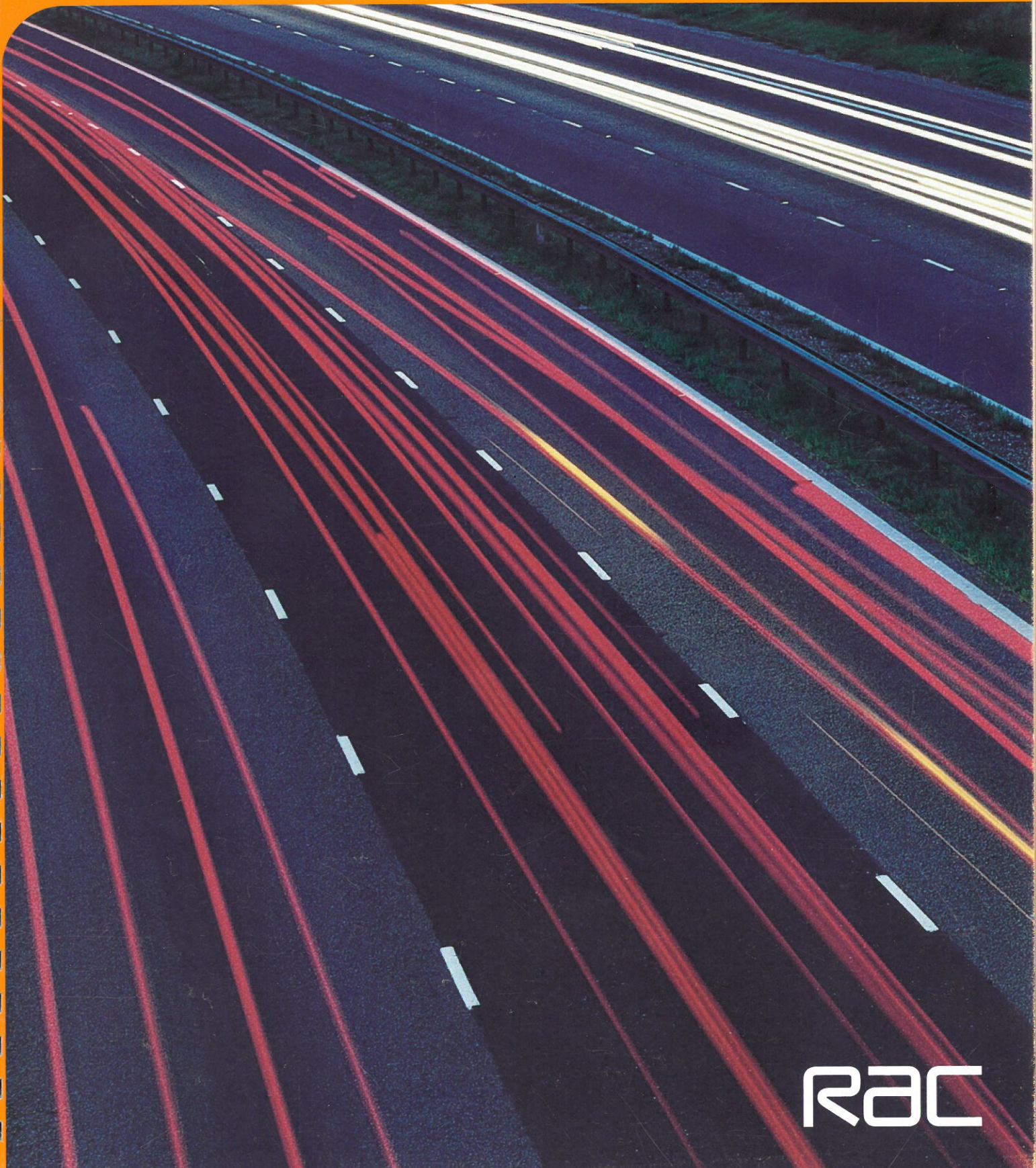


RAC Report on Motoring 2005

The agony and ecstasy of driving



RAC

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This report was prepared for RAC by Mark Carpenter and his team at Morpace International under the editorial control of Rebecca Bell, Head of Public Relations at RAC plc.

RAC plc is a unique support services company providing a comprehensive range of motoring and vehicle solutions to individual and business customers. The company has 11,500 employees in more than 350 locations across the UK, large and small. The company provides service to customers through RAC Consumer Services, RAC Business Solutions, Lex Vehicle Leasing and Manufacturer Support Services.

RAC supports its seven million individual and business customers with breakdown cover and a wide range of other individual motoring solutions. RAC was ranked "No. 1 Roadside Assistance Provider in Customer Satisfaction" in the J.D. Power and Associates 2004 UK Roadside StudySM. Study based on responses from 23,641 owners and drivers of 51 and 02 registered vehicles who required roadside assistance. www.jdpower.com.

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The RAC Report on Motoring 2005: The agony and ecstasy of driving

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Foreword by David Jamieson, Roads Minister

There are 30 million vehicles on our roads and as the findings of the 2005 RAC Report on Motoring confirms, the private car is becoming ever more central to the daily lives of many people.

Most drivers are careful, considerate and responsible. The UK has one of the best road safety records in the world, but with an average of 100 people still seriously injured or killed on our roads every day, there is still considerable room for improvement.

In 2000, we set a challenging target of a 40% reduction in fatal and serious road casualties by 2010 and good progress has been made. By 2003 the number of people killed or seriously injured had fallen by 22%, which means we are already halfway towards our 40% target.

The goal for children was to cut deaths and serious injuries by 50% and we have made particularly good progress, already achieving a 40% reduction.

However, what I found disturbing in this report is that over half the people surveyed admitted to speeding every day with a fifth admitting to drink driving. There are also worrying numbers of drivers with other very dangerous driving habits such as jumping red lights, using hand held phones and confessing to bouts of road rage.

This behaviour is frequently the cause of collisions and road deaths. We need to encourage people to recognise the risks associated with driving, and to act accordingly. We can reduce stress, and make driving more fun, if we all drive safely and responsibly.

We continue to encourage a change in the attitude of drivers through the THINK! advertising campaigns. Currently, we are running a major initiative which focuses on speeding.

Research shows that excessive speed is the single biggest cause of road fatalities. Safety cameras are now making a significant contribution in reducing death and injury. Independent research shows a 40% reduction in the number of people killed or seriously injured at camera sites.

Yet a third of the motorists surveyed in this report say one of their top three wishes is to have all safety cameras removed.

Speeding has consequences that we must not ignore. There are still too many motorists who think they have the inalienable right to drive as fast as they like, wherever they choose.

Tell this to the parents, partners or children of the 3,500 people who die on our roads every year, to say nothing of the 35,000 who are seriously injured. Each and every death or serious injury represents a terrible personal tragedy for many others.

At the time of writing, the Road Safety Bill is progressing through Parliament. This is an important piece of legislation which is designed to tackle problems such as speeding and drink driving along with other offences including tax and insurance evasion.

This will be done through a range of measures – such as graduated fixed penalties that better fit the degree of the offence and increased powers for the police, for example, the ability to carry out evidential roadside testing for suspected drink driving.

Roads policing is very central to preventing road accidents and criminal activity. In January, my Department together with Association of Chief Police Officers and the Home Office published a Joint Statement, reinforcing our commitment to pro-active roads policing.

In addition to reducing road casualties, we want to deny criminals use of the roads by enforcing the law. We also want to combat anti-social driving and enhance public confidence through high profile policing.

As the findings of the survey confirm, we all like to believe that our own standard of driving is beyond reproach. We would prefer to think that somebody else's bad behaviour is the cause of accidents.

In fact, the onus to drive sensibly and safely is upon us all.



David Jamieson
Roads Minister

Foreword by Andrew Harrison, Chief Executive, RAC plc

On behalf of RAC plc, I am delighted to introduce the 2005 RAC Report on Motoring, the 17th of our annual series of reports into the condition of Britain's roads and the perceptions of those who use them.

Our investigation into the agony and ecstasy of driving shows that the days of an enjoyable Sunday afternoon drive or a jam-free motorway journey from A to B are long gone. The average motorist now experiences congestion, road rage, close shaves and accidents with alarming regularity. But gladly, some motorists still report a heartening level of enjoyment from owning and driving their cars; quite a large number do seem to consider their car as their pride and joy, believing that the model they choose says something about them or that they value their car in the same way they might a close friend. For these motorists, the car they buy is far more than a commodity; it is something to be cherished, enjoyed and admired.

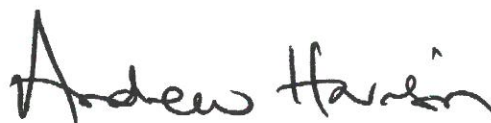
This said, much of the Report investigates the road environment and how the behaviour of Britain's 28 million motorists can make our roads a frustrating and sometimes dangerous place. Of course, many of the problems that we suffer are little more than irritating. Others, such as drivers speeding over the limit or drink driving are far more alarming and dangerous. It is these behaviours that our Report seeks to focus on.

It's clear that the Government's current transport strategy is also focused on improving road safety; November 2004's Road Safety Bill made clear the Department for Transport's commitment to tackling the major factors that cause accidents. This is important because despite the UK's good safety record when compared to our international counterparts there are still 10 people dying and many more who are seriously injured every day on the roads.

The sheer scale of death and serious injury is sobering, particularly when one considers that many of the accidents that occur are linked to dangerous or careless behaviour. Whether it's speeding, drink driving or driving whilst using a hand-held mobile phone, our research shows a significant proportion of motorists admitting with candour to behaviour which is both illegal and dangerous to themselves and others.

To understand how to tackle this complex web of behaviours, we need to understand that there is no such thing as 'the British motorist'. With 28 million people regularly driving on our roads we cannot expect the same behaviour from each of them. Our Report identifies seven strands of motoring 'DNA' which all motorists exhibit to some degree. From this, we have focused on six major driver typologies, some of which prove to be more dangerous and challenging than others when it comes to how they drive.

Our Report focuses on the behaviour of the most dangerous typologies by testing which mix of penalty, enforcement and educational campaigns might result in positive improvements to driving standards and so provide a context for continuing policy debate. My hope is that this Report will contribute to future thinking around this complex and contentious topic, in an effort to make our driving experiences more enjoyable in years to come.



Andrew Harrison, Chief Executive
RAC plc

Summary

Car dependency is now at its highest level since RAC began monitoring it 17 years ago. Now nine in 10 motorists would find it very difficult to adjust their lifestyles to being without a car and admit to using their car every single day. With the average motorist clocking up nearly 11,000 miles per year and almost half of them being part of a two car family, it's clear that the car has a pivotal role in British life. But with this dependency and in order to retain an individual's 'right to drive' comes a trade-off; owning and using a car is often far from being fun and enjoyable. It comes with various frustrations and some considerable dangers, which if we are to attempt to mitigate, need to be tackled in a concerted way. This Report focuses on how we might do that in order to bring more enjoyment back to driving.

The majority of British motorists are underwhelmed by car ownership, considering their vehicle to be 'just another household appliance' which they are increasingly dependent upon in daily life. Smaller proportions confess to a more emotional bond, with 22% considering their car to be 'a toy to have some fun with', 24% as 'something impressive to be seen in' and 29% 'a close friend or confidante'. Not surprisingly, it is the younger, 'flashier' drivers who are most likely to consider their cars in one of these ways; older and low mileage drivers are far more ambivalent. With this in mind, it figures that many motorists think driving is a drag; 44% of them believe that 'All the fun has gone out of driving these days' and only 14% disagree strongly with this sentiment. Again, it is younger drivers who find motoring most fun (perhaps because passing their test represents a taste of real freedom and adulthood), a factor that diminishes slightly the more points one gains on one's licence for driving offences.

Our sample was not uniform in identifying the types of thing that make driving tough or irritating; when offered the choice of 10 factors that would make driving more enjoyable the vote was split. However, the top three choices were: making middle and fast lane hogging a driving offence, removing speed bumps and removing all speed cameras. These choices point to a reality on our roads – drivers are individuals and in most cases consider their motoring experiences selfishly rather than with the good of all road users in mind. These results also suggest that other motorists' selfish behaviour is most annoying to them, followed closely by initiatives that place restrictions on their own driving speed.

But it is in looking at the entirety of the picture rather than individual behaviours that allows us to understand some of the problems, frustrations and agonies that motorists face. Though congestion and selfish driving may be annoying they are nowhere near as critical as tackling the problems that result in nearly 300,000 deaths and serious injuries on our roads every year, a good proportion of which are caused by speeding or drink driving, and increasingly other offences of dangerous driving.

In order to understand how and why some drivers commit these types of dangerous offences, we need to understand the main traits that make drivers tick. The RAC Report on Motoring has identified seven key traits that are present to different degrees in each driver. The Report then describes six major typologies which make up the vast majority of British motorists, demonstrating that though some of them pose few significant road safety risks, others are far more inclined to drive dangerously, recklessly and to habitually break motoring laws. The two worst offending groups are made up of young and middle aged male drivers who either see driving as a game or as necessity where it's easy to transgress the law and not get caught if you're clever about it. By reaching these motorists and seeking to change their behaviours we might improve this country's road safety record, whilst at the same time improving standards amongst other motorists, many of whom admit to frequent minor infringements.

Although 84% of our sample considered themselves to be law-abiding, 55% admit to exceeding the speed limit a little every day. Compared to last year's Report, we have seen a significant increase in the admission of lawless behaviour, with speeding being the most common offence. This has come at the same time as record numbers of speeding convictions that have been made by Police and Safety Camera Partnerships suggesting that detection has improved. Public awareness campaigns have sought to demonstrate the fact that dangerous and inappropriate speeding kills. The defiant admission of speeding behaviour by our sample has also corresponded with some anger about the use of cameras for speed policing. Few motorists consider that the current regime will make them slow down or stick to the speed limit as a matter of course; our more fervent speeders would respond to more traffic Police or a 'big brother' system where their movements are monitored by an in-car electronic device. A mixture of human detection and high-tech monitoring could be used to clamp down on dangerous speeders. If increased penalties were

introduced to attempt to deter perpetual and dangerous speeders, schemes would have to be rather draconian to effect a major behavioural change, for example, instant driving bans or prison sentences. As these penalties seem unrealistic and politically unacceptable it may be that improved enforcement and detection would be the most appropriate means with which to experiment, together with education schemes, such as driver retraining and speed awareness. At the same time, motorist goodwill could be fostered by donating the balance of revenue relating to fines to a road safety fund rather than it going to the Treasury. Finally, given that the Report suggests that the worst offenders might be 'named and shamed' into better behaviour, a requirement for displaying their penalty points on their windscreen might lead to an improvement in behaviour.

Drink and drug driving remain considerable problems for law enforcers and policy makers to address. Amongst some, particularly younger age groups, this behaviour is on the increase so concerted action needs to be taken to halt this worrying trend. 20% of the sample admitted to drink driving, with by far the highest incidence coming amongst young, male drivers in London. Given the fact that drink driving is largely socially unacceptable and hard-hitting education campaigns have been in existence now for many years, it's perhaps unsurprising that perpetual drink drivers would only change their behaviour if a technical solution, like an alcolock, was to prevent their car starting or if they felt the real likelihood of being caught was far greater than it currently is. Therefore, serious focus should go into the development of alcolock devices; fitting them as standard in passenger vehicles could certainly be a cheaper solution than the enforcement resources that might be necessary to make motorists believe that they have a good chance of being stopped on any journey. Only very severe penalty regimes such as lifetime or long-term driving bans would have the same impact on behaviour as the alcolock, though there could be a role for 'naming and shaming' offenders or reducing the current legal alcohol limit. Better roadside detection methods would certainly help crack down on the worrying increase in drug driving, whilst continued education is essential to communicate the dangers of both drink and drug driving.

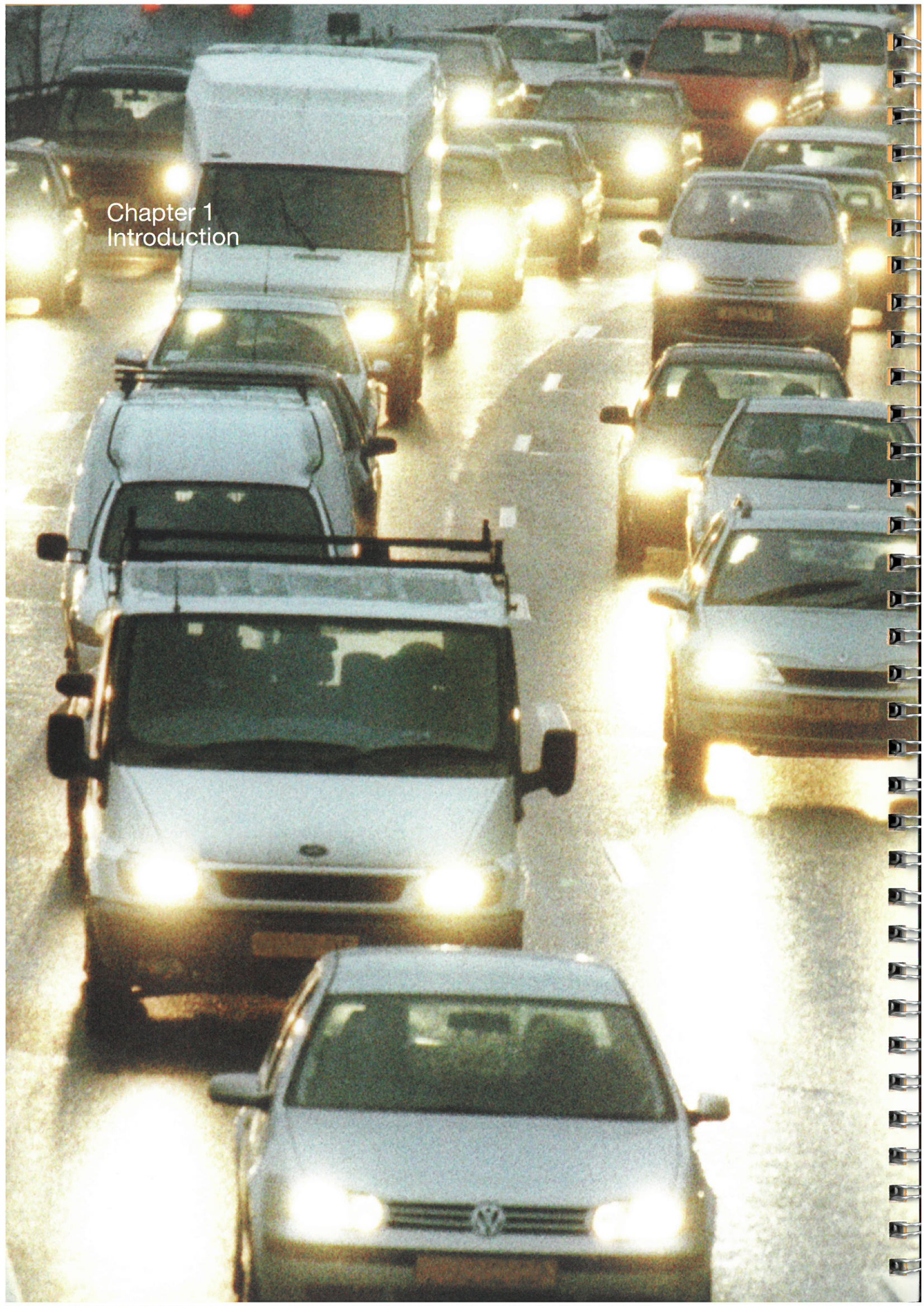
Beyond the sphere of the most dangerous driving habits are a number of anti-social traits, some of which can and do lead to accidents. Interestingly, though motorists consider transgressions like driving with a hand-held mobile phone to be dangerous if committed

by other drivers, many consider their own driving skills to be beyond reproach; 76% believe themselves to be safer than other drivers. These attitudes are perhaps symptomatic of today's 'me' society. This said, worrying numbers of motorists admit to a range of poor and dangerous habits ranging from jumping red lights, undertaking and blocking junctions to road rage, using a hand-held mobile and cutting people up. Few consider this behaviour to be serious or dangerous, particularly as they rarely get caught. Yet again, it would take a radical increase in detection and more stringent penalties for this sort of behaviour to change. An enhanced commitment to highly visible road Policing, announced by the Transport Minister, the Home Office and the Association of Chief Police Officers in January 2005, is an important step towards providing an active deterrent. Education also has a part to play to remind the worst offenders what's legal and the impact of their discourteous and often dangerous behaviour.

Illegal parking is rarely dangerous to other road users but it is a source of frustration for motorists, many of whom believe that there are too few legal spaces available and far too stringent and draconian an enforcement regime. RAC believes that this source of motorist agony has received enough penalty and enforcement focus and that more attention should now be paid to more serious transgressions, such as a failure by large numbers of motorists to keep their vehicle documentation up to date. Those guilty of this are creating a growing motoring 'underclass' whose actions often cost law-abiding motorists dearly as a result of collisions with uninsured or unroadworthy vehicles. Whilst this behaviour certainly needs to be dealt with in the most concerted fashion, a considerable number (11%) of usually law-abiding motorists do admit to some dishonesty when it comes to gaining an insurance quote by lying about where the car is parked overnight. Could it be that the cost of certain motoring-related charges is just too much for drivers facing increasing numbers of parking and speeding fines and rising fuel costs?

The Report demonstrates the wide range of issues facing drivers, Government and law enforcers when it comes to dealing with the often hectic and challenging reality that is our British road network. Our hope is that some of the insights it gives into motorists' instincts will help policy makers as they develop strategies of penalty, detection and education and explore preventative measures, particularly those available through in-car technology, to reduce the incidence of bad and dangerous behaviour and make our roads a more enjoyable environment for all to use.

Chapter 1
Introduction



Introduction

As we become increasingly dependent on our cars to go about our professional and social lives, there can be few reasonable people who would not acknowledge that as well as being pivotal – even essential – to most people's daily lives the car can also be the cause of considerable agonies to its owner and even to society as a whole. The good old days of taking pleasure in a Sunday afternoon drive or enjoying the freedom of the open road seem to be lost to most of us. It would seem that few drivers are able to boast any sense of enjoyment – or ecstasy – in driving or owning a car with congestion, accidents, pollution, fines and various anxieties taking their toll on many of the UK's motorists.

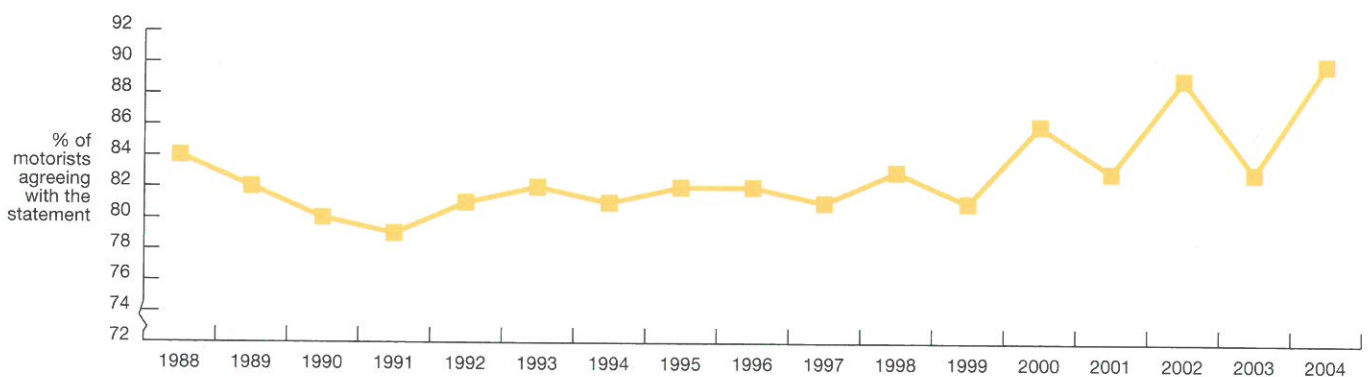
The dependency that British drivers have on their cars is illustrated in the 2005 RAC Report on Motoring by the fact that 90% of motorists agree that they would find it difficult to adjust their lifestyle to being without a car. As Figure 1 demonstrates, car dependency has been creeping ever higher since RAC began producing this Report 16 years ago. Despite a minor downward blip last year (due mainly to the introduction of the London Congestion Charge), dependency is back up to its highest point ever.

It comes as little surprise therefore, that actual car usage behaviour supports this attitude with almost 9 in 10 of Britain's motorists admitting to using their car every day. The typical British motorist drives over 10,600 miles a year with commuting accounting for approximately 40% of this distance, demonstrating the impact that economic growth and trends have had on car use. Amongst people using their car for business, the annual average mileage is almost double the national norm at 20,400 miles per annum.

Just under half (47%) of Britain's motorists currently have two or more cars in their household and the results indicate that the intent is to acquire more cars within the next 12 months – 53% of respondents anticipate owning more than one car within the next 12 months.

And for the privilege of using Britain's roads, motorists contribute £32 billion in fuel duties and £2.6 billion in vehicle excise duty alone. The total tax bill for Britain's motorists is more than £42 billion when of course the total amount of investment into roads and other transport systems is far less than this amount.

Figure 1
Motorists agreeing with the statement:
"I would find it very difficult to adjust
my lifestyle to being without a car"



Source: RAC Report on Motoring 2005

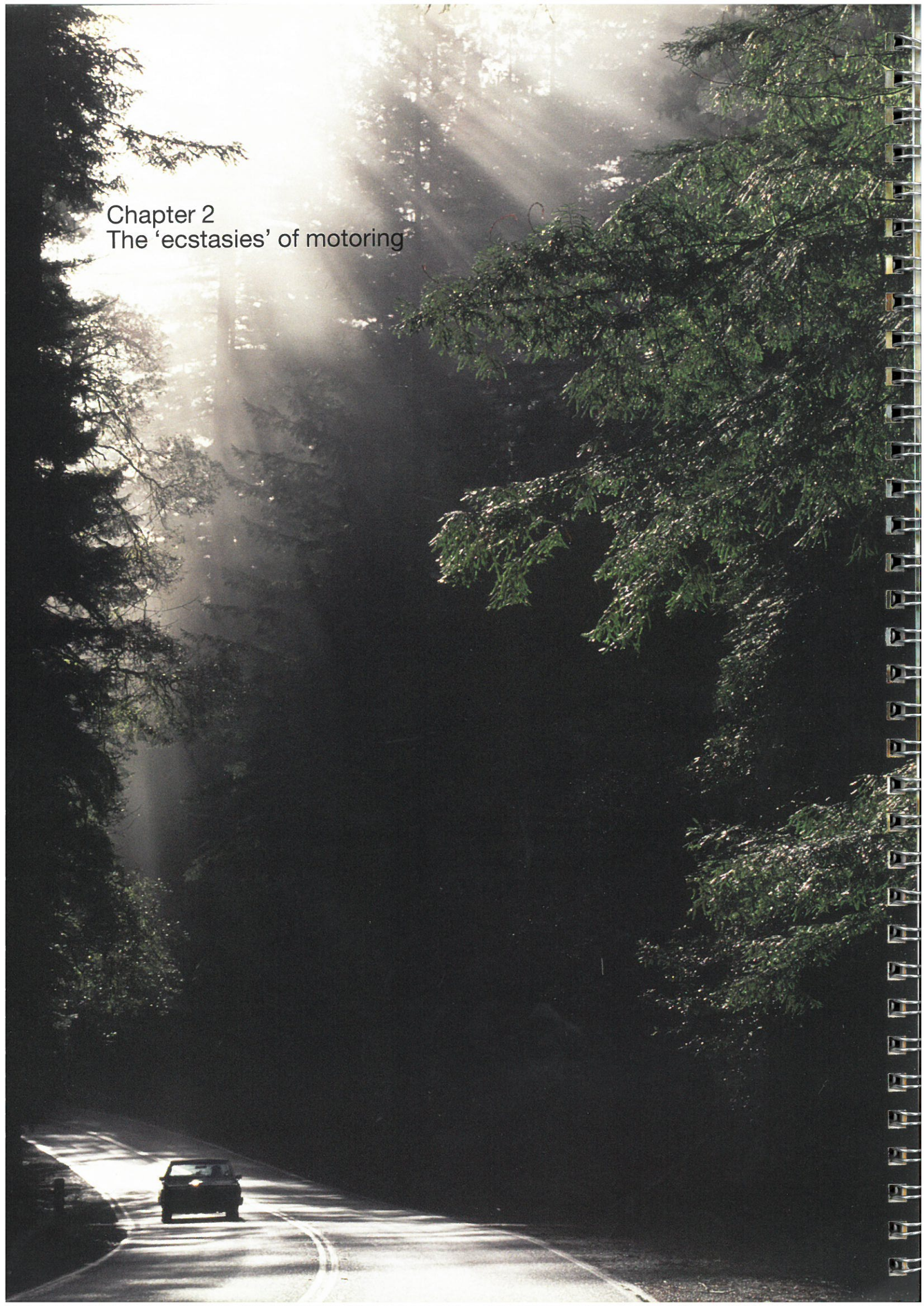
1.1 The agony and ecstasy of driving

It is clear that our profound dependency on the car brings with it agonies and sometimes some rare ecstasy. In the 2005 RAC Report on Motoring we look at both sides of this relationship. In the context of ecstasy, we uncover the nature of the relationship that the British motorist has with his or her car. We also make an attempt to understand what would help deliver more driving ecstasy by granting the British motorist three wishes in order to improve his or her lot on the road. What is clear is that there is an appetite amongst drivers for a return to some semblance of the joy of motoring that they associate with past times.

This said, the agonies of driving seem to be never too far from front of mind. In the 2004 RAC Report on Motoring we focused on the financial cost of motoring and its relationship to our congestion problems. While these aspects of car ownership can be painful, the true 'agonies' of motoring lie in the dangers and other costs – both human and those relating to property – that are caused by different types of illegal driving behaviours. Speeding, drink and drug driving, uninsured driving and theft or damage to vehicles all create at the very least major inconvenience and at worst death or serious injury to road users.

A major area of focus in the 2005 RAC Report on Motoring is on identifying the incidence of driving offences and the psychological, demographic and autographic profile of offenders. Most significantly, we try to provide some insights into how best to seriously reduce or eradicate these behaviours and practices either by detection, penalty, or education or a combination of all three so that we can adjust the current imbalance between the agony and ecstasy of motoring. This is clearly in line with current Government and legislative thinking; the Road Safety Bill announced in November 2004 demonstrates clear transport policy priorities around making our road network a safer place. It will be seen that the UK has some of the safest roads in Europe and it is very clear that respective authorities are making major (and in many cases successful) efforts to reduce motoring crimes. One of our objectives with this Report has been to investigate a range of new and sometimes radical suggestions to see how they resonate with motorists. This is much easier to do in a study such as this, and considerably harder to implement in the 'real world'. Although we would not necessarily advocate the implementation of some of the more radical initiatives supported by some of our sample, we hope that directionally, the 2005 RAC Report on Motoring points to what might be fresh thinking for the UK's road safety and transport policy and provide some context for future debate.

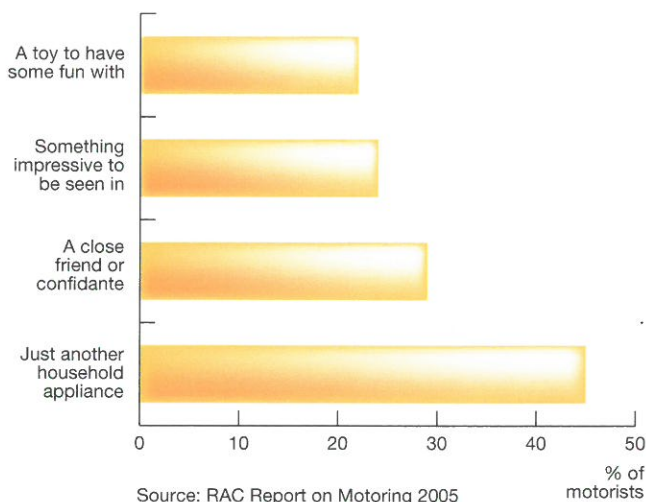
Chapter 2
The 'ecstasies' of motoring



2.1 How do British motorists relate to their cars?

It is clear that British motorists are very committed to their cars. The results of the 2005 RAC Report on Motoring suggest that the nature of the relationship can vary quite considerably. For some there is a profound emotional bond. Others view cars in a far more dispassionate way as no more than a family tool. Figure 2 indicates that while just under half of all British motorists view their car in a very rational manner i.e. as 'just another household appliance,' for some the car clearly fulfils a number of other deeper emotional roles that go beyond merely transporting them from A to B.

Figure 2
How do British motorists think about their cars?



Drivers of executive and luxury cars are more likely to view their cars as something impressive to be seen in, with 43% and 52% of these groups respectively expressing this opinion. This sentiment extends into the company car domain with 34% of business expense car owners viewing their vehicles with the same role in mind. The results indicate that 33% of drivers in the 17-34 age group also view their car as equivalent to a smart set of clothes in which to be seen. New car buyers are also more likely to consider their car as something impressive to be seen in, perhaps because much of the ecstasy of owning a car comes in selecting and buying it – when you first get in to a shiny new car and take in the distinctive smell of a flawless interior. This excitement does not necessarily extend into a car's ongoing use.

At the other end of the emotional spectrum there is a suggestion that emotional engagement with the vehicle can in part be related to the extent of car usage. Those who view their car as 'just another household appliance' are more likely to be low mileage drivers (54% of drivers who travel less than 6,000 miles agree with this statement), as are owners of lower medium cars (with 50% agreeing to this statement) and interestingly, drivers in Scotland (again with 50% agreeing to this statement).

