



57 Years Policing the UK Motorways

On this page we take a look at the history of policing the UK motorway network since the opening of the Preston Bypass in 1958.

There are a number of articles written by members of Police Car UK and we hope that you will find this page both informative and interesting! It is quite long, so make yourself a cup of tea and settle down to...

50th Anniversary of Policing the Motorway

The Preston Bypass

The M6 Experiment

Motorway Memories

and

West Yorkshire Motorways

The 50th Anniversary of Policing the Motorway

In 2009 we celebrated the 50th anniversary of the opening of the first section of the M1 motorway. OK, before we start there is an argument that the first motorway was opened a year earlier in 1958 and was called the Preston by-pass. However, it wasn't designated as a motorway (part of the M6) until several years later and so the other side of the coin will argue that the first 'official' motorway, the M1 was opened on 2nd November 1959. But the fact remains that from 1958/9 Britain's motorway network expanded across the country and is now an integral part of our transport system and our everyday lives. And for obvious reasons it needs policing and so we find ourselves here in particular celebrating the 50th Anniversary of Policing the Motorway. Those Police officers who have worked on 'the strip' over the years will have an affinity towards it that is hard to describe. It can be an extremely dangerous place to work but it can also be an exhilarating one. Dealing with everything from major incidents involving multiple deaths to the often-humorous side of human failure behind the wheel and everything else in between, working the motorway beat is anything but dull.

Here on this special motorway page we hope to bring you several things. Firstly, a potted history of the types of cars used to patrol the motorways over the years from 1958/9 to 2009 with a large number of photos taken from PC-UK's extensive archives. We have chosen not just the obvious Traffic patrol cars but the crash tenders and some of the more bizarre vehicles that have been tried and tested.

We also cover the everyday incidents and accidents that Traffic cops have to deal with on the motorway, from plane crashes to abnormal loads, from adverse weather conditions to stray animals.

This page is dedicated to those Police officers who have died or been seriously injured as a result of an incident whilst working on the motorway.

From the very beginning Britain's Police service was going to be at the forefront of this new breed of road and it was going to require a completely new type of policing. The first section of the M1 ran from Bedfordshire (19 miles), north towards Hertfordshire (16 miles), Buckinghamshire (9 miles) Northamptonshire (26 miles) and Warwickshire (3 miles), a total of 73 miles. The initial plan was that the road would eventually stretch from London to Birmingham. All five Chief Constables concerned tackled the project with great enthusiasm and foresight. They had profited from the experiences gained by the Lancashire County Constabulary on the Preston by-pass and also studied conditions on European motorways in Germany and Holland. They wisely adopted a common type of equipment and a common 'drill' for dealing with accidents. The Lancashire force had used the MK2 Ford Zephyr Farnham bodied estate together with the MGA 1600 open top sports car, both finished in white to patrol the 8 miles of the Preston by-pass.



Lancashire's first motorway patrol cars included the Zephyr estate and MGA.

A decision was made that all five forces policing the M1 would also use identical MK2 Ford Zephyr Farnham bodied estate cars, also finished in white instead of the more familiar black and fitted with a flashing blue light. A small illuminated 'stop' sign was placed in the rear windscreen and a full width mud flap was placed across the rear valance. The cars carried a large number of metal accident signs and other equipment. An official photo was taken with the Hertfordshire and Bedfordshire cars placed side by side (Bedfordshire and Northants cars were distinguished with 'Police' lettering across the leading edge of the bonnet) but no photos of the Buckinghamshire or Warwickshire cars seem to have survived.



(c) PC-UK

The Hertfordshire and Bedfordshire Zephyr estates get ready for action.



(c) PC-UK



(c) PC-UK

Hertfordshire's Zephyr shows off its new kit.



Bedfordshire Constabulary Ford Zephyr estate gets ready to patrol the new M1



Northamptonshire's Zephyr estate deals with a broken-down HGV on the M1

It didn't take long for those officers assigned to motorway duties to understand just how dangerous it can be when attending the scene of an incident and for them to suddenly become part of the incident themselves, after being hit by another vehicle.



One of the Hertfordshire cars written off on the M1.

By 1961 the Bedfordshire Constabulary added motorcycles to their motorway fleet. They used a number of BSA A10's with Avon Streamliner fairings. The photo below not only shows the bikes but gives us a fantastic look at the almost deserted M1 which has no central barriers, no cats' eyes, wooden fencing on its borders and a Ford Anglia in lane 3.



PC's Alec Gregg and Stuart Blythe patrol the M1 on their BSA's



Close up of the Bedfordshire BSA

By now another motorway had arrived, this time in Kent. The M2 was also patrolled for a while by motorcycle officers using Triumph Thunderbirds.



Kent Police Triumph Thunderbird

Kent County Constabulary favoured the Humber Super Snipe estate as their motorway patrol car with its big 3 litre, six-cylinder engine it was ideal for carrying the extra equipment needed to police the new road.



Kent County Constabulary Humber Super Snipe estate



Kent shows off the equipment carried on board its Humber's



PC Ron Gamage stands proudly beside his Humber close to the M2

Meanwhile back up in Lancashire that force had started to replace its aging MGA fleet with MGB Roadsters, whilst the West Midlands Constabulary used the new Mini Cooper to patrol its new section of the M5.



Lancashire County Constabulary MGB Roadster patrols a deserted section of the M6 south towards Birmingham



West Midlands Constabulary chose the Mini Cooper as part of its new motorway fleet

Carrying lots of extra emergency kit was a priority for the Police and large estate cars were ideal for this and so the popularity of the Humber Super Snipe grew, with forces like the Metropolitan Police (who had used the cars prior to the introduction of the motorway as SETAC units (Specially Equipped Traffic Accident Cars)) Northamptonshire and Hertfordshire taking them on to replace the now ageing MK2 Ford Zephyrs.

