratching offending vehicles with a nail.

The neighbouring borough of Brent has been prosecuting pavement parkers for some years. In 1978 there were no fewer than 200 successful prosecutions.

Footpath Campaign Success

Ever since 1973 residents of Thatcham, Berkshire, have been concerned for the safety of pedestrians using Bowling Green Road. Then in 1978 a woman and her one-year-old son were hit by a motor-cycle. The boy was killed and his mother, who was pregnant, severely injured.

The boy's father, Mr Nicholas Chaplin,

joined with other residents in calling for urgent action. About six months after the tragedy a section of footpath was laid down, but this was not considered adequate.

Despite the fact that he had moved out of the area, Mr Chaplin continued his campaign. The County Council has now agreed to extend the footpath to include the full length of the road.

Senior Citizens Clean up Footways

A residents' action committee largely made up of senior citizens has been formed in Wakefield, West Yorkshire, to clean up footways in the Belle Vue area. To show the District Council that they are not making a mountain out of a molehill, they added the rubbish to the pile started outside St. Catherine's Vicarage by the vicar, the Rev. Ray Adair.

"I wholeheartedly agree with them," said Mr Adair. "It's time something was done."

The local Environmental Health Department attributed the state of the footways to staff shortages, adding that Belle Vue was no worse than many other parts of the district.

Merseyside Police Drive to "Curb Kerbing"

A leaflet has been issued by the Merseyside Police as part of its campaign to stamp out pavement parking. It calls on motorists for help to "curb kerbing" since the practice is dangerous for pedestrians, especially the blind, children, the elderly, the infirm and women with prams. Motorists are reminded that pavement parking can cause damage which must be paid for by ratepayers.

Prominently displayed on the leaflet for the benefit of a driver whose car has been found by a police officer on a footway or verge is the warning: "The purpose of this leaflet is to seek your co-operation as an alternative to the prosecution which will follow should the vehicle be seen in similar circumstances again."

On a tear-off portion of the leaflet the officer notes relevant details: date, time, registration no., location, etc. The completed form is then used for record purposes by the Merseyside Police Accident Prevention and Traffic Management Department.

Drove across Pavement for 30 Years — then a £10 Fine

A master baker and his son have been fined the maximum £10 for driving a motor vehicle on a footpath in South Woodford, London.

Redbridge Magistrates Court heard in March that the baker was seen driving his car into the road from the private forecourt at the front of his shop. To do this he had to cross the pavement. Five days later his son was seen doing the same. The baker said that he had been driving across the same pavement for 30 years.

The defending counsel said that the police "had the audacity to come up with

a section of the 1835 Highway Act, which was directed more at mules and cattle than anything else."

The expression "carriage of any description" used in section 72 of this Act which makes it an offence to drive on the footway includes a motor vehicle, according to the Road Traffic Act 1972, section 195.

The counsel added: "What this now means is that any garage owner will commit this offence every time he drives his car into his garage unless the driveway is on private land."

The case has aroused controversy in the local paper, the *Ilford Recorder*, whose editor, quoting Mr Bumble, observes: "If that is the law, sir, then the law is an ass."

A Pedestrians Association member, Mrs Deane Whine, writes: "One takes one's life in one's hands when walking on the pavement in this borough," while another correspondent writes: "Thank God for the 1835 Highway Act — evidently they had respect for pedestrians in those days."

Councillor Bert Hamilton, chairman of the Redbridge Highways Committee, writing about drivers who do not use authorised pavement crossovers, says: "There needs to be an effective way to take action against them."

The *March Walk* reported that at the same court in November a driver was discharged after pleading guilty to driving on the pavement.

Sticker 'Blitz' Drives out Pavement Parkers

Anti-social motorists who block up pavements are the target of a fierce sticker campaign organised by the Gayton Residents' Association, north London. The self-adhesive stickers read: 'Please do not park on the pavement. It is illegal, dangerous, and it damages the pavement.'

"Choose one street or stretch of pavement and keep sticker-ing until the

Continued on page 9

Cut Speeds . . Cut Accidents

The number of people killed and seriously injured on the roads has been substantially reduced in 30 German towns as a result of measures to cut traffic speeds in residential streets. On average the number of accidents in those parts of Cologne, Dusseldorf, Bonn and Oberhausen covered by the measures has been reduced by 20 per cent. In some places accidents involving deaths and serious injuries have been cut by one half.

Studies by HUK, the German Motor Insurers' Association, had shown that the accident risk in residential streets was higher than on main roads and that more than half of the accidents involving children occurred on fairly quiet streets. Furthermore, it was found that the cause of accidents was not children or adult pedestrians reacting wrongly, but cars going too fast.

Ways were accordingly sought to ban through traffic from residential streets or

at least force drivers to go more slowly.

Road signs were found to be largely ineffective. Twenty-mile-an-hour speed limits were ignored and signs saying 'No Through Road: Residents Only' were disregarded by eight out of ten drivers.

The German safety engineers accordingly tried rearranging patterns of kerb-side parking in residential streets so as to create zig-zag paths for moving vehicles. These chicanes were found not only to oblige drivers to go more slowly but also to force them to keep their eyes on the road.

Opinion polls carried out in North Rhine Westphalia, where the slow-down experiments have been conducted, show that 82 per cent of respondents are in favour of eliminating accident risks on urban roads and that 66 per cent believe noise should be reduced.

The idea is also being canvassed that the solution to the problems of danger and noise in German cities could help to reduce the exodus of people from them.

PA Supports Points System

Road traffic offences should be graded by severity and offenders disqualified from driving after the points they have been awarded for each offence reach a certain total. The Pedestrians Association makes this recommendation in its submission to the Home Office on its review of traffic law. This points system is preferable, the PA believes, to the present practice of disqualifying a driver after a set number of convictions for offences of varying degrees of magnitude.

To ensure identification and prosecution of offenders who persistently fail to make their payments, the Association recommends the creation of links between the fixed penalty system and the driver and vehicle licencing systems. The penalties should also be very substantially increased.

The Association argues for an extension of the fixed penalty system to cover the offence under the Highway Act 1835 of driving on the pavement, because this

statute is being used in some areas to prosecute drivers for the much commoner nuisance of pavement parking.

Diplomatic immunity should be ended for traffic offences, says the PA, despite the possibility that British foreign service staff abroad may lose their immunity for like offences.

Continued from page 8

message gets through," is the committee's advice to members. In other areas, 'blitz' sticker-ing campaigns concentrating on particular streets have virtually eradicated the problem.

GRA members are expected to use their stickers responsibly. They must educate offending drivers not punish them, concentrating on really bad cases not trivial ones.

The stickers must not be put on paintwork nor should they obstruct a driver's vision, the best place for them being near the edge of the windscreen on the passenger side.

Parental Stress May Endanger Children on the Roads

Frustrated parental aspirations may be the root cause of many child pedestrian accidents, according to a research study conducted among casualties admitted to the King's College Hospital Group.

In *Action Magazine* (Autumn 1979), published by the National Fund for Research into Crippling Diseases, Jacque Lintell rejects the theory of 'accident proneness'. More mundane factors explain the vulnerability of child pedestrians: the unreliability of a child's concepts of time, distance and velocity, the handicap of smallness in traffic, over-estimation by parents of their children's capability on the road and the fact that safety education is not always directed in a manner that is easily understood.

"We have a suspicion, but it is no more than a suspicion," says the author, "that a likely contributory issue to accidents may be that children living in individual accommodation (houses) could be subjected to greater stress than children living in communal blocks of flats. The antecedents of this stress are not specifically broken homes, but are a mixture of economic and psychological problems resulting from frustrated parental aspirations."

According to the King's College Hospital Group study, such parents, having set their sights on a higher living standard, may be having difficulty with mortgage repayments and with helping their children achieve a higher educational attainment. "Consequently, the parents themselves are under stress from their inner conflicts and tensions, and this rubs off upon their children . . .

"Though not disputing the possibility that children living in communal housing, and in particular high flats, may suffer some disadvantages, it could well be that compared with many children living in individual houses they are subjected to less strain and are, therefore, less unstable."

The report concludes that there are

many gaps in our knowledge about why some children become pedestrian casualties while others do not. Investigations should be made into the personality and social background of a victim so that a picture emerges of the most important factors involved. This would help determine where future priorities lie and where large-scale research would be most valuable.

New Roads for Better Living

The creation of pleasant living conditions in towns will become one of the main driving forces for further new road building, Mr Ron Bridle, chief highway engineer at the Department of Transport, told a conference on Twenty Years of British Motorways in February.

Echoing the view of Mr Trevor Harris, deputy secretary for roads and local transport at the Department, that the motorway programme is nearly at an end, Mr Bridle said:

"Some road building may, therefore, continue primarily to produce environmental benefits of a significant level, improving pedestrian amenity, and reducing air pollution and noise and vibration around people's homes to an acceptable level. If one of the consequences is that journey times go up and trips are reduced at the margin, then these costs can be set against the environmental benefits.

