

The Battle for the Roads of Britain

Police, Motorists and the Law, c.1890s to
1970s

Keith Laybourn
with
David Taylor



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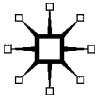
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To Julia and Thelma

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Preface

The advent of the automobile exerted revolutionary change on British society in the twentieth century, and this book examines this in relation to Britain's roads between 1900 and 1970. There are two central debates that drive this book. The first is concerned with the declining democracy of the road in the face of 'the new form of express train', the automobile. The second debate, and the central focus of this book, is the role of the police in controlling the road. This book suggests that the democracy of the road was bound to decline, as the motor car drove the pedestrian, and other road users, off the road – for motorised vehicles were indomitable and unforgiving killing machines and this implied necessary segregation. As for the precise role of the police in this process, and the extent to which they were complicit in the rise of the motorists, this book suggests that they sought to act in an impartial manner in enforcing the law, although they were not always helped by the magistracy and the courts, and that they were not the partial servants of the motorists. They adopted a three-part strategy: the three Es of Enforcement, Engineering and Education. In the first of these, their essential sphere of influence, the police acted as arbitrators of the road and sought to enforce the law of the land, despite the opposition of motoring lobbies and the failures of the courts. They thus performed in the style of Gatrell's concept of the 'policeman state' – the notion that the police have always sought to apply the law impartially. In the case of the Engineering and Education, their influence was much more marginal, for they were dependent on local authorities and planning authorities for the first of these, and influenced greatly by voluntary organisations such as the National 'Safety First' Association (NSFA)/Royal Society for the Prevention of Accidents (RoSPA) with regard to the second. Indeed, in Education, their work was very much focused on dealing with the pedestrian and the child. In the end, though, police sought to be even-handed, with Enforcement largely composed of the rules of the road applied to motorists, and Engineering and Education more geared towards saving the lives of pedestrians. The strategy worked and the road holocaust was finally defeated. However, this was achieved through the necessary restructuring of British policing and the segregation of the pedestrian.

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Any academic publication owes a great debt to the generosity of others, and this is no exception.

The University of Huddersfield has enabled me to gather together the government and police records, and in this respect I must thank Dr Neil Pye, who digitised many sets of annual reports that are used in this collection. In addition, I must thank my colleagues, and ex-colleagues, including Sarah Bastow, Barry Doyle, Richard Morris, John Shepherd and Paul Ward, who have all supported my efforts. Most particularly, I must thank Professor David Taylor, a treasured friend and an ex-colleague with whom I was going to write this book. Snowed under with other work, he had to make a late withdrawal from the project, but nevertheless found the time to read the manuscript and to make constructive suggestions for changes. Since some of the work included is his research he has agreed that the book should be published as authored by Keith Laybourn with David Taylor.

I owe a particular gratitude to the various archivists and librarians who have provided me with help in my research. Duncan Broady, Museum Curator of the Greater Manchester Police Museum and Archives, has, with his immense knowledge of police history, been particularly helpful. I would also like to thank the staff of the Archives, Heritage and Photography Service, Library of Birmingham, the Lancashire Record Office (particularly Bruce Jackson and David Tilsey), the Liverpool Record Office and the West Yorkshire Archive Service, Wakefield. The majority of the primary material was drawn from The National Archives at Kew, which gave me permission to draw on their document collection. In addition, I would like to thank the Controller of Her Majesty's Stationary Office (Norwich) for permission to quote from Crown copyright material. Judy Nokes was responsible for arranging this under the Open Government Licence, and also arranged permission for the use of the National Archives collections.

The vast majority of this book is drawn from the primary evidence gathered in the above-mentioned archives. However, in providing the historiography of debate, I have referred to the vital secondary literature that has shaped my thinking.

Every effort has been made to trace copyright holders and to avoid infringement of copyright. However, I apologise unreservedly

to any copyright holders whose permission I have inadvertently overlooked.

My thanks also go to Jade Moulds and the Palgrave Macmillan editorial team for their help and guidance in preparing this book, and to Jenny McCall, Global Head of History and Philosophy, Palgrave Macmillan.

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Keith Laybourn
20 January 2015

Abbreviations

AA	Automobile Association
CCA	Chief Constables' Association
CCoCC	Central Conference of Chief Constables
CID	Criminal Investigation Department
CIO	Central Office of Information
HMIC	His (Her) Majesty's Inspectors of Constabulary
IRV	Immediate Response Vehicle
MoT	Ministry of Transport
MPD	Metropolitan Police District
MU	Motor Union
NSFA	National 'Safety First' Association
RAC	Royal Automobile Club
RoSPA	Royal Society for the Prevention of Accidents
RBP	Rural Beat Policing
RSAC	Royal Scottish Automobile Club
SJC	Standing Joint Committee
TUC	Trades Union Congress
UBP	Unit Beat Policing

1

The Challenge of Automobility and the Response of Policing in Britain: An Overview of a New Vista

The 'new form of express train'

The automobile brought about seismic changes in every developed country in the world by rapidly replacing horsedrawn vehicles as the predominant form of transport in the early decades of the twentieth century. The exponential growth of motorised vehicles across the world, from a few thousand in the late 1890s to one million in 1910, 50 million in 1930s, 100 million in 1955, 500 million in 1985 and to more than 1 billion by 2010, has exerted profound social, economic, political and environmental impact upon societies and fundamentally changed the way in which many of them have operated.¹ The private ownership of cars, in particular, has been central to the personal autonomy of the majority of people. It has become the basis of transport, overtaking the train and other forms of transport, and a desired possession that provides status. Yet almost immediately they appeared, motor vehicles posed major problems for society and have done so ever since, whether as a cause of social discrimination, death, injury, congestion, gridlock and environmental pollution in what has become a battle for the roads between motorists and pedestrians in which the emergence of trunk roads and motorway can be seen as the triumph of the motorists. Ever-increasing numbers of motor vehicles were forced to jostle alongside horsedrawn traffic, trams, hand-pulled barrows and carts, with dramatic social consequences.

The ubiquitous problem has been road accidents involving motorised vehicles. Even in the 1930s, when there were relatively few such vehicles on the road, the death and injury figures for accidents were horrifically high and referred to as the 'road holocaust'. In the United States (with a population of about 135 millions), road accidents caused 39,700

deaths and 895,280 injuries in 1937. In Germany (with a population of 69 millions), 8,509 were killed and 171,120 were injured between the beginning of 1935 and the beginning of 1936. In France (with a population of 42 millions) there were 4,415 road deaths in 1935, though the number of injuries went unrecorded. In 1937, a relatively good year for road accidents in the 1930s, there were 6,561 deaths on Britain's roads and 227,813 injuries, at a time when the population was only about 46 millions.² Road deaths in Britain had exceeded 7,000 annually in the years 1930, 1933 and 1934.³ These figures rose again during the Second World War to 8,264 in 1939, 8,609 in 1940 and 9,169 in 1941 according to Home Office files (7,136, 7,359 and 7,578 for England and Wales), although thereafter they fell as a result of the dramatic reduction in car ownership in late wartime Britain before there was a second 'road holocaust' in the 1950s and early 1960s.⁴ These were truly alarming figures in a day and age when motorised transport was still in its infancy. Indeed, at the end of the 1930s Britain had only about three million motorised motor vehicles, two million of them cars (alongside about 426,000 motorcycles), compared with more about 34 million motor vehicles in 2013 (Table 1.1), and the road casualties (Table 1.2) were frighteningly high in relation to the number of vehicles. The situation has improved significantly since then, and there were only 1,300 deaths and 186,000 injuries in 2013 – though much of the recent improvement in road fatalities occurred between 2009 and 2013, with a decline of more than 40 per cent.⁵

Table 1.1 Motor vehicles in use in Britain, 1919–1966 (000s)

	1919	1929	1938	1969
Private cars	110	981	1,944	11,005
Motorcycles	115	731	462	
Buses & coaches	44	50	53	
Taxis	48	35		
Good vehicles	62	330	495	
Other (ex. trams)	0	42	96	
Commercial vehicles	1,667			
Total (ex. trams)	331	2,182	3,085	13,201

Source: B. R. Mitchell and P. Deane (1962), *Abstract of British Historical Statistics* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press), p. 20; MT 92/226, from an article in *Justice of Peace and Local Government*, 27 January 1968, for the statistics for 1966. Also W. Plowden (1971), *The Motor Car and Politics 1896–1970* (London: Bodley Head), pp. 456–457 suggests that there were 16,000 motor vehicles in 1905; 143,877 by 1910; 650,148 in 1920; and 2,273,661 in 1930.

Table 1.2 Deaths and injuries on Britain's roads, 1919–2012⁶

Year	Deaths	Injuries
1919	1,000 (est.)	
1921	2,673	
1926	4,886	134,000 (rounded)
1927	5,329	149,000
1928	6,138	165,000
1929	6,696	171,000
1930	7,305	177,855
1931	6,691	202,895
1932	6,667	206,450
1933	7,202	216,000
1934	7,343	232,000
1935	6,502	222,000
1936	6,561	228,000
1937	6,633	226,000
1938	6,648	227,000
1939	8,272	
1940	8,609	
1941	9,169	
1942	6,926	141,000
1943	5,796	117,000
1944	6,416	124,000
1945	5,256	133,000
1946	5,062	157,000
1947	4,881	161,000
1948	4,513	149,000
1949	4,773	172,000
1950	5,012	196,000
1951	5,250	211,000
1952	4,706	203,000
1953	5,090	222,000
1954	5,010	233,000
1955	5,526	262,000
1956	5,367	263,000
1957	5,550	268,000
1958	5,970	294,000
1959	6,520	327,000
1960	6,970	341,000
1961	6,908	343,000
1962	6,709	335,000
1963	6,992	349,000
1964	7,820	378,000
1965	7,952	390,000
1966	7,985	384,000
1967	7,319	363,000

Table 1.2 (Continued)

Year	Deaths	Injuries
1968	6,810	342,000
1969	7,365	346,000
1970	7,499	356,000
1980	6,010	323,000
1990	5,217	336,000
2000	3,409	317,000
2010	1,850	202,000
2012	1,754	193,699

The age of the car had arrived in Britain by the early twentieth century, with manifest and frightening social consequences for society. Lord Alness, whilst chairing a Select Committee of the House of Lords on Road Accidents (hereafter the Alness Committee) on 10 May 1938, suggested to C. T. Foley, of the Pedestrians' Association, that 'the community as a whole has not yet fully realised the truly revolutionary character of the changes in the condition of road traffic to-day'.⁷ Foley replied that:

Our President, Lord Cecil [of Chelwood], put the position, I think, in a very apt way when he said that when the motor car was introduced it was considered to be nothing more than an improved form of horse vehicle or a horseless carriage, whereas in point of fact it has turned out to be a new form of express train running the public highway without the safeguards which express trains on line are necessarily subject to.⁸

This was evident in his further comments about the need for the construction of footways and bridges which, he felt, 'would only confirm the view of the motorist that the public highway was a motor speed track and would lead to further accidents'.⁹ Indeed, the motorised vehicle was to fundamentally change relations between competing road users and to produce increased zoning on the highways of Britain between the 1920s and the 1970s; it was, in fact, to dominate the highway.

This is not to suggest that the nineteenth-century horsedrawn world of transport was without its obvious dangers. By the 1840s there may have been as many as 1,000 deaths per year on Britain's roads, though accurate figures were not gathered by the Registrar General until 1863. These were caused mainly by horses and horsedrawn vehicles, and rose

in the 1850s and 1860s before declining (though only relative to population growth) by the end of the century.¹⁰ Indicative of the continuing scale of danger presented by horses and horsedrawn vehicles at the beginning of the twentieth century is the fact that 84 police officers received medals, thanks, or money, for their action in capturing dangerous loose horses in the City of Liverpool in 1907.¹¹ Indeed, pedestrians throughout the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries faced serious dangers from other road users in crossing carriageways and walking on ill-defined and ill-constructed pavements and required the help of the police whose duties for traffic control had been laid down by the Police Act of 1839. James Monro, Metropolitan Police Commissioner, observed in 1889 that 'few crossings in crowded thoroughfares can be got over by the nervous and the timid without the appeal for the courteous help of the policeman'.¹²

Nonetheless, pedestrians and horse transport had almost exclusive rights to the highway in the early and mid-nineteenth century but competed with municipal trams and cyclists from the 1880s and motorcycles and cars at the turn of the century. Such conflicts could be accommodated in the nineteenth century, largely because little traffic travelled at significant speed on British roads. This was no longer the case from the early twentieth century because of the rising speeds of vehicles on the road. Pedestrians moved at 3 or 4 mph, horsedrawn traffic at four or five miles per hour, 'hurtling cyclists' at eight to ten mph, and cars at 12 or 14 mph (although their speeds were soon to achieve 30–60 mph). As cars improved travelling time became concentrated in new age of speed to effectively deny pedestrians their historic freedom of the highway. The 'road holocaust' of the 1930s was largely the result of motorised vehicles that had transformed the speed of the road.

Speeding automobiles mowing down pedestrians were seen to be an alarming and significant cause of the high death and injury figures in Britain from the beginning of the twentieth century. This led to the widespread use of the military metaphors of 'battle' and 'war' in connection with the roads by the press, all road users and the police. 'Candide', almost certainly a policeman, wrote an article for the *Police Review* in 1957 entitled 'The Battle for Britain's Roads', arguing that 'the roads of Britain remain battlefields, with the all-too familiar list of dead and mourned, impaired health and wasted property ever present, while apathy grows in the shade of unnecessary statistics'.¹³ To him the battle was made worse by the under-resourcing and fragmenting of responsibility which held back road safety with 'Jacob Marley' chains. This conflict

between road users fermented into a spate of legislation to control the speed of cars and lorries and maintain road safety, which inevitably produced a bewildering and multiplying array of traffic offences. This inevitably promoted the growth of pressure groups to represent all those with an interest in the use of the road, including the police who were entrusted to enforce the law.

Policing and traffic policing in Britain in the early twentieth century

Before examining the work of traffic policing per se it is helpful to understand its developments in relation to the structure of policing in Britain in the early twentieth century. Where, indeed, did it fit into the pattern of policing and what problems did it face? After the First World War, when the number of motorised vehicles increased rapidly, there were about 230 police forces in Britain (though the numbers fell during the inter-war years and rapidly after the Second World War), and 58 county forces and 128 borough forces in England and Wales alone in 1918.¹⁴ They were directly responsible to their joint standing committees (counties) and their local watch committees (borough forces) but partly financed by the Treasury as a result of the County and Borough Police Act of 1856, which offered a 25 per cent Treasury grant towards pay and clothing. This at least imposed some type of uniformity through the need of the forces to obtain a Certificate of Efficiency each year following an annual inspection to ensure that they received the Treasury money.¹⁵ The state was given some leverage by this system, but, operating through the Home Office, its aim was to create a more centralised system of policing to in order to improve police efficiency in all areas. However, the size of police forces varied immensely, restricting the ability of the Home Office to impose uniformity in both non-traffic and traffic policing. Indeed, in 1919 in England and Wales, ignoring the Metropolitan Police with its 19,000 officer establishment, 13 forces had fewer than 20 officers, 30 between 20 and 49 officers, and 86 per cent of the forces had fewer than 200 officers.¹⁶ Despite there being little prospect that the local committees would relinquish their control of the police to the state, concerted attempts were made by the Home Office, just after the First World War and in the early 1930s, to get smaller forces to amalgamate. However, few forces amalgamated until after the Second World War and the Home Office increasingly exerted its influence arranging of meetings, often without the knowledge of their watch committees, between their officials and many chief constables, and also

by arranging extra financial support from the Treasury for its projects, including the provision of money for police cars and experimental projects in motor patrolling. Secret meetings occurred frequently, for instance, between the Home Office and chief constables in 1919, a year of strikes, and in the run up to the General Strike of 1926 when the primary concern was to preserve public order.¹⁷ In both instances the police forces were supplied with cars and motor cycles, and extra transport equipment and facilities, in order to distribute Home Office instructions in the case of public disorder and threatened revolution.¹⁸ This meant that some police forces were already using police cars and other vehicles for functions other than traffic control long before most forces began to develop their own traffic units to deal with the problem of traffic policing per se. Police cars were used for administrative duties, transporting people, and light cars emerged for the use of superintendents, to replace the horses they had previously used. Traffic policing, as suggested, was one of the responsibilities of the police in the nineteenth century but it became an increasing burden as the number of cars increased rapidly in the early twentieth century, for this meant that the police would not simply be controlling traffic flow at points on the road but also be expected to create motorised police units.

Many chief constables were reluctant to take on the burden that motorised vehicles imposed, and it was not until the mid- and late 1920s that, with a lack of a suitable alternative, they readily accepted that responsibility. However, it is clear, given the varied size of police forces, that the development of motorised policing, alongside normal traffic duties, was immensely variable and was most developed in the large urban and county forces than the smaller forces. This meant that the Met, the Manchester, Leeds, Liverpool, Birmingham, Nottingham and the Lancashire County Police Force, for instance, were in the forefront of traffic policing by the 1930s and that the smaller forces, such as St Helens and Wigan, were slow to develop their traffic policing and patrolling. It was these larger forces that were also in the forefront of the introduction of the new technology, the telephone facilities that were connected with the 'Sunderland Box', the famous police box introduced in the 1920s to enable the public to telephone information to the police, to hold a prisoner, and to allow policemen a refuge and resting point for enlarged beats that partly resulted from the loss of police officers to traffic duties.

The British police slowly and prosaically accepted their increased traffic duties in the 1920s, although as part of a patchwork of traffic policing provision, dependent upon the size of the force, the chief constables

and the attitude of the local committees responsible for the police. This variation of response occurred against a backdrop of pressure from the Home Office which was designed to encourage chief constables to accept their new traffic responsibilities. However, the change was a slow process since the British police were also faced with dealing more broadly with the whole range of crime, from theft, to drink offences, prostitution, murder and numerous licensing activities that had always formed the real business of tackling crime in Britain. In particular, in the nineteenth century the police were widely faced with the problem of dealing with theft and drink offences, which seemed to be declining as the century progressed. In contrast, as we shall see, the twentieth century saw a rapid rise of criminality and traffic offences. The latter, which formed probably fewer than 2 per cent of total committals in 1900, rose to over 50 per cent by the 1950s and to around 63 or 64 per cent by the 1960s. Suddenly traffic policing became an increasingly urgent problem. Faced with the rising death rates of the 1920s, the 'road holocaust' of the 1930s, and the alarm at the greatly exaggerated level of 'motor banditry', which was particularly used by criminals in London to rob jewellers and furriers, there was an increasing recognition that more effective traffic policing had to be developed, ranging from the routine motor patrolling for the normal motorists to the flying squads and Q cars which were more about to apprehending criminal gangs than traffic policing per se.

At the beginning of the twentieth century, policing in Britain was thus localised, rather than centralised, influenced indirectly by the Home Office, and focused upon larceny and drink rather than traffic policing. It took time for chief constables to accept that traffic policing connected with the motorised vehicle should be considered as important as theft, drinking offences and murder. Their first steps were slow and halting but the sheer weight of the work they received ensured that they had to take seriously the enforcement of traffic law, the engineering of the road and the education of both the motorist and the pedestrian. These steps were taken by a fragmented police force in the face of opposition from motoring and pedestrian groups, the inconsistency of the courts and the need for the police to work with a multitude of local and national authorities connected with the roads and the road transport business. There was to be no smooth and even transition into traffic policing.

Legislation, the police and the 'battle' between motoring and non-motoring pressure groups

There has always been a substantial corpus of legislation connected with the maintenance, operation and policing of highways in Britain and,

as already indicated, it was the police who were traditionally responsible for patrolling highways. The Stage Carriage Act of 1832, which the police enforced, established the offence of 'Wanton and Furious Driving' that endangered others, whether by intoxication or negligence. The 1835 Highways Act similarly criminalised 'furious driving' of horse-drawn vehicles as did the widely used Towns Police Act of 1847. The 1861 Offences Against the Person Act provided for a sentence of imprisonment, not exceeding two years, with or without hard labour, for anyone found guilty of 'having the charge of any Carriage on Vehicle [who] shall by wanton or furious Driving, or Racing, or other wilful Misconduct, or by wilful Neglect, do or cause to be done Bodily Harm to any person whatsoever'.¹⁹ The 1835 and 1861 Acts contained provisions for obstruction of the highway which related to horsedrawn traffic but the 1861 Locomotive Act, modified in 1865, was concerned with problems related to steam traction engines and set crippling restrictions on their movement. The 1865 amendment reduced the maximum speed to 2 mph in towns and 4 mph outside and added that three persons had to accompany any horseless vehicle, one walking in front with a red flag – the Act becoming famously known as the 'Red Flag Act'. These restrictions came under pressure in the late nineteenth century and the Locomotives and Highways Act of 1896 became the Motorists' 'Magna Carta', removing the need for three persons, the use of the red flag and allowing for 'the furious driving of these vehicles' up to a speed limit of 14 mph – although it also contained a provision prohibiting driving 'at a speed that is greater than is reasonable and proper having regard to the traffic on the highways', allowed the Local Government Board to reduce the limit to 12 mph in some areas, and included a dangerous driving clause.²⁰ It also determined that vehicles should be driven on the left-hand side of the road. Despite road deaths of about 1,000 by 1900, the Motor Car Act of 1903 further raised the speed limit for motorised vehicles to 20 mph.²¹ Despite the proposals for change made by the 1906 Royal Commission on Motor Cars, and possibly in the light of the recommendations of the newly formed Automobile Association (AA), nothing was done to remove the speed limit. The 1903 Act was in fact perpetuated by a series of continuation Acts until 1930, when the Road Traffic Act removed the speed limit briefly until the Road Traffic Act of 1934 restored it at the new speed of 30 mph following the 1930s 'road holocaust'. The fulcrum point of much of the early conflict between motorists and the police, which so consumed the time of the motorists, the government and the police, was speeding and its likely grave consequences in terms of death and injury – although concerns for increasing road congestion

were never far from the minds of chief constables and their annual reports.

From 1903, as never before, there were problems of speeding, accidents, law breaking and intent that had to be addressed. The fact that new car owners were, initially, overwhelmingly middle class created a whole array of social problems for the police, who now came face to face with offenders who saw the police as their servants rather than the enforcers of the law, a point made by Sean O'Connell in his book *The Car in British Society*.²² The perplexed middle-class motorists, eventually to be joined by the working-class motorists, complained of being criminalised overnight by the new legislation on speeding and for other traffic offences, which now included dangerous and careless driving. Indeed, prosecutions for traffic offences in Britain rose from about 3 per cent of the total number of pursued through the courts by the police in 1900 to more than half the total by the 1930s and between 62 and 65 per cent by the mid-1960s.²³ These later increases are borne out by the Criminal Statistics of Scotland for 1960 which suggest that the Road Acts accounted for more than 30 per cent of all offences known to the police in 1946 and about 55 per cent by 1960.²⁴

Enforcing speed limits for motor-propelled vehicles proved to be a major source of dispute, although the police also dealt with the safety of vehicles such as defective brakes, damaged lights and other similar offences. The 'intoxicating influence of speed', noted by *The Times* in 1907, was even more powerful in the 1920s and 1930s, as Michael John Law recognised in his article on London motorists.²⁵ Motoring offered a new-found freedom for many motorists, and particularly for middle-class Londoners. Almost inevitably, police chief constables were divided on how to respond to the motor age and its challenges. At first they generally supported speed limits, but by the 1920s about two-thirds favoured the removal of speed limits and a third wished them to be retained, though particularly for urban roads.²⁶

The Road Traffic Act of 1930 experimented with the removal of speed limits for motor cars in a capricious moment when the motoring organisations and chief constables were united in their support for the removal of the speed limit for cars, although it did require the licensing of the coaches and omnibuses as a result of the large number of deaths and injuries they had caused in the so-called 'bus wars' for passengers of the mid-1920s.²⁷ The removal of speed limits for cars, supported by most chief constables, was short-lived since, with the 'road holocaust' of the early 1930s, the chief constables overwhelmingly changed their minds. The Road Traffic Act 1934 reimposed an urban speed limit, now

raised from the pre-1930 20 mph to 30 mph in built-up areas, though local authorities could request local derestriction. By 1938 the President of the Chief Constables' Association (CCA), which had promoted the reinstatement of the speed limit in the 1934 Act, concluded that the 30 mph speed limit had been a success for it contributed to 'a considerable reduction in accidents', although he also reflected the constant mantra of chief constables that 'Better results would be obtained if (a) magistrates would impose penalties of sufficient penalty to act as a deterrent, and (b) if motor patrols were increased.'²⁸ The first of these was a perpetual complaint of the police for years to come and the second was developed by such prominent figures as John Maxwell, Chief Constable of Manchester, Major Godfrey Chief Constable of Salford, and the Metropolitan Police who ran both uniformed motor patrols and the non-marked Q car patrols with plain-clothes officers from the 1930s.²⁹

Fast cars, 'furious driving' and the rising level of accidents and deaths, particularly of pedestrians, became an enormous problem despite police motor patrols. These patrols worked temporarily, but usually where there was intensive patrolling, and the courts continued to be erratic in their treatment of motorists and were subject to a lack of expertise, which annoyed chief constables. From the 1903 Motor Car Act onwards some police forces, mainly those in and about London, began to arrange speed traps in an attempt to enforce the 20 mph speed limit. This helped to provoke the formation of motoring interest groups. Indeed, the AA was formed in 1905 to help motorists avoid police traps and the penalties for breaking the speed limit, such as endorsements and the possibility of jail. At first, the legality of motorists being warned of speed traps had a chequered career in law but in the case of *Betts v Stevens*, of 1910, Lord Alverston ruled that for the AA 'scouts, or patrolman, who signalled a speeding motorists to slow down had committed the offence of 'obstructing an officer in the course of his duty' under the Prevention of Crimes Amendment Act, 1885'. Subsequently the AA developed a coded warning system, used until the 1960s, by which patrolmen would not salute a car with a displayed AA Badge if there was something wrong, such as a speed trap, to communicate.

Alongside the AA was the RAC – the Royal Automobile Club. This actually pre-dated the AA, having been formed in 1896 as the Automobile Club of Great Britain (and later Ireland), before King Edward VII commanded in 1907 that it become the Royal Automobile Club. During 1902 it campaigned vigorously for the relaxation of the speed limit, claiming that the 14 mph limit imposed by the Locomotive and

Highway Act of 1896 was absurd and seldom observed. Working with the Association of Motor Manufacturers and Traders, the RAC courted the support of Arthur Balfour, the Conservative prime minister at the beginning of the twentieth century, to influence discussions about the forthcoming Motor Car Act of 1903. It proposed that all speed limits be raised for cars. In the face of considerable pressure Parliament introduced the Motor Car Act of 1903 which raised the speed limit to 20 mph and imposed the offence of driving recklessly, dangerously and negligently. These measures were to prove a contentious issue for the RAC and other motoring organisations.

The AA and the RAC both campaigned vigorously against speed traps and for the consistent and uniform treatment of motorists by the police, the magistracy and the law. They wanted the deregulation of motoring since they saw the enforcement of the law on speeding and traffic controls as constantly throwing the motorist and the police into conflict. Yet to them little was changing. That is why in the 1930s motorist organisations and their supporters focused on the image of the unsociable 'road hog' to distract attention away from the constant speeding of the average driver, complaining, for instance, that the police were unnecessarily involved in the Met 'anti-honk' campaign to stop motorists honking their horns between 8 pm and 8 am.³⁰ The temperament of many motorists was partly reflected in a letter from 'Realist' to the *Manchester Guardian* in 1935: 'Cars are bound to kill if people deliberately run in front of them and the motorist, whatever his speed is no more to blame than the tide [for a drowning man].'³¹

The chief motoring organisations, and their supporters, were searching for scapegoats including pedestrians, foreign chauffeurs, working-class drivers, women and a small minority of young men with speeding sports cars. Sexton Cummings, a prolific writer and defender of motorists, was unequivocal when he told readers of the *Saturday Review* in 1935 that '[t]here is no doubt whatever that the motorists is the most oppressed class in the country'.³² This he considered to be unfair, and he reflected that there was a body of motoring opinion which suggested that it was a few motorists, the graphically portrayed 'road hogs', who were the real culprits and 'the enemy not only of the public but his fellow-users of motor-cars'.³³ These rogue drivers were apparently un-English, uneducated and often female. Indeed, according to *The Psychologist*, 'aggressive women take a fiendish delight in weaving in and out of the traffic frightening poor male drivers by their recklessness and verve. Many a woman takes out her hate of her husband, or her sexual dissatisfaction, in reckless driving.' The one consolation

was that '[m]any a woman who would like to use the ax [*sic*] on her husband or boss takes out her homicidal instincts on her car'.³⁴ Such vilification of minorities, including women drivers, only served to divert attention away from the need for rigorous regulation of the majority of private motorists. Focusing on supposedly 'problematic minorities' could not, however, hide the fact that the rising level of death and injuries, resulting from motor traffic. Demonising the pedestrian was, indeed, a feature of the defensive campaign of the motorists in the 1930s. Sexton Cummings stoked up the attack upon 'suicidal pedestrians' and 'palsied pedestrians' who 'had been "allowed" to usurp the motorists' highway'.³⁵ Lt. Col. Mervin O'Gorman (AA) was even more outspoken, castigating the foolish pedestrian for his 'act of reprehensible and suicidal – and, it may be, murderous-foolly'.³⁶

This defensive reaction of the motoring lobby fooled few chief constables, for they were deeply aware that accidents were often caused by motorists.³⁷ Therefore motoring organisations sought to widen the debate into one of civil liberties and the freedom of the road. Indeed, they presented the restriction of the use of the car as inhibiting the right of the people to choose their preferred means of transport. In this process the road moved from being a place of public use to 'a marketplace for transportation demands'.³⁸ Indeed, it was increasingly assumed by motorists and, as we shall see by the police, that roads were for cars – motorists wanted the freedom of the road whilst the police wanted order and road safety.

There was a problem with this view since, as the 1929 Royal Commission on Transport suggested:

All users of the road whether they are drivers of motor vehicles, or horse-driven vehicles or riders of horses, or pedestrians, or persons driving and leading animals, or cyclists, have equal rights on the road.³⁹

The Commission further criticised 'motorists who think that the road belongs to them' as well as 'cyclists and pedestrians [who] think that all traffic should give way to them...'.⁴⁰

The motorists' 'battle for control of the road' was still not won until the early 1960s, and even following the development of motorways motoring organisations still opined that their members were being unfairly targeted by the police. This was evident when the RAC submitted evidence to the Royal Commission on Police, 1960–1961. Their submission opened with the statement that 'The motoring organisations

consider it to be of the utmost importance that a satisfactory relationship should be maintained between the motoring public and the police' and, on law and its enforcement, noted that 'The motoring organisations recognise that much of the unpopularity of the police derives from the way in which they carry out their duties and often from the circumstances in which they are required to enforce the law.'⁴¹ In 1960 the Standing Joint Committee of the RAC, the AA and the RSAC had 'indicated the diversity of treatment of motorists in different force areas among the matters they have raised with the Royal Commission on the Police'.⁴² Motoring organisations were also unhappy about the reorganisation of the roads resulting from a variety of legislative changes in the 1960s, culminating in the Road Safety Act of 1967, which introduced safety restraint in cars and introduced the breathalyser, the latter checking their freedoms in favour of other road users.

The powerful motoring lobby was invariably in conflict with many other voluntary organisations who had an interest in road use and the application of the law. One was the Magistrates' Association, formed on 28 October 1921 out of the efforts of Alderman Wilkins of Derby and at the invitation of the Lord Mayor of London. It had 500 members when it first met at the Guildhall in London, 5,228 members by 1945 and 16,534 by 1970. Its first president, Lord Haldane, Lord Chancellor in the Labour Government of 1924, widened its influence, but it was often subject to the critical pressure from both the motorist organisations and the police, both of whom were worried at the lack of uniformity in magisterial sentencing.

More vehemently in conflict with the motoring lobby was the Pedestrians' Association. This Association was founded on 13 August 1929 at Essex Hall, London, as a result of the work of the journalist Tom Foley and Viscount Cecil of Chelwood. Established at a time when fatalities on the road had risen to the horrendous level of more than 6,000 per year, its chair, Lord Robert Cecil, stated that the association was needed 'to deal with a very serious and crying evil' which was 'comparable with any of the most serious evils against which human society had struggled'.⁴³ As a peace campaigner, a founder member of the League of Nations and winner of the Nobel Peace Prize in 1937, Chelwood associated deaths on the road with the evils of warfare. His concern, and that of the Association, was to 'defend public rights, especially of pedestrians'⁴⁴ and 'to safeguard the rights of foot passengers'.⁴⁵ He emphasised the point further, noting that all over the country those killed and 'are poor people for the most part. They have no means, or very little means, of defending themselves.'⁴⁶

The Pedestrians' Association was also often at odds with the police on how to deal with the rise of automobility, and this is evident in its memorandum to the Alness Committee (of the House of Lords) on 10 May 1938. Foley, noting that pedestrians made up almost half those killed on the road, 2,979 of the 6,591 killed on the roads in 1937 and a third of those injured, 72,857 of 226,339 injured in 1937, was at pains to stress that not only were pedestrians a significant proportion of the killed and injured but that they were unfairly blamed for the accidents that led to these statistics.⁴⁷ The Association fervently believed that the real problem of the roads was speed and that the fitting to motor vehicles of a mechanical device to check speed, a device being developed in the United States in the 1930s, would be much more effective than improving roads or teaching road safety to children – stressing that 2,707 pedestrians were killed in 1937 because speeding cars mounted grass verges and that there were few deaths in the age groups of 35–45 who were never taught road safety, perhaps because they were more agile.⁴⁸ Unlike the police, who felt that the magistrates were letting them down in not imposing severe penalties on speeding and dangerous drivers and should be encouraged to use the powers they had, the Pedestrians' Association went much further and felt that many offences were serious, rather than technical, and that the lay magistrate benches should lose their responsibility of dealing with death and injury on the road. These powers, they argued, should be given to higher courts, even 'special courts' whose might be more uniform in their treatment especially if every accident was subject to an inquiry into whether or not a criminal offence had been committed.⁴⁹ In the end, the assumption of the Pedestrians' Association was that motorists were driving a deadly weapon and that they had ultimate responsibility for road safety since their speed could be responsible for the hesitancy of pedestrians, and especially of young children. The Association was invariably opposed to the way in which both the police and other road safety organisations, and particularly the National 'Safety First' Association (NSFA), which maintained that road safety was an attitude of mind and that road-safety consciousness should be an essential part of the upbringing of every child. Instead, the Association condemned the 'internal viciousness' of the safety-first education for creating a culture of fear in the minds of the child and 'making them the subconscious guardians of their own safety', a process which, to the Association, absolved drivers from responsibility.⁵⁰ However, such insight and advice counted for little and John Walton, a recent commentator on pedestrians, pedestrianism and recreational walking, has concluded that the Pedestrians' Association

lacked influence, arguing that it has never had a fair hearing (the BBC ignored it systematically, even in the 1930s) and that changed its name to 'Living Streets' in 2001 because the original label was perceived as too pedestrian.⁵¹

Much more influential on the police and local authorities, as just noted, was the NSFA. Formed in London as the London 'Safety First' Council on 1 December 1916, it spread quickly to most other major urban centres, and incorporated other bodies such as the British Industrial 'Safety First' Association in 1924 when it became the NSFA 1924. In the 1920s and 1930s it promoted road 'safety first' weeks, the first one sponsored to the tune of £250 each by the AA and the RAC. and eventually changed its name to the Royal Society for the Prevention of Accidents (RoSPA) in 1941. Regarding the Pedestrians' Association as neo-Luddite, the NSFA/RoSPA worked closely with the police and local authorities to promote the education of schoolchildren, the introduction of manned and unmanned pedestrian crossing points, cycle proficiency tests and the creation of urban play areas. As Bill Luckin and Matthew Thomson have mentioned, it played a major role in the process whereby children, for the purposes of play, were moved from the street to the home, and emerges as a powerful body influencing the police between the First World War and the 1970s.⁵²

The evolving holistic approach of the three Es of traffic policing

The police had long held responsibilities for road traffic. Apart from their involvement in enforcing the legislation already referred to, the Police Act of 1839 contained clauses that empowered them to regulate both the route followed and the conduct of persons driving vehicles, such as stage carriages, or even herding cattle through streets. More particularly, they were charged with the duty of traffic management of motorized vehicles under the 1896 Locomotives and Highways Act – 'motorists being instructed to stop on the instructions of a police officer'. At that time there were probably fewer than 20 cars on British roads but the numbers mushroomed overnight to about 9,000 by 1904 and several hundred thousand by the early 1920s. Indeed, the police were soon deeply embroiled in enforcing the rules of the road and traffic management, operating in a battle of conflicting interests. It was not an easy role as the conflicts between motorists, the pedestrian and the law meant, initially at least, that the primary responsibility of the police

was to ensure safety on the roads by enforcing legislation and consequent speed limits. Indeed, the police became arbiters in the battle for all 180,000 miles of Britain's roads, attempting to enforce the law in an objective manner whilst cramped and confined by government, the law and public opinion. In order to do so, they slowly developed the policy of the three Es of the holistic approach to traffic policing – Enforcement, Engineering and Education – which had become embedded in police thinking by the 1930s and 1940s. Enforcement of the law became the first real responsibility of the police and this was most obvious in the early efforts of the police to enforce speed limits upon motorists.

To tackle speed the police organised, as we have seen, their highly contentious speed traps, as well as their checks on the technical faults of cars. Yet these motoring organisations and the police, whilst in conflict over the driving of motorists, often agreed from the beginning of the twentieth century, that whilst pedestrians and cyclists were the main victims of road accidents they often contributed significantly to their own death and injury. Indeed, pedestrian road traffic deaths and injuries dominated transport and police debates in the 1930s and 1950s, though they gradually gave way to deaths and injuries caused by crashes between motorist as pedestrian road safety measures began to work. The high death rate of pedestrians killed by motor vehicles, often representing up to 70 per cent of the number of victims, as compared with deaths amongst car drivers being as low as 3 per cent of the deaths in cities such as Liverpool between 1927 and 1951, was a matter of deep concern to the police.⁵³

Major Vernon Brook, addressing the CCA (of England and Wales) in 1937, endorsed this view suggesting that, as the cause of accidents, road casualty figures 'are in favour of the cyclist and pedestrian rather than the motorist'.⁵⁴ He stated that 'I recently analysed the cause of 131 fatal accidents in the City of Birmingham and found that only 12 were definitely not the fault of the deceased, only 23 were doubtful, and the rest entirely the fault of the deceased.'⁵⁵ Much the same point was made by three leading chief constables – T. Rawson (Chief Constable of Bradford and President of the CCA), John Maxwell (C.C. of Manchester), and F. Tarry (C.C. of Exeter) when they presented evidence, on behalf of the CCA, to the Alness Committee of the House of Lords at the end of May 1938. They collectively also argued that the majority of accidents were caused by pedestrians and cyclists.⁵⁶ Concerned at the mingling of all forms of road users on the road the Rawson felt that it was not surprising that pedestrians had caused 60,000 accidents between 1 April 1936 and

March 1937, and that this fact would probably necessitate ‘the need for curtailing their incursions upon the carriageway at other than prescribed crossings’, though he realised that this would present ‘very great difficulties’. He suggested that the Minister of Transport had, under Section 18 (2) of the Road Traffic Act of 1934, the right to prevent passage along the road within 100 yards of a crossing.⁵⁷ Rawson also suggested that local Highway Authorities, in consultation with the local Chief of Police, might seek approval from the Ministry of Transport (MoT), to restrict the crossing of roads to designated crossing points and possibly at given times, such as when workers were debouching from factories at 5 pm. Maxwell, though, was more circumspect than his associates and even handed, stated that:

The main causes of accidents, of course, are divided into categories; for the pedestrian class, a great many of the accidents (I should say the greater number of accidents) are caused by pedestrians leaving the footpath without looking where they are going. There is no doubt about that. With regard to the motoring side, the main cause is careless negotiation of road junctions, lack of judgement, and lack of attention.⁵⁸

Some chief constables were clearly convinced that motorists, largely middle class before the Second World War, were not without their share of the blame. Nonetheless, they all seemed to be converging on the notion that there needed to be the segregation of motorists and pedestrians through road ‘Engineering’ and the ‘Education’ of the pedestrian.

The police had traditionally worked alongside an evolving pattern of local and national organisations to improve the quality and engineering standards of the roads, although this became more evident in the twentieth century. Initially, parishes had held the responsibility for road maintenance through a variety of legislation and, as Carlton Reid has stressed, they were often kept to that by the cyclist organisations.⁵⁹ This was modest and relatively ineffective but in 1889 the newly-formed County Councils took over the responsibility for the cost of main roads and in 1894 the new Rural District Councils accepted responsibility for local roads. At this point motorised transport emerged and imposed a rapidly changing situation on a slowly improving and piecemeal approach to road maintenance. It was not until 1909 that central government made grants to local authorities for road maintenance and not until 1920 that a MoT was formed. It was 1930 before County

Councils took over responsibility for all roads and 1936 before trunk roads became the financial responsibility of the MoT. The police, in dealing with traffic management were thus forced to deal with bewildering array of organisations who were slowly emerging to improve roads, road surfacing, and road layout in order to separate road users began to perceive segregation to be the future. Charles Laughton Rafter, Chief Constable of Birmingham, writing in 1927, was clearly at the forefront of this movement by the police when he stated that:

No effort should be spared to provide all means of safety for the public on the street bringing the tramcar to the footpaths at suitable points, where people might board them, or alight, without running the gauntlet of traffic. Erecting further stand refuge refuges as suitable places to enable people to cross the street in safety.⁶⁰

Operating within a democratic political system, road building was subject to forces that discouraged an imposed transport plan. This made the work of the police in engineering less coherent than they would have liked, as William Plowden was to note in the 1970s.⁶¹

Not surprisingly, the complete segregation of all road users and the 'Engineering' aspect of police work occurred only slowly, almost prospectively, though it was effectively in place by the late 1960s. This slow emergence of segregation on the road led the MoT, the Home Office, local authorities and the police to focus upon other strategies than enforcing the law for motorists and other road users, the most obvious being the use of road safety education and propaganda. They began to educate the pedestrian and the cyclists through public safety campaigns – in the teeth of opposition from the impassioned C. T. Foley (Pedestrians' Association) who felt that the attribution of blame for accidents to pedestrian was undoubtedly wrong.⁶² Nevertheless, the culpability of the pedestrian and cyclist formed the basis of many police attempts to reduce death and injury on the road, and the 'human failure' pedestrian-based model of accidents accepted by the Alness Committee (1938–1939).

The police became increasingly pro-active in conditioning the British public to the need for adjusting to the age of the car. The early attempts, in the late 1920s and the 1930s, to promote road safety amongst children in Salford. and then throughout the county police area in Lancashire and in urban areas had been extended by the 1960s to such an extent that there were national campaigns and inter-town road safety and Highway Code quiz competitions for children.

It is clear that between the mid-1920s and the 1960s the police played an expanding role in developing the three Es of traffic policing. Education was an important part of the work of the MoT, the Home Office, the police, and local authorities from the 1920s onwards. Engineering was the main work of the MoT, along with the local authorities and the police, keen to make the physical features of roads safe, through the construction of crossing points, street islands, wider roads, the use of non-slip materials, arterial roads, and roads with cambers and gentle curves not affected by sharp curbs and changes in direction once dictated by ancient land boundaries. The two strategies of dealing with road safety and improving road design necessarily intersected with experiments connected with automated traffic signalling, popularly referred to as 'Roberts Robots' in reference to Sir Robert Peel, that emerged in the late 1920s and early 1930s, the zebra crossing of the early 1950s, penguin crossings, Panda crossing, play streets, and other similar experiments.⁶³ These developments pepper the annual reports of chief constables. Yet it was the Enforcement that was the primary, and central, role of the police, shaped by the direction the Home Office and by the often inconsistent, volatile, and conflicting, policies of Government, Parliament, and the magistracy. Traffic management, through increasing the point duty and traffic duties of the ordinary constable, and motor patrolling became common amongst most forces between the 1920s and the 1960s, from the formation of the Liverpool Traffic Police in 1920 to the formal requirement of police to have a traffic police department under the Traffic Act of 1967.

In the first seventy years of the twentieth century the three Es of policing strategy evolved slowly to ensure that British roads became safer for all road users. Though they probably emerged in a slow and pragmatic manner in the minds of senior police officers they are particularly associated with, H. Alker Tripp, Metropolitan Assistant Commissioner B, in charge of Metropolitan traffic policing from 1932 to 1947. He outlined his seminal assessment of the duties of police in a paper produced at the end of the Second World War which paraded the all-inclusive role of the police in the vital role of saving human life and promoting road safety.⁶⁴ In this paper, Tripp stressed that whilst murders in England and Wales averaged about 100 per year in the 1930s deaths on the road averaged about 6,300 per year. To him in policing the road it was vital to apply the holistic approach of the three Es. The tackling of road safety, in all its forms, to Tripp, was the most substantial challenge that the British police faced in mid-twentieth century Britain. Enforcement was also much more about the motorist whilst Engineering and Education was much more about the pedestrian.

Deaths on Britain's road ultimately fell as a result of the work of the three Es. Engineering improved automobility, raised speeds and drove pedestrians off the highway. Education often resulted in making pedestrians aware of the necessary precautions of crossing the road. The 'Enforcement' of safety measures and the control of speeding by the police largely enforced the law for drivers. Police forces reorganised to meet the challenge of traffic policing and its multifarious activities. The ultimate purpose of their activities became the segregation of road users.

The pace of police involvement in the three Es of traffic management varied enormously from region to region. Many of the major problems of pedestrians crossing roads were urban, rather than rural, issues and focused more on Metropolitan London and the South, than on the North, which meant that the urgency for action varied. In 1931 there was one car for every five households in Surrey, and similar proportions in other counties near London. In contrast in County Durham only one household in every 23 had a car.⁶⁵ David Jeremiah has also noted that the effect of the car on the countryside was less than in urban areas although it did create new economic opportunities, noise and dust pollution and traffic jams.⁶⁶ It was London traffic, and particularly the cars leaving the centre of London for the countryside on a Friday night, the famous London efflux, that were to create many of the early problems of speeding, accidents and the death of pedestrians and to provoke police speed checks. The distinction between London and the rest of Britain remained substantial but was less marked by the early 1950s when more than 1,000 cars per day were being bought in Britain, and by the early 1960s when car sales more than tripled on their early 1950s figures.

Traffic management and the threat of congestion, apart from the obvious issues of car crime, were central to the whole strategy of the three Es and the reduction of road deaths and injuries. It did not take much to create the obvious problems of traffic flow and congestion in overcrowded urban streets and this was something which was not long confined to London. Indeed, from the 1920s concern was being expressed constantly in the annual reports of chief constables at the slow movement of traffic in towns arising from both road congestion and the parking of cars. The situation grew worse as the century progressed and by the 1950s and the 1960s the congestion on London's roads, the worst affected, was so heavy that speed levels fell from the appallingly low speed of 11.4 mph in 1949 to around 10.3 mph between the mid-1950s in 1961.⁶⁷ This situation led the development of new engineering and technological developments, and most obviously to the introduction of parking meters.

Uniformed motor patrols and plain-clothes Q cars (named after the heavily armed and camouflaged Q ships of the First World War which were referred to a 'Wolves in Sheep's Clothing') might check speeding but they could not ensure traffic flow and so it was the ordinary constable on the beat, rather than traffic departments, who assumed responsibility for the enforcement of the law on traffic movement. The demands of traffic policing increasingly placed enormous pressure on the existing beat and saw the gradual decline of the 'bobby on the beat' from the inter-war years onwards, a culturally significant factor in the changing relationship between the police and their local communities. As demonstrated in Laybourn and Taylor's *Policing in England and Wales*, the move from the beat to patrol cars and traffic duty, which consumed the equivalent of about one-sixth of police manpower in the 1930s, led to larger beats being formed and the introduction of the Sunderland Box, with facilities for the police constable and a phone facility for the public, which evolved into the a variety of types of police box.⁶⁸ These mini-police stations were introduced in Sunderland, Manchester, Scarborough and other police areas – although they gave way, in some areas such as Manchester, to police telephone pillars through which the public could phone the police with information. A gap may well have developed between the police and the public by the decline of traditional beat to fuel the on-going battle between the police, the motorist and the pedestrian but as David Taylor has revealed, the public relationship with the bobby on the beat, or the community policeman was probably rarely the close and friendly one presented in the 1950s and 1960s television series 'Dixon of Dock Green'.⁶⁹ Instead the relationship between the police and the community was often based of a fear of the police who, even if they were respected, were usually treated as outsiders and with suspicion. That link may well have been undermined further as the 1960s saw the rise of Urban, and Rural, Beat, Policing, first experimented with in Kirkby. Liverpool, in 1959, the basis of the *Z Cars* series on television, and pushed forward in the late 1960s as part of a motor-patrol based system integrative system of quick response and colated system to crime to efficiently deal with rising crime in the face of inadequate manpower.

Faced with the enormous pressures on the ordinary police constable it was a relief to many chief constables that automated traffic lights were slowly introduced from the late 1920s onwards, releasing police manpower from point duty. However, other traffic duties were imposed upon the policeman on the beat. New offences were introduced but one of the major burdens was the need to need to keep traffic flowing by

controlling parking on the road. It was finally resolved by the use of parking meters and traffic wardens though it initially imposed a burden upon the police.

As with so many developments in traffic management and engineering, the idea of introducing parking meters had come from the United States.⁷⁰ By the early 1950s the United States had more than 200,000 parking meters in use and investigations by the Home Office into their use drew the advice that Britain should avoid their use. Nevertheless, the police were convinced that there was a need to control parking and to prevent the highway from being congested with parked vehicles. The Chief Constable of Liverpool, was conciliatory when he reflected, in his annual report of 1954, that is:

Theoretically, the law does not recognise the use of the highway for parking, but on the other hand, creates the offence of obstruction only when there has been an unnecessary use of the highway. Modern conditions demand some relaxation of the legal standpoint, and precautions, especially in central areas, are only initiated only where the areas of the highway has been used. What constitutes an unnecessary use of the highway must vary according to the type of street, times of day, volume of traffic, and dimensions of the vehicles.⁷¹

Yet he felt that some sort of appropriate and necessary control had to be introduced.

By the 1960s the Met were introducing parking meters. The Met meters were monitored by traffic wardens who were, initially, supervised by police officers. This development spread to other cities and towns in Britain, and was initially operated through the police forces. Some chief constables favoured street parking, supervised by wardens, whereas others favoured either underground or above-ground parking; the Chief Constable of the City of London Police favouring the former in the 1960s. This move represented an attempt to control car congestion in urban areas but also brought about a fundamental change in the laws of the highway. Charging for parking was, as the Chief Constable of Liverpool suggested, a fundamental change in the rules of Britain's highways which directly affected the motorist.

Other technologies were introduced to further ease the burden of policing, though their use was often contested. There were radar experiments and cameras to monitor the movement of traffic and infringements of the law. The introduction of CCTV faced similar difficulties in the 1960s and was not fully introduced until the 1980s.⁷² The

introduction of new equipment and new initiatives meant that the contentious nature of the relationship between the police and the motorists continued and, indeed, continues.

Conclusion

As this overview indicates, in the twentieth century the advent of the automobile profoundly altered the social and economic life of Britain and introduced the various road users into vituperative conflict over the ownership of the road. Inevitably it also transformed the way in which policing was conducted in Britain. Most police forces, even the smaller ones, gradually set up traffic departments between 1920 and 1967 to complement the increasing traffic duties of the ordinary constable on the beat. Regardless of when these departments were formed, the police had an increasingly important role to play in educating the pedestrian about road safety, in educating the motorist, in advising cyclists, in managing traffic and ensuring smooth traffic flow, encouraging the improvement of road engineering and enforcing speed limits and the laws of the road. Those responsibilities varied between forces but it was the Met and the police forces of the south-eastern counties and towns that first faced the problems raised by the motor age. In the end, the police became an omnipresent, if not omnipotent, force on the roads, but their precise role and contribution has been the cause of significant debate as they developed the holistic approach of Enforcement, Engineering and Education as the strategy to control the roads. Bluntly stated, there has been a conflict of opinion as to why the police acted in the way they did in ending the democracy of the road.

2

Historiography and Argument

A critical examination of the historiography of debate

The emergence of the motorised vehicle has led to a rapidly expanding academic literature which has focused upon both the conflict between the motorists and the pedestrians, and the role of the police. This literature has been dominated two major questions. Firstly, why did the motor car become dominant on British roads? Secondly, what part did the police play in this process? The second question, in particular, raises a number of subsidiary questions. Were the police complicit in the success of the motorist? Were the chief constables and ordinary policemen subservient to the motorist? Why did the police commit themselves to a policy of segregating the motorist and the pedestrian? Why did the police assume the responsibility of traffic control and the challenge of dealing with congestion? Why did they accept the three Es of Enforcement, Engineering and Education, which formed the holistic approach to traffic policing they adopted? How did the police structure change to meet the demands of traffic control and traffic crime? Relevant, but only peripheral to this book, is the question: How effectively did the police work with the courts in dealing with the enforcement of traffic offences?

In dealing with the first major question there are issues of urban planning and the democracy of the road to be considered. The debate on the conflict between the motorist and the pedestrian, arising from the dangers cars presented to other road users, partly arose from the fact that the planning policies of towns and cities were, from the 1930s, geared increasingly to the needs of cars rather than pedestrians. The emphasis upon the primacy of the car was asserted by Alfred Barnes, Minister of Transport in Attlee's post-war Labour government, who, in 1946, established the formal link between planning and highways. The

1947 Town and Country Planning Act went further, by fostering the idea of city planning based upon the needs of motor vehicles. It was assumed that the town and city had to be shaped for the movement of cars, and when this failed, due to congestion, slow traffic speeds and environment problems, Ernest Marples, Minister of Transport in the Conservative government of the early 1960s, commissioned Colin Buchanan to examine the problem in his *Traffic in Towns* report of 1963.¹ Whilst advocating the need for a variety of policies to tackle the problems, and stating that towns might develop ring roads, bypasses, and even establish pedestrian areas, the fact is that the Buchanan Report was geared to ensuring the accessibility of movement via the car almost to the exclusion of the needs of pedestrians. In 1964, Marples endorsed the report and encouraged urban areas to consider 'Buchanan's Law' as a trade-off between the environment and accessibility. Therefore, the needs of pedestrians were further limited until the 1980s, when cities and towns, such as Leeds, began to develop outer and inner ring roads in conjunction with pedestrian precincts, and to consider the needs of cyclists and other groups of road users.

Whilst emphasising the ubiquity of the car, there was a fundamental lack of co-ordination in the social policy of transport in Britain, and this was reflected upon by William Plowden in his book, *The Motor Car and Politics in Britain 1896–1970* (1971). Plowden's mantra was the need for an integrated joint framework of social policy, which had clearly not occurred in the case of the onset and expansion of the age of the car. He argued that the lack of a co-ordinated social policy meant that, as Jose Harris has claimed of social policy in her book *Private Lives, Public Spirit: A Social History of Britain 1870–1914* (Oxford, 1993), policies were constantly being ravelled and unravelled. There was clearly no thought-out policy, but an ever-changing reaction to events which tended to favour the motorist, with his/her pro-motorist organisations, such as the AA and the RAC, able to pressure Parliament and influence legislation.²

This top-down approach to motoring legislation, subject to intense debate at the national and local level between pro-motorist and anti-motorist groups, meant that effective and comprehensive legislation was rarely achieved. Local and regional concerns often dominated, and Christopher Taylor has written of the 'piecemeal reaction to changing circumstances in individual locations', further arguing that: 'The great expansion of motor traffic in the 1920s and 1930s is the prime example of this, for in those years individual loops of new road were wrapped around unplanned and expanding towns and villages, with

little thought to the future.³ Indeed, Taylor argues that proper road planning probably did not occur until the development of a national policy towards the motorways in the early 1960s. This is partly reflected in the attempt by the police to impose a co-ordinated approach to road safety which was buffeted by local concerns, motorist groups, parliamentarians, lawyers and magistrates, and meant that any semblance of policy often arose in a haphazard and contentious manner. Safety on the roads was the major concern behind the actions of the police, but police action raised many other conflicts concerning the equal usage of the road.