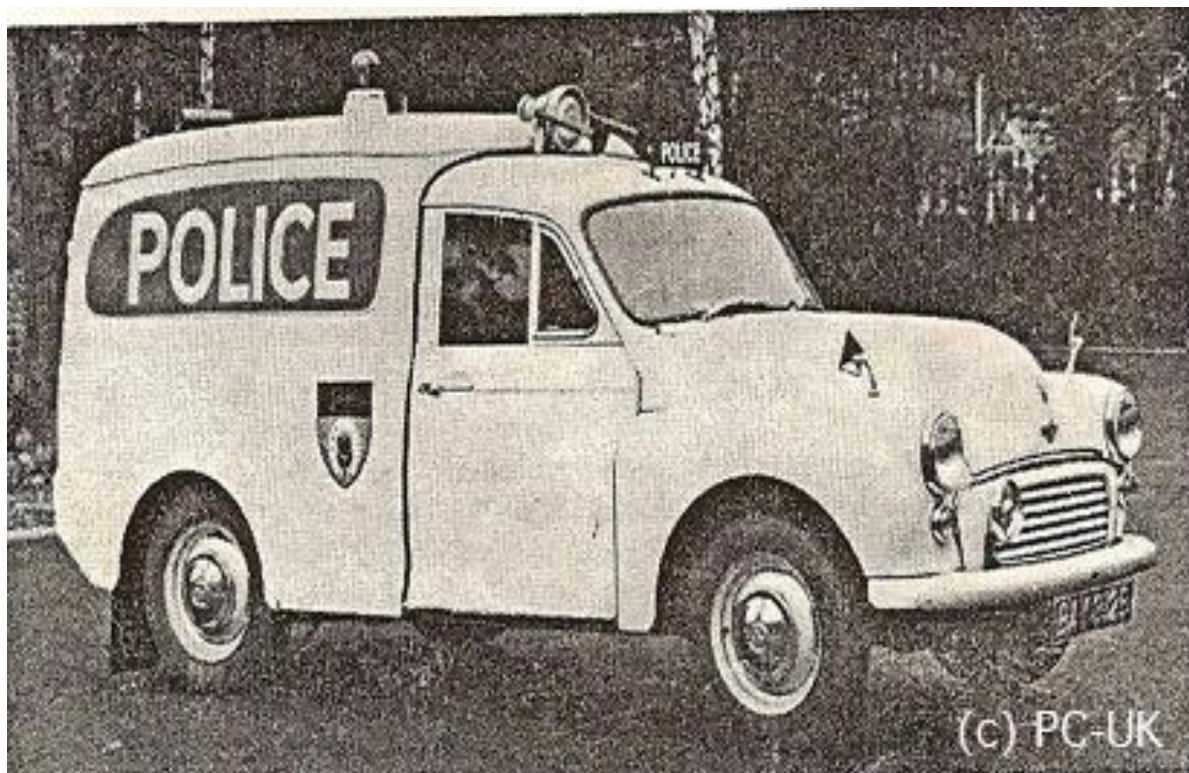


Hertfordshire Constabulary Humber Super Snipe



Metropolitan Police Humber in white, earlier SETAC units that were finished in black

Other forces started to add vans to their motorway fleets specifically to carry the extra equipment, leaving the cars to do all the emergency response work with the van being brought in if required. Leicestershire and Rutland Constabulary who now had the next section of the M1 running through their county opted for the Morris Minor van!



Leicestershire and Rutland Constabulary Morris Minor van shows off its kit carrying capability

By the mid-1960s there was a new faster patrol car to play with; the Jaguar 3.8 MK2. What Traffic officer wouldn't have wanted one at the time? Leicestershire were one of several forces that opted to use them as motorway patrol cars.



One of Leicestershire's MK2 Jags attends an RTA on the M1.



A selection of the M6 Experiment cars together with the BEA helicopter



One of the forces involved with the M6 Experiment was Cheshire and here we see one of their MK3 Ford Zephyr 6 estate cars together with its happy crew!

The Met Police started to replace the Humber Super Snipe estate with the Land Rover as its latest SETAC unit. It had a greater payload and its four-wheel drive capability came in useful in towing disabled vehicles from live lanes onto the hard shoulder. Over the coming years various Land Rover models would prove to be popular motorway patrol cars.



The Mets early SETAC Land Rovers had a wealth of extra equipment.

Not all forces utilised the very latest vehicles for motorway use. The West Midlands Police for example used a number of white Austin A110 Westminster's whilst the Nottinghamshire Constabulary opted for the Wolseley 6/110 on its section of the M1.



West Midlands Police Austin A110 Westminster



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Nottinghamshire Constabulary Wolseley 6/110

By 1967 the MK2 Jaguar and the later Jaguar 340 were really starting to prove popular with a number of forces that needed a fast response car for their particular stretch of motorway.



(c) PC-UK

Gloucestershire Constabulary MK2 Jaguar poses on the M4 close to the Severn Bridge.



(c) PC-UK

Kent County Constabulary Jaguar 340 on the M2

Staffordshire Police started using MK2 Jaguars in 1965 as the M6 weaved its way through the county. As with most other motorway patrol cars of the period they were finished in plain white to help make them stand out on the fast-new roads. However, in 1967 it is believed an accident occurred on the M6 where an officer died after his patrol car was rear ended as he stopped at the scene of another incident. In the subsequent enquiry it was felt that officers were not being offered sufficient protection whilst engaged in motorway duties. One of the lessons learned appears to be that Staffordshire Police then started to paint the boot of its motorway cars in fluorescent red. It also added red paint to the rear of the roof mounted light box and high intensity red fog lamps were also set into the box, whilst a large white sign with the word 'POLICE' in red was attached to the rear bumper. Large 'POLICE' lettering was also placed along the sides of the car. These new safety features helped distinguish the cars still further and as we will see other forces then started to adapt their cars with officer safety very much in mind.



Staffordshire Police MK2 Jags in plain white circa 1965.





Staffordshire's later Jaguar 340's complete with safety systems applied.

A couple of years prior to this tragic accident the Sussex Constabulary are credited with applying the first orange/red reflective stripes to the sides of some of their patrol cars. It didn't take long for other forces to adopt the idea and the 'jam sandwich' livery then became synonymous with Police Traffic cars. Other forces went even further, in particular the Lancashire County Constabulary who started to paint just about every surface of their motorway cars in a bright fluorescent orange. They looked superb and certainly stood out, even from a great distance.