"Such a trade-off is already apparent in the pedestrianisation of urban areas. A small bypass to a town with a shopping centre of 50 shops can increase the amenity of a million pedestrian movements each year.

"Therefore the creation of pleasant living conditions will be one of the main driving forces (for road building). Many of our industrial towns are completely dependent (on it) for the removal of heavy through traffic, and this is already accepted by some local authorities as the main justification for a new road. In future this may well become the primary justification for much of the residual road programme," Mr Bridle said.

The Unacceptable Face of Motoring

The indiscriminate breath-testing of drivers would raise complex moral and legal problems. This is the view taken by the Pedestrians Association in its submission to the Department of Transport on the Government's decision to implement the recommendations of the Blennerhasset Report on drinking and driving.

The Association does, however, believe in a substantial tightening of the grip of the police on the evil of drinking and driving, which it describes as "part of the unacceptable face of motoring".

The present conditions under which a test may be imposed should be extended, it says, to include "such times and such places as may give the police reason to suspect that drivers may have been drinking. This extension, whilst precluding random testing, would permit the police to concentrate their efforts near known drinking places or at times when drink-induced accidents are known to be common."

The Association advocates that for failing to stop and report an accident, penalties should be increased to at least the level of those for conviction for drinking and driving.

Close study of Scandinavian practice is recommended with a view to introducing into Britain forms of community service for treating high-risk offenders. Third-time offenders should automatically lose their licences for life, and driving while disqualified should carry an automatic gaol sentence.

In Sweden, a driver who loses his licence for drinking and driving does not automatically get it back even after the minimum disqualification period, usually of one year. He must apply for a new licence, which he receives only if he can present a certificate establishing that he is now fit to drive.

Snap-Open Seat Belt

A seat belt which snaps open after an accident to release the wearer has been devised by a West German firm.

Under normal circumstances, this new belt opens in response to pressing a button. But if the car crashes and the belt is jerked with sufficient pressure, a lock mechanism is activated, unfastening the belt automatically eight seconds later. In a succession of crashes, as in a motorway pile-up, the mechanism is re-activated each time, taking a further eight seconds to snap the lock open again.

For up-to-date law on commons, village greens and public rights of way, read:

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NEWS

New PA Branches Formed

Two new branches of the Pedestrians Association have been formed in Cambridge and Brighton this year.

The Cambridge Branch, set up in March, has been in touch with the County Traffic Management Committee about enforcing the law on pavement parking and received a favourable response. Sorting out conflicts between pedestrians and cyclists presents problems in a city where both forms of travel are so intensely used. The Branch is giving its

Priority to Child Safety

Child pedestrian accidents must take first place, writes Mr Norman Fowler, MP, Minister of Transport, in a letter to the Pedestrians Association following his meeting with the chairman and hon. editor in September. He was commenting on restrictions on expenditure and where the available money would be most effective.

The Minister took the PA's point about the need for publicity to keep pavements clear and safe for pedestrians, and he referred to the two radio fillers which were reviewed (*"A Word in Your Ear"*) in the March issue of *Walk*.

On the design and re-design of resi-

support to the Cambridge Council for the Disabled. For further information, contact Mr Sam Green, Acting Secretary, 6 Chalk Road, Cambridge, CB1 4NT.

The Brighton Branch started in April and got under way with a blaze of publicity in the local press and a small inaugural meeting. Details of 40 cars illegally parking on the pavement have been reported to the Police and action is awaited. Brighton Police have not been accustomed to using the Highway Act 1835 and seem a little nervous about applying it. Contact in Brighton is Mr Bob Stevenson 723894.

dential roads, the Minister referred to the help already given to local authorities to construct or adapt roads as low-speed streets for pedestrians and cyclists. But he feared that full implementation of the Dutch space-sharing experiments would "give rise to formidable legal problems of pedestrian/vehicle priority."

Car Licence Up 6,700 per cent!

The annual licence fee for private cars in Singapore was increased from \$15 to \$1,000 (just over £200) at the beginning of the year.

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The Price of Getting Knocked Down

by Frank West-Oram

Behind every road accident statistic lies personal tragedy and family disruption. Little is ordinarily heard of them, but valuable light has now been thrown on them by a survey, entitled *Knocked Down*,¹ by the Consumers Association.

Special mention is made of a new "no-fault" scheme for compensating road accident victims already been proposed by a Royal Commission under Lord Pearson, which reported² in 1978. However, this has so far not been implemented or publicly debated.

Road Accident Admissions

The present survey covers two samples of pedestrian and cyclist road-accident admissions to the Birmingham Accident Hospital, which serves a population of about 1.25 million people. The first — called "the recent" — comprised all casualties from 1 April 1976 to 31 March 1977 and involved interviews with 183 victims or their relatives. The second — called "the severely-injured" — covered the four years 1972 to 1975, involving 141 interviews. The first sample did include severely-injured persons, and both included fatalities.

In the first sample, 75 per cent were pedestrians; 66 per cent were children under 16; 15 per cent were heads of household; 20 per cent were working. In the second, there were more pedestrians; 45 per cent were under 16; 25 per cent were heads of household; 35 per cent were working. In both samples, there were high proportions of unskilled and semi-skilled worker families. 20 per cent of the accidents did not involve another vehicle; these happened mainly to children on bicycles.

Of the survivors of the "recent" sample, about 70 per cent were in hospital for up to one week, 15 per

cent from one to four weeks and 15 per cent from one to six months. There were a number of re-admissions. In the second sample, half the survivors spent more than a month in hospital, with again some re-admissions. The report emphasises the severe disruption to family life suffered by the victims, involving bereavement, days or weeks spent in bed, repeated hospital visits, loss of employment or educational opportunities as well as pain and discomfort.

The length of stay in hospital does not always indicate the severity of a case. In just one of several examples, a bus driver was in hospital for only four days, but was unable to return to work for eleven months and later had to undergo further surgery involving seven more weeks off work. Two-thirds or more had to return for outpatient treatment, a few needing 50 to 100 visits. Many were bedridden at home for long periods after discharge from hospital. In some cases, other members of the family had to give up work to care for the injured person at home. Of the high proportion of child casualties, about a third missed more than four weeks' education, some up to six months.

Financial Loss

Figures reported for financial loss by families varied widely. Apart from total loss of income from a deceased breadwinner, other losses reported ranged in the main from about £10 to about £1,000, as a result of loss of earnings, extra expenses from hospital visits and cost of home care. This is in the background of pre-1977 prices and the fact that in a high proportion of cases the head of the household was a partly-skilled or unskilled worker. In some cases, however, losses were in the range £1,000 to £7,000. The investigators believed that in many cases the families underestimated their losses.

Only about a quarter of those injured by motor vehicles succeeded in proving the fault and liability of the other party and in recovering compensation. Most of the remainder did not make any claims of fault at all. This was because of diffidence or ignorance of procedures.

¹ *Knocked Down. Report by the Research Institute for Consumer Affairs. Funded by a research grant from the Social Science Research Council.*

(Consumers' Association, 14 Buckingham Street, London, WC2, 1980).

² *Report Volume 1, Royal Commission on Civil Liability and Compensation for Personal Injury (HMSO, 1978).*

In the "recent" sample, of the 183 victims (or their families), 62 thought that the driver concerned was responsible, a further ten believing shared responsibility. Yet only 34 tried to claim compensation. In the second sample, only 52 of the 141 families claimed.

Long-Time Settlement

Claims took a long time to settle. By the end of 1978, eight recent cases had been settled and four dropped (one after incurring £40 solicitor's fees). The claim of one married man was still pending almost two years after the accident. He is unable to work again and lives with his wife on Supplementary Benefit.

In the earlier "severely-injured" sample, 41 cases had been settled. Nine were still outstanding three to six years after the accident. Sums actually received ranged from £200 in the "recent" sample to £8,000 in the "severely-injured". One third received less than £1,000, one-tenth £5,000 or more. The £8,000 quoted was in the case of a four-year-old girl who spent a year in hospital and a further year in bed at home, followed by 60 visits to an eye hospital. Five years after the accident, one arm and her eyesight were still affected and she now has to attend a special school.

Of the 17 victims of hit-and-run accidents, only five claimed compensation from the appropriate body, the Motor Insurers Bureau. Many were unaware that they could so claim. One man off work for six months received £4,250 within five months of claiming; it was thought that Trade Union backing had helped.

The report comments that the sums quoted appear very low in relation to the family and social dislocation involved. I would add that they appear low in comparison with sums paid by insurance companies to car-occupant casualties, sometimes of the order of £100,000. An earlier report³ from the Birmingham Accident Hospital had noted that eight per cent of road accident victims suffered severe injuries compared with only one and a half per cent of industrial and home cases. This underlined the need to pay special attention to the victims of road accidents.

³ *Road Accident Statistics: Accident Analysis and Prevention. Report by J. P. Bull and B. Roberts. (Birmingham Accident Hospital, 1973).*

Inadequacies

My conclusion is that the report does well to highlight the inadequacies of the present system of compensation to pedestrian and pedal-cyclist victims of road accidents. Most of these casualties are not insured against accidents and many are perhaps less than well-informed on procedures for claiming tort compensation, with all the difficulties involved such as finding witnesses and reconstructing the accident. Many, too, are unaware of the possibility of claiming from the Motor Insurers Bureau in hit-and-run cases.