Clearly the emotional role of the car diminishes a little as we get older – 52% of over 55's agreed that their car was 'just another household appliance' while only 34% of 17-35 year olds shared the same opinion. This characteristic might suggest that there comes a point in one's life when car buying is more about what the vehicle will do for you rather than what is says about you.

Our research suggests that the role of 'close friend or confidante' is determined more by the nature of the car than the demographic characteristics of the driver. There are few differences in the number of male or female or younger or older drivers that share this opinion. However, 62% of sports car owners see their car in this role as do 41% of luxury saloon owners and 33% of owners whose cars are over 10 years old (where the car is perhaps seen as reliable and familiar). In all three of the latter instances, it is possible to conclude that the car fulfils a niche character role with whom the owner enjoys interacting.

The expectation of the car being a 'toy' in which to have 'some fun' seems strongly related to age. While 33% of 17-34 years olds hold such a view, this proportion diminishes steadily until we reach the 55+ age group where only 13% are looking to get their kicks in this way. It is clear that the type of car plays a role in this inclination as well. Perhaps predictably, 61% of sports car owners agree with this sentiment, but executive saloon (37%) executive (39%) and 4x4 owners (38%) also appear to share the same twinkle in their eye when it comes to thinking about or describing their attitude to their car.

2.2 Is motoring fun any more?

Given the levels of congestion and taxation that the British motorist experiences these days, it would not be a major surprise if the vast majority of respondents agreed with the statement: 'All the fun has gone out of driving these days'. Although figure 3 below indicates that on balance, motorists tend to agree with this sentiment, it is clear that about one third of drivers specifically disagree with the statement, and as such, seem not to view the driving environment with such pessimism.

The results indicate that younger people are more likely to look positively on their driving experiences with 39% of 17-34 year olds disagreeing with the statement. As only 25% of this group agreed that all the fun had gone out of driving, it can be seen that the balance of opinion amongst younger drivers is distinctly towards a positive perspective – a characteristic that is wholly consistent with the far greater emotional intensity that this group invests in relation to their cars.

It is perhaps easy to understand the excitement and enthusiasm that younger people attach to motoring. Above and beyond the nature of the relationship they share with their car, other recent research from BSM has shown that passing the driving test and car ownership figure very prominently on the route to growing up. While in their younger years notable events involved changing schools, school trips and even teeth braces, car usage stands for many at the threshold of adulthood. Ritualistically and functionally, the car represents to young people a long-yearned-for freedom and independence, a sense of power and control that was never accessible before.

Amongst older people, where some of the novelty of car ownership has been eroded, the fun of motoring is an almost romantic vision prompting images of wind through the hair and driving at (responsible) speed amidst picturesque scenery. Man and machine in perfect harmony is admittedly a well-worn cliché but remains the aspiration of those who rejoice in the skill of driving and who perhaps enjoyed driving in long-past less congested days. While the daily commute is some considerable distance from such images, there are those who enjoy the skill of driving and specifically take a longer route in order to put the car and themselves through their paces.

It is perhaps interesting to note that the presence of penalty points on drivers' licences would not seem to have a major bearing on their view of driving as fun. While 44% of the total sample agreed that driving fun has disappeared, 47% of those with points agreed with the statement. If the acquisition of points had served to put a major black cloud across the driver's blue sky, we might have expected to see much higher shares of points holders agreeing with the statement. This perhaps suggests that these drivers are almost philosophical about receiving the penalty and as such accept it as an occupational hazard of their driving style.

Figure 3
Motorists responding to the statement:
'All the fun has gone out of driving these days'

	Disagree Strongly	Disagree Slightly	Neither/ Nor	Agree Slightly	Agree Strongly
'All the fun has gone out of driving these days'	14%	17%	26%	28%	16%

Source: RAC Report on Motoring 2005

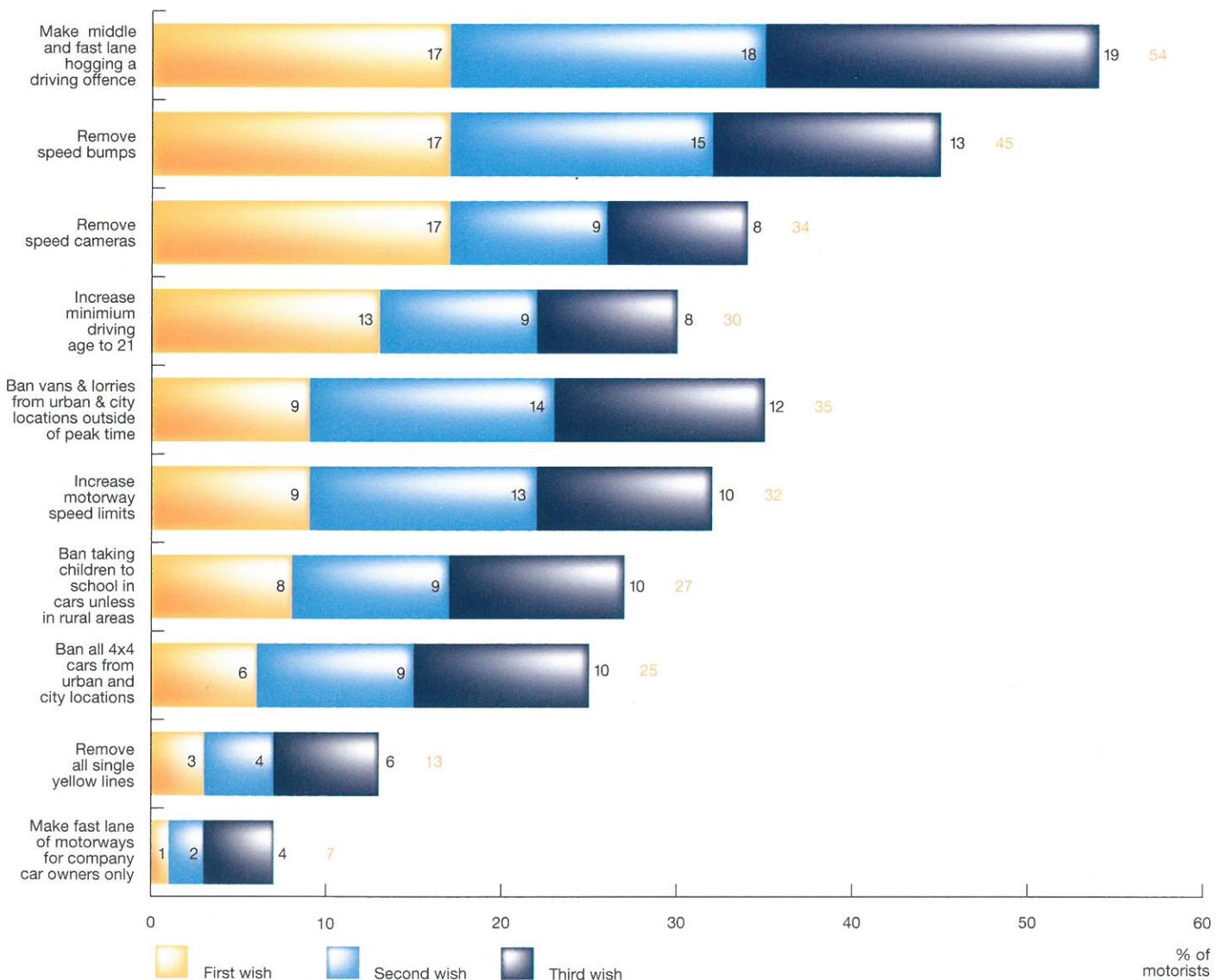
2.3 Granting 'three wishes' to the British motorist

As we have seen, our representative sample of British drivers does not have too much to speak of when it comes to discussing the ecstasy of motoring. In order to consider how we might improve the lot of the British motorist, our sample was invited to choose from a list of possible initiatives, selecting three wishes for improving the experience of driving. In taking a look at the results, it does not follow that when presented with such an opportunity, motorists would necessarily choose the initiatives that are best for society or road safety as a whole, but rather the things that they personally would like to see to make their own driving experiences better or more enjoyable.

Some of the initiatives we presented were deliberately provocative and a little 'tongue in cheek' but they still unearth some revealing underlying attitudes. Figure 4 illustrates the share of motorists choosing each initiative as first, second or third choice. In showing all three choices, we can identify the priority issues (as inferred by the share of first choice) as well as overall support for a particular suggestion.

Three initiatives attract precisely the same share of first choice: 'Make middle and fast lane hogging a driving offence', 'Remove speed bumps' and 'Remove all speed cameras'. This is an illuminating finding given that all three of the top three wishes relate to a desire to drive faster and avoid hold-ups. This is perhaps borne of a wide-spread frustration relating to the car in front, and the fact that when faced with the open road, devices like speed cameras seek to limit a motorist's progress. It also reveals motorists' general response to the reality of congestion that many of them face on a daily basis.

Figure 4
Granting 'three wishes' to the British motorist



Source: RAC Report on Motoring 2005

The desire to remove speed bumps and speed cameras does not necessarily come as a major surprise but of course, neither does it follow that the patient is better than the doctor at choosing his own medicine. Although some British motorists might feel that the abolition of speed bumps and cameras might give them a more comfortable ride – mentally and physically – there is plenty of evidence to suggest that the installation of such devices has given real comfort and improved road safety for many communities where the incidence of speeding has endangered life.

Speed cameras

Removal of speed cameras was clearly the fervent wish of a number of company car owners with 26% putting this initiative at the top of their wish list. In Chapter 5 of this report we highlight some of the reasons why their wish is unlikely to be granted, and point out how effective speed cameras can be both within immediate detection range and within the surrounding environment.

Middle lane hogging

What is perhaps of greater surprise is the prominence of support for the statement: 'Make middle and fast lane hogging a driving offence'. It is the number of motorists putting this particular wish in second and third place that serves to make it the most popular initiative overall. Motorists in Scotland and the North were most likely to put this initiative in first place with 29% and 21% respectively making this selection. The particular sensitivity to this issue in these regions may be related to the fact that they have a comparatively small number of motorways, perhaps making drivers in this area more sensitive to poor motorway discipline and etiquette.

Speed bumps

It is interesting to note that 30% of drivers whose cars are aged 10 years or over made the removal of speed bumps their first choice, pointing to the fact that the quality of many older cars' suspension does not make travelling over a speed bump a comfortable experience!

Censuring other motorists

A number of the initiatives served to regulate or restrict particular driver types that populate our roads. We did not expect large numbers of respondents to advocate designation of motorway lanes for the sole use of company car owners; in fairness, only 1% of motorists in this group selected this option. It is unsurprising, however, to see notable enthusiasm for the discriminatory regulation of some other groups. The results indicate that increasing the minimum driving age to 21 years would be popular with almost one third of all British motorists. It is interesting to note that the call for increasing the minimum driving age is more closely related to attitudinal rather than the demographic characteristics of a motorist. The results indicate that we would be wrong to assume it is simply older drivers who would find such a regulation popular; just 32% of respondents over 55 years nominated this initiative amongst their three wishes indicating a level that is broadly consistent with the sample as a whole. As we will see in Chapter 4, there is a group of motorists who consider themselves to be very law abiding while at the same time questioning the driving standards of others. The results indicate that 43% of this group nominated an increase in the minimum driving age as one of their three wishes. Driving training experts from BSM doubt the potential effectiveness of such a strategy; they consider any minor differences in attitude and

maturity between 17 and 21 year olds to be immaterial to driver behaviour once the driving test has been passed; any new driver is more likely to have an accident in the first year of driving due to their inexperience in different driving conditions and road types. In general, as you get older, it takes longer for you to master driving as a skill; on average you require an extra two driving lessons for every year you age so a 21 year old may require at least eight more lessons than an average 17 year old to become a competent driver. Another concern is that if one was to raise the legal driving age one might find greater numbers of those driving without a licence or uninsured, which of course would be an extremely unwelcome side-effect. Over one third of motorists would welcome larger commercial vehicles being banned from the roads at times other than peak periods, though RAC doubts the same people would welcome a poor supply of goods in shops as a possible consequence of this approach.

The fact that 42% of Britain's motorists consider young males to be the worst drivers on the road is largely borne out by national research that demonstrates that these drivers are most likely to drink drive, speed and drive uninsured. Our research also indicates that our sample tended to favour principles that would perhaps benefit them as individual drivers, but not necessarily the population as a whole. This finding relates to the sociological phenomenon of the 'free rider principle' that was uncovered in the 2004 RAC Report on Motoring; an individual motorist is unlikely to amend his or her driving behaviour to become more selfless, courteous or responsible if they think nobody else will do the same. But without a large-scale change in driving behaviour, few motorists are likely to consider their experiences on the road as fun or enjoyable.

Speed limits

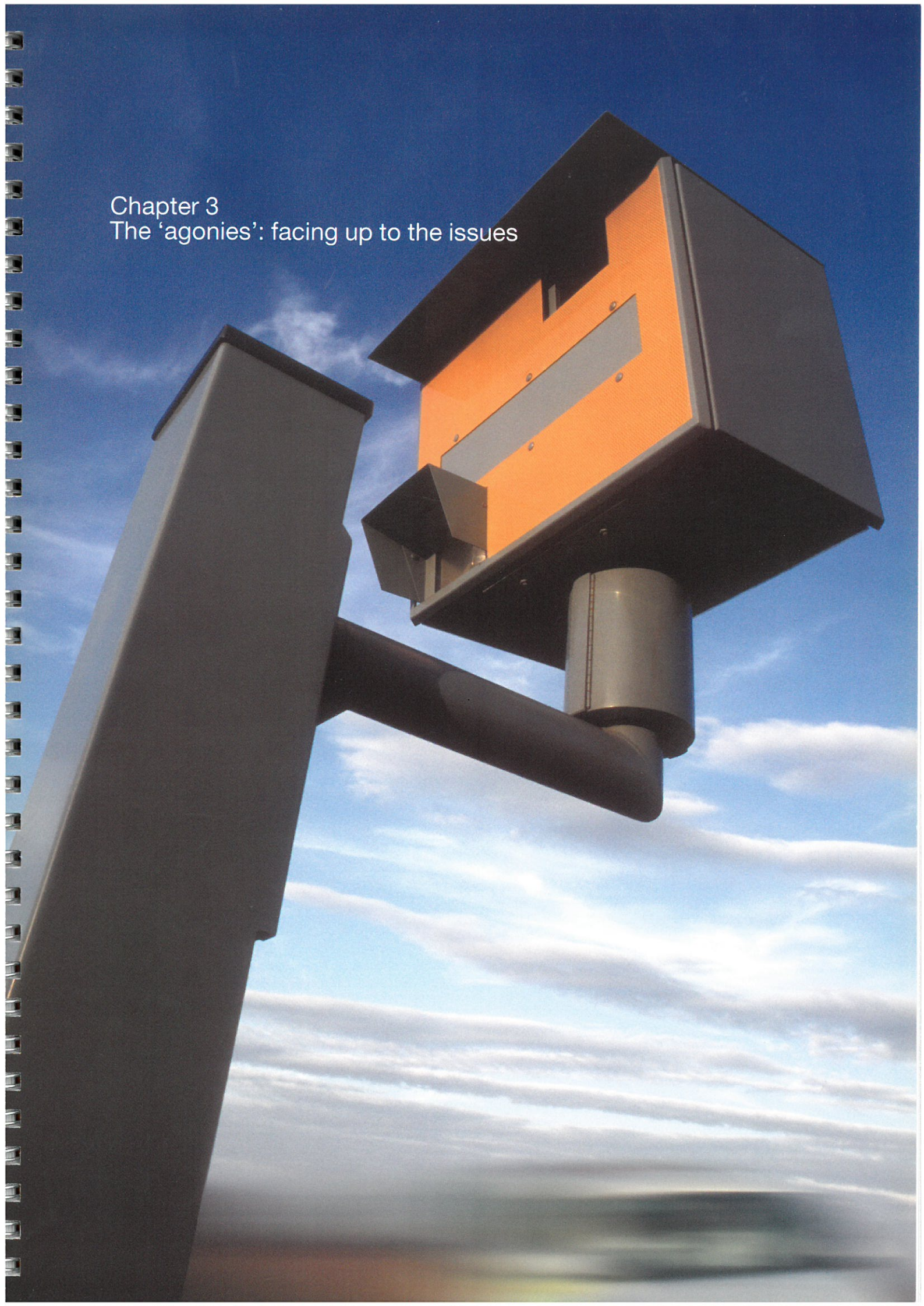
It is perhaps a little surprising that calls for increasing the speed limit on motorways did not figure more prominently amongst our sample's three wishes, although for company car drivers (17% of whom selected this as their first choice wish) and owners of luxury and bigger engined cars this was predictably a bigger issue. It is interesting to speculate whether this apparent lack of demand for an increase in the speed limit is a function of the 'speed kills' message actually getting through, or whether motorists feel they can already exceed the limit with impunity if they wish to, thus rendering a change to the law irrelevant.

Censuring drivers of specific vehicle types

Around the world – and in some parts of the UK in particular – there has been a backlash to the growing popularity of large 4x4 vehicles. Such vehicles have attracted a bad press concerning their potential environmental impact and pedestrian safety record, resulting in calls for censure. The results indicate that, in the UK, motorists are more inclined to seek a ban on cars travelling on the school run in non-rural locations than specifically to seek to penalise or ban 4x4 off-road vehicles. As mentioned before, it is apparent that the British motorist's field of vision is more likely to focus on fixing things happening within their immediate environment rather than considering 'bigger picture' policy issues.

Having provided an insight into the driving-related factors that might improve the lot of the individual British motorist, it is clear that there is no one catch-all formula that would please everyone of the 28 million drivers in this country. Each driver is an individual with his own habits and patterns of car usage. As we go on to see in Chapter 4 of this Report, different initiatives resonate more strongly with some types of motorist than others; but first, we should turn our attention to the issues that make our driving experiences, at the very least uncomfortable and, at the worst, agonising.

Chapter 3
The 'agonies': facing up to the issues



3.1 Road safety: priorities and paradox?

The only driving related pains that the vast majority of British motorists can wholeheartedly relate to are those of financial cost and congestion. Thankfully, only a small minority of our representative sample has either direct or indirect experience of some of the more extreme agonies associated with motoring, such as serious injury and death. If motorists were more sensitised to how widespread these true agonies of motoring really are, then perhaps priorities would change and there might be a greater desire to regulate and eradicate the conditions that cause such problems. Until then, however, it is likely that we will continue to tolerate some rather astonishing paradoxes within the scope of our driving environments.

3.1.1 Do we have our priorities straight?

The people who die on our roads every year would fill 30 commercial airliners.

Although Britain has one of the best records for road safety in the world, Government statistics show that in 2003 there were 290,607 reported casualties on our roads. 3,508 of these (just over 1%) were fatalities; 33,707 (12%) were serious injuries. This means that, every day, 10 people are killed on UK roads, with a further 100 being seriously injured. 15% of those killed or seriously injured are children.

3.1.2 Why the paradox?

A Transport Select Committee was recently advised by a senior Police representative that while a driver who punched another motorist could end up spending five years in prison, he might only get two years in prison for causing more serious injuries while at the wheel of a car.

It is perhaps not difficult to understand the paradox of the disproportionate airtime and public outcry that surrounds rail or airline casualties when much larger numbers of our population are killed or seriously injured on our roads on a daily basis with seemingly little recognition. Rationally, it would be difficult to believe that the British public would be indifferent to or indeed tolerant of human cost on such a scale; are we immune, selectively myopic, or seriously complacent about the threat posed by poor, dangerous and illegal driving habits that happen on our roads every day?

If we are to draw a parallel with another potentially fatal pastime – smoking – it would seem that culturally, smokers are coming under greater social pressure than drivers to curb their irresponsible behaviour. Though there are incidences of good driving behaviour, when driving is after all an essential activity for most, there can be no examples of good smoking, which is an optional activity.

It is interesting to note that while the environmental impact of the car is becoming an increasingly prominent global issue, there is relatively little sustained attention to the immense costs – both human and financial – that result from irresponsible or reckless driving each year. Clearly this is a huge and complicated problem to tackle, requiring multiple interlinking initiatives. This is aptly illustrated by the contents of the Road Safety Bill published by the Transport Minister in November 2004 which demonstrates commitment to dealing with speeding, drink driving and various types of careless and dangerous driving through a number of law changes.

Mr Rob Gifford, Executive Director,
Parliamentary Advisory Committee on
Transport Safety (PACTS)

“Because car accidents happen in ones and twos over a period of time, we tend to be more accepting of them, and there isn’t political pressure on a national level.

As a society we appear to demand absolute safety from rail travel, yet we tolerate risk on the roads. There is limited political will to do anything, because there is no single, simple solution to road problems. We’ve had the quick wins like putting in seat belts and making motorcyclists wear helmets. The next stage is doing what we’re doing, but just a little better, which I accept isn’t politically sexy or headline grabbing.”

3.2 The components and consequences of accidents

The European Federation of Road Traffic Victims affirms that the vast majority of fatal road accidents involve at least one of either speed, alcohol or insufficient protection for a passenger or pedestrian. Significant numbers of drivers, who have not necessarily been involved in accidents, admit to driving when stressed, tired, under the influence of alcohol or drugs, or while using a mobile phone. Police and Transport Research Laboratory research is now underway to thoroughly explain accident causation. In 2000, the Work-related Road Safety Task Group estimated that up to a third of all road traffic accidents involve someone who is at work at the time of the incident.

While some might argue that road accidents and their consequences may not be amongst the most evocative political ‘soapboxes’, even the most calculating politician could not afford to ignore the financial costs behind these statistics. At a time when public spending has rarely been under such scrutiny and return on investment is increasingly coming into focus, it is perhaps worth dwelling on some hard financial facts.

According to the Department for Transport, the value of preventing a single road fatality is calculated (using 2001 casualty figures) at some £1.19 million. This accounts for all costs relating to a fatality, such as Police and Health Service time and resources and costs to an individual or organisation. For a serious injury this figure is some £134,000 and for a slight injury it’s just over £10,000. Preventing a road accident that results only in damage to vehicles is valued at over £1,400. The total value of prevention of all road accidents in 2002 was estimated to have been £17,760 million.

Consequently, the value of preventing even 1% of road casualties in Great Britain in 2001 would be £41million for fatalities, £49.75 million for serious injuries and £27.25million for slight injuries (a total of £118million).

3.3 Detection and punishment

According to the Office for National Statistics for England and Wales, in 2002, a total of 11.8 million motoring offences (11% higher than in 2001) were dealt with by official Police action or the awarding of penalty charge notices. At 7.6 million, the majority (or 64%) of all these offences were 'obstruction, waiting and parking' offences, 14% were speed limit offences (1.7 million) and 10% were 'licence, insurance and record keeping' offences (1.2 million). 1.5 million offences were enforced by cameras.

Approximately 2.1 million of these offences were subject to court proceedings (a figure that was 5% higher than in 2001). There were 184,000 disqualifications for specific motoring offences (up by 11% from 2001) – and 41% of these disqualifications were for a period of time greater than one year. 30,500 motorists were banned from driving in 2002.

Nearly nine in 10 of those found guilty of motoring offences were male; 97% of dangerous driving offences were committed by men.

These statistics suggest that there has been a decline in the quality of driver behaviour. With an absence of voluntary commitment to improving driving standards, we can only seek to make an impact on the attitude and behaviour of British motorists if public authorities make more clever use of the three main tools at their disposal – education, detection and punishment.

In the 2005 RAC Report on Motoring we aim to determine what would need to happen to education, detection and punishment regimes in order to effect a genuine improvement in driver behaviour. We test, albeit attitudinally, reactions to various initiatives – some an evolution of current approaches, others creative or even draconian in emphasis – in an effort to understand how we might change driving behaviour towards safer, more responsible motoring. Coupled with some international case histories that highlight various education, detection and punishment tactics used around the world, we hope to give some directional insight into how to best blend these tools in a manner that will influence the psyche of British drivers. This in turn might result in better road behaviour, and dramatically lower the human and financial cost.

At some point in the debate, the issue of civil liberties invariably comes to the surface. Increased powers of detection and more severe punishments will undoubtedly constitute, for some, a move towards a more controlled state. Our Report highlights a variety of initiatives in use around the world – specifically in countries not generally regarded as overly authoritarian. We will see that some of the international initiatives, that would seem extraordinary by UK standards, have been proved to be quite effective in other countries; but when suggested to British motorists, the threat of such 'draconian' initiatives does not appear to result in a universal change in behaviour.

In striking a balance between reducing the human and financial costs of bad driving, the types of initiative that will bring about improved behaviour, and the sense of protecting civil liberties, we need to reflect very seriously on where our priorities should lie.

It is perhaps a fair argument to say that if a driver is not guilty of any motoring offence then he has nothing to fear from harder enforcement and detection methods, though many motorists questioned for this Report said that it is impossible to drive 100% legally, 100% of the time, however hard you try.

Mr Jeroen Weimar, Director of Transport Policing and Environment, Transport for London

"We fail to spend sufficient resources in educating drivers about the sort of behaviour that is expected of them.

There is a strong case for more effectively linking the type of offence to the resulting damage caused. We should make people understand and recognise the damage their actions cause, to make people face up to the potential consequences of their actions.

We would encourage a more aggressive penalty structure for dangerous driving and multiple offences, rather than just penalising minor infractions.

Drink driving is a deliberate act, and everyone is aware of the danger, but the penalties are comparatively light. If we are serious about sending a message to drivers, we need to get their attention by delivering a serious and significant penalty.

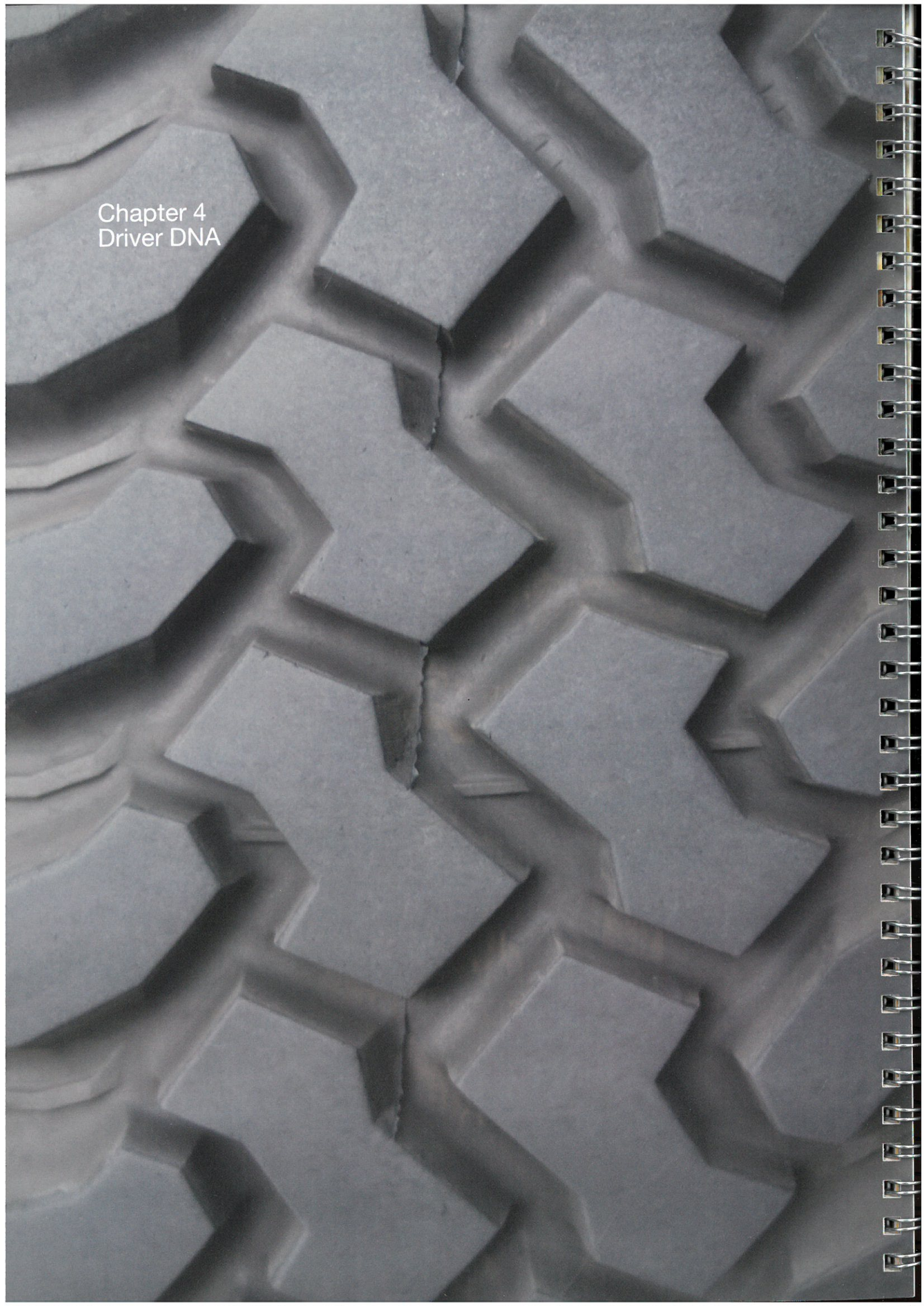
Financial penalties are not always the most effective lever to changing bad driving behaviour; some just see this as a cost of driving, and trade it off against the risk of getting caught.

For people who are committing serious offences – drink driving and significant speeding – you need to do more than simply putting their name in the local press – you need a much firmer, hands-on approach.

There is a political appetite to tackle poor driving more aggressively – so long as you identify and tackle the worst offenders.

With a very clear campaign targeting the very worst offenders, there would be widespread public support and impetus for a wider programme to promote road safety."

Chapter 4
Driver DNA



In order to determine the most effective means of further reducing the agonies experienced on our roads, it is necessary to understand which drivers we actually need to deal with. We need to understand their driving mentality, recognise what they look like (if possible) and determine what measures are likely to change their behaviour in the future. Suffice to say that there is no one archetypal British driver – a fact which is not surprising given that there are 28 million of us who regularly drive.

The 2005 RAC Report on Motoring has identified seven major strands of 'DNA' that exist within the British motorist. The prominence or otherwise of these strands within each individual motorist dictate not only their attitude towards driving but also their actual and likely behaviour on the road.

These strands were identified from the patterns of individual response to almost 40 separate and varied statements about driving and car ownership that we presented in the course of our research. The extent to which our representative sample agreed or disagreed with each statement served to indicate the extent to which a particular piece of driver 'DNA' was present in them, and influential on their driving.

In the rest of this section we describe the seven pieces of driver 'DNA' and show the statements that seem to work together in order to create six major driving typologies – stereotypes of the main driving characters that exist on our roads.

'Driving beneath the radar'

This trait indicates that a driver is likely to consistently break motoring laws without fearing regular detection. The laws they break might be on a scale of severity from minor speeding to drink driving. The statements behind this trait were:

- The benefits of breaking minor driving laws far outweigh the risk of getting caught
- I don't think I am very likely to get caught if I break most motoring laws
- It is OK to bend the motoring laws if it is safe to do so
- It doesn't do any harm to park on double yellow lines for a few minutes
- If I thought there was a greater chance of getting caught I might bend the driving laws a little less
- On rare occasions I have driven a car while probably being over the drink drive limit

'Driving's a game'

This trait indicates that a driver is likely to enjoy the thrills (and spills) of going fast and of driving in a way that mimics a computer game. The statements behind this trait were:

- I sometimes think of driving as an exciting game
- My car reflects my personality
- There is nothing wrong with manoeuvring your car to impose your will on other drivers
- I enjoy testing my skills by driving hard and fast

'Ineffective deterrents'

This trait indicates that a driver might view the current set of motoring laws and enforcements as being too soft to encourage safer driving behaviour. The statements behind this trait were:

- The risk of being caught for motoring offences is too low
- The penalties for motoring offences are not significant to have an impact
- Penalties for motoring offences should be much harsher

'Legislative straight jacket'

This trait indicates that a driver might feel unfairly constrained by a myriad of what they consider to be petty restrictions, ill-targeted legislation and driving laws enforced by the various authorities. The statements behind this trait were:

- Yellow lines and other parking restrictions are often used unnecessarily by local authorities
- It's almost impossible to drive a car these days without committing some sort of offence
- I think the motorway speed limit is set too low

'It's a jungle out there'

This trait indicates that a driver might feel under pressure or frightened by the actions of other motorists on the road. The statements behind this trait were:

- The roads are full of people who don't appreciate the levels of risk involved
- Most drivers are far too aggressive
- Aggressive drivers make the roads unsafe for people like me

'Model motorist'

This trait indicates that a driver considers they adhere safely to the laws of the road. The statements behind this trait were:

- I consider myself to be a law-abiding driver
- I am safer than most drivers
- Most days I do not exceed the speed limits

'Nervous disposition'

This trait indicates that a driver finds driving a worrying pursuit, which carries with it very little fun or enjoyment. The statements behind this trait were:

- I often feel a little nervous when driving
- All the fun has gone out of driving these days

4.1 Driver typologies

Our research indicates that although all drivers possess at least a little of each of these traits, different individuals will be dominated by different combinations of each driver 'DNA' strand. Based on the prominence and interaction of these traits, this year's RAC Report on Motoring has identified six major driver typologies which make up the majority of the British motoring population. We have given names to these six typologies in order to summarise their particular behaviours and outlooks towards driving.