Since Plowden wrote his pioneering work, a rising body of historical literature has focused upon the dominating issue of the declining democracy of the road in the battle between traffic flow and road safety. J. Kunstler, in *The Geography of Nowhere* (1994), argued that automobility disabled those who were not car drivers.⁴ P. E. S. Freund also maintained, in *The Ecology of the Motobile* (1993), that, from the road, 'The young and the elderly, people with disabilities, women and poor people are disproportionately excluded.'⁵ Michael John Law's recent article on speeding reaches a similar conclusion for there was, as a result of the new arterial roads, which favoured the movement of wealthy Londoners, 'Speed and blood on the bypass: the new automobilities of inter-war London.' These new roads encouraged an emergent form of automobility that was modern, sensational and exciting for the metropolitan driver, but also highly dangerous for pedestrians and cyclists living in suburban homes near these roads.⁶ Other academic contributions – by Sean O'Connell, Joe Moran, John Urry and Mimi Sheller, and Bill Luckin and David Sheen – have all emphasised the growing exclusion of the pedestrian and the restriction of cyclists from the road in the twentieth century.⁷ O'Connell, particularly, suggests that the domination of the motorist was based upon their initially middle-class nature: magistrates, many of whom were also middle-class drivers, made it difficult for the police to effectively enforce speeding limits in an atmosphere in which even police chief constables began to support the decriminalising of speeding. In this climate of powerful and bellicose motoring organisations, he argues that 'their [motoring organisations'] influence should not be underestimated'.⁸ Luckin and Sheen have also argued, in an article focused upon wartime Manchester, that the period 1920–1970 was dominated by the interest of private motorists.⁹ According to these writers, the car brought about social and cultural changes and gave its driver an emotionally charged experience – the thrill of the open road. The excitement for the new driver, and the sense of mobility and space gained at

the expense of other road users, has been further emphasised by Peter Merriman in his book *Mobility, Space and Cultures*.¹⁰

Collectively, then, there has been almost universal acceptance amongst historians of automobility that the rise of the motor car led to the end of democracy on British roads, because of the injury and death it could inflict on the pedestrian and other road users, and also due to the fact that urban planning and roads were to be built to facilitate the easy flow of road traffic. Indeed, dealing with the new arterial roads that emerged in and around London in the inter-war years, Law astutely concludes that:

These high-speed journeys along the arterial road created a new space for metropolitan drivers. Within a few years, this space had become contested. Others living in new suburban housing near to London's major highways, also started to drive or ride motorcycles in increasing numbers. The pedestrians and cyclists from these houses crossed these roads at their peril.¹¹

The supremacy of the car was kick-started by the fact that Britain, as O'Connell suggests, had a commanding motoring lobby in the twentieth century, operating initially through the Society of Motor Manufacturers and Traders, which represented a rising and substantial part of the British economy, and then more directly through the AA and the RAC. As we have seen in Chapter 1, these last two organisations alone formed a powerful and strident political lobby for the essentially middle-class motorists of the inter-war years, and have continued to do so ever since for motorists of all classes. Their influence over the MoT, in Parliament and on government soon became evident, as they submitted evidence to royal commissions and select committees – including the Alness Committee of 1938–1939 – and lobbied Parliament and local authorities on behalf of the motorist.¹² They were committed to the total separation of the different categories of road users, but doubted that road deaths and injuries could be quickly reduced and so had focused on a cluster of educational measures to improve 'physical' and 'psychological' behaviour (of both motorists and pedestrians).

This issue been developed further into a sub-debate on the impact of traffic upon the landscape of childhood. In 1997, Harry Hendricks pointed out that historians had largely neglected the topic of childhood in Britain during the inter-war years and in the post-1945 years to the 1970s.¹³ Recently, however, Bill Luckin has researched the 'closing down of the child's open space' because of the growth of road traffic, in a book edited by Matthew Thomson, *The Lost Freedom: The Landscape of*

the Child and the British Post-War Settlement.¹⁴ Luckin's research has suggested that child death rates began to rise and become a cause of concern in the 1920s and 1930s, which was amplified during the early years of the Second World War, which saw the militaristic-type Kerb Drill (HALT, eyes right, eyes left, ...) introduced, and further increased in later years, and after the war, with the growing emphasis upon parental responsibility, lectures to schoolchildren on road safety, and the introduction of the Green Cross Code in 1971, which promoted a more generalised awareness of crossing the road and road traffic.¹⁵ Luckin thus maintains that, whilst there is not necessarily a direct correlation between road traffic and child road deaths – since the relationship is mediated by cultural attitudes and because children do not always do what they are told – the fact is that road safety education and directives created new and restricted landscapes for the child. Indeed, as Mathew Thomson suggests, the concern about traffic, television and paedophiles may well have led to 'the lost freedom' of childhood and a move from the streets to the home in the 'post-1945 settlement'.¹⁶ The enormous increase in deaths and injuries on the road has, as Iris Borowy has argued, had a huge impact.¹⁷ The inevitable result has been the move to segregate the motorist and the pedestrian – particularly children, whose leisure time was often spent playing in the street – from each other.

If the first major question is one of urban planning and the democracy of the road, the second major question has centrally been: What part did the police play in this process whereby automobility became dominant? Several historians argue that motorists and their organisations dictated the contours of traffic policing. O'Connell has argued that police chief constables supported the motorist lobby in so far as they saw pedestrians as the major cause of road accidents.¹⁸ Moran has claimed much the same, as have M. M. Ishaque and R. B. Noland, and also B. Luckin and D. Sheen.¹⁹ Indeed, Luckin and Sheen state that: 'Policing attitudes and policies were underwritten by similar assumptions', referring to the Manchester Town Hall vilification of the pedestrian, who was battered by warnings such as that which appeared in the following doggerel:

Without compunction,
When you come to a Junction,
It is your function,
To proceed with gumption.²⁰

Luckin and Sheen note that both Major C. V. Godfrey and John Maxwell, respective chief constables of Salford and Manchester, were very much concerned about the suicidal tendencies of pedestrians,

even though Maxwell was also concerned about 'a sharp increase in [road-user] responsibility', by which he meant lack of responsibility.²¹ O'Connell and Moran have further emphasised the social and political influence of the motoring organisations in deflecting criticism from perpetrators to victims – careless pedestrians in particular – and helping to shape government traffic policy in their favour. O'Connell, in particular, sees the police as part of the wider problem facing road-safety reformers, portraying the Chief Constable of Salford, Major Godfrey, who demanded coroners return suicide verdicts in some cases of road fatalities, as if he were in some way typical of all chief constables. David Taylor and I challenged this characterisation of the relations between the motorists and the police in our book, *Policing in England and Wales, 1918–1939*, for the situation is far more nuanced, although we accept that the outcome of police action undoubtedly favoured the motorists.²² We argued that the battle for control of the roads was not entirely dominated by disagreements in Parliament and government, but fought on the highways between the police and the motorist, with chief constables realising that, over time, the balance of power was shifting from the pedestrian to the motorist.²³ The fact is that chief constables were often equivocal about motorists and sought to act impartially, but were clear in their intent to reduce road casualties in whatever way they could. Inevitably, this led to some differences of opinion. In May 1938, for instance, in giving evidence to the Alness Committee, John Rawson, Chief Constable of Bradford and President of the CCA for England and Wales, argued that 'speed is a very definite factor in the incidence of accidents', and reflected that this might be due to the 'road hogs, young men in sports cars who rush about the country at any speed they can get out of the car', thus rather buying-in to the motorist lobby's agenda of blaming the vilified minority.²⁴ On other occasions, the chief constables of Surrey and Warwickshire were fiercely critical of speeding motorists in the early twentieth century.²⁵ It is clear that Godfrey's view on pedestrians was not the only one. The fact is that most chief constables imposed restrictions on speeding motorists before also instigating their own version of Godfrey's campaign to promote road safety amongst children. The police were legally obliged to tackle speeding and dangerous driving because of the rising level of accidents, despite the fact that this would offend 'a number of high-profile and influential figures'.²⁶

O'Connell's views are also largely rejected by Clive Emsley in his seminal article "'Mother, What *Did* Policemen Do When There Weren't Any Motors?'" *The Law, the Police and the Regulation of Motor Traffic in England, 1900–1939*.²⁷ Emsley challenges some of the marvellous

myths surrounding the development of motorised transport. He criticises O'Connell's notion that chief constables, and the ordinary policeman, were somehow subservient to the middle-class motorist of the early twentieth century, and to their representative bodies, the AA and the RAC. Instead, he affirms V. A. C. Gatrell's view of the existence of the 'policeman-state', in which, with the establishment of Sir Robert Peel's Metropolitan Police in 1829, order was to be maintained by police acting as 'the impersonal agents of central authority', developing their own bureaucratic structure to meet a rising level of crime partly generated by the bureaucracy.²⁸ He thus rejects the notion of a ruling-class conspiracy even though the personnel efficiency and tactics of the police might often be suspect. Emsley further argues that a scapegoat mythology was introduced by the police in the form the infamous 'road hog', to legitimise police action and to distinguish between the ordinary and the irresponsible motorist. There was clearly overwhelming evidence that chief constables were willing to challenge the motorist with a whole raft of measures – speeds traps, unmarked Q cars, uniformed motor patrols and radar traps – between the 1930s and the 1970s, in order to improve road safety and control speed; furthermore, parking charges to deal with congestion were implemented from the 1960s onwards.²⁹

Laybourn and Taylor have further indicated that the independent action of the police is clearly evident in the Home Office Experimental Motor Patrol Scheme in Lancashire, one of several such schemes, which began on 1 April 1938 and extended to 30 September 1939. The Chief Constable of Lancashire was eventually to reflect, in a heartfelt paean, that:

The ideal is undoubtedly the complete segregation of different classes of road user, but even assuming this ideal is possible, its realisation could not possibly be reached for years to come, and in the meantime the Experiment has shown the extent to which the Police Motor Patrols can help in the problem, and that the real education of road users can be made effective far more quickly if advice or warning can be given by the Police on the spot at the actual time when the foolish careless action occurs.³⁰

However, that was not possible in this period, and so the Lancashire scheme was designed simply to reduce the appallingly high level of road casualties rather than pander to the needs of motorists.

The Lancashire County Police Force, which covered an area with a population of about 1,750,000 people, argued in its two reports, on

the first six months and the first year of the scheme, that death and injury rates, overall, fell by about 44 per cent by the simple expedient of having more visible and numerous motor patrols.³¹ The number of motor patrols on the road had been raised to saturation point through the use of a floating unit of 20 vehicles, which were employed as and when required, and more cautions were issued to motorists, cyclists and pedestrians, thus reducing the time spent on prosecutions.³² The Experimental Motor Patrol Scheme was a far cry from the harsh policy of prosecuting most offenders adopted by many police forces in the early 1930s, and the interim sixth-month report suggested, as a result of advice, education and caution, that 'it was a scheme for encouraging co-operation between Police, Motorist and the Public'.³³

This experiment, indeed, proved far more effective than the rigid and almost brutish application of the strict rules of the road that had applied between 1931 and 1935 – which was seen as anti-motorist – and the late 1930s tendency towards making motor patrols (through unmarked Q cars) as inconspicuous as possible.³⁴ What it revealed is that the police did not select the motorist for special treatment, either for or against them, but identified, cautioned and took action against motorists, drivers of horsedrawn vehicles, peddle cyclists and pedestrians as required. It sought to be even-handed with road users and noted that the limited active resistance to their police came not from motorists, but from cyclists and cycle clubs, who often complained of having to use cycle paths, worrying that they might in future have to pay for their upkeep, but arguing that they feared the 'loss of freedom of the highway'.³⁵

There were other schemes, but in the areas of the country not covered by the Experimental Motor Patrol Scheme, speeding accidents fell by only about 2 per cent in the period (not by the 44 per cent in Lancashire), and the thus police tried to increase their influence on the roads through prosecuting motorists. In contrast, the Lancashire County Police reduced the number of their prosecutions – from 22,700 in 1933 to 11,800 in 1937, with similar numbers in 1938 – resulting in savings on police time and increased police presence, and thus increasing police pressure which led to a fall in death and injury rates.³⁶

As a postscript to the debate on the complicity of the police in the rising dominance of the motorist, there has been further evidence for Emsley's view that neither the chief constable nor the ordinary policeman acted in subservient way to the motorist. This appears in Joanne Klein's immensely important and original book, *Invisible Men: The Secret Lives of Police Constables in Liverpool, Manchester, and Birmingham*,

1900–1939.³⁷ Ostensibly, the book is about the duties, lives and relationships of police constables in three English police forces in the early part of the twentieth century, rather than being particularly focused on traffic policing. Nevertheless, Klein reveals that, from the 1920s, traffic duties pulled constables from their regular beats because accidents and traffic jams required immediate attention. In one division of Manchester 11 (traffic road junction) points required a policeman to be present 12 hours per day, and, in Liverpool, traffic direction and control required 300 men per day by 1929, about 15 per cent of the force.³⁸ It was a wearisome duty, fraught with the danger of being injured, involving wearing the unpopular white coats and buffs of point duty, and increasingly including the protection of children. Chief Constable Dunning of Liverpool declared, in 1908, that traffic duties divert a constable's attention 'from his proper duties', and HMI Terry feeling that more miscellaneous duties could not be assumed by the police 'without destroying the efficiency of their primary duties'.³⁹ More pertinent for the issue of the relationship between the police and the motorist is Klein's suggestion that the majority of complaints against the police arose from those middle-class motorists who abhorred the incivility of policemen in an age when road manners and customs were in their embryonic state. Chief Constable Charles H. Rafter of Birmingham (CC: 1899–1935) made it clear, after a series of complaints in 1924, that it was motorists who had broken bye-laws who were 'trying to evade being summoned', and that they (the police constables) should try to avoid grounds for complaint whilst carrying out their duty.⁴⁰ In Liverpool, Chief Constable A. B. Wilson (CC: 1931–1940) was well aware that some motorists 'are difficult, are inconsiderate and as unpleasant as possible', but advised against getting into verbal wrangles with them.⁴¹ It was very rare for a police constable to be charged with incivility; chief constables almost invariably backed up their men in enforcing the law in the face of frequent hostility from motorists.

Whether or not the police were complicit in the motorists' dominance of the road, there is the subsidiary question: Why did they become so dominant in the control and management of traffic? Howard Taylor's challenging study of the police has suggested that the acquisition of responsibilities by chief constables is part of the process which allowed them, between 1914 and 1960, to justify their increased responsibilities, manpower and pay. However, this analysis can be questioned, particularly in regard to traffic policing.⁴²

One must remember, however, that the responsibility for increased traffic management and the free flow of traffic in the age of the car was

not necessarily a duty that the police willingly accepted, as evidenced by the debates within the Police Federation in the mid-1920s and the comments of many chief constables at the time, evidenced in Laybourn and Taylor's book on *Policing in England and Wales, 1918–1939*. Many chief constables who initially questioned police involvement in traffic management in the early 1920s had embraced the need for it by the end of the 1920s, and particularly so when they began to see the positive results of their actions. Others, such as Maxwell, Chief Constable of Manchester, had been convinced of its validity from the beginning of his tenure (1926–1942), and had introduced a mobile police force of about 50 officers in the early 1930s, which was increased to 100 as a result of the Home Office Experimental Patrol Scheme of the late 1930s. This later expansion reduced the number of accidents by 441 and summonses by 858 in two six-month test periods between November 1937 and April 1938. Maxwell commented that: 'One thing which has impressed me particularly has been the decrease in Speeding. Speeding, as we know it has more or less disappeared whilst these men are on the road.'⁴³

Almost as a postscript to the two major debates is the relationship between the police and the courts, which, O'Connell suggests, was part of a two-pronged middle-class motorists' attack which forced the police to accede to the interests of motorists.⁴⁴ Much of this assertion rests on the prevarication of the courts in regard to applying the full extent of the law, downgrading sentences, and in not accepting *The Highway Code* in court cases. One must remember that this leniency of the court to drivers is something which Michael John Law partly accepted.⁴⁵ However, Claire Corbett is more inclined to see the failure of the courts to sentence to the full extent of their powers as a general attitude in society that car crime is not real crime, rather than some sort of conspiracy to prevent the police successfully securing prosecution.⁴⁶ Laybourn and Taylor also deal with 'motoring offences and the enforcement of the law' in their book, *Policing in England and Wales, 1918–1930*, revealing the difficulties that the police faced in enforcing the law in the case of manslaughter, causing bodily harm, dangerous driving, careless driving and driving under the influence of drink. They established the fact that the effectiveness of the law partly depended upon police action and the preparation of court cases, which often involved time and expertise that the police did not have, while the reluctance of courts to use their full powers to punish, often settling for the lesser charge of dangerous driving over manslaughter, or careless driving over dangerous driving, meant the result was often unsatisfactory.⁴⁷ Pamela Donovan

and Paul Lawrence have provided insights into the experience of one inner London magistrates' court from 1913 to 1963.⁴⁸ Their article describes how the pressure on the courts was increasing, but it finishes short of tracking the rising caseload of traffic cases to the point when the fixed penalty notice fine system, imposed on illegally parked cars from 1960, began to overwhelm magistrates, provoking, as will emerge in Chapter 4, a serious discussion about the need for specialist traffic courts.⁴⁹ Why then did the courts act softly in traffic cases? Was this a conscious decision to favour the motorists, an unconscious decision to favour the motorist, a product of the varying experiences and traditions of courts, or a product of the failings of the police to present their evidence in a proper manner? Most certainly, there was inconsistency in sentencing in courts, much to the chagrin of the police and the Home Office.

The recent historiography of roads and motor vehicles in Britain has thus established that there are clearly two major interconnected debates in the 'battle for Britain's roads', which shaped the final contours of the ownership of British roads in the twentieth century. First, there was the battle between the motorist and the pedestrian, ultimately won by the motorist, possibly because of the sheer speed of the motorised vehicle and the urban planning needs automation imposed. Secondly, there was the battle between the police and motorists and other road users, to ensure that the roads were safe, that pedestrians could cross in safety, that speed limits were observed and traffic flow maintained. This saw children removed from the freedom of the road to a new, more restricted and defined urban landscape. It saw the gradual segregation of the motorist from pedestrians and some other road users. In the end, then, there are two main questions. First, why did the motorist become so dominant on the road, reducing other road users' freedom of the road? Secondly, what was the role of the police and were they positively complicit in the success of the motorist? One might add the subsidiary question of why the police were annoyed at the inconsistency of the court: Is it that they were biased towards the motorist rather than geared towards acting in the best interests of all road users in their attempt to enforce the law?

Sources and argument

The evidence for this research is drawn from a wide variety of chief constable annual reports, Home Office papers, MoT and Metropolitan Police files, the annual reports of the CCA, His (Her) Majesty's Inspectors of

Constabulary (HMIC) reports, the *Police Review*, newspapers and a variety of other primary sources, many of which have barely been used to study British traffic policing in the twentieth century. I have used these to tackle a topic which itself has received, at best, only patchy treatment. Indeed, the focus of research has usually been on the motor car and its impact upon society, rather than on traffic policing and traffic management as such. What the sources I studied reveal is that the open highway could not survive in the age of the motorised vehicle whose speed redefined the place of the pedestrian. They also confirm Gatrell's 'policeman-state' and the impartiality of policing, and reveal the scope of police responsibility in redefining the highway along the holistic lines of the three Es of Enforcement, Engineering and Education, as compiled by H. Alker Tripp.

Between 1900 and the beginning of the 1970s, the police were deeply involved in renegotiating the use of the highway, seeking to manage it to meet the mutual needs of all road users while focusing on their key aim: to protect human life. In other words, they were not committed to the almost inevitable dominance of the motorist, but attempted to create a safer environment on the road for all. Indeed, the constant conflict between the police and the motorists testifies to the nuanced, independent and neutral stance the former assumed, and the fact that they were not the benign defenders of the motorist. The task of the police was made difficult by the fact that government, Parliament, the magistracy, the judiciary, the pedestrians and motoring organisations were invariably at odds with regard their views and actions. The constant failure of the magistracy and the courts to consistently punish motorists for traffic offences, the majority of which were probably not seen as real crimes, also ensured that the police were frequently ineffective. Yet it will be argued that, in the end, police measures to ensure that the motorist and cyclist were segregated from the pedestrian were implemented quite slowly. The argument here is that O'Connell, Moran, Urry, Luckin and Sheen are obviously correct in stating that the motorist became dominant on the roads, that the police sought to maintain the free flow of traffic and that the culture of mass motorisation became ubiquitous. Yet, I will argue that motorists achieved this without the conscious complicit support of the police, whose agenda – although influenced greatly by RoSPA, local authorities and the actions of magistrates – was essentially the enforcement of the law, the education and separation of the motorist and the pedestrian, and the engineering of improvements in road safety and the maintenance of safe and legal traffic flow. The priority of the police was to reduce road deaths and injuries, a commitment

that made them work spasmodically both with and against all road users. This involved significant changes in policing, the emergence of traffic policing and departments, and the transformation of beat policing as, in the popular phrase, the police moved from their feet to their seats.

Part I

Policing Britain c.1900–1970: Enforcing the Law on the Motorist

Mid-nineteenth-century Britain (England, Scotland and Wales) had more than 230 police forces. They operated essentially as preventive bodies, with constables patrolling the streets on their regular beats, and evolved into a professional body of men by the late nineteenth century. Foot patrols remained the style of British policing until after the Second World War, and the only change is that a few police forces had amalgamated, those in England and Wales consolidating into 188 forces by 1918 and 185 by the end of the inter-war years (though they are now down to 43 for Britain as a whole). Little had really changed in the nineteenth century, but by the early twentieth century the rapid emergence of the automated vehicle was transforming British society and imposing extra duties upon the police, ultimately forcing them to fundamentally change their structures and methods. The age of automation brought with it traffic offences, speeding, theft based upon use of the car, 'smash and grab' raids, the theft of cars, and traffic congestion and noise, which were soon to dominate the work of the police. From dealing with speeding cars, car theft and larceny, these duties expanded into an amorphous mass of responsibilities, which was defined as a holistic approach to policing. It is not easy to tease out these responsibilities from one another as they are so integrated. Nevertheless, the essential need to police the roads in the age of the motor vehicle transformed policing tactics and organisation. Enforcement forms the basis of Part I of this book.

In 1900 police numbers in England and Wales were about 40,000, with the London Metropolitan Police Force representing about a third of that total. There were about 5,000 police in Scotland. There were around 50,000 police in England and Wales by 1914; 57,000 by 1931; and 60,000 by 1939, before a slight decline over the Second World War period.¹ Yet numbers rose particularly rapidly in the 1950s and 1960s,

reaching around 82,000 in 1960 and 100,000 in 1970. They grew significantly again during the ensuing 40 years, and beyond the period covered by this book, to about 125,000 policemen in England and Wales in 2000 and 145,000 in 2009, with another 22,000 in Scotland and Northern Ireland.² Therefore, police numbers more than doubled in Britain (and Northern Ireland) in the years from 1900 to 1970, although, in the desire to improve efficiency, amalgamations brought the number of police forces in England and Wales down from 188 in 1919 to less than a quarter of that number by the beginning of the twenty-first century.

The rise in police numbers clearly outstripped the growth of the British population, which increased from about 37 million in 1901 to 54.4 million in 1971. Yet this has to be set against a rising crime wave in twentieth-century Britain which, according to Victor Bailey, saw crime statistics rise by 5 per cent per annum between 1915 and 1930, 7 per cent per annum between 1930 and 1949, and, on average, by 10 per cent per annum after the Second World War, at least until the debateable and contentious fall in crime statistics in the early twenty-first century.³ The British Crime Survey estimated that 50 per cent of crimes went unreported to the police in 1997, and that unreported crimes may have been even more marked earlier in the twentieth century when police numbers were lower.⁴ This may be considered to be almost certainly the case, given the assiduity of police attempts to massage the figures. Although Bailey's argument is that this is more to do with theft/larceny in the context of an affluent society rather than a depressed economy, it is clear that the major part of the rise of crime in the twentieth century has been to do with thefts connected with motor vehicles and an enormous array of traffic offences – from illegal parking and speeding to careless and dangerous driving, manslaughter and murder. The number of commitments for traffic offences and traffic-related crimes, as we have seen, rose from an insignificant proportion in 1900 to almost two-thirds by the 1960s.⁵ Dealing with traffic offences, managing traffic flow and dealing with the amorphous mass of other traffic-related activities imposed an enormous burden upon British police forces before the modest decline during the Second World War. The Manchester Police suggested that, in the 1930s, about 16 per cent of police time was spent on policing traffic, with other forces such as Leeds and Birmingham suggesting even higher proportions. The structural patterns that emerged were usually of relatively small bodies or departments of traffic police, assisted by police constables from the rest of the force frequently donning white arm buffs to direct traffic.⁶ Traffic departments varied greatly in size though: the larger forces tended to have larger departments, although

even some large forces retained only small traffic departments.⁷ Indeed, as late as 1959, the Birmingham City Police, one of the biggest police forces in Britain, dealing with more than a million people, 1,000 miles of streets and, locally, 110,000 private cars, 35,000 motorcycles and another 41,000 motorised vehicles, had a traffic patrol beat of only two inspectors, six sergeants and 12 constables for patrol cars, supplemented by an additional 18 divisional constables, plus 26 constables for a motorcycle patrol.⁸ The chief constable recognised that, with the constant increase in the number of vehicles on the road and rising road accidents, 'the size of this small branch of the force becomes more and more inadequate to the demands made upon it', whether in motor patrolling, dealing with accidents, apprehending car thieves, dealing with road safety matters or simply dealing with car-related crimes.⁹

By the 1960s, the demands on police involved in traffic policing were much greater than in the 1930s. In 1963, it was estimated by Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Constabulary in a report that 10.52 per cent of policemen in Britain, about 6,000, were employed in the road traffic departments of police forces.¹⁰ Many thousands more directed the flow of traffic, and it was estimated that 1,637,355 man hours alone were dedicated to various road safety measures, and that constables on an eight-hour shift would devote three hours to traffic duties. There was also the extra concern and responsibility of dealing with motor crime.¹¹ From a bewildering array of statistics, the point that the report was making was that car crime and traffic offences were increasing rapidly. There were, for instance, 76,615 people charged with taking vehicles in 1963. In addition, the number of traffic offences dealt with by prosecution rose from 896,832 in 1961 to 989,812 in 1962. The number of persons prosecuted being 680,691 in 1961 and 755,753 in 1962.¹²

The early and mid-twentieth century may be divided, for convenience, into three broad, though overlapping, periods with regard to the enforcement of the rules of the road. The first may be said to have occurred between the 1890s and 1918, when the law changed to ensure that the police controlled the new motorised vehicles, and when the motoring organisations, such as the AA and the RAC, were developing. Relatively little changed during the First World War but a second period emerged in the 1920s and 1930s, when debates about the responsibilities and priorities of police in times of financial and manpower restraint arose, and when the chief constables and the Police Federation were initially far from convinced of the need to assume the demeaning task of road traffic control. Yet it was during this period that police forces acquired cars, and indeed motorcycles – an action facilitated by the

provision of central funding for traffic patrol cars in 1930, which was a big departure for the Home Office. The Liverpool Police had formed what was the first police traffic department in 1920, and others followed; police forces encouraged further in that direction by the Road Safety Committee of the MoT in 1944. All police forces were obliged to have a traffic department in 1967, in part to deal with routine traffic policing, but also to combat high-profile, though relatively insignificant, and regionalised motorised crime, such as ‘smash and grab’ raids.

Initially, fear of public disorder, following the Russian Revolution, led police to become more motorised in 1919 and 1920.¹³ By the 1930s, many forces had flying squads, motor patrols, and courtesy police patrols, and Athlestan Popkess, Chief Constable of Nottingham Police, had encouraged plain-clothes motor patrols well before the Met operated a full-blown version of the system between 1937 and 1939. The Home Office Experimental Motor Patrol Scheme of saturation motorised policing was tried in seven areas in the late 1930s. The police were also involved in educating road users as a means of controlling traffic and improving road safety. Eventually, small traffic police departments and motor patrols emerged, aided by the ordinary policeman on the beat. The improvement of traffic policing to ensure the free flow of traffic, the reduction of accidents and an effective response to criminality, became the objective of many chief constables, such as Maxwell, of Manchester, and Major Godfrey, of Salford. The growth of traffic policing also led to substantial conflicts with the representative bodies of motoring, as is evident from the Alness Committee of 1938–1939, which agreed that more policemen should be taught to drive but objected to the use of plain-clothes motor patrols (Q cars) in the place of uniformed courtesy policing, though it endorsed the segregation of pedestrians and motorists. Nevertheless, there eventually emerged a contentious accommodation between the police and the various motoring pressure groups to tackle the three Es of traffic policing.¹⁴ These first two periods of conflict and accommodation form the basis of Chapter 3.

Thirdly, post-1945 Britain, which will be examined in Chapter 4, saw the continuation of motor patrolling, road safety education and many other developments of the 1930s, but also the subcontracting, and reallocation of police responsibilities. Under the Traffic Act of 1960, for instance, the police were instructed to appoint traffic wardens and senior traffic wardens to assume responsibility for checking on parking meters, as part of the process of engineering the new urban landscape. Traffic meters were first introduced in London in the late 1950s as part of an attempt to control traffic congestion, and spread rapidly to other

cities and towns. As a result of the fixed penalty notice fines imposed upon illegally parked motors, though not speeding cars, the police were involved in a burgeoning and time-consuming responsibility for fining and charging motorists, although the option of paying the fixed penalty fine on the spot saved the police a considerable amount of time that would have been spent in court. Nevertheless, the 1960 legislation added in other ways to police responsibility, since they were involved in appointing, training and supervising traffic wardens.¹⁵ The resulting parking offences then overburdened magistrates' courts with cases: courts which were still considered, by motorists and police alike, to be inconsistent in their sentencing. Yet, by the 1950s and 1960s, speeding and road safety became less of a problem than congestion and parking. The police demand for the separation of motorists and other road users had been won, and the issue now was to ensure the free flow and controlled parking of automated vehicles in an age of car dominance.

Through these three broad phases of development, the conflict between the police and the motorists, and often other road users, remained a dynamic force of change, although the police were usually pragmatic in their approach, often reducing the level of their prosecutions, as they did in the operation of the Home Office Experimental Motor Scheme in the 1930s. Whilst the role of the police was sometimes nebulous, it was often at odds with motorists and other road users; in their desire to manage traffic effectively their main purpose was to reduce fatalities and injuries on the road by enforcing the law. This proved particularly difficult before the Second World War, when the police were establishing their own rules of engagement. It was easier after the war, though then the problem became one of how to integrate traffic policing, with its enormous demands, into the existing structure of policing to create a more effective system for the 'Enforcement' of traffic law.

3

‘An Unwanted but Necessary Task’: Traffic Policing and the Enforcement of the Law, c.1900–1939

Introduction

Sir Philip Game, the Metropolitan Police Commissioner of the mid- and late 1930s, reflected that:

Since the time of Sir Robert Peel’s reforms, no single change has had more effect on the work of the police and their relations with the public than the introduction of the motor car and the consequent revolution in the method of transport.¹⁶

To Game, the arrival of the motorised vehicle challenged the, apparently, improving relations between the police and the public, and had inaugurated an age of conflict between the police, motorists, cyclists and pedestrians. H. Alker Tripp, his assistant commissioner B for Transport, went further. He suggested that the growth of the ‘mechanically propelled traffic’ had ‘outstripped the normal means of dealing with it’ [the problem of safety on the road] and that the ‘only organisation in the country which possess [sic] the necessary machinery for the proper and effective control of the roads’, is the police.¹⁷ The statements of Game, Tripp, and indeed other chief constables, raised issues about the relationship between the police and road users – most obviously the motorist – as well as the role of the police in the new age of the car.

The problem of the motor age had arisen when motorised vehicles were unfettered from the harsh speed restrictions of the ‘Red-Flag’ era by the Locomotive and Highway Act of 1896, which raised the speed limit to 14 mph. The Motor Car Act of 1903 raised the speed limit further, to 20 mph, with possible local variations, and also required drivers to hold

a licence (without the need of a driving test), and to display their registration number plate. Indeed, the 1903 Act, by raising the speed limits and establishing new traffic offences, proved to be the real starting point for a serious conflict between the interests of the emerging motoring organisations and the police, as the latter sought to enforce the laws on speeding, manslaughter, dangerous and reckless driving, drink driving, and other laws relating to the identification and roadworthiness of motor vehicles.

Therefore, in the first 40 years of the age of car, the first question that the police focused on was: How could the speeding motorist, driving a dangerous and potentially deadly weapon, be controlled and the law enforced? As the number of cars increased, and cars were subject to more controls, a second major question arose amongst the minds of chief constables: Should the police be dealing with traffic management and offences at all, or should the work be farmed out to other groups? Once this was resolved, as it was by the early 1930s, the third major question became: How could the police most effectively enforce the laws regarding speeding and other related offences to make the roads safer? This effectively raised the issue of how motor patrolling, in its various forms, could be improved. These three major questions, which dominated early traffic policing, were mainly ones related to the motorist, and were not easily resolved in an age when the law had been left behind by the speed of technological change and when police forces were ill-equipped to deal with the enormous burden of traffic policing they were assuming. The resulting conflict between the police and the motorists proved to be both a bloody and bitter battle in which the police eventually established their primacy as enforcers of the laws of the road by the beginning of the Second World War, and in which they slowly adopted the new technology of the car to control the roads.

Speed, the police and the ‘Battle with the AA Scouts’

The enforcement of the law regarding speeding motor vehicles occurred almost immediately when motor vehicles appeared. In January 1896, Mr Walter Arnold of Kent was the first person to be prosecuted for speeding in a motor car, though under the 1865 Act. He was fined one shilling (5p) for hurtling through a 2 mph zone at the wickedly fast pace of 8 mph. With an increasing number of motorised vehicles on the road, and with speed limits raised in 1896 and 1903, both speeding and prosecution for speeding increased. In 1899 Mr Jeal was prosecuted for driving at a speed that was deemed inappropriate for the traffic conditions.

Fined £3, plus court costs, he was offered the alternative of three weeks' imprisonment. He was reported as having travelled at 12 mph, the court finding that 4 mph was fast enough given the road conditions.

Very quickly, chief constables began to complain about speeding and the rising volume of street traffic. In 1907, Leonard Dunning, then the Head (Chief) Constable of Liverpool City Police, was concerned with 'the supervision of street traffic, which increasing in volume and speed each year draws a larger proportion of men [police constables] away from the protection of property'.¹⁸ It was a concern about which he was philosophical in both his reports for the Liverpool City Police and his later work as a member of HMIC, where he argued for charitable, voluntary and cheaper help to control traffic. However, the concerns of chief constables regarding the strained manning levels for beat duty were soon to give way to the pressing need to control both speed and traffic flow.

The Motor Car Act of 1903 replaced the innocuous 1896 Locomotive and Highways Act, famous for initiating the 'Liberation' drive between London and Brighton in 1896, and the basis of the annual London to Brighton rally since 1927. The freedom of the road had been granted to motorists in 1896, but the 1903 Act now raised the speed limit to 20 mph, though, on the insistence of the police, it could be reduced to 10 mph in some areas. To enforce these limits, as well as new conditions, the chief constables of West Sussex, East Sussex and Surrey, county areas that experienced the weekly efflux from London, set speed traps, which normally meant that cars were timed over a 220- or 440-yard stretch by police officers.¹⁹ The AA was disparaging about these traps, seeing them as 'money-making' operations, and asked, 'Is it a consideration that these are the three counties where cyclists were prosecuted in the early days of cycling?'²⁰ There was, however, a worrying lack of uniformity in the prosecution of motorists for speeding. Many chief constables would not prosecute speeding motorists driving at less than 25 mph, though at Godalming the chief constable was prepared to prosecute at 10 mph where the police authorities had set lower speed limits or where dangerous driving was evident.²¹ Despite such variation, to offset such speed traps the AA and the RAC employed scouts to pre-warn motorists, initially by waving a flag, pointing to the policemen or by saluting (on other occasions, not saluting) cars displaying AA or RAC badges. The AA accepted that it had set out with the intention of frustrating the police speed traps, but claimed that 'they [the AA] are not only at peace but on cordial terms with many police authorities; and it is not difficult to see that any attempt at repressive legislation would be

most vehemently resisted and must involve the resolution of the speed limit'.²² It added that, 'No reasonable person who has ever driven in a car will admit that an excess of 20 mph, where no danger nor inconvenience is caused, is morally an offence.'²³ Indeed, the AA maintained that it would not need to exist if reasonable and distinctive road signals, like those in France, were available, and if some legislative relief was given to motorists who travelled at more than 20 mph on open and lonely roads.

Relations between the motoring organisations and the police worsened as the magistracy seemed reluctant to use the full powers of the law against those warning motorists of police traps. This was evident in the famous *Bastable v Little* case (71 JP 52) of 1906 and 1907, finalised at the King's Bench in 1907 (KB 59), which arose when Charles Bastable took a court action against William Farmer Little as a result of his interference with PCs Henry Harris and Percival Suter in the execution of their duty on 4 March 1906. The PCs had been interrupted in setting up speed traps as permitted by the Motor Car Act of 1903, and Little was charged with '... wilfully obstructing the Police by warning motorists that the Police were timing cars, contrary to Section 12 of the Preventions of Crime Act, 1871, as amended by 48 and 49 Vic c. 75 s 1 [Prevention of Crimes Amendment Act 1885 2], ...'. However, the charge was not upheld and the magistrates found:

- (a) That he was not acting at the time in concert with the drivers of motor cars, neither was he in any way connected with any person or body of persons interested in the driving of motor cars.
- (b) That it could not be presumed that the motor cars were in fact exceeding the legal limit, and that the respondent prevented the Police obtaining evidence on that point.²⁴

Little had warned motor-car drivers of a speed trap, but was acquitted by the local magistrate's court, on 23 March 1906, because he was not seen to be working in concert with the motorists.²⁵ There was no evidence that the motorists had been previously speeding and, indeed, Little's action could be seen as an attempt to prevent crime. The police then appealed to the King's Bench and, on 6 November, Mr Justice Ridley, the Lord Chief Justice of England, upheld the decision of the magistracy.²⁶

The *Bastable v Little* case created confusion about the prosecution of anyone warning motorists of speed traps, although a few minor cases were settled in favour of the police. The law seemed volatile, as

magistrates were inconsistent in their interpretation and judgements. However, a spate of prosecutions between 1908 and 1912 confirmed that magistrates were inclined to find 'scouts' guilty of interference if they were employed by a motorist organisation. In 1908 the Metropolitan Police prosecuted Thomas Ditton for interfering with the duties of PCs Davies and Smith, who were setting up a speed trap. This famous incident had occurred on the Portsmouth Road in the Kingston area of the Metropolitan Police District (MPD), in contravention of the Prevention of Crimes Amendment Act 1885.²⁷

According to a report of 8 October from E. C. Beck (PC 45), who was present on 5 October 1908, PCs 462 Davies and 683 Smith were at the Portsmouth Road, near to Kingston, when:

[A] scout in the employ of the Automobile Association, wearing a yellow armband followed us on a bicycle to a control at the Cross Roads as we commenced to time two motor cars proceeding to Kingston. The scout placed himself about 20 yards from PC 462 Davies at the control and as cars approached he held up his hand to the drivers and pointed to PC Davies, when they at once slowed down. We then attempted to time cars approaching from the opposite direction when the scout followed and again placed himself a few yards from PC Davies and as we changed our positions the scout did likewise taking up a position a few yards from PC Davies.²⁸

This occurred at about 1.15 pm, and PC Beck reported that a grey car approached at an estimated speed of 30 mph when the scout stepped into the roadway 'and waved what appeared to be a red pocket handkerchief and said something to the driver pointing in the direction of me, the car at once slowed down to about 15 miles per hour'. At that point a crowd of about 20 men, indicating the hostility of many of the public to the motorist, assembled and shouted 'throw him in the pond' and 'he is helping motorists to run us over'. When PC Davies approached Ditton and suggested that he was:

obstructing us in the execution of our duty... he replied 'I shall not give it, if you want it, apply to my superiors, I have done 25 years in the Police and know the Commissioner Regulations, you have no right to deal with me, I shall do as I like.' PC Davies then asked Ditton for his number (no 8) and proceeded to another control point about a quarter of a mile away and was, once again, followed by the scout, and proceeded to slow down the cars. The 'scout' placed himself

about 20 yards from the police constables, moved around as they did, and warned oncoming motorists by pointing to PC Davies.²⁹

The significance of this vignette is that it was based upon the action of a 'scout' employed by the AA, unlike the situation in the earlier *Bastable v Little* case. The points of law were different, although the prime concern was still the issue of whether or not the motorists being warned were speeding. On this occasion, the police gathered extensive supporting evidence – the manager of the 'Marquis of Granby' public house offering a signed statement – and took the case to the Surrey County Court where they made a successful prosecution. Ditton, having had been employed by the AA on 5 July 1908, was found to have contravened the Prevention of Crimes Act Amended Act 1885 by obstructing PCs Beck and Davies in the performance of their duties. He was fined £5 with £4 4s costs and court fees. The AA did not appeal against the decision and, in November, Amery Parkin, solicitor to the AA, suggested that, 'If the Magistrates were right in their findings, it is obvious that the Defendant grossly exceeded our Club's instruction and his authority.'³⁰ However, there was no indication of Ditton having received instructions from the AA.

Other successful police prosecutions of AA scouts followed.³¹ On 3 December 1908, a motor scout was prosecuted for his action in warning cars by telephone of a speed trap on Brighton Road, Croydon, and, in the Holland Park area of London, scouts appeared to 'blow a whistle' and approach a motorist: 'It is believed that the motorist who was stopped gave warning by telephone to the AA who no doubt sent men out.'³² This latter case provoked the Met to at least consider the use of plain-clothes police to keep an eye on the scouts.

The AA and RAC took up the cases of some of individual motorists who were prosecuted by the police for speeding. Indeed, the RAA (later RAC) took up the case of Ian Haywood Robert, of 5 St James Place, Westminster, in November 1908. They lost the case and Robert was fined £10 and had to pay £3 13s 6d costs.³³

The police were, by now, regularly winning cases against the AA and RAC scouts but it was the *Stevens* (an inspector of police) *v Betts* (the appellant) case (1910)(1KB; 26 TLR 5) of 1909/10 that became the landmark decision in law. The case arose when, on 21 February 1909, Betts, a scout, was employed by the AA to warn drivers with AA badges that there was a speed trap. Arrested and sent for trial, Betts was found guilty at the Guildford Petty Sessions of 'wilfully obstructing the police by giving warning to motor drivers of the presence of the Police...'. .

Nevertheless, C. J. Darling, who had also been the presiding magistrate in the *Bastable v Little* case, referred to the distinction between scouts warning drivers before a speeding act was committed, which was lawful, and scouts who warned car drivers who were speeding before they were caught in a speed trap, which was unlawful.

The decision was challenged by Betts, but the appeal against the sentence was dismissed. As reported in *The Times* Law Report of 14 October 1909, the finding of the court was:

That a man who, finding at the same time as did the Police that a car was breaking the law, waved the car so that it slowed down so as to prevent the Police from obtaining the only evidence on which, according to their experience, the Court would act was obstructing the Police in the execution of their duty.³⁴

At this time, police were working through Mr Remnant MP to inform the Home Secretary, Herbert Gladstone, that motoring organisations had increased the number of people they were employing as scouts between 1 July 1907 and 1 July 1909. The Home Secretary was asked whether or not he was aware of the increase in the number of patrolmen appointed by the AA, and 'what steps does he propose to take, by legislation or otherwise, to preserve the control of the roads in the hands of the police'?³⁵ Playing down the situation, Gladstone stated that:

The Commissioner of Police reports that, as regards the Metropolitan Area, there is no notable increase in the number of Scouts employed. There can be no doubt that the Scouts hamper the police in carrying out the duties which Parliament has imposed upon them, and if the evil continues, it may be necessary for Parliament to look for their [the police] protection.³⁶

At this time, the Home Secretary was being pressured further by chief constables about the action he intended to take against the scouts. On 2 September 1909, the Chief Constable of West Sussex, Captain G. R. B. Drummond, wrote him a letter on 'The Scouts employed by the Automobile Association'. In connection with the Motor Car Act of 1909, Drummond complained of the scouts employed by the AA at Princess Street and County Street, London, maintaining that:

These Scouts are presented with red badges being either worn on their jacket and yellow amulets. They ride bicycles from place to place in

many places controlled and directed by a superintending 'scout' who is furnished with a motor cycle.

They inform the Police that they are employed and paid for the purpose of warning the drivers of cars to check their speed when approaching any post where the Police are engaged in timing cars over a measured distance.

I have from time to time written to the Secretary of the Automobile Association complaining of the interference with the Police by their servants and requesting that it may be discontinued but without effect.

In view of recent legal decisions [the *Stevens v Betts* case had not yet been finally resolved] it appears that the action of the person referred to does not, under the existing provisions of the Law, constitute an offence and I therefore thought it right to bring to your notice what is occurring persistently and the difficulty which is being experienced by the Police in their endeavour to prevent the Law being broken.³⁷

Drummond also sent another two letters to the Home Secretary on 22 September and 7 October 1909. The second of these indicated that, after discussions with Sir Edward Troup, a leading civil servant at the Home Office, there was a feeling that the decisions of the courts were now moving in favour of the police, and that much of the speeding was simply a result of the London weekend efflux. Furthermore, Drummond felt that, despite the conflict between the police and the AA over speed traps, things were improving.³⁸ He added that such conflict could easily be resolved if two actions could be achieved, the provision of signals and legislation that would give relief to drivers from being trapped on open and lonely roads when exceeding 20 mph.

Though the problem of speeding was one which was markedly focused upon London it was also becoming apparent in other parts of the country, although there was substantial variation in how it was dealt with between police authorities. There were many speed traps in the West Riding of Yorkshire, and they presented problems since they were operating with different measured distances and subject to the variable approach of the magistrates' courts.³⁹ In Hull, conversely, there were no traps set up at this time. In Sheffield, the motorists were dealt with moderation, without 'fussiness or offensiveness'. While, in Liverpool there were speed traps but the police did not act until cars exceeded the speed limits by more than 5 mph, in other words, had reached 25 mph. In Westmorland speed traps were not set.⁴⁰

The Annual Conference of the CCA discussed the issue of this lack of uniformity of approach at its meeting on 26 April 1910, when Sir Edward Troup of the Home Office addressed them on the question of motor cars. Colonel Hammersley, Chief Constable of Chester, stated that he set quarter-of-a-mile traps and always prosecuted motorists travelling at over 30 mph. When asked by Troup about the prosecution of these cases, he suggested that success in the courts 'depends [upon] who is on the bench'.⁴¹ Variation in the action of police forces on speeding was compounded by the action of magistrates.

Indeed, the inconsistency of magistrates led to a concerted, but ill-fated, campaign by the Home Office to instil a uniform policy amongst them in 1912. When W. H. F. Pryer JP, of the AA, enquired about 'Convictions under the Motor Car Act Circular', one civil servant, in a side note on the file, informed McKenna, the Home Secretary, that:

In one particular instance we tried sending a circular to each individual JP, but the result was not very satisfactory. Now when we issue a circular which it is desirable that JPs themselves should see, we sometimes send a number of duplicates to their Clerk and sometimes we intimate that more will be sent on application. [...] HO cannot give instructions to JPs.⁴²

Subsequently, the Home Office sent out another circular to magistrates stating that the:

Home Secretary has had his attention called from time to time to what is alleged to be the unequal manner in which the Acts [Motor Acts] are administered... [and that] it seems to him that, occasionally, at any rate, hardened and deliberate offenders are treated too leniently and less serious offences meet in some instances with unnecessarily severe punishment. As to serious offence, it is given as Mr. McKenna's opinion that power to suspend a driver's licence or to declare him disqualified for obtaining a licence for a given period supplies the most appropriate punishment and is most likely to be effective. Heavy penalties are not to be imposed as a matter of routine, and trivial offences not due to any grave negligence may properly be met by a warning and payment of costs or a light sentence.⁴³

The tense relationship between the scouts, the police and the magistracy continued and reached a new intensity after the First World War and

throughout the 1920s. Indeed, there was another famous case of the ‘Signal by Failure to Salute’, held at Horsham Police Court on 18 September 1920.⁴⁴ Here it was alleged that, on 18 September 1920, two AA officials – Ernest Edward Parfitt and Albert James Newberry – had been instructed to warn car drivers by not saluting them as they passed by them at Cowfold on the main London to Brighton Road, where a 10-mile speed limit was in force. They were found guilty of obstructing the police in their duty.

The police gradually won the ‘battle of the scouts’, but the AA, and other motoring organisations, were resourceful, resilient, and growing in both power and influence. By 1919, the AA & MU (Motor Union) was an entrenched motoring pressure group. At the time it had about 100,000 members who owned motor cars, motorcycles and commercial vehicles, and was represented by Captain H. Fryer, Road Manager of the AA & MU and Honorary Secretary of Dudley and District Automobile Club. He had owned a car since 1902 and was also a cyclist.⁴⁵ He worked closely with Major Stenson Cooke, Secretary of the AA & MU. Together they set a pattern whereby they constantly offered evidence to royal commissions and pressured the MoT. They were to be found, alongside representatives of the RAC, presenting evidence connected with the amendment to the Lights on Vehicle Act of 1907 and other pieces of legislation.⁴⁶ In a more positive manner, they also began to employ their former scouts on road traffic control duty. Throughout the inter-war years, the motoring organisations rose in power and influence despite the actions of the police. Indeed, the AA had 725,000 members in 1939, more than a third of all car owners in Britain. The organisation constantly challenged the police on speeding and all matters of traffic policing for the rest of the century.

Proper police work: Crime fighting or traffic control? Police as the ‘handyman of civil life’ or the use of wardens

Speed traps were a high-profile attempt to control speeding motorists, although they were less evident during the First World War. However, faced with a serious shortage of manpower in the inter-war years, and the rising demands of traffic control, chief constables began to consider alternative options on how to control the mushrooming of motor traffic at a time when the priority of policing was still seen to be one of crime fighting, and dealing with drunks and vagrants, rather than traffic control. Indeed, despite the comment of *The Times* in 1926 that the police are ‘our real traffic controllers’, the police and the legislators were far

Table 3.1 Selected offences (per million of population)

	1900–1909	1910–1919	1920–1929	1930–1934	1935–1938
Intoxicating liquor law	6,494	3,992	2,109	1,250	1,393
Larcenies	1,247	1,166	1,085	1,140	1,249
Traffic offences	1,442	1,989	5,255	7,268	11,102

Source: Judicial Statistics.

from convinced of that commitment, with both chief constables and parliamentary legislators divided as to whether or not the police, or other bodies, should be used for traffic management.⁴⁷

Nevertheless, the case for the policing of the roads was becoming irresistible as the pattern of crime changed rapidly in the early twentieth century, as indicated in Table 3.1. It is difficult to believe that the decline in the number of liquor offences is real, even though the evidence suggests that beer consumption fell by half during the First World War and never recovered during the inter-war period, though the official figures on traffic offences seem plausible. Indeed, by 1931, traffic offences (including speeding offences, dangerous and careless driving, and drug- and drink-driving offences) accounted for over 40 per cent of all criminal offences; by 1938 almost two-thirds of those found guilty of a criminal offence were guilty of a traffic offence. Traffic offences stood at 82,000 in 1922, but had risen to over 200,000 in the early 1930s. Prosecutions by all motor-propelled vehicles rose from over 40,000 in 1934 to about 60,000 in 1938. These figures reflect the fact that accidents, death and injury rose to an annual peak of more than 7,000 deaths and about 220,000 injuries in the early 1930s – the worst figures ever faced in Britain's peacetime history (see Table 1.2).

The rapidity of the growth was alarming chief constables who, despite some hesitancy, eventually accepted the need to take action to check speeding (see Table 3.2), to improve road design and engineering, and to conduct a thorough programme of education for all road users.

As the police widened their responsibilities in the late 1920s, they increasingly came under criticism from the motoring lobby, who fostered the mentality of 'motorists as victim'. This thinking was reflected in an article by 'A Motorist' in the *Saturday Review* of 15 December 1928, under the heading 'My grouse against the police'. It argued that the police were acting arbitrarily in regard to speeding: 'We are fined not because we are committing an offence but because we happen to be on

Table 3.2 Home Office Experimental Motor Patrol Scheme, 1938–1939⁴⁸

	Traffic control men before scheme	Additional men	Scheme total	Total strength of Force	% Traffic control to total	% Increase in manpower
Lancashire	110	331	441	2,166	20.4	15.4
Essex	25	80	105	707	14.9	11.3
Cheshire	35	100	135	654	20.3	15.3
Liverpool	50	50	100	2,218	4.5	2.3
Manchester	50	50	100	1,436	7.0	3.5
Salford	15	15	30	384	7.8	3.9
MPD	563	70	633	18,560	3.4	0.4

the road at a certain time, on a certain day, when the police have decided to trap it.' The motorist, he argued, believes that the police:

have ceased to be peace keepers and have become our enemies with the consequence that [h]is [sic] subconscious mind responds to the injustice and persecution that he suffers and breeds in his contempt for the law and hatred for the outwards symbol of the inner tyranny that opposes him.

It was in an attempt to remove this sense of frustration that George Nathaniel Curzon, Lord Curzon, the 1st Marquess Curzon of Kedleston, emerged, from 1921, as a major opponent of police speed traps and as a leading advocate of the extension of the traffic police, in the teeth of much opposition from chief constables. A Conservative, and both Leader of the House of Lords and Lord President of the Council at the time, he wrote a letter to the Home Secretary on 13 September 1920, indicating that, for years, he had thought that speed traps should be abolished, 'on the grounds that the Police have ample powers if only they would enforce Section 1 of the Motor Car Act'.⁴⁹ It was, however, a second letter, written by Curzon on the same day, that proved contentious, since it seemed to imply that there should be a traffic police force drawn partly from the scouts of the motoring organisations. Curzon wrote that:

In my opinion it is urgently necessary that a special branch of road police be instituted and I am perfectly certain that if the RAC and the AA asked to supply such experts they would only be too ready

to do so. I am wondering whether it is your intention to give such a proposal a trial and also whether anything further has been done to the matter of mounting a certain number of police officers on bicycles. From my own personal experience of continually driving myself over a hundred miles per month in the Metropolitan Area I can state that such a branch of road police is urgently required who should be expert and competent to judge the amount of danger involved and if a certain number of clearly proved cases of dangerous driving can only be brought to book it will do more good that the institution of hundreds of police traps.⁵⁰

Police traps remained common, though Curzon's intervention had stirred the debate about policing traffic and raised many questions. Should the police assume the responsibility for traffic control? Should a new body of 'traffic wardens', drawn from outside the police, be established? Should there be an amalgam of activities by police forces and motorist organisations? What eventually emerged was a confusing array of conflicting opinions and actions. There was no 'Whiggish' sense of clear progress – although, in the end, it was the police, not other organisations, who had assumed extra traffic control by the late 1930s. The fact is that many chief constables who had been both opposed to their forces taking on traffic duties and also opposed to the AA and RAC assuming that role, fearing that these motoring organisations lacked authority. Chief constables were driven, reluctantly, to accept, as H. Alker Tripp suggested, that it was only the police who could provide the professional force necessary to do the job. This realisation came about only after a serpentine debate.

The government – initially driven by the concern of the prime minister, David Lloyd George, and his Cabinet, at the Bolshevik Revolution in Russia and the fear of the imminent possibility of revolutionary action in Britain in 1919 and 1920 – gave a nudge in this direction of traffic policing. In 1919 and 1920, the Home Office immediately subsidised police forces to purchase motor cars and motorbikes.⁵¹ These formed the embryonic basis of the motor traffic police, to operate at the side of the constables who patrolled their beats and were being increasingly drawn into traffic duties; the first police traffic department was formed in Liverpool in 1920. Leonard Dunning HMIC, remained sceptical of the need for traffic police, favouring a separate group of wardens, although he accepted that this was unlikely to gain approval. His ideas in this direction began whilst he was Head (Chief) Constable for Liverpool. In his *Annual Report of 1909*, he argued that many of the duties assumed

by the police 'did not sit with the police duty proper'.⁵² He made much the same comment as an HMIC in 1922, noting that, 'the duties of the police in the provinces had been largely extended in answer to the demands of the ratepayer', which were ever rising. In 1927, he further emphasised that the police had assumed responsibilities which were never contemplated in the early nineteenth century, 'services which have made him the handy man of civil life'.⁵³ Parry, his fellow HMIC, conceded that 'many men are employed on [traffic] duty who might be much better employed in carrying out other police duties', and felt that that persons other than the police might well do the job more economically.⁵⁴ Captain Mowbray Sant of Surrey, an idiosyncratic figure and no lover of the motor car, felt that the employment of the police on traffic duty 'absorbed an unjustifiable amount of police time', and Major A. L. Law, Chief Constable of Hertfordshire, 'did not regard traffic direction as a proper police function'. H. S. Turnbull, Chief Constable of the City of London Force, felt that the employment of the police went on 'to a greater extent than was really necessary' in county areas, and argued that 'motor drivers ought to be left to look after themselves sometimes'.⁵⁵ The Met were also shying away from the idea of traffic policing in the mid-1920s, realising that speed traps and pedestrian crossing duties might force them to use 1,200 constables from the force.⁵⁶ At first, only a few chief constables expressed the view that it was only the peculiar skills of the policeman that were suited to the task of policing the roads. F. Caldwell, Chief Constable of the Liverpool City Police in the 1920s and the person responsible for forming the first traffic police department, felt that the policeman was the 'skilled professional', trained in police work and working with the courts, and concluded, in 1920, that:

[I]t is because of all these trained requirement, and the status given by the law to a constable, that the substitution for the police of the employees of motor associations, or of men of quasi-police standing, to direct traffic is impracticable in large cities.⁵⁷

The Met, changing its stance, also expressed similar views, as did HMI Atcherley in 1926.⁵⁸

It is clear, however, that Curzon's vague commitment to some form of collaboration between the police and the motoring organisation with regard to the control of the roads was unacceptable to chief constables. There was much resistance to the idea of the control of the roads being left to the motoring organisations, whose work in favour of their

members had done much to thwart the police in their attempt to control speed at the beginning of the century. Therefore, what emerged was an untidy and fitful compromise in the early 1920s. Police pensioners were re-employed in counties such as Denbigh, Kent and the East Riding of Yorkshire, and also in a variety of towns such as Scarborough, Penzance and Southend. In Cardiganshire, disabled ex-servicemen (four, later six) were employed from Whitsun to September, 'to be solely... guides at certain busy and dangerous points in exactly the same way as the guides maintained by the AA'. Cambridgeshire employed ex-servicemen from 1926.⁵⁹ There were also occasional moves towards working with the AA and the RAC.