The report stresses the need for publicly debating and implementing the proposal of the Pearson Commission, though rightly pointing out that it needs extension, involving as it does only accidents concerning motor vehicles.

Among the acknowledgements, it is good to see the Pedestrians Association credited with suggesting this Consumers' Association study.

Mr West-Oram is vice-chairman of the Pedestrians Association.

Walking and Breathing

Professor Patrick Lawther, who chaired the Report of the DHSS Working Party on Lead in the Environment, published in March, tells the Pedestrians Association:

"I am a great walker myself and am wholly sympathetic to the cause of using the legs more. I think I will have some comforting results about the absorption of pollutants by walkers.

"I recently had a most interesting inquiry from a doctor who does all his rounds in Central London on a bicycle. He was told that this was a 'bad thing' because of all the carbon monoxide and lead he would inhale. We measured (instead of calculating on theoretical grounds) his carboxyhaemoglobin and blood lead and found them to be <1% and 18mg/dl respectively.

"So we were all very relieved. I have measured my blood carbon monoxide literally dozens of times after being in traffic jams and have never reached the 3% level. The average smoker who inhales can easily have 5-15%.

"I hope to have more results to show that the benefits of walking grossly outweigh any of the alleged disadvantages. This doesn't mean that I prefer town air to that which I breathe in the country."

The Pedestrians Association for Road Safety

1 Wandsworth Road, London, SW8 2LJ

NOTICE OF ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

The 51st Annual General Meeting of the Pedestrians Association

will be held in

Caxton Hall, Westminster, SW1

on Tuesday, 24th June 1980, at 5.30 p.m.

The Right Reverend the Bishop of Birmingham will preside.

A G E N D A

1. The President's Address.
2. Minutes of the 1979 Annual General Meeting.
3. Adoption of Annual Report and Accounts.
4. Election of President.
5. Election of Vice-Presidents.
6. Election of Officers.
7. Election of Committee.
8. Election of Auditors.
9. Motions of which previous notice has been given to the Secretary.

Speaker: Stephen Plowden.

The Pedestrians Association for Road Safety

OFFICERS AT 31 DECEMBER 1979

Founder President:

The late Rt. Hon. Viscount Cecil of Chelwood, C.H., 1929-44.

President: The Rt. Rev. H. W. Montefiore, M.A., B.D.
(The Bishop of Birmingham)

Vice-Presidents:

Lord Amulree, M.D., F.R.C.P.	T. Garth-Waite
Sir John Betjeman, C.B.E.	Mrs. M. Gray, B.A.
Sir Felix Brunner, Bart.	Dr. I. Jakobovits
Lady Brunner, O.B.E.	G. C. Jenkins, B.A., F.C.I.S.
Sir Arthur Bryant, C.H., C.B.E., LL.D.	Sir Graham Page, M.P.
Bishop Lord Coggan	Mrs Barbara Preston, M.Sc.
Dr. G. Ellison, Lord Bishop of London	Lord Redcliffe-Maud, G.C.B., C.B.E.
Lord Ferrier	Rev Edward Rogers, M.A., B.D.
Professor Leslie Fishman	A. J. P. Taylor
Mrs T. C. Foley	Jack Warner, O.B.E.
Lord Gardiner, P.C.	

Hon. Treasurer:

Dame Elizabeth Ackroyd, D.B.E., M.A., B.Litt.

Secretary:

Mrs Felicity Rea

Membership Secretary:

Charles Maher

Hon. Standing Counsel:

Martin Roth

Hon. Editor of Walk:

Cyril Myerscough

Committee:

<i>Chairman:</i> T. Bendixson	N. N. Forbes	S. A. Lee
<i>Vice-Chairman:</i> F. West-Oram	R. Hale	C. Myerscough
Dame Elizabeth Ackroyd, D.B.E., M.A.	D. Henderson	C. Sewell
J. Braun, O.B.E.	Ms R. Kane	W. J. Whitehead
R. T. Dann		

Representing affiliated bodies:

J. T. Jones (National Union of Teachers)
Mrs M. Salter (National Council of Women)
Mrs J. Allen (National Federation of the Blind)

OBJECTS OF THE ASSOCIATION

To promote the safety of the walking public, to protect and preserve their rights and amenities and to make the roads safer for all users.

Registered as a Charity.

Annual Report 1979

The Silver Jubilee

The year saw the Pedestrians Association through its 50th anniversary, which was celebrated by a hugely successful reception at the top of New Zealand House in the Haymarket. The Bishop of Birmingham welcomed the many distinguished guests, amongst whom were Mr Norman Fowler, Minister of Transport, and Mr and Mrs A. J. P. Taylor. This milestone in the Association's history, in addition to generating welcome publicity, prompted a stocktaking. The journal was renamed *Walk* and given a new format designed by Mr Ian Butterworth; a more lively campaigning stance was adopted; and a decision was made to go for the expansion of the membership.

Tom Foley

The founder of the Association, Mr T. C. Foley, died on January 26. It was a great sadness that he did not survive to see the Association's silver jubilee, but the tributes to him in the June issue of the journal made clear the tremendous scale of his contribution to road safety. Mr Paul Tofahrn, another long-standing member of the Association and its committee, also died in 1979.

Parking on the Pavement

On July 27, much to the disappointment of the Association, the Minister of Transport announced the deferment 'for the time being' of Section 7 of the 1974 Road Traffic Act, the pavement parking ban. A need to reduce the growth rate of public spending was the reason given. The Chairman wrote immediately to the Minister, arguing that the action would turn out to be a false economy. The money saved by not implementing the Section would be more than offset by the cost of repairing pavements damaged by lorries and cars.

A questionnaire subsequently circulated to members with *Walk* confirmed the ubiquitousness of the nuisance. More than nine out of ten of the 308 respondents said that pavement parking was common in their areas; three quarters said it regularly forced people to walk out into the path of traffic. These results were sent at once to the Minister.

The Association also published a pamphlet on 'The Great Pavement Robbery' and gave its moral support to the energetic 'Give Us Back Our Pavements' campaign mounted by the National Federation of the Blind. Mrs Jill Allen, the Federation's public relations officer and a member of this Association's committee, played a leading part in the campaign and was regularly in the news.

Cycling on the Pavement

No sooner had the immediate reaction to the Section 7 deferment died down than cycling on the pavement began to take its place. Dame Elizabeth Ackroyd drew this nuisance to the attention of the Committee and asked for the matter to be taken up with the Minister of Transport. The Chairman and Hon. Editor visited him in September and were told that the Department was receiving 10 to 20 protest letters a week. The Association was subsequently sent the script of a radio 'filler' (for use in unsold advertising slots) telling cyclists to stay in the road. The Committee

THE PEDESTRIANS ASSOCIATION FOR ROAD SAFETY

STATEMENT OF ACCOUNTS FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31st DECEMBER 1979

1978

EXPENDITURE

£		£
657	Secretarial and Clerical Services	657
994	Stationery and Printing	1,726
133	Postage	231
155	Travelling and General Expenses	642
3	Hire of Halls and Rooms	25
86	Subscriptions to Other Organisations	94
59	Audit and Accountancy	69
125	Rent	200
1,252	Surplus for the year	1,770
<u>£3,464</u>		<u>£5,414</u>

1978

INCOME

£		£
2,573	Subscriptions, Donations and Affiliation Fees ...	4,154
165	Literature Sales, Receipts and Collections	363
62	Advertising in <i>Walk</i>	33
364	Income Tax reclaimed on Covenants	321
300	Interest on Investments Gross	543
<u>£3,464</u>		<u>£5,414</u>

BALANCE SHEET AS AT 31st DECEMBER 1979

£	1978	£	£
94	Creditors	82	
25	Loans — free of interest	25	
	General Fund		
65	Balance 31st December 1978	1,317	
1,252	Surplus for the year	1,770	
<u>1,317</u>		<u>3,087</u>	
	Legacies and Gifts		
3,866	Balance 31st December 1978	3,963	
97	Received in year	—	
<u>3,963</u>		<u>3,963</u>	
159	Endowment Fund	159	
<u>£5,558</u>		<u>£7,316</u>	

£	1978	£	£
305	Cash at Bank:		
1,654	Current Account	289	
45	Deposit Account	1,304	
	Giro Account	34	
<u>2,004</u>		<u>1,627</u>	
13	Cash in Hand	54	
	Investments:		
3,382	General Purposes	5,476	
159	Endowment	159	
	(See schedule)		
<u>3,541</u>		<u>5,635</u>	
<u>£5,558</u>		<u>£7,316</u>	

ELIZABETH ACKROYD, *Honorary Treasurer.*

AUDITOR'S REPORT

We have examined the above statement of accounts which are properly drawn up in accordance with the books and vouchers of the Association and with the information and explanations given to us. We have verified that the securities are held by the Official Custodian for Charities.