West Yorkshire Constabulary Vauxhall Cresta PB estate, with red and blue side stripes.



Lancashire County Constabulary MK3 Ford Zephyr 6 estate.



Believe it or not but Lancashire even employed a couple of Mini vans, painted orange like the Zephyr, as motorway crash tenders, loaded to the gunnels with extra kit. They must have taken forever to get the scene!



Not all forces added fancy graphics though, as this Cumbria Police MK4 Ford Zephyr being driven on their new section of their new section of the M6 demonstrates.

In late 1969 Land Rover introduced a car that was almost born to be a Police motorway car; the Range Rover. With a 3500 litre V8, four-wheel drive capability, bags of torque and plenty of internal room for all that extra equipment, it wasn't too long before the Police started to take a serious look at it. And it's been using them ever since.



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Cheshire Constabulary were one of the first forces to employ the use of Range Rovers and as you can see here big new roof mounted signs and lots of equipment could be carried.

Britain's network of motorways continued to spread throughout the late 1960s and into the 1970s. The M3 linked London via Surrey and ended on the outskirts of Southampton and the Hampshire County Constabulary became the latest force to gear itself up to police its stretch of motorway. They chose to use MK2 Triumph 2500 TC's and a long wheel base MK1 Ford Transit van as its Motorway Accident tender.



Hampshire's new motorway fleet consisted of Triumph saloons and the MK1 Transit van.

In the early 1970s Jaguar replaced its ageing MK2/340 model with the sleek new XJ6. The 4.2 litre model in particular seemed perfectly well suited towards motorway patrol work although the economy and the 1970s oil crisis meant that some opted to look at cheaper alternatives. One of those was the Austin 1800S (often referred to as the Land Crab) which actually proved to be a popular choice of vehicle for the Police. It had a fair turn of speed combined with excellent comfort and loads of interior space.



Thames Valley Police used a large number of Jaguar XJ6 saloons to work the M4.



Staffordshire Constabulary were amongst several forces to utilise the Austin 1800S model.

Meanwhile the Lancashire County Constabulary painted anything that moved in bright orange to aid safety for its officers and so that the public could easily identify the car as being a Traffic patrol vehicle.



Lancashire's Range Rovers looked fabulous in this orange livery and they started to use the short wheel base MK1 Ford Transit van as it's Accident Unit.



One of West Mercia's Range Rovers seen on the M5 on a heavy vehicle stop.

The West Midlands Police now had a large amount of motorway running through its force area and of course were one of the first forces to use the Solihull built Rover 3500 V8 as its new age motorway car. Many will argue that this car was one of the best patrol cars of all time. The West Midlands also started to use vans as accident tenders and unusually they opted for the Bedford CF, complete with elevating stem light which helps illuminate a darkened scene and warns on-coming traffic much earlier.



West Midlands all new Rover V8 patrol cars and the Bedford CF accident tender.

By the mid-1970s the Rover was king of the Traffic fleets with a host of forces using the powerful V8 to power its crew at speeds of 120 mph.



Kent County Constabulary Rover 3500 V8 and Hampshire's updated fleet for the M3 (seen here at Fleet services) included the Rover saloon.

The Transit van was starting to prove its worth as a big load carrier and several forces started to use them to transport ever more equipment to the scene of a motorway incident. The idea was good in principal, but in reality, they were a burden on the officers tasked with crewing them. They were slow, cumbersome and restricted in the duties they could perform. Consequently, most ended up being left in the yard and only brought out as and when required.



Thames Valley Police Transit was finished in orange, similar to the Lancashire units whilst Nottinghamshire opted to use the red side stripe livery instead.

By the early 1970s some forces were daring to use foreign made cars due to the unreliability of the British product. One of the cars that was looked at for motorway use was BMW. The Thames Valley Police started it all by using the BMW 3.0Si and West Mercia Police, followed by Derbyshire Constabulary used the same model.



West Mercia Police BMW 3.0Si was finished in a rather strange livery called 'truck yellow' which was a sort of pale orange.

Some home-grown products continued to find favour though and non-more so than the revised Jaguar XJ6 saloon, now in series 2 guise. It was a big, powerful car that commanded respect. If you saw one of these in your view mirror as you sped down lane 3, you knew you were in big trouble!



Avon and Somerset Police S2 Jaguar XJ6 certainly looked the part.

The sheer variety of vehicles now available for Police use was now becoming apparent and forces were rather spoilt for choice.