The six typologies are:

- 'Virtuous minority'
- 'Frustrated business driver'
- 'Console king'
- 'Bemused bag of nerves'
- 'Leisure and pleasure driver'
- 'Calculating self-confidents'

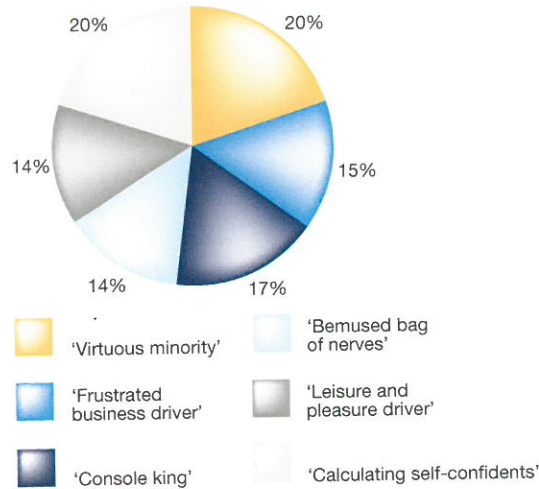
Figure 5 illustrates the relative number of these typologies within the population of 28 million British motorists.

Before describing the six driver typologies in detail, it is worth illustrating how the prominence, or otherwise of the driving 'DNA' traits serves to characterise each grouping. Figure 6 looks at two very specific driving characteristics, and based on their responses to our battery of attitudinal statements, we determine their scores across each of the seven traits. We have purposely taken some extreme findings to illustrate certain behaviours and mindsets.

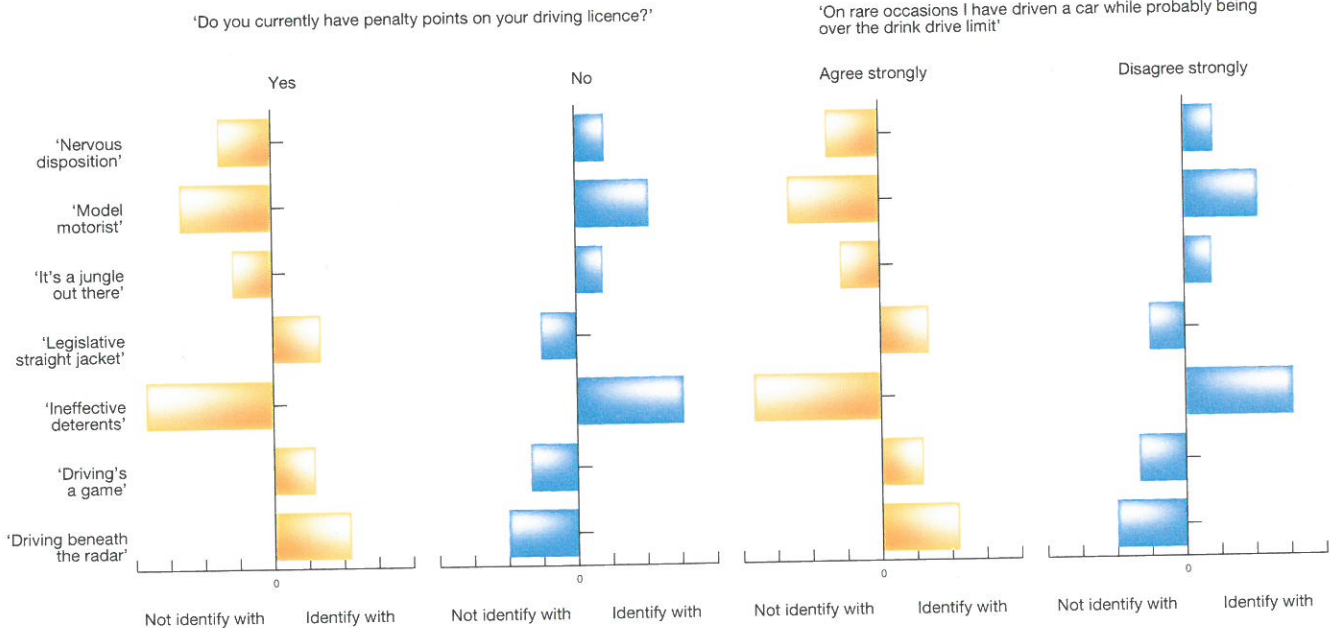
Figure 6
The keys traits or driver 'DNA' and their relative propensity to result in penalty points or drink drive offences in those who display them

It can be seen that the driver 'DNA' profiles of those who have penalty points and those who don't are almost mirror opposites; not surprisingly, those with points are more likely to subscribe to the 'Driving's a game' trait while those without points are distanced from the trait. Similarly, it can be seen that those acknowledging that they have driven while over the legal alcohol limit adopt the 'Driving beneath the radar' sentiment while those steadfastly denying such activity do not concur with the trait. Refreshingly, both sets of offenders recognise that their behaviour is not legal but both groups seem to agree that the current deterrents that exist to discourage illegal behaviour are largely ineffective.

Figure 5
Prominence of six major driver typologies within the British driving population

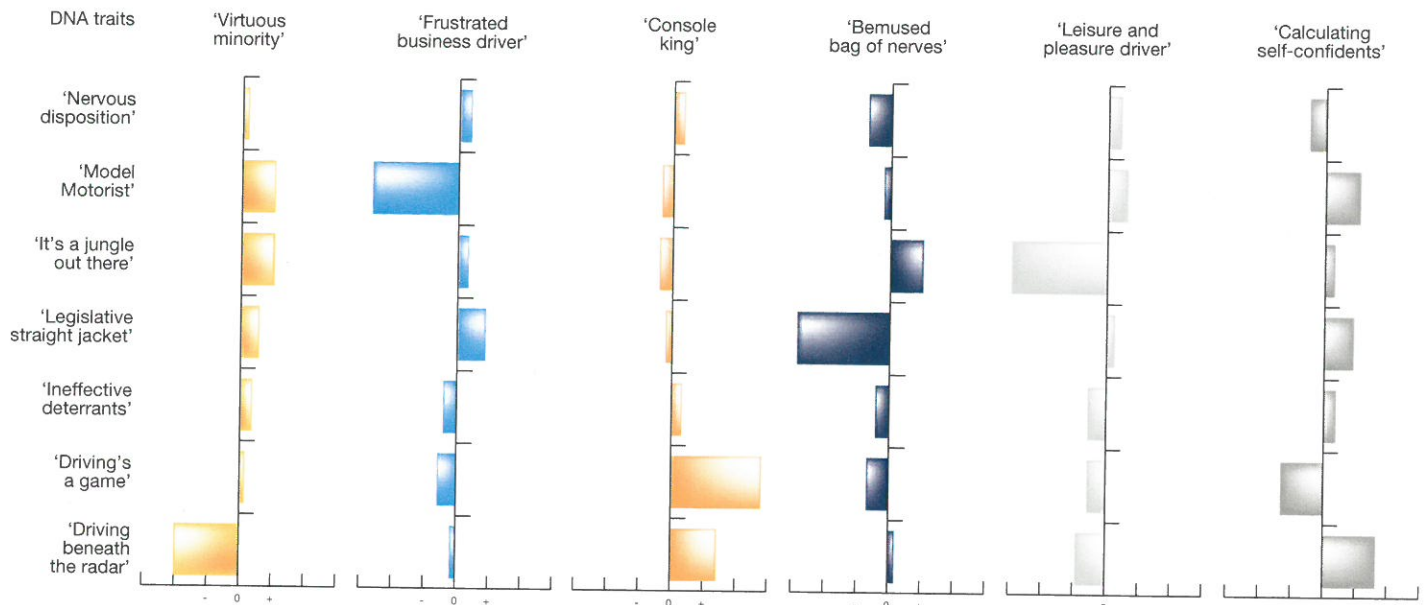


Source: RAC Report on Motoring 2005



Source: RAC Report on Motoring 2005

Figure 7
Six main driver typologies and the
key behavioural traits they display



Source: RAC Report on Motoring 2005

Figure 7 illustrates a direct quantitative comparison between the six driver typologies that this Chapter goes on to describe, demonstrating which of the seven driver 'DNA' traits resonate most with them. In order to understand how this figure works, it is important to bear in mind that the vertical line down the middle of each 'DNA' strand represents an average across all British motorists. The more the bar pushes out to the left, the less that particular driver type relates to that 'DNA' trait. Conversely, the further right the bar extends, the more a driver type identifies with and is influenced by that trait.

In the rest of this Chapter we bring each of the six typologies to life by describing:

The Mindset

An explanation of how the prominence and combinations of the seven driver 'DNA' traits serve to create a value set relating to driving behaviour.

Distinguishing Marks

An explanation of the demographic and autographic characteristics which make up each typology. While no single typology is made up exclusively of just one major trait or characteristic, the profile of each group tends to have a pronounced skew towards specific tangible factors which in some cases reveal a propensity as to how their behaviours might be influenced.

Driving Behaviour

An explanation of the major and minor road and traffic offences to which the typologies are prepared to admit. The results unearth some interesting psychological characteristics in the way that different people convey the extent to which they offend. **It is in understanding these characteristics that we will be able to suggest which priorities we might be able to tackle from a road safety perspective and the correct balance of education, deterrent and penalty that might be considered.**

4.1.1 'Virtuous minority' Attitudes

Attitudinally, the strongest single characteristic for this group is the extent to which they distance themselves from the trait of 'Driving beneath the radar,' suggesting that they are likely to adhere to the rules of the road with the utmost diligence – more so than any other typology. The extent to which the 'Virtuous minority' grasp the 'Model Motorist' trait indicates that they believe themselves to be law-abiding, responsible drivers. Their opinion of other drivers' ability is nowhere near as high; they exhibit the highest level of association with the trait of believing that 'It's a jungle out there'.

When compared to the total representative sample, this group is more likely to become nervous or scared of driving on motorways. They also hold the strongest views that young males make the worst drivers and the minimum age for driving should be raised to 21 years. With this in mind, they are sensitive to the agonies of the road and more aware of these than they are of any ecstasies.

Distinguishing marks

This group tends to be older (25% of them are older than 65 years) and demonstrate a higher incidence of females than the norm (50% of them, rather than 42%).

Driving behaviour

Consistent with their age profile, this group is less likely to use their car for commuting, with shopping trips being the most common use for the car. Across all of the driving offences raised in the Report, this group claims to be the least likely to offend and indeed is the least likely to have penalty points on their driving licence.

4.1.2 'Frustrated business driver' Attitudes

It appears that this group is perfectly happy to acknowledge that they do not adhere to the rules of the road. This is indicated by the extent to which they distance themselves from the 'Model motorist' trait. Interestingly, the one trait with which they identify most readily is 'Legislative straight jacket', suggesting that they feel legislation of various kinds suppresses their easy progress and enjoyment of driving. Coupling this characteristic and their agreement with the sentiments contained in the 'Nervous disposition' and 'It's a jungle out there', traits it is possible to conclude that the 'Frustrated business driver' has a somewhat gloomy and depressed view of what they consider to be a repressive, and generally unfriendly environment that is Britain's road system.

Distinguishing marks

In terms of demographic profile, this group is more likely to be populated by young professionals, either male or female, and of drivers in the 25-34 year old age group (27% of this group are in this age bracket) and from socio economic group B (32% of them are from this group). This typology has the highest incidence of company car ownership (13% of this group drive a company car) and, not surprisingly, the highest share of mileage accounted for by commuting.

It is possible that the strength of feeling behind the 'Legislative straight jacket' trait is promoted by the fact that 6% of this group have accumulated enough penalty points to lose their licence at some stage in the past. This incidence compares with only 2% within the total sample.

Driving behaviour

Based on their own admission, this group is the most regular offender when it comes to speeding both in 30 mph areas and on A roads and motorways. Approximately 23% admit to breaking the 30 mph limit every day while 26% acknowledge that they regularly travel faster than permitted on A roads and motorways.

Pen portrait of the 'Virtuous minority'

- Tend to be older and/or retired
- More likely than not to be female
- Are impeccably well behaved themselves but think others around them do not adhere to similarly high standards of driving

Pen portrait of the 'Frustrated business driver'

- 25-44 years old
- In full time work
- High annual mileage and company car ownership
- Higher than average volumes of motorway driving
- 20% have penalty points
- Once they are free of things that slow them down, they tend to take the law into their own hands... and often get caught

4.1.3 'Console king' Attitudes

This is perhaps the most demonstrative, rebellious and dangerous typology of all. It can be seen that they strongly embrace the doctrine of 'Driving's a game' seemingly taking their toy out to play in a big playground – whilst other drivers try to use the same space safely and responsibly. If this was not worrying enough, it can be seen that in their high levels of identification with 'Driving beneath the radar' they are actively trying to get away with whatever driving misdemeanours they can.

Some perhaps disturbing attitudes connected with their driving behaviour include the fact that 42% of this group agree that their car is a toy in which to have some fun. 47% of them also agree that a car is something impressive to be seen in. Revealingly, but not surprisingly, this group is the least likely to consider that young men are the most dangerous drivers on the road! They simply do not consider themselves and their own kind as being anything like a threat to safety. In their minds, older women should be perceived as a significant threat to road safety.

This group probably revealed plenty about themselves when asked about their three wishes to make driving more fun, with 27% of them showing an interest in removing all speed cameras! They are more likely than others to experience driving ecstasy related to car ownership and driving fun, though often at the cost of some agony to others.

Distinguishing marks

It comes as little surprise that membership of this group is skewed significantly towards the younger male. Almost 40% of this group are under 34 years with the share of under 25's being twice as high as in the total sample. The incidence of company car ownership is relatively high and one is more likely to see 'Console kings' driving a car from the lower medium segment.

Driving behaviour

Although not as frequently as the 'Frustrated business driver' typology, this group admits to speeding offences at regularities that are very much in excess of the average. Of perhaps greater concern is their track record with behaviours such as tailgating, cutting people up, jumping red lights, overtaking on the wrong side and 'road rage'. Although nowhere near as frequent as their speeding misdemeanours, the fact that so few can admit to 'never' having done such things suggests that such behaviours are commonplace within this group. At 22%, this group is the most likely to have penalty points on their driving licence.

Mobile multi-tasking would also appear to be a relatively prominent activity for this group with 23% admitting to using a mobile phone without a hands free device every week (and 8% of them admitting

to doing it every day) and 4% admitting to shaving or putting on make-up every day whilst driving.

Admittedly at very low levels, this group is most likely of any of the six typologies to be driving an unroadworthy vehicle; 2% admit to doing this at least once a week while a similar proportion admit to driving without insurance at least as frequently.

A further example of illegal behaviour that is significant given their driving style is that 13% admit that occupants of their car do not wear seatbelts at least once a week.

4.1.4 'Bemused bag of nerves' Attitudes

The 'Bemused bag of nerves' typology paints a picture of a group who tend to believe that this nation's roads are little more than uncontrolled bedlam. The very low levels of agreement with the 'Legislative straight jacket' DNA trait suggests that they perceive relatively low levels of enforcement of road regulations to be going on. The agreement with the 'It's a jungle out there' trait indicates that they feel this lack of regulation and enforcement is resulting in many other drivers abusing the system to get away with whatever they want – and not necessarily in a safe manner.

Other responses suggest that this typology has a slight underlying lack of confidence on the road. At 27% of the sample, this group is the least likely to claim that they never get nervous or anxious in any driving conditions, with bad weather being the most worrying scenario for them. Consistent with their concerns about other drivers, this group believes that the main priorities for authorities to address are tailgating and people driving whilst using hand-held mobile phones.

Distinguishing marks

This group shows a slight bias towards female drivers and 17-24 year olds. Apart from these differences from the norm, it would be difficult to distinguish this group from any other motorist typology based on visible characteristics. This suggests that the 'Bemused bag of nerves' state of mind could appear prominently in any driver regardless of age, gender or location.

Driving behaviour

It is of little surprise that relative to other typologies, this group is the most well-behaved on the roads. Based on their own admissions, their most frequent 'crime' would appear to be a failure to signal. However, this group is not necessarily whiter than white as 16% admit to currently having penalty points on their licence. To put this into perspective, though, this is an incidence that is completely in line with the total sample of British motorists.

Pen portrait of the 'Console king'

- Under 35 years old
- Male
- Living at an urban address
- 22% have penalty points
- View driving as a big game where you should get away with whatever you can

Pen portrait of the 'Bemused bag of nerves'

- 17-24 years old
- More likely to be female
- Single
- D E social class
- Easily intimidated and lacks confidence

4.1.5 'Leisure and pleasure driver' Attitudes

This typology would seem to be unremarkable when mapped against any type of behaviour with the exception of one trait. The level of disagreement with the 'It's a jungle out there' trait indicates that for some reason, they seem not to recognise, or are simply not exposed to, bad driver behaviour. This typology claim to be well behaved on the road and perhaps think well of other drivers' standards as they do not seem to consider current penalties for bad driving behaviour to be ineffective.

This group appears to have the least emotional engagement with their cars with 56% agreeing that it is 'just another domestic appliance'; the car is there as a tool to take them shopping or to their next social engagement.

Distinguishing marks

As individuals, there are few, if any, significant differences in terms of demographic characteristics from the total sample of British motorists. This group is slightly less likely to be in employment, so as a consequence, the proportion of their annual mileage taken up by commuting is considerably lower than the norm. This group is also more likely to be driving a privately owned car with 92% owning their own vehicle. From these autographic characteristics it could be argued that this typology is perhaps less likely to be exposed to the most stressful and least attractive aspects of driving. As such, their apparent good behaviour and their attitude that there is little to worry about on the roads is understandable.

Driving behaviour

Not surprisingly, this group claims to be relatively well behaved in terms of admitting to various driving offences. Although not habitual speeders, this group is not averse to advancing beyond the limits, with 14% currently having penalty points on their driving licence.

Pen portrait of the 'Leisure and pleasure driver'

- 34-54 years old
- B or C1 social class
- Low on commuting, higher on shopping and social journeys
- Drive small cars
- Don't see roads at their worst so are possibly driving in blissful ignorance

4.1.6 'Calculating self-confident' Attitudes

This typology is particularly interesting due to the apparent contradictions in the 'DNA' traits that they agree and disagree with. In overview, it is possible to see some potentially dangerous arrogance and complacency in their attitude to driving. At first glance it would seem slightly puzzling that anyone could agree with both the 'Model motorist' and 'Driving beneath the radar' traits. In reality this suggests that we have a typology that does not lack confidence in their own ability – so much so that perhaps they choose when they think it right or safe to ignore driving rules and regulations. However, they claim not to embrace the trait of 'Driving's a game'. One possible interpretation of this is that they justify their own actions by considering that they always drive responsibly and within the bounds of safety, just not necessarily within the law.

When given three wishes to improve their driving experience, they favour motorway speed limits being increased and for lorries and vans to be banned from urban areas and town centres outside of peak business hours. They are most likely to be anxious or nervous during rush hour and to be annoyed by tailgaters, but they could well be guilty of doing this themselves!

Distinguishing marks

This group displays a tendency towards middle aged and older males (with 66% being male). Their cars tend to be bigger than average with 8% owning an off road or 4x4 vehicle (compared to 4% in the rest of the total sample).

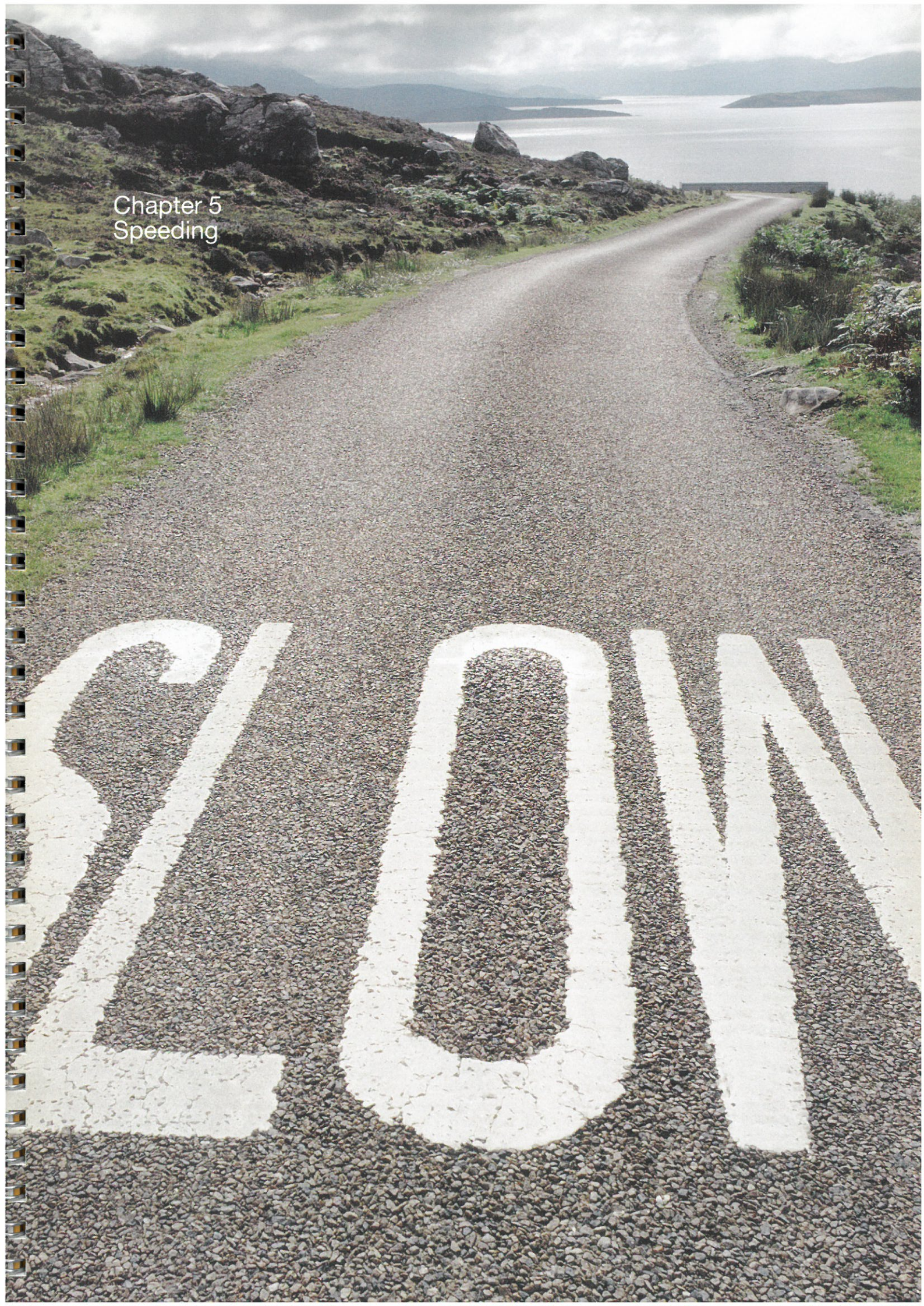
Driving behaviour

By their own admission this group's driving offence incidences are broadly comparable with the sample of British motorists as a whole although they do concede a tendency to speed on a regular basis. There is an indication, however, that they are either lucky not to be caught or are indeed cleverer at 'Driving beneath the radar' than others as only 11% of this typology have penalty points on their licenses compared to 15% in the total sample. This suggests that this typology is made up of generally alert drivers.

Pen portrait of the 'Calculating self-confident'

- 45+ years old
- Male
- Likely to drive an executive or 4x4 car
- High number of motorway miles driven
- Below average incidence of points but those who get caught tend to have quite a few
- Believe in their own ability to assess risk rather than simply to adhere to the law

Chapter 5
Speeding



5.1 Speed is our single biggest killer

The relationship between speed and accidents has been proven time and again. There is overwhelming evidence (from both national and international research) that higher speeds result in more collisions of greater severity. The Government's 2000 report entitled 'New directions in speed management – a policy review', indicated speed as a contributory factor in about one third of all collisions. Research suggests that up to one third of all fatal collisions are speed-related (Finch et al, *ibid*).

The most recent Government analysis of Police data on contributory factors to a collision (detailed in a Department for Transport report from September 2004 entitled 'Excessive speed as a contributory factor to personal injury road accidents') indicates that excessive speed was a factor in 28% of fatal accidents, 18% of serious injuries and 11% of slight accidents – and a higher proportion of motorbike accidents, with speed as a factor in 49% of fatal bike collisions.

A comparison between attitudes expressed by the representative sample of British motorists interviewed for the RAC Report on Motoring in 2004 and 2005 suggests that we might be conscious of our lapse into bad or worse driving behaviour. Although 84% of motorists in this year's research believe that they 'consider themselves to be law abiding drivers' the previous year saw 93% of motorists viewing themselves in that manner, marking a considerable reduction. Of perhaps greater concern is that in the 2005 Report 55% of motorists agreed that 'most days I tend to exceed the speed limit a little'; in the previous year only 46% expressed the same sentiment. At face value, this would seem to indicate a potentially dangerous decline in driving behaviour.

5.2 Speeding statistics

The majority of car drivers regularly break speed limits on all classes of roads, at all times of day and all days of the week – as highlighted in the Department for Transport's 1999 report 'The effects of speed cameras: how drivers respond'. 'The Attitudinal Determinants of Driving Violations', a paper produced in 2000 by the Department for Transport, states that if a driver exceeds the speed limit in one context, they are likely to exceed it in another. In 2003, Department for Transport data indicated that 58% of cars and 53% of HGV's exceeded the speed limit on 30 mph roads, while 27% of cars exceeded limits on 40mph roads. On motorways, 37% of cars exceed the speed limit by driving up to 80mph while a further 20% drive even faster. A similar pattern is apparent on dual carriageways where 35% of drivers travel over 70mph and up to 80mph while a further 15% travel in excess of this speed.

The number of speed limit offences dealt with by the Police increased by 18% between 2001 and 2002. The total number of motorists caught speeding increased from 1.4 million to 1.7 million (an increase of 21%). However, the number of prosecutions fell from 150,000 in 2001 to 144,000 in 2002 (a decrease of 4%).

There is evidence that speeds increase slightly at the weekend when traffic flows are lighter and the proportion of heavy vehicles using the road network is much smaller. The proportion of vehicles exceeding the speed limit also tends to be higher at the weekend, especially amongst cars on motorways.

5.3 The significance of slowing down

Transport Research Laboratory (TRL) research first conducted in 1994 but validated again in 2000 showed that for every 1mph drop in speed, there is a 5% reduction in collisions. At 40mph, 85% of people hit by vehicles die, compared to 20% at 30mph (and 5% at 20mph). Even at 35mph you are twice as likely to kill someone as you are at 30mph. TRL research also claims that speed is a definite cause in 4.3% of all accidents and a probable cause in 7.3% of them.

5.4 So why do we speed?

It seems that drivers speed because they think the majority of other drivers do. Speeding is considered by many drivers to be an 'acceptable' activity and a social norm validated by others. According to research by Corbett et al in 1992 few drivers see it as harmful, criminal or immoral. In fact, according to research by Corbett and Brown in 1999, speeding is regarded as one of the least serious traffic offences.

The 2005 Report On Motoring shows that 12% of all British motorists admit to speeding on A roads or motorways every day, with a further 18% acknowledging that they travel faster than the legal limit at least one to three times a week. Of course we cannot means-test the honesty or otherwise of these responses, but we can see that men either speed more frequently (or, at least are more prepared to admit to it) than women, with 17% of men admitting to it compared to 6% of women. A study published in January 2005 from psychologists at the Rollins College, Florida and the Saitama Institute of Technology in Japan suggested that young female drivers are just as likely as their male counterparts to speed and drive competitively. This supports Home Office statistics that show a 50% increase in speeding convictions for women in the past eight years, though this corresponding period has also seen more women driving in general as well as the introduction of speed cameras.

Regionally, it would appear that roads in the South East are more likely to witness speeding drivers, with 18% of motorists in this area admitting to speeding on A roads and motorways every day. Roads in the South West appear to be the most sedate in the country with just 6% of motorists admitting to the same behaviour.

People who drive on company business claim to be under some pressure from their employers to complete their work schedules within a certain time, so it is no surprise that a 2001 survey by Brake (conducted with drivers who previously had been caught for speeding) revealed 'I was in a hurry' as one of the most common excuses drivers given for speeding. The two other most common excuses were:

- They did not realise they were speeding
- They had forgotten, or did not know, what the speed limit was

Male drivers and younger drivers are more likely to think it's safe to drive faster on rural roads as there are fewer cars around, especially at night, when they think they'll see the headlights coming the other way. They are also more likely to think that fewer crashes take place on rural roads because they are quieter, although in reality, 63% of road fatalities occur on rural roads, often because they are narrow, poorly lit and full of bends.

The greatest contrasts in terms of A road and motorway speeding appear when we look at the differences between company car drivers and private car owners. Amongst private car owners, 10% admit to speeding every day. Company car drivers are either very

honest or very much more prone to speeding with 31% of them admitting to speeding on A roads and motorways. 18% of company car owners admit to speeding in 30mph limits everyday. It is interesting to note that one particular segment of company car buyers – business expense cars – are even more ready to admit to speeding in such areas. The fact that 24% of this group acknowledge that they do this makes this the highest apparent offending group of all speeders. These characteristics may bring into question the role of the potential impact of detection and punishment; company car drivers often drive under more time pressures than other motorists but at the same time the consequences of accruing penalty points or even losing their licence would be serious as it could result in the loss of their job and livelihood.

5.5 The role of speed cameras

The use of cameras to provide evidence of speeding offences has been permitted in the UK since 1991. There are now more than 5,000 fixed, approved mobile sites and red light safety cameras in operation across the country. A 'super camera' is planned for the UK in 2006, which would be able to monitor up to six lanes at once and identify speeders even when they change lanes. A sign of things to come is already in operation in Upper Thames Street in London. This road is equipped with a 'super camera' system that is capable of measuring the average speed between two locations of up to one mile apart. Such technology serves to greatly increase the monitoring range of speed cameras so that slowing down temporarily as one passes a traditional 'Gatso' speed camera may soon be a thing of the past.

Home Office motoring offence statistics indicate that between 2001 and 2002, the number of motorists prosecuted for offences detected by cameras increased by around 40% from 1.1 million to 1.5 million, accounting for 85% of all speeding offences dealt with. The total number of motorists caught speeding in the same period increased by 21% from 1.4 million to 1.7 million.

Research for the Department for Transport conducted by Corbett and Simon in 1999 found that speed cameras have a different impact on different types of drivers, there being 4 main types:

- Conformers** those who normally comply with speed limits, whether or not a camera is in place
- Deterreds** those who automatically keep to the limit once they know cameras are in place
- Manipulators** those who slow down just for the cameras and then accelerate away
- Defiers** those who ignore cameras and carry on driving as before – often well above the speed limit

Manipulators are seen as the most calculating type of driver; they believe they know where cameras are located, how they operate and how to avoid detection. They tend to be younger drivers and correspondingly have the highest accident rates but many of their attitudes map fairly well on to our 'Calculating self-confident' driver type.

Defiers tend to have the highest offending and speeding rates. They are the most likely to believe they know how to avoid detection and the least likely to think the Police would take action if they were caught. They tend to be company car or high performance car drivers and map well on to our 'Console king' driver type.

Independent analysis commissioned by the Government has shown that the majority of the public support a targeted approach to speed enforcement. The most recent analysis indicates that:

- 79% of people questioned agreed with the statement that 'the use of safety cameras should be supported as a method of reducing casualties'
- 68% of people agreed with the primary purpose of cameras was to save lives.

However, this is at odds with the results of the 2004 RAC Report on Motoring where 72% of motorists suggested that they considered speed cameras to be more about raising revenues than about improving road safety.