Winston Churchill, the Chancellor of the Exchequer, further enlivened the 'traffic policing debate' in 1926 when he raised issues about the costs and skills involved in traffic control. Although he underestimated the situation, he was shocked that 'a large number of men (probably 2,500 to 3,000) had been detached from their proper duties' and attached to traffic duties, because 'traffic duty requires less skilled personnel and involves less strain than ordinary Police work... it is unjustifiable to go on paying for this work such high rates of pay and pension as the police enjoy'.⁶⁰ He felt that there was a need 'to recruit Road Wardens for traffic duties'. Churchill's views were challenged in the Cabinet by the Home Secretary (H. Joynson-Hicks) who was less sanguine, feeling that economies in cost would not be made, that the standard of the wardens would not be up to the 'standard of the Police in the knowledge of the law generally', and that they were likely to be too much like AA scouts, who render 'first aid' to motorists in distress.⁶¹ Churchill persisted though, his comments seeming to suggest that 'The New Traffic Police, so it is proposed, should be faced by absorbing into the Police Force, for the special purpose, "the scouts of the Automobile Association", who now patrol the main road of the country to render "first aid" to the motorist in distress'.⁶² He persisted in his view that 'a special class of traffic wardens, described as Wardens [would be a] satisfactory and economical method of dealing with the problem'.⁶³

At this crucial moment, the Police Federation, formed by the government in 1919 as a non-strike organisation to thwart police strikes and to represent police officers from the rank of constables to sergeant (and later inspector), entered the debate. In 1925 and 1926 it frequently discussed the need for road police and, whilst it did not like the idea of traffic policing, disagreed with Churchill's idea of employing cheaper traffic wardens and Curzon's one of drawing on ex-AA and RAC scouts. In the end, the Federation's dilemma was resolved, as it, reluctantly,

agreed to support the emergence of a body of traffic police within existing police forces.⁶⁴

The picture that emerges is of the hesitant and halting moves by the police towards traffic policing.⁶⁵ Indeed, the Conference of Chief Constables, held at the Home Office on 6 April 1927, revealed the absence of any consensus.⁶⁶ However, in a rare moment of unanimity on this issue, the CCA Central (Annual) Conference, on 2 August 1927, expressed the undesirability of ‘any scheme for the employment of civilians for police duties’, in what was effectively a rejection of the ideas of Curzon and Churchill.⁶⁷ Yet it was some time before police forces whole-heartedly accepted their traffic duties, even though *The Times*, in 1926, reflected that the police are ‘our real traffic controllers’.⁶⁸

The AA and RAC, indeed, still retained a presence in traffic management. They operated at traffic points in the MPD. In Lincolnshire and Somerset, and also in Grantham, the Home Office-approved schemes employed two men from the RAC from each county, at the government’s cost, free on condition that the local police paid for a further three men at £150 per annum. Yet similar schemes were rejected in Leighton Buzzard since it was felt that an RAC man would be of no use, for ‘the man on duty must have the powers of a constable’.⁶⁹ There was also similar opposition in Hampshire and Essex.⁷⁰ In the late 1920s, the Met concurred. The Commissioner, Brigadier-General William Horwood, noted in response to Churchill’s view in 1926, that there would be a lack of public recognition of the new body for they wanted the full authority of the police constable.⁷¹ This view was endorsed, four years later, by Commissioner General Julian Byng, who warned the Home Office that:

[I]f the legal control of the traffic is to be vested in various bodies, confusion is likely to result and the Authority is likely to be lessened and the safety of the public to be imperilled rather than safeguarded.⁷²

Even Dunning reluctantly accepted what the public generally felt, that traffic control was the duty of the police.⁷³

This opposition was strengthened by the support of the County Council’s Association and the Association of Municipal Corporations. The former felt that men without previous police experience might make ‘errors of judgement’ and take the ‘improper assumption of a constable’s power’.⁷⁴ And so the matter rumbled on until, in November 1928, the Home Secretary declared his hand when he floated the idea of a special

force for traffic control, noting that trials had taken place (successful ones, as it happened, in Essex) but that 'the matter was in an experimental stage... [so that] no decision could be made for some time'.⁷⁵ Three days later he reversed his decision and announced to Parliament that 'it was essential in central parts of London that policemen and not scouts should be placed on points duty'.⁷⁶ This was open to debate, and within a year this decision was challenged by the Home Office Standing Joint Committees, which took the West Sussex Standing Joint Committee (SJC) proposal that a subsidiary force should be formed – a view immediately rejected by the Home Secretary and the Home Office.⁷⁷ The Home Office Conference in February 1929 – attended by representatives of the County Councils' Association and the Magistrates' Association, as well as chief constables of county and borough forces – agreed that it was 'undesirable to create a sort of inferior police force with limited functions and a lower rate of pay... [rather] the police with full powers of arrest must remain in control of the traffic'.⁷⁸ The conference expressed the view that the AA and RAC men might assume responsibilities at minor points, but felt that the creation of another body might cause confusion, a decision further endorsed by the 1929–1931 Royal Commission on Transport in its first report, on the control of traffic on roads.⁷⁹ The Home Office continued to harbour some residual hope that a scheme for the use of the auxiliary traffic police might emerge, but by now chief constables had come to accept, whatever their personal views, that their forces would be responsible for policing the road; a Home Office Conference at the end of 1929 gave 'singularly little support' for an auxiliary traffic police force.⁸⁰

By the 1930s, an enormous burden of traffic management and road safety had fallen upon the police, and by 1938 the Alness Committee concurred that the police held ultimate responsibility for traffic control (speed and free-flowing traffic) and road safety. Most chief constables who had supported the notion of establishing an auxiliary body of traffic wardens in the mid-1920s, had, by the end of the decade, become convinced that this was no longer a feasible option, given the reliance that the public placed upon the authoritative and legally empowered police constable.

Nevertheless, though the police accepted responsibility for traffic control during the inter-war years, motoring groups still played a continuing, if small, role in managing motorists well into the 1930s. The persistence of the AA and RAC was particularly evident in the MPD, where it was endorsed by Commissioner General Byng. Indeed, AA and RAC scouts relieved the Met of traffic duties and helped maintain the

flow of traffic. A Met survey of 1930–1931 noted the vastly increased volume of traffic on the roads and assessed the extent to which both the AA and the RAC were still providing scouts for point duty. The report also provided a list of the points manned by the AA and the RAC. There were 27 AA and RAC pointsmen (14 AA and 13 RAC), and their presence seems to have continued well into the 1930s. Such co-operation was also evident elsewhere. Cardiganshire and East Suffolk employed ex-servicemen for point duty,⁸¹ and in Essex the AA operated 21 points in the county.⁸²

Police traffic department and traffic patrols

The range of police traffic duties widened greatly during the inter-war years as car crime and the range of motoring offences increased, and the 1930 and 1934 Road Traffic Acts were passed. Police forces now found themselves involved in a number of initiatives, such as routine motor patrolling; dealing with speeding, technical and mechanical offences; Q-car patrolling and the development of fast-response ‘flying squads’; and dealing with ‘smash and grab’ raids. Much of this went beyond the normal police traffic duties of manning the points, directing the traffic and directing pedestrians.

Police authorities were not required to establish a separate traffic division or department until 1967, though many had done so by the late 1930s when HMIC Lieutenant Colonel Brook reflected that their ‘Motor Patrols have now become part of the ordinary organisation of police forces and can no longer be considered supplementary to, or a thing apart from, police duty.’⁸³ The move by chief constables towards traffic police in the face of the equivocal view of the Home Office was influenced by HMIC Major-General Atcherley who, in 1929, felt that there ‘is room for much greater development of motor patrols for various purposes’, although he believed that this had to be linked with improved telephone communications for the general public and a lengthening of foot patrol beats.⁸⁴ Motoring patrolling was also given a fillip by the Road Traffic Act of 1930, which provided 950 vehicles (cars and motorcycles) for the police, 125 of which were supplied to the Met. Though the Met was slow to take this allocation up, it eventually established a force of 112 vehicles (including 45 cars, mainly Morris Cowley 11.9hp two seaters, and 51 BSA solo motorcycles).⁸⁵ In addition, 5 MG Midget cars were purchased in 1931, and when the Home Office increased the fleet to 140 in 1933, the Met moved to the Home Office recommendation of 75 per cent cars. The Met eventually set up a driving

school at Hendon in January 1935, to provide elementary and advanced courses, with the assistance of the well-known motoring figure Lord Cottenham.⁸⁶

The Liverpool Traffic Police Department faced similar difficulties in building up its strength, and was quickly drawn into traffic crime control. The Edinburgh Force, under Roderick Ross, also found its mobile unit, set up in 1926, hampered by the lack of quality and power of its cars. Leeds Police had only two motorcycles in its traffic unit in 1928, but the 1930 Road Traffic Act transformed this into a dedicated motor patrol section in 1932. Yet it still had only one motor car, one three-wheeler, two motorcycle combinations and one solo motorcycle, despite being granted funding for eight motor vehicles.⁸⁷ However, when the 1934 Road Traffic Act increased police responsibilities for traffic management, the Leeds Police purchased three more cars and the road motor patrol was increased from 9 to 27.⁸⁸ The Second World War took its toll, however, and this number seems to have been reduced to 14 vehicles for general transport matters and eight cars, of 10hp and above, to deal with a city of 500,000 people.⁸⁹ By the late 1930s, the Manchester Police had a reorganised and renamed Mechanical Transport Department. It was divided into three sections: the experimental road patrol, the ordinary road patrol and general police work.⁹⁰ The first of these comprised 50 men (10 on foot!) and 19 cars became part of the Home Office Experimental Scheme of the late 1930s. As in London, there was a special motor school for the drivers. The ordinary road patrol was responsible for the enforcement of traffic laws and comprised 16 vehicles. In addition, the force bought 81 pedal cycles and 20 horses for patrol purposes in the city.⁹¹ Some smaller forces also developed traffic divisions and motor patrols. In 1932 Preston boasted one motor car, a motorcycle combination and a solo motorcycle, the latter being used for road supervision. Nonetheless, Chief Constable John Watson was convinced that the three vehicles were 'an effective step in dealing with present-day methods of the modern criminal'.⁹² Of the four cars used in 1935, two were paid out of the Road Fund under the provision of the 1930 Road Traffic Act. The rest of the section comprised nine bicycles. St Helens similarly had two motorcycle combinations and a Morris Oxford car for traffic patrol duties.⁹³ This threadbare picture of traffic police department and motor patrolling, particularly in small towns, was particularly evident in the southern English forces. Luton had a one-vehicle motor patrol, funded under the 1930 Road Traffic Act, while Southend-on-Sea had one pedal solo motorcyclist and six pedal cycles in 1930, though two Norton motorcycle combinations, funded by the MoT, were

acquired in 1931.⁹⁴ The picture that emerges is one of great variation in the development of traffic departments and motor patrolling: except for the Met, most forces – even large ones – were inadequately equipped with a hotchpotch of different types of motor vehicles and motorcycles.

Indeed, some major urban centres had no separate traffic police or motor patrol at all in the inter-war years. Bradford, a city of 298,041 people in 1931, had a force of 479 officers in 1935 (0.88 of a constable for every mile of main street in the city), but had no separate traffic department or motor patrol in the 1920s, although the whole force was deeply concerned about road safety.⁹⁵ As result, it bought six motorbike combinations in 1930, linked them with the introduction of 97 police call boxes, and replaced outdated motorbikes with new ones in 1933 – only finally purchasing a car in 1936.⁹⁶ Joseph Farndale, Chief Constable in the 1920s and 1930s, was alarmed when traffic deaths in the city rose between 1930 and 1934 (Appendix C), from 33 to 43, but was also frustrated that the prosecution of two drivers who were sent to Leeds Assizes for the death of eight people in total led to an acquittal and a discharge.⁹⁷ As a result, pedestrian road safety rose on his agenda above the issue of motor patrolling. In the City of Birmingham, with a population which rose from 900,000 in 1921 to over 1 million in 1936, the number of police rose from about 1,500 to 1,700 in the course of the 1930s. Yet even with the number of road fatalities rising from 61 in 1918 to 149 in 1930 and to 159 in 1933, and road injuries rising from 1,483 in 1921 to 6,280 in 1933 (Appendices A and B), there was no separate motor patrol or traffic department during the inter-war years.⁹⁸

The county forces faced similar difficulties. The Lancashire Force was a pioneer in the use of motorcycles in 1919 and, on the eve of the Home Office Experimental Scheme in the late 1930s, had 100 men on motor patrol duty. The West Suffolk Force, in contrast, provided divisional cars for superintendents only.⁹⁹ Two motorcycles were purchased by the Bedfordshire Police but they eventually purchased 12 motor vehicles under the 1930 Road Traffic Act. Kent purchased 19 BSA motorcycles for traffic patrol duty in 1931, and East and West Suffolk six and three motorcycles, respectively. Essex purchased ten solo Triumph motorcycles for patrol work.¹⁰⁰ These forces, and the borough forces, conducted motor patrol work but also acted as general support conveying prisoners to and from court and other general duties.

The duties of motor patrols – at least during their infancy in 1931 – were mainly connected with speeding and bad driving, according to Major Godfrey, of Salford, in his article in the *Police Review* on the ‘Function and Duties of Motor Patrols’.¹⁰¹ The Chief Constable of Leeds was

also convinced that the 'very presence of the patrols on the roads has had the effect of increasing the general standard of competency in driving and motorists have been persuaded to follow the wise suggestions of the Highway Code'.¹⁰² Similarly, Maxwell of Manchester, with a traffic patrol of 100 by the 1930s, wrote that road patrols had 'the same deterrent effect upon would-be road offenders as the uniform beat Constable has upon potential criminals'.¹⁰³ The *Police Review* waxed lyrical about the new 'speed cops', or 'flying squads', that some forces had in 1931.¹⁰⁴

Police motor patrolling did, however, raise the vital issue of how to deal with the motorist; there were marked differences of opinion between chief constables. In 1932, Lord Trenchard, Commissioner of the Metropolitan Police, wanted the police to deal gently with trivial motoring offences, though 'Road hogs and similar pests on the highway will, or should be, dealt with more vigorously than ever'.¹⁰⁵ The *Police Review* noted that 'The revised instructions have been hailed as a "Motorists Charter" and the Scheme should undoubtedly strengthen the harmonious relations between the Metropolitan Police and the public they serve'.¹⁰⁶ This, as will be seen, was not initially the situation in Lancashire and other forces, where a harsher regime was put in place, similar to the Met in the 1930s before Trenchard assumed control.

Flying squads, 'smash and grab', and car theft

Hugh Trenchard was much more concerned with 'motor banditry' and the 'smash and grab' raids by criminals that were occurring more regularly in London throughout the 1920s and 1930s, and in getting the Met Flying Squad to work with the Reigate Flying Squad on a focused effort to deal with criminals directly.¹⁰⁷ The 'Met's 'Flying Squad' came into existence in 1919–1920, when Sir Neville Macready experimented with a force of 16 detectives (four inspectors, four sergeants and eight detectives) and two drivers for the two Crossley tender vans, under the command of Inspector Walter Hambrook, with a roving commission to maintain surveillance on known suspected thieves and to 'smash up and capture the many gangs of criminals whose activities were creating so much concern, to dig them out of their nests...'.¹⁰⁸ At first, the cars and vans were not up to the speed required, but in 1927 Lea Francis convertibles (capable of 75 mph) were introduced, to be replaced by the heavier and faster Invictas (with a top speed of 90 mph) in 1929. Their breakneck speed was captured in a cartoon of a 'flying squad' car leaving Scotland Yard helter-skelter, in 1932.¹⁰⁹ In 1928, the 'flying squad' arrested 429 persons, 215 of whom were already 'suspected' persons; it is thus clear

that the system was built into one of prior knowledge and the swift transmission of information. This was enhanced in 1929 when the Met invested in the new 'police box system', of a mini-police station with a telephone for the public to phone 'Whitehall 1212' (Scotland Yard), and by the creation of a central information room at Scotland Yard in June 1934 to collate incoming information on a 24-hour basis.¹¹⁰ The 'flying squad' was initially only a small part of the Met's traffic policing and, in 1932, there were only 17 flying squad cars, including a newly purchased Invicta and a Bentley.¹¹¹ Yet developments were occurring elsewhere. By 1929 Liverpool had three 'flying squad' Criminal Investigation Department (CID) cars, Manchester had two in 1937 and Leeds had four 14hp saloon cars by 1938. Lancashire County Police operated 14 MG Magnettes, capable of up to 100 mph.¹¹²

These 'flying squads' were largely concerned in dealing with the perceived problem of 'motor banditry' where cars were stolen and used in 'smash and grab' raids. Yet motor banditry constituted only a small part of this rising level of car thefts, which for the Met rose from 204 in 1924 to 9,375 in 1938 (when 98.4 per cent were recovered), and it is easy to exaggerate their importance.¹¹³ In addition, and unlike much motor and traffic policing, the success of the flying squads was normally based upon prior information and the quick confession of the thieves,¹¹⁴ as in the case of a raid on a jewellers in Bond Street in 1925, when George Ward, the driver of a getaway car, confessed his guilt immediately, though he claimed not to know his accomplices.¹¹⁵

'Smash and grab' raids drew immense public attention in the 1920s and 1930s, Sir Herbert Samuel noting that they had increased three and a half times between about 1925 and 1932 and that London was the centre of the problem.¹¹⁶ As a result, the second reading of the Banditry Bill in the House of Commons in April 1932 drew immense attention and fuelled the campaign by *The Times* to tackle the spate of raids by high-powered cars on a variety of shops, including jewellers and furriers.¹¹⁷ Scotland Yard's response was to provide 52 new cars to deal with the problem by the summer of 1934, equipped with wirelesses and manned by special officers.¹¹⁸

A similar development had occurred in Nottingham where Chief Constable Athelstan Popkess, a controversial figure with a military background, introduced the 'uniform cruisers' of the newly formed mechanised division, a modern type of traffic policeman 'trained to drive with the skill of the racing motorist, but at the same time to exercise the tact of a diplomat'.¹¹⁹ Popkess had been the target for the first demonstration of the link between telephone communication and

'flying squad' cars, and had been 'caught like a rat in a trap' within ten minutes. This revealed the benefit of wireless communication for such work, as did various regional schemes centred on London, Liverpool, Manchester, Newcastle and Nottingham.

Alyson Brown has endorsed the view that 'motor banditry' was exaggerated by Trenchard and some chief constables in a recent article.¹²⁰ From examining the files of criminals in Dartmoor in the early 1930s, she stresses that 'motor banditry', 'smash and grab' and car crime, tended to be conflated into one, that the authorities exaggerated the extent of such car crime, and that the newspapers built up the importance of criminals such as Edward William Hughes, who was seen as the cleverest 'motor bandit' in Britain when he was sentenced at the Central Criminal Court in 1930. In Brown's view, the reality was that such crimes were relatively trivial, mundane and relatively rare. The appearance of American gangster films, such as *Little Caesar* (1930), *The Public Enemy* (1931) and *Scarface* (1932), seems to have led to the impression in the police and public mind that the new car crimes were modern and run by organised gangs, which was generally not the case.¹²¹ Nevertheless, the apparent threat of the 'motor banditry' seems to have driven Hugh Trenchard and some chief constables to develop the use of motor patrolling further.

The 'flying squad' was, in a few police forces, supplemented by the so-called Q cars, unmarked cars manned by plain-clothes officers,¹²² that were fitted with wirelesses, in order to patrol large areas and operate through information rooms to deal with car crime; however, in many areas, usually outside London, they also assumed normal patrolling duties, dealing with speeding and other motoring offences.¹²³ Their use in conjunction with an information room was first developed by the Met through experimental schemes in 1934, 1935 and 1936, and their full introduction was agreed in 1936 as part of a Wireless Area Transport District Full Cover Scheme.¹²⁴ That decision came despite significant criticism.

Initially, the Q-car scheme was seen as a fitful experiment and unlikely to succeed. One report, by two chief inspectors of the Met, written in March 1936, felt that the scheme in their district, covering 45 police boxes and 81 police beats, suggested that the Q car 'part of the scheme was a complete failure', adding that 'it affords a golden opportunity for cunning thieves to operate with impunity while the Constable's attentions are centred on road junctions for the detection of an offence which in an overwhelming majority of cases amounted to a "Joy-ride"'.¹²⁵ This suggests that their concern was with the experiment in some areas of

using Q cars at fixed points, rather than as part of a process of motor patrolling. This was clearly not the problem in some of the experiments, with Chief Inspector Doughty commenting on the implementation of the scheme in his division and suggesting that it was mainly used in response to dealing with stolen cars, with the theft of the contents of cars, driving without a licence, and the prosecution of those with housebreaking implements.¹²⁶ The patrolling duties appeared not to be a prime concern at this time, and comparisons seem to have been made with the more experienced 'flying squads'. There was some mixed views on Q cars, but another critical report on the intended Met-wide scheme, written by a divisional officer at the end of 1936, gave it support, though the officer reflected ruefully that 'I only hope that you will have better luck than I had when I tried a similar scheme on the bridges across the Thames, as, though I worked the scheme for a considerable time, I never had the luck to obtain any results'.¹²⁷ The divisional officer also suggested that Q cars needed more than one officer in a car to make them effective. There were numerous other reflections on the scheme from superintendent district inspectors, who gathered together the experiences of their districts, though they seemed to mainly raise the problem of an information room acting swiftly enough to verify information and requests from Q cars.

Notwithstanding such mixed feelings, the Q-car system was formally introduced throughout the MPD in 1937.¹²⁸ Some evidence suggests that the scheme worked better than the Jeremiahs (gloom-laden doubters) thought. Lomas Smith, aged 28, was arrested on 30 September 1937 at Westminster Bridge for stealing a car, and there were many similar reports of the speed and effectiveness of the unmarked Q cars linked with the detective work of the CID.¹²⁹ The Met now clearly had no compunction in using Q cars, as later became even more evident in the late 1940s and 1950s.¹³⁰

The use of Q cars had also spread to a small number of other police forces in the mid-1930s, most obviously Cardiff, where they were used extensively to capture speeding motorists. The Annual Report of the Chief Constable of Cardiff for 1937 emphasised the impact, in its write-up of the 'Plain Police and Speed Limit' (Q-car) experiment that took place there between 18 March and 31 December 1935.¹³¹ During this experiment, 706 motor drivers were prosecuted for breaking the speed limit in comparison to the 1,001 prosecuted in 1936, when uniforms were worn. A direct quantified comparison suggests that there should have been 850 prosecutions under the rules pertaining in 1935. Indeed, it was felt that the prosecutions would undoubtedly have even been

higher in 1936 had the arrangements not changed partway through the year. Between 1 January 1936 and 4 October there were 963 offenders, but from 5 October 1936 until 31 December 1936, when a system of cautions came in, the figure was only 38. The report stated that 'The new system [of uniformed police motor patrols] is not nearly as effective. It came into being on 5 October 1936 as result of a defendant, expressing in a letter to Court, his dissatisfaction at mobile officers being on duty in civilian clothing', although 'He made no complaints as to the conduct of mobile officers.' The Chief Constable of Cardiff felt that policemen in plain clothes kept motorists to the speed limits (35–60 mph). He felt that the wearing of uniforms had failed to deter speeding, and stated that 'From April 1937 Police motor patrols will revert to wearing plain clothes. In principle it is wrong (unless Parliament decrees, as it sometimes does). The only issue which the Court can consider is whether the method employed was an unlawful one.'¹³²

Nevertheless, Q-car patrolling remained unpopular with the motoring organisations and, pressured by these groups, the Alness Committee of the House of Lords condemned their use in its 1938 report. Yet the use of unmarked Q cars did not end until the outbreak of the Second World War, when many traffic policing initiatives were downgraded. However, towards the end of the war, H. Alker Tripp suggested that Q-car patrolling with unmarked patrol cars had helped to bring down London traffic fatalities by 34 per cent in 1938, compared to the 1934 figures, as well as reduce general crime levels.¹³³ His view, in a report which suggested that the police had first-hand knowledge of the whole problem of traffic control by restrictive laws, road design and town planning, and education, was that they should use any legitimate means to reduce road deaths.¹³⁴ To Tripp, the end justified the means.

The essential point about patrol cars, the flying squads and Q cars is that they needed radio communication with an information centre or control room to be effective, and this needed a telegraphic system to be in place and public access to telephones, whether through police telephone boxes, the police pillar phone system, or, increasingly, through the public telephone system. To begin with it was only London that had a telegraphic system, although other areas developed them in the 1930s. It was a 29-year-old civilian, Ian Douglas Auchterlonie, who, as Superintendent of the Manchester Police Regional Wireless Station, took control. He was one of more than 200 individuals in Britain who had a licence to set up their own radio station, and he had worked with the Liverpool Police in the early 1930s. Having developed communications equipment for cars and motorcycles, he moved to Manchester, where

he had 25 mobile units fitted with wireless transmitting and receiving equipment by 1936, and had a wireless van manned by two detectives brought into use on a 24-hour basis.¹³⁵ To make such vehicles even more effective, they were connected, through a control room, to the public, through the Sunderland Box, a police box developed by F. J. Crawley, Chief Constable of Sunderland. It looked like a wooden garden shed, and one of its purposes was to provide phone facilities for the public to contact the police about crime, though it also acted as a mini-police station where the policeman on his beat could rest or even detain a prisoner. The system was trialled and installed in Sunderland in 1923, and in Newcastle in 1925, and, when Crawley became Chief Constable of Newcastle, was installed in 1925. It was also introduced in Sheffield and Glasgow by Percy Sillitoe (later head of MI5), and in Leeds, Manchester and Preston, as well as in many other police forces – although some came late to the system and others, like Manchester, abandoned it for the police pillar telephone, which was seen as more accessible to the public.¹³⁶

In effect, motor patrols, flying squads and Q cars were small in number and badly distributed throughout Britain, but by the 1930s all police forces were employed in more extensive traffic duties. All employed police constables on traffic points duty, and some on pedestrian crossing duty (see Part II). Most were operating police speed traps. Some forces had well-developed ‘flying squads’, though most didn’t, and many were developing small, barely viable, motor patrol units run by traffic departments. Resource shortages and the time-consuming nature of prosecuting for minor offences were issues which further circumscribed police activity. However, faced with continuing high death and injury rates on the roads in the 1930s, further action had to be taken. The first experiment in using Q cars was implemented, amidst controversy, between 1937 and 1939.¹³⁷ An important alternative, given the criticism that Q cars received, was the decision of the Home Office to set up a Motor Patrol Scheme, to see – now that the police were fully committed to traffic policing and patrolling the roads – if this could also impose speed discipline on roads, and reduce death and injury rates, by saturation patrolling and softer advisory tactics, rather than the harsh tactics of the early 1930s.

The Home Office Experimental Motor Scheme 1938–1939

The Home Office Experimental Motor Scheme was set up in seven areas of England in 1938. Its main purpose was to augment the personnel

available for uniformed police patrols, and to advise, rather than to prosecute, motorists and other road users; thus the motor patrols earned the epithet 'courtesy cops'. It aimed to encourage a higher standard of road sense and behaviour on the part of all classes of road users, including cyclists and pedestrians.¹³⁸ The government-funded scheme embraced the counties of Cheshire, Lancashire and Essex, the London MPD, and the cities of Liverpool, Manchester and Salford, as indicated in Table 3.2. It was a response to the 'road holocaust' of the 1930s, which did not seem to be improved by the harsh treatment of motoring offenders, and the emerging opposition of the Alness Committee (1938–1939) to the Q-car scheme. Indeed, the Chief Constable of Lancashire reflected, in his 1938 report on the operation of the Lancashire scheme, that:

In regard to the Police procedure, the attempt to enforce the law as rigidly as possible was tried over the years 1931 to 1935 but just as prosecutions rose so did accidents rise slightly. Efforts were also made to devise a scheme to detect motoring offences more easily, but this entailed Motor Patrols [Q cars] being made as inconspicuous as possible, and, although there was a greater chance of detecting offence, the public did not look upon this procedure as fair, and accidents fell only very slightly.¹³⁹

He added that he wished motor patrols were not regarded by the public as 'unfair and not British'. Consequently:

[E]fforts were begun to encourage the public to look upon the Police Officer in a car in the light and in the same friendly spirit as they regard a Constable on foot. This in itself entailed Police vehicles being made as conspicuous as possible in the hope that their mere presence on the road would be more likely to act as a deterrent to possible offenders.¹⁴⁰

The scheme also drew in some of the foot and cycle branches of the police, to be specially trained in accident work, 'since their effort will produce a considerable effect particularly on pedestrians and pedal cyclists in built-up areas'.¹⁴¹

The scheme operated by the County Police of Lancashire was an amazing success in its first year, 1 April 1938 to 31 March 1939, but, as in all other areas operating the scheme, was terminated by the outbreak of the Second World War. Indeed, the Chief Constable of Lancashire reiterated at the end of 1939 that it was successful in its primary aim of 'the

education of the motorist and other members of the public in accident prevention, rather than the rigid enforcement of the law'.¹⁴²

The scheme covered the county police area of Lancashire with its 1,750,000 people. In this area, the number of road accidents had increased from 1,000 in 1919 to 7,000 in 1934, though this had fallen to 5,833 in 1937. Although the number of accidents fell, this still left an appalling 7,303 people killed and injured. However, the number of road deaths and injuries fell dramatically by 44.09 per cent in the first year of the scheme, in a strict comparison between comparable 12-month periods in 1937–1938 and 1938–1939, from 7,342 to 4,105 (see Tables 3.3 and 3.5). This contrasted with the miserly 2 per cent decline in deaths and injuries for the rest of the county, other than experimental areas. The biggest impact was on serious and slight injuries as a whole, but what was really impressive were the statistic for child injury and death (see Table 3.4), an issue examined in a Chapter 6 (see Table 3.6).

The success of the Experimental Scheme in Lancashire was not just about the motorist, for it was projected as a holistic scheme. It was carried out by a pro-active police force, which often stopped motorists to advise them on the roadworthiness of their car – rather than to prosecute them. The falling number of accidents arose from a combination of factors. There was an increase in the numbers of trained staff and

Table 3.3 Persons killed and injured in the Lancashire County Police District,¹⁴³ April to March 1937/8 and 1938/9

Period	Fatal	Serious injuries	Slight injuries	Total
1937–1938	303	1,839	5,200	7,342
1938–1939	248	1,050	2,807	4,105
Decrease	55 or 18.15%	789 or 42.99%	2,393 or 46.02%	3,237 or 44.09%

Table 3.4 Accidents to children in the Lancashire County Police District, April to March 1937/8 and 1938/9¹⁴⁴

April to March 1937/8 and 1938/9: Children killed and injured				
Period	Fatal	Serious injuries	Slight injuries	Total
1937–1938	46	301	949	1,296
1938–1939	27	152	525	704
Decrease	19 41.30%	149 49.50%	424 44.68%	592 45.68%

Table 3.5 Casualties (deaths and injuries) per 1,000 of the population in the Lancashire County Police District, 1932–1938/9¹⁴⁵

Year	Whole country	Lancashire
1932	4.9	4.6
1933	5.2	4.9
1934	5.5	5.1
1935	5.3	4.8
1936	5.4	4.7
1937	5.4	4.6
1938/9	5.4	2.5

Table 3.6 Road users killed or injured in the area covered by Lancashire County Police¹⁴⁶

	1937–1938	1938–1939
Pedestrians	2,100	1,320
Drivers	630	360
Motorcyclists	840	500
Pillion passengers	300	160
Pedal cyclists	2,100	980
Other persons	1,350	805

These figures are only approximate since they are taken from a graph.

vehicles, co-operation with, particularly, the pedestrian (who, it was believed, caused 70 per cent of road deaths), the education of children with regard to road safety, a combined effort by the whole force, and the maintenance of an intelligence and information network.

Ideally, there should have been an augmentation of the Lancashire Force by 1,100 men and 452 vehicles when putting the scheme into operation, but in the event only about 300 men were added to operate 92 extra vehicles and 50 lightweight motorcycles, with 12 men on clerical aid duties, along with 19 instructors at the Motor Patrol Training School.¹⁴⁷ Of the 300 extra officers on duty, 204 were drawn from other forces, 50 of them from the Royal Ulster Constabulary, 15 from the Rochdale Borough Police, and the others from a range of forces throughout Britain.¹⁴⁸ What it lacked in numbers it gained in flexibility, because the Lancashire Scheme had a floating force of 20 vehicles which could be used to saturate road black-spots to ensure that motorists gained the impression that the traffic police were present

in large numbers; these black-spots were often manned by new officers who were more amenable to being moved around the county than longer-serving officers.

With regard to the motorist, the Lancashire Motor Police felt that they were there to serve as a ‘shock tactic’ to control speed and to provide advice, guidance and testing, rather than prosecution, and it was felt that:

[T]he result so far has been to create a spirit of cooperation between the motorist and the Police, to an extent which has made the average driver tend to regard a fellow motorists who has been prosecuted as the recipient of a well-deserved public rebuke, rather than reviewing him sympathetically as a victim of assumed Police ‘persecution’. In other words, a motoring offence is ceasing to be considered something to boast about, but is being regarded, far more properly, as a breach of good manners.¹⁴⁹

One can speculate that this may have been a short-lived ‘honeymoon’ period, but the fact is that the number of prosecutions by the Lancashire Police fell from about 22,500 in 1934 to 11,800 in 1937, though this figure rose again to an estimated 13,000 in 1938.¹⁵⁰ Instead of prosecuting motorists, the police were issued with 40 Tapley brake meters, with which they undertook 25,234 brief brake tests during the first year of the scheme, in order to educate motorists rather than to prosecute them.¹⁵¹ The scheme was thus seen as a successful attempt to work with the motoring public, and thus fits neatly into the general impression that pedestrians were being forced off the roads owing to the emphasis upon the motorists rather than the pedestrian.

The Home Office Motor Patrol Scheme operated differently from area to area. Major Godfrey, of Salford, claimed that he was mainly interested in having his patrolmen visible on main routes at peak times, ‘to proceed by advice rather than admonition, and by admonition rather than prosecution’, and to give special attention to the safety of pedestrians, particularly schoolchildren.¹⁵² Despite this statement, between October 1937 and June 1938 over 6,500 motorists in Salford had received warnings and almost 28,000 were advised about the condition of their cars and speeding, while prosecutions went up by 65 per cent, from 201 to 336, possibly due to the fact that Salford had fewer motorists to deal with than the Lancashire County Police Force. Yet, accident rates fell – fatal accidents by more than 40 per cent, from 12 to 7 in the first six months of 1938 compared with 1937, and non-fatal accidents by 20 per cent, from 209 to 166 – and behaviour on the roads seemed to

have improved. Most road users co-operated with the police: crossings and safety islands were better used and road signs clearly observed.¹⁵³ However, whilst the Lancashire and Salford schemes saw remarkable reductions in accidents, the results were less dramatic elsewhere. There was an 8 per cent reduction in accidents in Manchester, 6 per cent in Liverpool and Essex, and only 5 per cent in London. The Met scheme suffered from the fact that only 70 of the 200 extra places could be filled, and that the focus of action was placed upon three arterial roads which were free flowing but which had cyclists and pedestrians on them at peak times, contributing to the accident rate. In the case of Essex, where 71 policemen were allocated 14 extra cars – 5 men per car – and endured a 16-hour day, there was a 78.8 per cent drop in fatal and non-fatal accidents between 1938 and 1939. The number of killed and injured fell by 217, or 8.04 per cent, between 1938 and 1939.¹⁵⁴

The Home Office Motor Patrol Scheme experiment appeared to be successful, but Tripp was not fully convinced. He felt that 'motor patrols are most suited to operation on open roads [but] almost useless' in built-up areas.¹⁵⁵ In addition, he maintained that lorry drivers avoided the areas where the scheme operated. He was also cautious about admonition rather than prosecution. In the end, his preference was for the Q-car scheme developed by the Met.

The precise influence of police motor patrols and traffic police activity were thus already being called into question on the eve of the Second World War. Yet, the fact is that chief constables and the Home Office had to consider how to deal with motorised traffic and its consequences, since it was becoming an increasingly important and dominate part of police work. On the eve of war, it appeared that the various Home Office schemes had convinced some leading advisers to the government of the need to ensure that there was some uniformity of motor patrolling throughout the country. Indeed, the Alness Committee was in favour of such a scheme, and stated that 'Road education without patrols would be like a school without teachers. [...] Motor patrols had done much to promote road safety', arguing that to extend it across the whole country would cost £2,500,000 per year, of which the government would contribute half.¹⁵⁶ However, the scheme came to a shuddering halt with the outbreak of the Second World War.

The police and the courts

A patchwork of motor patrolling was matched by a legal system which was inconsistent and disinclined to enforce the harshest penalties. Although magistrates, along with the courts and the High Court,

eventually did endorse the authority of the police to control of the road, initially over the AA scouts, it is clear that they remained inconsistent in dealing with the varying interpretations of the laws, particularly regarding manslaughter from dangerous and reckless driving.

Section 1 of the 1903 Act covered reckless and negligent driving at speed or in a manner dangerous to the public, with the latter drawing upon the established notions of ‘common danger’. The enormous expansion of the numbers of motor vehicles during the inter-war years led a growing demand for a clear application of the law. Indeed, *The Times* mounted a campaign in 1923 to demand more action against reckless driving and more penalties for dangerous driving, ‘whether it was due to incompetence, to ignorance, to physical disability or recklessness’.¹⁵⁷ Chief constables were similarly concerned and complained to the Royal Commission on Transport (1929–1931) about the difficulties of gaining convictions for manslaughter, where someone had been killed by a car, and also for dangerous driving, especially if there had been no injury in the case of the latter. Indeed, the problem continued and, in the 1930s, as indicated by Table 3.7, the number of manslaughter cases brought was quite low: in fact, only about 70–80 per cent of the cases raised in the 1930s (there was an average of 107 between 1930 and 1938) ever went to trial, and, of these, 60 per cent of defendants were acquitted of manslaughter, about two-thirds of them were instead convicted of dangerous driving, and fewer than a quarter of the total seem to have been imprisoned.¹⁵⁸

The problem was that the burden of proof required for major traffic offences was demanding, as E. H. Tindall Atkinson (the Director of

Table 3.7 Serious motoring offences, 1931–1938¹⁵⁹

	Manslaughter	Causing bodily harm	Dangerous driving	Careless driving	Driving under influence
1931	64	23	13,116	27,134	2,130
1932	91	37	6,888	25,505	1,952
1933	114	59	7,925	28,088	2,064
1934	130	48	10,745	33,578	2,267
1935	120	27	9,301	30,574	2,478
1936	125	20	9,039	31,955	2,849
1937	128	28	10,003	33,723	3,040
1938	130	43	9,101	34,511	2,870

Source: Annual returns to the House of Commons on motoring offences.

Public Prosecutions) explained when he addressed the Conference of Chief Constables in June 1932. He demonstrated the complexity of the law, by stressing that deliberately running over a child in the street was murder, seeing the child but being unable to stop a speeding car was manslaughter, but that if a child ran out in front of the car it was an accident.¹⁶⁰ However, he stressed that these different situations required a burden of proof that was often not available, and this meant that the courts were often reluctant to sentence for manslaughter and might impose the lesser sentences of dangerous, or even careless, driving.

Atkinson was speaking at a time of interregnum, when the speed limit for cars had been removed and when death and injury rates were rising; about 19 people per day were killed per day between 1930 and 1934, totalling about 7,000 deaths per year, with another 569 injured every day. The Royal Commission on Transport (1929–1931) had already anticipated in 1930 and 1931 that the removal of the speed limit for cars in 1930 meant that 'driving to the danger of the public' would be difficult to enforce, and that it was not possible 'to drive safely at high speed'.¹⁶¹ The onus was now on the police who, ignoring the more serious issue of manslaughter, would have the important task of 'deciding whether or not the driver was driving dangerously or merely carelessly' when death was not caused. The demarcation between the two was vague, and open to interpretation, because careless driving was deemed to become dangerous driving when it became a danger.

The proof required to verify actions for courts to convict on criminal responsibility for manslaughter was influenced greatly by *R v Bateman* (1925), a case involving a doctor whose patient had died in childbirth, which suggested that the test to be applied was whether there been 'such disregard for life and safety to others as to amount to a crime against the state'. The case was used in the later case of *R v Stringer* (1931), in which it was determined that evidence of careless or incompetent driving, in itself, was insufficient to warrant a manslaughter verdict, 'the disregard for... life and safety' established in *R v Bateman* had to be demonstrated, which meant that dangerous driving itself did not constitute enough for a verdict of manslaughter. The 1934 Road Traffic Act allowed juries, dealing with prosecutions, to 'derogate the law' and convict for dangerous driving in manslaughter cases, though there was still the problem of determining the appropriate degree of danger, whether through negligence or recklessness, in the driving of the accused person. This became evident in the 1937 appeal case of *Andrews v DPP*, where it emerged that Andrews had overtaken a car in a well-lit built-up area of Leeds and, while on the wrong side of the road, had

knocked down a pedestrian who was crossing the road and about to reach the pavement on the defendant's offside.¹⁶² Andrews was found guilty of manslaughter and sentenced to 15 months' imprisonment by the Leeds Assizes, but his case went to the Court of Criminal Appeal on the grounds that the jury had been misdirected and not informed of the option of returning a verdict of dangerous driving. When this appeal was rejected Andrews went to the House of Lords, where the appeal failed once again. Lord Atkin, in summing up, did, however, point out that whilst Section 11 of the 1930 Road Act allowed driving with a high degree of negligence, it also suggested that a man may drive at a speed or manner dangerous to the public and cause death but not be guilty of manslaughter.¹⁶³

The law of manslaughter on the road was, indeed, difficult to interpret, and many juries also returned verdicts of dangerous driving with lesser sentences. In 1937, at one such case at Leicester Assizes, the jury brought in a verdict of dangerous driving when there were no extenuating circumstances and Justice Humphries, clearly disagreeing with the verdict, declared:

I think there is little hope that we shall ever be able to reduce the number of fatal accidents...so long as juries are terrified, as they apparently are, of the verdict of manslaughter and on clear evidence such as in this case refuse to convict a person of that offence.¹⁶⁴

The difficulty of enforcing the charge of dangerous driving became as much a problem of that of manslaughter. Often that charge would be reduced by the courts to careless driving and a £10 fine would be imposed, as in the case of William Seager, a heavy-lorry driver, charged with driving dangerously at 40 mph in a 20 mph zone on the Newcastle Road in Cheshire. To the frustration of the police he was acquitted, because no member of the public had been put in danger. The Cheshire Police appealed to the High Court against the decision and the verdict was overturned by Justice Humphries, who castigated the magistrates for their misplaced leniency, reflecting that if the magistrates' decision became a precedent then no dangerously speeding driver could ever be convicted unless there was an accident.¹⁶⁵

There were also serious discussions of the less serious charge of careless driving in 1929, at the time when it was also being discussed by a Royal Commission on Police Procedure, but the fact that the 1934 Road Traffic Act allowed juries to convict for careless driving if they thought that the facts for the case did not warrant a verdict of guilty of dangerous

driving simply created room for more varied magisterial interpretations. The ignoring of halt signs, and road signs generally, went unpunished.

The law as to what constituted manslaughter, dangerous driving and careless driving was thus extremely confused and inconsistently applied by the courts. The magistrates' courts, in particular, were reluctant to find any drivers guilty of serious offences, perhaps out of respect for the social position of the middle-class driver and concern regarding the possible loss of employment of the working-class driver. The higher courts were perhaps less inclined to accept verdicts, and did occasionally change them for the police or the defendant on appeal. Indeed, most cases of manslaughter went largely unpunished, although it is less clear that this was entirely true in the case of dangerous driving, for magistrates often opted for sentencing on the default option of careless driving.¹⁶⁶

The police became frustrated at dealing with speeding leading to manslaughter, dangerous driving and careless driving. Maxwell, of Manchester, complained of 'the difficulties encountered when prosecuting drivers [because of] a divergence at the Petty Sessional Courts'.¹⁶⁷ However, attitudes varied between the forces. Whilst the Chief Constable of Leeds was happy that 'the Justices support the Police by inflicting salutary punishments' on drivers convicted of serious offences, the evidence of other chief constables, including that of the chief constables of Bradford and Manchester giving evidence to the Alness Committee (1938–1939), were unhappy with the lack of consistency between the magistrates and the unwillingness of juries to return guilty verdicts in manslaughter cases.¹⁶⁸ Also, prosecution rates for dangerous, careless and drunken driving were appreciably lower in Liverpool than Manchester. The Wakefield Police (in the early 1930s), and the police in Huddersfield and particularly Leeds (in the mid- and late 1930s), were more likely to bring charges of 'dangerous driving'. It may be that the street conditions and the actions of drivers varied from one area to another, and raised different issues, but it is much more likely that individual chief constables were making their own assessments of how to tackle traffic offences in the face of a reluctant and inconsistent judiciary and the procrastination of governments.¹⁶⁹

It is, therefore, unsurprising that, in 1934, the *Police Review*, reporting on a meeting, stated that:

The Police were also frustrated at the lack of action by Magistrates. On the other hand the Home Office does not seem to consider the charge of dangerous driving to be serious and will not extend the

period of disqualification laid down by the Act [1930] beyond twelve months. The fact is that Magistrates had been reluctant to disqualify but the Royal Automobile Association argued that 'the existing law, if properly enforced, is adequate to deal with the careless and dangerous driver'.¹⁷⁰

In 1935 and 1936, the police pressured the Home Secretary to tighten up the law by instructing magistrates to become both more rigorous and more consistent in their treatment of motoring offenders. This action was condemned by the National Motorist Association, which stated that:

The Association calls attention to Section 5 of the Road Traffic Act, 1934, which confers discretionary powers on Magistrates in endorsement of drivers for exceeding the speed limit in cases where the circumstances warranted special leniency. It is submitted, therefore, that the motorist who can prove that he has made a genuine mistake, and has an unblemished record, may expect leniency from the Magistrates in this respect, and it is content that the decision is fair to all concerned.¹⁷¹

The Association was worrying needlessly for, in the year from May 1935 to May 1936, of the 108,571 motorists who had been stopped for speeding only 246 had lost their licences, 57,103 had had their licenses endorsed and 47 per cent had been fined.¹⁷² There were also 4,525 motorists convicted of dangerous driving; of which 1,640 had had their licenses suspended and 2,688 had had them endorsed. For careless driving, 1,025 drivers had their licenses suspended and 8,081 had had them endorsed. These figures alarmed both the motorist organisations and the police alike, though for quite different reasons. The motorist organisation saw them as evidence of harassment, whilst the police were amazed how few motorists actually lost their licences or were imprisoned.

The *Police Review* complained further that: 'Perhaps the most glaring of all these disclosures of Magisterial leniency is to be found in the figures relating to the offences of driving or being in charge of a motor vehicle under the influence of drink or drugs.'¹⁷³ It also noted that, in 1935, of 9,866 people convicted for drunkenness, only 104 were sent to prison, while 1,377 had their licence suspended and 7,385 had it endorsed. The article continued:

The effect on the Police of the Magistrates' direction in favour of the offending motorist was emphasised in a recent report of the Chief Constable of Southport. The police, according to this authority, are being disheartened in their effort to reduce road casualties by the attitude of some Magistrates... [The view] expressed at Southport shows that the imposition of the speed limit, if properly enforced, is undoubtedly effective in reducing the number of accidents. The result, says the report, has been attended to by the Southport Police in the face of serious opposition by some Magistrates, who have imposed contemptuous fines on persons detained in flagrant breaches of the speed limit. Other Chief Constables could tell the same story.

In the wake of such comments, the Home Secretary fulminated further and sent out yet another circular to magistrates, deploring their appalling inconsistency in dealing with traffic offences. In addition, the Driving Licence Act 1936 was introduced, to give both the magistrates and the police a stronger hand in dealing with the motorists, although there is little evidence to suggest that it made a difference.

In 1936, the Home Office instigated an inquiry into the practice of summary courts in handling four different traffic offences.¹⁷⁴ Under the existing law, conviction for driving under the influence of drink, or for failing to have third-party insurance, should have resulted in disqualification, unless there were special circumstances. Seventy per cent of those convicted for driving under the influence of drink were disqualified – though this varied between 91 per cent in some courts and 36 per cent in others. The figures for those failing to have third-party insurance were more disquieting. The national average for disqualification was only 38 per cent, the variation in police districts being between 4 and 100 per cent. Courts had discretion with regard to the first offence of dangerous driving, but it was worrying for the Home Office to find that only 36 per cent of those convicted of this offence were disqualified, while in some courts as few as 15 per cent lost their licenses and in others as many as 65 per cent did so. Finally, figures for careless driving showed an even worse situation. In theory licences should have been endorsed on conviction unless there were special reasons for not doing so. The national average was 47 per cent endorsement, with a range of 0 per cent to 96 per cent for forces across Britain. In the view of the Home Office, whilst there was local discretion, many courts were not complying with the intent or spirit of the law,

and this created a sense of injustice which brought the law into disrepute. Magistrates were reminded that it had been Parliament's intention that the suspension or endorsement of a driving licence should be the normal consequence of conviction for certain specified offences.¹⁷⁵ Motoring organisations, who had already emphasised the unfair treatment of the motorists, seized upon these figures to amplify their point further.

Nevertheless, one needs to acknowledge that it was not the magistracy alone who were blame for inconsistencies of court decisions. The police were often selective in the cases that they prosecuted, ineffective in presenting cases, and failed to understand what the courts and the judges were looking for in evidence. Indeed, Major Vernon Brook spoke to the CCA in 1937 of the need to train 'Autoaccidologists', who would carry out forensic work on accidents, especially since the accidents officers recently appointed by the MoT did not seem to be reporting back to chief constables about whether or not accidents were caused by problems connected with the construction of the road or individual failings. Brook reflected that: 'I have been amazed... at the lack of technical knowledge on the part of judges, barristers, solicitors and lay magistrates',¹⁷⁶ and referred specifically to a case where a motorist described what he could not possibly have seen when approaching the brow of a hill, but where the police did not have the expertise to point this out.¹⁷⁷ This provoked T. C. Griffiths, Chief Constable of Chester, as well as Brook, to reflect that the MoT and the Home Office ought to provide legal and scientific experts for the local authorities and the police.

Driving under the influence of drink

Driving whilst under the influence of alcohol was one of the major causes of dangerous and careless driving, and 70 per cent of those found guilty of drink-driving were usually disqualified. Yet, as Table 3.7 indicates, only about 2,000 to 3,000 cases of drunken driving were taken to court each year, unbelievably low figures which indicate that the police were using their discretionary powers of caution. This is explained by the fact that it was very difficult to establish that someone was 'drunk' in charge of a mechanically propelled vehicle, an offence first established under the Criminal Justice Act of 1925. The problem was that there was no clear way in which to define what constituted being 'drunk' and thus incapable of safely driving a vehicle. Dr Ralph Rimmer, Chief Police Surgeon of the Bradford Police, spoke to the CCA in 1937 on 'The Problem

of the Intoxicated Driver'. Rimmer discussed his findings on 300 people considered to be under the influence of alcoholic drink, whom he had examined over the previous ten years.¹⁷⁸ There was a real and crucial debate going on at this time as to what constituted drunkenness, and Rimmer outlined the various ways by which it was being measured. There was smell, walking in a straight line, standing on one leg with one eye shut, and a handwriting test, but since these were often subjective he called for a simpler and more definitive tests to convince the courts of drunken driving.¹⁷⁹ As he declaimed, faced with the need for incontrovertible proof to take to court, the police often used their discretionary power of warning, rather than arresting and charging such suspects.¹⁸⁰ The police were very aware that many of their powers derived from laws that had not really been designed to deal with motorised traffic. It is, perhaps, not surprising then that, in February 1934, the *Police Review* felt that the Royal Commission on Transport (1929–1931) was correct in suggesting that the work of the police had been undermined by magistrates' courts, particularly in relation to what constituted being drunk:

The Royal Commission felt that Magistrates often release drivers because they did not know what was meant by 'drunk'. In 1933 14,546 motorists were charged with being drunk [does not accord with Table 3.7] and only 37 went to prison. *The Times* felt that the public were disillusioned with this and Lord Knutsford wanted Magistrates to take action.¹⁸¹

Therefore, the number of prosecutions for driving under the influence of alcohol remained low and reflects the problem of defining that offence, a problem that persisted until the Road Safety Act of 1967 introduced legal drink limits and the breathalyser, blood and urine tests.

Other traffic offences

There was a proliferation of other traffic offences which were considered to be less serious, but which were still punishable by law. There were prosecutions for failing to stop when ordered to do so by a policeman, or after an accident, and many insurance offences connected with the failure to have third-party insurance. There were offences for neglecting traffic directions such as police signals, traffic signals and pedestrian crossings; the last of these was introduced in 1935 and, in just over six months, led to 7,503 prosecutions in 1935, 11,749 in

1936, but only 8,592 in 1938.¹⁸² There were also mechanical offences connected with identification, lighting, brakes, noise and emissions. What these figures indicate that the police were constantly involved in checking the mechanical roadworthiness of cars. Significantly, however, there were very few prosecutions for emission, though lighting offences fluctuated between 69,000 and 64,000 in the 1930s, and brake offences were 26,129 in 1931, rose to 24,628 in 1933, and were a mere 13,306 in 1938 at a time of the Home Office Motor Patrol Scheme.¹⁸³ Many traffic offences were of a relatively minor nature, and often, as Claire Corbett suggests, not regarded by the public as real crimes; furthermore, the police were aware of the time-consuming nature of preparing court cases for a reluctant magistracy.¹⁸⁴

Conclusion

Between the late 1890s and the 1930s, the police of Britain were given increasing responsibility for the traffic management of the roads as they were being rapidly transformed by the emergence of the motorised vehicle. It was a responsibility which they reluctantly assumed, until the debates about the use of the AA and RAC 'scouts' and wardens, in the mid-1920s, forced their hand and led chief constables to accept full responsibility for traffic policing. The police traffic departments, motor patrolling and other related duties, often developed slowly, prosaically and haphazardly alongside long-established existing and continuing duties of traffic control at major crossing points. Clearly, and contrary to Howard Taylor's views, the police did not seek the extra responsibilities of traffic control and management to justify their professional pay, but had them largely thrust upon them. Before the First World War, they operated speed traps, as well as directing traffic. Faced with rising fatalities and injuries on the roads during the inter-war years, they experimented with motor patrolling, using uniformed patrols, 'flying squads', which covered both traffic and non-traffic offences, and plain-clothes Q-car motor patrols. Throughout, the police were strongly opposed by the motoring organisations, who saw the motorist as a victim, and were often undermined by the inconsistent sentencing of the courts and the difficulties in finding the body of proof necessary for a conviction of traffic offences, particularly for manslaughter, and for dangerous and careless driving. There were some major, if temporary, achievements – such as the Motor Patrol Scheme, which operated in the areas of seven forces between 1938 and 1939 to modify the insouciant behaviour of motorists. Primarily dealing with the enforcement

of speeding offences, they began to make inroads into the 'road holocaust' by the late 1930s, though, as we will see (Part II), they were already beginning to believe that the segregation of the motorist and the pedestrian was necessary. Despite some slow and halting improvements throughout the 1930s, the Second World War temporarily and dramatically set back the road discipline that had been achieved; however, by the 1960s, the enforcement of the law and rising crime statistics promoted a complete overhaul of how the police operated and enforced the law.