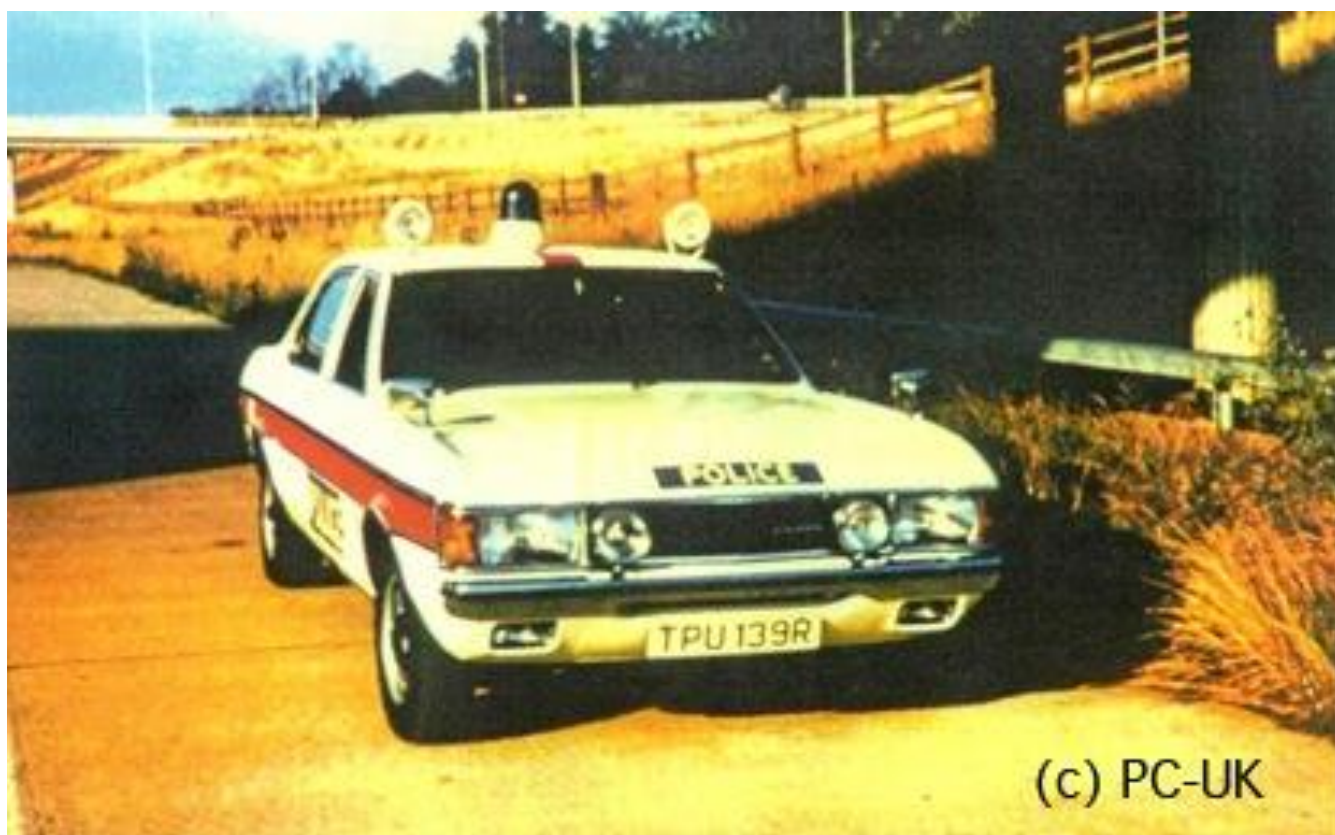
This photo shows a good variety of cars being used by the Greater Manchester Police, from a MK1 Ford Transit, Range Rover and a MK1 Ford Consul GT estate.

In 1975 Rover replaced the 3500 saloons with a radical 5 door hatchback, the SD1. It was a striking looking car and another that seemed destined for Police use on the motorway as soon as it left the drawing board. Another V8 powered car with ample interior space it again became an iconic Police car of its time, let down only by its chronic build quality.



West Yorkshire Constabulary Rover 3500 SD1, resplendent in its unusual graphics.

Rover had a serious rival to its Police crown at this time in the shape of the Consul GT and the later MK1 Ford Granada, especially in 3.0S format. History now tells us that it was honours even with forces either opting to use the Rover or the Ford, rarely using both.



MK1 Ford Granada 3.0S from Essex Police on the M11 and a 3.0S from the Avon and Somerset Constabulary.

Meanwhile the Range Rover continued to excel at motorway duties and its pulling powers became the stuff of legend with stories of them towing stranded articulated lorries and fully laden petrol tankers off the motorway with ease.



A later model Range Rover from the Cheshire Constabulary. Note the full length yellow coats that the officers are now wearing to help make them more visible whilst working the hazardous motorway environment.

Mind you not every force got to try out the latest cars from an ever-growing list of manufacturers. West Midlands Police were still using brand new Triumph 2.5's as late as 1976.



Last of the big Triumph saloons was issued to West Midlands Police for motorway duties in 1976.

More and more foreign cars were starting to creep in and none more so than in Hampshire, who had been using Volvos since 1965. But it was BMW that made the big impression as a motorway patrol car with the introduction of the 525 and later the 528i. On both performance and reliability, they were hard to beat.



A BMW 525 of the Hampshire Constabulary in 1978 with its driver PC Phil Jacob in the rear yard at Aldershot Police Station. This car would have patrolled the busy M3.

Big load carriers, crash tenders, accident units, call them what you will, continued to be used by Britain's motorway Police and two more types were called into service towards the latter half of the 1970s. Ford revamped its Transit range and introduced the new MK2 which went onto even greater use by the Police, not just as a crash tender but in many other roles. Perhaps a more unusual choice was that of the South Yorkshire Police Traffic Division to deploy the Leyland Sherpa 200 as its crash tender!





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This Leicestershire Constabulary MK2 Transit Accident Unit really looks the business whilst the South Yorkshire Sherpas were a very unusual choice. Both types of vehicle were fitted with huge stem light systems.

Ford also updated its Granada range in 1977/8 and the new MK2 Granada was another car that was destined for the motorway patrols, especially the estate variant. Plenty of forces used both saloon and estate and this is another car that gained iconic status.



(c) PC-UK



Two splendid looking MK2 Ford Granada estates in use with Surrey Police and Essex Police as motorway cars. The Surrey unit was so top heavy with its stem light and rear spoiler set up that it gained the rather unfortunate nick-name of the General Belgrano!

The series 2 Rover 3500SE SD1 was also launched shortly after the new Ford was introduced. It was faster and better equipped than before and above all it was a whole lot more reliable. There was still a 50/50 split on which force used which car though.



Rover 3.5 V8 SD1 series 2 of the West Mercia Constabulary used to patrol the M5 area.

The Greater Manchester Police loved their Range Rovers and became the biggest fleet users in the UK. GMP had a large amount of motorway to patrol including the M60, M61, M62 and the M66 and the Range Rover suited the purpose.



Unusual Range Rover van sits beside standard model, both from the Greater Manchester Police.

It has to be said that the Metropolitan Police, in comparison with many county forces didn't have that much motorway area to patrol and as a consequence its motorway fleet was fairly sparse. However, by the early 1980s things were starting to change and the Met had to increase its motorway capability. This included the use of MK2 Ford Transit Accident Units and the last of the Rover SD1 series, the awesome Vitesse models.



(c) PC-UK



(c) PC-UK

Met Police Transit Accident Unit and Rover Vitesse at Chigwell Traffic Base which served the M11 and M25.

By the mid mid-1980s was still neck and neck between the Rover SD1 and the MK2 Ford Granada, but things were about to change once more.