However, the independent analysis referred to above showed that where cameras have been introduced, vehicle speeds had dropped and casualties were down. Specifically:

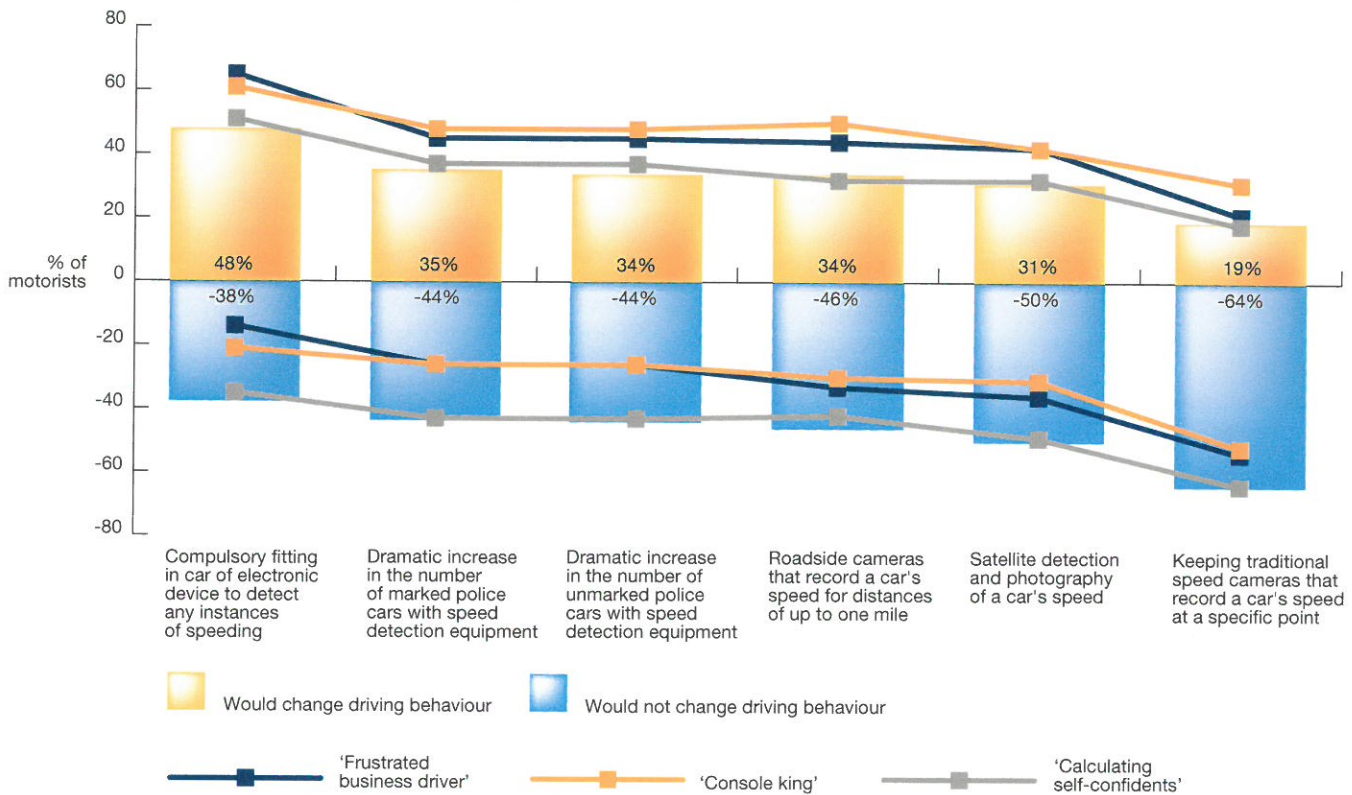
- there was a 32% reduction in the number of vehicles breaking the speed limit at camera sites. Average vehicle speed across all new camera sites fell by 7% overall
- there was a 43% reduction in excessive speeding – vehicles doing 15mph or more above the limit
- there was a 40% reduction in the number of people killed or seriously injured at camera sites, over and above the UK's general downward trend in killed or seriously injured casualties
- the benefit to society of the avoided deaths and injuries in 2002-03 was £221 million, based on the standard Government values for road injuries – over four times the £54 million resource cost of the programme in 2002-03.

5.6 Detection methods

In the 2005 RAC Report on Motoring we presented our representative sample of British motorists with a range of varied speeding detection methods and invited them to indicate what impact each might have on their confessed speeding habits. The idea behind presenting these various detection scenarios was less to do with their reaction to the specific detection methods and more to do with trying to interpret the underlying principles of what might make an effective policy of detection.

Figure 8 shows the percentage of British motorists who claim that each detection method would have either some impact on or make no impact at all on their speeding behaviour. The different detection methods have been rank-ordered from left to right in order of likely impact. The red columns represent the share of British motorists who claim that such a detection method would change the way they would drive. The blue bars represent the share of British motorists who claim such a detection system would not change their driving behaviour.

Figure 8
Various speed detection methods and their potential impact on speeding motorists



Source: RAC Report on Motoring 2005

The tracking lines represent precisely the same information for the three driver typologies whose speeding behaviour we should, arguably, be trying to influence and change the most. The dark blue lines at the top and bottom represent the 'Frustrated business driver' typology while 'Console king' is depicted in orange and the grey lines show the 'Calculating self-confident'.

Maintaining existing levels of detection is presented just as a means of setting a benchmark against which the new detection ideas can be assessed. It can be seen, therefore, that almost two thirds of all British motorists are unlikely to change their behaviour if detection methods remain as they are. Indeed it is probable that the one third who claim they would change their behaviour in a scenario where nothing is different from today's approach to detection and enforcement are providing what they think is a socially acceptable response in the research environment. It is precisely for these reasons that we should look at the rates of behavioural change rather than simply assessing absolute percentage shares of people agreeing with each statement.

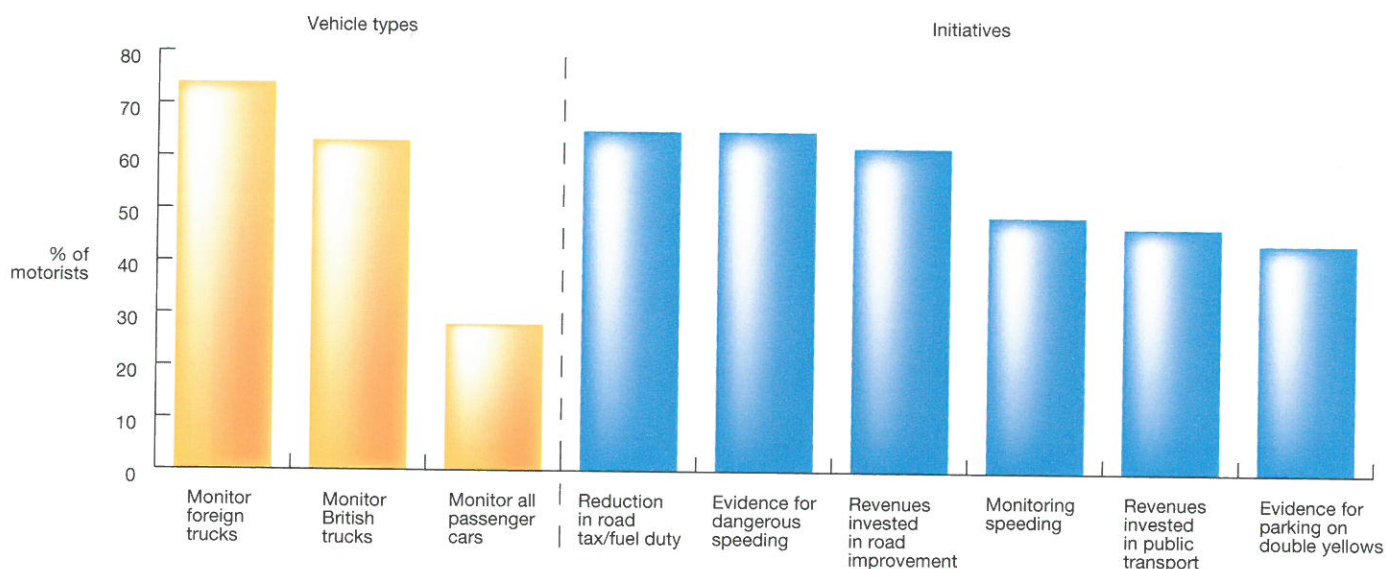
It can be seen that the detection method of compulsory fitting of electronic devices in a car would have a markedly more significant impact on both the 'Console king' and the 'Frustrated business

driver' typologies than other drivers, with approximately 60% of each group acknowledging that this would change their speeding behaviour. Coupled with their claimed reaction to the introduction of longer-range speed cameras, it is evident that these two typologies are more likely to fear hi-tech detection methods rather than the methods that are currently being used (i.e. mobile and fixed speed cameras and patrolling traffic Police).

A fairly consistent pattern can also be seen to be emerging for the 'Calculating self-confident' where their likelihood to change their behaviour in response to any of the detection methods remains lower than the other high-offending groups. This perhaps reflects their continued confidence in their own ability to 'Drive beneath the radar'.

It is perhaps interesting to note that the likely impact of introducing both more marked and unmarked Police cars are almost identical. It is unclear, however, whether any of our motorist types recognises the potentially greater risk of getting caught by an unmarked car or, whether the probability of encountering a dramatically increased number of Police vehicles is significantly higher in their minds.

Figure 9
Support for the introduction of satellite tracking
for different vehicles against a number of initiatives



Source: RAC Report on Motoring 2005

It is particularly interesting to notice that although satellite detection would appear to be the method least likely to change behaviour amongst British motorists as a whole, 39% of business expense car owners acknowledge that this method would effect some change in their behaviour – 25% stating that they would change their speed permanently if such a technology were introduced. As the group with the highest claimed incidences of speeding in 30mph limits, it is maybe their greater familiarity with the potential of this technology that makes this group more wary of it than other groups of motorists.

To the casual observer, these technologies may appear to be some distance away over the horizon. In reality, the electronic device is not as far off as it may seem with similar devices with such functionality due to be added to lorries by 2008. At the moment, a British haulier has to pay significantly more in fuel costs (due to the high price of British diesel) compared to a foreign operator who can fill up much more cheaply on the continent. This means that European hauliers can in many cases operate more competitively in the UK. Fitting HGVs with satellite tracking devices will allow authorities to charge them for travelling on the UK road network and then provide British hauliers with a rebate. No such rebate will be forthcoming for European operators. This system is not being mooted as a speed reduction technique – after all, HGVs are already fitted with speed limiters and tachograph computers – but the potential of the technology is that it could in due course allow speed to be monitored and enforced if fitted into passenger cars.

Indeed our research shows that some motorists would welcome the introduction of satellite technology to monitor vehicle behaviour, though admittedly within some fairly specific parameters. Figure 9 above illustrates that British motorists would welcome such regulation for trucks although, predictably, they are less keen on the same technology being applied to passenger cars.

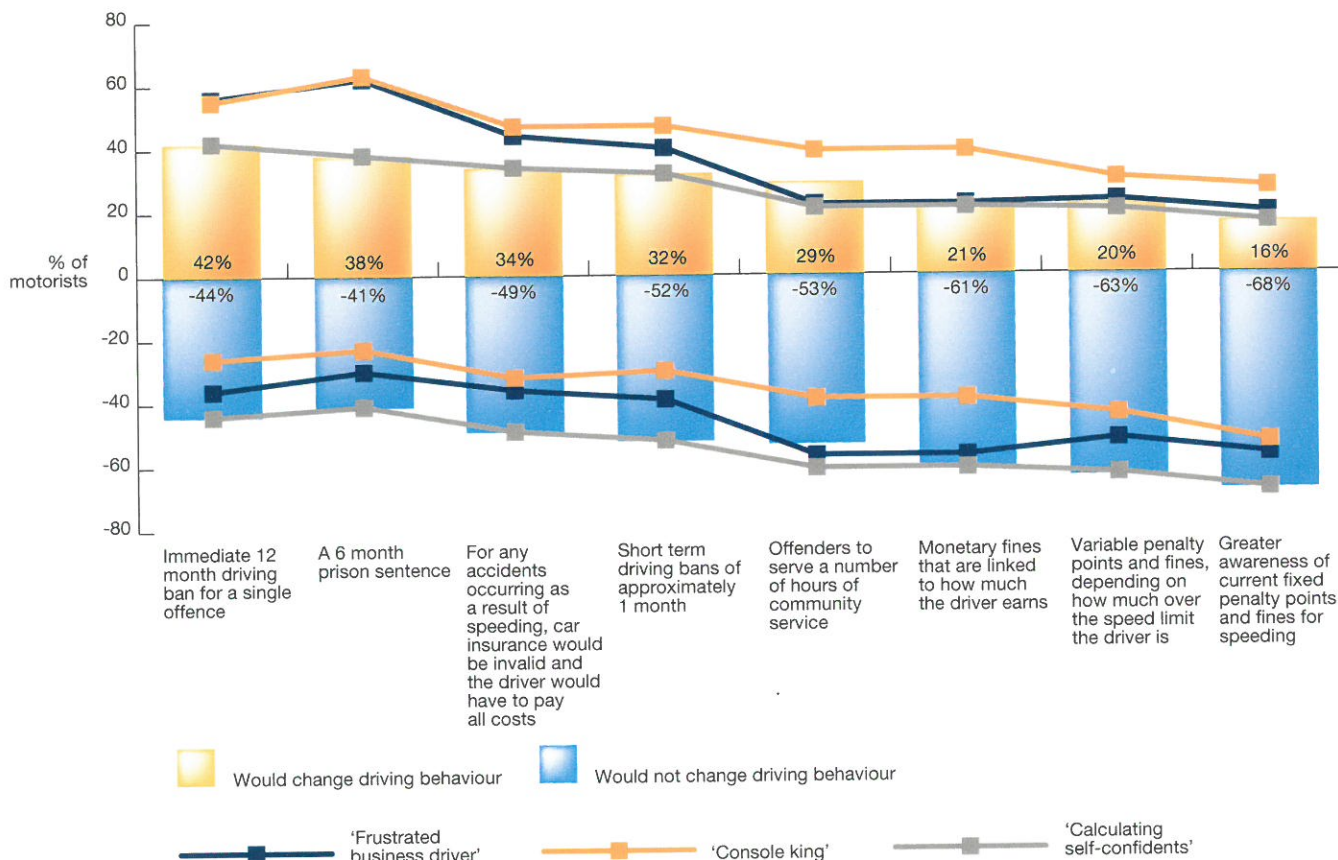
On the assumption that the technology could be used to determine an equitable method of charging based on road usage, a majority of British motorists would be happy to see such technology used to achieve reductions in road tax or fuel duty. A further 'sugar coating' for such technology would be if the revenues raised were re-invested into making improvements to the road system. There is not quite so much enthusiasm for directing the revenues towards public transport investment, which demonstrates a slight change in attitude amongst motorists than the one we uncovered in the 2004 RAC Report on Motoring. This Report saw at least equal interest in directing revenues towards non-road related initiatives.

There is also evidence of tolerance of such technology being used to detect serious misdemeanours such as dangerous speeding, but less support for applying it to minor offences such as parking, demonstrating that motorists are sensitive to the difference between dangerous motoring offences and more minor ones.

5.7 Penalty approaches

Whilst the installation of cameras (and even the simple presence of a speed camera sign by the roadside) has the pronounced effect of reducing many drivers' speeds, the threat of prosecution appears to be the strongest deterrent. Drivers are more concerned about gaining points on their licence than they are about being fined. Previous research from Corbett, Simon and O'Connell in 1998 has shown that unless drivers are actually disqualified as a result of a driving offence, fixed penalty fines themselves are not perceived by the motorist as being particularly onerous.

Figure 10
Motorists' responses to different penalty schemes for speeding offences



Source: RAC Report on Motoring 2005

Our representative sample of British motorists was presented with a series of potential penalties that could await them if they were caught speeding. Figure 10 illustrates the likely impact on speeding behaviours that each penalty might have.

The results indicate that an immediate 12-month driving ban imposed following a first offence would be the most influential – if admittedly draconian – penalty. It would seem that denial of the car would be a greater potential deterrent than the complete denial of all freedom that would come from a short, sharp prison sentence. Mindful of the saturation levels in Britain's prisons currently, this penalty was presented more with the intention of being provocative, and to set a context for drivers' car dependency versus their propensity to speed. The fact that the prison option and the prospect of losing a car for 12 months attract such similar levels of dread does point towards the potency of driving bans as a category of punishment, if one sets aside the political backlash that would result from the introduction of such a measure.

It is clear that the company car driver would find the prospect of a 12-month driving ban for a single offence a salutary proposition, with 48% claiming that such a penalty would change their behaviour. The regional analysis indicates that motorists in the North (54%) and Scotland (47%) are also more likely to be influenced by such a penalty, when compared with drivers in the South East (33%) and London (31%).

The idea of insurance being invalidated if excessive speed is proven would particularly change behaviour of motorists in the North (46%) and Scotland (41%), but would be much less effective in the South East (28%). This would be a serious consideration for company car owners with 49% of them stating that they would change their behaviour if such an outcome resulted from speeding. It is not hard to see why this would be the case; many company car drivers could potentially lose their jobs and their livelihood if they were to have their insurance invalidated. In addition, owners of bigger and more expensive cars would also find this approach likely to change their behaviour, with 40% each of executive saloon and 50% of sports car owners claiming this would change their behaviour. Again, this is an unlikely and draconian measure, but it demonstrates the fact that harsh penalties would have more of an impact on stopping speeding.

5.8 International lessons

In order to tackle incidents of speeding in New South Wales, Australia, the state embarked upon a multi-faceted programme incorporating education, enforcement and punishment. Education schemes needed to deal subtly with the psychology of an offence that, although recognised as illegal, was still readily practised. The absence of peer group disapproval that drink driving engenders also dictated that speeding could carry on relatively unchecked.

In a three-year deal announced in 2002, the Road Traffic Authority took a slightly unconventional approach to education, by sponsoring the high profile New South Wales Cricket team and attaching the 'Speedblitz' message to highly regarded role models in a very visible manner. From the enforcement perspective, speed limits were lowered in 'blackspots' backed up with greater use of fixed and mobile speed cameras. Penalties were also increased with specific doubling of driving licence points if a speeding offence was detected during holiday periods i.e. when children are more likely to be out and about.

In the city of Graz, Austria, a major publicity campaign was launched in 1992 with the slogan 'gentle mobility' which – coupled with speed limits being cut by 20mph on three quarters of the 500-mile road network, as well as tougher Police enforcement – contributed to a reduction in speeding motorists and a 24% reduction in serious casualties overall.

5.9 Getting the hump

Road engineering measures such as road humps and chicanes force the driver to slow down and so are especially popular measures for road planners in residential areas. According to RoadSafe, these engineering measures have reduced average speeds by about 10mph and have resulted in a 50% reduction in collisions. Another residential measure used to cut the number of deaths caused by speeding is 20mph restrictions; while a car driving at 20mph can stop within 50ft, at 30mph it takes 86ft and at 40mph it takes 119ft.

By objective measures, therefore, it is clear that speed bumps and indeed speed cameras have had a significant positive effect on driver behaviour by forcing them to slow down in places where collisions with pedestrians are most likely. If we juxtapose this evidence with the prominence in the drivers' wish list of the desire to remove these devices, we can conclude that the British motorist is perhaps not best placed to evaluate the bigger picture of behaviour and consequences when thinking about their own personal driving experiences.

At the same time, various emergency services, such as the ambulance service, have spoken out against the use of speed bumps in residential areas, stating that lives could be lost due to unnecessary delays caused by ambulances having to travel more slowly over bumps. There is definitely a balance to be achieved then between potential benefits of such devices and potentially negative and unforeseen impacts.

5.10 Speeding: a call to action

As we have seen, speed is a major cause of accidents on our roads, and something that many motorists admit to doing rather regularly. Though a good proportion of the motoring population might not be categorised as dangerous speeders, there are many amongst our representative research sample whose attitude towards speeding is worrying. With this in mind, speeding is definitely a priority road safety issue that requires constant and ongoing attention.

5.10.1 Penalties

RAC welcomes the review and recommendations made to the penalty system relating to different types of speeding offence that have been included in the Road Safety Bill announced by the Government in November 2004. This proposed system of graduated fixed penalties, if introduced, will enable a distinction to be made

Professor Steve Stradling, Professor of Transport Psychology, Napier University

"A one-day speed awareness course is more likely to bring about sustainable change to driving behaviour than simply fines and penalty points. The best speed awareness courses show drivers why they should change, and how they can change. You need to get up close and personal to adjust the individual's specific driving weaknesses.

Speed cameras really do spot drivers who are 'magnets to crashes'; those caught speeding are twice as likely to have been involved in a crash in the past three years.

Scare tactics alone are memorable, but only bring about a change in behaviour if you show a real link between particular behaviours and particular consequences. Peer group pressure is difficult in relation to speeding because many believe that everyone else speeds anyway.

When we catch drivers speeding, do we want to punish or rehabilitate them? I think we want to do the latter, to make them less dangerous than before, to make them slower and safer. We need to be creative in seeking ways to remove the opportunity and pressure to speed, and also the satisfaction some people obtain from speeding."

between the most serious and excessive types of speeding offence and those less dangerous offences, so that both the circumstance and the severity of the offence are taken into account. RAC supports the Bill's intention not to introduce a lower penalty limit in 20mph zones as this would perhaps discourage driving at appropriate speeds in these zones. Local authorities must review the appropriateness of all current 20 and 30mph designations.

RAC considers that these proposals will go some way to delivering a system that elicits the confidence and support of the generally law-abiding motoring population. RAC would also be in favour of identifying any long-standing loop-holes that exist in the speed penalty system. For example, RAC is aware that speeders currently caught and convicted of driving well over the speed limit can be subject to a ban of perhaps a month and a fine of a few hundred

pounds. After this conviction is spent, their driving licence reverts to its 'clean' status so previously accumulated points are wiped off. This is potentially a real benefit for someone who drives on company business or who completes many thousands of miles in a year and as a penalty regime it does little to clamp down on their habit of speeding; it merely serves to give dangerous speeders a fairly easy get-out clause.

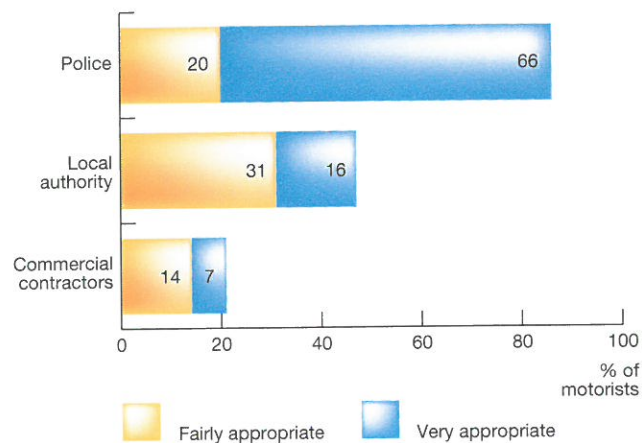
Even though the prospect of a prison sentence would capture the attention of two of our worst typologies guilty of speeding offences (the 'Console king' and the 'Frustrated business driver'), RAC believes that this is neither practical, politically acceptable nor cost effective. One way of reaching dangerous and perpetual speeders who may fit within these two typologies is the mandatory fitting of black box recorders or speed limiters on their vehicles for a probationary period once their conviction has been spent. Our research demonstrates that this technology could have a positive and sustained impact on driving behaviour if the probationary period was long enough and the fear of further penalty was linked to further transgression. This might be even more successful if driving reports were made available, for example, to employers. A different approach relating to the 'naming and shaming' of offenders would be a requirement for motorists to display their penalty points on their windscreen. At the same time, motorist goodwill towards speed enforcement could be fostered by donating the balance of revenue relating to fines to a road safety fund rather than it going to the Treasury as is currently the situation.

5.10.2 Detection

Most of the recent focus amongst the British motoring community has been on the punitive element of policing speed via the use of speed cameras. It is this concept that has whipped up fury amongst some groups of motorists, fuelled in some part by the popular press. The results of the 2005 RAC Report on Motoring seem to indicate that improved rates of detection might have a greater influence on changing speeding behaviour than the prospect of significantly more stringent penalties that may be far out of proportion with the ultimate severity of the crime.

Clearly there are two routes to improved detection. Traditional methods require manpower and, up until recently when speed camera use has been on the increase, the burden fell solely on our country's Police forces. In these times when Police resources are stretched, it is understandable that this scarce manpower should be focused around the prevention and detection of even more serious crimes. If 'traditional' methods of detection are to be maintained, then other enforcement bodies might be empowered to manage our speeding problems. Figure 11 indicates that while the Police are considered to be by far the most appropriate institution to enforce speed limits, close to half of all British motorists consider it appropriate for local authorities to play a more active role in this activity.

Figure 11
Which bodies are most appropriate to enforce speeding regulations?



Source: Report on Motoring 2005

There is definitely a sense that motorists would feel more comfortable – and perhaps less unfairly penalised – if speeding offences were detected by Police authorities rather than by third party cameras, which many consider to be 'blunt instruments'. As such, RAC would be in favour of more resources being made available for road and traffic policing, given the sheer number and severity of offences committed across the country every year. A commitment to greater and more visible road Policing was announced by the Transport Minister, Home Office and Association of Chief Police Officers in January 2005 as a means of enhancing public confidence, catching motoring offenders and reducing road casualties. Our research shows some motorists would accept other official bodies becoming involved in the speed enforcement process if administered in a significantly robust manner. This is perhaps a suggestion to consider further.

Another factor concerning detection that RAC welcomes is the proposal contained in the Road Safety Bill to make the use of speed camera jammers illegal. Such devices, which have the obvious purpose of helping speeding drivers to evade detection, are inappropriate if their sole purpose is to be used by those intending to drive outside of the law. RAC does however support the Bill's intention to retain the legality of GPS based satellite navigation systems, some of which identify the placement of speed cameras to the motorist. Arguably, anything which reminds motorists of appropriate speed limits in certain areas, is a good idea – particularly as one of the main reasons that motorists give for speeding is that they are not aware of the limits on certain roads.

Another way to stop motorists travelling at certain high speeds would be the mandatory fitting of speed limiters onto all passenger cars, similar to the limiters that are already in place on HGVs in this country and shortly will apply to all vehicles weighing more than 3.5 tonnes. RAC's opinion is that there could be a place for speed limiters to stop motorists driving at the highest speeds; however, a very technically advanced system would be required to vary the speed limit that a car could be driven at according to the particular speed limit of any road in this country. As the vast majority of journeys that are made in the UK are over short distances, and therefore not on motorways or trunk roads, it would be an expensive technically advanced solution that could prevent cars driving dangerously over the speed limit at any one time. Also, any solution that was introduced would require the ability of the motorist to override the speed limiter in order to allow the driver to take urgent evasive action if necessary. In addition, it is suggested that speed limiters could have the impact of reducing a motorist's concentration, allowing them in effect to go into cruise control mode. RAC has concerns about this when our roads require us to be more alert than ever to potential hazards and dangers. In summary, the wide-scale implementation of speed limiters for passenger cars is something that RAC has reservations about, not only because it would take the full and wide-scale cooperation of motor manufacturers and might make it difficult for British drivers to safely drive their cars abroad, but it may be something for the future when road user pricing is a reality across the EU.

The final approach to consider is to use currently available GPS-based technology linked to 'black box' equipment installed in passenger vehicles. Such technology – similar to the tachographs installed in HGVs to monitor distance travelled and the amount of time spent driving at a stretch – would provide a means of identifying motorists travelling at inappropriate speeds. Although this type of 'big brother' technology is unlikely to be popular amongst the majority of motorists who, as we have seen, do speed regularly, organisations and companies who run large fleets may well consider such devices to be useful in monitoring the behaviour of their drivers, particularly as duty of care and the provision of a new Corporate Manslaughter Bill are once more on the legislative agenda.

One type of as-yet under utilised technology is the speed-activated message sign. Though it directs a message to slow down to a speeding motorist driving past, it does not include a camera or result in fines or points being issued. Attitudinal feedback from motorists would suggest that such devices make them think about their behaviour without feeling they've been caught and punished. RAC would be in favour of a full trial of this sort of equipment in order that it might be rolled out on roads where speeding is commonplace but accident rates are low.

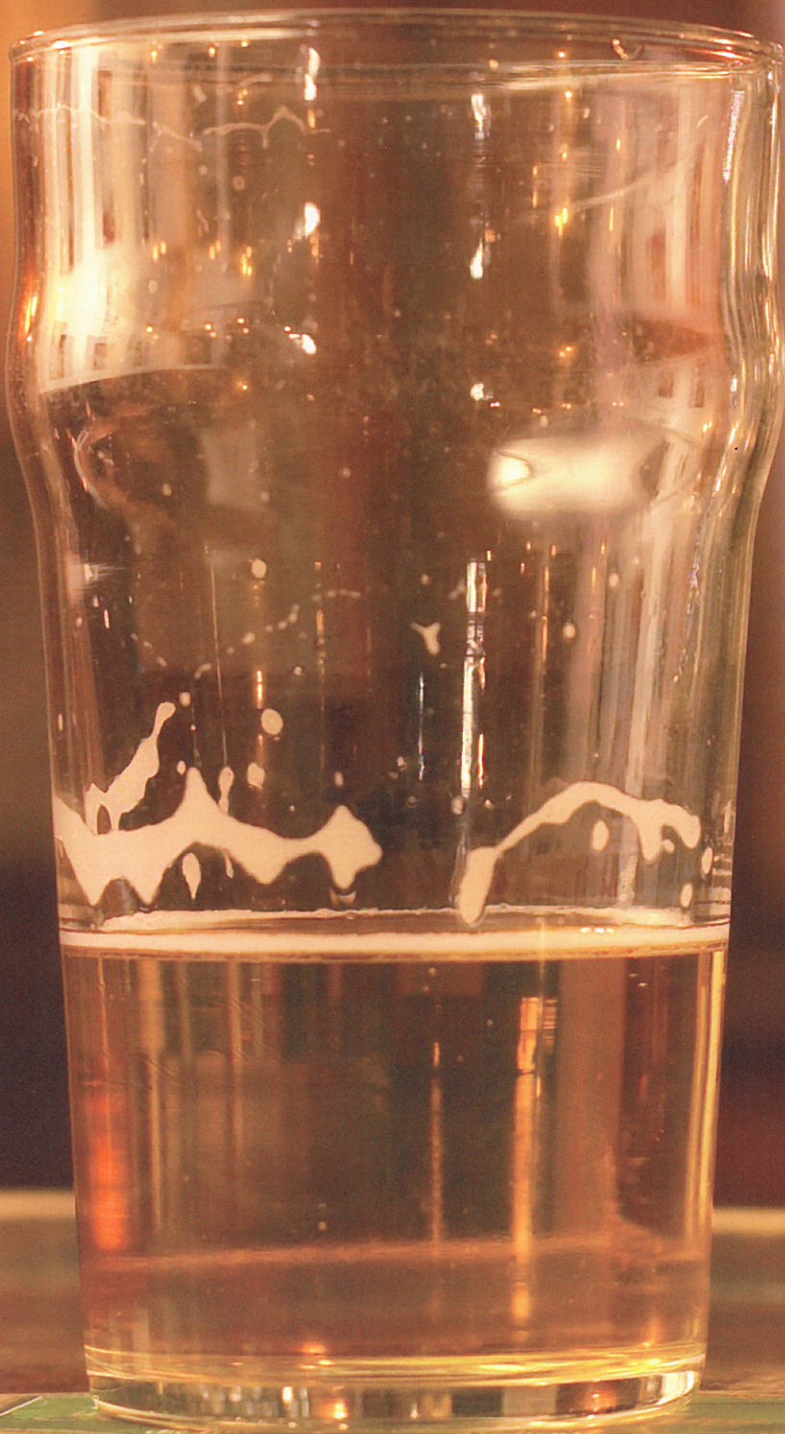
5.10.3 Education

The Road Safety Bill also sets out proposals to extend the use of driver retraining and other courses for those convicted of speeding offences. RAC strongly favours this approach as evidence from courses that are underway in many constabulary areas across the country demonstrates very positive responses from those who have attended them. It will certainly take more than a fine or a couple of points on their driving licence to rehabilitate perpetual speeders who have perhaps got into bad habits after driving a little too fast over many years. We need to get behind their behaviour to understand why they drive in this way if we are to change deep-seated driving habits. RAC believes that this approach would be particularly successful if introduced amongst the company car driving community, perhaps as part of a company's ongoing scheme of driver training and risk evaluation. RAC is also in favour of targeting this educative approach on more dangerous speeders, in combination with penalties to reflect the seriousness of their actions. Once a speeding driver who has been given a ban has spent his conviction, a requirement to undertake a speed awareness training course would be an appropriate step before he or she is allowed back on the roads.

As one of the key reasons given by motorists for why they speed is a lack of knowledge of the speed limits due to unclear road signage, one simple way that we might be able to tackle the speeding problem is by improving the clarity and positioning of road signs. RAC is aware of and sensitive to the various campaigns against expanding unnecessary street clutter, so rather than simply adding new signs everywhere, we should experiment with road markings, to help remind drivers of the appropriate speed limit.

Finally, RAC is in favour of the continued approach by the Government's THINK! campaigns to remind and inform motorists of the dangers of speeding. Some of the most memorable television campaigns of recent times have related to the impact of excessive speed on pedestrians and the fact that collisions at higher speeds hugely increase the likelihood of fatalities. In addition to this, RAC would like to see further experimentation in public awareness campaigns relating to speed limits. For example, many motorists forget soon after passing their driving test the implication of streetlights or built up areas on the applicable speed limit. Some simple public education campaigns could help remind motorists in order that they become more aware of the speed limit and therefore might have much more chance of sticking to it!

Chapter 6
Driving under the influence of drink or drugs



6.1 Context

Driving under the influence of alcohol has been a long-standing and familiar problem. As this Chapter will show, we have some way to go before it can be claimed to be under reasonable control. Driving under the influence of illicit drugs is a concept that so far has received far less public attention than drink driving, but one that is already contributing significantly to driving offences and casualties. Real progress needs to be made to understand this growing problem more fully and conceive strategies to tackle it effectively.

6.1.1 Drink driving

Since the 1970s and 1980s, drink-related road traffic accidents, casualties and fatalities have been on the decrease. However, since the latter half of the 1990s, these statistics have begun to creep up again, providing a significant reminder of the need for effective and ongoing action to tackle the problem. Whilst the number of drink-related casualties decreased from 27,200 in 1986 to less than 15,000 in the 1990s, it had risen again to 22,160 by 2003.

There is little evidence to suggest that the education and enforcement tactics in use today are any more effective than those used five years ago. From figures released in January 2005 by the Association of Chief Police Officers it is apparent that of the 11,685 breath tests taken in two weeks during December 2004, 8.75% proved positive. This constitutes a very marginal decrease from 1997 when 9.11% of tests proved positive. Similarly, the number of crashes involving drink drivers over the same period declined in 2004 by 1.2% when compared with 1997 statistics. It is perhaps reasonable to conclude that we have at best stayed still rather than making progress in reducing the number of drink drivers.