London.

3rd March 1980.

DEARDEN FARROW,
Chartered Accountants.

debated the issue and established the following policy: cycling on the pavement should be countenanced only in the case of small children unaccompanied by an adult; the safety of cyclists should be improved through the provision of proper facilities in the roads.

Other matters raised by the Association's representatives at their meeting with the Minister of Transport were the application of more of Transport and Road Research Laboratory resources to investigating problems faced by walkers, the slowing down of traffic in residential streets by changing the design and layout of carriageways and pavements to accord with the 'Woonerven' created by the Dutch in Delft, and the modification of car fronts to reduce the severity of injuries to pedestrians in the case of collisions.

Lobbying

The Association submitted written evidence to a number of Government inquiries in the course of the year. In observations on Local Speed Limit Policy it was pointed out that years of "improvement" to the design of highways and vehicles made it possible to drive today at 50 mph where it would only have been practical to go at 30 mph in 1934. Bearing in mind the need to hold vehicle speeds in towns and villages down to a level compatible with the safety and amenity of pedestrians, the Association said it was necessary to reverse the thinking of many years and start designing residential streets with the express purpose of obliging drivers to go slowly.

The publication of a private member's Bill, introduced by Mr Anthony Grant, MP, that would empower local authorities to make use of "sleeping policemen", or speed control humps, was another indication of the mounting body of opinion opposed to speeding.

In a statement to Sir Arthur Armitage inquiring into heavy goods vehicles, the Association stressed that juggernauts were not paying for the damage they caused to roads or for the noise, vibration, and fear they imposed on pedestrians. Increased taxation in proportion to these costs was proposed. The statement was well reported in the *Daily Telegraph*.

The plight of pedestrians was brought to the attention of candidates to the European parliament, reminding them that walking accounts for as many trips in European towns and cities as are made by car. A questionnaire covering, among other subjects, road survival instruction in schools, a 20 mph limit in residential streets, restrictions on goods vehicles over 20 tonnes and a reduction in lead level in petrol was circulated.

Annual General Meeting

The annual meeting, held in the fire-stained surroundings of Caxton Hall on June 14th, was chaired by the President who warned against the dangers to children of airborne lead emanating from petrol. Mr Ken Huddart, Greater London Council Officer for Road Safety, kindly standing in at short notice for Mr A. J. P. Taylor, who was sick, reviewed traffic law as it affected pedestrians.

Two new vice-presidents were elected by the meeting, Mr Graham Jenkins, a former Chairman of the Committee, and Mrs Marjorie Gray, a former Secretary.

Finance

The Association's finances continued in a reasonably healthy state thanks to the generous terms on which it was able to rent office space and services from the Ramblers' Association, the receipt of a magnificent anonymous gift of £1,000 and

the acquisition of 75 new members. Thanks to these circumstances, the severe rundown of the Association's reserves necessary during the mid-1970s was reversed and £2,000 was invested with the Charities Investment Fund, The Foley Fund, set up to finance a periodic memorial lecture, stood at £287 at the end of the year.

Officers

The Committee was sorry to receive the resignation of Mr Tony Lilleystone from the office of Vice-Chairman and from the Committee, but were happy when Mr Frank West-Oram agreed to step into his place. Mr Cyril Myerscough continued to devote a large part of his spare time to editing the journal. Ms Mary Brodie took up the role of literary editor for *Walk* in November and Mrs G. H. Philip, a member living in Argyllshire, volunteered to become advertisement manager.

In July Mrs Rea, the Secretary, and Mr Maher, the Membership Secretary, moved from Crawford Mews to new offices in Wandsworth Road where they overlook the giant traffic melée of Vauxhall Cross. They continue to give the Association admirable service, and it is a pleasure to note that they now do so in more comfortable surroundings.

Birmingham Branch

The Branch and its indefatigable Hon. Sec., Mrs. Marion Jenkinson, had a busy year. Pelican crossings were campaigned for successfully at two locations; pressure for improved arrangements for pedestrians in the city centre was maintained; and the Secretary was much in demand to give talks to other local groups.

With the transfer of all highway functions from the City to the County in April, Birmingham was left, despite strong representations from the Branch, without a road safety committee. As if to underline the serious implications of this situation, Mr T. E. Sinclair, chief road safety officer for Birmingham, told members in October that road casualties among pedestrians under 10 and over 60 continued to rise.

Hon. Secretary: Mrs M. Jenkinson, 31 Ashfield Avenue, Birmingham, 14.

Bristol Branch

The Bristol Branch had another successful year, increasing its strength to 106 members and reporting 389 incidents to the City Council, the Police and other bodies. The Secretary continued his efforts on behalf of victims of falls in the road and in one case assisted a resident to obtain substantial compensation. The Branch is co-operating with the cyclists' organisation, Cyclebag, in a project for a combined walking and cycling route from the fringes to the centre of the city.

Hon. Secretary: Clifford Howell, 35 King Street, Bristol, BS1 4DZ.

THE PEDESTRIANS ASSOCIATION FOR ROAD SAFETY

Schedule of Investments held at 31st December 1979

Market Value	Book Value		Market Value	Book Value
1978		General Purposes		
506	494	Guest, Keen & Nettlefolds Ltd.: £200 Ord. Stock	500	494
244	147	Fisons Ltd.: £80 Ord. Stock	208	147
		British Insulated Calendar Cables Ltd.: 258 Ord. Shares	250	438
324	438	£450 Metropolitan Estate Prop. Ltd.: 5% Conv. Unsecured Loan 1989/94	—	—
517	410	£1,007 City of Glasgow 9.25% Redeemable Stock	868	1,193
906	1,193	Agriculture Mortgage Corpn.: 9.75% Stock 1985 £707.30	552	700
573	700	Metropolitan Estate Pty. Ltd. £86.75 Ord. Shares	670	498
—	—	Charities Official Investment Fund Income Shares	1,857	2,006
—	—			
£3,070	£3,382		£4,905	£5,476
Endowment				
£221	£159	Charities Official Investment Fund	£221	£159

About our AGM Speaker . . .

Stephen Plowden, our speaker at this year's Annual General Meeting, is a leading transport consultant and a stalwart opponent of the takeover of cities by traffic.

He is the author of the book, *Taming Traffic*, recently published by Andre Deutsch, and the Executive Secretary of the Independent Commission on Transport.

FREE

from the Pedestrians Association

Two sheets of 25 car stickers carrying the message

"Pavements are for Pedestrians"

Send SAE to the Pedestrians Association

PEDESTRIANS FIRST!

This is the slogan on an attractive red and yellow badge which puts over the message of the most vulnerable (and most numerous) class of road user. 15p each (plus 7p post). Only 10p each if you order 20 or more.

Orders to Ros Kane,
15 Matcham Road, London,
E11.

Show you mean business!
Wear your ped badge
always!

GOING TO LAW

by Alec Samuels

of the Faculty of Law,
University of Southampton

You are knocked down by a motor vehicle. Or you trip and fall over a broken pavement. What legal advice and assistance is available?

If you are thinking of suing — don't. If you are being sued — settle. That is the advice you will usually be given, and it is sound advice. Litigation can be time consuming, worrying and costly. Even if you win, the loser may not pay: a Pyrrhic victory. Even if he does pay, the net damages or compensation is unlikely to be sufficient, unlikely to work out as a complete indemnity. Most of us are neither so poor (legal aid) nor so rich (millionaire) that we can litigate without regard to financial considerations. Most of us are too rich to benefit substantially from legal aid and too poor to litigate under our own steam.

Suppose you are knocked down and injured by a motorist. Or you fall down and sustain injury because of a defective pavement. What advice and assistance might be available? The Citizens' Advice Bureau will give free advice, and may have a lawyer available by appointment. In the bigger towns there is likely to be a duty solicitor scheme in operation under which an initial short free interview can often be had, although many operate under the normal legal aid arrangements. If you carry personal injury insurance, your insurer or insurance broker will help. The solicitor's department of the local authority may be able to help. A professional body or trade union will often help, especially if the matter is in some way connected with employment, e.g. injury sustained whilst on the business of the employer.

Under the "green form" scheme for the legal aid and advice a solicitor may do up to £25 worth of work, e.g. interview, advice, letters, statement for the court. The sum can be extended to £50 in a suitable case. The scheme does not normally cover assistance by way of representation in court, but may do so

in some "small" cases such as small accident cases in the county court. The client may have to make a financial contribution, depending upon a simple sliding-scale means test.

The normal inescapable obligations, e.g. spouse and other dependants, are deducted by way of allowances from the gross income to leave a "disposable income", contributions being payable if that exceeds £40 p.w. but not £85 p.w. Contributions run from £5 to £49. If the disposable income exceeds £85 p.w. aid is not available.