Splendid photo of a West Yorkshire Police Rover 3500 SD1 in the snow on the M1 and a Kent County Constabulary MK2 Ford Granada 2.8i used to patrol the M2.

Jaguar revamped the XJ6 again to give us the series 3 saloon and the Police made great use of the 4.2 model. It was a great motorway patrol car but was plagued with reliability issues which tainted many officer's memories of it. You can't argue with its good looks though!



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Hampshire Constabulary Jaguar XJ6 S3 with its driver PC Phil Jacob beside the M3 and a Sussex Police XJ6 S3 used to patrol the M23 between Gatwick Airport and Brighton.

The big motorway accident units continued to be used right through the decade and the following three examples show how each force utilised the products from Ford in a big way.



Essex Police called on the services of a Ford Transit 4x4 County Conversion to help patrol the M11 and M25, whilst the Greater Manchester Police had this superb looking 3.0 litre V6 as its Incident Unit. By 1987 Ford had released the MK3 Transit and Lancashire Police were one of the forces to adopt it as an Accident Unit.

The livery and lighting units on some motorway patrol cars were now getting even bigger and bolder. Forces and manufacturers were now experimenting with new products all the time, all of it designed to make the vehicle even more conspicuous than before.



Essex Police Range Rover with lots of graphics to enhance its looks and more lights than Blackpool seafront.

Two new cars arrived in the late 1980s, the MK1 Vauxhall Senator and the Jaguar XJ40, later re-badged as the XJ6. Both cars were used by a large number of forces, but sadly this was the last of the Jaguars to reach large volume sales with the Police as their products started to be aimed at the more expensive end of the market. However, for Vauxhall the story was only just beginning.





MK1 Vauxhall Senator was used by Leicestershire Constabulary on the M1 whilst this Sussex Police Jaguar XJ40 would have cruised the M23.

By the turn of the decade the MK1 Senator had morphed into the MK2. It had a 3.0 litre, straight six engines with fuel injection and 24 valves. It was quick enough to hit 140 mph and although there were some serious reliability and handling issues it was quickly hailed as the new king of Traffic patrol. It looked pretty good to.



Hampshire Constabulary MK2 Vauxhall Senator poses on the soon to be finished M3 extension through the Twyford cutting near Winchester.



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West Yorkshire Police MK2 Vauxhall Senator sits high above the M62.



(c) PC-UK

Fabulous looking Senator belongs to the Greater Manchester Police.



Gloucestershire Constabulary MK2 Vauxhall Senator overlooks the M5.

But Vauxhall didn't have it all its own way, there were several rivals during the early 1990s, from the likes of BMW, Ford and Rover.



BMW 525i from the Hampshire Constabulary was one of the best patrol cars of all time. This one is at an RTA on the A3M.



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Ford introduced the Sierra XR4x4 with a 2.9i V6 and permanent four-wheel drive. More suited to urban Traffic patrol work but it also spent a lot of time working on the motorway. This Surrey Police example would have been seen on the M25.



(c) PC-UK

Rover introduced the 827i and this series 2 saloon from Thames Valley Police would have been seen on the M4.



Ford also gave us the MK3 Granada Scorpio 4x4 saloon and this was the last of the big Fords. In truth it wasn't as popular as it had been in previous years. This Hampshire Constabulary version is seen at an incident on the M275.

Whilst the Granada was in the twilight of its years Ford gave us an instant legend; the Cosworth Sierra. What a beast. It was a big sales success for Ford and a huge hit with the Police. Several forces opted to use them including Bedfordshire, Sussex, Greater Manchester, Nottinghamshire, Northumbria and Cumbria all of whom had plenty of motorway now running through their areas. There weren't many vehicles that could outrun a Police 'Cossie'.



Sussex Police ran a fleet of Cosworth Sierra Sapphires.

Meanwhile the Range Rover continued to receive various updates and continued to give outstanding service as a motorway patrol vehicle.



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Lancashire Constabulary Range Rover attends a motorway incident whilst this Cheshire Constabulary version gets striking new graphics.

Vivid graphics and extremely efficient light bars helped make the motorway patrol car easy to see from a distance, thus aiding officer safety and helping reduce speed and improve driver behaviour at the same time.



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Jaguar XJ6 from the West Midlands Police looks great but the fancy graphics don't seem to set off this Lothian and Borders Police Ford Scorpio in quite the same way.

The following two photos have been included to show how things have changed in many ways over the years. Both photos are from South Yorkshire Police and appear to be taken from the same bridge.

Note the difference in traffic flow for a start and then look at the Police car graphics and lighting, even the high visibility clothing the officers themselves are wearing. The only thing that hasn't changed is the pose!



South Yorkshire Police Rover SD1 circa 1978 and Vauxhall Omega MV6 circa 2001.

The Range Rover was completely revamped in the early 1990s and continued to serve the Police as the number one motorway car, there simply wasn't anything else on the market to compare with its overall ability at this time.



Greater Manchester Police Motorway Unit loved their Range Rovers as this photo shows. Both old and new models are seen in this transition period.

By the mid-1990s Britain's motorway expansion was just about complete. More than ever it needed policing and two new cars were about to be introduced and they would become the standard motorway patrol cars for more than a decade. Vauxhall introduced the Omega to replace its Senator model and Volvo introduced the 850 T5. This car gained overnight cult status and the numerals 'T5' became synonymous with Police motorway patrols the country over. In 1997 Volvo revamped the car and it became the V70 T5 in estate form.





Vauxhall Omega MV6 of the Thames Valley Police sits on a Police ramp on the M40, whilst this great night time shot of a Hampshire Constabulary Volvo V70 T5 was taken on the M3.

Also in the mid-1990s a fresh look at the way the Police organised themselves on the motorway was introduced, along similar lines of the M6 Experiment from the mid-1960s. The West Midlands, West Mercia and Staffordshire Police formed the Central Motorway Police Group whose sole job description was to police the motorway network of the midlands using identical vehicles and equipment in a much more coordinated manner. It's largely worked and continues to this day.