During 2002, 570,000 screening breath tests were carried out – 9% fewer than in 2001 – but still 3.5 times the 1979 figure of 164,000. Indeed figures released in January 2005 as part of a Government-backed study called ‘Social attitudes to road traffic risk in Europe’ revealed that fewer motorists are breathalysed in the UK than in almost any other European country; only 9% of British motorists have been breathalysed in the past three years compared to 64% in Finland. Only Italy and Ireland have tested fewer drivers.

In addition, the number of breath tests carried out following accidents resulting in injury has increased greatly since 1979 – from 41,000 tests up to 196,000 tests in 2002. During 2003, the number of drivers breath-tested was 187,276 with 8,150 (or 4%) failing (compared to 8.5% failing in 1990). In 2001 convictions for alcohol-related driving offences in England and Wales totalled 85,000 (compared to 13,000 in 1990).

The human cost of drink driving is clear to see. In 2003, 560 people were killed in drink drive related crashes; 2,600 were seriously injured and 19,000 were slightly injured. In 2002, 21% of drivers killed in Great Britain (whose blood alcohol level was known) were over the legal limit. Nearly one in six of all deaths on Britain’s roads involve drivers who are over the legal alcohol limit.

As outlined in the Highway Code 2004 (Codes 83 and 84), alcohol reduces driving ability by engendering a false sense of confidence, reducing co-ordination, breaking reaction times, and affecting judgement of speed, distance and risk. Habitual alcohol consumption augments accident risk. People who drive at twice the current legal alcohol level are at least 50 times more likely to be involved in a fatal car crash.

The Department for Transport estimates that around 80 road deaths a year are attributable to blood alcohol levels of between 50mg per 100ml and 80mg per 100ml (our current limit being 80mg per 100ml). Around half of convicted drink drivers have blood alcohol levels in excess of 150mg per 100ml.

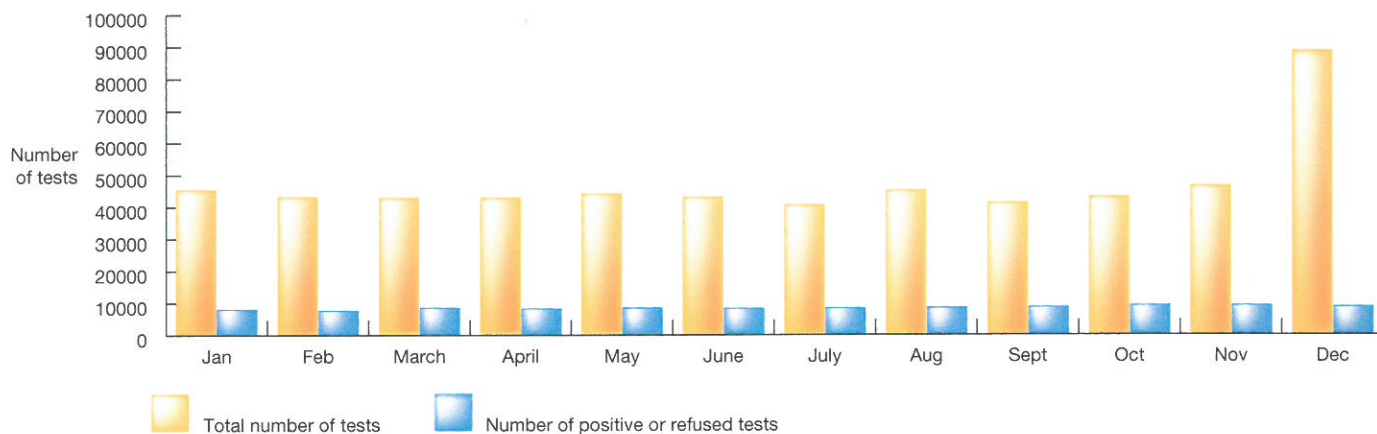
Our current legal limit for drink driving is almost twice the amount permitted in 10 of the 15 EU states (one of which has an upper limit of just 20mg of alcohol per 100ml of blood). Although in 1998 the Government proposed reducing the UK limit to 50mg per 100ml of blood, with support from the Police, public and road safety community, in 2000 it took the decision not to go ahead, stating that it was awaiting possible moves to harmonise the legal limits across the EU. There is, however, little to suggest that this will happen in the foreseeable future, particularly as in December 2004 the Government reaffirmed its stance not to alter the legal limit in response to a parliamentary question and reaffirmed this in January 2005 during the debate around the second reading of the Road Safety Bill. Government opinion is that it believes it would be more effective to maintain an emphasis on tackling habitual and serious offenders, enforcement and education rather than lowering the limit as a way of making necessary changes to cultural attitudes. It is true that significant progress has been made in recent decades to make drink driving socially unacceptable, but with the incidences of drink driving on the increase again, it is clear that more does need to be done. Government research also makes the assertion that while older people have been more likely to accede to cultural pressure and change their behaviour, the 20–29 age group now constitute the focus of attention as they represent the most culpable sector of the community.

In its three year review into road safety published in April 2004, the Department for Transport indicated that the following activities were essential for tackling drink driving:

- ‘Increase the likelihood and fear of being caught by ensuring a stronger visible Police presence on the road’
- ‘Strengthen Police powers to enforce drink drive laws at the first available opportunity, including provision for evidential roadside breath testing’ – this is something that is included in the Road Safety Bill published in November 2004
- ‘Strengthen publicity campaigns to convey the dangers of drink driving and focus on informing young people of the effects of driving under the influence of alcohol, what happens if they are caught and the penalties’
- ‘Study the outcome of research into breath alcohol interlock devices (‘alcolocks’) in vehicles as a means of preventing re-offending’ – again something that is included in the Road Safety Bill published in November 2004

Contrary to conventional wisdom, based on the timing of publicity campaigns, seasonal analysis of the incidence of positive or refused breathalyser tests shows that December is not the period of highest incidence. Instead, Government research shows that more people die in the month of November due to drink driving than they do in any other month of the year. Indeed, the facts indicate that this is an all-year-round issue. Statistics indicate that even in December when the number of breath tests almost doubles compared to other months of the year, the numbers of positive or refused tests are very close to the average for the whole of the year. Across the whole of 2002 the incidence of positive or refused tests was 18%. While increased testing activity in December dictated that the incidence was only 10% in that month, October (22%) and July and September (both 21%) realised the highest rates of detection. It is not unreasonable to assume therefore, that the combination of publicity and the perception of increased risk of being caught serves to change behaviour during the festive period and in the summer months when drink drive advertising campaigns are traditionally timed. Figure 12, with data taken from the Office for National Statistics (2002), illustrates that the perception of increased risk of being caught in December is well founded, with many forces stepping up their roadside patrols on the look-out for offending motorists.

Figure 12
Screening breath tests by month



Source: Office for National Statistics, 2002

Detection rates are, of course, not the same as accident rates – not everyone who tests positive has been involved in an accident. Drink drive accidents are more common during the summer holiday months, as well as during the Christmas and New Year period, when as many as 60% of all drivers and riders killed on the roads are above the legal limit for alcohol. Friday and Saturday night road accident fatalities, especially those which occur between 10pm and 4am, are also more likely to be associated with drink driving.

RAC is concerned that the extension of licensing hours could be unhelpful in the context of drink driving. It is perhaps no coincidence that the increase in binge drinking reported over the past several years has corresponded with an increase in drink drive offences.

6.1.2 Drug driving

The effects of drugs (both illegal and prescribed) are often unhelpful and can be even more serious than alcohol on driving behaviour. Studies conducted by the Transport Research Laboratory confirm that cannabis adversely affects a driver's ability to concentrate, whilst stimulants contained in cocaine and amphetamines can make a driver more aggressive or overly confident behind the wheel. Certain prescribed drugs, such as minor tranquillisers, increase the risk of accidents especially amongst elderly drivers.

Drug driving is on the increase, though hard figures to prove its widespread prevalence are relatively difficult to come by for two reasons. First, there is currently no chemical roadside test available to identify drugs in a driver's system, so the equivalent of positive breathalyser test figures are impossible to come by. Second, a driver who is arrested under suspicion of taking an illicit substance is not duty bound to agree to give a blood sample to the Police. As such, though they may then be charged with dangerous driving or driving without due care and attention, it is not possible to prove if they have taken a drug before driving. Identifying the number of drug

drivers by normal research methods is also difficult and unreliable because few people within a normal research environment would be happy to admit to taking illegal drugs and then driving.

As such, in the course of conducting research for this Report, it was considered that asking respondents to admit to drug driving behaviour might not elicit particularly honest responses or statistics.

Despite this, the RAC Report on Motoring 2003: Drink, Drugs and Driving showed the following results:

- 3% (or the equivalent of 800,000 drivers) admitted to having been driven in the last year by someone who had taken cannabis or marijuana. The equivalent of 200,000 motorists had driven themselves having taken the same drugs
- Every year up to 140,000 people drive under the influence of Class A drugs like cocaine, heroin and ecstasy
- On the whole, motorists do consider drug driving to be more dangerous than drink driving. They also consider it a more serious crime than mugging an old lady for her handbag, though worryingly 5% of 17-34 year olds do not think that driving whilst under the influence of cannabis or marijuana is dangerous
- Motorists aged 17-34 are four times more likely than 35-54 year olds to have driven under the influence of cannabis or marijuana in the last year

In addition, research from the road safety charity Brake conducted in 2001 revealed that:

- 17% of motorists have driven after taking prescribed medicine that they knew could make them drowsy
- 6% have driven after taking illegal drugs

The use of illicit drugs is on the increase. The most recent British Crime Survey showed that almost one third of 16 to 24 year olds have taken an illicit drug in the past year with one in 10 taking a Class A drug like heroin or cocaine. This increase in drug use seems to be impacting the number of drivers deciding to drug drive. According to a 'Drinking and Driving' Fact Sheet compiled by the Institute of Alcohol Studies in December 2004, the incidence of medicinal or illegal drugs in road fatalities increased three-fold between 1992 and 2002. In 2000, the Transport Research Laboratory reported a large increase in the incidence of drug driving with illegal drugs being present in 18% of all road deaths and cannabis in particular present in 12% of them. Although not necessarily representative of the nation as a whole, evidence from the Durham Constabulary released in 2003 revealed that 25% of all road accidents that resulted in a fatality involved a driver who had taken illicit drugs. In the same region during the same period only 15% of accidents resulted in fatalities involving a driver over the drink drive limit.

The Government has asserted its commitment to tackling the problem of drug driving. In its three year review into road safety published in April 2004, the Department for Transport indicated that the following activities were essential:

- 'Increase our understanding of the dangers of driving after using drugs'
- 'Focus on informing young people of the effects of drugs on the mind and on driving capability, and the consequences of being caught driving under the influence of drugs'
- 'Continue to research and develop ways of detecting drivers under the influence of drugs'
- 'Continue to collaborate with other leading road safety nations in studying the drug driving problem'

6.1.3 Who are the culprits?

Drinking and driving occurs across a wide range of age groups, but particularly among men under 30 – as shown by figures relating both to casualties and positive breath tests following a collision. Figures from the Department for Transport published in 2002 suggest that three times more men than women report having driven after drinking.

According to the Institute of Alcohol Studies' 'Drinking and Driving' Fact Sheet, nine in 10 drivers convicted of drink driving are male. Approximately 10% are under 21. A recent drink drive survey conducted by road safety charity Brake revealed that many young drivers are ignoring drink driving laws. 27% of those surveyed admitted to drinking a wide range of strong alcoholic drinks before driving and only 17% believed that alcohol made them drive more dangerously.

It seems that there is also a link between other types of lawless motorists and drink driving. The Association of British Insurers state that uninsured motorists are 10 times more likely to drink drive than those who have insurance and are also three times more likely to be convicted of driving without due care and attention.

6.1.4 The impact of drink drive awareness campaigns

It is the way of the world that the impact of publicity campaigns can be self-determining in the impact that they have. It can be the case that they serve to both strengthen the resolve of law-abiding motorists while simultaneously bringing up seemingly impregnable defences amongst those who are the prime targets of the message, many of whom are reluctant to change their behaviour.

In 2003, a survey was jointly conducted by The Portman Group and RAC, which questioned 18-30 year olds about public drink driving campaigns. Of those interviewed, only 61% said that the campaigns had an effect upon them and influenced them not to drink and drive. A further 14% said they hadn't noticed any campaigns running recently while another 7% said the campaign made them think but didn't stop them drink driving for long. At the more impregnable end of the spectrum, 3% of those questioned said publicity campaigns washed right over them and 4% said that though a campaign had scared them, it was not enough to stop them drinking and driving.

According to past RAC research, a couple of key reasons emerge for why motorists continue to drink and drive. First, that it is worth the risk when taxis or public transport are more expensive or inconvenient to rely upon. And second that peer pressure has an impact on younger drivers. Amongst older drivers, the belief that they can 'take their drink' or that their driving ability is better than the rest (perhaps supported by the fact that they have done it for a while without getting caught or being involved in an accident) also seem to have an impact on their likelihood to continue drinking and driving.

6.2 Admitting to driving under the influence

Unlike other driving offences where it is felt that there is a good chance that our representative sample of British motorists would respond reasonably honestly to questions about their poor driving behaviour, it is unlikely that car drivers would provide honest answers to similar questions about driving under the influence of drink or drugs.

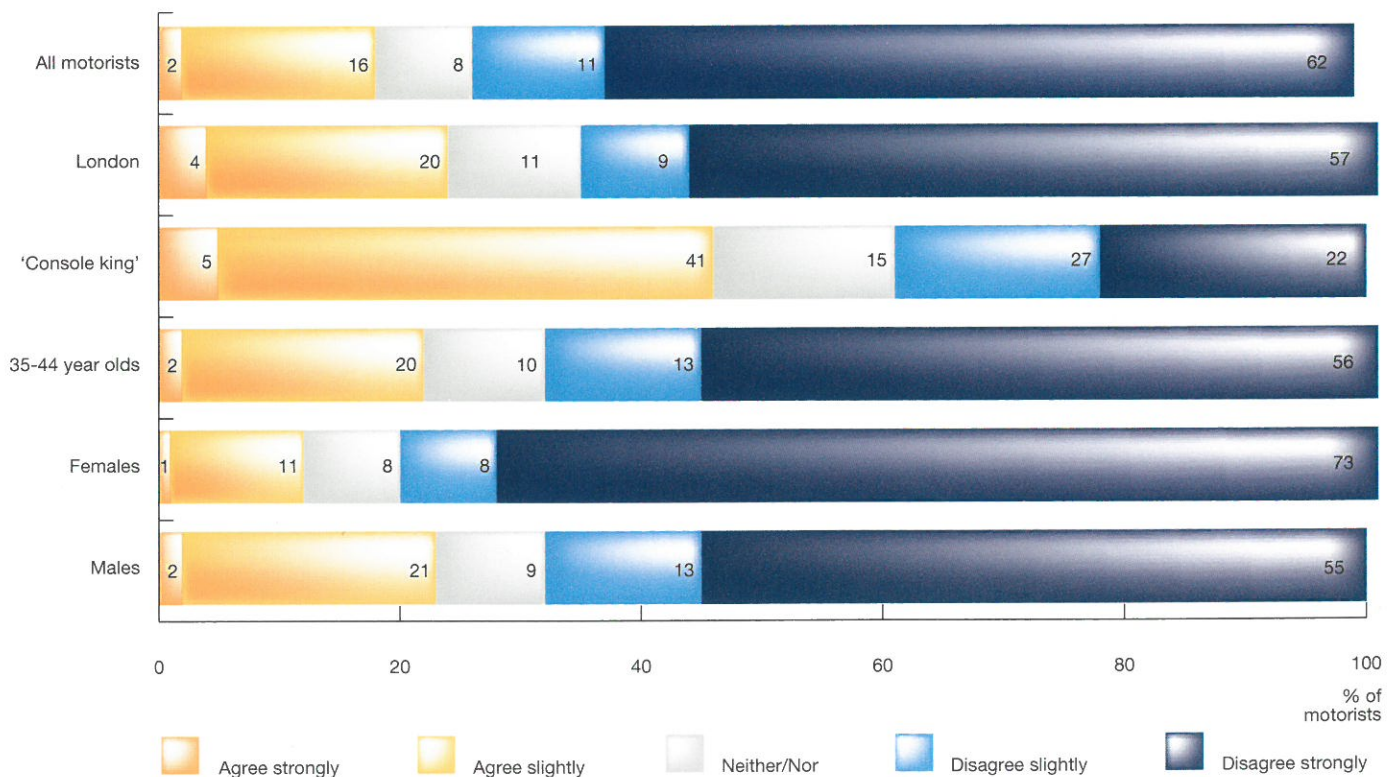
To try to counteract this problem and in order to get some sense of how widespread this behaviour might be, we took a more stealthy research approach by including the following statement in amongst the other 36 that we invited them to agree or disagree with.

“On rare occasions I have driven a car while probably being over the drink drive limit”

Psychologically, if this were behaviour that had been confined to the distant past, most of our sample would have disagreed to some extent with the statement. Furthermore, it is expected that people might choose to underplay the extent to which this happens by choosing to ‘agree slightly’ rather than ‘agree strongly’ with the statement.

Figure 13 illustrates how certain key groups responded to this question.

Figure 13
Motorists who admit to drink driving



Source: RAC Report on Motoring 2005

It can be seen that almost one fifth of the total sample are prepared to admit to having driven while under the influence of drink. It can also be seen that males are more likely to admit to drink driving than females with a similar incidence amongst 35-44 year olds, the age group most likely to admit to such offences. Based on their own admissions, Londoners would appear to demonstrate the highest incidence of drink driving in Britain.

Astoundingly, but perhaps predictably in the context of other behaviours, our problem typology the ‘Console king’ demonstrates an incidence of drink driving that is more than twice the average for the rest of the driving population. This suggests that this group of drivers should be a priority to target with anti-drink drive initiatives.

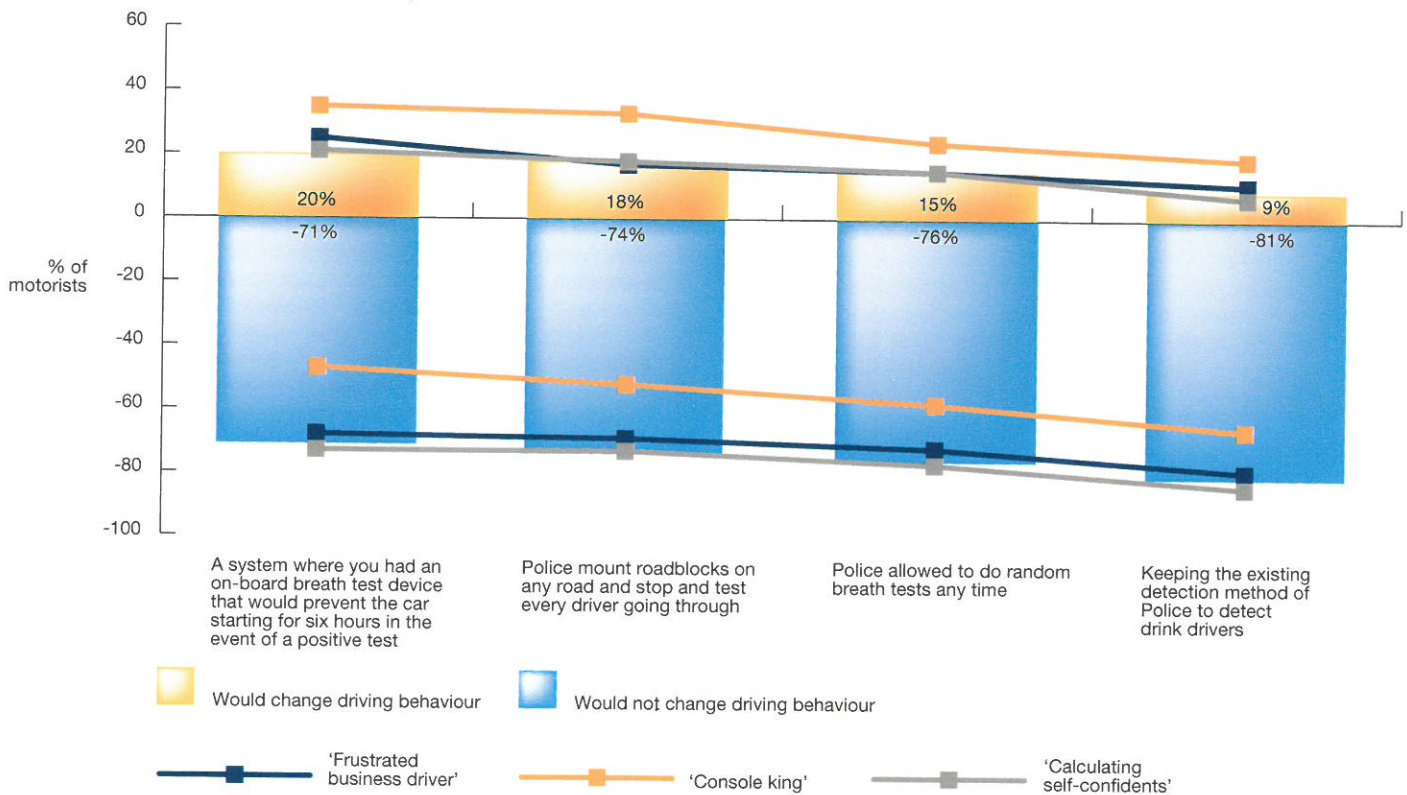
6.3 Detection techniques

6.3.1 Drink detection

As highlighted above, the April 2004 Department for Transport three year review into road safety highlighted a Government plan to strengthen the arm of the Police by introducing powers to allow evidential breath-testing at the roadside. Indeed the Road Safety Bill published in November 2004 revealed the Government’s intention to implement this.

In Figure 14 we illustrate the likely impact on drink driving behaviour of adopting different detection methods. It is worth pointing out that one reason for the relatively low levels of stated behavioural change may be the fact that with fewer offenders in the first place, the impact of more rigorous detection methods would not change what is already a high incidence of good behaviour.

Figure 14
The likely impact of new drink drive detection methods on different driver types



Source: RAC Report on Motoring 2005

It can be seen that in-car breath tests (or 'alcolocks') would be the most effective means of detecting and indeed preventing driving while under the influence of alcohol. Regionally, motorists in London would seem to be the most likely to change their behaviour if such a device was introduced, with 28% claiming that this would have an impact on them. A good proportion (24%) of high mileage drivers and (26%) company car drivers also recognise this as a means of detection that would impact their drink driving behaviour.

Growing concern about drink driving has prompted Saab to develop a miniature alcohol-sensing device, called Alco-key. The device, which would be built into the car's key fob and work off pre-existing anti-theft technology, determines whether the driver is fit to drive, based upon a pre-programmed threshold that is set into the system. If the driver is over the threshold, the car will not start.

While the in-car breath test method is entirely reliant on the acceptance and introduction of technology by motor manufacturers, it is unlikely to constitute a solution in the short term, particularly as a determined drink driver might recruit a sober person to activate the alcolock for them before getting in to drive. In this context it is interesting to note that the prospect of the relatively 'low tech' option of Police mounting random roadblocks would appear to have almost as much potential impact on British motorists. Indeed, our problem typology – the 'Console king' – appears to be amongst the

most reflective of all British motorists when it comes to thinking about changing behaviour. This is also in line with the Department for Transport's intention stated in their three year road safety review that strengthening a visible Police presence is an important pillar of the fight against drink driving, an intention reinforced by the launch in January 2005 of the Government's new strategy for road policing which includes a commitment to providing 'a highly visible Police presence on the roads'.

The results indicate that motorists living in major conurbations would be most likely to be influenced by this detection method – 23% of respondents living in London and other city locations indicated that the random roadblock would make them re-think their drink driving behaviour. There is also an indication that people in more flamboyant, up-market cars would perceive greater risk of detection with 29% of executive car owners and 27% of sports car owners considering that they would modify their drink driving behaviour.

It can also be seen that the difference in potential impact on behaviour is minimal between the rather more dramatic approach of implementing roadblocks and the introduction of completely random breath testing.

6.3.2 Drug detection

In December 2004 the Australian State of Victoria introduced the first fully approved and tested chemical device for identifying illicit drugs in the system of a driver. The Victoria test involves taking a saliva sample by means of an absorbent collector being placed in the mouth of the driver. In a similar fashion to drink driving tests, this can be applied at random, at the roadside, and in instances where the initial test proves positive, the suspect driver is then required to accompany the Policeman to a nearby 'drug bus' where a second test would be taken. This test mechanism is very much in its infancy and doubts have already been attached to its legitimacy and robustness.

In the UK, similar devices have been in development for some time, with the Home Office stating that an approved device is unlikely to become widely available until towards the end of 2005 at the earliest. Currently, Police in the UK only have powers to stop a driver and ask them to take a Roadside Impairment Test. These tests are made up of five different tasks which indicate a driver's likelihood to have taken an illicit substance on the basis of their ability to stand on one foot, walk a straight line or place one's finger on the end of their nose. Drivers who refuse to take the test can be arrested; if a driver fails a test they are then asked to provide a blood sample at the Police station.

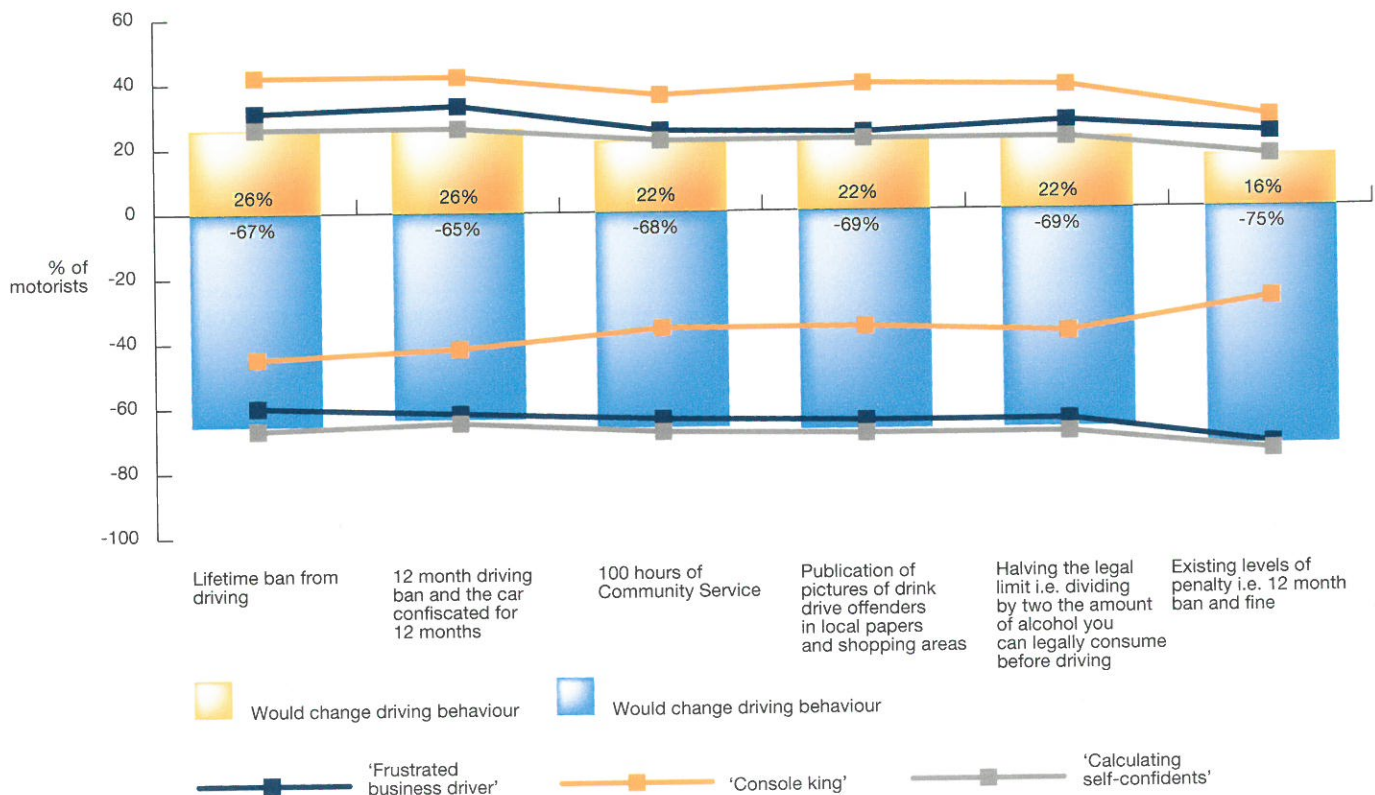
Clearly, the powers of the Police in this country to administer this 15 minute roadside test go some way to providing a detection method for drug driving, but the real prize will be the introduction of a quick, robust, roadside chemical test which works in a similar way to the breathalyser in detecting drink drivers. RAC's 2003 Report on Motoring: Drink, Drugs and Driving revealed that motorists are strongly in favour of the introduction of a drugalyser devices, with nine out of 10 supporting random roadside testing using such a device.

6.4 Penalty approaches

The only evidence of the likely future introduction of stiffer penalties for drink driving offences was the suggestion in the Road Safety Bill that offenders disqualified for 24 months or more would be made to re-take their driving test before their licence is returned.

Penalties have, however, been made more severe as public attitudes to drinking and driving have hardened. The offence of 'causing death by dangerous driving whilst under the influence' now carries a maximum penalty of 14 years imprisonment, a disqualification of at least two years, an unlimited fine and a requirement to pass an extended driving test before the offender can legally drive again. It's clear that despite this package of potential penalties, drink driving is on the rise, perhaps suggesting that it is increasing the likelihood of detection that will ultimately result in a change in behaviour.

Figure 15
The impact of various penalty measures on drink driving behaviour



Source: RAC Report on Motoring 2005

Figure 15 suggests that the prospect of penalties tailored to provide major disruption to mobility might have some significant impact on current drink driving behaviour. It is clear once again that the most effective penalties are those that involve the deprivation of the car.

Although this appears to be the case for British motorists as a whole, it is very interesting to note that our 'Console king' typology would appear to be as fearful of being named and shamed in their local areas as they are of receiving driving bans. Perhaps approaching the loss of reputation from another perspective, the results indicate that this penalty would also be particularly influential amongst business drivers with 29% of all company car drivers claiming that the prospect of this sort of penalty would change their drink driving behaviour.

The results indicate that the prospect of 100 hours of community service would be a more impactful deterrent for people who lead busy lives. Amongst respondents with business expense cars 37% claimed that such a penalty would change their drink driving behaviour.

Another deterrent that would seem to have greater impact on the business driver would be halving of the legal drink drive limit. The results indicate that this initiative would have an impact on the behaviour of 26% of all company car drivers and 29% of executive car owners.

6.5 International lessons?

6.5.1 Drink driving

In New South Wales, Australia, it is illegal to refuse a breath test. This random breath testing strategy, introduced in 1982, brought about a 25% decline in drink driving related crashes. It is the primary drink driving counter-measure in New South Wales and is linked with public education to give it high visibility. The random breath tests can be carried out in two scenarios – via mobile Police patrols at the roadside (as in the UK) and in static situations where roads can be closed down and every passing driver is tested. Mobile tests achieve the highest detection rates while static tests constitute a highly visible reminder of the threat of detection. The static tests effectively work in conjunction with more conventional education via the media to create a sense that if drivers drink they will be caught.

Other measures used in New South Wales to tackle drink driving include:

- Public breath-testers available for use by drinkers in licensed premises
- School road safety education programmes with a focus on delivering messages about the dangers of drink driving
- Pre-sentencing education programmes for traffic offenders referred by a magistrate
- Alternative transport programmes e.g. buses laid on for people to get home if they have been drinking.

In France the legal limit for drink driving was reduced to 50mg of alcohol per 100ml in 1995. This is reported to have led to a 4% reduction in fatalities. In Belgium in 1994 the limit was also reduced to 50mg per 100 ml of blood, leading to a 10% decrease in fatalities in 1995 and a further 11% decrease in 1996.

Ms Kate Winstanley, Head of Policy and Information, The Portman Group

“The maximum penalty for causing death under the influence has recently been increased to 14 years imprisonment. Penalties for drink driving are amongst the toughest in the world and are as severe as we would want them to be.

Enforcement and education are the key areas where we need more action and more resource. We would like to see more rigorous enforcement of existing drink-drive legislation. Whereas the number of breath tests carried out increased dramatically in the mid 1990s, they have been dropping off in recent years.

Ideally, we want to see additional measures to combat drink-driving, such as random breath tests, tests at the scene of the accident being used as legal evidence, and year-round campaigns.

Peer group pressure is a very powerful influence and campaigns should utilise this for maximum effect. Many people – especially younger people – already view drink driving as socially unacceptable behaviour.

The social will is there – most people think more should be done to tackle drinking and driving. I'm less certain there is as much political will; crime and disorder is high on the Government's agenda but drink driving would appear to take lower priority. So much so that it barely gets a mention in the Government's Alcohol Harm Reduction Strategy.

The Government needs to take a fresh look at how to address drink driving; there was a good downward trend of drink driving casualties until the mid 1990s, but since then the decline has hit a plateau.”

6.6 Drink and drug driving: a call to action

Many years of sterling work in making motorists aware of the dangers of drink driving have made the majority of the motoring public consider drink driving to be socially unacceptable. However, recent trends would suggest that this problem is once more on the increase, with younger motorists particularly guilty of driving whilst under the influence. This is an area that requires considerable and extensive focus combining the levers of detection, penalty and education.