If you need legal aid for a court case then you must apply for it. A solicitor can advise you on what to do. The DHSS (Supplementary Benefits Commission SBC) assesses your means, and you may be required to make a contribution, usually payable by monthly instalments over a year. Although some 75 per cent of the population is covered by the scheme, a contribution is often payable. Legal aid is available free for those with a disposable income of not more than £1,700 p.a. and by way of contribution up to £4,075 p.a., not exceeding one quarter of that disposable income. By a similar principle, disposable capital, excluding the dwelling house, is taken into account. Then a committee of the Law Society, local solicitors, decide whether or not you appear to have a case which is worth supporting, a case which looks reasonably likely to succeed, so far as may be judged at that stage.

If you win, the other side pays your costs, so you should get your contributions back, although any shortfall between the actual costs and what the other side actually pays will have to be met by you from the contributions and the damages or property recovered.

If you lose, you do not have to pay anything more; the legal aid fund pays.

Even if you cannot get legal aid, in a matter of any seriousness or importance to you it is always sensible to spend a few pounds in getting legal advice and, if necessary, in getting a solicitor at least to make written claims for compensation. If requested, a solicitor will tell you what the costs would probably be stage by stage if the matter goes on. Having a solicitor shows that you "mean business". A solicitor can often negotiate a reasonable settlement, and any insurance company acting for the other side will usually, as part of that settlement, pay reasonable costs.

Dangers of Drinking and Driving Underestimated

Police must have unfettered powers to catch offenders and be seen to have these powers
says Barbara Preston

A total of 1,200 deaths each year are caused by drinking and driving, it is claimed in the Government's consultative document on drinking and driving. But according to Mrs Barbara Preston, who was co-author with John Cohen of *Causes and Prevention of Road Accidents* (Faber and Faber, 1968), "it would seem this is a very considerable underestimate." In her submission to the Department of Transport on the document, she suggests 2,000, adding that this is probably an underestimate too.

Mrs Preston has two main reasons for questioning the Government's figure.

First, on the basis of the fall in road deaths following the introduction of the breathalyser legislation. "Road deaths decreased from 7,985 in 1966 (the last full year before the new legislation) to 6,810 in 1968 (the first full year after legislation)," she writes. "The decrease coincided completely with the introduction of the legislation and there was no overall reduction in road traffic, so the reduction must have been caused by the Act. This legislation saved at least 1,175 deaths, even if it is assumed, which seems unlikely, that there would have been no increase had it not been introduced."

She then quotes figures to show that prior to the Act, 25 per cent of motor vehicle drivers and riders killed had blood/alcohol levels above 80mg/100ml compared with 15 per cent after the Act. Since the 1,175 deaths account for the 10 per cent difference, "it would seem," she says, "that the total number of deaths caused by drink and driving may have been over 2,900 in 1967."

Second, according to the consultative document, one in three of all drivers killed on the road have more than the prescribed limit of alcohol in their blood. So, using the 1977 driver fatality

figures, this would mean that 558 out of 1,673 dead drivers were over the limit. Mrs Preston then refers to the findings of the Road Research Laboratory in an investigation of road accidents made over the 1959 Christmas period, which showed that of the 55 people killed in accidents in which the driver had been drinking only 14 of the deaths were actually drivers.

"If this rather small sample is taken as typical," she says, "then there would be about 2,190 people killed in accidents in which the driver had been drinking." When motor-cyclist fatalities are added, she estimates that "in round figures it would seem that about 2,400 people in Great Britain in 1977 were killed in accidents in which a driver or rider had drunk over the blood/alcohol limit."

Referring to random testing, she recalls that Parliament voted against it. But drinking and driving "is not a harmless offence, to be played like a game, with the rules arranged to give the prospective killers a 'fair' chance of escaping detection. Some of those killed are the drivers who have been drinking, many are other road users, and these deaths will only be prevented if detection is, and is felt to be, likely. I would suggest that the word 'random' is not used, but that there should be no restrictions whatever on the police. Individual Chief Constables should be left to decide, as in the detection of other crimes, just how the police force is to be deployed."

Concluding her submission to the Department of Transport, Mrs Preston writes: "Thousands, perhaps millions, of people drive while they are unfit through drink or drugs. This makes the prevention of this crime unlike that of other

Continued on page 30

BOOK REVIEWS

Lawther Report Has Produced Its Own Backlash

The report of the Department of Health and Social Security working party on lead in the environment has been greeted with scepticism by environmental professionals and campaigners. Both groups are increasingly concerned at growing evidence of the harm done to the health and intelligence of young children by atmospheric lead. While the working party considered lead in food, tap water and other agents such as paint, it is lead from petrol emissions that is likely to be of particular concern to members of the Pedestrians Association.

However, the working party chooses to minimise its importance by emphasising other sources. In its final chapter, Discussion and General Conclusions, petrol-derived lead does not even get a mention as a contributor to the lead content of urban dust and soil. In the important chapter on the neuropsychological effects of lead on children, calculations for adults are set out in a full-page table, while those for children (done in a different way) are merely mentioned in the text. More seriously, inner city/outer city blood-level data are given only for adults despite the existence of such data from other countries suggesting that ratios for children are greater.

The lack of comprehensive information on blood-levels in children limits the value of investigations of environmental lead in Britain. Probably the most useful data are from a survey of 429 Birmingham pre-school children in the late 1970s. This indicated that 15 had excessive blood-levels. But this work is not described. Instead, the working party examines work carried out in this country under an EEC Directive and conclude that there are no significant numbers of children in the UK with significantly high blood-lead levels. Lead from petrol emissions is regarded as a minor contributor to any existing lead levels. Finally, in considering "acceptable" blood-lead levels, the working party, despite dis-

claimers, settle for a higher one than that recognised by other European countries and by the United States (where lead-free petrol is on sale to motorists as an alternative to the leaded variety).

Not surprisingly, the Lawther Report has produced its own backlash, and the Government is under increased pressure to reduce lead pollution from vehicle exhausts. The London Borough of Camden is preparing to fight a test case in the Courts to ban the sale of leaded petrol in its area. The Friends of the Earth plan a summer of street campaigns. Perhaps the Lawther committee report will succeed in a way its distinguished chairman and members did not intend.

Mary Brodie

Lead and Health: the Report of a DHSS Working Party on Lead in the Environment. (Department of Health and Social Security, 1980. £4.50).

More Pedestrians Killed in 1978

According to *Road Accidents*, the total number of casualties on British roads in 1978 was almost 350,000, $\frac{1}{2}$ per cent more than in 1977; this compares with an increase in motor traffic of more than 4 per cent. Deaths (6,831) increased by 3 per cent, while seriously injured casualties increased by 1 per cent and slightly injured casualties remained about the same as in 1977.

The number of pedestrian casualties fell by more than 1 per cent, but the number of pedestrians killed increased by almost 5 per cent, following a steady decline since 1972: the number of child pedestrian casualties decreased by almost 5 per cent, reverting to the trend which existed prior to the increase in 1977.

Although the pattern of pedestrian casualty rates remains quite stable over

time, it is still alarming that in each of the last few years some 20 per cent of all casualties were pedestrians, of whom more than 40 per cent were children: 95 per cent of all pedestrian casualties occurred in built-up areas. With as many as 4,970 pedestrian casualties on pavements and verges, it would be most useful in future volumes to have a table showing such accidents to pedestrians by class of vehicle — HGV, car or bicycle.

A new injury accident form is gradually being introduced by the Police Forces in Great Britain. The 1978 figures are based on those items which are common to both old and new forms, and in some cases this has led to a slight reduction in the information published.

Eric Edwards

Road Accidents Great Britain 1978 (HMSO, 1980. £4.50).

Rights of Access

This book, to quote the subtitle, is about 'the struggle for access to Britain's Moors and Mountains' and must deservedly represent essential reading for those like David Clarke, MP, currently hoping to pilot his Access to Commons and Open Country Bill through Parliament and others who feel deeply about restrictions to rambling freedom.

Howard Hill charts the history of rambling groups and other outside organisations and describes their slow but still unfinished progress towards establishing rights of way and gaining access to hitherto restricted countryside.

The accounts of this long-drawn-out crusade take on a political tone but are none the less readable for that. Indeed, it would not take much imagination in places to believe that the author was writing about Grunwicks and mass picketing rather than the Peak District and mass trespassing.

Yet one cannot help wondering whether the long drawn out attrition between ramblers and land owners might have been resolved more amicably if less militant tactics had been used.

Thus Hill cites instances of confrontation on either side which were conducted at schoolboy levels of invective and threat. On the other hand, some of the early walking groups who formed themselves into 'Gentlemen's Clubs' disassociated themselves from the deliberate antagonism of other enthusiasts yet still had difficulty arranging access from aristocratic landowners.

A more balanced book would have given greater coverage to the owners' point of view. The fact that no less than 12 per cent of all of those now active in outdoor recreation are ramblers and hill walkers illustrates the extent of pressure on landowners. To quote the legal adviser to the Country Landowners Association, "Common land belongs to private individuals who work jolly hard to make a living from it. They try to improve the grazing on the land, but that can be ruined by rights of access."

It is easy to polarise the participants in these conflicts in political terms, and Hill may well be correct in saying that the greatest support for access in the past has come from those on the left of the broad political spectrum.

