

ABD London News

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Editorial

The biggest item of news in this edition is the launch of new blog for the ABD in London—see page 2. So you'll be able to keep up with the news even quicker rather than wait for this newsletter—but the latter will continue to summarise topical news and also contain additional articles you can read at your leisure.

Yes your editor is not just an old fogey but can keep up with the new vogue for digital and social media. If I get any encouragement I might launch a Twitter feed and Facebook page on the ABD London theme. Please let me know if that would be of interest. You can in the meantime post comments on the articles in the new blog.

The blog was launched with a post from ABD founder Brian Gregory on the subject of the continued war on the motorist.



That certainly applies in London as much as anywhere else with more 20 mph speed limits, more speed cameras, a totally unwarranted and penal regime to reduce vehicle emissions, and new cycle superhighways which seem to have been designed for the benefit of cyclists but to the disadvantage of everyone else.

The photograph above is of Tower Hill on the proposed East-West Cycle Superhighway route at 3.30 pm on a typical weekday. But it can only get worse if those proposals are not halted. See article on page 2 for an update.

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Quotes of the Month

"...the [Barclays] cycle hire scheme is by a long way the most heavily subsidized form of public transport in London on a per trip basis."..... John Biggs and the GLA Budget Committee.



"I will certainly be asking Transport for London to dust down those old ideas and let's have a look"..... Boris Johnson after seeing car free days in Jakarta.

"The route of the East-West Cycle Superhighway has been chosen to minimize impacts on other users....".....Boris Johnson. See page 2.

New ABD Blog

The ABD London region has launched a new blog - screenshot to the right. The address is:

<https://abdlondon.wordpress.com/>

Please take a look at it. Note that articles on topical news will be posted there first although they will still continue to be summarised in this newsletter.

You can register to “follow” the blog so you get notified of any new articles as soon as they appear.

You can also add your own comments to the articles by clicking in the balloon to the top right of an article, although the ABD reserves the right to remove or edit any comments—we don't want it to get overwhelmed by the views of cycling fanatics!



Alliance of British Drivers (ABD) London

London traffic and transport news

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East-West Cycle Superhighway, and Transparency Consultation

Posted on January 4, 2016

Our last ABD London Newsletter covered the proposals for a new East-West Cycle Superhighway along the Embankment and Upper/Lower Thames Street. See this page of our web site for that edition and all of our past newsletters:
<http://www.freedomfordrivers.org/Newsletters.htm> - they are a great source of



ARCHIVES

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- December 2014

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We hope to have other contributors to the blog than the editor of this newsletter and the first one is from ABD founder Brian Gregory who contributed the first blog post.

Simply scroll down to see earlier blog posts or use the search function to find any particular topic.



East-West Cycle Super- highway, and Transparency Consultation

Our last ABD London Newsletter covered the proposals for a new East-West Cycle Superhighway along the Embankment and Upper/Lower Thames Street. See our web site at www.freedomfordrivers.org for that edition and all of our past newsletters - they are a great source of information on all transport matters in London and can be searched using the site search function.

Anyone can register to receive our newsletters for free. Readers of the last newsletter were urged to strongly oppose the proposal which would reduce a lot of the road to one lane, increase traffic congestion and substantially increase journey times based on Transport for London's (TfL's) own predictions. This article is an update on the status of these proposals.

This writer wrote personally to Mayor, Boris Johnson, on the 5th October explaining what was wrong with those proposals and suggesting he needs "to listen to the general population, not to a prejudiced minority". I pointed out that there has not been a proper cost/benefit analysis of the proposals and the public consultation was grossly defective.

I also made it very clear I would not be voting for any candidate for Mayor of London who supports these proposals.

Just before Xmas I got a response from Mr Johnson. Among the statements therein are:

"The route of the East-West Superhighway has been chosen to minimise impacts on other users..."

"The proposed cycle track would, for the most part, replace only one traffic lane".

"TfL continues to assess the potential impacts of the proposals....."

Continued on next page



Cycle Super-highway (Cont.)

The fact that not all the route is reduced to one lane surely does not help. If you introduce bottlenecks on a major thoroughfare the overall capacity of the route is reduced.

Meanwhile in mid-November Howard Dauber of the Canary Wharf Group appeared on BBC TV News spelling out the objections to the scheme. In particular he stated that the "mitigation" measures being considered by TfL imply the holding back of traffic on main arterial routes. So for example using traffic light control to reduce traffic entering this route from the East (i.e. from Canary Wharf!).

Mr Dauber seems to be trying to generate wider opposition to the scheme, and may be developing alternative proposals.

The City of London Corporation have also considered the matter and raised a number of objections. For example, they expressed concerns about the impact on pedestrians, and that TfL should "*consider alternative design measures to ensure a resilient road network and demonstrate how the network will accommodate planned and unplanned road works*".