6.6.1 Penalties

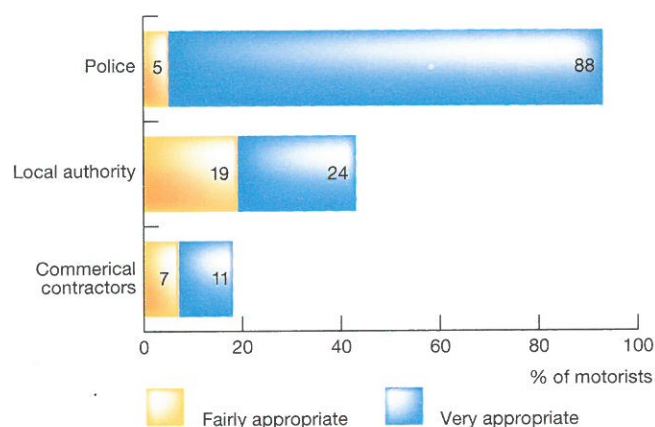
Despite the fact that respondents to the 2005 RAC Report on Motoring suggest that current rather strict drink drive penalties are not providing a deterrent to offenders, RAC would not necessarily welcome stiffer fines or prison sentences for drink drivers. The results of this Report suggest that a greater deterrent to drink driving would be longer driving bans, particularly amongst those who drive on company business or rely upon their cars to complete many miles per year. It is also interesting to see the resonance that 'naming and shaming' might have on those who admit to sometimes drinking and driving; it is clear that there are groups of people for whom personal reputation is very important. Whilst this is an interesting proposition, it is a solution that RAC believes would require very serious consideration before implementing; one only has to look at the approach that has been taken for 'naming and shaming' paedophiles amongst the tabloid press to see that mistaken identity could have a very damaging effect on those concerned. Perhaps there are more subtle ways of using peer or community group influence on these types of offenders? For example, we might look at asking perpetual drink drivers to give something back to their community or to those who have been directly impacted by the effects of drink driving, such as those working in the local A&E department.

6.6.2 Detection

RAC also welcomes the proposal included in the Road Safety Bill that will make the results of roadside breathalyser tests admissible as evidence without having to be supported by subsequent evidence from a blood sample. This clarification of the system will save Police time and arguably act as more of an instant deterrent to drivers. However, evidence of motorists' attitudes would suggest that in some cases a reduced Police presence on our roads is encouraging some motorists to think that they can 'get away with' drink driving because the likelihood of them getting caught is relatively small. Seasonal crack-downs of roadside testing only focus on the problem at certain times of the year, although Government statistics suggest that drink driving is very much a year round problem. As such, more resource being focused on visible traffic policing would be one powerful way to provide an adequate detection method and deterrent to offenders. This approach has certainly been seen to work in other countries and as such, RAC welcomes the Government's commitment to increasing a more visible Police presence, as announced in January 2005.

Interestingly, though motorists would perhaps be prepared to consider authorities other than the Police to be involved directly in speed limit enforcement, such an approach is deemed inappropriate by drivers for drink or drug driving. It's possible that this is because speeding is considered far less a 'criminal' activity when compared to drink or drug driving. Figure 16 shows that 28% of British motorists considered it 'very inappropriate' for local authorities to enforce drink driving laws in what is clearly amongst the most sensitive and serious of motoring crimes.

Figure 16
Who should have the power to detect drink driving offences at the roadside?



Source: RAC Report on Motoring 2005

Of course the other way to stamp out drink driving at the root would be to introduce alcolocks into passenger cars. It would require legislation or a considerable change in approach from motor manufacturers to introduce such devices into all new vehicles or to retro-fit them into older cars, so that is possibly not a realistic short-term option for all passenger cars. However, the Road Safety Bill does suggest that the experimental introduction of alcolocks into the vehicles of the worst offenders will be promoted to ensure that we can attempt to break their drink drive habit.

It might also be interesting to look at how one could offer drivers the possibilities of lower insurance premiums in return for having an alcolock fitted.

As regards drug driving, RAC is of the opinion that this is a huge and growing problem which requires urgent attention. The fact that nowhere in the Road Safety Bill were specific measures recommended to tackle the problem underlines the considerable task we face.

Currently, we do not have a chemical roadside test available in this country. Despite good intentions to develop such a test as a matter of priority, we have seen no breakthrough since RAC last researched the problem of drug driving back in 2003. It is critical that such a test becomes available as soon as possible because right now our only method of detecting a drug driver at the roadside is for Police to administer a behavioural Roadside Impairment Test. RAC is of the opinion that such tests cannot be 100% robust or reliable when compared to a device that works chemically to detect illicit drugs in a way comparable to a breathalyser. In addition, a behavioural test that takes 15 minutes to administer takes considerably more Police time than a roadside test that may give a reliable result in a matter of moments. Once again, drug drivers who may perpetually offend because they don't think they'll get caught, may be less likely to offend if they think the likelihood of being stopped and detected at the roadside by traffic Police is greater. This is another case where additional and visible Police resourcing will help to prevent the problem to a certain degree by providing a more effective deterrent.

6.6.3 Education

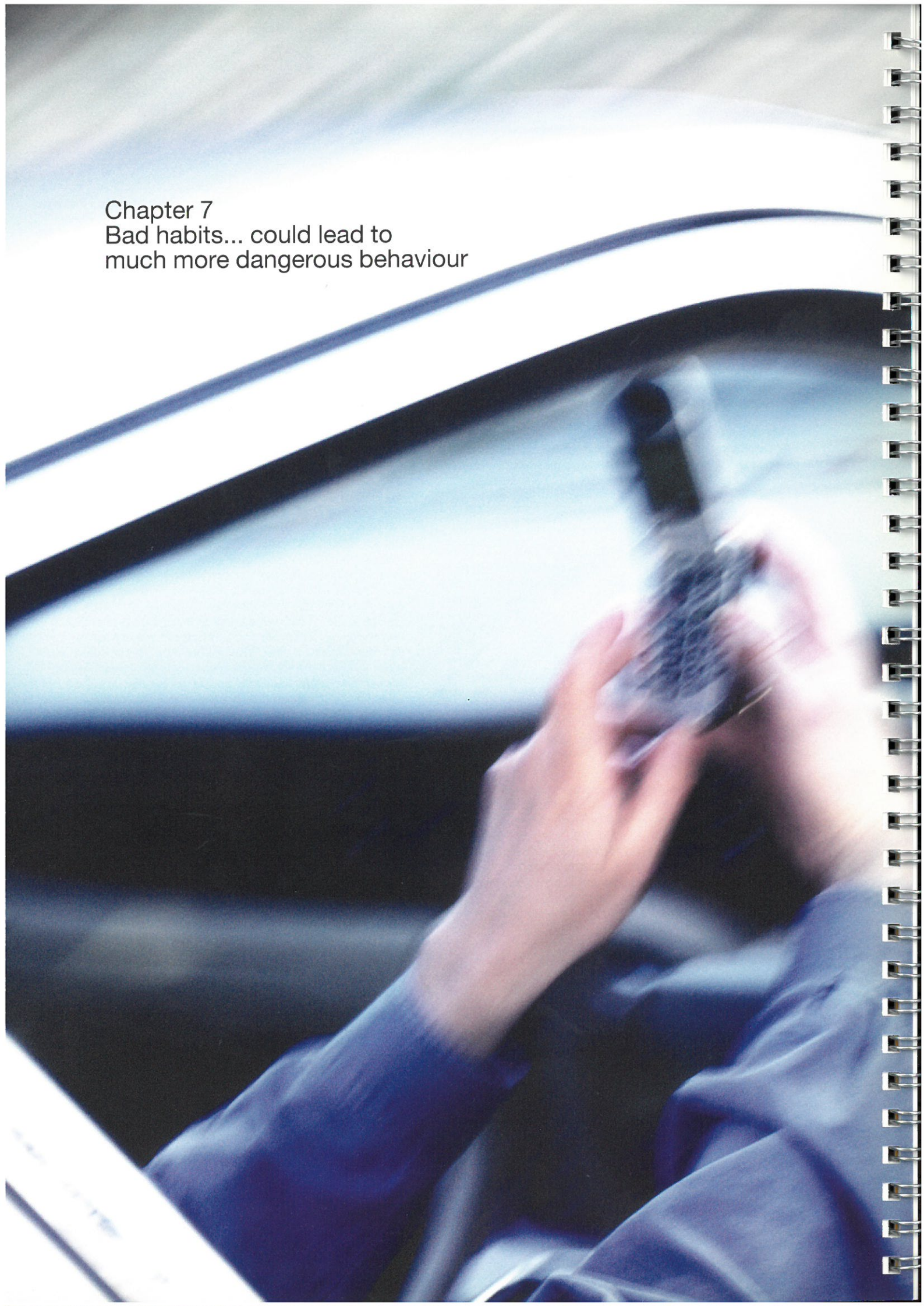
One of the key problems that our current drink drive limit engenders is that it is in fact legal to drink an amount of alcohol and drive, though the road safety message around this phenomenon is that drivers should not drink anything at all before driving. The impact of alcohol upon an individual cannot be generalised and as such, there has been a gradual move away from using the concept of units to describe what might represent a legal or safe limit of alcohol to consume before driving. If we are to retain the admissible limit of 80mg of alcohol per 100ml of blood, we do need to go some way to attempting to educate motorists as to what this means in practice, particularly if we are to help motorists understand the dangers of

'morning after motoring' when it may be some time since the driver in question consumed their last drink. The results of this Report demonstrate that a reduction in the allowed alcohol limit would have an impact on the prevalence of drink drive incidents amongst many of the 'problem' typologies. Perhaps the time has come to change the law so that only a tiny amount of alcohol is allowed in your system whilst driving? RAC would be in favour of revisiting the current law and reducing the legal limit from 80mg of alcohol per 100ml of blood to 50mg of alcohol per 100ml of blood – the same allowable limit as most of the rest of the EU – as long as detection rates increase in parallel and that we continue to focus attention – as is the Government's intention – on the most serious offenders.

RAC is also in favour of the recommendations included in the Road Safety Bill that the worst drink drive offenders should retake their driving test and preferably undergo intensive retraining before having their licence returned to them. Similar to those who regularly speed, drink driving can become a regular habit, made easier to keep doing if you've never been caught. Retraining can help alert the driver to the reasons behind their behaviour and can go some way to changing long-held mindsets.

As regards education about drug driving, the Department for Transport's own three year road safety strategy suggests that informing particularly young drivers about the dangers of taking drugs before getting behind the wheel of a car should be a priority. RAC would be in favour of a concerted campaign, possibly tackling youngsters as well as their parents so that the issue becomes as well known and as socially unacceptable as drink driving has become in most quarters. This could take the form of mass media advertising or more subtle education campaigns direct to young people in situations when they may be more receptive to such messages – not necessarily just via television advertising.

Chapter 7
Bad habits... could lead to
much more dangerous behaviour



7.1 Context

Although speeding and drink and drug driving often constitute the most dangerous threats to road safety, it is important not to lose sight of a secondary group of motoring offences. While many of these 'lesser' offences are not directly life threatening or always dangerous, it is entirely possible that the annoyance and frustration they cause can contribute to a more dangerous motorist mindset. If low level lawlessness is perceived as going unchecked and unpunished the danger is that some motorists could build up resentment and could start taking the law into his or her own hands. Equally dangerous is the likelihood that those who habitually get away with undetected poor driving behaviour could in fact develop yet worse habits.

We will see that even those who claim to be 'whitest of the white', have a selective memory when it comes to admitting of their own illegal driving behaviour. If resentment and emotion builds, even the more conservative drivers might set their own thresholds of acceptable behaviour. Tailgating, overtaking on the wrong side and road rage are considered by many motorists to be at levels that are already unacceptable.

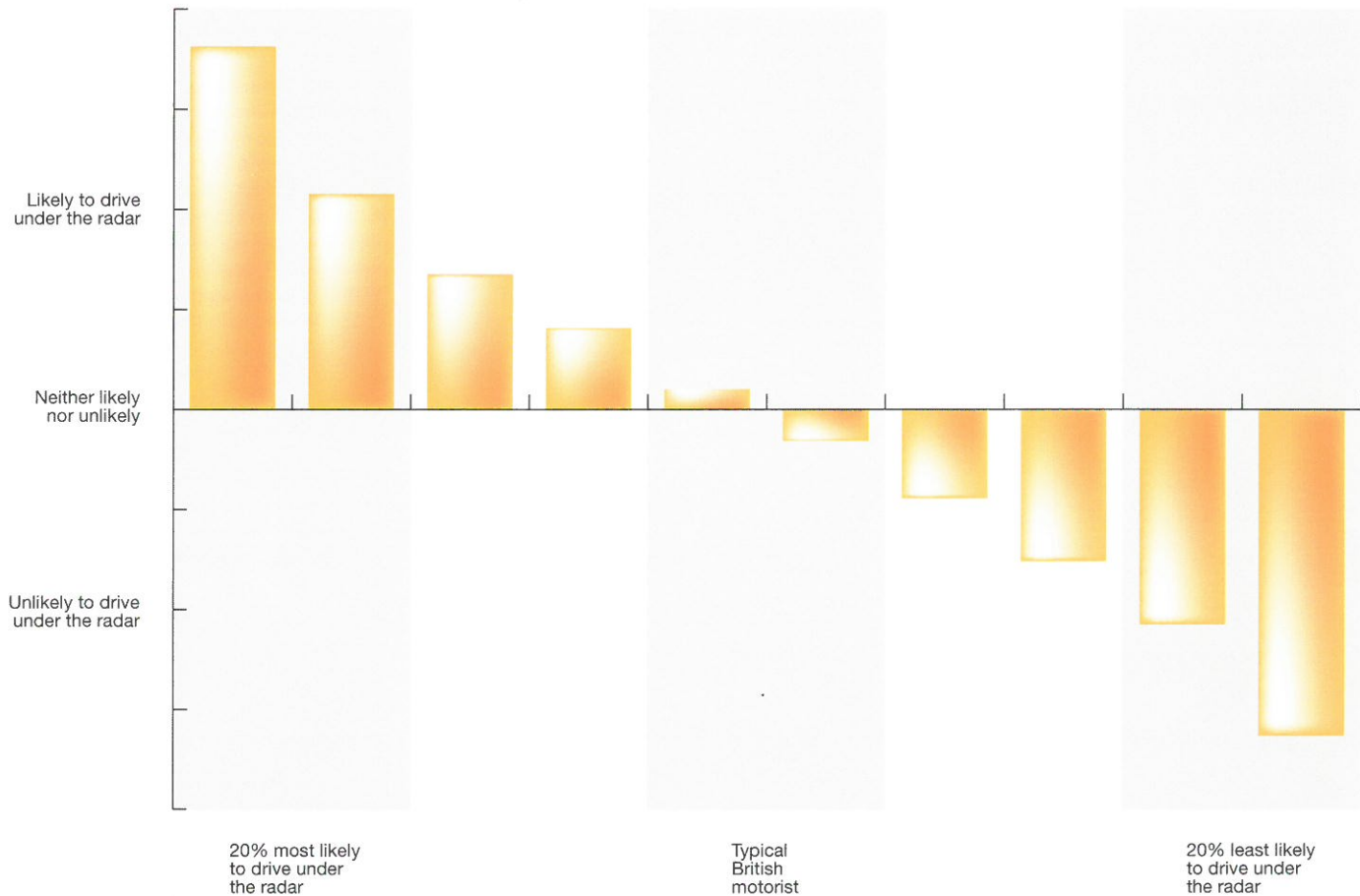
7.2 Holier than thou... but not necessarily better

The results of the 2005 RAC Report on Motoring suggest that the majority of British motorists do not lack confidence in their own driving ability. A massive 74% of our respondents agreed with the statement 'I am safer than most drivers' and 84% agreed with the statement 'I consider myself to be a law abiding driver'.

Research has shown that most drivers believe they are more skilful than the average, that accidents are more likely to happen to them as passengers than as drivers, and that the roads would be safer if everyone drove like themselves; they see 'other drivers' as being the main problem, and do not recognise their own behaviour as being risky. Amongst drivers in general there is an overconfidence that comes from being personally in control (as evidenced by the Department for Transport's 1999 report, 'The effects of speed cameras'). In fact, the mentality that 'it won't happen to me' evidenced in research published by McKenna in 1993 is a rational response for the majority of the population who may have yet to experience a serious accident or injury behind the wheel.

It is clear, however, that these particular drivers are not quite as blameless as they paint themselves to be. This Report indicates that 6% of those who consider themselves to be law-abiding drivers admit to using a mobile phone without a hands free device in the car at least once a week. Only 70% of those considering themselves to be law abiding claim never to use a mobile phone in such circumstances.

Figure 17
 British motorists who recognise in themselves the driver 'DNA' strand of 'Driving under the radar'



Source: RAC Report on Motoring 2005

7.3 Cause and effect?

In the rest of this Chapter we will see that our 'Console king' typology would appear to be amongst the main offenders when it comes to some of these bad driving practices. It is also clear, however, that they are not the only typology likely to participate in such activities. While there can be little doubt that the vast majority of motorists are aware of the illegality of these activities, the results suggest that the extent to which motorists behave in such ways is strongly related to the belief that they can typically get away with it.

The 'Driving under the radar' trait is not exclusive to the 'Console king' typology – it is a very prominent characteristic amongst 'Calculating self-confidents' and also manifests itself in all other groups with the exception of the 'Virtuous minority'.

Figure 17 serves to cut across the typologies we have identified and simply profiles the total sample according to the prominence of the 'Driving under the radar' trait. The chart depicts a scenario where we effectively line every motorist up according to the extent to which they believe in this trait and then divide them into 10 groups of equal number.

Towards the left side of the chart we have the motorists most likely to 'Drive under the radar' while on the extreme right hand side we depict the drivers least likely to identify with the trait. In the middle are groups that represent the average or typical level of identification with this trait across all motorists.

Figure 18 illustrates the frequencies with which the three groups highlighted in Figure 17 carry out such behaviours.

Figure 18

Motorists' propensity to drive in a selfish or dangerous manner compared to their identification with the trait of 'Driving under the radar'

	20% most likely to 'Drive under the radar'	Typical British motorist	20% least likely to 'Drive under the radar'
Speeding on A roads / motorways – every day	18%	12%	4%
Speeding in 30 mph zones – every day	17%	9%	5%
Jumping red lights – 'every now and then'	44%	25%	10%
Tailgating – at least once a week	10%	5%	3%
Blocking junctions – at least monthly	36%	19%	11%
'Under-taking' – at least monthly	27%	13%	6%
Using hand-held mobile phones – at least once a week	13%	7%	5%
No seatbelts used – at least once a week	12%	6%	4%
Road rage – 'every now and then'	30%	20%	10%
Inconsiderate parking – 'every now and then'	25%	10%	3%
Cutting people up – at least monthly	26%	14%	8%
Driving unroadworthy vehicles – ever	17%	6%	3%

Source: RAC Report on Motoring 2005

When asked about the frequency with which one 'misbehaves' it is highly probable that most people would tend to under-estimate the regularity if not deny it completely. We can reasonably assume, therefore, that in reality the frequency of such events is somewhat greater than the indications we have been given.

It would be naïve to believe that those who are least inclined to 'Drive under the radar' are likely to be perfectly behaved. Indeed the results indicate either sporadic or very low levels of dangerous or inconsiderate driving. The real significance of this analysis lies in the benchmark of bad behaviour as indicated by the 'Typical British motorist' column and the significantly higher incidences of dangerous or inconsiderate driving indicated amongst the 20% of British motorists who are most likely to believe they will not get caught.

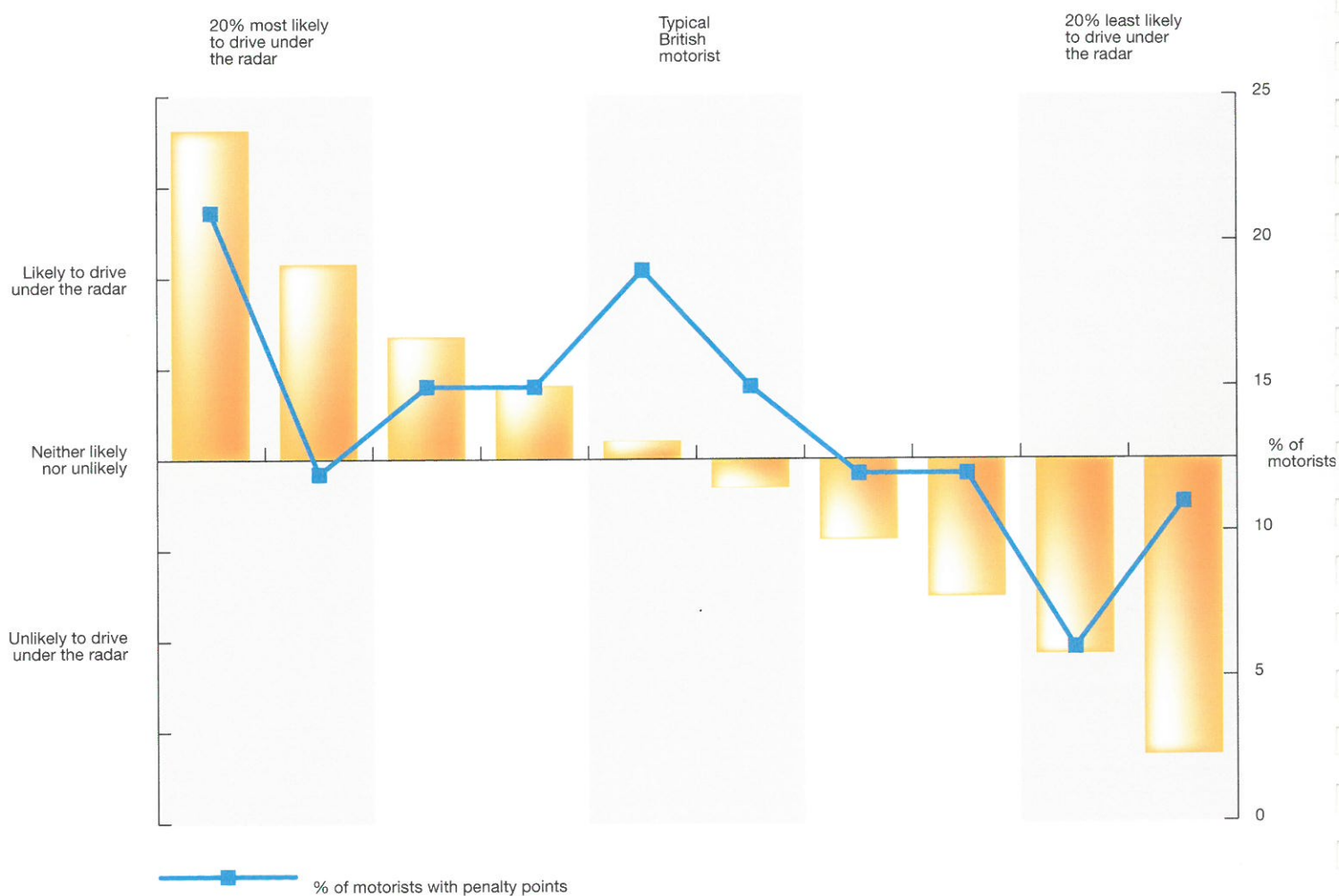
When we look at the 'Typical British motorist' we see that one in four acknowledge that they jump red lights on occasions and 20% of them succumb to road rage from time to time. It can also be seen that 7% use their mobile phone illegally on at least a weekly basis and 13% are not averse to regular if not very frequent overtaking on the wrong side. Interestingly, these types of behaviour are no less common amongst some groups of women than they are amongst men; a study published in January 2005 from psychologists at the Rollins College, Florida and the Saitama Institute of Technology in Japan showed that young female drivers were more likely than ever before to drive dangerously, ignore traffic signs, speed, drink drive and collect parking tickets.

It can be seen that, for the 20% of British motorists who believe they are unlikely to get caught, their heightened sense of impunity means that they are almost twice as likely as the 'typical motorist' to carry out such bad behaviours. While it is perhaps alarming to recognise the benchmark incidences of bad behaviour, for the average British motorist, it surely becomes very worrying when we see the frequency with which this seemingly cavalier group participate in many of these dangerous practices.

Figure 19 indicates that those sensing impunity may, based on their own experience, be justified. The height of the bar continues to represent the extent to which each group identifies with the 'Driving under the radar' trait (drawn against the vertical axis on the left) while the line (drawn from the vertical axis on the right) illustrates the percentage of each group that currently have penalty points on their driving licence.

Although amongst the biggest offenders (who are far ahead of the rest) the incidence of penalty points is markedly higher (at 21%) than all other groups, there is little evidence to suggest an otherwise strong relationship between points and bad behaviour. This analysis seems to present a bit of a chicken and egg scenario – does the lack of a pattern suggest that it is pot luck as to whether a driver gets caught or are the worst offenders cynically efficient at avoiding detection? Either way, these characteristics point towards a need for better, more rigorous detection methods if we are to significantly reduce dangerous behaviour on our roads.

Figure 19
The incidence of penalty points amongst British drivers compared to their likelihood to agree with the 'Driving under the radar' trait



Source: RAC Report on Motoring 2005

7.3.1 Hand-held mobile phone usage

Driving simulator experiments carried out by the Transport Research Laboratory in 2002 found that drivers talking on a mobile phone had reaction times 30% slower than those who had been drinking and 50% slower than sober participants. Drivers using mobile phones significantly missed more road warning signs than even those driving when drunk. Research in Canada has shown that motorists using mobile phones react much more slowly to hazards and road signs. Also, their braking distance at 70mph is 46 feet longer than a normal driver and 33 feet longer than a driver over the legal alcohol limit.

Ongoing research for the Department for Transport into attitudes towards using mobile phones while driving indicates that some 70% of drivers consider it unacceptable to do so. However, many of them also admit to doing this themselves. Only about a quarter of drivers say they would never answer a call while driving. The 2003 RAC Report on Motoring: Mobile Phones showed that nine in 10 motorists thought there should be a law to ban the use of mobile phones while driving. Of course a ban on using hand-held mobiles

was introduced in December 2003, though subsequent RAC research has indicated that the current £30 fine for those caught is not acting as an appropriate deterrent or changing behaviour. It is the Government's intention to introduce primary legislation (as evidenced in the Road Safety Bill published in November 2004) to toughen the law further so that those caught using a hand-held mobile behind the wheel would be subject to a £60 fine and three penalty points.

Our key problem typologies clearly find it difficult to avoid the temptation of using a hand-held mobile phone whilst driving. Amongst the 'Console king' typology, 22% admit to using a mobile phone in this way at least once a week, with 8% acknowledging that this is an every day occurrence for them. The 'Frustrated business driver' group appear to use a little more self-control with 10% admitting to hand-held usage at least once a week although half of these concede that it happens every day.

It would appear that this group is also not completely averse to tailgating as 4% admit to this activity at least once a week.

7.4 Detection methods

Figure 20 illustrates the potential impact on poor driving behaviour of various alternative detection methods. In order to reduce activities such as using hand-held mobiles or other activities that would compromise control of the car such as shaving or applying make-up, it would seem that the most effective means involve increasing the number of Police on the roads. There would appear to be no real difference in the perceived risk of getting caught by Police using marked or unmarked vehicles. Taken literally, this would suggest that there is no greater perceived risk of getting caught by methods that are not readily recognisable than with visibly marked cars. This might suggest that there is limited value in adopting a stealthy detection strategy where the seeds of uncertainty are sewn in the motorist's mind to make them fear detection. Instead, the results would suggest that motorists are more likely to be kept within the law by a constant, visibly reinforced, conventional policing approach, a fact that adheres well to the Government's stated commitment to increasing its visible Police presence on the roads.

7.5 Penalty approaches

The results of this Report indicate once again that penalties that involve significant disruption and inconvenience to motorists' normal routines would tend to be more effective in changing behaviour than imposing fines. In general, even if fines were linked to income on a sliding scale – so that the impact would be consistent across income bands – discomfort in the pocket would still seem to be less threatening than the potential for significant disruption to normal routines. Even company car drivers who demonstrate a greater likelihood to be influenced by the prospect of an income-related fine show an even higher propensity to change their behaviour if the threat of community service awaited prosecution for such an offence. It could be that currently motorists have no fear that means-related fines – such as are already enforced in Scandinavia – would ever be introduced in this country.

Mr John Bateman, Chief Executive, UK Youth

“Tackling poor driving behaviour is all about challenging whether people think their behaviour is acceptable, but we see little evidence of any concerted training programmes to assist existing drivers to change attitudes or more importantly to ensure that new drivers adopt appropriate attitudes at the start of their driving career.

Most current driving education tends to focus more on technical skills than attitudes to driving or the rights and responsibilities of driving, and even when it may be inappropriate to use a car.

For many, a £60 fine for speeding is just an irritant, and it only teaches us not get caught. Sustained education programmes have changed the way we view drink driving as socially unacceptable – culprits are viewed as anti-social members of communities.

To tackle poor driving among young people, lessons should be drawn from the most effective anti-smoking campaigns – portraying smokers as

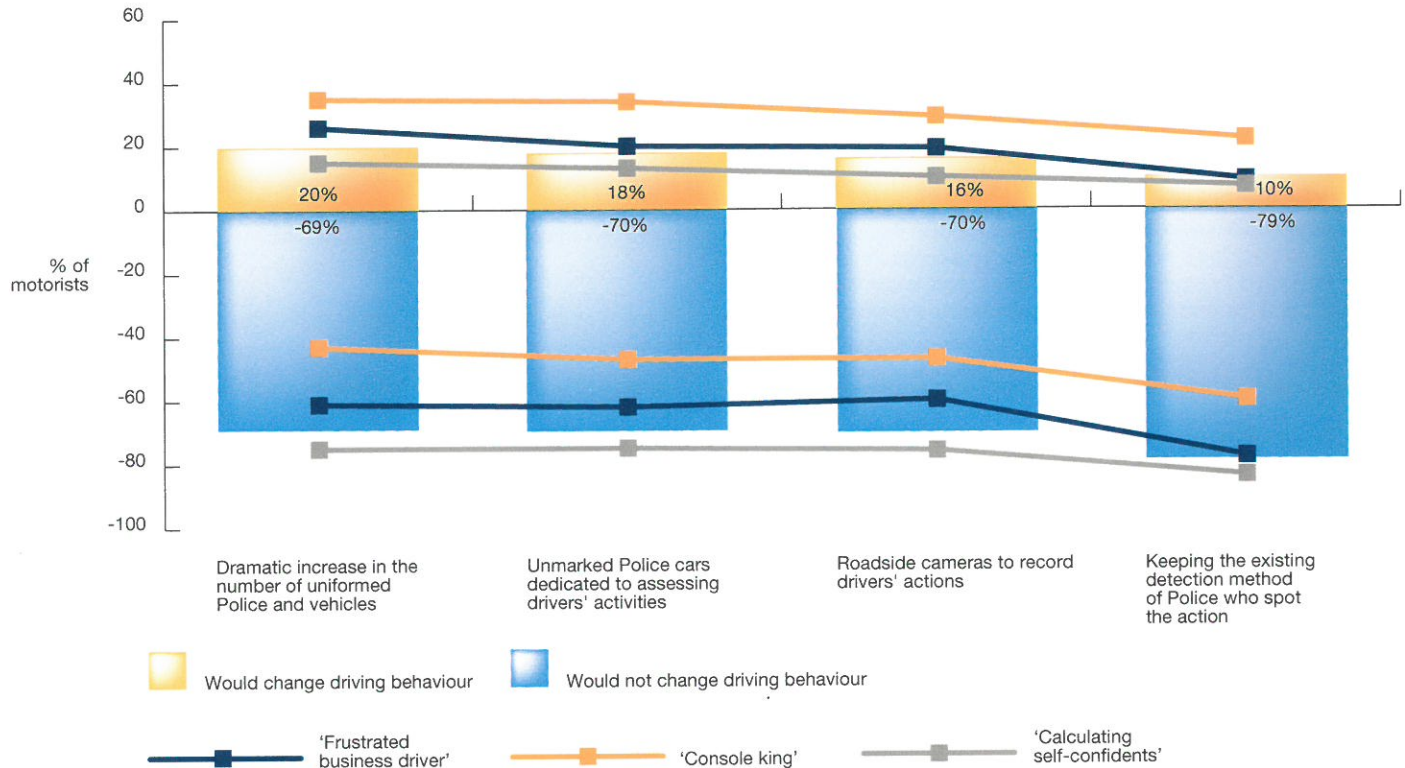
outcasts among their peer group. The impact comes from a message that is immediate, identifiable and tangible to the audience.

The only way to truly address poor driving behaviour such as drink driving and speeding is to change attitudes because if motorists think the rules are inappropriate, they will continue to ignore them. It is simple to put up a speed camera and demonstrate that people have cut their speed on that specific stretch of road – but that does little to change people's attitude to speeding further down the road.

Currently, people think if you can get away with speeding, then fine. If people really understood the stupidity of excessive speed, for example in built up areas or poor visibility, then they would develop an attitude based on awareness and modify their behaviour.

The difficulty is that changing the underlying attitudes takes time and money, and the immediate effectiveness is less easy to demonstrate.”

Figure 20
The impact of various detection methods on offences of poor driving behaviour



Source: RAC Report on Motoring 2005

As Figure 21 shows, few would consider even a short-term prison stay to be a penalty that is in proportion to this particular set of motoring offences. It is, therefore, interesting to note that for our most worrying typology, the 'Console king', the prospect of community service would seem to hold as much deterrent effect as a short, sharp vacation at Her Majesty's pleasure.