Where the author's enthusiasm and crusading fervour carry him away is in his suggestion for securing the support of the TUC — "without doubt the most influential body in Britain today". One can imagine that not all of the increasingly middle-class rambling groups would go along with that proposal nowadays.

J. M. D. Carmichael

Freedom to Roam: the struggle for access to Britain's moors and mountains by Howard Hill (Moorland Publishing, £5.95).

Dehumanised Pedestrian Streets

This is a loose-leaf binder of photographs and 1:500 plans of pedestrian streets in Aachen, Mannheim and Oldenburg. Street furniture is shown in other sections, into which are interleaved

examples from places as varied as Mombasa and Epidaurus.

The picture it gives of pedestrianisation in Europe — the text is trilingual — is rather limited; Monheim listed 142 schemes in Germany alone. The intention seems to be for the buyer to add his own contribution to make an encyclopaedic series. There are interesting things in it: mentally one transposes the trams from Mannheim to Oxford Street, and I liked some of the details, the tank of still water in Oldenburg, the tiled retaining wall from Delphi, the easy-to-read bus stop route indicator from Ljubljana for instance, but there is a dearth of hard information whether you look at it from the point of view of Camillo Sitte or as a user of standard details.

The pitfall of municipal design and synthetic materials is an overwhelming dullness which de-humanizes such well-intentioned schemes: is the secret perhaps to leave more to the care of the surrounding owners? One suspects that little that is shown in this book will survive hooliganism and weathering to stand the test of time.

R. B. Hubbard

Pedestrian Areas (D. Boeminghaus, Kramer Verlag, Stuttgart. Second edition 1978, £38).

London's Transport Policies

The aim of this book is stated on the cover: to review transport policies in Greater London and to distinguish those that are effective from those that are not.

Little mention is made of the pedestrian or of walking as a means of transport, except to say that in the 1972 Greater London Transport Surveys, the biggest single mode of travel, in terms of the number of trips, is walking which accounts for 38 per cent (page 92).

The authors call for the stricter enforcement of parking laws as this, they claim, would eliminate about 25 per cent of

private car miles in Central London. This newly-freed road space could then be used to improve pedestrian mobility.

Mary Murphy

"Transport Planning for Greater London" by Malcolm Buchanan, Nicholas Bursey, Kingsley Lewis and Paul Mullen (Saxon House, £15).

When Pedestrianisation Knocks the Buses

Over the past twenty years the high streets of many towns have been turned into pedestrian malls. Pedestrians, in particular, have welcomed such changes as one of the few gestures made by traffic engineers in their direction. However, a new investigation by John Roberts of Transport and Environment Studies (TEST) suggests that, in future, it would be wise to examine proposed pedestrian schemes more critically.

The TEST study is about Sutton High Street in suburban London. Over the past three years the local authority has been working methodically, if slowly, at creating diversionary routes for motor traffic, providing rear delivery roads for the shops and building car parks. The new roads alone cost £750,000.

London Transport has also been active and, although it argued strenuously to be allowed to go on running its red buses down the High Street, was forced to re-route them onto the adjacent by-pass roads. The effect of this re-routing was to increase the cost of operating the buses by between £30,000 and £40,000 a year.

But that is not all. One of the surveys made by John Roberts shows that the number of people in the High Street who had come by bus fell by 23 per cent between 1977 and 1979. Yet the comparable change for bus passengers throughout London was a fall of only 11 per cent.

Commenting on these figures, the

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Dipped Headlights

Mr Clarke, answering Mr Greville Janner, referred to the Highway Code rule requiring the use of dipped headlights in built-up areas unless the road is well lit and said that motorists must always use their own judgement and commonsense in deciding whether dipped headlights are needed in the road conditions they are encountering. Replying to a question from Miss Fookes about the surveys of dipped headlight usage in towns in the summers of 1978 and 1979 by the Night Safety Advisory Bureau, he said that the Minister doubted the need to spend public funds to determine whether the usage had increased since the last survey by his Department in January 1978. Although there had been a trend towards greater use of dipped headlights in towns at night, he was not at present contemplating any change in the law on this. — 23.1.80

Road Accidents

Mr Clarke told Mr Pawsey that it was estimated that parked vehicle involvements in accidents in darkness were 36 per cent greater in the twelve months since drivers had been permitted to park their cars unlit under street lamps than would have been expected had the regulations not been altered. This probably reflected an increase in the number of cars parked on the road at night, rather than problems in seeing parked vehicles when they were unlit. — 14.2.80

Pavement Parking

Mr Kenneth Clarke, Parliamentary Secretary to the Department of Transport, answering Mr Michael Spicer, referred to the decision to defer implementation of section 7 and said that yellow line waiting restrictions applied to the footway as well as the carriageway and that there were other powers to control footway parking. Heavy goods vehicles were prohibited from parking on all footways

under the Heavy Commercial Vehicles (Controls and Regulations) Act 1973. Both dangerous parking and obstruction were offences, and local authorities had power to ban parking on individual lengths of footway. In addition, the Government were doing what they could in the present circumstances to discourage footway parking by giving publicity to the inconvenience it causes. — 16.1.80

Seat Belts

Mr Norman Fowler, Minister of Transport, informed Mr Lawrence that in a study of 1,126 accidents, TRRL had found no cases where the occupant of a motor car would have fared better without a seat belt. — 21.1.80

Reflective Material

Mr Greville Janner asked the Minister whether he would take steps to provide reflector discs for children to wear or carry in hours of darkness, as was done in Norway. Mr. Clarke replied that his Department promoted their use and supported the initiative of the Royal Society for the Prevention of Accidents who had introduced them into this country. — 28.1.80

In reply to another question, Mr Clarke said that he strongly advocated the use of light-coloured clothing, and particularly of reflective materials, by those who walk at night. — 12.2.80

Weight Control of HGVs

Mr Fowler told Mr Best that in spite of a marked improvement after the Road Traffic (Foreign Vehicles) Act 1972, 13.5 per cent of foreign vehicles checked in 1978 were prohibited for overloading and that there was a national programme for installing more enforcement axle weighbridges. On the matter of container traffic entering Wales from Ireland, it

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Travelling to Work

People living in conventional suburbs containing a mix of homes and jobs have to travel less far to work and spend less time doing it than residents in either planned suburbs or old, inner-city neighbourhoods.

These conclusions flow from interviews with 3,000 employed adults in different parts of Greater Manchester. The areas covered were Moss Side, Rusholme and Levenshulme in the inner city, Wythenshawe, a post-war, suburban council estate about six and a half miles from the city centre, and Swinton and Pendlebury, a conventional late 19th-early-20th century suburb five miles from the city centre.

Residents at Wythenshawe, where there is planned separation of homes and workplaces, were found to travel an average of 5.3 miles to work compared with 4.6 miles for residents of the inner city. Those in the suburb who commuted by bus also found that their trips took longer than those of their opposite numbers in the inner city — in fact twice as long. Those living at Swinton and Pendlebury, on the other hand, travelled on average no further than 3.9 miles.

As with distance so with time: commuters from Swinton spent 21 minutes getting to work, those at Wythenshawe 25½ minutes and those in the inner city 26½ minutes.

(*Manchester Travel to Work Survey. TRRL Digest SR 538*)

Walkers and Cyclists Do Not Mix

Paths shared by cyclists and pedestrians in a three and a half mile long cycleway system in Peterborough are one of the two most heavily criticised features of this experiment. Cycle lanes in the roadway that are very narrow because of the limited width of two bridges were the other most unpopular feature.

The major criticisms of the shared paths were that 'cyclists could come up noiselessly behind pedestrians and knock them down and that pedestrians got in the way of cyclists'. These views were held by one third of the cyclists questioned and by the same proportion of motorists. It is assumed that the motorists were answering as if they were pedestrians.

Time-lapse photographic film of some of the paths at a place called Westwood, where pedestrians and cyclists are 'segregated' by a painted line on the asphalt, showed that 'the white line is ignored by many pedestrians and by some cyclists'. The film also made clear that the paths in question are too narrow for people to walk or cycle side-by-side without violating the white line.

Other points to emerge from a study by the Transport and Road Research Laboratory cycling and walking section were that the cycle system generated no overall increase in cycling (though about one in ten of the cyclists interviewed said that the routes had promoted them to re-start cycling or to use their bicycles more), that seasonal variations in cycle use were low, and that nine out of ten of the cyclists used only sections of the routes in the course of trips that started and ended elsewhere than along them.

(*Cycle Routes in Peterborough: Interim Report. S. W. Quenault and J. M. Morgan. TRRL Laboratory Report 904*)

Quietening Juggernauts

The noise given off by the largest, Continental-sized, heavy goods vehicles can be reduced by about half, judging by research done by Rolls-Royce and Foden for the Transport and Road Research Laboratory.

The noise abatement measures used are likely to add about 8 per cent to the purchase price of juggernauts but to have little or no effect on fuel consumption or maintenance costs.

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report says: "Accessibility has worsened for bus passengers, and improved for car users, over the 1978 position." And elsewhere: "London Transport and its passengers also appear to be carrying an unreasonable share of the costs of pedestrianisation."