They also asked for more time for consultation and a different approach by TfL when such major proposals are being developed (like everyone else, they don't like being presented with an almost final design without any prior consultation).

Incidentally on the latter subject, TfL have issued a public consultation on "Transparency" about how they wish to be "open and accountable". As one of the least open and accountable organisations in this writer's personal experience, you may like to submit your own comments as I have done. TfL's public consultations tend to be more of a PR exercise than real public engagement, with the key decisions already set in stone.

Will TfL and the Mayor listen? We wait to see, and the results of the public consultation on the East-West Superhighway are yet to be published. Note that I have also taken up this issue with my GLA Member and my Member of Parliament (I think it is a national issue as well as just a London issue when the capital's road network is being destroyed by political dogma). R.W.L.



Removing Bus Lanes in Liverpool and London

Liverpool has surely set an example that other major cities might like to follow. The City council and Mayor have decided to permanently remove 22 or the 26 bus lanes in the City, most of which are on radial routes.

The four remaining ones will now only operate for limited hours rather than the previous 24 hours. This follows a trial since last October on which the Mayor commented: "*Now for the first time we have robust data about the effect of bus lanes, rather than people's opinions about how useful or otherwise they are*".

But the council is considering other proposals to assist buses such as traffic signal priority and the introduction of red routes to stop obstructive parking.

Comment: Would it not be a good idea for London councils to take the same approach, i.e. remove bus lanes and see what the impact is? This writer could never understand the moral principle of allowing bus users to jump a queue of other vehicles.

Why should public transport users get priority? That is particularly the case when bus lanes are rarely fully occupied by buses so they often simply reduce the total capacity of the road network to move people around a City.

Of course Councils are often in favour of bus lanes because they generate large amounts of revenue from infringements which in London can be automated via cameras. Many of those infringements are often accidental or of a nature where no bus is impeded (for example a car turning left via a bus lane when the road is clear to the exit). An example is Sevenoaks Way, Orpington in the above photograph where although the road layout has been subsequently changed many fines are still being issued.

More Speed Cameras, and More Fines

The Daily Telegraph ran a front page article on 27th December in which this writer was quoted. The article reported on the increase in the number of speeding fines issued by the courts in England and Wales in 2013 (the latest year for which figures are available).

There were particularly sharp rises in areas such as Essex (up 44%) and Avon/Somerset (up 34%). These fines go to the Treasury and £45 million was generated as a result, but those figures do not include those who pay a fixed penalty notice or accept an education course (which they also have to pay for of course).

This was that "speed related collisions are a serious problem on London's roads and account for 46 percent of all KSIs in London over the last three years". This is a truly astonishing claim and cannot be reconciled to the national figures reported by the DfT which are much lower (only 25% of fatal collisions have a speed related factor and not necessarily where speed exceeded the posted speed limit).

They also claim KSIs are reduced by 57% where cameras are installed which ignores all the other factors that have reduced accidents in recent years, and the impact of regression to the mean.

What are the reasons for the increases? It seems very unlikely that it arises from more drivers exceeding the speed limit on the ever more congested roads.

The main causes are probably the switch from old fashioned Gatso type devices with film cameras to digital cameras which never run out of film and where the processing can be automated, plus the increased use of speed awareness education courses. The police get a kick-back from the course operators and hence have a financial interest in generating more potential prosecutions. The ABD has reported in our past newsletters on this perversion of justice where the police are financially motivated to waive prosecutions, but the Government and senior police officers see nothing wrong in this morally dubious practice.

Indeed it's worth pointing out that when the City of London were arguing for their new 20-mph speed limit they said that "speed is not recorded as a factor for most of the collisions within the City.....".

One has to conclude if one has examined the evidence in detail that any benefit from speed cameras is dubious which is why I said to the Telegraph reporter that "It is in the Government's interests to encourage the issuing of fines; they are effectively a cash cow". This is not about justice or accident prevention. It's about those with little real understanding of road safety wishing to inhibit and control road users as part of a wider agenda.

If this happened with any other "crime" the police concerned would be prosecuted.

In addition the number of active speed cameras has been increasing with rising numbers of average speed cameras. For example, London is committed to putting them on many of the main arterial routes into the centre of London to replicate those already on the A13.

Note that there are proposals afoot to increase the levels of fines imposed by magistrates courts so the level of fines collected by the Treasury may triple. For example the maximum fine for speeding on a motorway may rise to £10,000.

In London the justification for installing more average speed cameras was in a report dated 17 Oct 2013.



In terms of cost/benefit there are lots more effective ways to improve road safety than speed cameras. There is more information on these topics on the ABD London web site at <http://www.freedomfordrivers.org>.

Note that Transport for London (TfL) are spending large amounts of money converting older speed cameras to new digital ones on the roads they control—600 cameras are involved, but they refuse to disclose the cost. In addition any red light cameras on those roads are also being converted to include speed cameras.