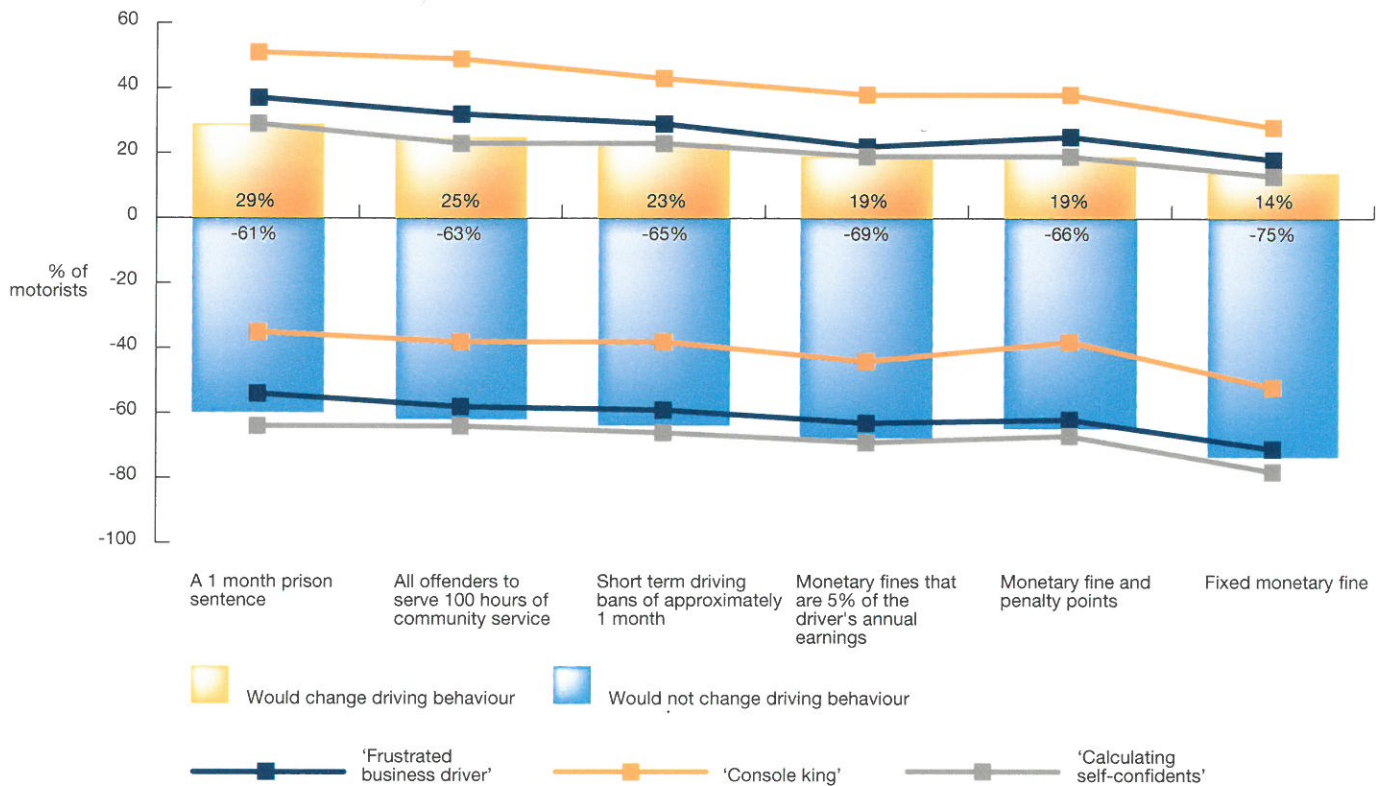
The prospect of short-term driving bans would clearly be a penalty that would make business expense car drivers more closely consider their behaviour in this context; 29% stated that such a penalty would make them change their behaviour. A similar proportion of the 'Frustrated business driver' group – a segment with a disproportionately high share of company car drivers – would also be influenced by the prospect of such a penalty.

7.6 Minor annoyances: damage to vehicles

In terms of experiences that could serve to build up resentment and create a none too positive attitude to driving, damage and theft to vehicles can also influence the mindset of the motorist. It is clear that most British motorists suffer a variety of close calls and minor encounters that could dent either their car or their confidence. About 2% of motorists claim that they suffer from damage to paintwork or bodywork by drivers who do not own up to it on a monthly basis. 9% of the 'Virtuous minority' group and 8% of motorists over the age of 55 years suffer from this, suggesting that they appear to be more prone to such misadventures than others.

In city and town locations almost one quarter of all motorists suffer vandalism to their car at least once a year. This compares with 16% of drivers across the country as a whole. Car theft or break-ins are incidents that 7% of Britain's motorists encounter at least once a year. Only 60% of all motorists have never had their car stolen or broken into.

Figure 21
The impact of various penalties on offences of poor driving behaviour



Source: RAC Report on Motoring 2005

7.7 International lessons

7.7.1 Mobile phones

Since 1 November 1999, Japan has prohibited the use of hand-held phones while driving. Failure to comply with the law can lead up to three months in prison. One year after the introduction of the legislation, there had been a significant drop (of more than 50%) in the number of accidents and casualties in collisions in Japan involving mobile phone use. The number of fatalities has also decreased by 20% – from 25 a year to 20 a year.

7.7.2 Countering car theft

One method of counteracting car theft, which has already been employed in several cities across Canada (including Ottawa, Vancouver and Hamilton), is the use of bait cars. These are theft-prone vehicles which are parked in areas which have experienced car thefts in the past. The vehicles are fitted with GPS systems that allow the Police to remotely track the vehicle if its stolen. Some

vehicles also use automatic videotaping to catch the culprits, which can later be used as evidence. Once a vehicle has been stolen and is in a safe position, the Police can remotely disable the engine and move in for an arrest. This removes the need for a Police chase and minimises the risk or danger to the public, Police and offenders during their apprehension. In Hamilton, the number of vehicles stolen reduced by 24% during the first year of operation against the previous five-year average as a result of their bait car programme.

In the United States, a few Police forces began using bait cars in the late 1990s, since when they've become increasingly popular. Dozens of Police departments are now using bait cars in order to catch car thieves. Some Police departments report more than a 25% reduction in vehicle thefts as a result of their bait car programmes. In fact, insurance companies like the idea so much that some have begun buying bait cars for the Police. The Minneapolis bait car programme (which was amongst the first to be actioned) resulted in a 40% drop in vehicle crime between 1997 and 1999. They now use 10 bait cars and catch nearly one suspect every week.

7.8 Poor driving behaviour: a call to action

There are quite clearly two rather polarised types of driving offence that we have identified in this Chapter; those that are potentially extremely dangerous, and those which might be described as rather milder annoyances, which if allowed to go unchecked could perhaps lead to more serious incidents or danger on our roads.

7.8.1 Penalties

The results of the 2005 RAC Report on Motoring suggest that the prospect of different penalties would seem to be a greater deterrent than increased detection methods in these types of driving offence. The apparent potential impact of penalties that cause inconvenience to motorists' normal routines leads RAC to suggest that a further review of penalties might be appropriate, in some cases making them more draconian, as long as detection is further increased. RAC is particularly keen that the current penalties in place for using hand-held mobile phones at the wheel are toughened as soon as possible in accordance with the content of the Road Safety Bill. This would mean that penalty points and increased fines of up to £60 would be in place for those caught using a hand-held mobile at the wheel. RAC believes that this would represent a more appropriate deterrent to a problem that many motorists continue to perpetuate because they don't believe they'll get caught and because many of them feel that a £30 fine is infinitely affordable. In addition, the Road Safety Bill seeks to raise the fine for those convicted of careless driving from a maximum of £2,500 to £5,000. RAC is in favour of this approach so that the potential severity of an offence is punishable by a more appropriate penalty.

As regards responding to our motorists' three wishes by making hogging the middle lane or the fast lane a specific offence to be met by points and fines, RAC would urge some caution. Though it is true that selfish lane hogging can be annoying, cause some drivers to take risks or undertake and can result in unnecessary congestion, RAC safety experts are concerned about the potential danger that constant lane changing could introduce into the motorway environment, particularly increasing the number of near misses caused by 'fast' and 'slow' lane drivers both converging on the middle lane. It may be worth considering international examples when looking to address this problem. Some motorways, for example in the US, have no etiquette regarding the use of different lanes for different speeds; drivers choose to proceed in a particular lane without having to overtake to make speedier progress. Likewise, there is no rule about undertaking since none of the lanes is designated faster than another. Conversely, though French motorways have only two lanes, experience of 'fast lane' hogging is much rarer since the strongly observed etiquette is for drivers to move over into the outside lane once their overtaking manoeuvre has been completed.

7.8.2 Detection

As ever, one of the key issues with various types of dangerous or careless driving is that motorists don't feel that they are likely to be caught or detected. Speed cameras cannot currently detect anything other than motorists driving over the speed limit and yet motorists regularly drive past them whilst on their mobile phone, applying make-up or reading maps, or engaging in potentially even more dangerous pursuits. Increasing the penalty for the use of hand-held mobiles whilst driving is one lever to use when attempting to reduce bad behaviour. Another lever is of course detection, which would require more roadside law-enforcers in order to catch drivers in the act of driving without due care or attention or indeed driving dangerously. This is something that the Government has now committed to resourcing as part of an enhanced road Policing resource.

Detection of poor driving behaviour, such as dangerous tailgating on motorways or selfish lane-hogging, is another issue that requires attention if we are to improve safety. The motorway is the last largely free frontier for the motorist, with very few enforcement or detection methods in place, save the odd speed camera in road works and a few traffic Police. However, the impact of these Police can be seen clearly; when traffic slows down on the motorway without warning it's usually to file past a Police car within reasonable bounds of the speed limit. Whilst the introduction of speed or detection cameras on motorways to catch poor driving behaviour is likely to be very unpopular amongst most motorists, it is instead a suggestion that a more visible Police presence might improve general standards. RAC believes that the suggestion of introducing tailgating cameras is worth investigating, but only if the technology can ensure that it penalises only those who are actively involved in tailgating, not those who perhaps suffer when careless or reckless drivers pull out too closely in front of them.

Another approach to improving driver behaviour amongst business motorists and company car drivers might be a softer means of preventing or detecting those who continue to drive, for example, using a hand-held mobile phone. Businesses can help by ensuring that those who need to drive on company business and be available on the phone at the same time have appropriate hands free equipment fitted. They also need to ensure that they do not make undue demands on their employees as regards making and receiving phone calls whilst on the road. These things should be enshrined in a road safety strategy published by the company to all relevant employees.

A technical approach would be the development of a universal hands-free device for use with any phone in any car. This technology already exists but would require cooperation from mobile phone network operators and motor manufacturers if it was to become a mandatory requirement in all vehicles. Of course providing hands-free equipment in this way might also encourage motorists to use the phone whilst driving, something the Government and road safety campaigners would be unlikely to condone.

7.8.3 Education

RAC considers that an appropriate means of tackling the problem of middle and fast lane hogging, identified as the main driving agony or habit they would like to see changed, might be via improved education. New drivers do not have to complete any specific training before venturing onto the motorway, and hence may do so without full consideration of appropriate behaviour that they might have only read about briefly in the Highway Code. More training for drivers soon after they pass their test might go some way to ensure that they start their motorway driving career in the most appropriate way. Similarly, as company car and business drivers complete a good number of motorway miles, there is another opportunity for fleet managers to introduce driver assessment and training to remind them of safe and appropriate lane etiquette. Finally, the use of variable message signs to discourage lane hogging, could be a way of instantly reminding motorists of how to behave.

It's more than a year since the law was changed to make the use of hand held mobiles a specific driving offence. RAC research suggests that relatively few motorists were aware of the law change at the time or understood what in fact was legal within the confines of the new regulations. It's certainly true that new law changes take some time to sink in and alter behaviour. After all, the law concerning seat belts took a long time to be translated into driving habits and in fact we still haven't changed behaviour entirely in this area; the Road Safety Bill seeks to increase fines from £200 to £500 for failure to ensure a child is wearing a seat belt in rear seats of a car, the same level of fine as for failure to wear a seat belt in the front seats. This suggests that many drivers continue to ignore the current law as it stands.

The fact that behaviour has not changed much and that many motorists appear to still be breaking this particular mobile phone law suggest that more education and awareness campaigns are required to hammer home the message. Perhaps there might be room for a 'shock' advertising campaign such as we have seen for drink driving to illustrate the potential impact of using a hand-held mobile whilst driving?

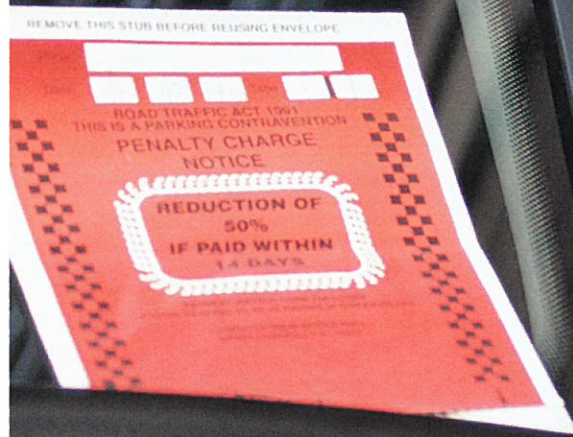
RAC is fully in favour of investigating the concept of driver training and retraining, particularly for those who have been identified as dangerous drivers. Drivers who have perhaps got into bad habits during their motoring career may well be rehabilitated to a certain extent by being retrained at some point in their driving career, particularly before their licence is returned to them after a careless or dangerous driving-related ban. RAC, through its driver training company BSM, is not in favour of compulsory regular retesting for drivers. Not only are the resources of the Driving Standards Agency that administers tests already stretched thinly but there is the fear that drivers will focus only temporarily on improving standards in order to pass a test before lapsing immediately back into bad habits.

Delivering additional training soon after the first driving test is a useful concept to prepare young drivers for different types of road environments. Pass Plus courses which apply more rigorous training to newly qualified drivers can not only ensure that they are ready and prepared to deal with all sorts of different driving environments, including the motorway, but they can also reward the driver with a lower insurance premium. RAC is fully in favour of these types of courses. In addition, the introduction of log books for learner drivers can help focus on recognising the types of motoring environments that a new driver has been exposed to in order to enhance their early driving career.

Just as companies need to provide their business drivers with the tools to ensure they can drive more safely using a mobile phone, so companies have a duty to ensure their drivers are equipped with skills and information to drive in the most responsible way possible. Our research has shown that a good proportion of company car drivers are guilty of driving aggressively and committing offences like dangerous tailgating. Companies can play an important role in delivering additional driver training and identifying risky drivers within their fleet who have a poor driving record.

Finally, simple road safety measures, like chevrons placed on the road or motorway, can be useful in reminding drivers about good driving etiquette and not getting too close to the car in front. This kind of measure can be relatively low cost to implement and yet rather effective in a practical sense.

Chapter 8 Parking



8.1 Context

In 2002, the largest group of motoring offences dealt with were for obstruction, waiting and parking offences – 7.6 million in all (though 12% fewer than in 2001). One in 10 drivers received at least one parking fine during this year, but arguably, and in most cases except those of the most dangerous or obstructive parking, breaking parking regulations is hard to categorise as a serious driving offence.

A lack of car parking spaces is tempting more people to consider parking illegally. Whilst Government data shows that 32.2 million people are in possession of a full UK driving licence, there are reportedly only two million public car parking spaces in the UK (according to Parking Data and Research International). As such, there is an estimated one parking space for every 16 cars on our roads.

In 2003, 5.9 million parking and bus lane fines were issued in London alone, at least 500,000 more than in 2002). 5.2 million of these were for illegal parking; the remainder were for trespassing into bus lanes. The number of motorists fined for driving in bus lanes almost doubled between 2002 and 2003, with more councils than ever enforcing their bus lane restrictions with CCTV cameras.

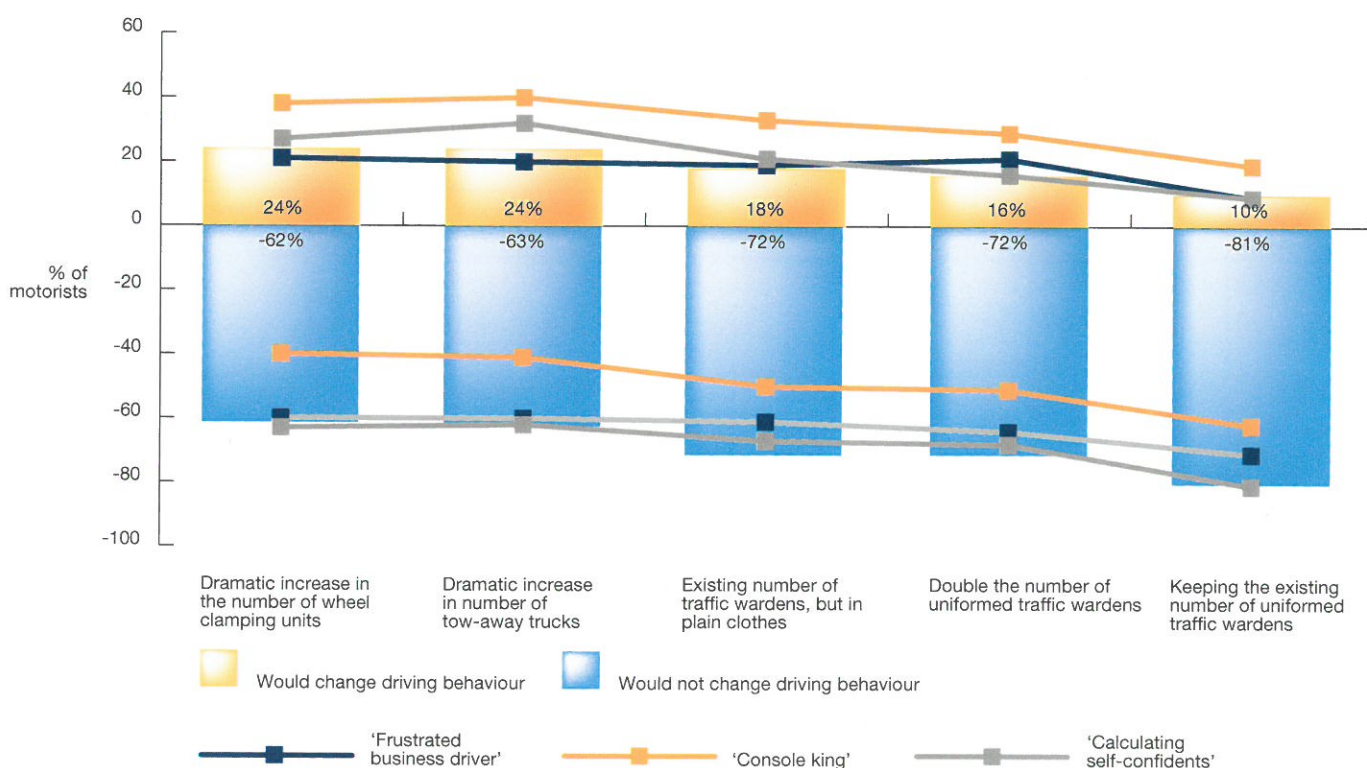
8.2 Detection methods

In 2001, the London Borough of Croydon focused banks of CCTV cameras on its bus lanes and caught 60,000 law-breaking motorists. This figure has dropped to 25,000 in the past year. Clearly, it is one thing to have a regulation in place but it is not until such regulations are seen to be enforced and offenders punished that behaviour actually changes for the better.

The results suggest that increases in the perceived risk of getting caught parking illegally would have a significant impact on behaviour. Taken literally, Figure 22 indicates that the subtle, stealth tactic of having 'plain clothed' traffic wardens would have at least the same impact as doubling the number of traffic wardens.

In a society where use of public funds is always under scrutiny and rarely an easy set of demands to balance, it might be worth considering the low cost, high stealth approach if stiffer parking enforcement is considered to be a real priority. Younger motorists (22%) and those in the North (29%) would seem to be most likely to be influenced by the prospect of 'stealth wardens'.

Figure 22
The impact of various detection methods on the incidence of illegal parking



Source: RAC Report on Motoring 2005

It is well known that to a significant degree, the incidence of parking infringements follows the folklore reputation of local traffic wardens – the more ‘mean and mobile’ they are perceived to be the less likely a community will be to run the risk of getting a parking infringement. It follows, therefore, that should it become known that in a particular town or area traffic wardens are almost impossible to spot, then the level of illegal parking is likely to decrease. Of course, the message is potentially more threatening than the actual ‘menace’ – but rather like the use of hidden enforcement cameras, this sort of covert approach would be likely to receive massive public opposition.

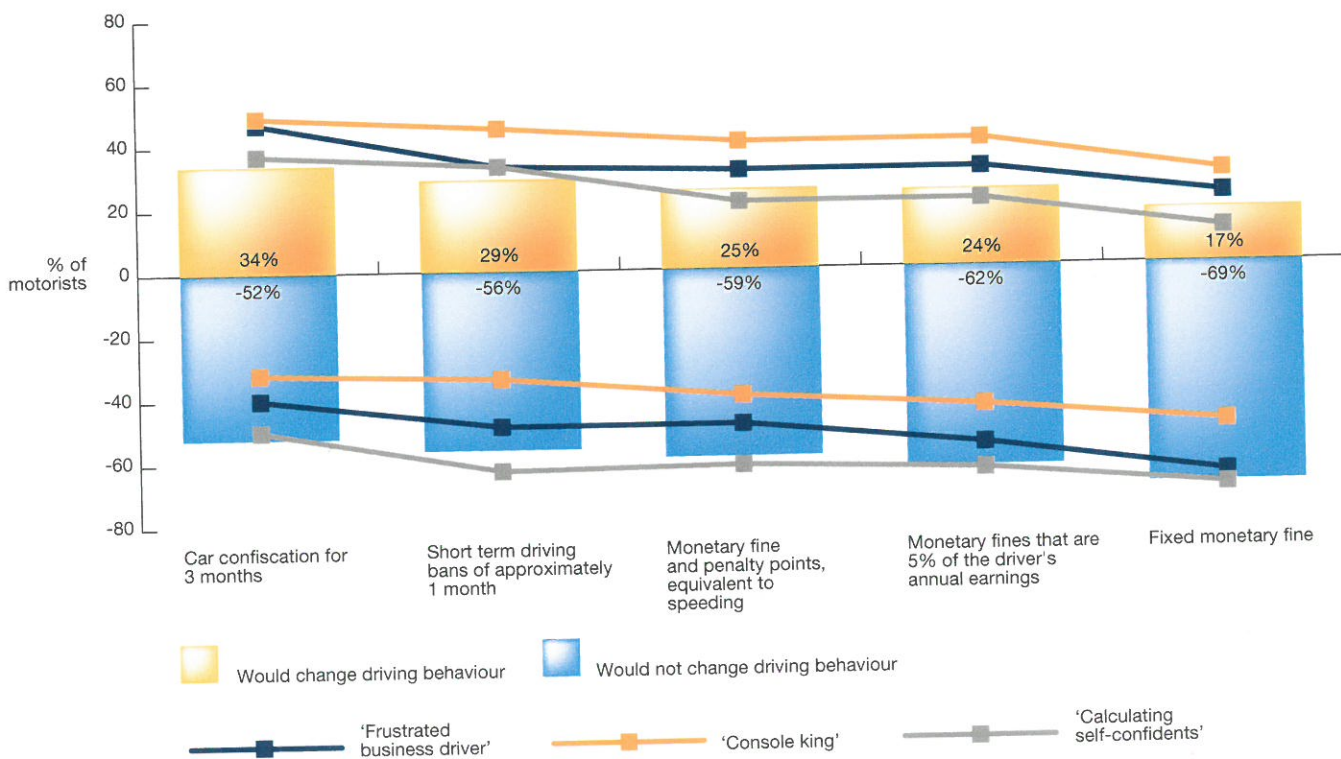
It is interesting to note that in this category of motoring offence, our ‘Calculating self-confident’ typology begins to show a little more likelihood to think about changing his or her ways. A central part of this typology’s psyche is the self-confidence to ‘Drive under the radar’, effectively avoiding detection. The results indicate that almost all of the hypothetical detection methods tested would seem to threaten their ability to keep this low profile; the prospect of a dramatic increase in the number of towed vehicles would seem to bring the highest probability of a change in behaviour.

8.3 Penalty approaches

A study conducted by Privilege Insurance in 2003 showed that one in three drivers parked illegally through sheer frustration. They found that because the problem of finding an appropriate parking space is so great, some drivers are prepared to get fined on a regular basis and not just because the fine is less expensive than parking costs. A two-hour stay in some parts of London now costs more than £7. Privilege also found that one in 20 motorists have to pay to park close to their home and one in 10 have to pay to park at work.

Our results in this Report indicate that if there is a real desire by authorities to do something about the levels of illegal parking, there is plenty of scope for reviewing penalties without necessarily resorting to draconian measures that are totally out of proportion with the severity of the offence. There is, of course, a political and equitable balance to be maintained. From a political perspective, it is worth keeping in mind that more than half of our representative sample of British motorists consider that yellow lines and other parking restrictions are often used unnecessarily by local authorities to penalise motorists and raise revenues. From the equitable standpoint, any incremental parking restrictions should only be put in place if adequate alternative parking or public transport arrangements are available to give motorists a chance, and a choice.

Figure 23
The impact of various penalty approaches on incidences of illegal parking



Source: RAC Report on Motoring 2005

By any reasonable standards, car confiscation is probably an over-reaction to the minor offence of illegal parking. This particular penalty was included as a calibration exercise in order to see what kind of reaction a rather extreme option might provoke. It is interesting, therefore, that the addition of penalty points or setting fines as a proportion of income provokes a reaction that sits almost halfway between the most draconian option and current practice.

Since 1994, responsibility for issuing parking tickets has been increasingly privatised - passed from the Police to local councils and enforced in many cases by private companies. Nowadays most towns and cities have private parking attendants, and profits made from fines are kept by the councils. Many of the private firms have been given a clear incentive to issue as many tickets as possible - to the disgust of motorists. Consequently, there has been a massive rise in the number of parking tickets issued each year - from 3.4 million in 1993 to 7.6 million in 2002.

In August 2004, one London Borough Council (Waltham Forest) announced its plans to bring in 22 new CCTV cameras to be trained on parking problem hotspots. Parking attendants will be alerted by radio link to remove or clamp vehicles causing dangerous obstructions. Clamping or removing vehicles guarantees that fines can be collected. The rising problem of unregistered cars and cloned number plates (often associated with drivers who are breaking other motoring laws) can make it difficult for fines to be collected.

8.4 International lessons

In Auckland, New Zealand, plain-clothes traffic wardens have been used in order to monitor dangerous parking outside schools. The initial response to this problem was to use conventional, uniformed traffic wardens. It became clear, however, that although parking behaviour improved at times when the uniformed traffic wardens were visible, drivers tended to revert to illegal practices once they were out of sight. As part of a 'zero tolerance' policy aimed at changing this behaviour, 'mufti' un-uniformed wardens simply recorded the car registration plates and penalty notes were duly despatched in the post. The use of plain-clothes wardens and subsequent issuing of fines rather than slapping tickets on cars meant that drivers are simply unaware of whether wardens are patrolling the problem areas or not. The controversy surrounding the operation would seem to suggest that such measures have an emotional and practical impact; many motorists consider that stringent parking enforcement is unnecessary and mean-spirited!

8.5 Parking: a call to action

Much has been done in recent times to change the focus of the way that parking restrictions are enforced. The Traffic Management Act, passed in 2004, sees the transfer of parking enforcement in all cases from the Police to local authorities. RAC is in favour of this, allowing Police time to be spent on more serious issues. However, given the fact that most parking offences are minor rather than dangerous, and that the motoring public seems to have a level of jaundice about the purpose of parking restrictions being mostly about raising revenue from those guilty of minor transgressions, RAC would like to see the removal of incentive schemes for parking attendants. In addition, RAC would favour an appropriate process to provide a proper 'right to reply' for those issued unfairly with parking tickets using, where possible, visual evidence to support ticketing such as is being trialled in some Boroughs in London. Local authorities can go some way to placating the motorist by ploughing parking fine revenues into local road safety and other transport initiatives.

Chapter 9
Car documentation

Keep this safe

Counterpart Driving Licence

Electronic and paper counterpart together make up the licence.
Both must be produced when required.



Driver number

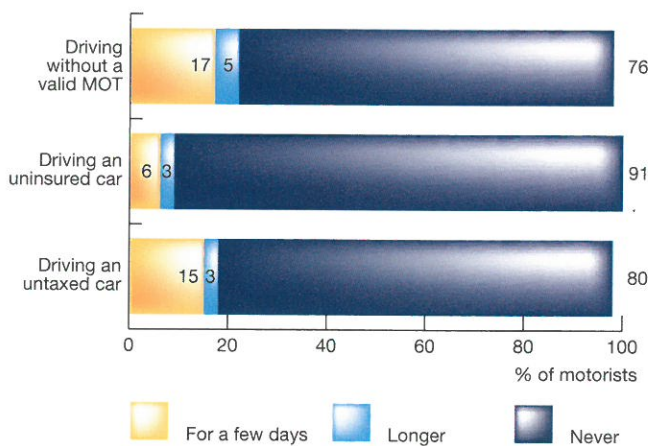
A rectangular box with a thin black border, likely intended for the driver's identification number or other personal details.

9.1 Context

It is vitally important that we have in place systems that monitor rigorously the various categories of vehicle documentation. Without an effective system we risk encouraging a motoring underclass to develop, the members of which recognise that it is perfectly easy to opt out of the system, save significant amounts of money and potentially add risk to the roads, through driving either unroadworthy, untaxed or uninsured vehicles.

Figure 24 shows that the vast majority of Britain's motorists claim to keep their regulatory vehicle documents up to date. For the small minority who admit to not strictly obeying the letter of the law, the period of illegality extends to just a few days – most likely a function of forgetfulness or less than perfect planning rather than a conscious attempt to avoid their legal responsibilities.

Figure 24
The propensity of motorists to fail to keep their motoring documentation up to date



Source: RAC Report on Motoring 2005

When it comes to forgetting to conduct an MOT, our results indicate that males (72%) are less likely never to have driven without a certificated car than females (80%). The South East would appear to be the most forgetful region when it comes to carrying out their MOTs – only 71% can claim to have never driven without a valid MOT.

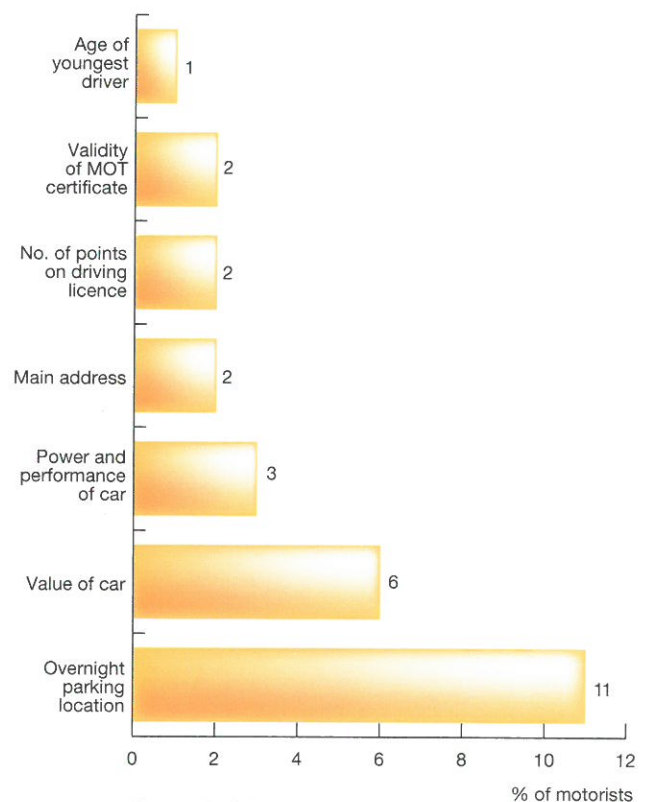
A similar pattern of forgetfulness is apparent for tax discs although the problem seems a little more contagious in the South of the country where both the South East (74%) and London (75%) appear to lag behind the rest of the country in never having driven an untaxed car. Continuous registration for tax discs introduced in January 2004 and stiffer penalties which allow the authorities to crush perpetually untaxed vehicles have resulted in an estimated 500,000 fewer untaxed vehicles during 2004 than in the previous year, though there is still estimated to be a further 500,000 left undetected and untaxed.

9.2 Insurance issues

9.2.1 Covering yourself

Of the three required regulatory documents that need to be in place, insurance would appear to be the best kept discipline amongst Britain's motorists, presumably because damage caused to an uninsured car would significantly impact the value of the asset and would not be reimbursable. The sample groups least able to claim perfect behaviour are those driving cars of over 10 years of age where only 85% claimed never to have driven without insurance, and those in the socio-economic groups D and E where only 86% claim perfect records with regard to insurance cover. Once again our problem typology, the 'Console king' appears to be amongst the most forgetful when it comes to gaining insurance cover; only 82% claim never to have driven an uninsured car and 5% admit to having had no insurance for a period of a few weeks or more.