A dodgy little striped chart of the ages of travellers by bus and car to Sutton High Street suggests why such an exceptionally large number of bus travellers have given up the ghost. It shows that those arriving by car tend to be young, and therefore strong, while those going by bus are more likely to be elderly and thus frail.

Looking for solutions to the problems faced by public transport passengers, John Roberts draws attention to the way that buses, and on the Continent trams, are often allowed to go on using streets otherwise limited to walkers, and suggests that this is what should be done in Sutton. Alternatively, he proposes that buses be routed along streets crossing the pedestrian mall or the introduction of a minibus service to shuttle up and down it.

It is not clear whether this sobering tale has a happy ending, but it may be significant that the research was commissioned by London Transport. The results should therefore enable the busmen to show more clearly than hitherto what a disastrous effect on their passengers certain kinds of pedestrian mall can have.

Sutton High Street: A Study of Pedestrianisation by John Roberts of Transport and Environment Studies (Published by London Transport, 55 Broadway, London, SW1H 0BD).

Terence Bendixson

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crimes. The problem is NOT catching a few offenders and preventing them endangering the public. The problem is to introduce legislation, and publicise it, so that a very large number of people are deterred from committing the offence.

"It is for this reason that it is so important that the police have unfettered powers to catch offenders, and are seen to have these powers."

Mrs Barbara Preston is a vice-president of the Pedestrians Association.

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This rise of 6,700 per cent is in addition to the existing initial registration fee of 125 per cent of purchase price. A further 45 per cent duty is imposed on imported cars.

Singapore is a city which has been operating an area licencing scheme for the past five years. Private cars entering the central business district during morning rush hour are required to display a special licence costing about £1 a day. To encourage car sharing, private cars carrying four or more persons are exempt.

Surveys by the Singapore government and the World Bank have shown a 76 per cent drop in the number of cars in the district during the restricted period.

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The Government's 'Working Group on Research into Traffic Noise', which first reported a decade ago, has financed two quiet heavy vehicles, one made by Leyland weighing 32.5 tonnes when fully laden, and a second by Foden/Rolls-Royce, capable of operating at up to 38 tonnes.

External noise from both the experimental vehicles was reduced during acceleration tests by ten decibels compared with the vehicles in their original, unmodified state. The final results of the research and development work were noise levels of 79 decibels (A) for the Leyland and 83 for the Foden/Rolls. These improvements were brought about by fully-enclosing a redesigned RR and a standard Leyland engine, by using quieter exhaust silencers and radiator fans and by altering the design of air-brake discharge systems.

(TRRL Quiet Heavy Vehicle Project. TRRL Digest SR 521)

Terence Bendixson

Dipped Headlights . . . what you think!

The article by Michael Evans in the March issue of *Walk* extolling the use of dipped headlights prompted considerable reader response. No letters favouring dipped headlights were received. All of them condemned their use. Extracts from some of the letters are printed below.

I find the only time when, as a driver, I'm liable not to see the wayward pedestrian is when I'm blinded by an oncoming headlight. Without the beam of an oncoming car, only those with defective vision would fail to see obstructions in the roadway such is the present excellent performance of street lighting.

Why then do 83 per cent of motorists switch on? I think it is a defence mechanism. They feel that by going onto dipped beam they are protecting themselves (he must have seen me — I had my headlights on), they are demanding more road territory for themselves and they are generally harassing competitors in the aggressive environment of motoring. But most dangerous is the suggestion that by switching on, the driver is claiming exemption from his responsibility not to run into anything (it was the pedestrian's fault). This is the attitude the Association should be resisting very firmly . . .

Comparisons with other countries are not always fair. In the U.K. we have very congested conditions, especially in the south-east and probably the best street lighting in the world. U.K. cars also seem to have the most powerful and badly adjusted headlights in the world. On empty dual carriageways in thinly populated areas the glare is no problem. In narrow streets it is almost intolerable. — D. A. Bosomworth, 16 Frensham Rd., London, SE9.

As a pedestrian who does not drive, I dislike headlights including dipped ones: they are for me almost always objectionable and often dangerous . . .

Most would agree that a minimum level of lighting is needed and that the minute parking lights of older cars are not

adequate. However, many modern cars have side or parking lights that are almost ideal for the assessment by a pedestrian of the vehicle's distance and speed, both necessary for judging the possibility of crossing the road at night.

A focussed beam of even moderate power does dazzle, even when directed down, and when turned towards the kerb makes walking at night a near purgatory. The claim by the police that such a light facilitates the assessment of the distance and speed of vehicles is irresponsible nonsense . . . From the pedestrian's point of view, the best light is a soft-focussed light of the kind which a previous Secretary of the Association described to me in a letter on this subject as a dim-dipped light . . .

In addition to these practical matters, there is the psychology of headlights. The intimidating aspects of facing a bright light are well-known to those concerned with torture and brain-washing, and although most motorists are fortunately reasonable people, pedestrians are placed at a disadvantage when facing headlights. The use of dipped headlights is also an aid to and justification for maintaining speed in residential side-roads when speed should often be reduced . . . R. J. Crudge, 106 Howard Road, Westbury Park, Bristol.

I am amazed that the Night Safety Advisory Bureau has come down in favour of headlight driving in towns. The glare of so-called 'dipped' headlights in the eyes of on-coming drivers is absolutely nerve-wracking because it creates a vast area of vision in which one sees *only* the glare, nothing else . . .

"The dipped headlight drivers . . . see

CORRESPONDENCE

much better," says Michael Evans. On the contrary, they blind the drivers coming towards them, so everybody sees worse. — Gwen Marsh (Mrs), 35 Tanza Road, London, NW3.

A properly dipped headlight beam reaches the ground at so short a distance in front of a car that even at 30 mph a pedestrian caught in its beam would be lucky to live!

As I drive along with a procession of dipped headlights coming the opposite way and another pair dazzlingly reflected in my rear view mirror, I find it increasingly difficult to see into the shadows thus created. While I may indeed be more visible to others with my headlights on, I am not sure it is such a good idea to depend on others seeing me without me being able to see them.

The real folly of the situation is, however, contained in Mr Evans's own statement that cars are only visible to pedestrians if they have headlights *because they have come to expect this*, even in well-lit streets. — I. F. W. Pearson, 10 Darrington Avenue, London, SW20.

The main trouble today is not insufficient light, but far too much light. It is the constant swiftly moving to and fro of vehicles with headlights on not allowing time for our eyes to adjust to either lesser or more light, which causes the dazzle, distortion and danger, and is a prime factor in the cause of road accidents at night.

Any optician will tell us that nature has designed the human eye to become used to light and dark. If we go into a cinema in the daytime, at first we cannot see and have to be shown our seats by an usherette with a torch. After a short time, however, our eyes gradually become accustomed to the dim light, and we can see quite clearly.

This same principle applies when driving at night in well-lighted town areas; our eyes become used to the street lighting, and both drivers and pedestrians can see one another quite clearly. When headlights are constantly flashing, all this accomplishes is to dazzle drivers and pedestrians alike, and many an accident has been caused by a driver being completely blinded by the headlights of an oncoming vehicle and knocking down a pedestrian on a crossing whom he never saw because of the glare. — Norman Hiskins, 39 Alington Crescent, London, NW9.

I am partial to taking evening walks all the year round. However, I have virtually ceased the practice except during summer because of the sheer mini-hell of the headlights. The noise and fumes of vehicles were bad enough, but they are mild relative to dipped headlights for sheer pedestrian harassment. I am, of course, by virtue of the mini-hell, now rarely available as a prospective after-dark victim. I think many others, too, for the same reason must now be off the list of prospective after-dark victims, and statistics will no doubt confirm that dipped headlights bring safety.

But some safety when it is achieved by making life so unbearable for the victims that they stay indoors! — H. Atkinson, 4 The Avenue, Whitley Bay, North Tyne-side, Tyne and Wear.

OTHER LETTERS

Harder Policy

Dear Sir,

I find it very disturbing to read in the terms of the Metropolitan Police (*Walk*, March issue) the clear thought that if enough people abuse speed limits in enough quantity and frequency the limits should be re-assessed and made more realistic: i.e. that might is right, and the

rest of us should rearrange the laws so that the mighty are not put to any inconvenience by having to break them — nor, incidentally, the police by having to enforce them.

The police are the enforcement arm of the law, and the advocacy implicit in their comments seems a travesty of that function. The doctrine of the percentile rule, which is clearly based on such a philosophy, is iniquitous and I am surprised that the Association in its reply did not draw this aspect out much more strongly. I believe burglary is on the increase. Perhaps some future police spokesman may advocate legalising that — up to a percentile limit, of course . . .

Much motivation for driving is attributed, both by the police, and also in the same issue by the TRRL, as amounting to some kind of pleasure and/or thrill. Pleasures which publicly damage the rest of us must be stopped by force of law. The Police Commissioner came to London as 'the hammer', but in so far as road safety is concerned we have still to see him use it.

I personally would like to see a much harder policy by the police, not only for motorists but also for pedestrians who, be it fairly said, are by no means as strict as they should be on the roads.