R.W.L.



Dartford Crossing Fines

The "free-flow" payment system at the Dartford Crossing has now been in operation for some weeks. There are no toll booths so people have to pay before or after via other means. It was estimated by the ABD that the number of non-payers (who would then get issued with a fine of £35 per infringement) would be about 10% (that was based on other similar schemes in other countries). But in reality the number so far is much higher at about 15%. That's equivalent to about 10,000 people per day who will have been issued with fines, i.e. £350,000 per day in fines or £127 million per year if that infringement rate continues.

It seems many people still are not aware of this system so the number may fall somewhat in due course.

But as many users are travelling through this crossing from remote parts of the country it seems unlikely it will fall below 10%.



The ABD strongly opposed the introduction of this system and the retention of tolls on this essential river crossing. See this page for our campaign on this subject and our response to the grossly biased public consultation that took place:

www.freedomfordrivers.org/River_Crossings.htm

The new arrangement appears to have improved traffic flows somewhat, and may do so further when the road works are completed

But it is surely a very unjust system where high numbers of people accidentally collect large fines. Indeed the economics of this system and the similar London congestion charge (a.k.a. tax) depend on large numbers of penalty fines being issued. This is surely unjust.

Those who have collected a fine as a result should complain to their Member of Parliament because only public pressure will cause the Government to reconsider.

Barnet Emissions Based Permit Parking

Barnet Council have finally agreed to pay the £155,000 costs of the legal action brought by David Atfield and his supporters against proposed new parking charges.

The council lost the Judicial Review action in the High Court after it was ruled that increases to charges across controlled parking zones (CPZs) in Barnet in order to pay for other transport projects were unlawful. Let us hope other London councils take note of this case.

It reinforces the previous legal precedent that all councillors should be aware of - namely that you cannot use on-street parking schemes to generate revenue, i.e. there should not be an intended surplus.

But Barnet has not given up on increasing charges. They are bringing in one of those hated "emissions based permit parking schemes", i.e. the more emissions your car makes the higher the charge even though no cars emit emissions when they are parked, and the probability of such a scheme having any impact on emissions in the borough is very low because it only affects cars parked in CPZs and not those parked off road or elsewhere.

This was clearly demonstrated in the London Borough of Richmond but councillors pushed ahead regardless.

The ruling LibDem council and its leader were subsequently ejected by the electorate as the measure proved very unpopular (see www.freedomfordrivers.org/Richmond.htm for the ABD's past campaign in that borough).

Stockwell Gyratory

TfL have issued a public consultation on redesigning and removing the Stockwell gyratory road system. See the ABD London Blog for more information.



Registering to Receive This Newsletter

This newsletter is free of charge and is sent approximately bi-monthly to anyone who cares to request a copy. It is sent via email (as a link to a web page from which you can download it). To register for a free copy simply go to this web page: www.freedomfordrivers.org/Newsletters.htm and fill out the box to be added to our mailing list.

Address Changes

Don't forget to notify the ABD of any change of postal or email addresses. You may otherwise miss out on future copies of this newsletter without noticing that they are no longer being delivered.

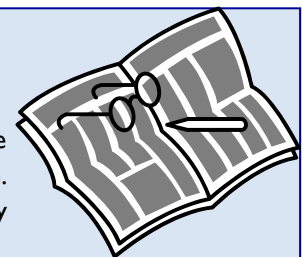
About the Alliance of British Drivers (ABD)

The Alliance of British Drivers was formed from a merger of the Association of British Drivers and the Drivers Alliance. The ABD is the leading independent organisation which represents the interests of private motorists in the United Kingdom. We campaign to protect the rights of individual road users and believe that road transport is a beneficial and essential element in the UK transport infrastructure. We oppose excessive taxation of motorists and are against tolls and road usage charging. We also campaign for more enlightened road safety policies. The Alliance is a "not for profit" voluntary organisation which is financially supported primarily by its individual members. More information on the ABD is available from our web site at www.abd.org.uk

Local London Contacts	Contact Person	Borough	E-Mail
Note that the ABD maintains a list of members who are familiar with individual London boroughs and may be able to help with information on local issues in those boroughs. The current list is to the right.	Les Alden	Southwark	LHA@looksouth.net
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This Newsletter is published by the London Region of the Alliance of British (A.B.D.), PO Box 62, Chislehurst, Kent, BR7 5YB and is distributed free of charge to ABD Members in the London area and to anyone else who has an interest in traffic and transport issues in London. All material contained herein is Copyright of the A.B.D. or of the respective authors and may only be reproduced with permission. Any opinions expressed herein are solely those of the author of the article or that of the Editor which do not necessarily represent the official policies of the A.B.D. The ABD London Region also publishes a blog which can be found here: <https://abdlondon.wordpress.com/>



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