4

Policing the New Age of Mass Motoring c.1940s–1970: Motor Patrolling, to Q Cars, Z Cars and Unit Beat Policing

Introduction

By the early 1930s the police had come to accept their ultimate responsibility for traffic control. At the end of the 1930s, they were tentatively developing an holistic approach to traffic policing that incorporated the needs of Enforcement, Engineering and Education with the prospect that it would get integrated into the wider structure of policing.¹ This new approach had been advocated by H. Alker Tripp in the 1930s, and was re-emphasised by him, and a variety of chief constables, in their response to the MoT's 1944 investigation into 'Safety on the Roads', following a relapse in road safety and traffic policing during the Second World War.² The engineering of the road, town planning, the education of road users, the enforcement of the law, and the segregation of motorists and pedestrians were all vital aspects of this all-encompassing approach. But this approach imposed an enormous burden upon the police which forced upon them to make significant changes in the way in which they enforced traffic control and speed limits, forcing them, increasingly, to move from walking the beat to accepting the pervasive automobility of both traffic policing and the unit beat policing (UBP) system. In the popular idiom of the day, the police 'moved from their feet to their seats', adopting new technology and additional support in a form and manner never fully envisaged during the inter-war years. Walking the streets was increasingly abandoned to traffic wardens, and, ultimately, a rise in traffic offences became so dominant a feature in police work that the systems of policing were changed to meet its demands, culminating in the all-inclusive and revolutionary UBP

system in the 1960s, which was designed to deal with both traffic and non-traffic offences.

Changes in the pattern of traffic policing were to be conditioned by four concerns. The first was the rising general level of crime, which was growing at between 5 and 10 per cent per decade in the twentieth century. The second was the new 'road holocaust' of the 1950s and early 1960s, which saw a rapid rise in deaths and injuries as car sales soared.³ The third was the fact that traffic offences were becoming an increasing proportion of crime statistics, rising from 2 per cent of all committals in 1900 to more than 50 per cent in 1930, 62 per cent in 1962 and 65 per cent in 1965.⁴ The fourth was that new developments – the formation of motorways from the late 1950s, and the introduction of traffic meters, breathalysers and other technology in the 1960s – ensured that traffic-related offences would increase rapidly and require increased police manpower.⁵ Indeed, the farming out of the work connected with parking and parking meters to traffic wardens, who issued fixed penalty notices for parking offences, added to the workload of the police by involving them in training wardens, although, in the long run, it averted a possibly crushing increase in police workloads.

The reorganisation of British policing to meet the rising tide of crime, particularly to meet the increasing number of accident and traffic crime offences, was something which did not emerge fully fledged. The development of UBP and traffic policing in the 1960s owed its origins to developments during the inter-war years, including the District Crime Scheme adopted by the Met in 1937 in connection with the use of Q cars. This structural reorganisation in the 1960s occurred further in an environment of new technology – such as the use of radar speed equipment and CCTV, and the widening of two-way radio systems – which made traffic policing and motor patrols more effective.

The new technological developments and new styles of policing did little to improve the bitter relations between the police and the motorists that had raged from the beginning of the century and engulfed policing during the inter-war years. Both the motoring public and the police continued to complain about each other in and out of the courts. Such embittered relations belied the notion that there was complicity between the two in the evolution of the modern motoring age. In reality, there was a mounting and continuing battle between the police and the motorist, and their organisations, to control the urban landscape, in which finally the pedestrian lost the right to freely roam the public highway. This was undoubtedly the emerging scenario from the 1940s to the 1970s, though, as Luckin and Sheen suggest, it was the

introduction of the breathalyser in 1967 that began the process whereby motorists were forced to concede to other road users.⁶ In the end, it was the enforcement of the law and control over motorists that was to drive many of the changes in policing that made the police a more mobile and integrated force capable of asserting control over the road and the urban landscape. Yet, at the beginning of the 1940s, it did not look as though this would happen.

Policing traffic during the Second World War, 1939–1945

The Second World War reversed many of the improvements in the enforcement of traffic policing achieved in the late 1930s. Road deaths increased from around 6,648 in 1938 to 8,272 in 1939 (a 25 per cent increase in one year, largely as a result of the rapid rise in deaths at the end of 1939), and to 8,609 in 1940 and 9,169 in 1941, before declining during the subsequent war years (Table 1.2).⁷ Transport statistics for the twentieth century reveal that the years of the Second World War saw the highest death rates per 1,000 cars on British roads. In 1944, by no means the worst wartime year for deaths, there were 4 fatalities per 1,000 cars; the decline, from the late 1960s onwards, eventually reduced the figures to 0.1 fatalities per 1,000 cars in 1997.⁸ Blackouts, partially covered headlights and some confusion in the operating use of red and green lamps at night seems to have caused a high level of accidents, which greatly outweighed the fact that petrol restrictions reduced the number of private cars on the road.⁹

Police numbers declined, although they were made good by the recruitment of the Specials, and the police assumed a large number of extra wartime duties. As a result, the Motor Patrol Scheme was abandoned, and there was less in the way of police action to deal with the rampant motorist. In the case of Leeds, the significant decline in motor patrolling was evident. Indeed, the number of cases dealt with for speeding fell from 417 in 1939 to 229 in 1940, other offences falling only from 879 to 823.¹⁰ In Dewsbury, neither of the two cars that were operating in the late 1930s seem to have been used after 1940.¹¹

The horrendous situation with regard to traffic policing, motor patrolling, and road injuries and fatalities was confirmed on 5 March 1941, when Sir Leonard Bremlett, and Home Office officials, held a Traffic Conference, under the chairmanship of Sir Alexander Maxwell, to discuss the high wartime traffic death rates.¹² The Conference agreed to produce a set of rules for drivers, including the advice that motorists should take care approaching the brow of a hill, and at junctions. It also

offered a comparable set of guidelines for pedestrians, advocating the use of the pedestrian crossing particularly where there was a police presence. Indeed, it recognised that the major cause of higher deaths was the lack of street lighting under wartime conditions, combined with a decline in traffic policing, although it felt that pedestrians were to blame for not being more cautious.

These conclusions were largely informed by the advisory and information reports produced for the Conference by a number of chief constables and senior police officers. The summary of the advisory report of the opinions of chief constables concluded that 'it seems a fair assumption that the increase [in road deaths and injuries] was almost entirely due to blackout accidents during the first four months of the war'.¹³ Chief constables noted that whilst death rates were up 4 per cent in 1940, compared with 1939, most of these, 3.6 per cent, occurred in the last four months of the year. It further observed that, in 1940, '55 per cent of those killed were pedestrians and 65 per cent of all fatalities occurred in the hours of darkness' – the latter being a reversal of what had occurred during the inter-war years. Individual chief constables were less prudent in their judgement than the summary Conference report conveyed. The Chief Constable of Birmingham bluntly stated that the main reason for the rise in fatalities was the continuing 'carelessness of pedestrians'; he was supported in his assessment by Captain Hordern, Chief Constable of Lancashire, and the chief constables of Birkenhead, Birmingham, Cardiff and Warwick. The Chief Constable of Cheshire was more cautious, and put road deaths and injuries down to the 'youth and inexperience of young drivers' and those 'in the army'. Nevertheless, the chief constables collectively accepted that the rising traffic toll was due to a decline of traffic policing; the Chief Constable of Lancashire indicating 'a falling off of public interest in road safety'.¹⁴ This meant that that the public, 'who had previously responded well to education, especially the children', were no longer acting safely on the roads. Prosecutions were also falling and the penalties for motoring offences were light: the Chief Constable of Warwick stressing that prosecutions for speeding in his area were down from 2,170 in 1939 to 162 in 1940, while the figures for the West Riding of Yorkshire were about 50 per cent down.¹⁵

The effects of the Second World War on accidents and policing have been researched by Bill Luckin and David Sheen in a pioneering study of Manchester. This city had one of the worst road safety records in Britain, with road deaths of 142, 132 and 144, in 1939, 1940 and 1941 respectively, compared with 81 in 1938. Luckin and Sheen argue that the laxity

of road safety was possibly a product of wartime fatalism, the slowness of inter-war road and traffic-control improvement schemes and poor street lighting, and that the early 1939 blackout exercise to extinguish electric and gas lighting had mixed results.¹⁶ These were poor preparation for the air attacks on Manchester on 23 and 24 December 1940. Yet both before and after these attacks road fatalities and injuries had increased enormously and the blame had been attached to the pedestrian, a view fuelled by the government, which accepted the findings of the pre-war Alness Committee (of the House of Lords), which had favoured the long-term segregation of road users. Luckin and Sheen suggest that the Manchester City Council's road safety policies were heavily influenced by the Alness Committee – even though the chief constables of both Manchester and Salford had expressed their concerns about the failings of pedestrians and the need for road segregation in the 1930s (see Part II).¹⁷ They reiterated their pre-war views on the culpability of pedestrians, endorsing a view trailed by Tripp in the 1930s, and which became his anthem in the early 1940s.¹⁸ This view extended beyond the chief constables to include coroners in mid-Cheshire and Manchester, who returned verdicts of accidental death in some cases where pedestrians had been killed by cars and buses.¹⁹ In 1944 and 1945, it was only a few MPs and the Pedestrians' Association who complained of the murderous activities of motorists and the need for road safety campaigns, though this minority view gained the support of the *Manchester Guardian*, which fostered an alternative view when it targeted irresponsible drivers in its headline 'Road Hogs – New Style'.²⁰

Wartime conditions fostered an attitude of liberality towards the motorist driving a potential lethal weapon in difficult blackout conditions, and it was the pedestrian who was expected to exercise caution. This could have been the story of the Second World War as far as automobility was concerned. However, in 1944, chief constables were encouraged to offer their vision of future road safety to the MoT's Road Safety Committee. What emerged from this consultation as an important point for future policing was, as H. Alker Tripp elaborated, the need for a holistic approach to traffic policing. According to Tripp, as already intimated, the vital traffic policing had to be all-embracing in order to tackle the fact that road fatalities were running at an annual average of 6,300, as compared with an annual average of about 100 murders. He stressed that the police were responsible for traffic control, changing the law, advising about shaping the road, road safety and enforcing the law, and were well equipped to do so because they had 'first-hand

knowledge of the whole problem'.²¹ This view might have carried little resonance in the war context, but it ultimately shaped the evolution of policing through the introduction of new technology and the evolution of integrated Q cars, Z cars and UBP.

The growing problem of post-war traffic between 1945 and 1970

A dominating concern of post-war policing was the rapidity of growth in the number of cars on British roads, and the rising level of road fatalities and injuries, particularly between the early 1950s and late 1960s, as indicated in Table 1.2. This was to produce both an increased post-war commitment to road safety and the introduction of new technological initiatives. For the police, the immediate response was to take action through a revival of their 1930s imperatives of patrolling the road to preserve life and property, with both marked cars with uniformed officers and unmarked cars with plain-clothes officers. Motor patrolling revived greatly, but there were still marked differences between the sizes of traffic departments and their motor patrol units. In 1959, the relatively small St Helens Police Force had a motor unit of six motor vehicles, one motor van and two motorcycles, one of which was fitted with two-way VHF wireless apparatus. Indeed, the traffic department operated with 1 inspector, 4 sergeants, 15 constables, and 4 other members, including two female clerks.²² This small department dealt with normal motor patrolling, responded to crime-related 999 calls (the emergency system had been introduced nationally in the late 1930s), and undertook some work connected with offering road safety talks and checks at schools. Wigan, another small town with a small police force, had only two patrol cars in 1947.²³ By 1954 it had expanded and had a Traffic and Communications Department, comprising of one inspector, one sergeant and ten constables, and two Austins (1951 and 1952 Model 2199) as patrol cars, two Austins for general purpose work and three motorcycles.²⁴ These forces contrasted badly with the Met, the Manchester Police, and the traffic departments of other large towns and cities, possibly because motor-related problems were more acute in large cities. Birmingham, for instance, in 1959, had a traffic patrol of 2 inspectors, 6 sergeants, 12 constables, 18 additional divisional constables and 26 constables on motorcycle duties, and it was stated that 'traffic patrols contributed greatly to the free movement of traffic and the safety of all classes of road user'.²⁵ This worked in close connection with a police

wireless scheme (begun in 1949), which led the department to respond to 999 and other calls to the police, and to work alongside the city's 12 road safety officers.²⁶

Much of the work undertaken by traffic departments operated within the context of road congestion, which will be examined in later chapters. As chief constables were all too aware, it did not take many cars at an unmanned junction to create gridlock, and the introduction of automated lighting signals came as something of a relief to chief constables in the late 1920s and early 1930s. Yet though congestion was a major problem in the inter-war years, it became even debilitating after 1945, and eventually had to be included in the emerging planning strategy of successive governments and, indeed, the Buchanan Report (1963). For the police it was a central concern. The obvious way to tackle the problem of traffic flow was to establish a programme of street improvements throughout the urban areas, and to redesign towns in the way which Buchanan suggested, but the cost made that prohibitive and other measures had to be developed. Since congestion was often caused by indiscriminate parking, parking became a legitimate target for the police in their attempt to keep traffic flowing.

Traffic meters and traffic wardens in the 1960s: 'They also serve who only stand and wait' (Milton)

Since the immediate urban transformation of Britain was impossible, and the traffic on the roads was slowing down in the face of an enormous post-war rise in the number of motor vehicles, other action had to be taken. A major cause of congestion, which will be examined in more detail in Chapter 5, was the 'promiscuous parking of cars in the streets of the City', as the Chief Constable of Leeds put it in the 1930s.²⁷ The situation got worse in the 1950s, leading to chief constables enforcing parking restrictions in order to maintain the flow of traffic.²⁸ The police had been reluctant to accept a separate force of traffic wardens to direct the flow of traffic in the 1920s, but the sheer volume of work connected with urban congestion on Britain's roads forced them to reconsider the idea. Met and the Home Office delegations visited the United States in search of solutions. The Home Office was particularly impressed by the introduction of parking meters in Oklahoma City in July 1935. A local newspaper man called C. C. Magee, in 1932, had the idea of renting the kerbside: 'Business people have realised that the system may stave off the nightmare which has threatened American cities – virtual stagnation of the main shopping district as the customers go

elsewhere to avoid traffic and congestion.¹²⁹ Magee's idea was opposed by the powerful American Automobile Association (formed in 1902), though he later denied being responsible for the introduction of the first parking meter in Oklahoma City in July 1935. Yet the Oklahoma City experiment expanded and, by 1952, the United States had more than 200,000 parking meters. Despite American warnings against the introduction of parking meters, particularly from the American AA, the Met and the Home Office were attracted to the idea.³⁰ However, it was noted that parking meters would impose an extra burden upon the police, for they would have to check large numbers of meters to issue a fine, and this led once again to a discussion about the need to employ traffic wardens.

As in the 1920s, there was still strong residual police opposition to the idea of employing traffic wardens, even though the nature of the problem had changed. A letter, written in 1956, from Sir John Reginald Hornby Nott-Bower, the Metropolitan Police Commissioner from 1953 to 1958, to Sir Frank Aubrey Newsam, Permanent Under-Secretary at the Home Office, echoes the debate of the 1920s, quoting the evidence presented by the London and Home Counties Advisory Committee.³¹ Though the strain on the police was enormous, Nott-Bower stated that:

I am strongly opposed to the suggestions. It is very doubtful whether any body of men who did not possess the full powers would command the respect of, and obedience of, the motoring public. [...] It would inevitably lead to divided responsibilities for the free flow of traffic and the prevention of accidents. If the duties of such a body were to be limited to the issue of process for parking offences, with all the continued friction involved, it could hardly be an attractive occupation, its members would have to be of a remarkably high standard of physique, intelligence and integrity.

This attitude of the Met changed when Sir Joseph Simpson, Nott-Bower's successor as Commissioner in 1958, pushed forward with the introduction of both parking meters and traffic wardens. The Met set up the first experimental car parking meter at a bomb site in Portland Place. It was here, in the north-west corner of Mayfair near Grosvenor Square, London, that, on 10 July 1958, George Nugent, the parliamentary secretary to the Minister of Transport, unveiled the parking meter, with the words – and without a hint of irony – of John Milton: 'They also serve who only stand and wait.'³² The charge was 6d (2.5p) for the first two hours, and 10 shillings (50p) for the next two hours.

The Met and the City of London Police were now faced with not only the time-consuming task of dealing with illegally and dangerously parked cars, which had been one of the main traffic duties in the 1920s, but with checking parking meters, which could involve police officers standing around waiting for parking miscreants. As a result, it was agreed, under the Road Traffic and Road Improvement Act of 1960 and endorsed by the Royal Commission on Police in May 1962,³³ that the police should be encouraged to appoint traffic wardens to help them deal with the meters and the new fixed penalty notice scheme of fines.³⁴ This was encouraged by the concern of the MoT that the imposition of further traffic duties on the police would diminish respect for them, and that the fixed penalty notice fine system would discourage local authorities from dealing with parking problems since the police would be doing that for them. Indeed, at a meeting on 6 October 1960, it was reported that:

Mr. Waldron confirmed that motorised police officers are now issuing tickets on the peak hours Clearway in West London. He would be opposed to any extreme use of tickets by police officers, as opposed to traffic wardens, not, as was suggested at the meeting at the Ministry of Transport, because it would impair relations with the public but, as I understand his argument, because police officers engaged wholly or primarily on the work would inevitably come to be regarded as second-class officers and because, so far as parking officers are concerned, street enforcement by the police would tend to reduce the pressure on local authorities to introduce parking meters and make other provision for the regulation of parking.³⁵

The Met appointed traffic wardens in 1960s, a move that was quickly followed by other urban communities and police forces, such as Leicester, Liverpool, Blackpool and Newcastle, where their task was to enforce 'working restrictions and (in most zones) parking place orders; contrasting with London where their operation was confined to meter zones'.³⁶ The Met had originally estimated that about 2,000 wardens were needed, but the prosperous economic conditions of the early 1960s meant that it was difficult to get applicants, and numbers crept up slowly at first, with the majority being men of 45–55 years of age.³⁷ There were estimated to be more than 1,000 traffic wardens dealing with parking areas and meters in Britain by May 1964, about 440 of them operating in the MPD of London.³⁸ There is, however, some variation in

Table 4.1 Traffic wardens in England and Wales and the Metropolitan Police District, 1962–1965³⁹

Year	National total (A)	Metropolitan Police District (B)	% A to B
1962	456	310	68
1963	807	432	54
1964	1,025	441	43
1965	1,432	440	31
Average			40

Table 4.2 Fixed penalty notice fines issued by the Metropolitan Police in 1963 and 1964⁴⁰

Total for 1963 (and the first quarter of 1964)					
Total issued	Paid on time	Paid late	Total	No further action	Summons applied for
196,365	74,471	66,979	141,450	33,375	18,828
100 per cent	38.5	34.69	73.1	17.2	9.7
First quarter of 1964					
50,993	22,467	15,699	38,166	8,802	4,025
100 per cent	44	30.8	74.8	17.3	7.9

estimates, for the Met were also reported as having 449 wardens and 45 senior wardens operating in 9 districts of the MPD on 11 June 1964.⁴¹ Yet, as Table 4.1 reveals, whilst about half to two-thirds of wardens appointed throughout Britain were employed by the Met, that proportion had fallen to less than a third by the mid-1960s, to average of 31 per cent.

The traffic meters and the traffic wardens, two of the greatly hated symbols of 1960s Britain, created many problems for the British police forces. Wardens soon became prominent in the urban landscape, checking parking spaces, monitoring traffic meters and imposing the fixed penalty notice fines which could be paid by the offending motorists. Traffic wardens had been introduced in September 1960 to deal with minor traffic offences and were endorsed by the MoT and the Road Traffic and Road Improvement Act of 1960.⁴² The fixed penalty notice system was first used by the police in the same year, and issued to those who had parked improperly or who had failed to pay a proper

parking fee for the time they were parked. These fines of £2 could be paid without the need of a court attendance, which would take up the time of both police and, later, traffic wardens, but motorists would go to court if they challenged the fine or it remained unpaid for 21 days.⁴³ The proliferation of fixed penalty notice fines, of £2 to £4, created pressure for more traffic wardens. In 1962, for instance, 196,635 fixed penalty notices were issued by the Met, of which 74,471 were paid on time and 66,976 later. No action was taken in 33,756 cases – including a large number connected with diplomatic immunity – but 18,828 summonses were applied for (see Table 4.2).⁴⁴ As a result, it was decided that, from April 1964, diplomatic exemption cases would be pursued, an action that added further to the burden of the police and the courts.⁴⁵ Indeed, the scale of this work grew enormously and was overwhelming the courts; in 1964 Marylebone Court, in London, was setting one day per week aside for court meetings related to traffic offences.⁴⁶ As a result, the Law Society campaigned for special traffic courts to be set up to deal with these and other rising traffic offences, although, as will become evident towards the end of this chapter, the idea was rejected.⁴⁷

The appointment of wardens transformed the dynamics of the relationship between the motorists, the police and the law, and two vital factors emerged. First, the burden of parking work was increasing and it was quickly estimated that a Met force of more than 5,000 traffic wardens would be needed for metered areas and another 7,000 for unmetered areas by the early 1970s, as indicated in Table 4.3. Secondly, although traffic wardens assumed some of the responsibilities of the police, they also imposed additional responsibilities on that body.⁴⁸

The creation of a body of wardens necessitated immediate police training and advice. Indeed, by July 1962, the Met had responded rapidly by employing 4 inspectors and 17 policemen ‘to supervise Traffic Wardens’,⁴⁹ until senior wardens were introduced in 1963.⁵⁰ Putting

Table 4.3 The additional traffic wardens projection in the Working Party Report on Traffic Wardens⁵¹

Metered area	Unmetered areas	Metered areas	Total
Phase I (64–6)	1,760	2,250	4,010
Phase II (67–9)	2,040	2,490	4,530
Phase III (70–3)	1,740	2,250	3,990
Total	5,540	6,990	12,530

this in place quickly concerned the Met because, as a representative of the force stated:

These officers, who have to be freed from the strength or ordinary duty, can ill be spared and the Commissioner's view relates to the loss of police strength for Parking duties. Therefore he intended to introduce a new grade of Traffic Wardens who could take over the Police duties. [...] He believed that there are among the Wardens now serving a number of men capable of carrying out these duties and it is proposed that a Superintendent should be retained to recruit suitable candidates for interview by a Promotion Board, who would select the required number to undergo promotion training at Peel House [...].

From the start, however, the recruitment of wardens proved difficult. Part of the problem was that there was a shortage of recruits in a period of economic boom, and that since they did not have the authority of the police they were frequently abused by motorists who objected to being fined for exceeding their parking times. A police draft report of May 1964 noted that: 'It will be appreciated that traffic wardens are subject to a considerable amount of criticism both generally or from individual members of the public and in consequence look for effective police support for their work.'⁵² It was also noted that, in training, 'The wardens... are housed away from the police station and the seven wardens do not therefore have the close contact with the police that is required.' It was felt that the salary should not be set too high for fear that police constables might resign to assume the less demanding role of traffic wardens. Further to this, given the initial shortage of male applicants it was quickly decided to appoint female wardens, who were likely to accept lower pay. The first of these was employed at Croydon on 31 April 1964, although their presence apparently created problems in training.⁵³

The issues presented by the employment of traffic wardens were recognised by the Chief Constables 'Association in its annual meeting on 7 May 1964.'⁵⁴ Estimating that there were about 900 wardens in England and Wales, it felt that their organisation had to be far more co-ordinated and that more women should be employed, following the appointment of part-time female wardens in Leicester, St Albans and the Met. It was 'agreed that wardens could be used to deal with straightforward cases of obstruction in law (e.g. parking on the approach to a pedestrian crossing) but should report these cases where judgement is required'. It was

also felt wardens could assist policemen in three ways: they could take over some duties of policing, take over ‘pedestrian’ duties, and undertake traffic control duties at peak hours or in special circumstances. However, this meeting was merely reiterating the views of the Working Party on Traffic which had been formed in 1962 and which had reported on 13 June 1963. The 1964 Conference had been alerted to the problem of recruitment and pay for a body whose powers were less than the police, and noted Mr Waldron’s comment that being a traffic warden was ‘not a particularly attractive job involving outside working and possible abuse of the public...’, and also his fear that they could not be too well paid for: ‘If pay were to be increased it could not be increased very much without encroaching on the constables’ pay, and any such encroachment would not only be embarrassing but might be particularly harmful if, as might happen, policemen requested to join the warden service.’

Despite this caution, the CCA endorsed the Working Party Report in favour of a rapid phased expansion of the service, estimating that 850 wardens cost £1,000,000 and that the needed 5,000 would cost £4 million; an expansion over ten years to more than 5,000 wardens in metered areas and an additional 7,000 in unmetered areas was envisaged for the MPD, for example.

Nevertheless, the expansion of the numbers of traffic wardens, without full police supervision, did create extra problems and work for the police. Many years later, in 1982, Inspector Croft of the Met reflected that:

[I]t is painfully obvious that the vast majority of recruits are unaware of the main duties of a traffic warden. A short period of attachment to the centre prior to entering training school would be useful in getting rid of the disillusionment and giving other food for thought for their period at training school.

Periodical instruction classes taken by officers in charge of traffic warden centre would be useful. [...] An examination at the end of a warden’s [probationary period] would assist...⁵⁵

This was accompanied by a detailed account of the syllabus for traffic wardens between 1971 and 1982, which developed the training schemes and syllabus first put in place in 1966.⁵⁶ From a small auxiliary force of supervised traffic wardens in the 1960s had emerged a force of independently operating traffic wardens, who, whilst often connected with police stations, were less integrated with police work in the 1980s than they had been in the 1960s.

Wireless, radar and CCTV

From the 1950s onwards, other means of monitoring and regulating the motorists were developed to aid traffic management, with limited effect. There were several radar and camera experiments to monitor the movement of traffic and infringements of the law between the 1950s and 1970s.⁵⁷ However, there was an immediate setback in the case of a motorist caught in a police radar trap on 19 August 1957, which was overturned by a Beaconsfield magistrate, Major R. F. Law, who said: 'The Police have a good name and always have had, but this will help them lose it.' In the end the motorist was fined £2 and had his licence endorsed.⁵⁸ The AA also criticised the new police technology, stating that: 'We came into existence to fight this system. We deprecate this way of enforcing the law. A police car on patrol has more effect on motorists and is more satisfactory.'⁵⁹ Yet the police persisted with them and, by 1963, radar speed meters were being rented from the Home Office Regional Wireless Station, and a limited number were being used in most regions, apparently with the support of the courts, who seem now to have accepted the new technology.⁶⁰ Indeed, Dr N. E. Hand, of the Home Office Police Research and Planning Board, produced a pamphlet entitled *A Survey of Radar Speed Metering* based upon a survey of its use in the forces of England and Wales in 1964. It found that whilst most forces had radar meters they made comparatively little use of them because of technical difficulties.⁶¹ There were still many problems in using them: insufficient trained police officers were available and there was a general reluctance to use them, bearing in mind the hesitancy of magistrates to accept new technology. Further research was called for, even though less than a third of 1 per cent of prosecutions was unsuccessful and the fact that only 1 in 2,000 offenders appealed against conviction and only 1 in 4 was successful.⁶²

Increasing use was also made of the wireless, which had first been developed in the inter-war years when London, Manchester and several other centres had introduced a wireless system to enable a control room to communicate, often for non-traffic reasons, with police cars, despite the fact that the number of cars with one-way and two-way wireless equipment was not large. Nevertheless, this was an important development. The emergence of 'flying squads' and Q cars demanded such provision, and, in 1963, 3,000 police cars and 2,200 motorcycles were fitted with two-way and multi-channelled wireless equipment. A Regional Wireless Centre was set up in Wales in 1963 to further encourage this development.⁶³

As already suggested, the introduction of CCTV faced particular difficulties in the 1960s, as CCTV was first introduced in London in West Drayton Bridge in 1959. More famously, it was used for the visit of the King of Siam in 1960, when the equipment set up in Trafalgar Square resembled loudspeakers rather than the smaller modern CCTVs.⁶⁴ It was then introduced on some of the streets of Liverpool in 1963, and its use was extended in 1965 to work in conjunction with a plain-clothes squad of 60 police known as the 'Commandos'. A preliminary survey suggested that it cut car theft and other car-related crimes by half practically overnight – theft from motor vehicles falling 47.1 per cent and car theft falling by 48.2 – and that the detection of crime had gone up 128 per cent.⁶⁵ Indeed, the Liverpool scheme reported a 'marked psychological deterrent effect on the minds of thieves and potential criminals'.⁶⁶ The Durham CCTV scheme began on 16 March 1965, there was the Highgrove Swimming Pool CCTV experiment in 1965, Hatton Gardens on 12 July 1965, and the Croydon experiment in 1965, though these schemes were used mainly for crime rather than traffic control. A. J. Humphrey, of New Scotland Yard, reported on 3 January 1969, that he thought that CCTV was invaluable in the control of car crime and the control of traffic in the London community schemes he had examined.⁶⁷ Yet Chris A. Williams suggests that the attempts to introduce CCTV in London and Liverpool were unsuccessful because of the cost of cabling, and it is clear that CCTV did not become widespread until the 1980s.⁶⁸ However, the introduction of new equipment and new initiatives exacerbated the contentious nature of relations between the police and the motoring public, and indeed the magistrates. It was too little to be effective but enough to create tensions.

The re-emergence of Q cars, Z cars and the evolution of UBP

The increasing pressures upon policing traffic, maintaining traffic flow, curbing traffic offences and crime, and controlling parking in the 1960s, forced chief constables to consider not just the introduction of new technology, but the way in which they could change how they operated to ensure that they were more effective in dealing with the rising levels of crime, of which traffic offences were now the dominant part. The major structural, indeed seismic, change was the move to UBP in the 1960s, but this did not emerge quickly. It owed much of its introduction to the trial and error of traffic policing in the 1930s, responding to traffic crimes through the use of flying squads, Q cars and uniformed traffic

policing, although it was part of a holistic attempt to more efficiently tackle the whole range of crime in Britain, not just traffic crime and offences.

Many of these motor patrols were with uniformed policemen in marked cars, as evident in the Home Office Motor Experimental Scheme of the late 1930s, but some involved unmarked cars (Q cars), with plain-clothes policemen; both types were subject to research to improve their effectiveness.⁶⁹ These Q cars, which earned the policemen who operated them the nickname 'the disguise cops', looked like standard cars but were, in fact, high-performance vehicles, able to apprehend the high-powered vehicles they were often faced with chasing. This was in contrast to the Motor Patrol Scheme of the same period, which sought to saturate the roads with marked cars to discourage speeding and other offences.

The reintroduction of Q cars in the Met in 1948, and by forces in other parts of the country in the 1950s, was a response to rapidly rising road fatalities and injuries, which became particularly marked by the 1950s. Again, the use of Q cars was contentious, both within the police forces and between the motorist and the police, reviving memories of the Q-car experiment of the late 1930s, when the Alness Committee, the AA and the RAC had condemned their use. Nevertheless, at the Central Conference of Chief Constables (CCoCC) in 1951, it was declared unequivocally that the Home Secretary was not opposed to the necessary use of plain-clothes motor patrols: '... there was nothing underhand in the employment of police in plain clothes on the prevention and detection of crime; it was a common everyday practice. Reckless motorists were criminals.'⁷⁰ The Home Secretary further reflected that:

The principal motoring associations had taken an unhelpful line in this matter but in his view public support would be forthcoming if the use of plain clothes officers was confined to the detection of reckless and dangerous driving, and they were not used to deal with technical offences. He added that he would not hesitate to support or defend the employment of police officers on these lines should he at any time be questioned on the matter.⁷¹

Sir Herbert Scott reflected, on behalf of the CCA, that 'all chief officers of the police were concerned about a heavy loss of life on the road and were conscious it should be reduced', feeling that all measures had to be considered.⁷² The Association was very much in favour of 'showing the flag' and indicating that the use of Q cars was not

‘snooping’. The Conference was particularly responding to Lieutenant Colonel H. Rutherford, Chief Constable of Oxfordshire, who, earlier that month, had opposed Q cars on the grounds that they were snooping, stating that: ‘We do not want to spoil the very good relations which exist between the police and the motorist’ – a somewhat optimistic statement.⁷³ At the Chief Superintendents’ Conference of 6 February 1951, Rutherford’s report on Oxfordshire stated that: ‘The Metropolitan Police had used these methods in the past and abandoned them because they impaired relations with motorist and the general public.’ That was not strictly correct: the system was abandoned with the onset of the Second World War as part of a national decline in traffic policing.⁷⁴ Predictably, the AA and the RAC supported Rutherford, and Major M. V. Gibson, Secretary of the AA, said he was glad that the Q cars were not, at least in Oxfordshire, taking the place of ‘courtesy cops’, for ‘We are not fond of the disguise business. . . . Our feeling is that it is better for the police to do their job in uniform.’⁷⁵

There was a marked difference of opinion on the value of plain clothes and unmarked motor patrolling in the early 1950s, though a clear majority of chief constables were in favour of the use of Q cars. However, this gave way to almost complete unanimity amongst chief constables by 1954, in the wake of rapidly rising death and injury statistics on the road as car sales rocketed in Britain during the early 1950s. Indeed, the minutes of the 65th (Central) Conference of the Chief Constables, held on 28 January 1954, shortly after the House of Lords debate on motor patrols, made it clear that experience proved that ‘the plain clothes traffic patrols were a more effective deterrent to dangerous driving than uniformed patrols’.⁷⁶ Thus, in view of the appalling road casualty rate, the Conference had been invited to consider whether or not such patrols could be usefully employed more widely than at present. The chairman of the Conference declared that the Home Office felt that police:

[S]hould be prepared to consider any way of reducing the number of fatal accidents. He thought the use of plain clothes patrols a legitimate method of discouraging the criminal conduct on the roads especially in view of the shortage of uniformed police.⁷⁷

Lieutenant Colonel Rutherford, the Chief Constable of Oxfordshire, who had previously strongly opposed the scheme, was then asked to explain why the Q-car scheme had been adopted in Oxfordshire in 1953. His explanation for his change of heart was that the development of air bases in the area had led to increases in road deaths and injuries since

1952, and that, as a result of the introduction of Q cars, traffic injuries had fallen by 6 per cent between 1952 and 1953, at a time when national injury rates for traffic had increased by 9 per cent. He stated that warnings were given to motorists that plain-clothes patrols were operating by means of boards by the roadside, and only the worst cases of dangerous driving were taken to court. Rutherford reflected that, except for motoring associations, public opinion was by no means as hostile to Q cars as first thought, influencing the Conference to assert that plain-clothes patrols were not considered to be 'un-British' and should be used when considered necessary. Publicity, he felt, was an essential element of the scheme being propounded in the House of Lords, for the object was 'to deter drivers from driving dangerously not to catch them after the offence'.⁷⁸ Nonetheless, he argued that 'the uniformed patrol remained the strongest deterrent and that additional plain clothes patrol could only be provided at the expense of an effective uniformed patrol service'.⁷⁹ Essentially, then, the purpose of the Q car was seen to be to supplement, not replace, the uniformed police, and to deter criminally reckless drivers rather than to enforce speed limits. It was announced that the Secretary of State for the Home Office would be informed 'that the police were willing to use plain clothes patrols whenever necessary'.⁸⁰ In fact, they operated throughout Britain from the late 1940s to the 1960s, alongside the normal uniformed road traffic policing. Their most effective use was, and remained throughout the 1950s, that by the Met.

The Met had returned to using Q cars in 1948 when there was 1 car per division (with the exception of A and C who shared a car), which meant that there were 21 divisional cars in use. By the 1950s, the Q cars operated in the 4 main divisions of the Met; each had 4 Q cars each and 2 relief cars, in addition to divisional Q cars, which suggests that there were possibly 24 Q cars operating, often in connection with the CID. More important than their numbers was the fact that the system became more sophisticated and integrated into the rest of the force. The number of relief crews for the cars was increased in 1958, and the Met began to use Q cars on a minimum 16-hour and sometimes 24-hour basis.⁸¹ All divisions that year were given reserve crews drawn from the uniformed branch because the CID did not have trained drivers and officers available. By 1 June 1959, integrated working had been extended with the use of 21 Q cars in various divisions, with possibly up to about 10 or 11 reserve cars also operating: an experiment that was considered to be an 'undoubted success', as indicated by Table 4.4.⁸² By 1959, it was claimed that 50 per cent more cars had been employed and that

Table 4.4 Arrests with the Q-car system, 1958 and 1960⁸³

Year	June	July	August	September	October	November	Total
1958	87	111	83	85	160	133	659
1960	223	235	211	201	175	206	1,251
Increase	136	124	128	116	15	73	592

that had led to 50 per cent more arrests (though, as Table 4.4, shows the figures were low), which suggests that there were possibly 33 Q cars in operation.⁸⁴ Q-car numbers clearly expanded further in the early 1960s, and the Metropolitan Commissioner's Office introduced, into A2 district of the Metropolitan area, an additional crew and a uniformed sergeant to aid the work of the 22 Q cars used in that district.⁸⁵

The Q-car system prospered until the 1960s, increasingly demonstrating the value of an integrated system of policing, even though it was based upon a plain-clothes operation. It anticipated the structure for the UBP system, which emerged in the 1960s and relied upon uniformed police cars, and particularly the Panda car, along with two-way radio system and a collator to analyse evidence in a quick response to incidents. This integrated system of rapid-response policing was obviously partly a response to the rising level of inner-city and urban-area crime, and effectively challenged the established preventive foot patrol system encouraged by Sir Robert Peel through the Metropolitan Police Act of 1829. Traffic policing became part of a more integrated approach, whereby the Met provided special traffic patrols alongside other motorised units, sweeping away much of the Victorian foot-patrolling system, and accelerating a trend that is clearly discernible in the inter-war years.

The unmarked Q cars had been considered 'un-British' by the motoring lobby, but the Z car-style of policing of the uniformed police of the UBP was a very different proposition and anticipated fundamental changes in the policing of Britain. 'Z' car-style policing first emerged in Kirkby, near Liverpool, in 1959, and consisted of uniformed two-man police patrols in cars, which were used to replace the beat policeman. The term Z cars was coined by Colonel Eric St Johnston, the Chief Constable of Lancashire, who set up the Kirkby patrol cars before acting briefly as an advisor to the hard-hitting action-packed television series *Z Cars*, which ran from 1962 until 1978. The television series used the alphabetical system of numbering adopted by the Lancashire Police for their marked police units. The Lancashire units had call signs, with

A Unit was in the north of the county, based in Ulverston, while the later letters in the alphabet were used for the call signs of those units in the vicinity of Manchester and Liverpool. There was never, in fact, a call sign Z. The TV series took the non-existent signs Z Victor 1 and Z Victor 2 for their series; the letter Z did not refer to the cars they used. The Ford Zephyr was the standard car used by the Lancashire Police; the Ford Zodiac, a faster car, was in fact never used by them.

The system developed in Kirkby was based upon the idea of policing being conducted from identifiably marked cars manned by two officers, but soon developed as a basis for reorganising the police, along with foot patrols and 'collators', for a rapid mobile response to incidents, along the lines of the 1930s areas car system which did not use unmarked cars. It was campaigned for by the Chief Constable of Lancashire at the CCA in the early 1960s, and quickly gained growing support.⁸⁶ Fully developed and formally introduced in Kirkby in May 1965, UBP was encouraged by Harold Wilson's Labour Party victory in the general election victory of March 1966, and promoted by the new Home Secretary, Roy Jenkins.⁸⁷ On 1 June 1966, the Home Office Research and Planning Branch introduced a form of UBP into Accrington, Lancashire, on a similar principle to that at Kirkby. In North West England, Carlisle and other areas followed suit – the only exception being Oldham where the Finance Committee of the Police Committee would not immediately agree to purchase cars. Very quickly, about two-thirds of Lancashire and the North West had introduced some preliminary sort of UBP – or the Accrington version of the scheme – and some flexible versions of UBP were also developed in Manchester and Liverpool. Jenkins gave further impetus to this scheme when, on 7 December 1966, the Home Office organised a meeting of the Police Advisory Board, which decided to fundamentally reorganise the system of policing in Britain by introducing UBP, sending out a circular commanding its introduction. The system developed rapidly, if haphazardly, and about two-thirds of England and Wales, and parts of Scotland, were covered by 1968.

On 25 July 1968, the Staff Officers' Conference, an historically important meeting of seismic proportions with regard to policing in Britain, brought together 23 senior police officers, inspectors and advisers from the Police Research and Development Branch, and from police forces in England, Scotland and Wales, to discuss the staffing problems of UBP. Their particular purpose was to distil the fragmented emergence of UBP and to give some guidance for its future development. Chaired by R. Bebbington of the Police Research and Development Branch, it included representatives from across British policing, including Chief

Superintendent Ferrie of the Renfrew and Bute Constabulary, Superintendent Jackson, of Wales and the South East, and many others from England, including Superintendent Jackson of the Eastern Division, Superintendent Harrison of the Western District, Sergeant Vickers of the North East and Superintendents Jackson and O' Hanlon from the Eastern Division.

Reports to the meeting indicated that the North-West Police Area (plus Gwynedd in Wales) had 17 UBP schemes operating in 1968. The Lancashire scheme began on the 14 May 1965, the Cumbria scheme on 17 September 1966, the Gwynedd scheme on 27 October 1967, two other schemes were established at the end of 1967, and the rest in 1968. The report of the HM Chief Inspector of the Constabulary of Scotland suggested that the opportunities to introduce UBP were far fewer in Scotland than in England and Wales, because of the relative lack of large towns and the large expanse of rural areas. There were 23 police forces in Scotland, 4 for large cities, 1 borough force and 18 county forces, and it was felt that 9 of the county forces would be unable to introduce UBP or even its rural variant rural beat policing (RBP). Of the rest, schemes were introduced in Ayrshire (1 January 1967), Edinburgh (9 May 1967), Glasgow (15 May 1967), Fife (October 1967), Clydebank, Arbroath, Inverness, Hamilton, Kilmarnock and Ayr. In January 1968, schemes were being contemplated for Renfrew and Bute, Dumfries, Galloway, and the scheme in Fife was to be extended.⁸⁸ Most of the schemes in the eastern region of Britain had emerged since the end of April 1968. Birmingham and the Midlands, the Southern Division, the Thames Valley, and all the other areas were moving, often haltingly, towards some variant of UBP. In England it was only the City of London Police, of urban police forces, who, it was felt, would have difficulty in introducing UBP, because of the small area they covered. Given the disparate nature of the implementation of UBP (and RBP), the Staff Officers' Conference was clearly laying down new rules to try to make them more consistent across all areas. The system developed rapidly in the 1970s and beyond, with black-and-white Panda cars, for instance, being designated area cars or immediate response vehicles (IRV), according to the level of training of the drivers; area car drivers, unlike IRV drivers, were constrained from ignoring traffic lights and operating the siren.

UBP varied enormously between forces, particularly in relation to both manpower levels and the number of cars. In C Division of Newcastle upon Tyne there were six drivers allocated to a car, to cover a 24-hour shift with seven car beats. However, they soon had difficulty manning the cars with 2 men, instead of 1, and in 28 days only

achieved 67 out of 515 man shifts, resulting in it being suggested that there should be 9 men attached to each car.⁸⁹ They also had difficulties with a shortage of skilled staff, and it was noted that 12 of the 42 police drivers were, in fact, probationers. Other police areas seem to have applied UBP to a whole district, but in Leeds and Sunderland they operated on a subdivisational basis. Other problems included the fact that in Leeds there were insufficient radios, in contrast to Sunderland, which had 100 sets for a network of 14 cars. It was also reported to the Conference that: 'There are still too many foot patrols in town centres, and borough Chief Constables are most reluctant to reduce them.'⁹⁰ Yet the benefits of UBP were being discovered and it was noted that: 'At Leeds, a force deficiency of about 300 has resulted in the utmost economy in the use of manpower, and the city operated without town centre foot patrols. The Chief Constable now estimates that he could police the area properly with only 100 additional men.'⁹¹

There were many critical reports of how UBP operated in Cheshire, Manchester and Birmingham in 1969. Of Birmingham, Chief Inspector T. Booth of the Metropolitan Police said that:

The absence of a foot patrol in the central area brought a spate of criticism from every quarter and as a result the force planning department have re-adjusted allocation of cars to allow for a small foot patrol strength. Even so, I found the size of residential and car beats in this force to be completely incompatible with efficient policing. At the moment Birmingham area are operating eighty-eight beat cars over an area no much larger than our 'Z' Division which has only twenty-eight cars. Whilst comparisons are odious it does tend to stem the ineffectiveness of following the Home Office . . . too closely.⁹²

There was considerable discussion and reporting on how rural areas could develop their equivalent RBP system. The difficulty is that the population of such areas was, by its very nature, diffuse, and the area to be covered much too large. Nevertheless, it was felt that whilst each village could not necessarily afford the luxury of a policeman, the RBP could be made to operate efficiently. Indeed, one successful RBP scheme in Bedfordshire covered 11,000 people living in an area of 35,000 acres, with 110 road miles to patrol, and dealt with about 100 crimes per year.⁹³

The Conference discussion favoured urban areas having eight car beats, emphasised the value of UBP producing 'a quick response time for incidents', the reduced need for foot patrols, and the important

incident analysis work of the collator in the police station.⁹⁴ Superintendent O'Hanlon of Eastern Division regarded UBP as a combination of 'modern policing methods and old-fashioned supervisory methods'.⁹⁵ It was also stressed that the collator under UBP would have to deal effectively with a duplication of evidence, in order to make informed decisions quickly, so as to initiate a speedy response to incidents.

At this Conference, UBP was seen as a more practical and professional form of policing, than mere foot and traffic patrol, for the enforcement of both traffic laws and non-traffic policing duties. It was further noted by the Committee that traffic police officers were no longer hampered by emergency calls and could focus more upon their traffic duties.⁹⁶ UBP was to be based upon the use of vehicles – increasingly, the black-and-white painted Panda cars (there were also blue and white cars for more general police duties), which were drawn from a wide variety of car models, from Hillman Imps in Kent to Ford Escorts in Thames Valley.⁹⁷ These Panda cars could get to the scene of an incident quickly because most police officers had two-way radio systems to enable a rapid response to criminal activity or traffic incidents. The UBP sometimes operated with the much reduced foot patrol police in city and town centres, and at the police station there would be a collator who would analyse the information produced by the patrolling officers for a rapid response. The idea was that the UBP would also attempt to work with the local community for intelligence information. The clear message was that UBP policing should initially be based upon the mobile Panda cars, which could cover six times the area of a normal foot patrol, a two-way radio system and co-ordinated intelligence. It was a revolutionary change in the organisation of policing in Britain for it was responding to the perceived changing nature of criminal behaviour caused by motor vehicles, although there were other factors involved. It also ensured that the traditional bobby on the beat would become a rarer site on the streets of Britain. It worked well enough, promoting policing over a wider geographical area over a 24-hour cycle, though, since the 1980s, there has been a view that Britain should get back to the advantages of having the local knowledge of the traditional bobby on the beat, and the ability to reassure and dissuade that the constable on a beat inspires. However, in the 1960s the UBP system was seen as a way of meeting the needs of the modern society and facing rising levels of crime. By the 1980s it was under criticism, for whilst it offered a rapid response to crime it was considered inimical to public opinion. Indeed, eventually an article in the *Daily Mail*, in 2014, expressed the view felt by some that, since the UBP,

car patrolling had lost the impact of reassurance and deterrence evident in street patrolling: 'Put him [the police officer] in a car and give him a radio and he starts to react to events after they have happened.'⁹⁸

The impact of UBP upon policing the traffic

What, then, did the developments from Z cars to UBP, and indeed RBP, mean for the policing of traffic in the late 1960s? How did UBP affect the battle for Britain's roads in its emerging years?

It was clearly stated at the 1968 Staff Officers' Conference that: 'One of the objects of UBP is to provide a quicker response time for incidents. These can be measured by the Collator. A further advantage is conspicuity i.e. large police signs on cars which must be an advantage over the policeman on foot.'⁹⁹ However, when the UBP first emerged in the mid- to late 1960s, it was seen as a supplement rather than an alternative to traffic patrols. Indeed, it was clearly stated at the Conference that: 'All chief constables agreed that traffic patrols were needed', and that, indeed, was a requirement of all police forces from 1967.¹⁰⁰ Nevertheless, Mr Manuel did suggest that: 'Traffic patrols had their work taken over by the Panda car.' O'Hanlon, of the Eastern Division of Britain, clearly indicated that, in his area, Panda cars were still being used for both UBP and normal traffic duties, and noted that there was often 'a race between Panda and UBP cars to see who would get the scene of an accident first'.¹⁰¹ Bebbington, chairing the Staff Officers' Meeting, seemed to recognise that Panda cars were being used as part of the UBP system and that the rest of traffic policing provided the incident cars, which were slower and unlikely to prevent crime or catch a criminal. The UBP was, indeed, a vital addition to traffic policing. It did not remove the uniformed traffic police who were already in place. Apparently, in many rural areas the UBP/RBP took responsibility for the main roads and patrolled the roads emanating from urban areas, where they would expect speeding and other traffic offences.

This picture of overlapping duties, fitful co-operation and the continuance of established traffic policing is borne out by the supporting evidence from all police regions gathered for the Staff Committee Meeting. Indeed, evidence from the report of the Midland regions suggested that: 'cases have arisen when Panda cars have been involved in a chase they have lost wireless control with their local controller because they

had travelled out of range'.¹⁰² The South East Region Report, in an attempt to assuage the fears of the traffic police, noted that:

Some Traffic Officers wondered whether the future lay in the new system of policing. There is no reason why the traffic patrols should not play a part especially in the field of criminal intelligence. They should be able to play a more rigorous role in traffic enforcement.¹⁰³

Some police forces issued collator bulletins to keep their colleagues abreast of developments. The Thames Valley Constabulary Divisional Collators' Bulletins indicate, in a welter of detail, information about the criminal of the week and the changed addresses of suspects, and the arrest of suspects charged with larceny as a result of their car and number plates being circulated.¹⁰⁴ The Reading Police Collators' Bulletins focused more upon the use of a garage to break up stolen vehicles.¹⁰⁵ The fact is that, in its early years, the UBP, and indeed RBP, did overlap with the duties of traffic police. The two systems continued to deal with criminal activities connected with traffic, although it was the traffic police who undertook patrolling and road safety duties in all their forms. The vital point to emerge is that the UBP was a rapid-response system, whereas traffic policing was much more concerned with watching, discouraging and advising motorists. The collator reports also make it clear that UBP was often aimed at traditional CID targets, whereas traffic policing per se was there to alter or police the behaviour of the average motorist. The relationship did develop from the 1970s onwards, to a point where the Panda, or rapid-response, cars, were used in different capacities according to the skills of the policemen who were driving. Those with standard driving skills could not run a red light or use the police siren in the pursuit of criminals, whilst those who were more advanced drivers were empowered to take both actions.

Given the notoriously difficult relations between the police and the public, and the police and the motorist, it is interesting, surprising, and perhaps even improbable, that most of the reports on the early days of UBP imply an improving relationship. The North Western Area Report, presented to the 1968 Staff Officers' Conference, was emphatic in suggesting that: 'It is apparent, as a result of the introduction of the new methods of policing, that the relationship between the police and the public is showing a favourable trend.'¹⁰⁶ There was no quantitative assessment of this, but public support, in the contentious and contested world of policing, is something that the police rely upon. Such support was not always available from the motoring public.

Continuing conflict between the motoring organisations, the police and the law

Relations between the police and the motorist had been contentious from the beginning of the motoring in the 1890s, inflamed by the issue of speed traps, AA scouts and the volatility of the magistrates' courts. Matters improved as the AA and RAC scouts and officers were drawn into helpful point duty in London in the 1920s and 1930s. Yet the relations between the police and the vested interests of motoring were never entirely easy, largely because of their contending opinions. It was clear that the police wanted order on the road, whilst the AA and RAC were much more concerned about protecting their members from arrest as a result of confusing and variably applied rules, which might vary in their interpretation from area to area and from situation to situation. This was most effectively seen in the evidence that the motoring organisations, particularly the RAA/RAC, gave to the Royal Commission on the Police of 1960–1961; the Commission was focusing upon the need to improve relations between the motorists and the police.¹⁰⁷

The Standing Joint Committee of the RAC, the AA and the Royal Scottish Automobile Club (RSAC), from its lair at 3 York Street, Regent's Park, in London, sent to the Royal Commission on the Police 1960–1961, via its secretary T. A. Critchley, who later became a famous historian of policing history, 'A Summary of the Views of the Motoring Organisations concerning the Relationship between the Police and the Motoring Public'. The SJC prided itself on its commitment to maintaining a good relationship with the police, and stressed that the police wished to reciprocate, as suggested by the 1958 report of the Commissioner of Police of the Met. The Commissioner had reported upon the growing mountain of regulations arising from the enormous increase in the number of cars entering London and the consequent parking problems, which imposed 'strain on the cordial relations which normally exist between the police and the motorist'.¹⁰⁸ His summary added that:

Critical views are, however, expressed more frequently concerning the policies adopted by police forces in regard to the enforcement of motoring regulations or in regard to the lack of clearly defined policy. The motoring organisations consider that this aspect of the matter should be thoroughly investigated with a view to securing uniform methods which may be understood and respected by the motoring public. In this way, it is hoped that the enforcement action may be effectively carried out without causing resentment. It is desirable

that the police employed on traffic duties should be regarded by the motorists as a source of help and guidance and not as primarily interested in obtaining convictions.¹⁰⁹

The Commissioner's report suggested that police recruitment and training were vital to the improvement of relations, since it was considered essential that the police should be fair in their judgement and willing to distinguish between the treatment of those who had committed minor offences and those who had committed serious crimes. In particular, it was felt that entering the ticket system for crimes (fixed penalty notices) was a new concept in punishment, and that, 'It will be important to ensure that the simplification of enforcement procedure will not lead to a hardening of the police attitude towards the motoring public.'¹¹⁰ The report further maintained that traffic wardens, who were just being appointed in London at that point under police supervision, should be trained to 'assist rather than to harass the motoring public'.¹¹¹

Nevertheless, it was the law and its enforcement that worried the Standing Joint Committee of the RAC, AA and RSAC most. The motoring organisations felt that the 'unpopularity of the police' arose more from the way in which they carried out their duties than from the fact that they had to enforce the law. It was argued that motorists observed the law if it was reasonable and precise, but tended to ignore it if it was unfair and unfairly enforced. Disregard of the law, it was felt, was unsatisfactory, but it arose because: 'Some perplexity is caused to motorists by variations in the policing in regard to enforcement at different times and in different parts of the country.'¹¹² More specifically, it was alleged that: 'Each chief officer of police makes his own decisions in regard to the policy to be adopted. Some general indication of police policy in the matter of enforcement in the matter of enforcement of motoring regulations would be welcomed by drivers.'¹¹³

The motoring organisations were emphatic, and bitter, in their views of the prickly issue of police traffic patrols; they favoured those conducted by uniformed officers in marked cars whose presence had 'a most beneficial effect on road behaviour', but disliked plain-clothes patrolling in unidentified Q cars, 'particularly when it results in prosecution for minor offences'.¹¹⁴ Parking, it acknowledged, was a contested problem, since it was not always obvious where parking was permissible, and the law on obstruction of the highway was considered to be flawed. Yet most criticism was directed at the new 'ticket system' being introduced into London by the Road Traffic and Road Improvement Act 1960, which gave a driver the option of paying a financial penalty in respect of a

certain offence without having to go to a court hearing. This required confidence in the system, and there was concern that, if matters went to court, courts would have to deal with such ticket issues with rapidity and that the motorist would only accept the new system if they felt that the actions of the police and the court were reasonable. The removal of vehicles, that occurred, for instance, in the Pink Zone scheme in London (a scheme introduced for Central London in 1959 and repeated in 1960, where parking meter places were set up for the Christmas period and free parking areas were provided to deal with the Christmas rush), was also considered unnecessary unless there was a serious case of obstruction to answer and proper display of warnings.

By the 1960s many new aids to detection were available and the motoring organisations complained that:

The use of scientific aids in the investigation and detection of traffic offences is a matter of some concern to motoring organisations. They are anxious to ensure that such inventions as radar speed meters and sonometers are used only in conditions which [prevent] any possibility of the recording of inaccurate data. Some motorists object to their use by the police, in the detection of speeding offences of such devices as radar speed meters and of such methods as speed traps which are timed over a measured length of highway by hidden police. It may be that no objection can justifiably be taken to such measures, but there is good reason for thinking that many people would prefer them to be used only if more overt measures proved useless.¹¹⁵

The motoring organisations made it clear that the measurement of speeding continued to remain contentious. Under the Road Traffic Act of 1960 it was possible for a court to convict on the basis of two witnesses providing evidence of speeding. However, it would appear that the police and the courts were reluctant to accept such evidence, for 'This process is thought to be undesirable, it has seldom been invoked, it is liable to cause ill-feeling, and it is felt that there is little justification for its retention.'¹¹⁶

The RAA/RAC submission to the Royal Commission occurred at the cusp of the post-war changes in the control of the roads. The 'courtesy police' policy with regard to motorists had been tried in the late 1930s, but had only worked with the saturation policing of the Home Office Scheme of the late 1930s. As a result, the police had used unmarked Q cars to capture the 'speed hogs' of the road in the 1930s, and from the mid- to late 1940s, upsetting the motoring organisations in the

process. In addition, the 1960s saw three other developments that further exacerbated relations between the police and motoring organisations. The first was the discussions about how to deal with the fixed penalty notice fines and their impact upon the work of magistrates' courts. The second was the development of motorways from 1959 onwards, which called for a more integrated system of police action between the forces of different counties, and restrictions on what could or could not be done on some of the highways of Britain. The third was the introduction of seat restraints and the breathalyser under the 1967 Road Safety Act. Although all three gave the police enhanced powers, it was the last of these that essentially reasserted police authority on the road.

