

THIS WEEK'S

Speed camera lies

Extensive new university research shows speed camera partnerships' safety claims are inaccurate and 'exaggerated'

BY TOM RAYNER & STEVE FARRELL

IT'S official, speed cameras do NOT save lives. Research published last week by the University of Liverpool proves cameras do not cut fatal accidents. It's bad news for the Road Safety Camera Partnerships who maintain cameras are lifesavers and not money-spinners.

To show our disgust at the lies and hypocrisy, we are launching our 'Thumbs Down to Speed Cameras' campaign (see right) which aims to give British bikers a way of fighting back.

The new speed camera study officially proves what MCN revealed a year ago – that speed cameras have not improved safety, and that Government 'evidence' suggesting otherwise was rigged.

Research by Liverpool University's Dr Linda Mountain has found no significant benefit from speed cameras in terms of reducing deaths or serious injuries – even at camera sites.

The reason Mountain's findings are different to those announced by the Department for Transport (DfT) last year – when we were told that accidents had fallen by 40% at camera sites – is that the DfT didn't take into account the fact that accidents were bound to fall because in preceding years they'd been exceptionally high. It made as much sense as putting a camera where

lightning has struck, then crediting it for the fact it didn't happen again – as MCN pointed out at the time.

The case for speed cameras has been "exaggerated" according to Mountain, because hundreds of people make their living out of speed cameras, and the police get an easy and cheap traffic conviction every time one flashes. This then 'frees them up' to concentrate on other priorities like street crime, while

real road hazards go unchecked.

It's why police traffic officer numbers have drastically fallen, why conviction rates are down for virtually every traffic offence except speeding, why drink driving cases are rising, and why we need to unite against cameras now.

Last year, two million road users were flashed and fined by speed cameras, making the Government £120 million. The time to act is now!

THE NEW EVIDENCE

DR LINDA MOUNTAIN (right) is senior lecturer in traffic engineering at Liverpool University.

She and her team of researchers studied 149 accident blackspots in 30mph zones around the country, and concluded that speed cameras had no significant effect on deaths and serious injuries.

Dr Mountain told MCN: "We looked at the effectiveness of speed cameras compared to other speed-reducing measures."

Mountain found that fatal and serious accidents did fall at speed camera sites but, crucially, that "the difference is not actually significant" – casting serious doubt on claims from the Department for Transport (DfT) that cameras cut accidents by 40%.

Unlike the DfT research, Mountain

took into account the fact that accidents at speed camera sites are always likely to fall after a camera is put up – because rules about their positioning require the number of accidents at a site to have previously been exceptionally high. This key factor in interpreting statistics accurately is known as regression to the mean (RTTM).

"It's true the DfT did not take account of RTTM in their research," said Mountain. "They overestimated the effect of speed cameras."



MORE GOVERNMENT LIES...

WHEN the DfT claimed last year that new evidence showed speed cameras were making roads safer, it wasn't the first time we'd been lied to about the money-making grey boxes which litter the roadsides.

In fact, the case for speed cameras has now been exposed as a cynical pack of lies and rigged evidence right from the start.

Here are some of the other corkers they've tried to make us swallow...

LIE 1

'SPEED CAUSES A THIRD OF ACCIDENTS'

CENTRAL to the justification for speed cameras. It appeared in a five-year-old government document called 'Tomorrow's Roads - Safer for Everyone,' which said: "Research has shown that speed is a major contributing factor in about one-third of all road accidents." This has since been "revised" and "moved away from", according to a government spokesman – but we still have the cameras...

LIE 2

'THE PUBLIC SUPPORTS SPEED CAMERAS'

CAMERA partnerships made this claim after asking people if they agreed with seven statements about cameras – but five of the statements were pro-cameras and only two were against, which Professor Mervyn Stone, from University College London, says is a "loaded instrument" used to "inflate" support. A Daily Telegraph poll found that 70% of drivers thought speed cameras were for making money...

LIE 3

'SPEED KILLS!'

THIS claim is practically the slogan of speed camera partnerships, and it's also nonsense. If it were true, then motorways wouldn't be the safest roads in the country, but they are. "It's driving too fast for the conditions that can kill, not speed in itself," said Paul Smith, founder of road safety organisation Safe Speed (www.speed.org.uk), and tireless campaigner against speed cameras.



PLUS

NEW DUKES PAGE 6

DVLA DENIES ERROR PAGE 8

FRAMES SCANDAL PAGE 12

MAD RACING PAGE 19

Get up to the minute news on www.motorcyclenews.com/news

exposed

'Show your disgust at the lies and hypocrisy by joining MCN's new campaign'



NEW MCN CAMPAIGN

Now signal YOUR disapproval!

AS the evidence just keeps mounting that speed cameras DON'T work, MCN has decided it's time to make a stand - with the launch of our new campaign, Thumbs Down to Cameras.

The majority of people who use the roads dislike speed cameras - but that's not reason enough to say we want them pulled down. If it was clear they were doing their stated job of saving lives, then most of us would accept their continued presence at the roadside.

But not only have speed cameras done nothing significant to cut deaths, the types of traffic crime that put motorcyclists at the greatest risk of death and injury - like careless or dangerous car driving - have gone increasingly unpunished as real policeman in cars and on bikes have been phased out and replaced by cameras.

So now we're asking MCN readers to join us and express your disapproval for the Government's failed policy by giving the thumbs-down sign with your left hand whenever you see another rider and you're in the vicinity of a speed camera. You'll be exercising your right to public freedom of expression, while also warning fellow motorcyclists of a possible danger ahead (speed cameras are, after all, only supposed to be put up where accident rates are high...).

The more of you who join in, the better life will be for all of us.

WHY ARE WE CAMPAIGNING AGAINST SPEED CAMERAS?

● Since the widespread introduction and reliance on speed cameras, a continuing year-on-year fall in the number of proportional road deaths in Britain came to a halt. For the first time in 50 years, that

LET other riders know there's a speed camera ahead



total number increased in 2003

- In the same period, the number of traffic police across the country was drastically cut
- Drink-driving offences and deaths are on the rise again.

WHAT ARE WE GOING TO DO?

- First up is going to be a free sticker sheet in every copy of MCN on June 15 with the new Thumbs Down to Cameras stickers (see below). Put them on your bike, car or anywhere else you think they might look good - we'll leave the location to your imagination
- We'll be organising a petition to take to the Government calling for proper traffic police instead of cameras. You'll be able to sign up at big events throughout the year or through a form in MCN.
- We'll also be organising protests around the country - keep reading MCN for details of where and when you can join in.

FREE STICKERS IN MCN JUNE 15!