The CMPG even gets its own unique crest to adorn its patrol cars with. They included the Volvo 850 T5 and a new type of crash tender. The Mercedes Benz Sprinter Incident Command Unit seen here was one of the first of its type and not only carried huge amounts of kit but was also a mobile office and communications centre to be used at the scene of any large RTA.

The mid 1990s also saw the start of a revolution in Police vehicle graphics with the introduction of the Home Office inspired Battenberg livery. The original idea was that this was to become the national motorway Police livery, the argument being that the yellow and blue blocks provided a greater visual impact on the motorway environment and that no matter where you went in the UK a motorway patrol car could be recognised by the public. However, after more than 15 years in existence it seems that just about every Police car on the road now has Battenberg on it together with the ambulance service, fire and rescue units, blood donor vehicles, various security firms, breakdown recovery agents and of course the latest Government inspired initiative the Highways Agency Traffic Officers (HATO'S).



Greater Manchester Police Volvo V70 T5 and a Strathclyde Police BMW 528i are both adorned in Battenberg.

By the turn of the century the Range Rover, now on its latest incarnation got a serious rival to its crown. BMW introduced the X5, a four-wheel drive SUV that did all the things the Range Rover could but with added reliability and supreme road holding. And the Mercedes Sprinter van took over from the Ford Transit as the number one crash tender in a large number of forces. Like the CMPG unit these vans were now tasked with becoming a mobile office, complete with toilet and refreshment facilities due mainly to the length of time officers now had to spend at the scene of a fatality to facilitate the needs, under Statute, of the Road Deaths Manual (average time spent at these incidents is now 6 hours).



Hampshire Constabulary were the first force in the world to use the BMW X5 3.0d as a Traffic Police car and this photo shows the car on the hard shoulder of the A3M underneath Bedhampton Bridge. The Mercedes Sprinter is also from the Hampshire Constabulary Roads Policing Unit and was their Support Tender.

Our last group of photos shows some of the current crop of motorway patrol cars. But are they the last we shall see? Is this the only big anniversary we shall celebrate? As the Police presence on our motorways declines in favour of the HATO'S it is unlikely that we will see another 50 years of Police motorway cars. The future seems to be that the HATO'S will 'patrol' the motorway network to do the everyday tasks that until recently were the domain of the Traffic Police and that the only time you will see a patrol car on the 'Mike-Whisky' is when it all goes wrong.



The Ford Mondeo of the Wiltshire Constabulary sits and watches traffic above the M4 whilst this Cambridgeshire Constabulary Volvo V70 T5 performs VASCAR speed enforcement, both being a good deterrent towards bad driving on our motorways.



(c) PC-UK



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What better way to finish off our montage of motorway Police vehicles than with these two examples. A Greater Manchester Police Range Rover, one of dozens that have graced our motorways for more than 35 years and a Hertfordshire Constabulary BMW 530d at an incident on the M1 where it all started.

THE TRUTH ABOUT BRITAIN'S FIRST MOTORWAY

The Preston Bypass by Brian White



There seems to be an increasing reluctance in the media to accept that Britain's first motorway was opened in Lancashire in 1958 by the then Prime Minister Harold Macmillan.

This modern misrepresentation is in danger of changing the course of history regarding the development of motorways in Britain.

The tendency is to portray the first motorway as the M1. The M1 was not opened until 2nd November 1959, **almost one year later**. The M1 opening ceremony had been downgraded from Prime Minister to the Minister of Transport, Ernest Marples.

The confusion may surround the expression M1. This in some people's minds may indicate the first. The simple and correct explanation is that the M1 was designed to run parallel with the A1 trunk road. The M6 parallel with the A6, The M2 with the A2 and so on. All following the English precedent like spokes of a wheel radiating from London.

The Preston By Pass was part of the planned M6 north/south motorway system (running alongside the main A6 London to Carlisle). This planning took place as early as the 1930's. It was the first leg of the overall Government plan for motorways in Britain.



It was built to the motorway standards and specifications of the day. It was controlled by new motorway regulations and had a specially trained and dedicated team of Police officers assigned to patrol. They had liveried vehicles, and carried emergency equipment; signs etc, more sophisticated than 'ordinary' Police patrol vehicles. There was even a motorway Police station (later renamed Motorway Police Post) purpose built at Samlesbury, right alongside the motorway.

When the Prime Minister officially opened the M6 Preston By Pass he referred to the “new motorway” in his inaugural speech. He also unveiled a large granite plinth alongside the motorway with the words.

“PRESTON BY-PASS BRITAIN'S FIRST MOTORWAY OPENED 5 DEC 1958 BY THE PRIME MINISTER THE RT HON HAROLD MACMILLAN M.P.”



RULES OF THE DAY

The opening of the Preston By-Pass marks the beginning of a new era of motoring in Britain. It is the first link in the network of motorways, which, progressively completed, will contribute to an increasing extent to the health of the community and to the national economy.

The national motorways in general and the Preston By-pass in particular are designed to enable traffic to travel safely at high speeds, and to minimise the chance of accidents arising from bad driving.

These objectives are achieved principally by: -

1. The prohibition of pedestrians, cyclists and animals.
2. The prohibition of access from adjacent land and the elimination of all cross traffic by the bridging of all roads and footpaths, etc... encountered on the route.
3. Dual carriageways separated by a central reservation.
4. The provision at junctions of acceleration and deceleration lanes which enable traffic to enter or leave the stream of traffic on the Motorway in safety.
5. The adoption of easy gradients and very large radius curves.
6. The absence of raised kerbs and the provision of hard shoulders on the nearside of the carriageway for use in emergency halts.
7. Sign posts of a size which can be read both by day and by night without the need for a driver to slow down.
8. The provision of road surfaces with the highest possible resistance to skidding.

M6 Experiment



The Motorway Problem

The opening of the first section of the M.1 motorway created a problem new to the police of this country - that of supervising extremely fast, six-lane, almost self-contained highways. In 1959, therefore, a small team of chief officers of police visited Germany and Holland to study well-established police motorway patrol methods in those countries and the subsequent report became a blueprint for motorway policing in this country.