Fixed Penalty Fines and specialist or centralised magistrates' courts

By the mid-1960s there was strong public concern about the rising general level of crime and the disregard for traffic laws, much of it directed at both the MoT and the Home Office. J. Madge, of the MoT, expressed the concern that, 'If being caught does not matter we can never win.'¹¹⁷ He thus demanded more action from the police to deal with driving offences, and supported the idea of central courts: 'I think that we must think harder about traffic courts and traffic police. While the police are coming round a bit, playing cops and robbers will always be more fun than prosecuting traffic offences.'¹¹⁸ Mr Scott of the MoT could not agree, but admitted that it was salutary to reflect that:

It is scarcely an exaggeration to say that you can with impunity do almost anything in a car provided you don't park it, hit something or fail to spot a speed trap. It is no good blaming the Police, that is by no means entirely their fault.¹¹⁹

Notwithstanding such criticism, Madge felt that the main purpose of the police was to prevent accidents rather than to enforce the law, and that the police should be seen to helping people to be safe rather than 'catching them out'.¹²⁰ Madge was clearly reflecting strong views held within the MoT, and was probably active in preparing a brief for the Minister of Transport, Barbara Castle, in anticipation of the Road Safety Bill of 1967, which called for an unleashing of police action to enforce the traffic laws, favouring the idea of fixed penalty notice fines for speeding, and not just for parking, to reduce court time. However, he did

not favour the formation of a separate national traffic police, 'Castle's Cops', named after the Minister of Transport, an idea first mooted by the Royal Commission on Policing in 1962, feeling that each force should have its own separate traffic department, a measure introduced in the Road Safety Act of 1967.¹²¹ In addition, Madge indicated an interest in specialist traffic courts like those that had emerged in the United States.

It was in this climate of debate and confusion that the Law Society, a professional organisation of solicitors, campaigned for the establishment of specialist traffic courts, separate from the normal magistrates' courts.¹²² In a ten-page memorandum it suggested that since traffic offences were often complex and lacking in clear definitions, there was a need for traffic courts with magistrates who had extensive experience of dealing with offences.¹²³ The idea of traffic courts, as mentioned, came from the United States, where there was considered to be compelling evidence that such courts worked, and it was also felt that they could deal more easily than the average court with the increasing number of traffic offences. The offences were often difficult to understand, lacked clarity of definition (for instance, between reckless and careless driving, and the improper use of the road referred to in Chapter 3), and it was difficult to establish 'where there is no element of criminality'.¹²⁴

The Law Society's suggestion raised the temperature of debate in 1966. It pointed out that there were 889,000 traffic cases in 1965 – 65 per cent of the workload of all courts – and that only 1,800 cases were not treated in magistrates' courts.¹²⁵ It then looked at how the problem was dealt with in the USA, noting that where a court had 30–59 traffic offences to deal with per week, it held one sitting for traffic offences, and two sittings when there were between 60 and 89 offences. Where a court faced 7,500 or more cases per year a traffic court was set up. This, the Law Society felt, was the pattern the British courts should follow since it was estimated that there would be 1,800,000 traffic cases by 1980, of which about 70 per cent would have to be dealt with by the courts.¹²⁶ Faced with likely delays in dealing with cases, a draft paper of the Law Society's campaign argued that there would be 'a growth of contempt for much traffic law' if court delays occurred, and thus a '...waste of policemen's time':

They have to attend the Court until the case is heard, since the time for this is not known in advance, they may well have to waste all day. If the case adjourns they then have to repeat the performance another

day. If a policeman has several cases these may not be grouped, so he may have to attend court several times.¹²⁷

Given this debilitating wastage, the Law Society felt that traffic courts would be a much better solution because there would be no fundamental changes required and the burden could be reduced further if the 'present proposal to extend the ticket system to speeding, failure to display a vehicle excise licence and lighting offences on moving vehicles are implemented'.¹²⁸ This view had already been rejected by the Royal Commission on Police of 1962, the Home Office and the police. Indeed, a Home Office working party optimistically suggested that the solution to the burgeoning number of fixed penalty notices would be to increase the fine.¹²⁹ Lord Dilhorne, the Lord Chancellor, after a discussion with the Magistrates' Association, also dismissed the idea, rejecting the notion that it would remove the backlog of cases.¹³⁰ In effect, the Home Office tackled the rising pressure on the courts by the two-pronged attack of setting up a new court in the London MPD, 'to deal with non-custody cases, including many minor motoring cases which are causing congestion...', and by increasing the number of stipendiary magistrates from 29 to 34.¹³¹ Traffic courts were not to be formed, but the burden of traffic offences led to the expansion of the magisterial system.

Faced with the rapidly rising number of traffic offences, as indicated in Table 4.6, the main route forward seemed to be to simplify the law, since the majority of people did not have 'even the foggiest idea of the gradations in existing traffic offences and the maximum actual penalties', which necessitated a campaign to combine 'education, publicity and enforcement'.¹³² In the end, the existing confusion in the law persisted, the number of traffic offences climbed rapidly, and the courts remained bogged down with cases despite attempts to increase the number of magistrates. There was little to alleviate the pressures upon the police and, indeed, their burdens had increased from the late 1950s onwards with the opening of motorways (Table 4.5).

Table 4.5 The enforcement of traffic law offences relating to motor vehicles, 1961–1963¹³³

	1961	1962	1st half 1963
Number of offences dealt with by prosecution	896,832	989,812	493,509
Number of persons prosecuted	680,691	755,757	377,445

Policing the motorways

Whilst the police and the motorist may have been in conflict over the law and its enforcement there was a sense of equability when motorways were opened, because of the absence of the pedestrian as a motorway user, but this was not to last. Harold Macmillan opened the 8-mile Preston Bypass, the first section of motorway in Britain, on 5 December 1958. Less than a year later Ernest Marples, the Minister of Transport, opened the first section of the M1, which stretched from Berrygrove, near Watford (now junction 5), to Crick, near Rugby (now junction 18), as part of what became a 62-mile motorway. These, and subsequent motorways, brought about a revolution in British motoring by offering opportunities for motorists to drive fast for long distances. The rapid development of the motorway system challenged the whole issue of multiple road usage, since here, for the first time, was a road system which gave exclusive use to motorists. Nevertheless, opening the first section of the M1, and now recorded in a 34-second YouTube clip, Marples suggested the danger of such motoring was that 'this magnificent road encouraged speed so great that senses may be numbed and judgement warped', that 'the margin of error gets smaller as the speeds get faster', and that motorists should 'take it easy' and remember 'If in doubt don't.' By 1964 the motorway system was spreading rapidly throughout Britain. The M4 and M5 were wending their ways up the Thames Valley out to the west, and the M1 linked the West Midlands with the North West.

Initially, Marples' cautious words were taken lightly by both the motorists and the police, who felt the motorways would be a safer haven for the motorists and relatively free from accidents now that pedestrians would not be a factor. The Traffic Sub-Committee of the CCA had, in 1956, first suggested of the impending motorways that the 'greatest single contribution to the reduction of accidents would be the raising of the general standard of the road user, and in this field the police play a leading role', and advocated a speed limit of 70 mph.¹³⁴ Three years later, on 4 December 1959, the CCA received an annual report from its Traffic Sub-Committee indicating that it had sent a working party over to Holland and returned with concerns that motorways could be used as escape routes by criminals.¹³⁵ Apart from this, there were many ongoing problems. The CCA was informed that, on the 295 miles of the A1/Great North Road (which was about to be restricted to motor vehicles), there were concerns about variations in motor police patrolling. Indeed, the AA, RAC and RSAC had reported to the Royal Commission on the Police (1960–1962) that this had led to a 'diversity of treatment of motorists in

different force areas', aggravating tensions between the police and the motorists.¹³⁶ The fact is that, on that stretch of road, there were 13 different police forces operating, with 13 different types of equipment, and it was felt that there should be uniformity because chief constables themselves would not wish to work with 13 different motoring organisations and 13 different highway codes: 'As the Motorway Chief Constables put it, here is the opportunity to play a larger part in helping to make travel on a main route safer and easier.'¹³⁷ Co-operation and greater uniformity between police forces, as well as improved road design, became the policy pursued by chief constables.¹³⁸ T. E. Johnstone, the Chief Constable for Lancashire, reminded the Working Party on Motorways of the continued importance of Tripp's three Es for road safety – Enforcement, Education and Engineering.¹³⁹

The initial police expectation that the new motorways would be safer and easier to police soon proved to be an ill-founded assumption,¹⁴⁰ for, far from reducing the their burden, it was increased, and a level of integration of policing between forces not previously realised was required. Indeed, motorways raised the related issues of safety, driving standards and the pressure on police resources. The M1 between London and Birmingham, for instance, was immediately the subject of a survey which covered its opening from 2 November 1959, to 31 July 1960, and indicated that there had been some serious problems, with 45 deaths and 734 injuries on its three sections.¹⁴¹ There were also other studies of traffic conditions throughout this period, but once the motorway had been studied for a year it was stated that 'The Home Office appear to be under some pressure from the police to discontinue [the analysis] on M1 now that they had twelve months experience of it.'¹⁴² The police also conducted their own report on the M1, noting how a motorway differed from a normal road in having no crossing traffic, and in the fact that 'traffic is not impeded by pedestrians, cyclists, animals or learner drivers who are excluded'.¹⁴³ The police report examined the 75 miles of M1 and M45 that went through six counties (Herefordshire 14 miles, Bedfordshire 19 miles, Buckinghamshire 10 miles, Nottinghamshire 21 miles, Northamptonshire, Northamptonshire M45 8 miles and Warwickshire M45 3 miles). What emerges is that the police had planned for the motorway from the time that the Preston Bypass had been formed, but that they had not expected driving standards would be so poor, with drivers driving too fast, paying insufficient attention to signs and not using sidelights in darkening conditions. The policing requirement was originally one of a provisional crew unit with two men from each of the four counties, but this was an underestimate and

additional cars and motorcycles had to be employed.¹⁴⁴ The police report reflected that: 'It is hardly necessary to say that the Motorway needs more police attention than any ordinary main road. There are more incidents to attend to and the danger of obstructions being left unmarked is greater.'¹⁴⁵ Yet it concluded that the four-month trial on the working of the motorway, conducted by the Home Office and the police, did not indicate the number of police cars needed. Indeed, the problem of establishing how many cars were needed and whether or not they should be one-manned or two-manned remained a vexed question throughout the 1960s and 1970s, subject to very technical surveying and analysis.¹⁴⁶ The responsibilities of the police mounted up, although they were given new weapons in controlling motoring that redressed the balance in favour of pedestrians and other road users, as well increasing their own powers, when the issue of drink and driving was finally challenged in the 1960s.

The 1967 Road Safety Act and the breathalyser

From the Licencing Act of 1872 until the Road Safety Act of 1967 a range of legislation had made it an offence to drive, or be in control of a motorised vehicle whilst under the influence of drink or drugs. The precise wording of the legislation varied slightly, but the Criminal Justice Act of 1925 and the various Road Traffic Acts of 1930, 1960 and 1962, reiterated the offence and offered punishment in the form of a fine or a short prison sentence, at the discretion of the court. Nevertheless, this legislation was difficult to enforce, largely because there were no accurate guidelines, and therefore no legal limits, as to what constituted being drunk or under the influence of drink, as was indicated by the Royal Commission on Transport (1931–1933) and, as mentioned in Chapter 3, was recognised by Dr Ralph Rimmer in his speech to the CCA in the 1930s. Indeed, as we have seen, the situation worsened during the Second World War, and, on 1 March 1945, the Road Safety Committee of the MoT produced a paper on the 'Administration of the Law'.¹⁴⁷ It argued that:

[M]agistrates should realise that 'under the influence of drink' does not necessarily mean intoxication in the ordinary sense and that Magistrates should be consulted on the subject. It is believed, however, that Magistrates and their clerks are, in general, well aware of the point. No doubt there are exceptions but in the view of the Home Office a circular to Benches as suggested by the Committee, unless it

were tied to some especially appropriate occasion, such as a change in relevant pieces of the law, might do more harm than good.

The report also surveyed the whole area of the enforcement of the law, noting that 'it cannot be said that any satisfactory means of securing a greater degree of uniformity in penalties imposed for motoring offences has yet been devised'. The situation with regard to dealing with drink-driving seemed almost irresolvable at the end of the Second World War. This problem was amplified by the fact that the *R v Crossman* case of 1939 (NI 106) established that earning a living by driving was not a special circumstance that would allow a drunken driver to avoid the endorsement or suspension of his/her licence in Northern Ireland, but could be in the English courts.¹⁴⁸ Exemption was the rule in England and Wales.

Nevertheless, an attempt was made to address the problem of rising death rates in the 1950s when, in 1956, the Conservative government decided that it would amend Section 15 of the Road Traffic Act of 1930, in a bill that had a clause to 'make drunk-in-charge a separate offence from driving or attempting to drive under the influence of drink or drugs and drunk in charge is the less serious offence of the two'.¹⁴⁹ According to the *Police Review*, this was the result of police pressure, although it was doubtful whether it would keep drunken drivers off the road.

The 1960 Road Traffic Act attempted to beef up the law, although the wording was very much the same as the Road Traffic Act of 1956, but there were difficulties in that even if a motorist was considered to be drunk and driving badly or dangerously, it might be argued in court that he/she was a bad driver in any case – in some courts this meant the driver then avoided punishment.¹⁵⁰ Indeed, the CCA and the Working Party on the Policy on Motorway and Major Roads constantly maintained that police activity 'is inevitably conditioned to some extent by the attitude of the courts, there are limits to which uniformity can be achieved'.¹⁵¹

The 1962 Road Traffic Act had sought to introduce blood, urine and breath tests, but there were still no clear limits as to what levels of alcohol consumption constituted being drunk, nor was it an offence to refuse to supply evidential samples. Nevertheless, in 1964 the British government became interested in an American accident, alcohol and risk study, the 'Grand Rapids Effect Revisited', which suggested that when there was 80 micrograms of alcohol in 100 millilitres of blood there was an increased chance of drivers causing accidents on the road. On leaving office to contest the General Election of October 1964, Ernest

Marples, the outgoing Transport Minister, was interviewed about his achievements. He was not satisfied that he had done everything he could have done for road safety, and stated he was 'a disappointed man today. I have not got over to the motorists the meaning of personal responsibility. Drivers must be made to realise that it will not pay [for] them to drive recklessly, drunken driving is automatic disqualification.'¹⁵²

However, the subsequent Labour government declared an interest in introducing a drink-driving limit based upon the American study, and, in 1967, Barbara Castle, the Minister of Transport and a non-driver, pushed forward the 1967 Road Safety Act, which imposed alcohol limits of 80 mg of alcohol per 100 ml and the equivalent of 107 mgs of alcohol per 100 millilitres of urine. In March 1967 she was quoted as having said that: 'The reason why people are being killed and maimed at this appalling rate must chiefly be because people are drink-happy, impatient, and thoroughly careless.'¹⁵³ In response, Dick Taverne MP, junior minister at the Home Office, argued that there should be a circular to the police on the first part of the Road Safety Act of 1967, outlining the requirements for urine tests and the need to breathalyse all drivers involved in an accident.¹⁵⁴ This became the famous Police (Chief Constable) Circular 25/1967, which set the limits of alcohol at 80 milligrams in 100 milligrams of blood or 107 millilitres of urine.¹⁵⁵

The Road Safety Act of 1967 was considered by the police to be an immediate success for even the threat of the breathalyser, before it was effectively deployed in 1968, seemed to have quickly brought about a significant reduction in the number of road casualties. There was evidence of an 18 per cent reduction in accidents, from 2,269 in November and December 1966, to 1,859 in November and December 1967, and RoSPA noted a fall of no less than 25 per cent on comparable periods.¹⁵⁶ The impression was not to last long, however, for whilst road deaths and injuries did fall in 1968 (Table 1.2) they increased in the early 1970s, before a long decline in drink-drive-related accidents, deaths and injuries began to occur. The problem in determining results is that the precise details on deaths caused by drink-driving are difficult to disentangle from other statistics on crime and traffic offences until 1979, when a vigorous campaign, conducted on television and in the press to curb drink-driving, seemed to spawn information. However, we know that there were 1,640 drink-related road deaths in 1967, of the 7,319 total road deaths; that this remained at roughly the same level in the mid- to late 1970s, against a rising level of road mileage and rising death rates; and that, in the early twenty-first century,

drink-driving-related deaths fell from about 550 per annum to about 230 by 2012.

The slow improvement in drink-driving death rates was not helped by the challenges to the results of the breathalyser in the courts, which led to two important judgements in 1969. The first concerned the *Pinner v Everett* case, which led to a House of Lords decision relating to Section 291 of the Road Safety Act of 1967.¹⁵⁷ In this case, Hugh Pinner had been followed by two policemen at Huntingdon whilst driving, and had been stopped because his rear number plate was not illuminated. However, the officers smelled alcohol and breathalysed him, finding him over the drink-drive limit. He was breathalysed again at the police station and then asked to give a blood or urine test, a request which he refused. Convicted by the Huntingdon magistrates for failing to provide a blood or urine test, his appeal against this judgement to the divisional bench was overruled. He then appealed to the House of Lords on whether or not a breath specimen had to be provided, and whether or not he had to be in the actual act of driving when suspicion of drink-driving occurred. Lord Reid, taking a literal line of the legislation, pointed out that nowhere in the 1967 Act did the words 'actually driving' or 'driver' appear. He overruled the decision of the divisional bench and found in favour of Pinner, thus throwing the legislation into confusion. There was also the *Webb v Carey* decision of July 1969, which made the judgement that the drink test must be administered not less than 20 minutes after the last alcoholic drink.¹⁵⁸ Winning the battle with drivers under the influence of drink was going to be contentious, even if the police now had an additional powerful weapon in their armoury.

Yet win they did for, despite the problems of the courts, the fact is that there was almost an explosion of court cases brought by the police which were upheld by the courts, as is indicated in Table 4.6: figures which do not include the 14–20 per cent of those convicted for drink-driving as a second, rather than principal, offence. Clearly, drink-driving took time to control, but there is no doubt that police were rapidly gaining the upper hand after 1967 in the battle to improve the safety of the roads.

Conclusion

After the Second World War, which had seen traffic policing reduced by the exigent needs of war, traffic policing in Britain expanded greatly through the development of uniformed and marked traffic patrols and the reintroduction of unmarked and plain-clothes Q cars. Indeed, in

Table 4.6 Drink driving statistics for England, Scotland and Wales, 1966–2011

	Charged and convicted where drink-driving was the principal offence					
	England and Wales			Scotland		
	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total
1966	9,432	158	9,590	4,968	35	5,003
1967	9,887	151	10,038	5,309	54	5,363
1968	18,173	201	18,374	5,540	57	5,597
1969	23,417	304	23,721	6,969	67	7,036
1970	25,930	343	26,273	8,333	80	8,413
1975	56,757	1,388	58,145	11,435	250	11,685
1980	63,828	2,566	66,394	11,516	355	11,871
1985	88,281	4,912	93,193	10,411	405	10,816
1990	94,035	6,105	100,140	7,395	402	7,797
1995	75,174	6,290	81,464	6,047	445	6,492
2000	68,762	7,984	76,746	5,399	599	6,003
2011	41,638	8,413	50,051	4,314	967	5,281

Source: UK Drink Driving Statistics, from UK Drink Driving Statistics, England, Scotland and Wales 1966–2011, http://www.drinkdriving.org/drink_driving_statistics_uk.php.

1959/60 more than 56 million miles of traffic policing was done: this had risen to 63.7 million miles in 1962/3, and was still rising quickly.¹⁵⁹ This was a response to the increasing number of cars on the road, the resultant road fatalities and injuries, the smothering impact of road congestion and the rising level of road crime. Drawing upon the experiences of the United States, and indeed Munich in the early 1950s, parking meters, radar and CCTV coverage were introduced to meet the perceived problem of high death rates and poor traffic flow. The result of these pressures on policing was a rapid increase in the size of the police force of Britain in the 1950s and 1960s (referred to in Part I's introduction). Yet even then the growth of police numbers was insufficient to deal with the rapidly rising crime levels as the population grew by 50 per cent between 1945 and 1970. Even the employment of traffic wardens was only a modest step in alleviating the increasing burdens on the police, for whilst relieving the police of responsibility for administering the fixed penalty notice fine system, wardens nevertheless imposed increasing demands on police training skills and resources. In the final analysis, changes in the policing structure in Britain had to go beyond mere tinkering to fundamental restructuring – moving from foot patrolling, with some minor motor patrolling, to a more integrated and car-based system

of UBP with limited foot patrolling. In so doing, and with more effective powers with regard to drink-driving and speeding, the British police sought to assert their control of the urban landscape. As Luckin suggests, the breathalyser enhanced the police control of the road over the motorist. Motorists could no longer freely do what they wished. These developments operated within a financially tight climate, which saw police forces amalgamate, conscious of the need for more efficient and co-ordinated action, rather than committed to the extension of their powers. Traffic policing reflects the increased responsibilities that were imposed on the police and it is, perhaps, not surprising that, in 1968, the *Daily Sketch* reported 'POLICE PROTEST: WE CAN'T COPE' when the Home Office declared a stepping up of the war on motoring offences on 1,000 miles of key roads in Britain.¹⁶⁰ Nonetheless, the police had introduced new technology – and continued to do so – as well as modifying their organisation and seeking extra powers to make themselves effective enforcers of traffic, driven on by the attempt to act in a neutral and efficient way in their commitment to the demands of operating the law-enforcing 'policeman-state'. They battled to enforce the law of the land and impose discipline on the potential imbroglio developing between themselves, the motorists and the courts.

Part II

Engineering, Educating and Channelling Road Safety

The development of traffic policing, and the changes in the structure of policing that evolved in twentieth-century Britain, impacted greatly upon the urban roadscape and how it operated. The reorganisation of the police to increase their ability to enforce the law, focused upon in Part I, was based upon Sir Robert Peel's 1829 commitment to protect both life and property, and involved the control of speeding, and the misuse of cars, which threw the police into conflict with both the motorist and the courts. However, this had important consequences for the accessibility of the public highway. In order to protect life – for the motorist, the cyclist and the pedestrian – the British police quickly committed themselves to a policy of segregation. The public highway had been open to all in 1900, but the high deaths rates of the inter-war years and the 'road holocaust' of the 1930s, and, indeed, the rising road death rates of the 1950s, confirmed the police in their view that the motorist and the motorcyclist had to be separated from the pedestrian and other road users. The incompatibility of the speed of different road users, the dangers that cars presented to the life and limb of pedestrians, and the difficulties that an intermingling of road users meant for congestion and the environment, necessitated a pro-active police policy of segregation. The end product was that roads were improved, motorways and freeways were developed, and road safety, with the channelling of pedestrians, redefined the urban landscape of the motorist, the child and the pedestrian.

During the twentieth century, the police adopted the strategy of dealing with the impact of automotive vehicles in three ways. Firstly, as focused upon in Part I, they were central in the enforcement of the law, advising on new laws, training and appointing traffic wardens, pressurising the courts to be consistent and helpful, and dealing with car crime and traffic offences, such as speeding, drunken driving and illegal parking. They supported the removal of the speed limit with the 1930 Road Traffic Act, and its reinstatement in the 1934 Road Traffic Act when this

blatantly failed. The police pushed for stronger measures to deal with drink-driving from the 1930s, and secured, through the introduction of the breathalyser, a victory of sorts in 1967. Secondly, and operating within the wider context of town planning and development after the Second World War, they became involved in advising about the design of roads, automatic traffic lights, town centre development, urban free-ways and the new motorways of the 1950s. Thirdly, they were active in the attempt to save lives through promoting road safety measures among children and pedestrians in general – education work which emphasised that the pedestrian should learn more road sense and accept advice about how to cross the road safely, and gain knowledge of *The Highway Code*. The last two of these objectives form the basis of Part II of this book.

The police thus helped to reshape the urban landscape in their desire to protect life and limb and to keep traffic flowing. However, their influence on engineering the road, through establishing new roads, determining road layout and using technological aids to keep traffic flowing, was limited, for, though the police had some input, it was the MoT and the local authorities which had the authority to approve those developments. In addition, the total or partial reorganisation of many towns was unlikely to occur or, if it did so, unlikely to occur quickly. Therefore, the police found that their activities in encouraging the separation and segregation of road users were largely educational and focused upon the redesign of existing roads, with new crossing points, street barriers and traffic lights. They particularly concentrated upon the pedestrian and the child, offering to educate them about crossing the road and to provide the cosmetic engineering required to make such action easier.¹ At least 63,000 people were killed on the roads in 1930s Britain, just over half of them pedestrians, and a very large proportion of those (16,000) children. Major Godfrey, Chief Constable of Salford, estimated, in his book *Road Sense for Children*, that 14,000 children had been killed between 1927 and 1937.² Similar proportions for children applied to the 2.2 million or so people injured by motor vehicles at the time. Faced with these figures, governments, local authorities, some pressure groups and the police, operated together to educate the child and to improve the urban streetscape. They engineered the landscape of childhood as children were discouraged from using the road as their playground, and channelled away from motorised traffic towards play streets, safe islands in streets, safe crossing points, zebra crossings and other safety zones.³ They also visited schools to teach road safety.

The police sought to act as impartial arbiters and mediators with regard to the changing needs of British society, greatly influencing the way in which the motorist and society operated. Ultimately, they helped to create a situation (in 2014) whereby the horrendous loss of life and injury of the early and mid-twentieth century was dramatically reduced, though congestion and environmental pollution remains a problem. Yet, this was at the cost of the established rights and freedoms of the adult pedestrian and the child. It was the police, just as much as the motorists and other groups, who largely shaped the evolution of the modern landscape of car society of Britain; albeit the former were driven by a concern for the safety of the public whilst the motoring organisations were driven more by the sectional interest of their members.

5

Engineering the Environment c.1900–1970: Congestion, Meters and Redefining the Urban Landscape

Introduction

It is axiomatic to suggest that the motorised vehicle transformed the urban landscape of Britain between 1900 and 1970. Motor cars were not designed for the British roads of the early twentieth century, which were often rutted, narrow and winding, lacking clearly designated pavements, and open to many forms of competing road users. The obvious incongruity of cars on roads suitable only for nineteenth-century traffic, combined with the rapid increase in automobile numbers, and resultant road congestion and noise pollution, dramatically increased the existing traffic problems of many towns and added significantly to road deaths and injuries. Photographs of town centres in the 1920s and 1930s testify to the confusion of traffic flow on the roads that forced the second Labour government (1929–1931) to introduce *The Highway Code* in 1931. The fact is that there were different speed limits operating for cars, for buses, trams and other road users, which were in conflict with each other and the slow pace of the pedestrian, the cyclist and the horse.irate car owners honked their horns to add to an incredible cacophony of sound in Britain's urban centres. Indeed, the *Daily Mail* mounted a campaign in the late 1920s to reduce noise pollution in London, in conjunction with the Columbia Gramophone Company, which made two records of *London Street Noises – Leicester Square* and *London Street Noises – Beauchamp Place, Brompton Road* on 11 and 20 September 1928.⁴ Cars and roads led to new smells as well as the sound of the horn, features highlighted in T. S. Eliot's poem *The Waste Land* (1922). In the 1930s, the Met, following the example of Paris, outlawed horn-honking at night

between the hours of 8 pm and 8 am, to such effect that, in 1935, the Mayor of New York praised the English anti-horn efforts, suggesting that it had contributed to the fall in deaths (17 per cent) and injuries (7 per cent), in London.⁵ The Chief Constable of Leeds noted the high level of car-horn honking that occurred at crossroads which were not manned by policemen at night, and the relief to nearby residents that occurred when automated traffic lights were introduced in the early 1930s.⁶ Other parts of the country, on the instigation of the police, held anti-honk weekends, anti-honk weeks, and banned the honking of horns from late evening to early morning. From 1941 the law demanded that warning instruments (horns) should not be used at night between 11.30 pm and 7 am, an instruction that appeared in the 1946 and 1954 versions of *The Highway Code*.⁷

Clearly, a multitude of environmental and engineering issues resulted from the rise of automobiles. Chief constables wrote of the need for more road signs, road markings, automated traffic lights, traffic islands, and the accoutrements of a new car-based urban environment. Road engineering, in all its forms, was transforming the urban landscape, and the police became closely associated with the instillation of pedestrian crossings and the flashing safety lamps called Belisha beacons (named after Leslie Hore-Belisha, a Minister of Transport in the 1930s), 'play streets' and a whole range of similar initiatives.

These initiatives initially appeared in London, where road congestion, often caused by parking, was particularly acute. Indeed, a Met report for 1952 noted that whilst education and enforcement were being used extensively to make good the shortage of road-building programmes there was serious road congestion, for 'whilst no accurate evidence can be given of the time wasted through traffic delays in central London, the aggregate figure must be very great'.⁸ By the 1960s, the situation appears to have worsened.⁹ Indeed, the speed of travel seemed to have fallen in London from 11.4 mph in 1949 to 10.3 mph in 1961.¹⁰ The free flow of traffic was being reduced by car congestion on the roads, often at the cost of life and limb.

Chief constables were very aware that the existing highways needed improving, that this was an expensive venture in towns where streets were narrow, and that there was clearly insufficient money to achieve this mammoth task. In the absence of comprehensive road-building schemes, the installation of new street architecture became one of the major concerns of many police forces, even though this depended upon factors that were often beyond their direct control. However, they were able to exert influence on the new layout, the architecture and the

signage of the road. The Met, and some of the south-east counties' forces, achieved early success when they encouraged the construction of bypasses and arterial roads, such as the Kingston Bypass. Constructed on the old London–Portsmouth Road, it was initially an 8.5-mile stretch of road beginning at the gates of Richmond Park, which was first mooted in 1914, begun in 1924 and opened by the prime minister (Stanley Baldwin) in 1924. New arterial roads, like the Kingston Bypass, provided fast-flowing routes for automobiles, and initiated new housing developments and hostelrys, but often proved to be battlegrounds between the police and the speeding motorist.¹¹ Yet the small number of arterial roads were limited in their impact on the continuing problems of congestion in towns, and the police had to deal with the joint issue of traffic flow and road safety by encouraging the channelling of the pedestrian to specific police-manned crossing points, and by ensuring that signalling systems at junctions through the use of policemen or automated lights were available for motorists. In addition, the police had to deal with parking, which became a major congestion problem in most towns from the 1920s, though there was some variation in opinion about whether or not parking should be on the streets, in underground car parks or in multi-storey car parks. Yet, in the final analysis, the police were public servants subject to developments in government thinking, which ranged from advocating the use of smaller cars to the 1963 Buchanan Report's emphasis on the town being designed for the car.

Of the three Es in the holistic approach adopted by H. Alker Tripp, 'Engineering' the environment was the one on which the police had least direct influence, and to which they reacted more than implemented and enforced. This was recognised by HMIC Major-General Atcherley in November 1931, when he wrote that 'delay [in dealing with road improvements and layouts] is more attributable to a want of agreement between Local Authorities concerned rather than a particular departmental difficulty' within policing.¹² The upshot of this report was that the police regarded the improvement of roads as vital to dealing with the problem of road safety, though they accepted that this was not to be their dominant area of influence. In the absence of a wholesale rebuilding programme there was a fitful creation of free-ways, arterial roads and motorways, and a reshaping and channelling of existing streets, from the 1920s to the 1970s. Such developments were slow and the police were essentially forced to deal with the congestion through advice, parking restrictions and increased motor patrolling: the Education and Enforcement part of Alker Tripp's three Es of policing. Vitally, it was the government, the MoT and local authorities who

built roads and redesigned the urban landscape, and the police input was fleeting: operating through watch committees they were linked up with local highway departments and civil engineers in determining some of the actions taken.¹³ They introduced parking meters into Britain, and were initially responsible for employing and training traffic wardens. In other words, they helped to shape the street architecture of motoring and pedestrian life. The Met were particularly involved, through H. Alker Tripp, an Assistant Commissioner from 1933 to 1947, with the London and Home Counties Advisory Committee, set up in 1924 to deal with the horrendous transport problems of London through an integrated plan.

The urban landscape changed to meet the needs of the car and the police were committed to ensuring that its new regulations were abided by, and offered advice on reshaping the road. They vitally contributed to the reshaping of the urban landscape, focusing mainly upon the three issues of congestion and the free flow of traffic, parking and road safety, and the desire to segregate the motorist from other road users.

1900–1945: Congestion, the free flow of traffic and pedestrian crossings

Until the First World War, motor vehicles were a rarity throughout most of the country, other than in London, which gave a glimpse of the vista of the coming motor age. Apart from other motorised vehicles, motor cars were owned by the rich and the middle classes, and the most significant problems they presented emerged as they sped out of London on a Friday night and encountered the police traps which the AA and RAC so vigorously campaigned against. Little seems to have changed between 1900 and 1914, though the AA and the RAC began to arrange for road signs to be placed along routes frequently used by motorists. However, the situation changed dramatically during the inter-war years. The 10-fold increase in motor vehicles on British roads during the inter-war years masks the even more dramatic 18-fold increase in private car ownership.¹⁴ As the British Association for the Advancement of Science noted in 1935: ‘The rapid development of mechanical road transport had been one of the outstanding events of the post-war period...’¹⁵

Although the purpose of the police had always been to protect law-abiding members of society against criminals, they had always assumed other duties. In particular, they had responsibility for the free flow of the highway, and the General Orders of the Met of the 1830s and 1840s drew attention to the importance of not allowing ‘foot and carriage ways to be

obstructed' and 'to enforce the law relative to persons riding or driving in their vehicles without reins'.¹⁶ As the century progressed, this became more of a problem as the diversity of road users and vehicles increased. Town and city councils, such as Birmingham and Manchester, began to introduce traffic bye-laws to remove all forms of obstructions from the road, and watch committee minutes reveal an interest in all road obstruction. Indeed, the Manchester Watch Committee minutes are littered with decisions to remove 'obtrusions' extending into roads.¹⁷ The 1903–1906 Royal Commission on London's Traffic also noted, in its first report of July 1905, the increasing diversity of traffic and the problems of obstruction. Sir Alexander Bruce, Senior Assistant Commissioner of the Met, worried about the increased volume of traffic, the diversity of road users and the outdated nature of police powers.¹⁸

By the 1920s, these duties were extended greatly to deal with the problem of urban congestion caused by the car. By this time, with the exponential rise of the motor vehicle, the roads of Britain had to deal with 'the slow-moving units for which they were originally designed – pedestrians, horses and cattle – [and] the large mass of faster modern inventions – cars, lorries, motor-cycles and bicycles'.¹⁹ The mixture of the old and new forms of transport persisted throughout the inter-war years, and as late as 1938 the Met complained that a slow horsedrawn wagon could easily bring 30 or 40 motor vehicles to a crawl.²⁰ Yet the emerging problem was essentially one of car congestion. And in his annual reports in the late 1930s, the Chief Constable of Manchester, Maxwell, reflected that whilst Manchester had only about 15,000 registered car owners (at the beginning of the 1930s) there was horrendous congestion throughout the city. Trams and buses often caused safety hazards – the latter by failing to pull into nearside lanes to drop their passengers – and could add to congestion.²¹ Large-scale public events, such as the Cup Final and Fascist marches around the East End of London added to the problem.

Across the country as a whole, one of the greatest problems in terms of day-to-day congestion was inconsiderate and dangerous parking. The Chief Constable of Liverpool complained about this in 1928, noting that major stringent measures had to be taken against large numbers of owners and drivers who were 'monopolising the streets'.²² In 1934, the Metropolitan Police Commissioner stressed that changes in traffic demands could turn 'a quiet street into one of considerable traffic importance'.²³ The Chief Constable of Leeds was similarly critical of 'promiscuous parking', after having arranged for the provision of parking.²⁴ Maxwell, of Manchester, condemned the selfish motorists

who 'most unreasonably wasted [police time] by [being] thoughtless and wilfully inconsiderate people who would make laws and car parks for their individual convenience'.²⁵ The situation was similar in Bradford which, from the mid-1920s onwards, restricted the movement of large vehicles delivering goods into the centre of the city between 8 am and 6 pm, and set up 57 parking areas between 1926 and 1929 where parking was restricted to two hours.²⁶

Road junctions, in particular, were likely to create delays in the absence of a police officer, or some mechanical means of, directing traffic to avoid a free-for-all. The obvious solution to this was to increase the numbers of police officers on fixed point duty at major junctions and crossroads. Yet, this required developing a uniformity in signalling that drivers could easily follow. In 1927 Major General (sometime Lieutenant Colonel) Atcherley, an HM Inspector of Police, wrote that there was a 'risk of very serious accidents occurring from genuinely mistaken signals'.²⁷ Failure to provide clear and proper signalling led to criticism by the AA, which attacked the traffic police in Manchester because 'they wave their arms about as if they were the wings of a derelict windmill in a gale'.²⁸ Indeed, the 1929–1930 Royal Commission on Transport also noted that there was a pressing need for 'complete uniformity in the hand signals given by constables on point duty all over the country' and *The Highway Code*, first published in 1931, facilitated this aspiration.²⁹ The visibility of policemen on traffic duty was equally important, and led to policemen wearing white coats and gloves and strongly standing in spotlights which were set up near to crossroads. By 1928, white gauntlets and white gloves were widespread; the Dewsbury Police, for instance, ordering 12 dozen pair of white gloves on May 1934.³⁰ In addition, floodlights for men on duty were first introduced in Salford in 1929 and Liverpool in 1932.³¹

The rapidly rising volume of motor traffic required that a significant number of men in most forces be assigned to traffic duties, and many police forces, as we have seen, were obliged to form traffic departments, which dealt with motor patrolling, and to use ordinary police constables for point duty. As indicated in Chapter 3, the Met assumed the responsibility of point duty well before the 1920s, but were able to reduce the numbers of policemen used in the early 1930s, when automated lights came into use in London. Similar situations occurred elsewhere. Yet, despite this, many policemen in London, as well as other parts of the country, were assigned to school crossings duties. Indeed, 642 constables in the Met were employed exclusively on traffic duties in 1935, whilst another 2,389 were on part-time duties, which meant that just about

a sixth of the uniformed force was employed on traffic duties in some shape or form.³² With a force of 1,400, the Manchester City Police had to man 92 fixed traffic points in the late 1920s, while an additional 102 men were assigned to help schoolchildren across the roads.³³ Bradford, with an authorised police force of about 460 men in the mid-1920s, reported that it had purchased mackintoshes for the 200 constables in the force who were employed on traffic duty.³⁴ This picture of traffic policing was widespread and had consequences for beat policing, including encouraging the introduction of mini-police stations with phone facilities for the public, such as the famous Sunderland Box.³⁵ These were introduced in Sunderland and Newcastle in the early 1920s, and spread to Dewsbury in 1926 and Manchester in the late 1930s. They allowed the public to phone up the police with information and receive a quick response from the overstretched foot patrols. Dewsbury opened its first police telephone box outside Boots in April 1926, contemplated setting up 12 at the expense of £240, and reflected upon ‘a telephone directly installed with the Central Police Office’.³⁶

In order to help reduce the demands upon police manpower, automatic traffic lights were developed in the 1920s. They were first experimented with in Leeds in the mid-1920s, but first introduced into Princes Square, Wolverhampton, in 1927 – with both two-light and three-light systems of design. Manchester, Leeds and Preston installed traffic lights in 1928, 1928 and 1929, respectively, though Liverpool, Dewsbury and Bradford did not introduce them until 1930, 1931 and 1932.³⁷ Bradford Watch Committee declared its interest in automatic traffic lights in March 1929, and the first ones were installed in 1930.³⁸ Bradford had at least 17 sets of automatic traffic lights in operation by 1935.³⁹ The slow experimentation with two or three colour controls was speeded up when the MoT offered to pay 60 per cent of the cost of installation, although this encouraged the emergence of many different lighting sequences before standardising with the red, amber and green with which we are all familiar today.⁴⁰ Indeed, Bradford initially spent £2,486 on the automated traffic lights, and reclaimed 60 per cent of the costs in February 1932.⁴¹ Huddersfield, taking advantage of the government grant, moved to introduce automatic traffic lights in 1931 and had them in place by the summer of 1932.⁴² Dewsbury introduced automatic lights on 20 February 1931, operating them between 12 and 13 hours at a time, according to the day of the week.⁴³ The proliferation of the automated lights systems, quickly referred to as ‘Robert’s Robots’, in reference to Sir Robert Peel, was encouraged by the fact that the published reports and booklets of the Central Committee of Chief Constables in the late

1920s and early 1930s were studied with adverts and discussions about the latest systems.⁴⁴

Surprisingly, despite the scale of the traffic problem in London, and the use of portable traffic lights in The Mall in 1924, it was not until 1931 that the first major experiment was undertaken in London, with the opening of a scheme for 68 fixed-cycle automatic traffic signals at 17 junctions in Oxford Street.⁴⁵ Another 20 were added the following year.⁴⁶ When the scheme was extended to Piccadilly in 1932, Commissioner Trenchard claimed that 20 officers were relieved of traffic duties, saving £6,000.⁴⁷ By 1935, London had 527 sets of automated traffic lights, rising to 860 in 1938 (even though some estimates at this time suggest that, on the eve of war, there were around 1,800 automatic traffic signalling lights in Britain, with about two-thirds being in London).⁴⁸ Automatic lights appeared in Trafalgar Square in 1933 and in Piccadilly Circus in late 1937. The new systems saved on manpower and money, those in Piccadilly Circus alone saving some £3,600 per year by releasing police from traffic duty.⁴⁹ On the eve of the Second World War, the Met only used police-operated lights in the easily congested Ludgate Circus junction. Vehicle-actuated lights, which were seen as superior to police-operated lights, thus rose from 30 per cent to 90 per cent of all light signalling systems between about 1932 and 1937.⁵⁰ The police encouraged the construction of such lights, though their cost of installing them and maintaining them fell on other bodies. However, what worried the Met was the need for drivers and cyclists to come to terms with the new system: it was suggested that there was widespread carelessness and disregard of the 'amber lights',⁵¹ and many cases of 'racing the green' worried the police. Sir Philip Game, Metropolitan Police Commissioner, complained that 'no traffic signals, however excellent, can compel obedience and experience has shown that whatever signals supersede pointsmen in any quantity, a quota of men have to be returned to carry out supervisory and enforcement duties'.⁵² Maxwell further complained that the 'amber gambler' was not easily dealt with by the Road Safety Act of 1930 (Section 49 (b)) and could not easily be brought before Petty Sessions Courts, which diverged on their views of how to treat them.⁵³

Chief constables were not always happy with the type of automatic light systems introduced in the experimental years of the late 1920s and early 1930s. The Chief Constable of Manchester wanted, but did not get, 'a flexible progressive system of mechanical traffic control'.⁵⁴ Traffic light signals had been introduced in Manchester's Market Street and Cross Street in 1928, and the system 'was most successful, and

has undoubtedly had the effect of speeding up the traffic', a situation noted the following year when new lights in Oxford Street and Whitworth Street made it possible to divert three constables to patrol work.⁵⁵ However, only slow progress was initially made in Manchester, although, by 1936, two of the four new sets of traffic lights installed incorporated the new 'early cut-off' feature that made them 'the most up-to-date in the North of England [working] on the vehicle-actuated system, which provides for a variable green period in relation to the volume of traffic'.⁵⁶

It took time for the road users to become accustomed to the new regulations and Maxwell was, in 1929, disappointed that 'pedestrians have not yet taken full advantage of the protection afforded to them by crossing the streets in compliance with the [traffic] signals'.⁵⁷ It should also be noted that automated traffic lights became the default crossing point for pedestrians in the absence of pedestrian crossings until the mid-1930s. In 1930, Maxwell observed that 'the signals are being observed by the drivers and the pedestrians alike...', although there was a continuing trend by motorists to accelerate before the lights changed, which often led to accidents.⁵⁸

Nevertheless, there seems to have been a general acceptance of the automatic traffic systems in many parts of the country. Traffic signals were widely welcomed in Preston in 1929, and in 1932 the Chief Constable reflected that 'road users and pedestrians alike have learned that obedience to automatic traffic results in the safety of the street and an easier and regular flow for traffic with consequent reductions in delay and congestion'.⁵⁹ In 1926 Robert Matthews, Chief Constable of Leeds, felt that point control was consuming a considerable amount of police time and put forward to the watch committee his proposal for traffic control based upon automatic lights using a fixed cycle, the 'Limited Progressive System'. Designed to allow a vehicle to enter a controlled area and to progress at a pre-determined speed without being stopped at the traffic lights, it was first implemented on The Headrow in March 1928 and operated at 31 intersections.⁶⁰ It was an innovative moment in traffic control and had released 25 constables from duty for patrol work by 1931.⁶¹ Its success attracted deputations from 40 different cities and towns,⁶² and similar schemes were then quickly introduced into at least 8 towns, such as Brighton, Leicester, Oxford, Southampton and Portsmouth, as well as many parts of Greater London. County forces, such as Kent, Surrey and Sussex, experimented with similar schemes, and rural forces began to arrange for roundabouts to be replaced by traffic lights.⁶³

The introduction of traffic lights – and later automated traffic lights – was one of a wide range of measures to improve road safety through engineering. To avoid them being used as potentially dangerous default crossing points for pedestrians, for which they were not designed, the Road Traffic Acts of 1930 and 1934 provided, as we have seen, the legal provision and funds necessary to provide safer pedestrian crossings. In July 1934, the Minister of Transport, Leslie Hore-Belisha, demonstrated the new, more pedestrian-focused approach in Camden – and famously only narrowly escaped being knocked down by a motorist whilst on the crossing.⁶⁴ From then onwards, thousands of pedestrian crossings emerged, indicated by yellow globes on iron posts, quickly dubbed ‘Belisha beacons’. By 1935, there were said to be 10,000 in the MPD alone, but only 5,000 in the rest of England, Scotland and Wales.⁶⁵

The introduction of pedestrian crossings was fitful in the speed it moved and was faced with opposition. Some councils, such as Bermondsey Borough Council, Bournemouth, and Morley Town Council, in the West Riding, refused to install them, an ironic decision with regard to the last of these councils since Belisha beacons were manufactured there.⁶⁶ Captain J. Hutchinson, Chief Constable of Brighton, criticised the ‘Belisha beacons’ as a source of danger rather than safety, and there was concern from the Chief Constable of Sheffield and the city engineer that pedestrians were being too hesitant, ‘not playing the game’ and causing serious congestion. Mr West, the Labour MP for Hammersmith North stated that 75 per cent of motorists ignored the beacons.⁶⁷ The Met toughened up on those who ignored the crossings, as did the Manchester Police, who condemned those who ignored the first pedestrian crossing in Manchester, on London Road, opened in 1929, as adding to traffic congestion. In 1936, Maxwell was still complaining about pedestrians, who needed to be educated to ‘cross very busy thoroughfares at approved points’.⁶⁸ The picture was even gloomier in Bradford (also see Appendices C, D and E), where there were 44 accidents at pedestrian crossings in 1935, prompting the Chief Constable to conclude that ‘these unfortunate happenings do much to create disregard and lack of confidence in the use of these crossings’.⁶⁹ However, the returned presence in Bradford of policemen at both automated traffic lights and pedestrian crossings did much to ensure compliance in the 1930s, rather undermining their purpose.

Significant progress was, however, made in Leeds, where more than 360 crossings were introduced in the summer of 1936. They were located at all intersections controlled by automatic traffic lights and at uncontrolled sites. The Chief Constable reported that they had proved useful

and that the accident statistics showed a 'very welcome decrease'.⁷⁰ Nevertheless, he still reported that pedestrians felt uncertain about their rights, but that he believed that safety measures had reached saturation point and that it was now up to the general public to act safely to reduce accidents.⁷¹ This rather endorses Bill Luckin's view that the National 'Road Safety' Association mantra of educating and inculcating the pedestrian, influenced by the motor industry as suggested, and largely ignoring the responsibilities of motorists, was dominating police thinking.⁷²

The police were also deeply involved in new architecture of the roads that were designed to improve traffic flow, road safety and road layouts – one-way systems, roundabouts, alternate day parking, traffic islands, cycle lanes, and eventually bypasses and motorways that emerged between the 1920s and the 1970. Bradford was already moving towards introducing an 'experimental street refuge in the Square', Forster Square, in June 1924, and guard rails were to come in the early 1930s.⁷³ Salford introduced an integrated approach after a survey was carried out in February 1929 to identify 'the most practical solutions to the serious traffic congestion prevailing and the minimizing of vehicular street accidents'.⁷⁴ This saw the emergence of one-way systems, the relocation of tram stops, the instillation of traffic lights and traffic islands, improved road signage, an additional 30 constables devoted to school duty, rush barriers being set up outside schools and 30 streets in very congested areas closed to create play areas for children.⁷⁵ Play street areas were also set up in Manchester in 1935. The Chief Constable of Wigan also reported on a play street system operating there in 1946, which covered 48 streets and which appears to have been formed on the eve of the Second World War.⁷⁶

London had even more ambitious plans and tried to co-ordinate all the relevant authorities in a capital-wide body, the London and Home Counties Traffic Advisory Committee. Formed by an Act of Parliament in 1924 to advise the Minister of Transport in the exercise of his powers relating to the improved regulation of traffic and road reconstruction within the London traffic area, it originally had 19 appointed members, but the number was increased to 41 under the 1933 Act, the same Act that created the London Passenger Transport Board.⁷⁷ It had representatives from all sections interested in traffic. The representatives of the transport and road vehicle interests were increased from 3 in 1924 to 7 in 1931, the London Passenger Transport Board had 2 representatives, and the various boroughs, London County Council and other local authorities had 23 members. The Minister of Transport had one representative.

Importantly, the City of London Police also had one representative, as did the Met.⁷⁸ The Met representative, from 1933 until 1947, was (Sir) Herbert Alker Tripp.⁷⁹ He had started his working life in the civil service, working as clerk in the Commissioner's Office in 1902, but had risen to become chairman of the Police Recruiting Board in 1920. He had conceived the idea of a police college, an idea taken up by Lord Trenchard as Commissioner of the Met in the early 1930s, when the police college at Hendon was set up. On 15 January 1932, Tripp was appointed Assistant Commissioner 'B', in charge of traffic.⁸⁰ He devoted the next 15 years to studying London's traffic problems and those of other cities throughout Europe and the United States. In 1938, Tripp published *Road Traffic and Its Control*, which remained the only full-length study of the subject until his death in 1954, and in September 1942, he published a second book, *Town Planning and Road Traffic*, which looked ahead to post-war reconstruction and pioneered the idea of motorways in Britain. He was also a member of the MoT Committee on Road Safety from 1943 to 1947.⁸¹ The main point about Tripp is that he carried the views of the Met to the centre of road planning and traffic flow in London and, as indicated, effectively presented the importance of policing in his 1944 advice on road safety, where he emphasised the centrality of the three Es. He continued to press for improvements in traffic policing in the 1930s and throughout the Second World War, although this was a period when traffic controls were slackened and road fatalities rose, although the number of cars on the road fell.

1945–1970: Urban road congestion, parking meters and new pedestrian crossings

Between 1945 and the 1970s there was a dramatic eightfold rise in the number of motorised vehicles on Britain's roads; this became particularly marked in the 1960s, which saw the number of motor vehicles rise from 10.5 million to 24.2 million (Table 5.1). This exacerbated an already difficult position. Indeed, though congestion had been a major problem in the inter-war years, it became even more acute after 1945, little having been done to address the issue, given the perceived decline in its importance during the Second World War. Congestion on the roads became a vital target for the emerging planning strategy of successive governments in the 1950s and 1960s, and was the subject of the Buchanan Report of the mid-1960s.

London, which faced the worst of these problems, became a pioneer in the development of traffic management control, but its strategies placed

enormous additional burdens upon police chief constables and commissioners, whose early twentieth-century experience of controlling traffic made them well aware that this would throw them into conflict with the motoring public. For the Met, congestion was earmarked as a central concern in Tripp's seminal report to the Road Safety Committee of the MoT in 1944. Congestion and the slow rate of traffic flow was particularly acute in London, where, even before the car boom in the early 1950s, the Met report of 1952 suggested that congestion was a great waste of time.⁸² By the 1960s, the situation had worsened, the number of registered cars in London having almost tripled between 1953 and 1963, slowing down the speed of traffic even more.⁸³ And car congestion and parking had become the subject of even more intense debate.⁸⁴ London's experience foreshadowed the problems that were to come, to a lesser degree, in the rest of Britain. Seeking solutions, some felt that parking should be available in either underground or above ground parking facilities, whilst others felt the need for the better control of car parking on the streets. Faced with a conundrum on car congestion, the Home Office and the police sought, as indicated in Chapter 4, evidence of what was occurring in the United States, and eventually introduced parking meters, the supervision of which necessitated the appointment of traffic wardens. Thus, congestion led to the addition of the ubiquitous parking meter (and traffic warden) and CCTV to the urban landscape.

The Working Party on Traffic Wardens and the Fixed Penalty Scheme was set up by the Home Office and the MoT, in connection with the Met, in March 1962, to review their responses to the problem of parking. In a preliminary report, it detailed and updated the urban traffic problem of London, alongside developments in the rest of the country. Dramatically, it revealed that in 1953 there were 664,000 registered cars in London, but that this had increased to 1,800,000 in 1963.⁸⁵ The rest of urban Britain was facing a similar situation. It felt that much had

Table 5.1 Traffic growth, 1962–1980⁸⁶

Year	Commercial vehicles	Other motor vehicles	Total
1962	1,563,000	8,430,000	9,993,000
1963	1,628,000	9,216,000	10,844,000
1964	1,673,000	10,076,000	11,749,000
1965	1,699,000	10,619,000	12,318,000
1966	1,662,000	11,005,000	12,627,000
1970 (est.)	2,600,000	13,500,000	16,100,000
1980 (est.)	3,100,000	21,600,000	24,700,000

been achieved through traffic management in London and other cities in the 1930s, through the numerous traffic control schemes, but that other changes had to be made to 'this technique' of controlling traffic, as the number of motorised vehicles had increased exponentially. It concluded that:

The capacity of the urban road system has not been growing and cannot hope to grow at the same rate. Already average speed in urban areas is lower than in 1955 being around 10 miles per hour against . . . mph [not given] ten years ago. Congestion not only means that each individual driver is impeded; it slows down the whole pattern of urban leisure and causes economic loss to the country as a whole.⁸⁷

The Working Party ruled out the idea of taking 'fiscal' action to discourage car ownership altogether, and did not feel that costly road construction would solve the problem. Therefore, it looked towards a more sophisticated form of traffic management:

Much has already been achieved by traffic management in London and other cities, but the increasing demand for road space means that still more use must be made of this technique. Traffic management schemes may be divided into those which are in effect self-enforcing, such as one-way streets and banned turns, and those which are not, such as controlled parking schemes, peak hour waiting and loading bans, and waiting and loading restrictions generally. The latter category in fact requires a high degree of enforcement to be effective.⁸⁸

It also recognised that some drivers were quick to ignore the rules, and that a few illegally parked cars on streets were likely to attract others. As a result, it suggested that the labour-intensive controlled parking schemes which emerged in the 1950s should be extended and a resulting increase in the number of fixed penalty notice fines for illegal parking, plus court costs, be made. The resulting enforcement of all this meant that both the police and the courts continued to play an increasing role in this traffic management programme, as already indicated in Chapter 4.

This essentially London-based survey was, however, the confluence of a number of tributary factors that focused attention upon road congestion in the 1950s and 1960s – though two stand out. The first is that there was an abundance of evidence that motorised vehicles were

bringing London and urban Britain to a grinding halt in the early and mid-1950s. The London and Home Counties Advisory Committee had already reported that: 'in inner London, the traffic had outgrown the capacity of the streets, the saturation point had already been reached at certain times of the day in some thoroughfares and that the time was no far distant when it would be reached in other areas'.⁸⁹ According to the London Advisory Committee, London traffic had increased by about 10 per cent between 1950 and 1951, and the figure in 1952 was 15 per cent more than in 1949. In Westminster alone there were 10,500 cars parked during the day in 1951 and 18,180 in November 1955. It was estimated that this would rise to 25,000 by 1958. The speed of the traffic was often slowed to a crawl by the illegal and haphazard parking that occurred on many of the side streets. The control of such parking, by the creation of designated parking areas from 1953 onwards, consumed a considerable amount of the time of both the City of London Police and the Met.