Yours truly,
J. Harrington
c/o 45 Goldsmith Avenue,
Acton, London, W3 6HR

More Inspiration

Dear Sir,

I am most impressed by a couple of remarks in your book review, *Walking Is More than Transport* (*Walk*, March issue).

You say: "We are . . . guilty of having taken walking for granted for many years." And again: "We may have missed out in having neglected in our propaganda the healthful advantages of this safe, non-polluting, energy-conserving transport mode."

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On the other hand, the notice, *Shoes Step into the 'Eighties*, says nothing about the need to wed stride with style — or of Doc Marten's apparent success in doing this. My 15-year-old son only takes off his Doc Marten boots to go to bed.

As the PA enters the 'eighties, I hope the AGM will consider a less prosaic, dry and narrow approach to walking promotion. It may have been fair enough in the hiking and biking 'twenties, but not now.

The Americans, in *The Complete Book of Walking*, may have overdone it; but the British have underdone it, as we tend to underdo everything.

We should stand (or stride) for a socially-advantageous mode of transport that is *also a good thing in itself* in urban, suburban and rural places . . . *Walk* should be less like a trade paper, such as the *Grocers Gazette*, and several shades more inspirational.

The only *inspirational* thing I've discovered in its high-minded, right-thinking pages is the ad for Ros Kane's attractive red and yellow badge. Good old Ros!

All good wishes,
Allan Bula
15 Glebe Ct X Lns, Guildford, Surrey.

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had been found that prohibition (until the excess had been removed) was a more effective deterrent than prosecution. Offences involving foreign lorries in Great Britain were regularly reported to the Governments concerned for action under national laws. — 31.1.80

Heavy Lorries

Mr Fowler told Mr Penhaligon that when motorways were being designed they were not making assumptions that the weight of heavy lorries was to be increased. That was one of the major reasons for setting up the Armitage inquiry. — 23.1.80

Sidney Lee

Unrealism

Department of Transport guidelines to local authorities still talk the language every speed merchant loves to hear. In its Circular Roads 1/80 dealing with the subject of speed, great play is made of the word *unrealistic*.

When *unrealistic* is used in the context of a speed limit, the Circular makes clear that the limit referred to is one which is substantially below the 85 percentile speed. In other words, when 85 per cent or more of motorists exceed the required maximum, that limit is so low as to be unrealistic.

Accordingly *Walk* drew the Department's attention to the concern expressed in the Circular for speeding drivers and its apparent lack of concern for those expected to cope — and survive — among vehicular traffic.

In its reply, the DoT pointed out that the Circular, in placing emphasis on road environment, does take account of pedestrian movement. So it does. But only in the vaguest possible way. The frustration, fear and accident rate of the most vulnerable of road users are not singled out and quantified as are all-injury accidents to all road users.

Before-and-after studies are quoted in the Circular to show that when speed limits are raised, there is little or no variation in the all-injury accident rate. As if anyone imagined there would be! Speed has two contrary effects: on the one hand, it frustrates some journeys and fosters fear; while on the other hand, it makes collisions, when they occur, more damaging.

Since speed increases the severity of a casualty's injuries — slight injuries into serious injuries, and serious injuries into fatalities — the Department does well for the sake of its own argument not to quote the effect raising the speed limit has on the number of fatal and serious injury accidents. As *Walk* revealed in the March issue, the Metropolitan Police found that where speed limits are higher so are the proportions of fatal and serious pedestrian accidents.

The Department of Transport's task is a difficult one. Its function is to consider the interests of the motor lobby and of road safety. But these are usually in sharp conflict, and it would be unrealistic to expect that one of these groups of interests does not take second place.

It is easy to see which one is consistently relegated to this position.

Freedom under Pressure

"Pressure groups, almost by definition, have their propaganda; and those who believe in freedom and in allowing people to be left alone, almost by definition, are not a pressure group."

This doctrine was enunciated by Sir Ronald Bell, MP, in the House of Commons on March 7 when he described the Road Traffic (Seat Belts) Bill as "pressure group legislation".

The Pedestrians Association, whose members are by no means all in favour of this Bill, sees itself as a pressure group, so it takes exception to the implication that pressure group members are not motivated by a love of freedom. "No pressure group is formed for freedom," Sir Ronald went on, "for leaving people alone or for allowing them to do nothing."

Would Sir Ronald not describe as pressure groups those freedom-loving, propaganda-issuing organisations Amnesty International and the National Council for Civil Liberties? Do not the pro-abortionist and anti-abortionist groups both issue propaganda and do not they both in their separate ways believe in freedom? Were it not for pressure groups Sir Ronald, at the wheel of his mechanically-propelled road vehicle, would still have to be preceded by a pedestrian carrying a red flag!

It is fortunate that we in Britain, unlike the citizens of totalitarian countries, are allowed to have our pressure groups as well as our Parliament. That is the whole essence of democracy. In fact, we owe it to a thirteenth-century pressure group led by a certain Simon de Montfort that we have a Parliament in which Sir Ronald can propagate his views.

Who Pays for Accidents?

A champion of the motorist has been found in Mr Roland Moyle, MP, a former Minister of Health. On March 3, he told the House of Commons that under the Road Traffic Accidents (Payments for Treatment) (England and Wales) Order which he was seeking to be annulled, someone having in-patient treatment would be charged £1,225 instead of the present maximum of £200, an increase of 525 per cent. Increased hospital charges for road crash victims, he argued, would be one more cost for motorists since insurance companies paying these charges would recoup them from motorists in the form of premiums.

It seems odd that Mr Moyle did not take into account the fact that the present charges are wholly out of step with inflation. These costs of motoring have to be borne by the national health service which recoups from the public as a whole, most of whom cannot afford or do not wish to be motorists. His motion that the order be annulled was rejected by 119 votes to 66.

The principle of requiring the motorist to make a larger contribution to these health service costs is only fair and reasonable. What is good for the public as a whole must surely be good enough for the motorist.

Ask an Adman

Car advertisements are coming in for severe criticism from the Pedestrians Association for their exultation of speed. So a recent contribution to the road safety debate by a leading advertising man is particularly refreshing.

Campaign magazine, which circulates among people in communications, recently published an article on the strategy behind the Government's seat-belt campaign, in which the TV spots liken the risk of not wearing a seat belt to that of playing Russian roulette.

Mark Jerewski, account director of the Young and Rubicam advertising agency handling the campaign, said that although pleased with the public's

response, he believes the law is the only really effective way of making people wear seat belts.

"Most people would secretly prefer to let the Government make the decision for them," he said.

Legislators who feel unhappy about passing new laws for saving lives on the roads should be encouraged by this frank statement from a communications expert.

Human Effort

Readers of *Walk* do not have to be reminded of the value of walking as a mode of transport. It gets people around by human effort as does cycling. But what of a vehicle, powered solely by human effort, which can crack the United States national speed limit?

In the USA, the national speed limit is 55 mph. In Britain, whose first Speed Challenge for human-powered vehicles will take place on September 6, the top speed limit is rather higher.

All manner of unusual vehicles will participate at this event to be held in Madeira Drive, Brighton. Some will be for single riders, others for two or three riders, pedalling from positions often horizontal to the ground.

Contestants will be riding vehicles which have no assistance from gravity, wind or any form of stored energy. Since the ordinary bicycle and rider present a poor aerodynamic shape, streamlining is allowed on their vehicles. Designs of these streamlined supercycles will have two important features in common: small frontal area and smooth, low-friction surfaces.

One of the conditions of the Speed Challenge is of particular interest to those concerned with safety in design. It stipulates that any vehicle considered likely to endanger either its crew or the general public will be eliminated.

Would that the general public were similarly protected by the safety regulations governing the front-end design of petrol-driven vehicles. These are in far greater profusion on the roads of Britain.

Cyril Myerscough

Join the Pedestrians Association

The Pedestrians Association is the only body in the country that campaigns for improvements in conditions for people on foot. It relies for income on subscriptions and donations from individuals, affiliated organisations, local authorities and libraries. The annual subscription for ordinary members is £3 (retired persons and full-time students £1.50). Members receive free copies of *Walk*.

Deeds of Covenant

The Association is registered as a charity and reclaims tax paid on subscriptions made by Deed of Covenant. Three pounds subscribed in this way becomes worth more than four. Covenant forms may be obtained from the Secretary.

Bequests

The Association is particularly grateful for bequests of money and property. The following form of bequest is usually suitable:

"I give and bequeath (insert here details of the legacy) to the Pedestrians Association for its general purposes and desire that the receipt of the Treasurer for the time being of the Pedestrians Association at 1 Wandsworth Road, London, SW8 2LJ, shall be good discharge."

Further information on the Association's work will be gladly supplied on request to the Secretary.

Membership Form

To the Secretary, Pedestrians Association, 1 Wandsworth Road, London, SW8 2LJ.

I/We wish to become members of the Pedestrians Association and enclose

a first annual subscription of

Name
(BLOCK LETTERS, PLEASE)

Address

Giro Number 583834000