It was recognised from the beginning, however that a great deal more would be learned as time went on about policing motorways and that a central fund of knowledge based on the experience gained would be of the greatest value to the Police Service, police authorities and the general public. Accordingly, the working part referred to in the statement made to Parliament was set up by the Home Secretary in 1962, to consider whether useful advice could be produced for chief officers of police and police authorities about the policing of motorways and comparable through routes. The working party after considering proposed basic scales of personnel and equipment thought it right to ask the newly set up Home Office Police Research and Planning Branch to make a scientific evaluation of the problem.

It will be remembered that the branch is staffed by scientists and police officers and the first point they had to consider was that the existing motorway system (now approximately 250 miles) would probably be increased to 1,000 miles in the next decade. The second point was that the technical sub-committee of the working party had recommended that the scale of policing for motorways and comparable through routes should vary between a patrol car and motor cycle for every 20 - 30 miles of carriageway by day and a patrol car for every 40 - 60 miles of carriageway by night.

It had been estimated that if the existing motorway system and the comparable through routes were to be policed on this scale a traffic force of over 6,000 men and approximately 1,800 vehicles would be required. The cost would be over £11.5 million and, although it would require a number of years to recruit, train and make operational such a force and costs would be spread over this period, it was necessary to make out an extremely good case before such expenditure could be undertaken. It could be said that the demands of accident prevention alone are sufficient justification for the cost, but there is no clear indication that such a force, using present methods, would have the desired impact on the problem.

The Pilot Study

It was decided that an early task of the Police Research and Planning Branch was to ascertain how the various forces were coping with the problems of policing motorways. This study was commenced in the latter part of 1963, when already there were many lengths of motorway policed by different forces and visits to seven of them were made in what has become the pilot study of the problem.

Some variation in scales of policing was apparent and this to a great extent was due to the very short lengths of motorway in some police districts which cannot always be policed to a national pattern. This is partially being overcome by co-operation between adjoining forces, but different types of vehicles are already being used and there seems a danger that standardization may not be maintained.

It is probably true that complete standardization is not essential but there is little variation in motorways throughout the country and it seems reasonable to assume that an ideal common policy is possible. The motorway accident, incident and traffic offence rates in the seven force areas were studied as being likely to give some indication of the relative effectiveness of the methods used. It was found, however, that although as expected the various scales of policing affected the number of incidents attended and the number of offences reported, the degree of police activity apparently had little effect on the accident rate per mile, which is substantially the same in all areas.

It will therefore be appreciated that although a great deal of information was obtained the pilot study did not produce any clear-cut evidence which would indicate the most effective scales and methods of policing - nor had any account been taken of modern surveillance methods such as closed-circuit television.

The Experiment

A field experiment was therefore agreed upon, the main objects of which were to examine:

- (i) The effectiveness of the present traffic patrol organisations;
- (ii) the advantages of combined force traffic patrol organisations;
- (iii) the value of helicopters to both the current and combined force methods of policing;
- (iv) the effect of various levels of policing upon accident, offence and incident rates;
- (v) the administrative and technical problems which might result from combining forces, e.g., communications, vehicle maintenance;
- (vi) the value of mechanical and electronic aids for surveillance and control.

The M6 motorway was selected for the experiment, mainly because it is the longest single stretch of motorway (88 miles) in the country and only three forces are concerned in its policing, a point of some importance in view of the considerable communications problems involved.

It was decided to arrange the experiment in two phases:

- (i) Combined Cheshire, Lancashire and Staffordshire force motorway policing under one command from the 9th March to the 6th June 1964, inclusive;
- (ii) separate force motorway policing under separate commands from the 7th June to the 26th June 1964, inclusive.

During both phases a helicopter was superimposed on the ground patrols for the purpose of assessing its relative effectiveness. The machine, a Bell 46J, was a charter with its pilot and ground engineer from British European Airways (Helicopters), Ltd. A police observer was carried and it was intended that it should normally fly four hours a day, five days a week, at varying periods. To facilitate recognition from the helicopter the call signs of the motorway cars had been painted on the roofs.

The patrol height of the helicopter was 200-400ft. and to avoid distraction to motorists and to give a wide angle of vision to the observer it was usually flown well to the side of the motorway. It was available for special traffic control on and off the motorway, e.g., at holiday time, although this had to be carefully planned as its flying time on full tanks was about two hours or 160-180 miles.

Phase One

Strength

The combined force was placed under the command of the traffic chief superintendent of the Lancashire constabulary and the combined force headquarters was set up at the police post in the Knutsford Service Area, in Cheshire on the M6. The details of the force are as follows...

Staffordshire - Personnel

Chief Superintendent = 0

Inspector = 1

Patrol Sergeant = 2

Patrol Constables = 19

Control Constable = 1

Aircraft Observers = 1

Vehicles (White)

Supervisor Cars = 1

Estates or Cars = 4

Motorcycles = 3

Cheshire - Personnel

Chief Superintendent = 0

Inspector = 1

Patrol Sergeant = 2

Patrol Constables = 19

Control Constable = 1

Aircraft Observers = 1

Vehicles (White)

Supervisor Cars = 1

Estates or Cars = 4

Motorcycles = 3

Lancashire - Personnel

Chief Superintendent = 1

Inspector = 1

Patrol Sergeant = 3

Patrol Constables = 25

Control Constable = 2

Aircraft Observers = 1

Vehicles (White)

Supervisor Cars = 1

Estate or Cars = 7

Motorcycles = 6

The motorway had been divided into six sections, each approximately 15 miles long (30 miles of carriageway) and a car and motorcycle normally patrolled each section by day, and one car normally covered two sections by night, as follows...

90 miles, one motor car and one motorcycle for each 15 miles (30 miles of carriageway) = six sections.

- 8.00am to 4.00pm or 6.00am to 2.00pm = 12 personnel for cars, 6 for motorcycles and 0 for supervisor cars. Vehicles included 6 cars and 6 motorcycles.
- 4.00pm to 12 midnight or 2.00pm to 10.00pm = 12 personnel for cars, 6 for motorcycles and 0 for supervisor cars. Vehicles included 6 cars and 6 motorcycles.
- One motorcar for 30 miles (60 miles of carriageway) = three sections
- 12 midnight to 8.00am = 6 personnel for cars. Vehicles included 3 cars only.