The congestion and problems of the Met were faced, at a lesser level, by provincial police forces of Britain. In 1953, for instance, the Chief Constable of Liverpool reported that:

[N]ew cars are coming on the road at the rate of a thousand a day and it is evident that parking must continue to be a very serious problem, especially when the vacant sites used as parking spaces are built upon. [...] When motorists are allowed to park their vehicles in the street, they should not forget that they are really being allowed in the nature of a concession. . . . In certain streets parking is allowed but no motorists has any right to leave his vehicle as long as he desired. In these official parking places a time limit is usually fixed so that the use of the facility of parking is available for the reasonable use of as many people as possible.⁹⁰

Continuing, he referred to the fact that unnecessary obstruction was an offence and that in some countries the charge of a parking fee was made. With an eye to change, he reflected that: 'In this country, however, it is regarded as a principle that no charge can be made for the use of the highway.' In 1954, the Chief Constable of Liverpool noted that the number of cars was increasing at a time when the wartime 'blitzed' areas used for parking were increasingly being built upon, resulting in less parking spaces.⁹¹ In 1955, faced with the MoT and Aviation advice on one-way streets, he wrote that 'to increase the number of one-way streets would impede rather than help the free flow of traffic'.⁹²

In 1956, he reported that the development of dual carriageways in East Lancashire and Walton, when completed, 'would greatly assist the police in dealing with heavy traffic in the district on the occasion of Football matches'.⁹³ Similarly, the chief constables of smaller police forces, such as Bradford and Wigan, reflected, albeit briefly, upon congestion and parking.⁹⁴

The second major factor, or pressure, was that the Met and the Home Office had already looked to the United States for solutions to the parking problem, and it was this which ultimately led to the introduction of the parking meter. Despite American warnings against introducing parking meters, particularly from the American AA, the Met supported their introduction in 1954. The Chief Constable of Liverpool had noted that, whilst parking on the highway was not strictly illegal it could be considered obstruction, and that parking might be dealt with by sensible limitations and use of the highway, implying that parking meters might be used.⁹⁵ The Home Office and the MoT decided to experiment with parking meters in London.⁹⁶ Mr Waldron, an Assistant Commissioner of the Metropolitan Police, announced his commitment to the parking meter system before a dozen chief constables in January 1959, based upon an experiment begun six months earlier, and a full-scale commitment to introducing them was reached soon afterwards.⁹⁷ Thus began one of the most reviled symbols of the modern landscape to car owners – the ubiquitous parking meter, along with its enforcer, the traffic warden, under the supervision of the police.

Pedestrian architecture for crossing the road in post-war Britain, 1945–1970

Equally ubiquitous and necessary, given the policies and beliefs of both government and the police, was the designated crossing points of the road. Joe Moran has stressed that successive British governments adopted two policies in helping pedestrians to cross the road.⁹⁸ One was the educational and propaganda work done by the government, local government, voluntary organisations and the police, discussed in Chapter 6. The second was the tangible development of designing and developing more sophisticated crossings in a reshaping of the landscape of the road.

The CIO promoted a hard-hitting 'Keep Death off the Roads Campaign' in 1945 and 1946, in which it emphasised both policies. The second of these policies was developed in the mid- and late 1930s, when pedestrian crossings with police attendance and supervision began to

emerge. In 1946, the Road Research Laboratory (formed in 1933 and conducting research for the MoT) boosted these developments by recommending a pedestrian crossing that was more highly visible to all road users than the 'Belisha beacon' crossing points, developing the zebra crossing, named by James Callaghan who was parliamentary secretary to the Ministry of Transport at the time.⁹⁹ The Road Research Laboratory promoted the introduction of striped crossings, 'zebra crossings', following 'pedestrian crossing week' in April 1949, when a thousand sets of black-and-white stripes were painted on roads, though it was found that few used the zebra crossings.¹⁰⁰ However, in June 1951 the Ministry introduced Circular 668 to local authorities, informing them that they had to reduce the number of uncontrolled pedestrian crossings by two-thirds, and mark out any new crossings with road studs and with zebra markings,¹⁰¹ and on 31 October 1951 new traffic regulations were introduced to this effect.¹⁰² The main provisions for crossings were that the road surface should be striped, other road users were to give precedence to pedestrians and that vehicles were not to be allowed to wait at the kerbside within about 45 feet (13.7 m) of the crossing – though this was extended to 75 feet (22.9 m) in 1958. The Belisha beacon was retained, but in 1953 was replaced by a flashing beacon for better visibility at night.

The introduction of zebra crossings was seen as an immediate success and, compared to the first ten months of 1951, the first ten months of 1952 saw an 8 per cent reduction in pedestrian casualties.¹⁰³ The *City of Liverpool Road Safety Brochure* for 1953 published a full-page description of the new pedestrian crossing in a short article entitled 'Watch Out for the Zebras: New Pedestrian Crossing Regulations', which reminded the pedestrian that the crossings are controlled by traffic lights or a police officer, that they have no primacy and must take extra precautions before attempting to cross.¹⁰⁴

Nevertheless, the introduction of 'zebra crossing' regulation in 1951 was seen by many (wrongly, as it happens, since crossing rights remained confused) as an attack upon the legal rights of pedestrians to cross the road as they wished. There was a remarkable amount of resistance to the changes, and the addition of flashing beacons in 1953 led the *Yorkshire Post* to complain that the City Square in Leeds had turned into a 'giant Christmas tree with the fairy lights out of control'.¹⁰⁵

The zebra gave way to new road architecture, and in the early 1960s the government experimented with hybrid crossings that would more effectively stop cars, but not interrupt the flow of traffic as much as fixed traffic lights. They replaced the parallel stripes at zebras with

triangular black-and-white shark teeth (resembling panda markings) and the pedestrian wishing to cross pressed a button at the roadside which lit up a 'wait' sign. This produced a flashing amber light followed by a pulsating red light for drivers ordering them to stop. A cross sign would then flash on, indicating that the pedestrian should cross. It was, in fact, a distinct development on road sharing between the motorists and the pedestrian, allowing the pedestrian control of the road at different times when they needed to cross. The first panda crossing was switched on across from Waterloo station in April 1962 by the Minister of Transport Ernest Marples.¹⁰⁶ There was a chorus of complaints against the panda crossings, and Marples, however, and the crossings were quickly dropped. Other experiments followed had similar fortunes. The Met, for instance, had red lines painted along the kerb and £20 fines for jay-walkers in 1966, but after 5,000 people had been warned and no one fined the scheme was dropped after three months as being 'absolutely unworkable'.¹⁰⁷

From that period onwards, the emphasis came to be one of improving the layout of the street landscape rather than forcing pedestrians and drivers to behave in a certain way.¹⁰⁸ Buchanan's *Traffic in Town* (1963) report now geared the authorities and the police towards the segregation that many, including the police and the Chief Constable of Lancashire, had been pushing for since the 1930s. It led to a spread of guard rails, underpass or pedestrian subways and bridges, elevated roundabouts, clearways and urban motorways.

There was continued experimentation with pedestrian crossings, however. In September 1964, shielded lights for pedestrians at kerbside, showing a red man standing (wait) and a green man walking (cross) were developed.¹⁰⁹ The major development in the late 1960s was the pelican or pelicon (pedestrian light-controlled crossing). Conscious of the antagonism of the press and the motoring organisations, the brief to the Minister of Transport included the comment: 'Panda was first attempt at hybrid crossing. Like Chi-Chi and An-An, the experiment didn't come off. Admit pelican unusual offspring [of zebra and panda] ... I'm confident pelican will fit the bill.'¹¹⁰ Retaining the hybrid system of flashing lights to encourage traffic flow when the crossing was clear of pedestrians, it favoured the motorist, for the flashing green man now meant 'do not start to cross' instead of 'cross with care' as it had on the X-way. This still left the pedestrian and the motorist bewildered as to how to interpret flashing lights. Nevertheless, the pelican lasted longer than most schemes, and in 1976 there was an advert with a 'pelican song':

When the green man's flashing and the amber too
This is what you've got to do
Pedestrians, don't start to cross
Your life's more important than the time that's lost.¹¹¹

The pelican was simpler and more easily understood than its hybrid predecessors and replaced the 'X' with a full green signal showing all the time, except when the button to cross the road was pressed. There were also explanations attached to it to explain how it operated.

The police and segregation

What role, then, did the police play in these 1950s and 1960s' engineering developments, and how did they view the management of the road? From the start it is clear that they were as committed to segregation of the motorist and the pedestrian as they had been before the Second World War. As we have seen, in connection with the Motor Patrol Scheme of the late 1930s, the Chief Constable of Lancashire favoured segregation. In addition, Game suggested in 1937 that there needed to be a spirit of 'give and take' on the roads, and that:

Though both pedestrians and cyclists are entitled to say that the present situation is not of their making, the fact remains that the problem is there. They must submit to a certain amount of restriction for the common good. They have as much right to use the road as anyone else, but under existing conditions full exercise of these rights can only lead to painful and possibly fatal results.¹¹²

The scene was thus set for Tripp to make his 1944 appeal for a holistic approach to policing, in which engineering the environment of the road was contemplated to further this segregation. This was soon followed by a further emphasis in this direction. The Met, working with the MoT, introduced a Pedestrian Segregation Experiment in 1946, which operated for a number of years in the late 1940s and early 1950s on Kensington High Street, Chelsea's King Street, Whitechapel Road, and several other streets in London.

Ernest Marples, the Conservative Minister of Transport in the early 1960s, gave further impetus to this policy in 1962. In answer to a question in the House of Commons as to what steps he was taking to increase the segregation of pedestrian and vehicular traffic, Marples

replied that: 'It is in the towns and the cities that this problem is most acute and I foresee an increasing need for segregation of pedestrian and vehicle.'¹¹³ That intent had become more urgent in the 1960s, was further discussed in Parliament, became the basis of the Buchanan Report, and was widely discussed in the public arena.¹¹⁴ Indeed, H. F. Wallis's article on 'Segregation', written in 1961, strongly supported this and noted how the development of the Barbican in London and developments in other urban centres were moving in that direction. To Wallis, however, the one great success was the new town of Cumbernauld, in Scotland, which had developed a traffic system for the twentieth century, though he stressed that 'Most other urban areas are stumbling along with patched up versions of a layout produced for the hansom cab.'

Conclusion

Engineering the road essentially required the redevelopment of the town landscape of Britain in the new age of the car. That was advocated by the Buchanan Report and other government-inspired reports, as governments moved towards the idea of engineering the segregation road users. However, such redevelopment unlikely to happen quickly, or at all, in some of Britain's overcrowded cities and congested streets. As a result, whilst the police pushed for such developments they were faced with the need to ensure that road safety was maintained by segregating cars and pedestrians through a range of alterations and additions to the existing architecture and layout of the street. The police were pro-active in the introduction of automatic lights, pedestrian crossings and traffic meters, and in creating play streets and the other trappings of the urban road landscape. Their influence was perhaps less trumpeted than that of the MoT and other public bodies, but there is no doubt that they were deeply involved in reshaping the urban landscape. In London, the most congested of all Britain's urban areas, the Met was involved with the London and Home Counties Traffic Advisory Committee. In the rest of the country, the police worked closely with local authorities, advising them on the placing of automated traffic lights and pedestrian crossings. The outcome of this was to shape the morphology of motoring, childhood play experiences and pedestrianism. The police worked at controlling the motorists, through enforcement, and the pedestrian, through education, in their use and abuse of the road, and established road markings and lane discipline.

6

Traffic Accidents and Road Safety: The Education of the Pedestrian and the Child, 1900–1970

Introduction

Herbert Morrison, Minister of Transport in the Labour government of 1929–1931, wrote to the Home Secretary in early 1931, boasting that he had driven about 500,000 miles without an accident.¹ Such preening pride would not have been uncommon from some car drivers, but the Minister of Transport was a prominent political figure and his driving record was both exceptional and exemplary in an age of road carnage. Indeed, the confidence he exuded is perhaps a reflection of the faith he, and the second Labour government (1929–1931), held in removing the speed limits for cars under the Road Traffic Act of 1930.² Indeed, both Morrison and the second Labour government seemed to have acted as conduits for the temporary convergence of opinions of both motoring organisations and chief constables; the former wanting to simply remove speed limits *per se*, whilst the latter wished to remove some of the contentious speed limits for motorised vehicles, albeit convinced by the evidence, emerging in their annual reports, that it was the pedestrians, not the motorists, who were primarily responsible for road accidents. Yet even if pedestrians contributed significantly to their own deaths and injuries, the decision to remove the speed limit seems remarkably thoughtless, and belied the obvious dangers that the car, and other motorised vehicles, presented on the roads of Britain, regardless of who was at fault.³ However, the ‘road holocaust’ of the 1930s could not be ignored. Belatedly, the Home Office, with a touch of pathos, accepted the Royal Commission on Transport’s (1928–1931) view that the abolition of the speed limit in 1930 ‘would render the enforcement of the law against driving to the danger of the public exceedingly important, particularly as we realise that in the present condition it is not possible

on many roads to drive safely at high speed'.⁴ In February 1934, the Home Office produced a report on accidents which 'gives grounds for no hope that the number of road accidents is likely to be decreased as long as the Road Traffic of 1930 remains unamended'.⁵ Finally, as a result of the 'road holocaust', the Home Office, with the support of chief constables, reintroduced the speed limit through the Road Traffic Act of 1934.

Nonetheless, the absence of motor car speed limits, operating in the three years in which the legislation was in force between 1930 and 1934, provoked a major turning point in the history of policing road safety in Britain. Whilst the emphasis between the 1890s and 1930 had been placed upon controlling speed, and continued to be so thereafter, from the 1930s onwards, and even after the restoration of speed limits in 1934, increasing emphasis was placed upon road safety education in all its forms. The 'road holocaust' increased the toll on pedestrians and convinced most chief constables that road safety relied not only upon controlling speed, but also upon education, propaganda, the creation of children's play areas and play streets, the zoning of pedestrians and motorists, the introduction of pedestrian crossings, safety islands, Belisha beacons, traffic lights, road markings, and all the engineering accoutrements of the new age of the cars.⁶ In other words, there had to be both an educational and engineering solution (see Chapter 5) for pedestrian safety. When the national government and the Home Office reimposed speed limits in 1934, many chief constables made it their mission to both curb car speed (speed limits on trams and the bus had not been removed in 1930). They focused increasingly upon the pedestrian and the child, and adopted a decidedly ageist approach which effectively assumed that the old were largely beyond redemption, but might be helped by engineering, and that emphasis should be placed on educating the young – not surprising, perhaps, in an age when the protection of childhood was becoming increasingly important if not virtually sacrosanct.

Although Harry Hendricks has pointed out that historians have generally neglected the history of childhood for the years 1918 to 1970, opting for the lush pastures of British nineteenth-century and early Edwardian childhood, Bill Luckin has recently rectified this omission as part of a wider attempt by Matthew Thomson to establish that traffic was part of the process which drove children from the street to the home in the twentieth century.⁷ Luckin argues that, amid a myriad of related concerns, and oblivious of its long-term impact, the mantra of many

chief constables became road safety for children, with an emphasis upon stimulating both their visual and zonal awareness through the presence of police officers at crossing points and road safety education campaigns in schools. The stimulus for their action was Section 115 of the 1930 Road Traffic Act, which stated that there the object of 'disseminating knowledge or otherwise informing the minds of the people with a view to promoting road safety' should be paramount.⁸ Thus, police action on the road safety of the pedestrian was intensified in the 1930, galvanised further in 1936 when all police forces had to become involved in educational work, and reached its apogee in the 1950s and 1960s. Indeed, it was a development which saw the police operate closely with both voluntary and municipal bodies, the highway committees and departments, and road engineers. Between the 1890s and the 1960s, the police and local and traffic authorities worked together to channel pedestrians into safe zones for crossing roads, paving the way for the segregation of motorist and pedestrian (discussed in Chapter 5).⁹

Indeed, four main points emerge from a litany of events: the annual reports of chief constables, the *Police Review*, the CCA and government records. The first is that the NSFA/RoSPA's influence continued unabated throughout the 1920s to 1970. Secondly, although the intensity of work might vary, all police forces were involved in some type of road safety and educational work even before they were required to do so, from 1936. Thirdly, the focus of much of this educational safety work was the child. Fourthly, it is clear that *The Highway Code* had to be used more as an educational tool by the police since, as a corpus, it lacked authority in law.

The controlling of speed and gradual move towards road safety education, c.1890s to c.1930

Although the police were always involved in preventing road deaths and injuries from the nineteenth century onwards, they were initially reluctant to assume a fuller role in sponsoring educational road safety measures. They simply continued their traditional safety activities; dealing, for instance, with runaway horses presented a particular and recurrent danger.¹⁰

Speed, even at a low pace by modern standards, could lead to death, and a historical landmark occurred on 22 August 1896 when 43/44-year-old Bridget Driscoll became the first British pedestrian to be killed by a motor car: the first of about 500,000 victims who died on Britain's roads

between 1896 and 2013. She froze and became bewildered when she saw the car coming at her at a speed of 4 mph and her death was recorded as accidental. The number of road accidents increased exponentially after her death, when speed limits were raised to 14 mph under the Locomotive and Highways Act of 1896 and to 20 mph under the Motor Car Act of 1903. However, the latter did try to control who could drive, and required that all motor vehicles be officially registered at a cost of £1 per year for a car and five shillings for a motorcycle. Driving licences were also required and could be obtained by paying five shillings at the Post Office, although some licences had to be acquired from local watch committees.¹¹ Governance and control were emerging in the world of motor traffic, though these measures still focused more on the motorists than the pedestrian.

The Motor Car Act of 1903, indeed, started the process of creating a framework of rules for the road that visually transformed its landscape. It allowed local authorities to erect road signs, and provided the basis for the standardisation of the hollow red triangle as a hazard warning, the solid red circle to show something the road user was prohibited from doing, and the hollow white circle to indicate the speed limit. To these were added the signs erected by motoring organisations, notably the AA and the RAC, and the Cycling Touring Club. Within a few years, what had been seen as an attempt to provide a clear structure for driving, riding and walking on the road had become a confusing assemblage of roadside signs. This eventually necessitated standardisation through the formulation of the first *Highway Code* in 1931, in the wake of the Road Traffic Act of 1930, and amendments in the second version in 1935, the third in 1946 and the fourth in 1954.¹²

Despite such efforts, road deaths and injuries rose rapidly in the 1920s and early 1930s, as indicated in Table 1.1 and Table 6.1, and the latter shows a threefold increase in accidents in the 1920s and a rise of 23 per cent of accidents per thousand miles travelled. As a result, the Pedestrians' Association was formed in 1929 to secure the safety of pedestrians and to safeguard the rights of foot passengers. It was convinced that speed must be checked by technical equipment, which would be fitted to cars to prevent them from speeding.¹³ The improvement of the road and road safety education initiatives meant little to the Association, for it argued that the excessive speed of automated vehicles was a killer of pedestrians in what was an unequal context between a deadly weapon and a vulnerable pedestrian – three quarters of those killed being under 15 or over 60. It was assumed that agility of the other age groups, particularly those between 35 and 45, allowed them to largely escape death or

Table 6.1 Road accidents in the 1920s¹⁴

Year	Number of accidents involving a propelled vehicle	Number of motor licences	Number of accidents per 1,000 miles driven
1921	38,700	1,106,000	35
1922	44,280	1,210,700	37
1923	55,519	1,416,400	39
1924	67,333	1,644,400	41
1925	82,788	1,932,400	43
1926	91,045	2,132,900	43
1927	99,650	2,349,000	42
1928	111,976	2,527,000	44
1929	116,558	2,687,000	43

injury.¹⁵ Despite the Pedestrians' Association's opposition to road safety activities, educational initiatives prospered, particularly after the First World War and from 1930 onwards.

It was the much more influential NSFA which had a profound influence on police thinking about the road safety of pedestrians. The NSFA emerged during the First World War, when the London Accident Prevention Council changed its name to the London 'Safety First' Council, before becoming the basis of the NSFA. It arose from a meeting on 1 December 1916, called by Mr H. E. Blain, the Operating Manager of the London General Omnibus Company. About 200 people assembled in Caxton Hall in a year when there were 428,000 licensed vehicles on the road, and 46,199 accidents and 1,332 fatalities caused. To stem the road carnage of wartime Britain, the Mayor of Westminster proposed a 'Safety First' Campaign in the MPD and the election of a 'Safety First' Council. Its official foundation occurred at another meeting, on 17 January 1917, and in 1918 it organised the 'Safe Driving' Competition, as it was felt that the co-operation of the 'professional' driver was essential. Awards of prizes and badges of merit were made to drivers of all classes of vehicles, to secure every care and discretion in their driving. Its campaign to encourage walkers to face oncoming traffic did reduce, by about 70 per cent, the number of injuries to pedestrians stepping in the path of vehicles. After the First World War, it produced, in response to the rising traffic mortalities in London (Table 6.2), a famous poster of a widow in mourning, with the slogan 'Keep Death off the Road'. Its popularity spread quickly. For instance, a 'Safety First Council' was formed in Leeds in 1925, bringing together bodies such as the Education Committee and the police, and receiving glowing reports from the Chief Constable of

Table 6.2 Traffic deaths in London, 1922–1929¹⁶

Percentage increases based upon 1921 figures = 100		
Year-on-year increases		
Year	Children killed	Adults killed
1922	26	15
1923	14	19
1924	23	59
1925	19	61
1926	26	100
1927	20	116
1928	40	153
1929	44	183

Leeds in 1925, and again particularly in 1931.¹⁷ Similar bodies emerged elsewhere. One was formed in Middlesbrough, and in Manchester a ‘Safety First’ Committee was established in 1927 and revived in 1929.¹⁸ By 1930, a National ‘Safety Week’ Council was in existence, designed to encourage towns to organise a week of road safety activity. Lieutenant Colonel J. A. A. Pickard, its general secretary in the 1920s and 1930s, was instrumental in organising an annual National Safety Week in major urban areas of Britain from 1930 onwards, informing the CCocC, in 1930, that:

This year was held the experiment of holding a National Safety Week. As originally conceived it was mainly to encourage simultaneous local safety activities in some 30 centres where we formed branches. Actually it developed into something much larger. Forty other societies took part, and activities were undertaken in a large number of additional centres. Considering the very limited funds available a remarkable showing was achieved. Some writers in the Press said that a week was not enough: twelve months a year was necessary.¹⁹

Indeed, this aspect of its work continued, and in the 1960s it conducted its famous ‘Mind the Child Campaign’. Many years later, in 1979, the International Year of the Child, it produced its famous ‘Road Safety Is about Caring’ poster.²⁰

During the First World War, the London Council and the NSFA campaigned to improve the level of street lighting. They produced thousands of posters providing ‘Hints to Drivers of Horse and Motor Vehicles, and to Cyclists’ on road discipline, which included the catchy ditty:

The Rule of the Road is a paradox quite,
In Riding and Driving along,
If you KEEP TO THE LEFT you are sure to be RIGHT
But if you go RIGHT you are wrong.

Throughout most of this period, the NSFA also enhanced its popular status, though enjoying royal patronage, for the Duke of York, the later King George VI, was its president from 1920, and Queen Elizabeth II is its current royal patron.

Yet, in spite of the work of the NFSFA and other developments in road safety, the rapid increase in the number of cars added constantly to the rising road toll in the 1920s, and this was supplemented by deaths arising from 'bus races', where bus drivers from rival companies competed fiercely for passengers, an action which forced the Labour government to introduce a 30 mph speed limit and licence bus routes in the Road Traffic Act of 1930. Indeed, throughout the inter-war years, a substantial number of road deaths – often a quarter in urban areas – were caused by motor buses or trams.²¹ The 1930 Road Traffic Act helped cut the 701 deaths (about 11 per cent of all deaths at that time) caused by coaches and omnibuses in 1929/30 to 569 in 1930/1.²²

Faced with clear evidence of the failure of motorists and pedestrians to observe safe behaviour on the roads, the NSFA made its own efforts to standardise the rules of the road. It distributed half a million copies of its first booklet, providing a 'Safety Code', in 1924. In 1926 it issued two million copies of *Road Sense* free to those applying for driving licences. The April to May 1930 edition of its journal, *On the Road*, also listed where the new automatic traffic lights might be found throughout the United Kingdom. Its guides to the etiquette of the road and road sense pre-dated *The Highway Code*. However, its actions were hardly impartial for it was heavily financed by commercial motoring interests, and their owners occupied many of its key positions.²³ It campaigned for the removal of the speed limit in 1930, against the reintroduction of the speed limit by the 1934 Road Traffic Act, and against the introduction of a driving test in 1935, focusing instead upon the need to educate the non-motoring public, and especially schoolchildren, in order to imbue them with an awareness of personal road safety.²⁴ Its activities were encouraged by the 1930 Road Traffic Act, which had stipulated that money from the Road Fund could be spent on road safety. The Road Fund had been formally set up in 1920 by the Roads Act of 1920 and the Finance Act of 1920 and allowed the excise duty raised from cars to be used for road construction and maintenance. It was never

fully used up and the annual surplus was often diverted to other, non-motoring, projects. From 1936 it was financed by government and it was wound up in 1956. In the early 1930s some of the money from the Road Fund was used to promote informal publicity by the BBC and newspaper editors, but some trickled down to voluntary organisations such as the NSFA. As a consequence, the NSFA stepped up its activities in the 1930s, making announcements on BBC news bulletins and *Children's Hour*, showing road safety films in cinemas, advertising its road safety weeks, broadcasting the advice of celebrities, such as Gracie Fields and Sir Malcolm Campbell, distributing posters and issuing flags.²⁵ These initiatives meant that child death rates began to fall and the work of the NSFA impacted upon the police.

The rising demand for police action on road safety to the 1930s: The debate

By the late 1920s, the police had been drawn into a wide range of traffic policing duties, which took up a significant proportion of their time, and, within a decade, 'duties connected with traffic control on the highway occupied at least one-sixth of the whole time of the Police Force'.²⁶ A small, but rising, proportion was concerned with road safety measures, often connected with the manning of road crossing points for children, the segregation of children and their education in road safety.²⁷

This emphasis was relatively new and was modest in scale at first, for in the 1920s the concern of the police was focused upon gaining overall powers for road safety rather than specific responsibilities for educating the pedestrian. Indeed, in 1920, two articles in the *Police Review* are indicative of this all-encompassing approach. One suggested that this was 'so that the question of safety on our roads and streets becomes of national importance and one that will brook of no delay in the introduction of practical and effective measures for its proper control, and safeguarding life and limb'.²⁸ It added that 'The Police Service is the only organisation in this country which possesses the necessary machinery for the proper and effective control of road traffic...'.²⁹ The other, from a 'County Policeman', wanted such a focusing of powers for road safety to include all road safety measures as well as the granting of licenses and driving tests.³⁰

Until the mid-1920s, when there were only a few hundred thousand motor vehicles on Britain's roads, the police placed little urgency on the safety of pedestrians. The police were drawn into road safety activities for pedestrians only from the late 1920s, but their focus often varied in

its emphasis. The Birmingham City Police seem to have focused upon the engineering aspects of maintaining traffic flow, whilst others, like Manchester, Salford, Leeds and Liverpool, Bradford and the Metropolitan Police, combined this with the desire to educate pedestrians.³¹ By the late 1920s, however, the same police forces were spending an increasing amount of time on crossing duty at or near schools, an onerous task that some were quite prepared to concede to civilian adult patrols. Such was the frustration of the Chief Constable of Liverpool at the level of police involvement that he described his city's pedestrians as 'the worst in the world', and in 1930 was expressing concern about the resources he could devote to school crossings.³²

Police forces were, however, driven in this direction by the prevailing NSFA belief that it was pedestrians who were the real cause of road accidents. This was partly based upon the fact that on-the-spot police constables who made official assessments of the causes of deaths and injuries indicated that between 40 and 50 per cent of road accidents were the fault of the pedestrian.³³ Indeed, the failings of pedestrians were supported by evidence gathered from the returns made by coroners in the last six months of 1929, and presented in a report to the CCA's annual meeting in 1930. This suggested that 85 per cent of fatal road accidents were caused by human failure and that 40 per cent (22 per cent adults and 18 per cent children) by pedestrians.³⁴ As already established, the annual reports of chief constables for the 1930s confirm that pedestrians may have been responsible for up to 70 per cent of all road deaths. What was certainly established is that private motorists were less likely to be killed and injured in motor accidents than pedestrians, and it seemed that the pedestrian was to blame.

Added impetus was given by the fact that many of those killed were children. A coroner's report for the late 1920s suggested that this was about 45 per cent.³⁵ In 1926, a total of 857 children were killed on the road, and this figure had risen to 1,433 in 1933 before falling to 1,254 in 1934.³⁶ Other figures suggest that, whilst about nine children per 100,000 children (aged mainly 5–9) were killed in 1921, the figure had risen to 13 per 100,000 children in 1934. Nearly 30 times that proportion were injured. Indeed, the report noted that 'children between the ages of five and eight are most liable to accidents, and those between eight and twelve are the most immune. After the age of twelve the accident rate rose again, for the very significant reason that after that age many children become cyclists.'³⁷ Death rates for the under-5s had also increased, from 12.3 per 100,000 in 1935 to 13.6 for 1936/7.³⁸

The Pedestrians' Association challenged these figures, noting that the victim of an accident was often the dead pedestrian who was unable to

tell their story, and that, for a variety of reasons, two-thirds of pedestrians who were injured were never interviewed. The well-worn view of the Association was presented by C. T. Foley, in his evidence to the Alness Committee, when he trenchantly observed that 'the pedestrian has a tremendous incentive to care because his own life is at stake, whereas the motorist is protected by his vehicle'.³⁹ He argued that if the pedestrian was often hesitant in crossing the road it was because of the problem faced in judging the speed of oncoming traffic and the manner in which the car was being driven.⁴⁰

However, Foley's view carried little weight with the police, and the annual meeting of the CCA in 1930 castigated pedestrians for allegedly standing in the middle of roads discussing 'the failings of their mothers-in-law or their fancy for the 2.30'; Major Godfrey of Salford was especially outspoken about 'suicidal pedestrians'.⁴¹ His counterparts, particularly in London, Leeds and Manchester, were aware of pedestrians' 'suicidal tendencies' and expressed their views constantly in their reports throughout the 1930s.⁴² On the issue of pedestrian crossings, the Chief Constable of Preston expected that it would 'take a few years before the general public acquire the habit of using [them]'.⁴³ The Conference was also greatly influenced by Lieutenant Colonel J. A. A. Pickard, General Secretary of the NFSA, who gave a lecture on 'Some Developments in Street Accident Prevention', focusing upon the failings of pedestrians, which had meant that, as against 1921, there had been significant year-on-year rises in road deaths in the 1920s, significantly higher for adults than children (Table 6.2).

The Home Office Report on road injuries of 25 March 1931 sustained the prevailing belief that the real problem was the 'roving of the pedestrian', stating:

But the pedestrian is accustomed to rove about the pavement as he wishes. . . . The difficulty here is not to make him change a long-term custom (indeed one can hardly assert that there is an established custom of keeping to the right – certainly not in many provincial towns) but to convince him that the price of restricted freedom instead of any rule of the footpaths would bring with it all [the benefits] commensurate with personal security that would therefore accrue.⁴⁴

The Home Office certainly felt that pedestrians frequently caused accidents by walking in the path of traffic and should be taught to keep to the pavements, although there were mitigating circumstances some, such as the fact that, at the time, there was often no demarcation

between the road and the pavement. By the late 1930s, Maxwell, Chief Constable of Manchester, argued that 'legislation governing the movement of pedestrians' was necessary.⁴⁵

Pedestrians were not alone in being identified as the culprits, for cyclists were also blamed because of their prominence in accident figures: 'There are cyclists who ride with their hands in their pockets... and others who load themselves with cumbrous articles so that they have no proper control, and yet others who rode the tramlines, caught lifts of the back of lorries and even deliberately rode to and from work without lights.'⁴⁶ Indeed, the Chief Constable of St Helens sympathised with the motorists 'confronted and endangered by cyclists riding without lights'.⁴⁷

Nonetheless, and contrary to the claim of O'Connell, the police did not simply morph into the wider pro-motorists middle-class consensus of the 1930s that scapegoated the pedestrian and the cyclists. They were unequivocal in their demands for the restoration of the speed limit in 1934, in opposition to the NSFA, the AA and the RAC. Indeed, in 1936 the Metropolitan Commissioner Sir Philip Game recognised that 'the pedestrian and the cyclist are entitled to claim that they have not created the problem' and that 'they have as much right to the use of the road as anyone else', but that 'under the conditions existing today, full exercise of these rights can only lead to painful, if not fatal, results'.⁴⁸ Game reported that 'the class of road user with the worst records... is the motorist'.⁴⁹ The Chief Constable of Liverpool agreed, and felt that 'dangerous driving is responsible for a large number of accidents'.⁵⁰ The police were identifying the pedestrian as a problem but not absolving the motorists from blame, for they were the focus of their Enforcement work.

Faced with the enormous level of road death and injury, and operating within the confines of their beliefs, both the Home Office and chief constables strove to improve road safety, mindful of the influence and whims of the motorist lobby, the magistracy and the law. The result was that they had to be realistic and, moving to save pedestrians, were drawn into working with the NSFA. Bill Luckin has reminded us that this meant making children aware of the road and promoting their general road sense, which was, in the words of the chairman of the Pedestrians' Association, 'making the child the subconscious guardian of his own safety', thus absolving the driver from responsibility.⁵¹ The police accepted the position of the NSFA for the pragmatic reason that the education (and indeed segregation) of the pedestrian was felt to be the solution to pedestrian deaths and injuries. The NSFA was also the most

powerful road safety group in Britain and seemed to be setting the pace of road safety discussion from the 1930s, and it was, after all, unlikely that the Pedestrians' Association demand for cars to have speed-curbing technology would be introduced. The police were drawn to two strategies for pedestrians, both advocated by the NFSA. One was to channel the pedestrian across roads, in a redefining of the urban landscape, discussed in Chapter 5. The second was the need to educate pedestrians, as well as other road users.

Maxwell, of Manchester, although clearly not without his own criticism of pedestrians, was committed to educating a child's road sense, and stated that 'the children of today are the citizens of tomorrow and education regarding their responsibilities is on benefit to all'.⁵² His attitude, and that of other chief constables, was given an impetus by the 1930 Road Traffic Act, which provided funds for educational road safety activities; the 1934 Road Traffic Act, which directed local authorities to provide pedestrian crossings; and the decision in 1936 that the police had a responsibility for educational work connected with road safety. This was stimulated further by the evidence that 3,507 of the 7,202 deaths in 1933 were of pedestrians, compared to only 589 for motorists – drivers or passengers in buses, lorries and private cars – of which private motorist deaths were, by far, the smallest in number.⁵³ About 40 per cent of these 3,507 were children, many of whom were killed between 4 pm and 5 pm on weekdays on leaving school.

The police and road safety measures: The 4Rs c.late 1920s to 1939

Where precisely, then, did the police locate themselves in the development of road safety for the pedestrian? From the late 1920s they were pro-active in establishing road safety for pedestrians. They worked closely with the National Road Safety Council, which brought together a variety of interested parties including the NFSA, the British Medical Association, the AA, and the government in the form of the Board of Trade and the Board of Education, to organise a safety week throughout the country throughout 1931.⁵⁴ The Council asked chief constables to 'express any concerns, favourable or otherwise, upon the effect of the Safety Week' Movement as it developed in 1931. Local 'Safety First' Councils had organised local national safety weeks throughout 1931, and one list of 14 such weeks indicates that Halifax held its week between 4–11 April 1931, Exeter 11–17 April, London 2–8 May, Huddersfield 9–16 May and Sheffield 22–29 May. The purpose

of these weeks was 'to force public attention upon the urgent necessity of accident prevention – at work – on the street – in the home and in the air'.⁵⁵ And the police played a vital role in these early developments. They participated in safety weeks, giving talks and showing slideshows and films to schoolchildren, and sent handbills to parents warning of the dangers of the road. 'Safety films' had previously been shown to 25,000 schoolchildren in Salford in 1929, and Chief Constable Godfrey broadcast over the radio on 'Traffic Problems of an Industrial City'.⁵⁶ The police visited parks and recreation grounds out of term time, and enforced their message 'by means of a loud-speaker van-relayed gramophone records on "Safety First" by well-known celebrities such as Mr. Hore-Belisha, Miss Gracie Fields and Sir Malcolm Campbell'.⁵⁷

The National Safety Week Council was initially encouraged by results, when it found that, in the first nine months of 1931, the total number of road deaths for England and Wales was reported at 3,631, 10 per cent down on the previous year, though non-fatal accidents had risen from 111,929 to 118,231. Chief constables expressed the view that the improvement in the figures of fatalities was achieved without any appreciable change in the volume of traffic on the roads.⁵⁸ And some of the best results were achieved in the West Riding towns and cities of Bradford, Dewsbury, Halifax, Huddersfield, Leeds and Sheffield, where local 'Safety First' Councils took a very active part in the organisation of the National 'Safety First' Week, and were active at a Congress held in Leeds. Some of these councils contributed to the funds of the NSFA, Bradford contributing £50 per year to the local NSFA and occasionally contributing to its national campaigns.⁵⁹ Each of these towns or cities recorded a fall of around 25 per cent in the number of street fatalities, and the Chief Constable of Bradford felt that 'definite progress could be achieved if "Safety First" was brought to the knowledge of School Children at regular intervals as part of the routine work of schools', leading to better road sense amongst children 'at the most important period of their lives'.⁶⁰ He repeated his commitment to the NSFA and the 'Safety Week' concept two years later.⁶¹ There were also considerable improvements in road safety achieved in Manchester and Liverpool, in the South West and in Brighton and Hove.⁶²

Thereafter, the 'Safety Week' and NSFA projects were regular, high-profile events in many major urban centres. In the early 1930s, the Burnley and Bolton Safety Week saw children being given practical instruction by police officers. In Scotland, 25,000 children attended the NSFA's traffic event 'Alert Today – Alive Tomorrow' in

November 1934. Major Godfrey, Chief Constable of Salford, arranged for Inspector Milner, a trainee officer, to lecture at every school in Salford. At Aberdare, in Wales, Chief Constable James McConnach arranged for 400 adults to see 'Alert Today – Alive Tomorrow'.⁶³

Indeed, many chief constables took up the cause of road safety in the inter-war years, though two in particular were identified with efforts to educate children in road safety. Maxwell, of Manchester, was dedicated to effective traffic policing and sent his officers into schools to teach children the importance of road safety. Even more famously, Major C. V. Godfrey, of the neighbouring Salford City Force, produced his famous book *Road Sense for Children* in 1937, which included his instructive and seminal safety-first song, recorded by Gracie Fields:

When you cross the road day or night
Beware of the dangers that loom in sight
Look to the left, and look to the right
Then you'll never, never get run over.⁶⁴

Godfrey noted that Inspector Milner, of the Salford Police, would give a brief lecture and follow it up with this song, during which the children would achieve 'a sort of seventh heaven of concordant ecstasy'.⁶⁵ He believed that schoolchildren looked forward to these visits, often asking their parents 'if they may wear their best clothes on the day when a police lecture is to take place'.⁶⁶

The Met was also systematic in giving lectures to children at schools and to child and youth organisations, as well as to adult groups, throughout the late 1930s.⁶⁷ In 1936 and 1937, they gave over 50 talks on road safety, including ones to the students at the Marie Grey Training College on 14 March 1936 and Walthamstow Girl Guides on 14 September 1936.⁶⁸ Indeed, throughout the 1930s, they organised hundreds of lectures a year as well as putting together an enormous programme for the London (Metropolitan) Safety Week of 1–7 October 1939, a month after the outbreak of the Second World War.⁶⁹

This explosion of road safety activity, of which the police were a vital part, was turned into a commitment by the national government (1931–1940). In 1934, the Home Office began its road safety campaign by noting that there were 2,416,908 motor-propelled vehicles in Britain as of 30 September 1934, and that both police forces and local authorities should do their best to ensure that the carnage on the roads was reduced, especially on bank holidays when deaths and injuries peaked.⁷⁰ Each area and region of Britain was encouraged to

compete to produce the most improved statistics, and Charles Laughton Rafter, the Chief Constable of Birmingham, wrote a letter to A. L. Dixon at the Home Office, which included the statement that 'all members of the Police Force are on the qui vive with regard to the prevention of street accident'.⁷¹ He attached guidance on road safety measures in his own 23-page pamphlet, *Synopsis of Fatal Vehicular Street Accidents in the City of Birmingham for the Year 1933*, calling for a pro-active police activity in road safety measures.⁷² Indeed, between 1933 and 1935, he and other chief constables were strident in their efforts to bring down the 'Bank Holiday holocausts'. Indirectly, and from the point of view of the motorists' contribution to road safety, they were supportive of the initiative of the NFSA and its General Secretary Lieutenant Colonel J. A. A. Pickard, for promoting the formation of the Road Fellowship League. This had arisen because the Duke of York had said that there was a need to 'cultivate a spirit of good fellowship on the road'; the Road Fellowship League was formed with Sir Malcolm Campbell, the world land speed record holder, as its president.⁷³

This work by the police and local voluntary and municipal bodies was encouraged further by the National School Propaganda Committee (Association), whose chairman, Dr J. Watson Grice, stressed, in 1935, that three of every four pedestrians killed on the road were under 15 years of age or over the age of 55. More shocking, and damning, he argued, was the fact that, annually in the five years from 1930 to 1934, over 1,000 boys and 500 girls under 14 years of age had been killed on the roads. Grice argued that these groups needed far more protection, and that 'The National School Propaganda Committee is representative of the leaders of all kinds and grades of schools throughout Great Britain, of administrative staff, and of the Board of Education.'⁷⁴ Sir Malcolm Campbell, Jack Hobbs, the cricketer, and over 150 education authorities were involved. Over 60 chief constables, upwards of a third of the chief constables of Britain, were also directly associated with this Committee. Indeed, Captain J. Moore, Chief Constable of Huddersfield, was, for several years, its chairman. He was supported by the Chief Constable of Oldham, who was opposed to children riding bicycles. John Williamson, Chief Constable of Northampton, was also active. The Committee also included Mr J. T. Tarry, the Chief Constable of Exeter, who had been involved in the Safety Week Movement, and on the Errant Safety First Council and involved in the Errant Boys' Safety Reading Competition. Road safety for children was, therefore, taken up by a variety of interconnected movements, which often worked hand in hand with the police. The organisation was also connected with the

Road Fellowship League through Mr J. F. May, the Chief Constable of Swansea.

Yet it was the NSFA which usually set the tone and was strident in the need for further action. Indeed, Sir Henry Piggott (NSFA) felt that insufficient had been achieved in the early 1930s beyond the introduction of *The Highway Code*, and he and others sought £2,000 per year from the government in 1933 so that the NSFA could conduct their road safety activities, although they felt the need of £25,000 to wage an effective campaign.⁷⁵ Piggott argued that 'it [the NSFA] is earnestly of the opinion that the whole influence of the Government should now be brought to play in order that the Association's efforts may be brought into play'.⁷⁶ It hoped to start a full campaign in March 1934 and to reach its zenith in May 1934, through the road transport industry, the press and the Cinematograph Exhibition Association. It actually secured £5,000 from the government on 18 January 1934. It sought similar funding in 1939, eventually securing another £5,000 from the government 'to encourage the teaching of road safety principles to school children'.⁷⁷

There remained, however, some lingering doubts amongst police chief constables about the advisability of such work. In the 1930s, some chief constables questioned the value of their child road safety schemes, and continued to express concern at the extra burden these placed upon their officers. In 1934, the Chief Constable of Leeds hoped for an alternative scheme to reduce demands on his overstretched men.⁷⁸ Similarly, the Commissioner of Police for London was alarmed that the equivalent of some 250 men were engaged on school patrol, and later advocated 'the wider employment of Adult Patrols, as used in America, to carry the approved "Stop - Children Crossing" sign outside schools', rather than leave the responsibility with the hard-pressed police.⁷⁹ Even in Manchester, the police tried to deflect the burden by training older boys (i.e. 14 year olds) to supervise younger children. The boys wore safety armlets.⁸⁰ However, Maxwell ruefully noted that 'the value of this special effort has not unfortunately been reflected in a satisfactory reduction in the number of accidents occurring to the children of school age'.⁸¹ From a different position, a delegate to a 1936 conference on road safety worried about the inculcation of the child: 'we shall develop a highly-strung, birdlike type of child, swivel-necked with constant practice in looking right and left'.⁸² Even Major Godfrey felt that the propaganda was 'hard and unrelenting' and that a study of Doctors Goebbels and Frick would reveal the impact it could have upon the juvenile mind.⁸³ Yet, in 1936, Maxwell ruefully noted that 'the value of this special effect has not unfortunately been reflected in

a satisfactory reduction in the number of accidents occurring to the children of school age'.⁸⁴

As a result, the national government took the further step of setting up an Interdepartmental Committee on Road Safety in 1935. It produced *Road Safety and School Children: The Report of the Inter-Departmental Committee on Road Safety among School Children* at the end of April 1936.⁸⁵ Receiving extensive evidence from the chief constables, it stressed that 'To the Police it is a matter of greatest concern that the death rate of children on the roads is so high and that the casualty rate among road users has reached the appalling figure of over 200,000 a year.'⁸⁶ Its message was that there needed to be even more draconian action and more serious penalties for dangerous driving, to ensure that offenders 'are being brought properly and without fail towards the Courts to answer their misdemeanours', a view strongly held by many chief constables.⁸⁷ On road safety for children, however, 'The Report states that the most effective method of safeguarding children at busy road crossings near schools is by means of a Police Constable attending for this purpose. That takes a considerable amount of police time', as many chief constables complained. Indeed, HM Constabulary Scotland and England reflected that: 'A large number of schools in the cities and burghs are situated in the vicinity of the main thorough forces, and constables have to be withdrawn from their beds four times a day to... help children across the streets [...] The co-operation of Police officers with school children is encouraged.'⁸⁸ The report also noted that lectures by selected police officers to schoolchildren were to be encouraged and recorded. The clear message was that the police had to teach road safety in schools. Up to 1936, the teaching of road safety to schoolchildren by the police was considered optional, but after 1936 every police force in Britain had a duty to provide educational work in the form of lectures, road safety literature, cycle checks, road safety guidance and related activities.

The measures worked and, by 1937, national child road deaths had fallen to 900, from 1,437 in 1933. And the *Police Review* for 2 June 1939 reflected that:

Education to be most effective should be started early, and here again the Police have shown the way. A week or two ago the Traffic Department of the Salford Police were able to announce that during the past thirteen months [March 1937–March 1938] no child of school age had been killed on the city's roads. In April 1938 there had been one casualty.⁸⁹

Indeed, the Salford Police had established a reputation for the ‘control of road-sense propaganda’, and had worked closely with the City Education Office and with individual schools. They were determined to inculcate the ‘4Rs’ – the conventional 3Rs plus road sense – and Godfrey emphasised the importance of visual warnings.⁹⁰ Maxwell, had also drawn in 50 county policemen to operate on the streets of Manchester in order to inform the public about *The Highway Code*, and this was thought to have helped reduce the number of deaths and injuries there in 1938.⁹¹

Despite these improvements, Foley, of the Pedestrians’ Association, remained critical of the road safety measures of the police and some voluntary bodies, and doubted their impact. He maintained that the value of police instruction in schools ‘may be over-estimated’, with the police overstating their role and other factors at play, saying that ‘the reduction in the number of accidents to children of school age is very largely due to the fact that parents have adopted a convoy system; they take their children to and from school in a way in which they did not do years ago’.⁹² Nonetheless, death rates of both adult and child pedestrians were declining by the late 1930s, and it is difficult to believe that the commitment of many forces to educational activities, voluntarily from about 1930 and compulsorily from 1936, did not contribute to this improvement.

The wartime slaughter on the roads 1939–1945 and the ‘Kerb Side Drill’

At the start of the Second World War, Britain’s wartime government was alarmed at the sudden reversal of the improvements in road safety secured in the late 1930s. The Second World War saw blackouts, confusion over the use of red and green lamps as an alternative to normal signalling for the instructions of motor vehicles, and the removal of road signs. Although both the number of cars on the roads and car mileage were greatly reduced – the two million cars of 1939 falling to about 800,000 and substantial reductions in other motor vehicles – initially road accidents rose dramatically.⁹³ With the death of 4,133 people on the roads in the first four months of the war in 1939, compared to annual death rates of 6,000–7,000 in the 1930s, it was clear that road safety had deteriorated dramatically. There were more than 8,000 deaths in 1939, 8,500 in 1940 and about 9,000 in 1941 (Table 6.3).⁹⁴ The *Police Review* reflected upon the consequences of the move from peacetime to wartime conditions:

Table 6.3 Road deaths, 1938–1946⁹⁵

Year	1938	1939	1940	1941	1942	1943	1944	1945	1946
Killed	6,599	8,272	8,609	9,169	6,296	5,796	6,416	5,256	5,065

Under peace time conditions it was estimated that duties connected with traffic conditions on the highway occurred for at least one-sixth of the whole time service of the Police Force. That was the measure of the magnitude of the problem. Since the outbreak of war the question has become so complicated in consequence of lighting restrictions and a variety of the reasons that it is asking the impossible to expect the Police to exercise effective control on any terms. Since the introduction of the black-out there had been a big increase in the number of deaths and cases of injury caused by road accidents.⁹⁶

The wartime ‘slaughter on the roads’ led Captain Euan Walker, Minister of Transport, to announce, in January 1940, that a safety campaign would be initiated and directed ‘chiefly at helping pedestrians because he [sic] was the worst sufferer, under black-out conditions [and] it lay in his hands to make the greatest contribution to safety’.⁹⁷ This endorsed the views held by the powerful Society of Motor Manufacturers and Trades and was the accepted policy of the NSFA/RoSPA, but was strongly opposed by the anti-motorist Pedestrians’ Association. The Minister had, in effect, accepted the ‘Human Factor’ model of road accidents promulgated by the pre-war Alness Committee, which laid the blame for accidents on the individual, mainly the pedestrian.

Road fatalities and injuries fell from 1942 onwards. This may have been as a result of the fact that RoSPA, with the aid of a Treasury grant and the support of the Ministry of Information, introduced the Kerb Drill.⁹⁸ This was the famous dictatorial military drill of ‘at the Kerb HALT, eyes right; eyes left – then – if it is clear; quick march’; it became the universal road safety drill for both adults and children.⁹⁹ The Kerb Drill was spread by the press, magazines and through newspaper editorials. Further to this, in 1944, plans were drawn up to organise a publicity campaign as soon as possible after the cessation of hostilities. The idea was to use shock tactics halfway through the preliminary campaign. Up to that point, in 1945, the ‘friendly policeman as guide and philosopher’ had been the preferred approach of advertising. Now, instead, there were to be adverts on hoardings with a hand superimposed over

the words 'Keep Death off the Road Slogan', the 'Widow posters' as they were called.¹⁰⁰

The police played a vital role in this publicity, and some individual police forces organised their own separate wartime road safety measures. The most ambitious was undertaken by the Met, which, towards the end of the war, worked with United Motion Pictures to produce road safety films and displays, in association with RoSPA. Police officers volunteered their time, film display boards were produced for the film, and they exhibited, amongst other things, the Kingston Safety Film Display event, and related activities, over several days.¹⁰¹ The Met became involved in organising a road safety display on the riverbanks at Brentford and Chiswick on 26 June 1943, which concluded with a grand parade of mounted police, and a similar road safety demonstration on 22 and 23 September 1943, incorporating the film, at Kingston upon Thames.¹⁰²

Developments in road safety, 1945–1970

At the end of the war there was immediate renewed interest in road safety. The CIO promoted a hard-hitting 'Keep Death Off the Roads Campaign' in 1945 and 1946. The government commissioned four inquiries and reports connected with road safety, which were published in 1945 and 1946, to examine the impact of its immediate post-war campaigns. The first, in July 1945, was a Social Survey Inquiry for the Ministry of War Transport into public attitudes towards road accidents and *The Highway Code*, 'to discover how seriously the public took the problem of road danger and what was known of the Highway Code'.¹⁰³ It also observed the behaviour of people crossing the road throughout the country, and concluded that 'The Road Safety campaign had evidently succeeded in making a large proportion of the public aware of the dangers on the roads.'¹⁰⁴ The second, in January 1946, was an inquiry by the MoT into the newly organised road safety publicity campaign. Its main aim was to find out what proportion of people had been reached by the advertisements in newspapers and magazines. In March 1946, Social Survey initiated a third inquiry into the impact of the film *It Might Have Been You*, circulated by the Campaign Division of the Office of Information. This was followed by the fourth inquiry on road safety, in May 1946, for the Ministry of Information, which, like the inquiries of May 1945 and January 1946, examined the issue of pedestrians crossing the road, but focused on the different social categories of road users. Then, in 1946, Louis Moss and Kathleen Box analysed the findings of these four inquiries into a distilled 50-page summary report.¹⁰⁵ They

concluded that the road safety campaign seemed to have worked well and been effective. The three inquiries of 1946 revealed that 74 per cent, 79 and 79 per cent, respectively, of those who had been questioned, indicated that they had been aware of road safety advertising. Also 71, 72 and 82 per cent, respectively, could remember seeing adverts on road dangers, though they were seen by a higher proportion of women than men. There was evidence that public concern about road safety had increased from about 56 per cent in July 1945 to 69 per cent in May 1946, and further evidence – with 38 per cent, 43 per cent and 51 per cent, respectively – that the respondents were more careful on the roads. In assessing the July 1945 and May 1946 evidence, the summary report suggested that road behaviour in pedestrians had improved:

It was found that higher proportions looked for oncoming traffic before crossing the roads at corners and stepping out from behind an obstruction in the road which blocked their view, in May 1946 than in July 1945. There was however no considerable increase in the proportion using pedestrian crossings.¹⁰⁶

The report concluded that further advertisements of a similar kind 'would be unlikely to result in a higher proportion of the population knowing about road danger and that the effect of repetition might of course be to make people think about it more'.¹⁰⁷ However, the feeling was that now was the time to offer more specific advice, and that 'signs and traffic lights' might be put up to reduce accidents. Indeed, in one survey it was suggested that 28 per cent of those sampled wanted more signs, 25 per cent wanted increased fines for motorists not stopping, 23 per cent wanted wider roads and double carriageways, 13 per cent wanted to enforce rules for pedestrians and 12 per cent wanted more police traffic control.¹⁰⁸ Most of these suggestions were introduced in the next quarter of a century.

The Moss and Box Report, its 50 or more tables and various studies also suggested marked differences in response according to gender, age and class. It appeared that women were slightly more likely to have seen the adverts of road safety, that there was little difference in the impact of such campaigns throughout the country, that the age groups 35–54 seemed to be most concerned about road safety, and that higher earners were more likely to be aware of road safety. Indeed, those earning less than £4 per week, £4–£5 10s, and above £5 10s per week, in respective order, were 70, 81 and 87 per cent likely to be aware of the road safety campaign.¹⁰⁹

The report was accepted by the Attlee Labour government and became the basis of the government strategy adopted towards road safety over the next 25 years. Signs and crossing points increased enormously, the police became more involved in regulating both the speed and flow of traffic and road safety, and educational road safety campaigns intensified. Continuing from the 1930s, attention was increasingly focused mainly on the child. In 1948, the *Police Review* revealed that the proportion of child road fatalities had increased dramatically as a proportion of all road deaths, since 822 children had been killed in a total traffic death toll of 6,590 in 1937 and 828 children killed in 1946 from a lower overall death toll of 5,062.¹¹⁰ Road safety measures seemed all the more urgent. The situation worsened when road fatalities increased in the wake of the car purchase boom of the 1950s. Although only 5,012 people had been killed, and 201,325 injured, on the roads in 1950, central and local government and the police were greatly concerned, as road deaths rose to 6,970 in 1960, 7,895 in 1966, and were at 7,494 in 1970.¹¹¹

In response, the CIO recommended continuing education and propaganda to enforce the road safety message. It, and governments, encouraged the development of school crossing patrols, the lollipop, the Teddy Club for children under six and the Lookout Club for older children, in an attempt to improve road safety knowledge amongst children. The Duke of Edinburgh supported this co-operation when, on 16 July 1952, speaking at a meeting of the AA, of which he was president, he urged a joint conference of all those concerned with accidents on the road.¹¹² The Conference included representatives from all the major interested parties, including CCA, the Ramblers' Association and RoSPA. The group held further conferences on 5 January 1953 and 13 March 1953. After that the initiative appears to have faltered.

The problem of action on road safety was separately addressed in a report by the Met in 1952, which placed the divergent approaches of the police into perspective.¹¹³ Adopting the H. Alker Tripp structure, it discussed both road safety and urban road congestion, noting on its first page that 'the one that most affects the Police is that of enforcement'.¹¹⁴ Yet is argued that the police had 'responsibilities also for the educational and engineering sides of the problem, are in effect the sole agency on the road'. It was maintained that whilst every offence should be the basis of a hearing in court, the police should endeavour to use persuasion rather than a punitive policy, though the report favoured taking court action if necessary as an example, even though the courts imposed little more than token fines, and sometimes took no action at all.¹¹⁵ It noted that, in 1951, the Metropolitan Police Commissioner had decided to increase

traffic patrols to remind the motorists that they were in control of a 'lethal weapon', felt that further legal action was required to deal with pedal cyclists, and had reminded his readers that, 'In the present state of the law the Police have little or no control over pedestrians, and feel effort can only be made in the fields of education and engineering.'¹¹⁶ The emphasis of the police and most organisations connected with these schemes was the education of pedestrians of all ages. The Met were providing 1,050 police patrols on school crossings by 1951, and increased these to 1,400 in 1952.¹¹⁷ Its programme was evidently holistic, but also about inculcating the values required in the modern motor age. As is clear, the police also attempted to tackle the problem by controlling speed and by improved engineering. Yet one cannot get away from the fact that a tremendous amount of effort was being placed upon shaping the mind of the child, often of the very young child.

