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## August National Road Victim Month 2010: remembering the casualties of the war on the roads

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On his first day in office, the new coalition Transport Secretary Phillip Hammond proclaimed the end of the war on the motorist. But we believe this war on the motorist does not exist. Over eight years ago, The British Medical Journal dedicated an issue to the *real* war; the War on the Roads<sup>i</sup>. Alas, this undeclared war<sup>ii</sup> still rages on and is evidenced by the six killed and countless others seriously injured on Britain's roads every day<sup>iii</sup>.

The new coalition government has drastically slashed road safety budgets with immediate abolition of the road safety capital grant, which provided funding for safety cameras. This should come as no surprise given that the Conservative pledged last October to end all central funding for fixed speed cameras. This has also ended local authority discretion in how they allocate their road safety grant, resulting in many local authorities turning their safety cameras off.

RoadPeace asks how can this be justified without putting in place alternative methods of speed enforcement? Given the expected reductions in police officers, automatic enforcement is even more important than ever.

Enforcing a legal speed limit does not infringe any convention on human rights and extensive research has already proven that cameras reduce speeding, crashes and casualties with 42% fewer people killed and seriously injured at camera sites.

War analogies are frequently used in reference to road crashes. This is why RoadPeace chose the Sunday after Remembrance Sunday (the third Sunday in November) for its World Day of Remembrance for Road Traffic Victims for those affected by road death and injury. In addition, during August National Road Victim Month, we organise other remembrance activities, listed below:

6<sup>th</sup> August, Manchester: A service of remembrance is held at the RoadPeace Memorial Garden in Beswick, Manchester. On this particular day in 2000, Jodie Webb and Joanne Greenwood died in a horrific car crash. The memorial garden is dedicated to their memories especially. It has been inspired by Jodie's mother, June Webb, in honour of her daughter and all others who lose their life on the roads.

14<sup>th</sup> August, Staffordshire: A ceremony of remembrance at the National Memorial Arboretum is held as part of National Road Victim month. The ceremony offers an opportunity to reflect quietly in the peaceful and tranquil setting of the arboretum and the RoadPeace Wood, as well as the chance to meet other people who have sponsored a tree in the wood or have come to remember others. During a short service, names of those being remembered are read out from oak leaves which are then buried amongst the trees of the RoadPeace Wood.

31<sup>st</sup> August, Liverpool: Every year, on 31 August, a service of remembrance is held in Liverpool, to remember Diana, Princess of Wales, who died on this day in 1997 in a car crash, and to remember the lives of all others who are killed on the roads. This is also the anniversary of the first person reported to have died in a motor vehicle crash. This year the service will be held on the steps of Liverpool Anglican Cathedral.

**For further information contact:**

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**References**

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<sup>i</sup> BMJ (2002), 11 May 2002.

<sup>ii</sup> Williams H (1991), Autogeddon

<sup>iii</sup> DfT (2009), Road Casualties Great Britain 2008