Figure 25
The propensity of motorists to lie about different details when acquiring motor insurance cover



Source: RAC Report on Motoring 2005

The cost of motor insurance has been seen to increase at a very noticeable rate in recent years. Against this backdrop, it is apparent that a minority of motorists seeking insurance will be slightly 'economical with the truth' when it comes to certain characteristics that they perceive might add cost to their premium. Figure 25 illustrates the types of detail that a minority of motorists have admitted to 'amending' in an attempt to keep the cost of car insurance down. It can be seen that the key fact most likely to be modified is the location of the car when parked overnight.

9.2.2 Uninsured Drivers

It is an unfortunate characteristic of our times that while the majority of Britain's motorists fulfil their legal obligations, there is a minority that do not and whose behaviour behind the wheel brings inconvenience, distress and even misery to others. It is one thing to forget to renew your motor insurance for a few days; it is another to cynically opt out of the system completely. Current estimates have it that there are more than one million uninsured drivers on our roads, equivalent to approximately 5% of the motoring public.

The Queen's Speech in November 2004 made mention of legislation in the subsequently published Road Safety Bill whereby Police forces will be allowed to make greater and easier use of motor insurance data in order to detect uninsured drivers.

The 2005 RAC Report on Motoring asked a representative sample of Britain's motorists about their encounters with uninsured drivers and joyriders. While gladly the vast majority of Britain's motorists have not come into contact with either category of offender, 12% encounter joy riders at least once a year and 14% have suffered accidents with uninsured drivers in the past year.

It is clear that the uninsured driver problem is something that is coming increasingly into focus for British motorists as a whole. When presented with a list of 16 driving related offences and problems and invited to say which issues should be the highest priority for authorities to deal with, the uninsured driver problem topped the list with a 21% share of choice.

9.3 Vehicle documentation: a call to action

Once again, there are two extremes of offence relating to the up to date upkeep, or otherwise, of vehicle documentation. There are those who simply allow their documents to lapse for a few days but who have no intention not to renew and pay up in full. And there are those who make up the motoring underclass, whose cars are unlikely to have an up to date MOT, insurance cover or tax disc.

The introduction of continuous registration for vehicle ownership and tax discs has gone some way to reducing this core of motorists whose actions drive up the cost of motoring for the rest of us largely law-abiding car owners. However, there are still alarming numbers of uninsured motorists driving on our roads who are credited with pushing up the average insurance premium by £30 for everyone else.

9.3.1 Penalty

RAC is in favour of some of the recent powers extended for clamping down on these problem motorists, for example crushing the vehicles of perpetual or long-term offenders who do not have car insurance, as enshrined in the Serious and Organised Crime Agency Bill currently going through Parliament. RAC is looking to the Government to announce its formal response to the 2004 Greenaway Report into uninsured motoring to ensure that the right mix of penalties are in place to act as an appropriate deterrent. After all, a car is in most cases an expensive asset, which motorists would surely wish to protect. Whatever the penalty for those prosecuted for driving uninsured, it must be at least equitable with the amount a motorist would have to pay for an average insurance premium; the current fines are considerably below the amount you would have to pay for even the cheapest premium, encouraging those inclined to evade car insurance to do so as they will be financially better off even if they are caught and forced to pay a fine under the current regime.

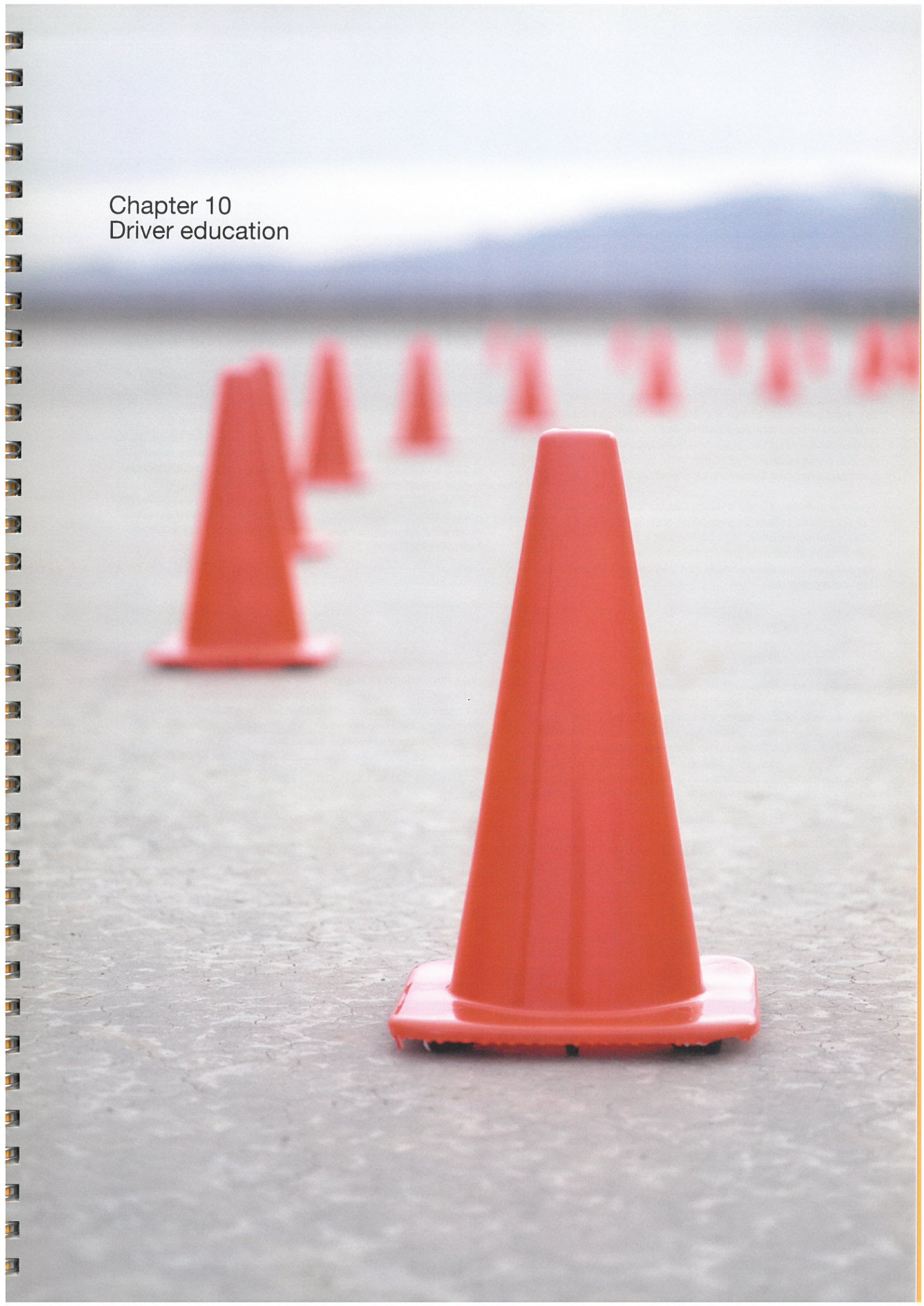
9.3.2 Detection

One thing that the new Road Safety Bill proposes is enabling the Police to detect those driving uninsured via Automatic Number Plate Recognition (ANPR) technology. This is possible through new powers to use data from the Motor Insurance Database held by the insurance industry, which has also agreed to establish a section of the database for 'at risk' vehicles. These are all positive moves which RAC is in favour of, but of course, ANPR will only be a real success if there are adequate numbers of traffic Police patrolling with the technology fitted into their vehicles to immediately detect and pull over drivers at the wheel of uninsured vehicles. The Government's new road policing strategy, announced in January 2005, acknowledges the need for an enhanced and visible Police presence and recognises the impact that ANPR can have in detecting offending motorists. Officers using ANPR are reported as making nine times more arrests than a conventional officer.

9.3.3 Education

One problem relating to the speedy renewal of various ownership and insurance documents is the cost to the motorist. In some cases, and for certain types of insurance 'risk', premiums can be extremely high. This is particularly the case for young drivers who should be encouraged to consider initiatives such as Pass Plus to reduce their insurance premiums by up to 20%. In addition, the insurance industry needs to consider more affordable products for different types of drivers. For example, pay as you go insurance may be considerably cheaper for those who complete fewer miles every year. RAC Insure is also in the process of developing more affordable products for young drivers, which may be one way of encouraging them to take out the necessary cover.

Chapter 10
Driver education



10.1 Context

Along side Enforcement and Engineering, Education makes up the third 'E' in the Government's 10 year road safety strategy. Driver education can take three main forms: mass communication via advertising and publicity, educational schemes reaching out to school-age children before they become drivers and specifically focused forms of remedial retraining. In this Chapter we consider the relative merits of these approaches.

10.2 'Just in time' learning

There are potentially simple and immediate forms of 'education' available for motorists. Road safety and motoring organisations are recommending that the Government should put more speed limit signs in place because 'not knowing the speed limit' is one of the main excuses given by drivers for speeding.

Speed-activated LED signs which display the speed of each vehicle that approaches them, or a message stating, for example, 'SLOW DOWN' (when the driver is going too fast past a sensor) have been shown to be effective in getting drivers to reduce their speed without imposing an immediate penalty, but they haven't as yet been put into widespread use.

10.3 Education through advertising

The Government spends some £10 million per year on road safety awareness campaigns. THINK! – the Department for Transport's national road safety campaign – informs and advises the public on many aspects of road safety, including drink driving, wearing seatbelts, driving while tired and speed management. One aim of the THINK! Slow Down! campaign was to urge society to see speeding as being as antisocial as drink driving. Since the launch of the campaign, the proportion of drivers who claimed that it was extremely unacceptable to drive at 40mph in a 30mph area rose from 43% in January 2001 to 58% in March 2003.

Deaths on the road cost society much more. As we have seen, including costs to the emergency services and the NHS, every single death is estimated to cost over £1 million.

It is a firm principal that educating drivers to reduce the number of casualties on the roads, rather than maximising the number of fines, should be the priority for authorities. The majority of motorists think that speeding drivers should be sent back to school rather than clocking up points and fines. A speed awareness course may cost more to the motorist than the usual fine, but if successfully completed it means that penalty points aren't awarded and long-term changes to driving behaviour can be encouraged.

Since 1976, the Government's drink drive campaign has run each year, contributing towards educating drivers about the consequences, and changing attitudes and behaviour. Since 1979, fatalities involving a driver over the legal limit have fallen from 1,680 to 560, and the percentage of people failing breath tests after road injury accidents has fallen from 8.5% in 1990 to 4.1% in 2002. Though in 2003 total drink drive figures rose by 6%, suggesting that complacency is not an option, these statistics suggest that public information campaigns have an important ongoing role to play in improving road safety.

10.4 Driver retraining

In 2000, the Department for Transport's Drink Drive Rehabilitation (DDR) scheme was expanded nationwide, so allowing all Magistrates' and Sheriffs' Courts in Great Britain to refer convicted drink drive offenders to a specially designed rehabilitation course. Participation is voluntary and the offender must pay a fee. However, successful completion entitles offenders to a reduction to their disqualification period of up to 25%. Evaluation of the effect of course attendance revealed that convicted drink drive offenders who had not attended a DDR course were almost twice as likely to re-offend as those who had attended a course.

Mr Rob Gifford, Executive Director, Parliamentary Advisory Committee on Transport Safety (PACTS)

"We have a mixed history in terms of how effectively we have educated motorists about road safety.

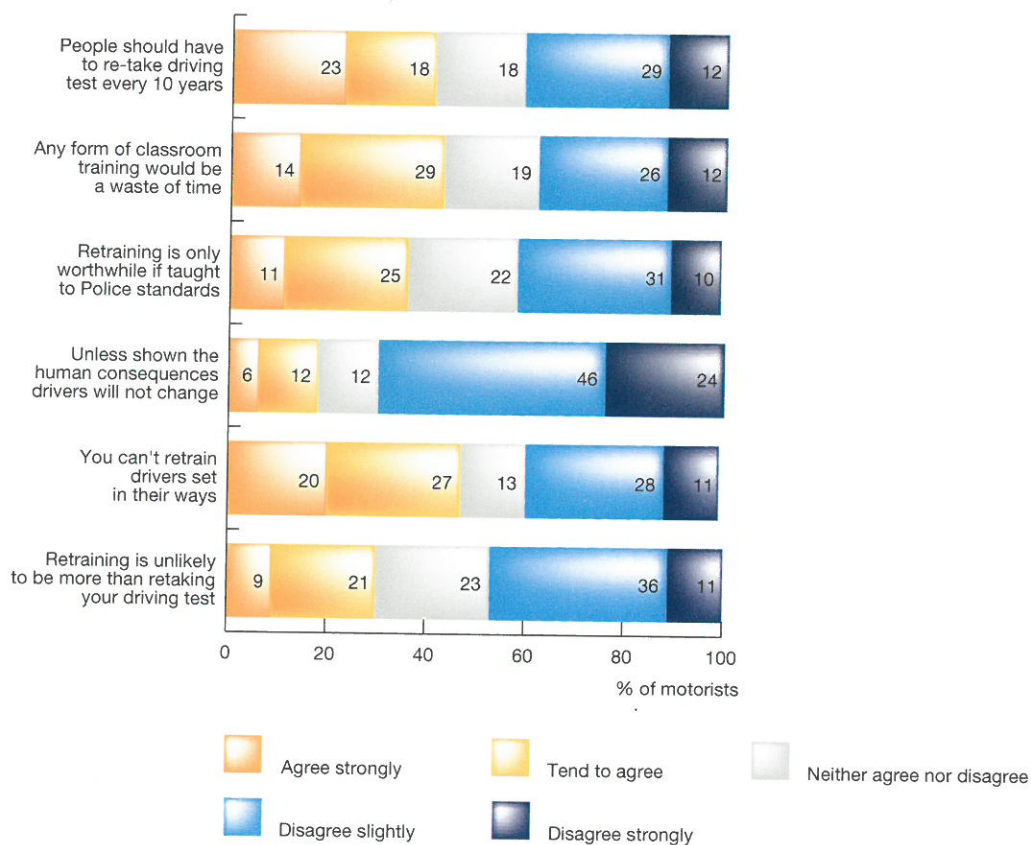
Penalty points are a deterrent for those who need an occasional short sharp shock, but do little for the hard-core, multiple offender. More aggressive strategies, like vehicle seizure and community service, may be useful, but we also need to remind drivers of the consequences of their actions. For instance, working in an A&E department would be a salutary reminder.

We need to be much more creative in the penalties that we are applying to people.

We have made cars extraordinarily comfortable and have insulated people from the consequences of making a mistake; we need to re-establish the link between the action and the consequences.

We need to make people understand why what they were doing was a stupid thing to be doing. We need to look at ways of praising and encouraging law-abiding behaviour; there are few rewards for doing the right thing. In some respects, the rewards – getting to your destination sooner – come from beating the system."

Figure 26
The potential impact of driver retraining courses on driver behaviour



Our representative sample of British motorists was asked their opinions about certain aspects of driver retraining. Figure 26 illustrates their opinions.

The results indicate that when hearing of driver retraining, the image of merely retaking one's driving test comes most readily to mind. It can be seen that almost half of our representative sample of British motorists perceived that this was a likely scenario in driver retraining. Motorists in the North (57%) and those over 55 years (52%) were most likely to have this expectation in their minds.

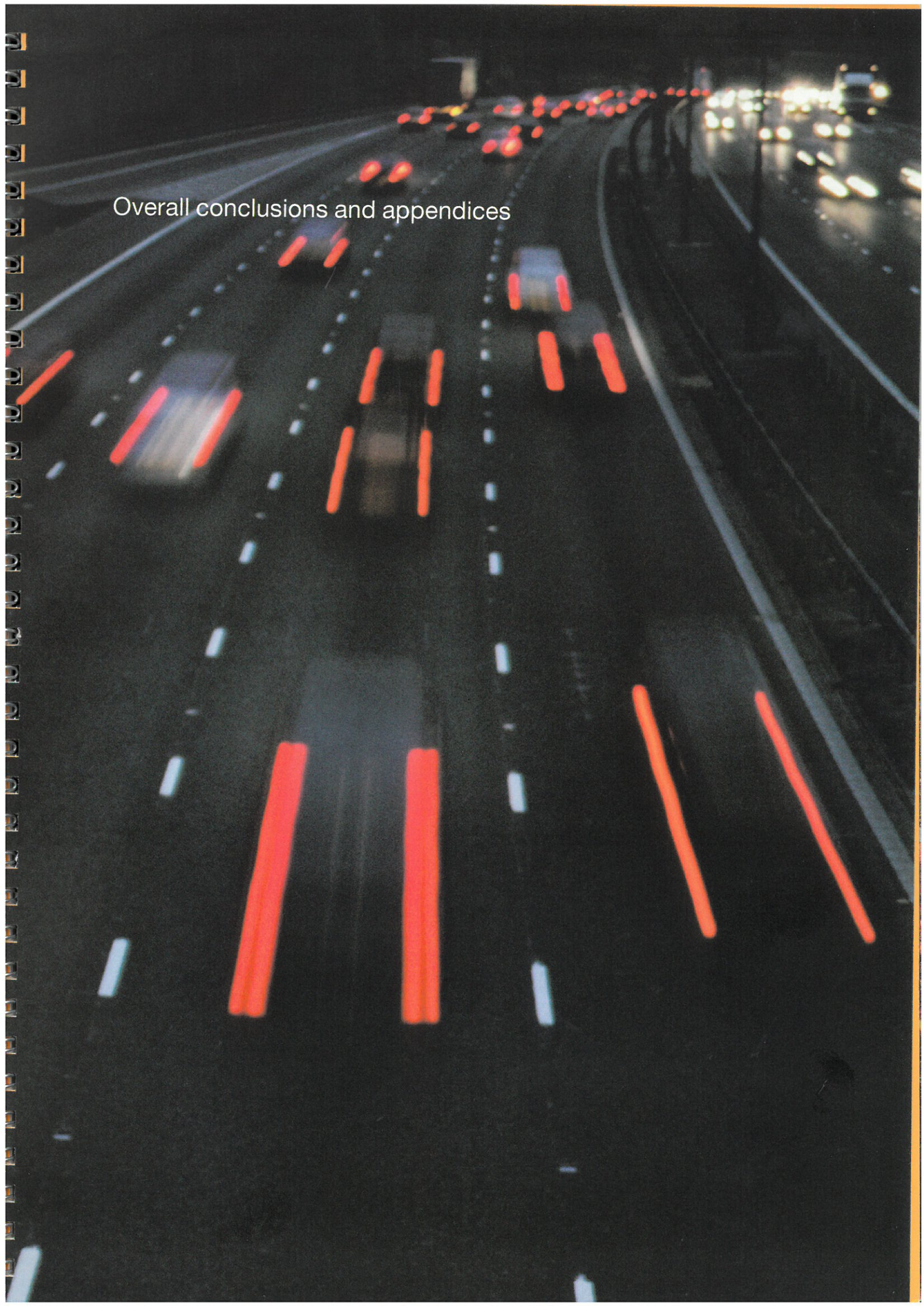
Opinions are reasonably divided about whether retraining would be effective on drivers who are set in their ways, but on balance, there is a sense that retraining can have an impact. Men appear to be more sceptical than women about whether retraining would have an impact on such drivers with 44% of males and only 33% of females agreeing that drivers set in their ways would not respond to retraining. It can also be seen that motorists belonging to the D and E socio-economic groups (51%), older respondents (44% amongst over 55 year olds) and people driving cars aged 10 years or more (46%) are more likely to agree that retraining is unlikely to be successful with the entrenched driver. It is quite likely that the groups of respondents who appear more sceptical about the ability of retraining to change drivers' ways are projecting a little bit of themselves into their answers. It becomes interesting, therefore, to understand what kind of content would need to be part of a retraining regime in order for the initiative to attract greater credibility.

A sizeable majority (70%) consider that in order to have any real impact, wayward drivers need to see the human consequences of their actions. Perhaps worryingly, our 'Console king' typology seems to be amongst the least likely (63%) to agree that showing the human consequences would have any impact.

The results suggest that British motorists are more likely to attach greater credibility to driver retraining if such sessions contained a significant practical element that imparted greater control and skill. Opinion seems very divided about whether classroom sessions would make a valuable contribution. Female respondents are more likely to see value in a classroom session than men – 48% of women disagreed that such sessions would be a waste of time while only 40% of men shared the same opinion.

It is interesting to note that although the 'Console king' typology was amongst the least enamoured with the idea of classroom sessions, this group does seem receptive to the idea of being taught to Police standards of driving with 49% of them agreeing that retraining would only be worthwhile if this standard of driving was the outcome. There is a strong suggestion that this group takes considerable pride in their driving. On this point where authority and youth share common (if not identical) interests, it is perhaps worth considering the value of teaching better technique alongside greater responsibility.

Overall conclusions and appendices



Overall conclusions

RAC believes that this year's RAC Report on Motoring provides a timely contribution to the debate about the future of road safety in Britain.

The Report's theme recognises that the nature of driving has changed markedly in recent history. Most of the fun, exhilaration and enjoyment seems to have gone out of driving. Whilst we can still be excited about learning to drive or perhaps buying a new car, rarely does the daily experience of making journeys hold much fun at all. Even our motorsports – popular pastimes that might remind us of the excitement that could be associated with driving seem to have become boring and predictable – mirroring perhaps the feeling of everyday motorists as they start up their engines for the grind of their daily commute.

But beyond the annoyances that accompany drivers on most journeys – those of congestion, selfish or thoughtless driving or minor prangs and scrapes – come a whole host of more dangerous driving pursuits. Some of these relate to signs of the times; the march of technology has introduced the mobile phone as an ubiquitous tool at the same time as the majority of adults now have access to a car and hold a valid driving licence. Similarly, the availability of illicit street drugs and an increase in their usage is layered across the reality of many more people wanting to drive most of the time. These, and longer standing behavioural problems that compromise road safety, such as drink driving and speeding have collided, providing profound challenges to the Government, policy makers and law enforcers who must also consider ways of encouraging motorists to drive less to tackle increasing congestion. Despite this context, what we have is a remarkably stable road safety record, but one which still reveals many thousands of deaths and serious injuries every year.

We must not become complacent about the challenge of tackling this enormous human cost, but at the same time we have to acknowledge that it's an incredibly tough nut to crack. As we have seen, our road safety problems are many and complex and those who perpetuate poor driving behaviours are not always one type of person. Indeed, this Report identifies the fact

that there is no one type of 'British motorist'. RAC's behavioural and attitudinal analysis shows that though we all share seven key driving traits between us, these are arranged in different volumes within six major driver types. Only three of these types seem to be guilty of the majority of driving misdemeanours, however, the task at hand to tackle these people is clearly tricky because many more drivers have unhealthy, if not dangerous, attitudes towards problems like speeding. They simply do not consider driving over the speed limit to be in the remotest way dangerous to themselves or others.

Ideally, we would need to conceive of a complex menu of measures that start to tackle these attitudes and beliefs and in so doing bring about a radical and long-term change in behaviour. This Report demonstrates that there are three major tools at our disposal: education, detection and enforcement (including penalties). Any one of these three tools taken in isolation is unlikely to crack the problem, particularly as our research shows that different driver types react to different initiatives. The clear challenge as RAC sees it is not the political difficulty that accompanies enforcing ever more stringent penalties; our research shows that despite some pretty tough penalty structures relating to certain types of driving offence, many motorists do not consider these to represent feasible deterrents to poor behaviour. As the radar seems relatively insensitive to lawless behaviour, a good number of motorists believe that they have learned to drive beneath its beam. This points to the rather sensitive issue of improving deterrents. The Report shows that for the majority of bad or dangerous driving offences, the most effective measure that could be implemented to change behaviour is increasing the number of visible law enforcers or traffic Police on our roads, a factor which up until very recently has seemed beyond Home Office resources to deliver. However, the announcement in January 2005 of a commitment to provide a highly visible Police presence on our roads should be welcomed if it is to bring with it a belief amongst motorists that their offences will not go unnoticed.

The psychology of this isn't hard to understand; many of us feel guilty when we pass a Police car on the road or even walk through the 'Nothing to Declare' customs channel, whether or not we've done something wrong. It seems that the mere presence of authority or law enforcers is enough to make people smarten up their acts and become more conscious of their behaviour. Hence, when the speed of a stream of motorway traffic suddenly slows to the designated limit without warning, it's likely that a Police vehicle has been spotted up ahead. It is acknowledged that increasing the Police presence is not an easy or particularly cheap option to introduce, particularly at a time when Police resources are stretched and society is exerting pressure on them to solve a whole host of other serious crimes. What it comes down to then is a question of priorities; can the huge cost of each fatal or serious accident be off-set against the savings in Police time and other resources, such as Health Services, that would result from fewer incidents? This is a question which RAC believes requires considerable thought if we are indeed serious about tackling 10 deaths a day on our roads.

If the fear of detection was to rise as a result of a more robust and visible enforcement presence, the job at hand would still not be done. As we have seen, education and penalty are both critical ingredients in the mix. You only have to look at the attitude of motorists towards hand-held mobile use and the current deterrents to see that some categories of dangerous driving behaviour still require tougher penalties. With more disposable income has come an increase in car ownership and other signs of affluence; this very factor suggests that fines alone do not change behaviour if ultimately an individual can afford to pay, or if the fines associated with transgression do not equate to the cost of adhering to the law in the first place. This is of course the case with the current fine structures for uninsured driving – a pittance when one considers the size of certain premiums that some drivers choose not to pay – which is why the more draconian approach of uplifting and crushing vehicles for perpetual or serious offenders is likely to be successful. After all, if you remove the main asset from the offender, then that will hit them where it hurts. Similarly, if you consider a different set of 'problem offenders' – some sections of the company car driver category – the same type of penalty is shown by our

research to present a threatening deterrent. Either by removing their vehicle, their livelihood or impacting their professional reputation, you threaten to take more away than might a fine or a couple of penalty points. It is a full consideration of these sorts of levers that might be considered if we are to tackle the behaviour of some of our problem typologies.

The final strand that this Report has investigated is education. RAC believes that this is critical if we are to change deep-seated behaviours. In some sectors the idea of educating or rehabilitating offenders is seen as a soft option, but RAC disagrees with this sentiment if it comes hand in hand with better detection and appropriate penalty regimes. After all, our research has shown that not only do motorists have a blind spot when it comes to assessing their own driving behaviour, but they are also ignorant to various realities – if they have never been in a serious accident or had a loved one die in such an incident then they may believe that it will never happen to them. The success of drink drive campaigning over several decades in making this trait socially unacceptable, and the feedback from those who have changed their behaviour after attending speed awareness courses, shows that education and retraining do have a place in the mix as they can force the individual to take responsibility for their own driving actions. RAC believes that this is also a useful tool when it comes to people who drive on company business as an opportunity is there from the employer to assess and implement such schemes.

This Report has sought to combine a wealth of real world facts and data with their perception in the minds of the motorist. It is heartening that many of the current initiatives and policy suggestions that are underway are those that might enhance the success with which threats to road safety are tackled. The Road Safety Bill goes some way to dealing with some of the critical issues but our Report shows that without significant investment in enforcement, many motorists have no reasonable intention to drive legally or responsibly. Until this mindset changes, all parties involved in this area will have considerable work to do.

Appendix 1 Research methodology

Basis of the research

The 'RAC Report on Motoring 2005: the agony and ecstasy of driving', presents the analysis of a quantitative survey conducted by Morpace International Limited on behalf of RAC Motoring Services.

Morpace International interviewed 1,000 regular drivers (defined as driving at least once a month) face to face at home during November and December 2004 in 100 constituency points in Great Britain. The sample included a boosted total of 250 company car drivers.

The data has been weighted to reflect the actual GB incidence of

- A company car drivers (whose car is provided by the company)
- B those who drive a car bought as a business expense and
- C drivers who bought their car privately

Interlocking weighting factors have also been applied to reflect the gender and residential region of GB car drivers.

It should be noted that the title of this report is 'RAC Report on Motoring 2005: the agony and ecstasy of driving'. Up until 1999, the reports were 'The Lex Reports on Motoring' and from 2000 'The RAC Reports on Motoring'. Despite these name changes, consistent research methods were used throughout.

Statistical reliability

Any figure taken from a sample can never be taken as a precise indication of the actual figures for the total population being sampled. The figures shown give an estimate, within a small margin of error, of the actual figures.

The error margin varies with the sample size: the larger the sample is, the lower the error will be. It also varies with the actual proportion answering, so that the error is lower for a 90/10 result than it is for a 50/50 result. In order to illustrate the use of varying sample sizes and their effect on the statistical significance of results, the table below outlines the degree of statistical error broadly associated with different sample sizes from the car drivers' survey.

Sample size	Percentage error 90/10 result	50/50 result
1,000	+/-2	+/-3
800	+/-2	+/-3
600	+/-2	+/-4
400	+/-3	+/-5
200	+/-4	+/-7
100	+/-5	+/-10

For example, from a sample of 1,000, if 50% answered in a particular way, we would be 95% confident that the true range is between 47% and 53%.

Appendix 2 Acknowledgements

RAC is grateful to the following experts for their comment and contribution to this Report:

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RAC plc

RAC plc provides motoring and vehicle solutions to individual and business customers, ranging from teenagers who are learning to drive with BSM and families who enjoy peace of mind with RAC breakdown cover, to the Ministry of Defence which trusts us to supply and maintain its non-combatant vehicles.

Across the UK we now cover over seven million motorists, through either individual membership, affinity sales, insurance or cover provided through our motor manufacturer relationships.

In June 2004, RAC was voted No.1 Roadside Assistance Provider in the annual JD Power and Associates survey and came top in 22 out of the 23 measures in the survey. This reflects the investment we continue to make in our colleagues, our systems and our infrastructure. Our roadside patrols are now equipped with RACScan, a PC-based tool designed to diagnose faults, allowing them to quickly and accurately identify the breakdown problem at the roadside. This has undoubtedly helped us keep our members moving and our patrols now fix 80% of vehicles at the roadside.

RAC Public Affairs leads policy campaigns on behalf of RAC plc and develops advice and guidance on responsible motoring for our members. Our corporate social responsibility projects include the hugely successful Grass Routes programme, which challenges students to develop safer ways of travelling to and from school. RAC sponsors the Baywatch Awards, which recognises supermarkets in their efforts to provide accessible parking for disabled drivers.

RAC Consumer Services offers a comprehensive range of individual motoring solutions and provides an exceptional level of support to customers through their motoring lifetime. In addition to breakdown, our services include:

- RAC Legal Services, providing a range of legal services and advice on motoring matters
- RAC Financial Services, which offers a range of products from insurance to loans and personal leasing
- RAC Auto Windscreens, the UK's largest manufacturer and installer of vehicle windscreens
- BSM, the UK's largest driving school

Other services include RAC Traffic and Travel, helping motorists reach their destination quickly and safely, RAC Hotels, offering advice on the best places to stay – and RAC's expert vehicle examiners who provide an impartial opinion when you buy a used car.

RAC Business Solutions offers a range of services covering vehicle inspections, customer contact centres, breakdown services and motor claims sold to motor manufacturers, fleet operators and insurance companies. In France, we have successfully launched an accident management business to fleet customers and expanded our warranty business to corporate customers.

Manufacturer Support Services works across the business to business market with both the Lex brand, principally focused on fleet and commercial vehicle support services, and the RAC brand for motoring-related insurance activities such as the claims handling we provide for large insurance companies.

Lex Vehicle Leasing (LVL) is the UK's leading car and van contract hire company. It provides company car fleets for businesses of all sizes, together with personal leasing and employee car ownership schemes.

LVL has won a number of industry awards for the quality of its products and services. The company leads the industry in environmental initiatives and plays an active role in helping customers manage the environmental impact of their fleets. Lex Vehicle Leasing is a joint venture with HBOS plc.

Lex Transfleet is the UK's leading independent supplier of commercial vehicle fleet support services, with over 40,000 commercial vehicles and plant under management. Its wide-ranging customer base spans from owner-driver operators through to large corporate and Government fleets. Customers include the MoD, British Airways and Securicor.

Lex Auto Logistics provides purchasing, inventory management, warehousing and distribution services to automotive clients.

Hyundai (UK) Ltd is the official importer and distributor of Hyundai vehicles in the UK.

Lex Commercials has 23 truck and van dealerships making it the largest group in the UK. Lex Commercials also incorporates Lex Fleetserve, a specialist parts supplies organisation for fleets.

In addition to these individual operations, RAC plc focuses on five key sectors where the scope and range of our group services form a comprehensive proposition for major organisations.

Defence: where we manage over 14,000 vehicles for the MoD and are preferred bidder for their 'C' Vehicle Capability PFI.

Insurance: where we provide services from roadside assistance to claims handling for clients including Norwich Union, NFU Mutual and Lloyds TSB.

Vehicle manufacturers: where we deliver roadside services – resulting in 41% of all new cars sold carrying RAC membership. We also provide parts supply, call centre support and vehicle inspection services and have recently won a contract to provide outsourced contract hire services to Ford Financial.

Airside: where we operate fleet management services and run over 6,300 vehicles for British Airways Ground Fleet Services.

Utilities: where we provide vehicle services to a range of utilities companies including Thames Water, East Midlands Electricity and Scottish Power.

The RAC Foundation for Motoring is an independent body established to protect and promote the interests of motorists. The opinions of each organisation are not necessarily shared by – and should not be attributed to – the other.

For more information about RAC Motoring Services visit www.rac.co.uk

For more information about RAC plc visit www.racplc.co.uk

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