Governments worked closely with RoSPA. School crossing patrols, introduced by the police from the 1930s, were officially accepted by the government in 1951, with a circular 'children crossing' sign, the 'lollipop', appearing in 1955. Government, as already noted, also looked at pre-school children and got RoSPA to found the Teddy Club to promote road safety to the under-6s, and launched the Lookout Club for older children in 1953, with the motto 'always alert'. These initiatives, which appear to have reduced deaths by a third in the 1950s (Table 6.4) were eventually succeeded by the formation of the Tufty Club or 'Under Five Clubs' sometimes referred to as the Road Safety Toddlers Club and specifically named after Fluffytail, a squirrel drawn in cartoons who appeared alongside Minnie Mole, the naughty Mr Weasel, Mrs Owl the teacher and Policeman Badger, who always popped up in the nick of time to save children. It was launched on 4 December 1961 by RoSPA for the under-5s but expanded to include older children in 1962. The club enrolled 53,000 members in its first year and involved the merchandising of toothbrushes, handkerchiefs and jigsaws.¹¹⁸ There were 420,000 children under five years of age connected with the club by July 1965. Its essential concern was to teach them to follow a drill before crossing the road.¹¹⁹ By 1 February 1967 there were 500 Tufty Clubs and, after six years, road deaths of under-5s had fallen by 16 per cent. The Tufty Club Movement was successful and had more than two million members by the early 1970s.

By the 1960s, the government was using television to advertise road safety. Experiments were made in London to introduce the panda crossing scheme, along with other schemes for crossing the road, including the ill-fated X-way system and the pelican crossing, and to fine

Table 6.4 Road accidents and deaths of under-5s¹²⁰

Year	Killed	Seriously injured	Slightly injured	Total casualties
1951	360	2,027	7,655	10,042
1952	326	1,825	6,973	9,124
1953	287	2,017	7,226	9,530
1954	236	1,873	7,016	9,125
1955	257	1,848	7,531	9,636
1956	270	1,791	7,395	9,456
1957	211	1,733	7,011	8,955
1958	227	1,826	7,242	9,295
1959	250	2,112		
1960	242	2,344		

jaywalkers, those pedestrians not crossing roads at designated crossing points. From 1971 onwards, the Kerb Drill taught to children gave way to the Green Cross Code, which was launched in 1970 with clearer, less military, advice to children, warning them 'To Think, Stop, Use Your Eyes and Ears', and to 'Never Cross Near Parked Cars'. In addition, in 1974 the Road Traffic Act made it the statutory duty of local authorities to produce their own safety campaigns and not to merely rely upon national campaigns.

Police initiatives on road safety from the late 1940s to 1970

The police taught the Kerb Side Drill in their school-based lectures from the 1940s to the 1950s. They became deeply involved in the inter-town rivalry associated with *Highway Code* competitions, often training the schoolchildren who represented their town. Indeed, the annual reports of all the reports of chief constables are studded with their child road safety initiatives. In Birmingham in 1959, there were 12 road safety officers, a sergeant and a constable of each of six districts, visiting schools and youth clubs, and reaching an audience of 170,964, with an increase of 20,913 in 1958.¹²¹ Officers also examined 9,234 bicycles owned by schoolchildren (compared to 6,381 in 1958), of which 439 were found to be defective. They also dealt with cycling proficiency exams. However, all officers were encouraged to become involved in road safety work, especially the Special Constabulary Reserve.¹²² The police also trained the 325 crossing patrol staff in their duties, and raised the upper age limit of such staff from 70 to 75. In Wigan, in 1959, there was no town road safety officer, and 'It has fallen to the Police to carry out the duties which would normally be undertaken by such an officer.

All police officers are trained in Road Safety and are constantly giving advice to all types of road user, but more specifically to children...'.¹²³ Lectures were given to 600 children on cycling proficiency. The police were also keeping a watching brief on the 53 play streets in the borough. In St Helens in 1959, children received lectures and films on road safety, and the Traffic Department and policewomen visited schools to make children 'mindful of the hazard of crossing the road today'.¹²⁴

Liverpool had one of the best organised and most integrated post-war road safety educational systems. The police had first approached the Education Committee in 1928 with its statistics on traffic accidents and child fatalities and injuries, after which such information, and the periodic circulars from the police, had been distributed to head teachers.¹²⁵ Safety bulletins had been circulated to schools since 1933, and there had been close co-operation between the Liverpool Road Safety (Special) Committee, the police and the City Education Department. Police officers had, for years, given talks at schools, and these were seen as being of paramount importance: 'Receiving instruction at the hands of the Police not only has the advantage of the authority of the policeman, but cements further the confidence between the modern child and his friend the policeman.'¹²⁶ This report was clearly idealised, but there is an extensive record of the work of the three organisations in the surviving annual and six-monthly City of Liverpool Road Safety Committee reports of the late 1950s, and the local journal, the *Liverpolitan*.¹²⁷ From these records, it would appear that road fatalities and injuries were high in the mid-1950s, 71 in 1955 and 69 in 1956, rising to 77 in 1959. The good news was that the death rates amongst children fell slightly. There were 11 deaths amongst pre-school children and ten schoolchildren (5–14) in 1956, which fell to 15 in 1959.¹²⁸ However, there were no deaths reported for pre-school children and only two for children aged between 5 and 14 in January and February 1960, the same as for the same period in 1959.¹²⁹ The City of Liverpool Police gloried in their relative success. In 1949, when a very strong campaign was being run, they visited 362 schools and saw 159,874 children, performed 276 puppet shows on road safety, showed 86 films, and operated a road safety centre at Lark Lane Police Station, which attracted more than 1,000 children during the year.¹³⁰ The type and level of commitment changed over the years, but in 1959 the Chief Constable noted that his road safety unit had visited 111 schools, given 290 lectures, talked to 34,980 scholars, and had also gone to clubs and talked to 382 people and 17 parties in conjunction with the road safety officer at Seel Street Police Station.¹³¹ Like other forces, Liverpool was involved in training crossing patrol staff,

had '76 traffic wardens looking after crossings used by school children', and maintained close relations on road safety with the local Education Department of the Council and with teachers.¹³²

Several police forces employed officers who built up road safety packs and schemes which filtered through to other forces. Some of these, like the one produced by the Huddersfield Road Safety Committee, supported by the Chief Constable of Huddersfield, were effectively advanced driving manuals.¹³³ On the other hand, many were produced for teaching children the 4Rs.

The Metropolitan Road Safety Department Model Set was produced in 1947 by Sergeant Haskell and PC Jackman, and used extensively in the 'K' Division, though it proved to be contentious since, in February 1948, Haskell complained that it was believed at the time that:

Jackman and myself would receive rewards for my efforts, but since the inception of this kind of instruction to school children in particular, many calls have been made upon so, not only in our Division, but in many parts of the MPD.

Whilst attending Road Safety exhibitions we received certain information that other persons intended to take up our ideas and put the model on the market for their own gains...¹³⁴

The letter went on to request that the Model Set be patented.

The City of Bradford Road Safety Department produced the 15-page *Billy Bunny: The Rabbit Who Forgot: A Colour Cartoon* at the beginning of 1952, with cartoons by PC Morrell Dennison, a 27-year-old student of art, and script by 44-year-old Sergeant Parker. It consisted of 35 cartoons and related stories about a rabbit that runs out of school on hearing the school bell and gets knocked down. The *Sunday Express* quoted Sergeant Parker as saying that 'All the children are so interested now that they shout warnings when a character is doing the wrong thing.'¹³⁵

This project produced some significant reactions, including a letter from the City of Newcastle Police on 28 January 1953, asking how road safety worked in Bradford.¹³⁶ There may have been previous correspondence between the forces, but the only surviving reply was sent from the Bradford Police to the Newcastle Police on 1 May 1953. It examined the road layout of Bradford, stating that:

From a Road Safety point of view Bradford is a difficult place to look after. The centre of Bradford is in a hollow. There is only one road leading out of town where you do not have to climb a hill. We have

no road going straight through the town. The city centre was planned many years ago and little has been done to bring it up to date.

It then went on to outline the supportive work of the Road Safety Department, which had one inspector, two sergeants and two constables for a town of 298,000, of whom 42,000 were schoolchildren. A constable was employed on record work and another constable planned the drawing of accidents for road safety display cards. The inspector dealt with matters of policy, and attended and spoke at conferences. The sergeants dealt with school instruction and youth organisations, and the city being divided into two halves, they take the schools in their own half, 'roughly 100 schools in each half'.¹³⁷ It added that:

We give Road Safety Instruction to children of all ages. Starting with the Daily Nursery School, there were have children from three years to five years of age; then comes the infant school with children from five to seven years of age, then comes the junior school, children seven to eleven years; and lastly secondary schools with children eleven years and over. These schools include grammar schools where in some cases we have students of 17–18 years of age.

The schools were those covered by the Education Department and Health Department of the City Council; the unit had only £345 per year to spend and were thus always looking for free materials. They drew upon the Bovril Traffic Light Cards, the Process Safety First Game and the Oxo Daily Book as free advisory material on road safety. Despite its financial constraints, the unit was able to offer cycle and cycling proficiency tests in the summer: 'We set out the school yard with roads and traffic signs, give demonstrations of safe cycling tests to children with their cycles.' They were also particularly associated with children in the 12–16 age group. Indeed, 'In winter we give film shows to organisations. [...] I feel that with Road Safety there is never a dull moment.'

The Highway Code: The moral, not legal, code of the road

Finally, as part of the road safety strategy and underpinning their activities, all of Britain's police forces were involved in the formulation and implementation of rules of the road for all road users. When the Road Safety Act of 1930 (Section 45 (4)) decided that it wanted a highway code, it was expected that this code would be used by the courts to deal with issues of speeding, dangerous driving and careless driving.

However, when it emerged it was clear that it was not to have the status of the law of the land but be a toothless moral code. Herbert Morrison described the very first *Highway Code*, issued in April 1931, as 'A code of good manners to be observed by all courteous and considerate persons.'¹³⁸ In 1935, Leslie Hore-Belisha, Minister of Transport in the National Government (1931–1940), introduced the new version of *The Highway Code*, by writing, in rather high-flown style, that: 'In every human activity there is a standard of conduct to which in common interest we are expected to conform. This Code is the standard of conduct for the road. Respect for the Code and for the spirit underlying it is so much a moral duty that its practice should become a habit and its breach a reproach.'¹³⁹ The 1946 edition underlined the 'moral duty' of the code and the requirement of 'the spirit of tolerance and consideration', even though it contained both legal requirements and discretionary behaviour.¹⁴⁰ The 1954 edition, written by John Boyd-Carpenter, Minister of Transport and Civil Aviation, was even more emphatic:

The Highway Code is not a body of law, with pains and penalties to back it. It is a collection of Do's and Don'ts for drivers, cyclists and pedestrians based on good manners and good sense. [...]

The Highway Code is designed to help make our roads safer. If we follow it in spirit and in the letter we can each of us contribute very directly to keeping down the number of accidents and to keeping traffic on our roads flowing smoothly.¹⁴¹

The message was clear; *The Highway Code* was a moral code, although it contained mandatory rules endorsed by acts of Parliament which, if flouted, could lead to prosecution. Much to the chagrin of the police, this meant that whilst they constantly urged the use of *The Highway Code* in motoring cases, the magistrates and the judiciary generally ignored it for it had no force in law. Failing in the courts, the *Code* was used by police as the basis of educating a young generation who would soon be driving cars, through school visits and the promotion of inter-town *Highway Code* competitions. It thus became part of the process of educating the child, the adult, the pedestrian, the learner motorist and, hopefully, other road users of the need to abide by a recognisable and standard set of behaviours.

The position of the *Code* reflects its origins in the voluntary attempts of road users to draw up rules for the road upon a compromise to which all could agree. The AA, the RAC and the NSFA had all introduced road

signs and published booklets on the rules of the road by the 1920s.¹⁴² However, what was lacking, as the AA reminded governments, was a clear set of national guidelines and road signage along the lines. As a result, Morrison promoted the idea of establishing *The Highway Code* in the Road Traffic Act of 1930. It was first introduced in 1931, and between then and 1970 was revised – in 1935, 1946, 1959 and 1968 – with some updating and visual amendments in-between these dates, as in the case of a supplement produced for the onset of the motorways in 1958/9.

From the start, whilst the police were active in all areas of road safety they played a peripheral role in shaping the original *Highway Code*. The 1930 Road Traffic Act required the MoT to prepare guidance for all road users. The police were, however, deeply concerned about the preparation of *The Highway Code*, though their compelling interest was overshadowed by a body of sectional interests, and their views and those of the Home Office were often marginalised by the fact that the MoT held responsibility for introducing transport legislation. Indeed, in January 1931, the MoT, after initial consultations, invited many interested parties to discuss the details of a draft set of proposals at a Conference on the Highway Code on 22 January 1931, which nullified the chances of the police ever determining the implementation of the *Code* and added to the difficulties they later faced in trying to enforce *The Highway Code* in the courts.

It is worth, for a moment, reflecting upon the range of competing interests represented at this formative meeting. The motorist was overwhelmingly represented by bodies such as the RAC, the AA, the National Road Safety Association (Lt. Col. Pickard), the Order of the Road (Rt. Hon Earl of Cottenham), the Standing Joint Committee of Mechanical Road Transport Association (Chair W. Edward, Vice Chair G. W. G. Allen and Hon Sec., Fred G. Bristow), and the Omnibus Owners' Association. Cycling organisations such as the National Cyclist Union (H. N. Crowe) and the Cycling Touring Club (Secretary G. Herbert Stoner) and the Auto-Cycle Union (a motorcycle organisation represented by Secretary T. W. Loughborough) were present. The Pedestrians' Association was also represented, as was the Magistrates' Association, the Metropolitan Borough Standing Joint Committee, and other local government organisations such as the Metropolitan Borough Standing Joint Committee's Traffic Sub-Committee and the Institute of Transport. The War Office was represented by Sir N. Burrell, while Arthur Ponsonby represented the MoT. There was only a small Home Office and police presence, which was rather swamped by the motoring interests.

The Conference spent much time discussing the details of road discipline and order, including the use of motor horns, with regard to which Lord Ponsonby suggested that 'we try to steer a course between too much and too little hooting'.¹⁴³ There were many similar discussions on the logistics of road use by different users. It was established that the *Code* assumed, as Lord Ponsonby suggested, that the rights of motorists and pedestrians were equal. The representative of the Scotland Office reflected astutely: 'Yes, but it is not an equal right.'¹⁴⁴ Vitaly, the main observation made was that the 1930 Act stressed that

failure to observe any provision of the Code shall not by itself become an offence, but that any proceedings whether civil or criminal, including any proceedings for an offence under the Act, itself, any said failure may be relied upon as tending to establish negative any liability which is in question.

In other words, the *Code* was not to be the law of the land as a document, but the breaking of it might be used by the courts in estimating damages. This subsequently proved to be a controversial issue, for the courts tended to dismiss any evidence of the police based upon the contravention of *The Highway Code*, precisely because it was not the law.¹⁴⁵

The January 1931 meeting was thus one of those defining moments – a turning point, in drawing up the rules of the road – and built up *The Highway Code* sentence by sentence and rule by rule as modern transport moved slowly into the new age of the car in Britain, with the separation and segregation of road users implied in the evolving *Code*.¹⁴⁶ The basic guidelines that emerged, and were worked upon by civil servants, would be readily recognisable today. The 'Keep Left rule', the equal rights of road users and many others were discussed at this meeting and became the basis of ongoing debate. Yet the big issue for the police was the lack of legal power to use the *Code* in, for instance, cases of dangerous or careless driving.

In 1938, the Alness Committee suggested that the full force of the law might be used to strengthen the *Code*, for it was evident that it was being broken 'day after day, without conscience or remorse'. However, it also, rather disingenuously, argued that 'Against such people the full range of the law has been ranged', and added that there should be restraint in the suspension of licences because this might 'involve taking away the livelihood of a professional driver'.¹⁴⁷

Failing to gain legal force, the Home Office and the police focused upon *The Highway Code* as an educational tool. The 1931 edition was rather basic and flimsy, but enshrined in the 24-page 1935 edition is an appendix used by 'Police Constables and others engaged in the Regulation of Traffic', indicating the standard hand actions, as illustrated by drawings of a policeman in action.¹⁴⁸ Churchill's wartime government felt that there was no need to strengthen the legal enforcement of the *Code* by an amendment to the 1930 Act suggesting that the *Code* should be used more frequently in courts. Attlee's post-war Labour government more or less agreed, but in 1945 and 1946 the propaganda work of the CIO, through its 'Keep Death off the Roads Campaign', encouraged the revision of *The Highway Code*, the third edition of which appeared in 1946. It was used to remind road users what traffic signs looked like.

The continuing lack of legal enforcement of the *Code*, however, remained a constant problem, and this was illuminated by the Lord Chief Justice who, in 1951, discouraged any reference to *The Highway Code* being made in the case of *Kemp v Read*. This was a case where a lorry driver reversed into a main road blindly, an action discouraged by the *Code*, and collided with a motorbike, seriously injuring a woman in a side-car. In the wake of the Lord Chief Justice's action, Edward Terrell, Recorder at Newbury, ran a campaign to give statutory powers to the *Code*, which went well beyond the ideas of the Home Office and the MoT.¹⁴⁹ He felt that it should be both a document of law and a body of advice.

There then began a tortuous debate throughout the 1950s as the police, the Home Office and the MoT pressured for the legal enforcement of *The Highway Code* to no avail. The MoT Committee on Road Safety met on 19 July 1951 to improve *The Highway Code*, feeling that it should now be 'given the force of law'.¹⁵⁰ This view was strongly supported by the Traffic Sub-Committee of the CCoCC, at its sixth meeting, held on 6 September 1951, where it was agreed that police powers to deal with driving offences should be strengthened. At its seventh meeting, on 12 September, the Committee further agreed that there was a need to take action in dealing with dangerous and inconsiderate driving, though it was felt that this should be done 'by linking up the Code with the existing law, rather than creating fresh offences'. Indeed, it felt that some current rules could be made offences, and that this could make drivers more aware of the weight of their actions.¹⁵¹

The Committee on Road Safety: Report to the Minister of Transport on the Highway Code examined the Terrell Plan in 1952, and favoured

its application. The essential element of the plan was that the *Code* was a 'confused series of exhortations and rules' and that what was required was:

[A] clear and simple Highway Code which would codify the law of negligence on the roads. This would not only assert the Police and the Courts but, coupled with the imposition of disqualification of driving and for breaches of the Code. This would result in the Highway Code being thoroughly learnt and understood by road users.¹⁵²

There were to be rules laid down for good and careful driving, and rules for the pedestrian and cyclist as well. It was argued that whilst the *Code* did not have the force of law it could be repealed, redrafted and re-enacted.¹⁵³ The Committee admired the Terrell Plan, and accepted that the *Code* had not been successful at educating all road users, but felt that it would have to apply also 'to the conduct of pedestrians and pedal cyclists as well as the drivers of motor vehicles', which it felt would 'not be accepted by the public as reasonable'.¹⁵⁴

The strengthening of the 1930 Act on the *Code* was discussed in 1953 by the Road Traffic Committee of the Home Affairs Committee, which, on 6 October 1953, turned down a proposal that Section 45 (4) of the 1930 Road Traffic Act should be amended, so that failure to comply with *The Highway Code* would be *prima facie* evidence of an offence in both criminal and civil courts. It did not want to go as far as compelling courts to consider *The Highway Code* in every case but to generally raise its status. As a result, the MoT, the Home Secretary and the Solicitor General met to establish 'some form of words' that would just fall short of *prima facie* evidence.

The MoT and Scotland Yard both wanted a clause in a new Act, obliging courts dealing with criminal cases to examine it in regard to the relevant part of *The Highway Code*.¹⁵⁵ In a discussion between representatives of the MoT, the Solicitor General, and Mr Dalton and Mr Coverdale Sharpe (of the Solicitors' Department) of Scotland Yard, it was agreed that the MoT and Scotland Yard wished for provisions 'that would make it obligatory on the court to have regard to the relevant rule in *The Highway Code* if it were quoted in evidence by either side'.¹⁵⁶ It was suggested that when there was evidence that a lack of care had caused an accident, 'it is difficult to convince the court that the drivers' action had, in fact, been dangerous'. It was thus recommended, on 16 October 1953, that an amendment to Section 45 (4) should, for criminal proceedings, read as follows:

A failure on the part of any person to observe any provision of the Highway Code shall not in itself render that person liable to criminal proceedings of any kind, but in any criminal proceedings, in deciding whether the acts complained of amount to an offence, the court shall have regard to such provisions of the Highway Code as appears to the court to be relevant.¹⁵⁷

It was considered that a similar provision should be set up in relation to civil proceedings. The prevailing belief was that if *The Highway Code* appeared in criminal proceedings it would advertise the *Code* and it would be more difficult for the courts to ignore it in future. However, this did not meet the concerns of the chief constables.

On 27 October 1953, the Traffic Sub-Committee of the CCoCC considered the Memorandum from the Home Affairs Committee on *The Highway Code*, and continued to reflect that it should 'have the force of law'. It noted that the MoT had, in March 1952, admitted that the use of the *Code* was restricted to only a few cases, and that the 'existing *Highway Code* had not proved satisfactory as a measure of educating all classes of road users in road safety'.¹⁵⁸ The Traffic Sub-Committee of the Chief Constables added that:

[A] new and improved Highway Code would not secure the success which was aimed at unless the Court showed themselves ready to accept evidence based upon a breach of the Highway Code rules and gave the Code the status that Parliament had clearly intended them to have under Section 45 (4) of the Road Traffic Act, 1930.

On 7 January 1954, the Home Office produced a further document on 'The Legal Status of the Highway Code', in which it was indicated that the Road Safety Committee should look again at *The Highway Code* being *prima facie* evidence. The pressure came quite clearly from the Traffic Sub-Committee of the CCoCC, which felt that 'the status of the Code did need raising'.¹⁵⁹ In particular, pressure came from London, 'where the police have failed to prove offences of dangerous and careless driving in cases where disregard of the law had resulted in accidents'.¹⁶⁰ On 19 January 1954, the same Sub-Committee noted that the Lancashire Police were concerned about the additional hazards for pedestrians, particularly children, and the need to take action.¹⁶¹ Mr Coverdale Sharpe, in charge of the Solicitor's Office of Scotland Yard, dealing with traffic accident prevention, stressed that it was often difficult to convince courts that there had been dangerous driving.

A month later, on 19 February 1954, the Traffic Sub-Committee of the CCoCC expressed its consternation that courts continued not disallow reference to *The Highway Code* in traffic offences. This, it reiterated, contrasted with the original intention when *The Highway Code* was first written in 1931.

When the 1954 revision of *The Highway Code* was presented to Parliament in November 1954, it was as a *fait accompli* which could not be changed, and retained the original legal statement made in the 1930 Road Traffic Act. Nothing had changed. J. Boyd Carpenter, the Minister of Transport and Civil Aviation, mentioned, in the Commons, that detailed discussion of its legal position had occurred but had changed little, whilst Lord Carrington, in the House of Lords, offered the sop that whilst it could be regarded in civil and criminal proceedings as tending to establish or negate any likely compensation in question, there was a difficulty in deciding 'a halfway house between the existing status of the Code and giving it the force of laws'.¹⁶² It was clear that there had been considerable opposition of change from motoring organisations, the National Road Transport Federation and the Trades Union Congress (TUC), and it was felt that 'it was not written in such a manner that would command the respect of the road users and the courts'.¹⁶³ Lord Lucas of Chilworth, who had been at the MoT in 1951 when a revision of the 1946 Code was considered, and had been chairman of the National 'Safety First' Committee, opposed making it the law, because it could not be enforced and would make a mockery of the concept of British law.¹⁶⁴ It was just a little unfortunate that, the previous month, October 1954, it had been announced that – despite accidents per 10,000 vehicles falling from 22.5 in 1938 to 10.4 in 1953 and the number of children killed falling from 792 in 1938 to 510 in 1953 – the total number of accidents and deaths had risen by about 10 per cent in 1953, and possibly another 10 per cent in the year to October 1954.¹⁶⁵ It was felt that there had to be as big a drive to publicise the new *Highway Code* as there had been for the old one in 1947.¹⁶⁶

In this climate of inertia, the police were able to do little other than to signify their support for some parts of the Code. They welcomed the section 'The Law's Demands', which was a summary of the law for all road users, found between pages 27–32 of the revised version of *The Highway Code* for 1954. This was clearly an add-on to remind road users of the law as it stood, above and beyond the Code, as some type of concession to the legal demands made by the police, but it was no substitute for legal powers. As an alternative, some chief constables, particularly the Chief Constable of Glasgow, suggested minor amendments, such as

the 'Don't Cross' sign on pedestrian crossings in addition to the 'Cross Now' sign, whilst the Chief Constable of Inverness County Police, noted in his annual report for 1953 that 14 of the accidents in his district were due to drink-driving and that there should be heavier penalties for this indicated in *The Highway Code*.¹⁶⁷

The CCA, weary of failure, barely showed a flicker of interest in the legal enforcement of *The Highway Code* when the matter came before them again in September 1958. On this occasion, revisions were being discussed, partly in the light of the anticipated opening of the Preston Bypass and other motorways, and partly due to the fact that deaths and injuries on British roads had risen to 300,000 a year. Many chief constables, including those at Sheffield, Aberdeen, Wolverhampton, Lancashire and Wakefield, considered the changes drawn up by the revision of *The Highway Code*, but were drawn away from the *Code's* legal position into the more parochial issues of signalling, road signs, keeping left at crossings and other details of the new *Code*.¹⁶⁸ They held their final deliberations on 28 October 1958, shortly before Parliament discussed the revision of the *Code*.¹⁶⁹ Their views were once again co-ordinated by the Traffic Committee of the CCA, which advocated the issuing of a supplementary code for motorway driving and advised about the need for a sign a quarter of mile in advance of slip roads to the left.¹⁷⁰ It eventually encouraged the MoT to produce *The Highway Code Supplement*, essentially a code for the motorway driving. After some confused correspondence with the Treasury, it was agreed that 72,370 copies of the new *Highway Code* would be distributed, one for every current member of the police force, in response to a request from the chief constables.¹⁷¹ Little had been achieved and, reflecting the acceptance of the situation by the CCA, the legal issue was barely raised by Richard Nugent (Joint Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Transport and Civil Aviation), who focused instead upon the educational value of the *Code*, stressing that: 'In most schools, head teachers encourage teaching of the use of the road. The police are a great help here. Copies of the *Code* are given by education authorities to older children... at the age of 10 or so. [...] We should get children to talk about the *Code* and get it into their heads.'¹⁷² It was all pretty tame stuff, for even though road injuries and deaths had risen in the 1950s, it was clear that few MPs felt it wrong that breaking the *Code* did not render 'that person liable to criminal proceedings of any kind'.¹⁷³

The Road Traffic Act of 1960 did little more than reiterate the Road Traffic Act of 1930. Accepting that ignoring *The Highway Code* was not an offence as such, it stated that 'A failure on the part of a person to observe

a provision of the highway code... may in any proceedings... whether civil or criminal... be relied upon by any party to the proceedings as tending to establish or to negate any liability which is in question in these proceedings.¹⁷⁴ Nothing had changed.

In 1968, the *Code* was revised in order to incorporate the new 70 mph speed limits on motorways and dual carriageways, the new system of traffic signs that had been introduced in 1965, and parking arrangements which had emerged since the previous *Code* had been published. MPs played their ritualistic part in examining the details of the *Code*, discussed its legal powers – and changed nothing.¹⁷⁵

The police sought to use *The Highway Code* to instil discipline, order and safety on the roads of Britain. However, the essential rules of road etiquette were slow to develop, changed with the times and were often ignored. From its introduction in 1931 to the end of the 1960s, the history of *The Highway Code* was effectively shaped by motoring organisations and some pedestrian groups, who were not prepared to push for the body of the *Code* to become the law of the land. This lack of legal power for the whole *Code* blighted the efforts of the police to mount court cases against motorists, and indeed other road users, and by the 1960s the police had effectively given up the attempt to make the full body of the *Code* legal, becoming more concerned about improving the guidelines and spreading the *Code's* message beyond learner drivers to schoolchildren. The police kept a watchful eye on the *Code* and placed greater emphasis on improving the education, rather than enforcement, of road safety, of which the *Code* became an important part, along with planning and engineering the new urban environment of the road with regard to segregation.

Conclusion

During the inter-war years, the emphasis of traffic policing moved away from the sole policy of controlling speed to a dual one of also offering measures for the pedestrian in the form of combination of road safety education, particularly for the young, and of channelling pedestrians across the road by use of pedestrian crossing and safety islands. This broadening of policy was not as innocent a measure as first might appear. It was encouraged by motorist groups, and motorist-dominated, organisations, such as the NSFA, which wished to see pedestrians confined to restricted zones of the road so as not to impede traffic and necessitate the imposition of speed limits. However, chief constables were not driven by such self-interest. They were far more concerned

that pedestrians seemed to be both the main cause and main casualties of the road deaths and 'road holocausts' of 1930s and the 1950s. Their assessment of the situation came from the statistics embedded in their annual reports to the watch committees of the borough police and the standing joint committees of the county police, rather than from the pressure of the motoring groups, with whom they were in almost perpetual conflict. The implications of this situation were, however, the same, for both motorists and chief constables wanted the zoning of pedestrians, and indeed cyclists, to ensure safe and free-flowing motorised road traffic. What was particularly important though, is that from the late 1920s, and particularly after government decisions were made in 1930 and 1936, which provided funds for road safety work and committed the police to educational road safety work, the pace of police work increased. The manning of school crossings and the lectures to schoolchildren led to the creation of the production of road safety education kits, the teaching of slogans and the 'Kerb Side Drill', as well as the checking of bicycles and cycling proficiency tests. Times changed, and children in particular were subject to an evolving landscape of both mind and engineering, which restricted their rights to the road and reshaped their thinking. Luckin is right to focus upon the changing urban landscape of the child. The police bought into the idea, as governments did, of inculcating the child with new ideas on road safety. Herbert Morrison had not realised what he had unleashed when the second Labour government removed the speed restrictions on cars in the 1930s. With restricted means of controlling the motorist, the focus of police policy had to change towards pedestrian safety, albeit based increasingly on jargon and inculcation, which did reduce road deaths and injuries over time. However, the police were less enamoured of Morrison's other idea of 1930, the creation of *The Highway Code*, for its lack of legal status minimised the effect of establishing the new rules of the road, restricting it to being a mere educational tool.

Conclusion

The battle for Britain's roads in the early and mid-twentieth century was an unequal conflict between the motorist, the pedestrian and other road users, mediated by the police. Given the remorseless, indomitable and unforgiving nature of motorised vehicles, it was the motorist who won the conflict and came to rule the road, thus ending the democracy of the road. The improvement of the roads, the development of arterial roads and motorways, and the urban redevelopment of towns, all ruled in their favour. There were small concessions, as in the case of the introduction of the Road Safety Act of 1967, when motorists were checked in their freedom of action by an attack upon drink-driving through the introduction of a breathalyser and seat belts, and clear guidelines as to what constituted drunken driving. Nevertheless, even though motorists came to dominate the public highway, one must not assume that the police were consciously complicit in this process, in reference to the second and dominating question of this book. Indeed, this was far from the case, as the evidence of the continuing conflict between the motorist and the police suggests. Conflicts between the police and the motorists waxed and waned, as the police successively introduced speed traps, motor patrolling, Q cars and 'courtesy cops', abandoned control of the road in wartime Britain, reasserted the importance of Q cars in the 1940s and 1950s, and introduced traffic wardens to monitor traffic meters in the 1960s. Indeed, the underlying conflict between the motorists and the police, as Clive Emsley and Joanne Klein have suggested, is inimical to the idea of the police being mere servants of the middle-class motorists and their organisations as O'Connell and some others assert. In fact, the dominating concerns of the police remained the enforcement of the two principles laid down by Sir Robert Peel in 1829: the protection of property and the protection of life. Policing the car was

essentially about the latter, although it did mean the arrest of criminals involved in theft and was interwoven with the normal range of policing activities.

As with the legal system in general, the application of the law did not always help the traffic police in their duties and policing in general. Magistrates, to the consternation of the Home Office, the police and the motorists, were often inconsistent, and did not exercise the full range of their powers. This inconsistency of application was most evident in the frequent failure to convict for manslaughter and dangerous driving, and in the related, and ongoing, saga of *The Highway Code* with its new and evolving rules of the road, which failed to achieve even semi-legal status in its first forty years of operation.

Nonetheless, the emergence of traffic policing in the twentieth century transformed the whole structure and approach of policing in the twentieth century, as the force faced the problem of a twentieth-century crime wave, of which traffic offences became an increasing part. It meant that many police forces had their own traffic unit from the 1920s, though they were not obliged to have them until 1967, working alongside non-motorised police officers on traffic duties, and that traffic policing consumed between 16 and 18 per cent of police time in the 1930s and more than twice that level of committed manpower hours by the 1960s. Police numbers did expand to meet the new demands of the crime boom they faced, rising most rapidly from the 1950s onwards, but they did not keep up with rising crime levels, or with the rising level of traffic offences and committals, which rose from 2 per cent of committals and offences in 1900, to 65 per cent by the mid-1960s, and continued to rise in the late twentieth-century crime and offences surge in Britain. The sheer pressure of all this eventually demanded a more integrated form of policing – UBP – which, drawing from the uniformed motor policing and plain-clothes Q-car policing, fundamentally transformed policing from being foot based to being motor based, and incorporated traffic policing, both motorised and non-motorised, from being foot based at the end of the 1960s.

The assumption of traffic policing by the police reflected how far the attitudes of chief constables had changed in the early twentieth century. Opposed to assuming the traffic responsibilities in the 1920s, by the 1930s chief constables had come, reluctantly, to accept that it was only the police who could effectively meet these responsibilities. What this equivocation indicates is that the police did not necessarily gather to themselves more responsibilities to justify the increased financial status given to them from the First World War onwards by

the Desborough Committee (1919) and the Oaksey Committee (1948), as Howard Taylor suggests. Instead, the growth of British traffic policing reflected their increasing need to control the urban landscape to save life. This meant, in the end, the segregation of the motorists and the pedestrian. The urban landscape of childhood was, as Luckin has suggested, changed fundamentally by the removal of children from the road to the home.

In essence, then, the 'Battle for the Roads of Britain' did three things to shape the evolution of traffic policing in Britain between 1900 and 1970. First, it established that the police were ultimately responsible for the urban landscape of Britain, segregating motorists from pedestrians and inevitably reshaping the landscape of childhood. Secondly, it meant that British policing had to change to meet its new and onerous responsibilities, and this meant that it had to incorporate the new technology – of cars, radios, telegraphic systems, radar and CCTV – and the new tactics – of flying squads, Q cars, Z cars and UBP. Thirdly, it meant that the policing of traffic in Britain had to be as independent and impartial as possible. Police actions were subject to the whims of Parliament, the law and the magistracy. They were pressured by the motoring and pedestrian organisations. Nevertheless, the police sought to steer a path – serpentine as it may have been – through the minefield of traffic policing in a new urban landscape. In this role, Gatrell's concept of the 'policeman's-state' has resonance.

The final word should, however, be left to H. Alker Tripp, who helped to develop the notion of a holistic approach with regard to traffic policing. His views serve as a reflection of the evolving strategy for traffic policing from the 1920s until the 1970s. As he stated in his 1944 report:

The simple duty of the police in regard to the reduction of road accidents is to implement and enforce the laws created by Parliament with the object, at the same time of taking every opportunity to spread knowledge of the Highway Code and the law itself. [...] [In addition, the fact that] they have the first-hand knowledge of the whole problem, as experience has shown, puts them in a position to suggest a grand outline of the kind of remedies which the situation demands, both in reduction measures by law and constructive work in the using of road design, layout and equipment, and in town planning. For the reduction of casualties, it is essential that this knowledge procured by the Police, should be explained to the utmost.¹

The holistic policy of the Es was adopted by the police in the first seven decades of the twentieth century to tackle the horrendous social consequences of the rapid emergence of automobility in Britain; by the end of the 1960s there were signs that it was working. A watershed was reached in the mid- and late 1960s, which changed the balance of control of the road in favour of the police and eventually brought enormous improvements in road safety. But that is another story.

Appendices

Appendix A The number of street accidents and injuries in Birmingham, 1912–1933

Year	Accidents caused by						Persons killed and injured			
	Trams	Bus	Car	Motorcycles	Pedal cycles	Others	Totals	Killed	Injured	Total
1912	424	20	877	31	–	1,224	2,576	40	1,213	1,253
1913	501	118	861	334	539	715	3,068	44	1,539	1,583
1914	472	85	860	384	–	1,187	2,986	38	1,510	1,548
1915	517	127	1,087	352	437	648	3,168	69	1,532	1,601
1916	682	134	1,173	306	346	590	3,231	70	1,566	1,636
1917	599	121	1,188	217	280	538	2,943	54	1,336	1,390
1918	555	79	1,011	55	438	251	2,389	61	1,137	1,198
1919	248	69	1,042	367	395	304	2,425	74	1,150	1,224
1920	207	74	1,338	433	358	353	2,763	65	1,246	1,311
1921	96	46	1,548	547	554	343	3,134	57	1,426	1,483
1922	128	48	1,858	558	603	379	3,574	49	1,582	1,631
1923	195	107	2,169	633	689	404	4,197	66	1,787	1,853
1924	322	160	2,727	818	922	527	5,476	73	2,248	2,321
1925	293	137	3,415	1,109	1,305	519	6,778	88	2,956	3,044
1926	287	251	3,883	1,371	1,393	488	7,673	106	3,611	3,717
1927	351	313	4,477	1,621	1,488	484	8,734	104	4,211	4,315
1928	378	383	5,007	1,632	1,378	454	9,232	126	4,260	4,386
1929	345	346	5,333	1,804	1,338	476	9,642	151	4,504	4,655
1930	312	414	5,274	1,670	1,292	437	9,849	149	4,761	4,910
1931	315	618	9,562	2,167	1,822	488	14,972	137	5,553	5,690
1932	276	449	9,024	2,178	2,400	454	14,781	134	5,918	6,052
1933	270	527	8,463	1,878	2,874	420	14,432	159	6,121	6,280

Source: From the Chief Constable of Birmingham, *Annual Reports, of the City of Birmingham Police, 1912–1933*.

Appendix B Number of accidents and deaths caused by traffic in Birmingham, 1934–1939

Years	Accident in which injury occurred	Fatal	Non-fatal injuries	Total
1934	6,631	159/165*	6,121	6,280
1935	5,106	149	5,500	5,649
1936	4,889	140	5,295	5,435
1937	4,790	125	5,229	5,354
1938	4,736	118	5,142	5,260
1939	4,838	178	5,305	5,483

* The annual report for Birmingham in 1934 suggested 159 but the figure 165 appears in the tables of subsequent annual reports.

Source: From the Chief Constable of Birmingham, *Annual Reports, of the City of Birmingham Police, 1912–1933*.

Appendix C Accidents, deaths and injuries in Bradford, 1926–1934

Year	Accidents			Deaths	Injuries	Total
	Fatal	Non-fatal	Total			
1926	20	558	578	29	740	769
1927	19	651	670	19	740	759
1928	34	654	688	34	794	828
1929	37	741	788	39	824	863
1930	36	725	761	37	820	857
1931	33	944	977	33	1,059	1,082
1932	35	1,038	1,073	35	1,135	1,170
1933	33	990	1,023	34	1,098	1,132
1934	43	1,157	1,200	44	1,281	1,325

Source: From the *Annual Reports of the City of Bradford Police, 1926–1934*.

Appendix D Location of accidents in relation to the City of Bradford Town Hall, 1928

	Accidents		Persons	
	Fatal	Non-fatal	Killed	Injured
Within 1 mile	14	324	15	375
Within 2 miles	11	253	11	394
Beyond 2 miles	9	77	8	105
Total	34	654	34	794

Source: From the *Annual Report of the City of Bradford Police, 1928*.

Appendix E Location of accidents in relation to the City of Bradford Town Hall, 1934

	Accidents		Persons	
	Fatal	Non-fatal	Killed	Injured
Within 1 mile	18	481	18	518
Within 2 miles	13	501	13	544
Beyond 2 miles	12	175	13	210
Total	43	1,157	44	1,272

Source: From the *Annual Report of the City of Bradford Police, 1934*.

Appendix F Motorists exceeding the speed limit, 1938–1951

Year	Finding of guilt	Disqualification
1938	116,040	672
1947	54,431	73
1948	61,713	56
1949	52,215	43
1950	67,065	93
1951	75,454	134

Source: From HO 310/1, statistics presented to the Traffic Committee of the Chief Constables' Association.

Appendix G Reckless or dangerous driving, 1938–1951

Year	Finding of guilt	Disqualification
1938	5,072	1,258
1947	3,408	606
1948	1,978	377
1949	3,955	358
1950	2,812	660
1951	3,912	1,073

Source: From HO 310/1, statistics presented to the Traffic Committee of the Chief Constables' Association.

Appendix H Careless driving, 1938–1951

Year	Finding of guilt	Disqualification
1938	23,644	1,258
1947	15,248	403
1948	17,781	232
1949	13,973	233
1950	20,251	459
1951	22,862	761

Source: From HO 310/1, statistics presented to the Traffic Committee of the Chief Constables' Association.

Appendix I Traffic fatalities, 1938–1951

	1939	1950	1951
Total killed	6,618	4,781	5,128
Pedestrians only	3,031	2,262	2,312
Pedal cyclists only	959	741	956

Source: From HO 310/1, statistics presented to the Traffic Committee of the Chief Constables' Association.

Appendix J Traffic and road safety, 1953–1963

	1953	1962	1963
Number of vehicles registered	4,995,000	10,052,000	10,919,000
Number of accidents	186,304	264,032	271,531
Persons killed	5,090	6,709	6,922
Persons injured			
Serious	56,522	83,915	87,776
Slight	165,158	251,072	261,481

Source: From MT 92/72 *Her Majesty's Chief of Constabulary Report for 1952 (HC Paper 259)*, Chapter 5 on road and traffic safety.

Notes

1 The Challenge of Automobility and the Response of Policing in Britain: An Overview of a New Vista

1. Iris Borowy (2013), 'Road Traffic Injuries: Social Change and Development', *Medical History*, 57, January, 108–38, particularly 111.
2. Report of the House of Lords Select Committee on the Prevention of Road Accidents 1938–1939, *Proceedings of the Select Committee on the Prevention of Road Accidents* [hereafter, *Proceedings*, Alness Committee], 8 March 1938, Lord Alness, p. 4.
3. Borowy, 'Road Traffic Injuries', p. 113.
4. HO 186/435 files deals with the years 1939–1941/2. The other figures come from Bill Luckin (1997), 'War on the Roads, Traffic Accidents and Tensions in Britain in 1939–1945', in Roger Cooter and Bill Luckin (eds.), *Accidents in History* (Amsterdam/Atlanta: Rodopi), p. 236; Bill Luckin and David Sheen (2009), 'Defining Early Modern Automobility: The Road Traffic Accident Crisis in Manchester, 1939–1945', *Cultural and Social History*, 6, 2, 211–30, particularly 214. The figures produced on the MoT websites are higher than those appearing in the above articles and are the ones given in the main text. The others, in brackets, and presumably for England and Wales, appear in the Luckin (1997) article.
5. The Department of Transport GOV.UK website gives constant updates of figures, usually annually based to the end of June each year. These figures indicate that the average death rate was 2,816 between 2005 and 2009, 1,785 in the year to the end of June 2012 and 1,730 to the year ending June 2013. The average total of casualties was 246,050 between 2005 and 2009, and 199,091 in 1912 and 185,500 in 2013. They also give the number of vehicles on British Roads. There were about 4 million vehicles in 1950, 8 million in 1960, 14.6 million in 1970 and 34 million in 2010.
6. Some of these figures are drawn from National Archives, MT34/142, Final Draft, Reducing the Number of Road Accidents. Some are from the MoT UK GOV website, and others drawn from the Bill Luckin article cites in endnote 4. There are no accurate figures until the MoT began drawing them up in 1926. Thereafter, slightly different figures for the same year appear in MT files in the early 1930s. Luckin and Sheen, 'Defining Early Modern Automobility', 214 and *Report Road Accidents Statistics*, SN/SG/2198, Matthew Keep and Tom Rutherford, Social and General Statistics Section.
7. *Proceedings* (Alness Committee), paragraph 3428.
8. *Ibid.*, paragraph 3430. There were cartoons in *Punch* and other magazines and papers of the 1930s depicting cars running on rails.
9. *Ibid.*, p. 276.
10. M. M. Ishaque and R. B. Noland (2006), 'Making Roads Safer for Pedestrians or Keeping Them Out of the Way: An Historical Perspective on Pedestrian

- Policies in Britain', *The Journal of Transport History*, 27, 1 (March), 115–39, particularly 117; P. E. Hair (1971), 'Deaths from Violence in Britain: A Tentative Secular Survey', *Population Studies*, 25, 1, 5–24.
11. *Annual Report of the City of Liverpool Police, 1907*, p. 16.
 12. Ishaque and Noland, 'Making the Roads Safer for Pedestrians'; H. Shpayer-Makov (2002), *The Making of a Policeman: A Social History of a Labour Force, Metropolitan London, 1819–1914* (Aldershot: Ashgate), p. 12.
 13. *Police Review and Parade Gossip* [hereafter *Police Review*], 28 June 1957.
 14. Keith Laybourn and David Taylor (2011), *Policing in England and Wales, 1918–1939: The Fed, Flying Squads and Forensics* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan), p. 4.
 15. Keith Laybourn (1995), *The Evolution of British Social Policy and the Welfare State* (Keele: Keele University Press), p. 54.
 16. Laybourn and Taylor, *Policing in England and Wales, 1918–1939*, Table 1.2, p. 8.
 17. *Ibid.*, Chapter 3, 'Policing Public Order in the Inter-War Years'.
 18. Laybourn and Taylor, *Policing in England and Wales, 1918–1930*, Chapter 3, 'Policing Public Order in the Inter-War Years'.
 19. See *Annual Report of the Commissioner of Metropolitan Police, 1921*, PP 1922 (1699), p. 17 and *Report of HMIC, 1927*, PP 1927 (130), p. 16. Arm signals were codified at the Home Office Conference in 1923.
 20. Royal Commission on Transport, *1st Report. The Control of Traffic on Roads, Parl. Papers 1929–1930* (3365), p. 24 (hereafter Royal Commission, *Transport, 1st Report: The Control of Traffic on the Roads*).
 21. This Act was innovative in that it required drivers holding a driving licence costing five shillings (25p) and in that they also had to display a vehicle registration licence.
 22. S. O'Connell (1998), *The Car in British Society: Class, Gender and Motoring 1896–1939* (Manchester: Manchester University Press), p. 113.
 23. MT 92/226, letter from R. J. Stone to Mr W. W. Scott, 25 October 1966.
 24. Her Majesty's Stationary Office, *Criminal Statistics of Scotland, 1960: Statistics Relating to Police Apprehension and Criminal Proceedings for the Year 1960* (1961), (Edinburgh: HMSO, Cmd 1343), Chart B, p. 5.
 25. Michael John Law (2012), 'Speed and Blood on the Bypass: The New Automobilities of Inter-War London', *Urban History*, 39, Part 3 (August), 490–509.
 26. Royal Commission on Transport, *1st Report: The Control of Traffic on the Roads, Parl. Papers 1929–1930* (Cmd 3365), p. 6. Opinion was equally divided among county and borough chief constables, although surprisingly 18 county chief constables were not in favour of abolition of all speed limits.
 27. *Proceedings*, Alness Committee, 31 May 1938, 10 May 1938, C. T. Foley, of the Pedestrians' Association, paragraph 3444. It was suggested that the number of deaths caused by coach and bus accidents fell from 701–569 in the first year that the Act operated.
 28. *Ibid.*, 31 May 1938, Mr T. Rawson, Chief Constable of Bradford, p. 395, paragraph 5113.
 29. *Ibid.*, 31 May 1938, Mr John Maxwell, CC of Manchester, p. 399, paragraph 5166.
 30. O'Connell, *The Car in British Society*, p. 113.

31. *Manchester Guardian*, 3 January 1935.
32. *Saturday Review*, 11 May 1935.
33. *The Times*, 28 June 1921, 15 August 1931, 16 August 1926, 1 December 1930.
34. *Autocar*, 29 July 1938.
35. *Saturday Review*, 15 June 1935.
36. *The Times*, 11 December 1935; Lt. Col. M. O’Gorman (1943), *The Political Roots of Road Accidents* (London: 21 Embankment Gardens SW, self-published), p. 10.
37. *Proceedings*, 31 May 1938, T. Rawson, Chief Constable of Bradford, p. 407, paragraph 5255.
38. L. G. Norman (1962), *Road Traffic Accidents: Epidemiology, Control and Prevention* (Geneva: World Health Organization), pp. 6, 11–13.
39. Royal Commission, *Transport 1st Report: The Control of Traffic on the Roads*, pp. 39–40.
40. *Ibid.*
41. National Archives, HO 271/64, evidence of the Royal Automobile Association [sic] to the Royal Commission on the Police 1960–1961. The file was compiled by, amongst others, T. A. Critchley, a leading historian of police history. This will be dealt with in more detail in a later chapter. In a more constructive mood, from 1906 the AA had erected thousands of roadside danger and warning signage. *The Automobile Association Handbook, 1926*. Indicated that the AA installed 6,500 direction signs and 15,000 village signs.
42. MT 92/72, Traffic Committee of the Central Conference of Chief Constables (CCoCC), 7 October 1960, p. 7.
43. *The Times*, 5 November 1929. At this time *The Times* was running a ‘Road Deaths of the Week’ column.
44. The Pedestrians’ Association became the Pedestrians’ Association of Road Safety in 1952 and is now called Living Streets. In 1950, Hore-Belisha, one-time Minister of Transport, became its vice-president.
45. *Proceedings*, Alness Committee, 10 May 1938, paragraph 3378.
46. Luckin, ‘War on the Roads’, p. 240.
47. *Proceedings*, Alness Committee, 10 May 1938, paragraph 3385.
48. *Ibid.*, 10 May 1938, particularly paragraphs 3387, 3391.
49. *Ibid.*, 10 May 1938, particularly paragraphs 3487–500.
50. Luckin, ‘Out and About’, pp. 146–48.
51. John K. Walton (2013), ‘The Northern Rambler: Recreational Walking and the Popular Politics of Industrial England from Peterloo to the 1930s’, *Labour History Review*, 78, 3, December, 243.
52. Luckin, ‘Out and About’.
53. *Annual Reports of the City of Liverpool Police, 1927–1951*.
54. Chief Constables’ Association, *Conference and Special Conference 17 and 18 June 1937*, p. 114.
55. Major Vernon Brook, ‘The Scientific Investigation of Road Accidents’, *CCA Annual Report of the General Meeting at the City of Liverpool Conference and Special Conference 17, 18 June 1937*, p. 114.
56. *Proceedings*, Alness Committee, pp. 390–413, paragraphs 5059–334.
57. *Ibid.*, p. 394, paragraph 5099.
58. *Ibid.*, paragraph 5267.

59. The 1835 Highways Act paid surveyors to work for the districts, or groups of parishes, to maintain roads. There was a Highways Act of 1862 but it was 1878 before properly constituted highway authorities were formed. Also Carlton Reid, *Roads Were Not Built for Cars* (Kindle: 2014).
60. *Annual Report of the City of Birmingham Police, 1927*, p. 5.
61. Christopher Taylor (1979), *Roads and Tracks of Britain* (London: Dent), pp. 178–9.
62. *Ibid.*, 10 May 1938, evidence of C. T. Foley of the Pedestrians' Association, pp. 258–60, paragraphs 3380–3389.
63. *Annual Report of the Wigan Police, 1946*, p. 8 indicates that there were 48 Play Streets for children and the report for 1954, p. 28 indicates that this number had risen to 53.
64. MT 55/336, H. Alker Tripp, Memorandum for the Road Safety [Committee], 'The Problem of Road Safety: The Police Function', 1944.
65. Society of Motor Manufacturers and Traders, *The Motor Industry of Great Britain 1937* (1937) (London), and www.visionofbritain.org.uk for the official census data, and quoted in Law, 'Speed and Blood on the Bypass', p. 491.
66. D. Jeremiah, 'Motoring the British Countryside', *Rural History*, 2010, 233–50.
67. MEPO 2/7794 contains an article by H. F. Wallis on 'Present and Future Plans for Separating Traffic Surveyed', *The Autocar*, 2 June 1961, p. 2, which gives these mileage figures. MEPO 2/9301, for 1952 contains Metropolitan Police, 'The Problem of Road Safety', 8A, a document of seven pages refers, p. 7, to the serious traffic delays and congestion in central London.
68. Laybourn and Taylor (2011), *Policing in England and Wales, 1918–1939*, pp. 192–4.
69. David Taylor (1997), 'Policing the Community: Late Twentieth Century Myths and Late Nineteenth-Century Realities', in Keith Laybourn (ed.), *Social Conditions, Status and Community 1860–c. 1920* (Stroud: Sutton), pp. 104–22; Laybourn and Taylor, *Policing in England and Wales*; Clive Emsley (2009), *The Great British Bobby: A History of British Policing from the Eighteenth Century to the Present* (London: Quercus); Barbara Weinberger (1995), *The Best Police in the World: An Oral History of English Policing* (Aldershot: Scolar).
70. *Police Review*, 1 March 1957.
71. *Annual Report of the City of Liverpool Police, 1954*, p. 40.
72. Chris A. Williams (2003), 'Police Surveillance and the Emergence of CCTV in the 1960s', *Crime Prevention and Community Safety*, 5, 3, 27–38.

2 Historiography and Argument

1. Colin Buchanan (1963), *Traffic in Towns: A Study of Long-Term Problems in Urban Areas* (London: HMSO).
2. R. Davis (1997), *Death on the Street: Cars and the Mythology of Road Safety* (Victoria: Leading Edge Press and Publishing), makes many of these type of points, pp. 9–10.
3. Christopher Taylor (1979), *Roads and Tracks of Britain* (London: Dent), p. 179.

4. J. Kunstler (1994), *The Geography of Nowhere*, referred to in J. Urry (2006), 'Inhabiting the Car', *Sociological Review*, 54, 17–31.
5. P. E. S. Freund (1993), *The Ecology of the Motobile* (New York), p. 45.
6. Michael John Law (2012), 'Speed and Blood on the Bypass: The New Automobilities of Inter-War London', *Urban History*, 39, Part 3 (August), 490–509.
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9. Luckin and Sheen, 'Defining Early Modern Automobility', pp. 211, 213.
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12. *Proceedings*, Alness Committee.
13. Harry Hendricks (1997), *Children, Childhood, and English Society* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press), reveals the neglect of the topic of childhood in Britain for the years 1918 to 1970, but gives only one brief comment about traffic and childhood on page 94. Also Harry Hendricks, 'Constructions and Reconstructions of British Childhood', in Alison James and Alan Proust (eds.), (1997), *Constructing and Reconstructing Childhood: Contemporary Issues in the Sociological Study of Childhood* (London: Falmer), pp. 34–62; H. Cunningham (1995), *Children and Childhood in Western Society since 1500* (London: Longman).
14. Bill Luckin (2013), 'Out and About: Traffic, Play and Safety', in Mathew Thomson (ed.), *The Lost Freedom: The Landscape of the Child and the British Post-War Settlement* (Oxford: Oxford University Press), p. 152.
15. Luckin, 'Out and About', pp. 147, 150; *The Times*, 18 September 1944, 'Is Your Child Educated'; *The Times*, 29 April 1971; '£500,000 to Change Children's Kerb Drill'; Luckin, 'War on the Roads', pp. 234–50.
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21. Luckin and Sheen, 'Defining Early Automobility', 219; *Manchester City News*, 21 October 1939.
22. Laybourn and Taylor (2011), *Policing in England and Wales, 1918–1939*.
23. *Ibid.*, p. 133.
24. *Proceedings*, Alness Committee, 31 May 1938, p. 407, paragraphs 5255–6.
25. Laybourn and Taylor, *Policing in England and Wales, 1918–39*, pp. 126–34.
26. *Ibid.*, p. 157.
27. C. Emsley (1993), "'Mother, What Did Policemen Do When There Weren't Any Motors?'" The Law, the Police, and the Regulation of Motor Traffic in England 1900–1930', *Historical Journal*, 36, 2, 357–81.
28. V. A. C. Gatrell (1990), 'Crime, Prevention and the Policeman-State', in F. M. L. Thompson (ed.), *The Cambridge Social History of Britain 1750–1990* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press), pp. 243–310, particularly p. 260.
29. Laybourn and Taylor, *Policing in England and Wales, 1918–1939*.
30. *Home Office Experimental Motor Patrol Scheme: Report of the Chief Constable of Lancashire on the Progress of the Scheme during the first twelve months of the Experimental Period* (1939) [hereafter *Experimental Motor Patrol Scheme, first twelve months*], p. 12, paragraph 45.
31. *Home Office Experimental Motor Patrol Scheme: Report of the Chief Constable of Lancashire on the Progress of the Scheme during the first six months of the Experimental Period* (1938) [hereafter, *Experimental Motor Patrol Scheme, first six months*]; *Experimental Motor Patrol Scheme, twelve months*. There are copies in the Lancashire County Record office and in the Greater Manchester Police Museum, Newton Street, Manchester.
32. *Experimental Motor Patrol Scheme, first twelve months*, p. 26.
33. *Experimental Motor Patrol Scheme, first six months*, p. 37, paragraph 79.
34. *Ibid.*, p. 37, paragraph 81.
35. *Ibid.*, p. 48, paragraph 89.
36. *Ibid.*, p. 39, plate 29.
37. Joanne Klein (2010), *Invisible Men: The Secret Lives of Police Constables in Liverpool, Manchester, and Birmingham, 1900–1939* (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press).
38. Klein, *Invisible Men*, p. 61; City of Manchester, *Reports Relating to the Police Box System*, pp. 1, 12; and *Annual Report of the City of Liverpool Police, 1929*, p. 13.
39. Klein, *Invisible Men*, pp. 64–5; *Annual Report of the City of Liverpool Police, 1908*, p. 18; 'Inspectors of Constabulary Report for the year ended the 29 September 1909', PP 1910 (106) lxxv, 587, p. 31, also September 1917, PP 1917–1918 (173) xxv, 823, p. 4.
40. Klein, *Invisible Men*, p.193; Birmingham City Police Orders, 19 March 1924, p. 8150.
41. *Ibid.*, p. 193; Liverpool City Police Chief Constable's Disciplinary Reports, 10 January 1935.
42. Howard Taylor (2001), 'Forging the Job', *British Journal of Criminology*, 39, 113–35; Howard Taylor (1998), 'The Politics of the Rising Crime Statistics of England and Wales, 1914–1960', *Crime, History & Societies*, 1, 1, 5–28.

43. *Proceedings*, Alness Committee, 31 May 1938, pp. 399–400, paragraphs 5164, 5166.
44. O'Connell, *The Car in British Society*, p. 133.
45. Law, 'Speed and Blood on the Bypass'.
46. Claire Corbett (2001), *Car Crime* (Devon: Willan Publishing).
47. Laybourn and Taylor, *Policing in England and Wales, 1918–1939*, Chapter 7, 'Motoring Offences and the Enforcement of the Law', pp. 151–85.
48. Pamela Donovan and Paul Lawrence (2008), 'Road Traffic and an Inner-London Magistrates' Court (1913–1963)', *Crime, History and Societies*, 12, 2, 119–40.
49. *Ibid.*

3 'An Unwanted but Necessary Task': Traffic Policing and the Enforcement of the Law, c.1900–1939

1. *HMI Inspector, Annual Report*, 29 September 1931, by Sir Llewellyn Atcherley, HM Inspector of Constabulary. This indicated that there were 18,513 county police and 18,849 borough police at that point in England and Wales, though it did not include the Metropolitan Force, which hovered around 19,000–20,000.
2. *The Guardian*, 27 January 2011, reported that police numbers fell by 2,503 in England and Wales between 2009 and 2010, to a figure of 142,313 in September 2010.
3. Victor Bailey (1988), 'Crime in 20th Century Britain', *History Today*, 3, 5.
4. Joe Heath and Grahame Allen (1999), *Trends in UK Statistics since 1900* (Research Paper 99/11, House of Commons Library), p. 14.
5. MT 92/226, letter from R. J. Stone to Mr W. W. Scott, 25 October 1966.
6. MTT 9/226, letter from Mr Scott to R. J. Shaw, 25 October 1966.
7. The Metropolitan Police were to the forefront of Q-car patrolling from the mid-1930s onwards, whilst many of the smaller forces, such as Wigan, were involved in traffic policing with a force of four Austin cars and three motorcycles as late as 1954, *Annual Report of Wigan Police, 1954*, p. 20.
8. *Annual Report of the City of Birmingham Police, 1959*, p. 77. At the same time it had 12 officers employed in road safety duties, p. 75.
9. *Ibid.*, p. 78.
10. MT 92/72, *Her Majesty's Chief of Constabulary Report for 1963* (HC Paper 259), Chapter 5, pp. 53–60, 75.
11. *Ibid.*, p. 54.
12. *Ibid.*, p. 55.
13. Laybourn and Taylor, *Policing in England and Wales, 1918–39*, pp. 56–7.
14. MTT 55/336, 'The Memorandum on Road Safety: The Problem of Road Safety: The Police Function', by H. Alker Tripp CBE (Assistant Metropolitan Police Commissioner).
15. MT 92/266, material between 1965 and 1968 on Police Action and Traffic Warden Policy, and MT 92/226 on Police Action and Traffic Courts Policy, 1963–1968.
16. *Report of the Commissioner of Police of the Metropolis for the Year 1926*, Parliamentary Papers 1936/7 (5457), p. 5.

17. *The Police Review and Parade Gossip* [hereafter *Police Review*], 9 January 1920. Also look at *Police Review*, 30 January 1920, a piece on 'Control of Road Traffic'.
18. *Annual Report of the City of Liverpool Police, 1907*, p. 61.
19. HO 45/1117, a five-page report on the AA, undated but clearly written in 1909, in a file on the AA and the Motor Car Acts.
20. *Ibid.*
21. *Ibid.*
22. *Ibid.*
23. *Ibid.*
24. *Police Review*, 2 September 1910, article on 'Motor Scout and Police'.
25. HO 45/1117, a file on the AA and the Motor Car Acts.
26. *The Times*, 7 November 1906; HO 45/11117.
27. MEPO 2/121. The file contains various reports on the police and witnesses on the events.
28. MEPO 2/1215, evidence on PC 145 E Beck.
29. *Ibid.*, a file dealing with the Metropolitan Police prosecution of an AA Scout, Thomas Ditton.
30. *Ibid.*, letter of 11 November from Amery Parker, solicitor of the Automobile Association, in the file.
31. *Ibid.*, a paper listing another dozen or so examples of the interference of AA scouts.
32. *Ibid.*
33. *Daily Telegraph*, 17 November 1908.
34. *Police Review*, 2 September 1910.
35. HO 45/1117, quoting from the Parliamentary debates (Hansard).
36. *Ibid.*
37. *Ibid.*, letter from Chief Constable of West Sussex to the Home Secretary, 2 September 1909.
38. *Ibid.*, letter from the Chief Constable of West Sussex to the Home Secretary, 7 October 1909.
39. *Ibid.*, the notes of Edward Troup.
40. *Ibid.*
41. *Ibid.*, Report on the Conference of Chief Constables, 26 April 1910.
42. *Ibid.*, Notes on instructions to JPs, 23 October 1912.
43. *Ibid.*, Home Office Circular 23 October 1912. The item is mainly taken from an unattributed and undated newspaper cutting in the file.
44. *Ibid.*, a file on AA Scouts and Accidents connected with 'Signal by Failure to Salute', reported in a newspaper clipping from the *Daily Chronicle*, 21 September 1920.
45. MT 34/31 for 1919.
46. MT 34/31.
47. *The Times*, 23 September 1926.
48. Chief Constables' Association, *Annual Report, 1938*.
49. HO 45/1117.
50. *Ibid.*, letter of Lord Curzon to the Home Secretary, 13 September 1920.
51. Laybourn and Taylor, *Policing in England and Wales, 1918–1939*, pp. 56–7.
52. *Annual Report of the City of Liverpool Police, 1909*, p. 71.
53. *Report of His Majesty's Inspector of Constabulary, 1922, PP 1923 (55)*, p. 7; *Report of His Majesty's Inspector of Constabulary, 1927, PP 1927 (130)*, p. 6.

54. *HMIC Report, 1928*, p. 15.
55. *Ibid.*, p. 15; CCA, *Annual Report of 1927*.
56. *Ibid.*
57. Chief Constable, City of Liverpool, *Annual Report of the City of Liverpool Police, 1922*, p. 6. This view was reiterated in the 1926 *Annual Report*, although it was suggested that some auxiliary control would be possible in rural areas.
58. HO 45/24785, Atcherley memorandum and the minutes on traffic wardens.
59. *Ibid.*
60. MT 34/62, Cabinet Economy Committee meeting, 26 February 1926.
61. *Police Review*, 29 January 1926, article on 'The Blues and the Buffs'.
62. *Ibid.*
63. *Ibid.*; HO 45/24785, minutes on traffic wardens.
64. Laybourn and Taylor, *Policing in England and Wales, 1918–1939*, p. 41.
65. Howard Taylor (1988), 'The Politics of Rising Crime Statistics in England and Wales, 1945–1960', *Crime, History and Societies*, 2, 9–10.
66. *The Times*, 29 August 1927, letter from D. M. Kirby.
67. *Ibid.*
68. *Ibid.*, 23 September 1926.
69. HO 45/24785.
70. *Ibid.*
71. HO 45/24785, memo to Home Office, 12 March 1926.
72. HO 45/20130, London Traffic, letter to Home Office, 17 April 1930.
73. *HMIC Annual Report, 1928*, p. 7.
74. HO 45/24785, letter to Home Office, 12 March 1926.
75. *The Times*, 13 November 1928.
76. *Ibid.*, 16 November 1928.
77. Quoted in the Royal Commission on Transport, *1st Report: The Control of Traffic on the Roads, Parl. Papers 1929/30* (3365), p. 22 [hereafter Royal Commission on Transport, *1st Report 1929–1930*].
78. Royal Commission on Transport, *1st Report 1929/1930*, p. 23.
79. *Ibid.*, pp. 22–3.
80. *The Times*, 15 January 1930.
81. Laybourn and Taylor, *Policing in England and Wales 1918–29*, p. 113.
82. HO 45/24785, minutes on traffic wardens.
83. *HMIC, Annual Report 1937*, p. 8.
84. *Ibid.*, 1929, p. 11.
85. K. Rivers (1972), *History of the Traffic Department of the Metropolitan Police* (London: Metropolitan Police), p. 15.
86. Laybourn and Taylor, *Policing in England and Wales, 1918–1939*, pp. 202–3.
87. *Annual Reports of the City of Leeds Police, 1932*, p. 17 and 1933, p. 17.
88. *Ibid.*, 1935, p. 16.
89. *Ibid.*, 1940, p. 16.
90. *Annual Report of the City of Manchester Police, 1937*, p. 22.
91. *Ibid.*, p. 24; M. Anderson (1926), *How Manchester is Managed* (Manchester: Manchester City Council), p. 200.
92. *Annual Report of the Preston Police, 1931*, p. 15.
93. *Annual Report of the St. Helens Police, 1932*, p. 15.

94. T. S. Madigan (1993), *The Men Who Wore Straw Helmets: Policing in Luton* (Dunstable: Book Castle); Essex Police Museum, website.
95. *Annual Report of the City of Bradford Police, 1935*, pp. 1–3.
96. Bradford Watch Committee, Minutes, 19 December 1930 and 6 July 1932.
97. *Ibid.*, 1933, p. 26.
98. *Annual Report of the City of Birmingham Police, 1933*, pp. 2, 5, 7.
99. Bob Dobson (1989), *Policing Lancashire* (Blackpool: Landy), p. 52; L. C. Jacobs (1992), *Constables of Suffolk* (Suffolk: Suffolk Constabulary), p. 55. *Annual Report of the Luton Police, 1928*, quoted in A. R. Richard (1991), *Policing Bedfordshire* (Bedford: Bedfordshire Magazine), p. 115.
100. R. Ingleton, *Policing Kent* (Chichester: Phillimore), pp. 97–8; Jacobs (1992), *Constables of Suffolk*, pp. 55, 77; M. Scollan (1993), *Sworn to Serve: Police in Essex* (Chichester: Phillimore), p. 16; J. Woodgate (1985), *The Essex Police* (Suffolk: Terence Dalton), pp. 144–5.
101. *Police Review*, 2 January 1931.
102. *Annual Report of the City of Leeds Police, 1931*, p. 16.
103. *Annual Report of the City of Manchester Police, 1936*, p. 18.
104. *Police Review*, 31 October 1931.
105. *Ibid.*, 5 February 1932.
106. *Ibid.*
107. *Ibid.*, 23 September 1932.
108. Walter Hambrook (1937), *Hambrook of the Yard* (London: Robert Hale & Co.), p. 184.
109. *Police Review*, 2 April 1932.
110. William M. Meier (2011), *Property Crime in London, 1850–Present* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan), pp. 61–5.
111. HO 144/16175, letter, 18 October 1931, on flying squads and cars, noting the payment of £290 for an Invicta and £723/2/6d for a Bentley.
112. *Annual Report, Metropolitan Police, 1924*, p. 15; *Annual Report of the City of Manchester Police, 1937*, p. 32; *Annual Report of the Leeds Police, 1938*, p. 15; Records of the Lancashire County Police, Lancashire County Record Office, Preston, reference 5335.
113. Laybourn and Taylor, *Policing in England and Wales 1918–1939*, pp. 197–200, particularly Table 8.1 and Table 8.2.
114. MEPO 3/1207, case of a smash and grab raid on 27 July 1939, dealt with by the Kew Flying Squad.
115. MEPO 3/481.
116. *Hansard, House of Commons Parliamentary Debate*, 15 April 1932.
117. *The Times* reported more than fifty such jewellery raids in London between 1929 and 1937, and a similar number outside London. For instance, *The Times*, 11 February, 1 March, 1 August, 5 September 1932 in London, and 13 September 1934 in Liverpool, and 21 July and 22 August 1936 in Edinburgh. Look at Laybourn and Taylor, *Policing in England and Wales, 1918–1939*, pp. 186–8, 238.
118. *The Times*, 6 June 1934.
119. *Ibid.*, 13 April 1937.
120. Alyson Brown (2012), 'Crime, Criminality and Serial Offenders in Early Twentieth Century Britain', *Contemporary British History*, 25, 4, 551–68.
121. Brown, 'Crime, Criminality', pp. 561–3.

122. *The Times*, 2 April 1935.
123. *Ibid.*, 11 October 1935, 'The Wireless Hue and Cry' editorial. See also 'Cars and Crime', 29 March 1938 and 'Crime in 1938', 2 January 1939.
124. MEPO 2/2649 deals with 'The District Cover Scheme: Use of Q Cars at Strategic Fixed Points in Co-operation with Information Room', dealing with the years 1936 to 1938.
125. *Ibid.*, two-page report from two chief inspectors dated 3 March 1938.
126. *Ibid.*, report on the first six months District Crime Scheme by Inspector Doughty, 11 March 1938.
127. *Ibid.*, Memorandum from DAC 4, 14 December 1936.
128. MEPO 2/2649 deals with 'The District Cover Scheme: Use of Q Cars at Strategic Fixed Points in Co-operation with Information Room', dealing with the years 1936 to 1938.
129. *Ibid.*, DAC Memorandum to the Superintendent, 12 March 1938.
130. MEPO 2/2649, two-page report from two chief inspectors, 3 March 1938.
131. *Police Review*, 26 July 1937.
132. *Ibid.*
133. MTT 55/336, 'The Memorandum on Road Safety: The Problem of Road Safety: The Police Function', by H. Alker Tripp CBE (Assistant Metropolitan Police Commissioner), p. 26.
134. *Ibid.*, Committee on Road Safety file, covering the years 1944–1947 and 1950; 'Memorandum on Road Safety: The Problem of Road Safety: The Police Function', by H. Alker Tripp (Assistant Metropolitan Police Commissioner), pp. 25–6.
135. There is a scrapbook of his newspaper cuttings, many without dates, deposited by his widow in the Greater Manchester Museum, Newton Street, Manchester.
136. Laybourn and Taylor, *Policing in England and Wales 1918–1939*, pp. 191–6; *Annual Report, Metropolitan Police, 1929*, p. 7; 1932, p. 17; *Manchester Guardian*, 27 April, 11 November 1928, *Annual Report of the Manchester City Police, 1929*, p. vi; *Manchester City Police (1938)*, 'Telephone Pillar System: B. Division' (Manchester: Manchester City Police), pp. 3–4.
137. MEPO 2/2649, 'The District Crime Scheme: Use of Q Cars at Strategic Fixed Points in Connection with Information Room'.
138. Home Office letter to Salford Chief Constable [Godfrey], 18 February 1937, though the same words were used by Sir John Simon, Home Secretary, when addressing Parliament on the same day.
139. *Home Office Experimental Motor Patrol Scheme: Report of the Chief Constable of Lancashire on the Progress of the Scheme during the first six months of the Experimental Period (1938)*, p. 37, paragraph 81.
140. *Chief Constable of Lancashire, Scheme during the first six months*, p. 37, paragraphs 82 and 83.
141. MT 55/336, in a report presented to the Committee on Road Safety, 23 April 1944, reporting upon the Lancashire Motor Patrol Scheme and the information presented to the Alness Committee. It suggests that this scheme was good for the simple setting-up of traps but would raise the number of prosecutions and thus not foster co-operation with the public.

142. *Chief Constable of Lancashire, Scheme during the first six months*, p. 1, paragraph 2.
143. *Ibid.*, p. 6.
144. *Ibid.*, pp. 6–7.
145. *Ibid.*, p. 7, paragraph 15.
146. *Ibid.*, p. 23, paragraph 75.
147. *Ibid.*, p. 24, paragraph 80.
148. *Ibid.*, p. 15, paragraph 57.
149. *Ibid.*, p. 9, paragraph 25.
150. *Ibid.*, p. 39, paragraph 85, plate 29.
151. *Ibid.*, p. 27, paragraph 103.
152. Chief Constable of Salford Notes for Chief Constables' Meeting, Liverpool, 4 August 1938, regarding the Home Office Motor Patrol Scheme, p. 1.
153. Chief Constable of Salford Notes for Chief Constables' Meeting, Liverpool, 4 August 1938, regarding the Home Office Motor Patrol Scheme, p. 2.
154. *Police Review*, 16 June 1939.
155. Metropolitan Police Report on Home Office Experimental Motor Patrol Scheme, October 1938, p. 14 for the quote, and pp. 6–7.
156. *Police Review*, 23 June 1939.
157. *The Times*, 15 and 23 August 1923.
158. Laybourn and Taylor, *Policing in England and Wales*, pp. 162–4, including Table 7.7.
159. Laybourn and Taylor, *Policing in England and Wales*, p. 164.
160. *The Times*, 24 October 1932.
161. Dr Ralph Rimmer, 'The Problem of the Intoxicated Driver', CCA, *Annual Report 1937*.
162. Laybourn and Taylor, *Policing in England and Wales*, pp. 165–6.
163. *Ibid.*
164. *The Times*, 29 January 1937, p. 11.
165. *Ibid.*, 29 January 1939, p. 4.
166. *Ibid.*, 2 December 1935.
167. *Annual Report of the City of Manchester Police, 1932*, p. x.
168. *Annual Report of the City of Leeds Police, 1935*, p. 57; Alness Committee (House of Lords Select Committee on the Prevention of Accidents, 1937–1938), *Report*, QQ 5124, 5133, 5195.
169. Laybourn and Taylor, *Policing in England and Wales, 1918–1939*, particularly pp. 171–7.
170. *Police Review*, 2 February 1934, an article entitled 'Magistrates and the Law'.
171. *Ibid.*, 4 September 1936, an article entitled 'Motorists, Magistrates and the Law'.
172. *Ibid.*
173. *Ibid.*
174. *The Times*, 22, 23 September 1936; 8 May 1937.
175. *Ibid.*
176. CCA, *Central Conference Annual Report, 1937*; Major Vernon Brook, 'Road Accidents', p. 104.
177. *Ibid.*, p. 118.
178. *Ibid.*, Dr Ralph Rimmer, p. 78.
179. *Ibid.*, particularly pp. 74–85.

180. Laybourn and Taylor, *Policing in England and Wales*, Chapter 7, pp. 151–85.
181. *Police Review*, 2 February 1934, an article entitled 'Magistrates and the Law'.
182. Laybourn and Taylor, *Policing in England and Wales, 1918–1939*, Table 7.12, p. 180.
183. *Ibid.*, pp. 180–1, indicates an increase in cases for failing to have third-party insurance rose from 11,616 in 1931 to 15,199 in 1938; that failure to observe police signals fell from 4,124 in 1935 to 3,229 in 1938; failure to observe pedestrian crossings rose from 7,503 in 1935 to 8,592 in 1920; and that there were also significant increases in lighting offences, though identification offences, brake (17,717 in 1931 and 13,306 in 1938) and noise offences (26,129 in 1931 and 9,129 in 1939) generally fluctuated downwards as the 1930s progressed.
184. *Ibid.*, pp. 156–62.

4 Policing the New Age of Mass Motoring c.1940s–1970: Motor Patrolling, to Q Cars, Z Cars and Unit Beat Policing

1. MT 55/336, report c.1960 from Chief Constable of Lancashire, Col. E. S. Johnstone, reiterating the three Es idea developed in the 1930s and reiterated in 1944 by H. Alker Tripp.
2. MT 55/336, includes numerous reports from police chief constables to the Road Safety Committee as referred to in Chapter 1, including one by H. Alker Tripp.
3. MEPO 2/7794, contains an article by H. F. Wallis entitled, 'Segregation: Present and Future Plans', *The Autocar*, 2 June 1961, which indicated that road fatalities in 1960 had risen by 4 per cent over 1959 to 6,970, and injuries by 6.9 per cent to 340,581.
4. MT 92/226, letter to Mr Scott from R. J. Shaw, 25 October 1966, in which, supporting the Law Society demand for special traffic courts, it was suggested that magistrates' courts have to change.
5. *Ibid.*, note to Mr Scott from R. J. Stone, 25 October 1968, in which it was stated that traffic offences rose from 62 per cent of all offences to 65 per cent between 1960 and 1965.
6. Luckin and Sheen, 'Defining Early Modern Automobility', p. 213.
7. HO 186/435, a report on a meeting to discuss high death rates on 5 March 1941 gives the lower figures, but the MoT GOV.UK website gives the higher figure for 1940.
8. <http://www.parliament.uk/briefing-papers/RP99-111/a-century-of-change-trends-in-uk-statistics-since-1900>, *A Century of Change: Trends in UK Statistics since 1900* [hereafter *A Century of Change*], p. 17.
9. *Ibid.*, p. 17; also R. Ingleton (1994), *The Gentlemen of War: Policing Britain 1939–1945* (Kent: Cranborne).
10. *Annual Report of the City of Leeds Police, 1940*, p. 16.
11. KA 235/10 (West Yorkshire Archives, Kirklees Office), Chief Constable of Dewsbury Report to Watch Committee, 8 February 1940.
12. HO 186/435, report of 5 March 1941 of the meeting under the chairmanship of Sir Alexander Maxwell; MEPOL 2/2649, General 21/71, A 51, Traffic also contains the same report.

13. HO 186/435, reference 863,571/5, report received from Chief Constables, informing the Traffic Conference, 5 March 1941, statement made by Mr C. G. Markbrester.
14. *Ibid.*
15. Luckin and Sheen, 'Defining Early Modern Automobility', p. 214, and an article in *The Autocar*, 24 January 1941, p. 73.
16. *Ibid.*, pp. 215–16.
17. *Ibid.*, pp. 217–18.
18. *Ibid.*, p. 219; Herbert Alker Tripp (1938), *Road Traffic and Its Control* (London), and (1942) *Town Planning and Road Traffic* (London); Manchester Chief Constable, *Chief Constables' Annual Report 1935*, p. 9, and the same for 1937, p. 44. (Sir) Herbert Alker Tripp (1883–1954) was a civilian who became Secretary to the Metropolitan Police in 1928, and an Assistant Commissioner between 1932 and 1947. He was a specialist in traffic policing, a member of the London and Home Counties Traffic Advisory Board/Committee from 1938 until 1947, and a member of the MoT Committee on Road Safety from 1943 until 1947.
19. Luckin and Sheen, 'Defining Early Modern Automobility', pp. 218–19.
20. *Manchester Guardian*, 19 December 1939, p. 6.
21. MT 55/336, the 26-page Memorandum for the Road Safety Committee produced by H. Alker Tripp, particularly p. 26.
22. *Annual Report of the St. Helens Police Force, 1959*, pp. 37–8.
23. *Annual Report of the Wigan Police Force, 1947*, p. 18.
24. *Ibid.*, 1954, p. 20.
25. *Annual Report of the City of Birmingham Police, 1959*, pp. 77–8.
26. *Ibid.*, pp. 4, 75–6.
27. *Annual Report of the City of Leeds Police, 1931*, p. 24.
28. H. F. Wallis (1961), 'Segregation: Wheel and Walker Do Not Mix, Present and Future Plan for Segregating Traffic Surveyed', *The Autocar*, 2 June, p. 2.
29. *Police Review*, 1 March 1957, article by 'Junius', entitled 'Pay as You Park'.
30. MEPO 2/8517, material on American parking meters.
31. *Ibid.*, letter from Nott-Bower to Newsam.
32. *The Telegraph*, 30 December 2008, article by J. Barnard. On 30 December BBC Radio 4 also broadcast 'Meter Mad'.
33. MEPO 2/9755 deals essentially with discussions about appointing traffic wardens under the 1960 Road Traffic Act. HO 291/1041 contains material on the Road Traffic and Road Improvement Bill of 1960. MEPO 2/9983 contains material from the House of Lords debate on 17 November 1960 and on the Traffic Improvement Bill, 1960. MT 92/226, Memorandum on the Enforcement of Traffic Law, quotes the Royal Commission on Police, which approved the idea of traffic wardens 'so as to relieve the police of as much traffic work as possible'.
34. MEPO 2/9755 deals mainly with the setting up of the force and the application forms.
35. HO 291/1041, dealing with a meeting at the MoT on 6 October 1960.
36. MT 92/226, Memorandum on the Enforcement of Traffic Law.
37. MEPO 2/10399, statistics on fixed penalty notices.
38. *Ibid.*, report of the CCoCC, 7 May 1964.
39. MEPO 2/1030.

40. MEPO 2/10839, Police Advisory Board Working Party on manpower, Appendix B, c.1965.
41. HO 29/1041, meeting at the MoT, 6 October 1960, regarding the support by the Transport Minister for the fixed penalty system.
42. MEPO 2/9983, details of the system gathered from the House of Lords debate on the Traffic and Road Improvements Bill, 1960.
43. MEPO 2/10399, sheets on statistics and fixed penalty notices.
44. Ibid.
45. Ibid., letters to and from N. F. Cairncross.
46. MT 92/226, the Law Society Memorandum by the Council of the Law Society, a ten-page document outlining the need for the centralisation of traffic offences in specialised courts where magistrates were used to dealing with motoring offences.
47. MEPO 2/10399, Statistics on Fixed Penalty Fines.
48. Ibid.
49. Ibid., Draft Report of the Working Party on Traffic Wardens and Fixed Penalty Scheme.
50. MEPO 2/1020, document dated 26 July 1962.
51. MEPO 2/1030 contains material on the police supervision of traffic wardens, covering the years 1860 to 1974.
52. MEPO 2/1020, Police Reports May 1964, 11 June 1964.
53. Ibid.
54. Minutes of the CCoCC, 7 May 1964, also copy in MEPO 2/10399.
55. MEPO 2/11294, details of training for traffic wardens.
56. MEPO 2/10838, file on 'Employment of Traffic Wardens and Their Duties', and details of meetings in 1966.
57. HO 286/694 contains a report on 'Specifications for a Preliminary Design Study of Methods of Improving the Allocation of Police Traffic Resources, 4 March 1971', which discusses the use of the Plessey radar system and police cars in a Sussex traffic experiment, noting the 'tactical use of police cars to influence driver behaviour and to check speed'. A comment made in Chapter 13. Also, MEPO 2/9978 contains material on the Marconi radar equipment being tested by the Home Office. Further, MT 111/109 on traffic control with CCTV, and HO 377/141, CTTV for Police Purposes 1973.
58. *Police Review*, 23 August 1957.
59. Ibid.
60. MT 92/72, *Her Majesty's Chief of Constabulary for 1963*, p. 56.
61. HO 377/22, Dr E. H. Hand (1966), *A Survey of Radar Speed Metering* (London: Home Office Police Research and Planning Board Report T3/66), p. 4.
62. Ibid., p. 7.
63. MT 92/72, *Her Majesty's Chief of Constabulary for 1963*, p. 57.
64. MEPO 2/9556 file, which includes a copy of *The Security Gazette*, 7, 2, February 1965, which offers an article that examines the new initiatives of the Liverpool Police Force which was 540 under strength at that time.
65. Ibid.
66. MEPO 2/9956, the Liverpool file.
67. MTT 111/109, Report from A. W. Humphreys, 3 January 1969.
68. Chris A. Williams (2003), 'Police Surveillance and the Emergence of CTTV in the 1960s', *Crime Prevention and Community Safety*, 5, 3, 27–38; Chris

- A. Williams (2003), 'Police Surveillance and the Emergence of CCTV in the 1960s', in M. Gill (ed.), *CCTV in Perspective* (Leicester: Perpetuity Press).
69. HO 377/52 and HO 377/64 contain material on the Home Office Police Research and Development Board on the Manning of Traffic Patrols. It examines the effectiveness of one or two men in a car, noted that one-man cars were often used in the day rather than at night, and suggests that there was no evidence to suggest that one-manned cars were less effective, indeed the contrary seems to have been the case.
 70. MEPO 2/8960, extract from the CCoCC, 31 January 1951.
 71. *Ibid.*
 72. *Ibid.*
 73. *Ibid.*, quoting the Chief Constable of Oxfordshire on 4 January 1951.
 74. *Ibid.*, from a report on the Chief Superintendents' Conference, 6 February 1951.
 75. *Ibid.*, extract from a report connected with the CCA Conference, 30 January 1951.
 76. *Ibid.*, initial report in the file and on the cover notes. The file contains discussions on Q cars from about 1951 to 1959, when the summary report was written.
 77. *Ibid.*, summary report on Q cars and the CCoCC, 31 January 1951.
 78. *Ibid.*, initial report in the file and on the cover notes on Q cars.
 79. *Ibid.*
 80. *Ibid.*
 81. MEPO 2/9766, Standing Inter-Departmental Crime Committee, 19 March 1958.
 82. *Ibid.*, Standing Inter-Departmental Crime Committee, Extension of Q cars in September 1958, and report on subsequent events, pp. 1–2. Also, HO 281/1522 contains an 'omnibus' letter on this committee and its findings.
 83. *Ibid.*, Standing Inter-Departmental Crime Committee, Extension of Q cars in September 1958, and report on subsequent events, p. 2.
 84. MEPO 2/9766, Report of 17 November 1959 for the Commissioner's Office.
 85. *Ibid.*, Standing Inter-Departmental Crime Committee, 13 January 1961.
 86. MT 92/72 contains a number of reports of CCA Central Conferences for the early 1960s, and other related reports.
 87. HO 287/1522 (formerly POL 65/650/7/40), report on 'Unit Beat Policing: An Examination of the Present Situation in the North West Police Area' (Plyd Gwynedd), p. 1.
 88. *Ibid.*, Report of HM Chief Inspector of the Constabulary of Scotland.
 89. *Ibid.*, the supporting information to the Staff Officers' Conference, 25 July 1968.
 90. *Ibid.*
 91. *Ibid.*, Report on Unit Beat Policing: North-East Region.
 92. MEPO 2/10598, Chief Inspector Booth, of the Metropolitan Police, reporting upon his investigations in the workings of the Cheshire, Manchester and Birmingham Police.
 93. HO 287/1522, Report of UBP and RBP in Scotland.
 94. *Ibid.*, Minutes of Staff Officers' Conference, 25 July 1968, p. 1.
 95. *Ibid.*, p. 3.
 96. *Ibid.*, pp. 9–10.
 97. *Ibid.*, 'Report on Unit Beat Policing: South East Region', pp. 3–4.

98. *Daily Mail*, 6 February 2014. This is an article drawn from Peter Hitchen's new book, *A Brief History of Crime*, published 11 April 2014.
99. HO 287/1522, Minutes of the Staff Officers' Conference, 25 July 1968.
100. *Ibid.*, pp. 4–5.
101. *Ibid.*, p. 6.
102. *Ibid.*, Report of Unit Beat Policing No. 4 District [Midlands], p. 2.
103. *Ibid.*, Report of Unit Beat Policing in the South-East Region, p. 8.
104. *Ibid.*, Thames Valley Constabulary Divisional Collators' Bulletin, E. Division.
105. *Ibid.*, Reading Borough Police Collators' Bulletin, No. 9, 27 February 1968.
106. *Ibid.*, 'Unit Beat Policing: An Example of the Present Situation in the North West Police Area (Plus Gwynedd)', p. 6.
107. HO 272/64, 8ii.
108. *Ibid.*, 'A Summary of the Views of the Motoring Organisations Concerning the Relationship between the Police and the Motoring Public', p. 1.
109. *Ibid.*
110. *Ibid.*
111. *Ibid.*, p. 2.
112. *Ibid.*
113. *Ibid.*
114. *Ibid.*, pp. 2–3.
115. *Ibid.*, p. 4.
116. *Ibid.*
117. MT 92/371, a short paper from Mr Madge, 28 October 1966.
118. *Ibid.*
119. *Ibid.*, a reply to Mr Madge prepared by Mr Scott.
120. *Ibid.*
121. *Ibid.*; Briefing on the Enforcement of Traffic Law for the Minister of Transport for her Meeting with the Home Secretary, early 1967; MT 92/226, a Memorandum on the Enforcement of Traffic Laws about 1962/3. The Royal Commission on the Police approved the idea of traffic wardens to relieve the police of unnecessary duties.
122. P. Donovan and P. Lawrence (2008), 'Road Traffic in an Inner-London Magistrates Court', *Crime, History & Societies*, 12, 119–40.
123. MT 92/226, The Law Society, Motoring Offence, Memorandum, By the Council of the Law Society.
124. *Ibid.*, pp. 9–10.
125. *Ibid.*, Draft item on Traffic Costs. Referring to the views of the Law Society.
126. *Ibid.*
127. *Ibid.*
128. *Ibid.*
129. *Ibid.*, Memorandum on the Enforcement of Traffic Law, November 1963, commenting on the report of a working party of the Road Safety Division.
130. *The Times*, 8 October 1963; *Daily Mail*, 19 October 1963; *Sunday Telegraph*, 20 October 1963.
131. *The Times*, 8 October 1963.
132. *Ibid.*
133. MT 92/72, Report on motor patrolling, table dealing with enforcement of traffic laws, p. 55.

134. MT 92/72, from the Traffic Sub-Committee of the Central Conference of the CCA, 19th Meeting, Friday 28 September 1956. The main members seem to have been Mr T. H. Lewis, Chief Constable of Carmarthen, and Mr D. M. McLaughlin, Chief Constable of Coatbridge. The main item was Item 17.
135. *Ibid.*, CCoCC's Association, 80th Meeting, 4 December 1959, Traffic Committee Report, November 1958 to November 1959, and Traffic Committee, 29th Meeting, 30 January 1959.
136. *Ibid.*, Traffic Committee of CCoCC, 36th meeting, 15-page report on the A1/Great North Road, p. 7.
137. *Ibid.*, Traffic Committee of CCoCC, Report on the A1/Great North Road, conclusion, pp. 13–15.
138. *Ibid.*, 'Working Party on the Policing of Motorways and Transit Roads in England and Wales', 9 January 1962, which included the evidence on the CCoCC Report of the Traffic Committee on the Road Traffic Bill, 1961.
139. *Ibid.*, report of the Working Party on the Policy of Motorway and Transit Roads in England and Wales, presented 30 September 1963.
140. MEPO 2/7794, article by Wallis, 'Segregation'; also a paper on the police meeting to discuss the M1, where six people were killed and 92 injured in 1959–1960, compared with a 17-mile stretch on the A1 where 13 were killed and 207 injured.
141. MT 92/105, H. D. Johnson, 'Accidents and Casualties on the London–Birmingham Motorway during the First Nine Months', a four-page report. MEPO 2/7794 contains a report which gives a more optimistic assessment compared to the 17-mile section of the A1 near Hatfield.
142. MT 92/105, letter from J. Garleck, 14 December 1960.
143. *Ibid.*, Police Report on the London to Birmingham Motorway.
144. *Ibid.*, p. 8.
145. *Ibid.*, p. 10.
146. MEPO 287/698 mainly contains documents relating to the policing of motorways in the early 1970s.
147. MT 55/336 contains material for 1939–1947 and 1950, including the Road Safety Committee Report on 'Administration and the Law', 1 March 1945, with material under the heading 'Alcohol, Insurance, Administration of the Law and Pedestrians'.
148. *The Times*, 2 October 1946, a letter referring to comments made by Lord Chief Justice Goddard to the CCA.
149. *Police Review*, 20 January 1956, article on 'What Shall We Do with Drunken Drivers'.
150. MT 92/72, Report of the Traffic Committee of the CCoCC, 20 April 1961.
151. *Ibid.*, 12-page document of the Working Party on Policy of Motorways and Major Roads, p. 7.
152. MT 102/290, *Daily Mail*, 27 September 1964. The interview was conducted by Dennis Holmes.
153. *Police Review*, 10 March 1967, a cutting of which is MT 92/371.
154. HO 310/92, discussions about a circular on Part 1 of the Road Safety Act, 1967.
155. *Ibid.*, Police (Chief Constable) Circular No. 25/1967. Circulated by the Scottish Home and Health Department.
156. *Police Review*, 28 June 1968.

157. *Ibid.*, 20 and 29 April 1969; *The Times*, 29 January 1969.
158. *The Times*, 5 July 1969.
159. MT 92/72, CCoCC, 20 April 1962, 8 pages.
160. *Daily Sketch*, 5 February 1968, Michael Kemp, 'Home Office Orders New Speed War, but POLICE PROTEST: "WE CAN'T COPE" '.

5 Engineering the Environment c.1900–1970: Congestion, Meters and Redefining the Urban Landscape

1. J. Moran (2009), *On Roads: A Hidden History* (London: Profile Books), pp. 477–96.
2. Major C. V. Godfrey (1937), *Road Sense for Children* (Oxford: Oxford University Press), p. 8.
3. Bill Luckin, 'Out and About: Traffic, Play and Safety', in Matthew Thomson (ed.), *'Lost Freedom': The Landscape of the Child and the British Post-War Settlement* (Oxford: Oxford University Press), pp. 133–52. This is a pioneering essay on the topic.
4. Historical London Sounds: http://www.soundsurvey.org.uk/index.php/survey/radio_recordings/1930s/1606, accessed 12 June 2014. There are sound recordings of Leicester Square and Beauchamp Place on this record, produced by the Columbia Gramophone Company.
5. David Merritt Johns, 'The Car Horn Is Beeping Useless', <http://www.slate.com/authorsdavejohns.html>.
6. *Annual Report of the City of Leeds Police, 1933*.
7. *The Highway Code 1946*, p. 24, CUR 1941, Nos. 78 and 79, in 'The Law's Demands' section; *The Highway Code 1954*, p. 31, CUR No. 84, in 'The Law's Demands' section.
8. MEPO 2/9301, Metropolitan Police, 'The Problem of Road Safety', p. 6.
9. MEPO 2/10399, 'Working Party on Traffic Wardens and the Fixed Penalty System', section VIII.
10. MEPO 2/2794, cutting of an article by H. F. Wallis, 'Segregation: Present and Future Plans for Separating Traffic Surveyed', *The Autocar*, 2 June 1961.
11. Michael John Law (2012), 'Speed and Blood on the Bypass: The New Automobilities of Inter-War London', *Urban History*, 39, Part 3 (August), 490–509.
12. HMIC, *Annual Report, 1931*, p. 8.
13. Bradford Watch Committee, 20 June 1924, stands as one piece of evidence of the contacts which all watch committees made with local highway authorities in the redesigning of the roads.
14. B. R. Mitchell and P. Deane (1962), *Abstract of British Historical Statistics* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press), p. 230. There were 330,000 motor vehicles in Britain in 1919 (110,000 of them cars), 2.2 million and 981,000, respectively, in 1929 and 3,085,000 and 1,994,000, respectively, in 1938.
15. P. Thorold (2003), *The Automobile and Britain 1869–1930* (London: Tavistock Publications), pp. 174 and 210.
16. *General Orders* [of the Metropolitan Police Force], 7 September 1838 and 1 November 1847.

17. *City of Birmingham Police: Bye Laws, Local Acts, etc.* (1903), p. 71, issued to the full police force; Watch Committee Minutes, City of Manchester, located in the Greater Manchester Police Museum, Newton Street, along with the watch committee minutes of Salford and other Lancashire towns.
18. Royal Commission on London Transport, 1906, *Report* [Cmnd 2751], QQ 7405–8064, pp. 275–92. See also the reports of the London Traffic Branch of the Board of Trade before the First World War.
19. *Annual Report, Metropolitan Police, 1937*, p. 11.
20. *Ibid.*, 1938, pp. 57–8.
21. See, for example, *Annual Report of the Metropolitan Police, 1922*, p. 17; *Annual Report of the City of Birmingham Police, 1926*; *Annual Report of the St. Helens Police, 1937*.
22. *Annual Report of the City of Liverpool Police, 1928*, p. 15. The *Annual Reports, 1928*, p. 70 and 1930, p. 45, make much the same point.
23. *Annual Report, Metropolitan Police, 1934*, p. 45.
24. *Annual Report of the City of Leeds Police, 1932*, p. 24. See also *Annual Reports of the St. Helens Police, 1932*, p. 4 and 1936, p. 3; *Annual Reports of the City of Liverpool Police, 1930*, p. 15; *Annual Report of the City of Birmingham Police, 1937*; *Annual Report of the City of Bradford Police, 1936*; and *Annual Report of the City of London Police, 1930*, pp. 23, 26, 1936, pp. 11–12.
25. *Manchester Guardian*, 4 October 1932.
26. Bradford Watch Committee, Minute Book, 30 April 1926, 31 April 1928, 31 August 1928 and 28 July 1929.
27. *HMIC Annual Report, 1927*, p. 11.
28. (Manchester) *Evening News*, 15 July 1931.
29. Royal Commission on Transport, *1st Report: The Control of Traffic on Roads, Parl. Papers 1929/30* (3365), p. 24.
30. KA 235/10 (West Yorkshire Archives, Kirklees), Chief Constable of Dewsbury reports to Watch Committee, 14 May 1934.
31. Royal Commission on Transport, *1st Report: The Control of Traffic on Roads, Parl. Papers 1929/30* (3365), p. 24.
32. *Annual Report, Metropolitan Police, 1935*, p. 55.
33. *Annual Report of the City of Manchester Police, 1929*.
34. Bradford Watch Committee, Minute Book, 17 October 1924.
35. K. Laybourn and D. Taylor (2011), *Policing in England and Wales, 1918–1939: The Fed, Flying Squads and Forensics* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan), particularly Chapter 8.
36. KA 235/9 (West Yorkshire Archives, Kirklees), Chief Constable of Dewsbury reports to Watch Committee, 15 April 1926.
37. *The Times*, 7 February 1933.
38. Bradford Watch Committee, Minute Books, March 1929 and 7 March 1930.
39. *Ibid.*, 14 October 1932, 7 June 1935.
40. *The Times*, 7 February 1933.
41. Bradford Watch Committee, Minute Books, 12 February 1932.
42. Huddersfield Watch Committee, Minute Books, 5 October 1931, April 1931 and 3 October 1933.
43. KA/23 (West Yorkshire Archives, Kirklees), Chief Constable of Dewsbury reports to Watch Committee, 30 February 1931.

44. There is an extensive collection of these reports in the Greater Manchester Police Museum, Newton Street, Manchester, as well as a more or less full run of the *Police Review*.
45. *The Times*, 4 March 1924; *Annual Report, Metropolitan Police, 1921*, p. 22.
46. *Annual Report, Metropolitan Police, 1931*, p. 22; *The Times*, 10 January 1932.
47. *The Times*, 10 January 1932.
48. *Annual 1932, Metropolitan Police, 1931*, p. 44; 1935, p. 55 and 1938, p. 57.
49. *The Times*, 16 November 1937.
50. *Annual Reports, Metropolitan Police, 1933*, p. 38, and 1937, p. 57.
51. *Ibid.*; The increasing problem of negligent cyclists was noted in the 1935 *Annual Report*, p. 51.
52. *Ibid.*, 1936, p. 53.
53. *Ibid.*, 1932, p. ix.
54. *Annual Reports of the City of Manchester Police, 1932*, p. viii; 1933, p. ix.
55. *Ibid.*, 1928, p. vii; 1929, p. viii.
56. *Ibid.*, 1936, p. 36.
57. *Ibid.*, 1929, p. vii.
58. *Ibid.*, 1929, p. vii; 1933, pp. xv–xxi.
59. *Annual Report of the Preston Police, 1931*, p. 15.
60. *Annual Report of the City of Leeds Police, 1934*, p. 26.
61. *Ibid.*, 1928, 1933 and 1935.
62. *Ibid.*, 1931, p. 23.
63. *The Times*, 7 April 1933 and 17 August 1933.
64. *Ibid.*, 10 July 1934.
65. CCA, *Annual Report, 1935*, p. 21.
66. *The Times*, 2 and 10 November 1934, 6 February 1935 and 11 May 1936.
67. *Ibid.*, 29 January 1935.
68. *Annual Report of the City of Manchester Police, 1934*, p. xxxiv.
69. *Annual Report of the City of Bradford Police, 1935*, p. 28. Chief Constable Rawson reported some improvement in 1936.
70. *Annual Report of the City of Leeds Police, 1936*, p. 27.
71. *Ibid.*, 1936, pp. 27–8.
72. Luckin, 'Out and About'.
73. Bradford Watch Committee, Minute Books, 20 June 1924.
74. *Annual Report of the Salford, 1929*, p. 15.
75. *Ibid.*
76. *Annual Report of the Wigan Police, 1946*, p. 9. The number of play streets remained the same in the annual report 1950, p. 24, despite the hope of extending the number of play streets by ten in the 1946 report.
77. MT 37, London and Home Counties Traffic Advisory Committee, minutes and papers 1924–1963, 60 files.
78. Hansard, *House of Lords Debate 18 July 1939 vol. 114 cc 298–310*, debate on London and Home Counties Traffic Advisory Committee led by the Marquess of Aberdeen and Temair.
79. *The Times*, 23 October 1946.
80. *The London Gazette*, 29 January 1932.
81. *The Times*, 7 October 1947, 'Road Rules for Pedestrians'.
82. MEPO 2/9301, 'Metropolitan Police, The Problem of Road Safety', p. 6.

83. MEPO 2/10399, Working Party on Traffic Wardens and the Fixed Penalty System, section VIII.
84. Wallis, 'Segregation', cutting in MEP 2/7794.
85. Wallis, 'Segregation'.
86. MT 92/226, clipping from the *Justice of Peace and Local Government Review*, 27 January 1968.
87. MEPO 2/10399, Draft Report of the Working Party on Traffic Wardens and the Fixed Penalty Scheme, formed March 1962 for the HO and the MIT, drawn up sometime in 1963.
88. *Ibid.*
89. MEPO 2/8517, in a letter written on traffic apparently about 1956, from John Nott-Bower to Sir Frank Newsam.
90. *Annual Report of the City of Liverpool Police, 1953*, p. 35.
91. *Ibid.*, 1954, p. 40.
92. *Ibid.*, 1955, p. 42.
93. *Annual Report of the City of Liverpool Police, 1956*, p. 32.
94. *Annual Report of the City of Bradford, 1952*, pp. 20–2; *Annual Report of the Wigan Police, 1952*, pp. 22–6.
95. *Annual Report of the City of Liverpool Police, 1954*, p. 40; MEPO 2/8517 also contains evidence of the extensive lengths to which the Metropolitan Police went to gather evidence on the work, practice and effectiveness of traffic meters.
96. MEPO 2/8517, contains a considerable amount of material on American parking meters.
97. CCoCC, 80th Meeting, 4 December 1950, receiving evidence from the 29th meeting of its Traffic Sub-Committee of 30 January 1959, attended by a dozen chief constables including Captain Sir Henry Studdy (West Riding), Mr G. E. Parfitt (Barnsley), Mr A. J. Mathieson (Aberdeen) and Mr R. S. Allen (Renfrew and Bute).
98. Moran, 'Crossing the Road in Britain, 1931–1976'.
99. George Charlesworth (1987), *A History of the Transport and Research Laboratory, 1933–1983* (Aldershot: Routledge), pp. 104–6.
100. *The Times*, 5 April 1949, 'Watch on the Crossing: New Types Tested'.
101. *Annual Report of the City of Liverpool Police, 1951–1953*; Minutes of the City of Liverpool Road Safety Committee for 1951–1953, which cover most of the 1950s and up to 1960.
102. MT 112/167, 'Contribution to Brief for Debate on Private Member's Motion: Pedestrian Crossings', January 1964.
103. M. M. Ishaque and R. B. Noland (2006), 'Making Roads Safer for Pedestrians or Keeping Them Out of the Way: An Historical Perspective on Pedestrian Policies in Britain', *The Journal of Transport History*, 27, 1 (March), 127–8; Road Research Laboratory (1963), *Research on Road Safety* (London), p. 63.
104. *City of Liverpool Road Safety Brochure* (1953) (Liverpool: Liverpool Road Safety (Special Committee)), p. 66.
105. Department of Environment (1973), *Pedestrian Safety* (London), p. 16.
106. *Ibid.*, p. 21; *The Guardian*, 3 April 1962.
107. *The Guardian*, 19 August 1986: Martin Wainwright, 'Zebras Get the Hump'.
108. MT 112/317, 'Comments on the Draft Pelican Crossing Regulations 1969', 11 June 1969.

109. MoT, *Report of the Signs Committee, 18 April 1963 (1963)* (London), p. 59.
110. MT 92/411, 'Road Safety Publicity: A Proposal for a Sustained Campaign: Brief for Minister', 9 January 1967.
111. *Pelican crossing song – Paul Greenwood* (1976) (CIO), from Moran, 'Crossing the Road', p. 492.
112. *Police Review*, 21 May 1937.
113. *Hansard, Parliamentary Debates*, 3 July 1962.
114. Wallis, 'Segregation'.

6 Traffic Accidents and Road Safety: The Education of the Pedestrian and the Child, 1900–1970

1. MT 34/101, letter from Herbert Morrison to the Home Secretary.
2. Corinne Mulley, 'Passenger Transport in the UK 1905–1950: The Drive for Co-ordination of Transport Modes', AAHANZBs Conference 2009, on the Internet.
3. K. Laybourn and D. Taylor (2011), *Policing in England and Wales, 1918–1939: The Fed, Flying Squads and Forensics* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan), p. 105. In 1919, there were 331,000 motor vehicles in use in Britain, 110,000 private cars, 115,000 motorcycles, 44,000 buses and coaches and 62,000 goods vehicles. In 1939, the total was 3,085,000, including 1,944,000 cars, 462,000 motorcycles, 53,000 buses and coaches and 495,000 goods vehicles.
4. *Ibid.*; The Royal Commission on Transport sat between 1929 and December 1930 before producing three reports in 1931. They were: *The Control of Traffic on the Road*, *The Licensing and Regulation of Public Service Vehicles* and *The Co-ordination and Development of Transport*.
5. *Police Review*, 2 February 1934, 'Magistrates and the Law'.
6. Bill Luckin, 'Out and About: Traffic, Play and Safety', in Matthew Thomson (ed.), *Lost Freedom: The Landscape of the Child and British Post-War Settlement* (Oxford: Oxford University Press), p. 146. Also, look at the play streets scheme introduced by the Wigan Police, in the *Annual Report of the Wigan Police, 1946*, pp. 8–9, which suggests that play streets had begun to be implemented before the Second World War. The *Annual Reports of the Salford Police* suggest that this also happened in Salford in the late 1930s.
7. Luckin, 'Out and About', pp. 147, 150. Also H. Hendricks (1997), *Children, Childhood, and English Society* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press), pp. 83–4, 94. It is essentially the first attempt to provide a historiography of a topic which really had no historiography at the time. He argues that inter-war and post-1945 Britain has been neglected in the study of child histories, even with regard to studies of childhood and the family, class, health and other areas. Also Harry Hendricks (1997), 'Construction and Reconstruction of Childhood' in Allison Jones and Alan Proust (eds), *Constructing and Reconstructing Childhood: Contemporary Issues in the Sociological Study of Childhood* (London: Falmer Press), pp. 83–4, 94; H. Cunningham (1995), *Children and Childhood in Western Society since 1500* (London: Longman).
8. *Proceedings*, Alness Committee, 1938–1989, p. 2.

9. MEPO 2/7794 contains many reports upon the moves to segregation between 1944 and 1967, many reflecting on the experience of the 1930s.
10. *Annual Report of the City of Liverpool Police, 1901*, p. 14.
11. Under the Act, the minimum age for motorcyclists was 17 years of age, which became the minimum age for all other vehicle drivers. However, no one was required to take a driving test, or to show competency in driving, until 1935.
12. *The Original Highway Code: Reproductions of Highway Code booklets from the Thirties, Forties and Fifties* (2008) (London: Michael O'Mara Books).
13. *Proceedings*, Alness Committee, 10 May 1938, evidence of Mr C. T. Foley, particularly paragraphs 3388–9.
14. Chief Constables' Association, *Report of the General Conference 19 June 1930 and Special General Conference 20 June 1930 held at Cardiff*, from a Lecture by Lieutenant Colonel J. A. A. Pickard, General Secretary of the National 'Safety' First Association, on 'Some Developments in Street Accident Prevention', p. 52.
15. *Proceedings*, Alness Committee, 10 May 1938, paragraphs 3388–9.
16. Chief Constables' Association General Conference, *19 June 1930, Report*, p. 52.
17. *Annual Report of the City of Leeds Police, 1926*, p. 11; *1931*, p. 26.
18. *Annual Report of the City of Middlesbrough Police, 1927; Annual Report City of Manchester Police, 1936*.
19. Chief Constables' Association General Conference, *19 June 1930, Report*, p. 58.
20. London Road Safety Council website on the Internet.
21. As a result of this road anarchy, the Road Traffic Act of 1930 authorised local authorities to regulate bus services, and made it illegal for vehicles on the road to have no insurance.
22. *Proceedings*, Alness Committee, 1938–1939, 10 May 1938, p. 264, paragraphs 3443–4.
23. S. O'Connell (1998), *The Car in British Society: Class, Gender and Motoring 1896–1939* (Manchester: Manchester University Press), pp. 113–14.
24. W. Plowden (1971), *The Motor Car and Politics 1896–1970* (London: Bodley), p. 258.
25. MT 34/142, NSFA: 'summary of draft scheme for conduct of an educational campaign against accidents', July 1933.
26. *Police Review*, September 1939, quoted in MTT 9/266 in a letter from Mr Scott to R. J. Shaw, 25 October 1966.
27. MEPO 2/7794, Pedestrian Segregation Experiment: Recommendation of the Committee on Road Safety, a committee which included Mr S. Chamberlain of Scotland Yard.
28. *Police Review*, 9 January 1920.
29. *Ibid.*
30. *Ibid.*, 30 January 1920.
31. *Annual Reports of the Birmingham, Bradford, Leeds, Liverpool, Manchester and Salford Police Forces in the 1920s and 1930s*, particularly *Annual Report of the City of Birmingham Police, 1926*, p. 4, and *Annual Report of the City of Manchester Police, 1936*.
32. *Annual Reports of the City of Liverpool Police, 1929*, pp. 15–16; *1930*, pp. 15–16.

33. *Annual Report of the City of Leeds Police, 1931*, p. 26, suggests that pedestrians caused 55.41 per cent of the 74 fatal road accidents that year, and 46.61 per cent of non-fatal road accidents.
34. Returns from coroners in the last six months of 1928, gathered together by the NSFA; Chief Constables' Association General Conference, 19 June 1930, p. 54, indicates also that 9 per cent of deaths were caused by cyclists, 30 per cent motor drivers, 20 per cent by motorcyclists and 5 per cent by buses, trams and lorries; Laybourn and Taylor, *Policing in England and Wales, 1918–1939*, p. 132.
35. Chief Constables' Association General Conference, 19 June 1930, *Report*, p. 58.
36. *Ibid.* It is possible that these figures relate only to schoolchildren because Luckin, 'Out and About', p. 141, gives different figures. Child fatalities were indicated at 1,232 in 1926 and 1,685 in 1930.
37. *Police Review*, 2 June 1939.
38. *Proceedings*, Alness Committee, 10 May 1938, evidence of Mr C. T. Foley, p. 260, paragraph 3393.
39. *Ibid.*, p. 261, paragraphs 3414–17.
40. *Ibid.*, p. 261, paragraphs 3409–11.
41. Laybourn and Taylor, *Policing in England and Wales, 1918–29*, p. 131.
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