This, of course, was substantially in accordance with the scales of policing recommended by the working party sub-committee, but as the experiment progressed the scale of policing was varied and the crews interchanged.

Obviously, it was important that the experiment should in no way interfere with the normal policing of the motorway and operational requirements should take precedence over the experiment. Subject to this, however, it was intended to assess the duties actually carried out by the patrols and also the police action taken in regard to certain “artificial incidents” which would be injected by the Police Research and Planning Branch. Briefly, the reason for the “artificial incidents” was that the resultant police action could be assessed under controlled conditions. For example, the time, date and place of such incidents were pre-arranged and kept confidential and the scale of policing at the time was, of course, known. The only unknown quantity was if and how the incident was to be dealt with by the police and the task of measuring the effectiveness of any action taken was therefore facilitated.



*A Lancashire Motorway Car a helicopter used in the experiment
(Picture by courtesy of the Chief Constable of Cheshire)*

Duties

The duties of car crews and motorcyclists were those of normal traffic patrolling - example, assistance, advice and law enforcement. It was hoped that the effectiveness of police patrols could be assessed and that it would be possible to pinpoint the most successful methods of operation. Generally, the scales of duty were 8.00am to 4.00pm, 4.00pm to midnight, and 12 midnight to 8.00am, but once again these were varied as the experiment progressed.

Administration

The experiment, of course, resulted in the temporary creation of another police force with its attendant administrative problems, which were complicated to some extent by the fact the area policed was a narrow strip of land, carrying a highway 88 miles long.

Special arrangements were necessary, for example, for servicing and maintenance of vehicles; disposal of prisoners and property; court commitments; submission of reports; circulation of crime information; and press relations.

Various types of reports and records were maintained in the three districts and it was necessary to adapt procedures to the needs of the combined force and the purposes of the experiment within the administrative framework of the forces concerned.

Combined Force Headquarters



The control centre for the combined force was established at the police post in the Knutsford motorway service area in Cheshire. These posts were not designed as police stations or headquarters but consisted of a mess room, office and store. A good deal of improvisation was necessary to enable the building to be used as a headquarters; the office became the control room; the mess room was a combined office and mess room; and a mobile police station was used as additional office accommodation for the officer-in-charge and for meetings.

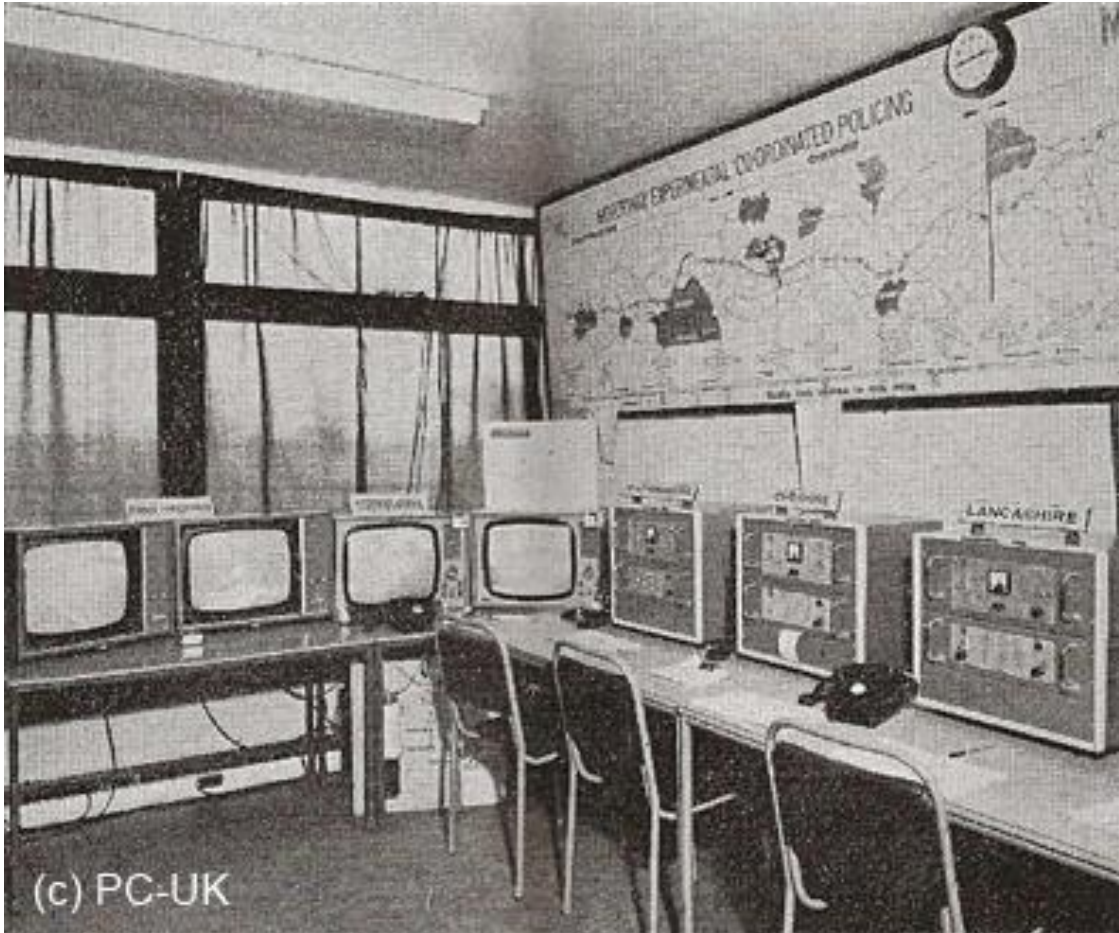
The control room was staffed throughout the 24 hours by police officers and during the day female civilian clerks were employed to deal with correspondence and to type the patrol officers' reports.

Sub-stations, mainly used for refreshment and reporting purposes were at the police post at Keele, Staffordshire and Charnock Richard, Lancashire.

Communications

These fell under two headings; telephone communications available to the public, and police wireless and telephone systems. The motorway emergency telephones at mile intervals for public use are linked directly to the three forces concerned. It had not been possible to divert these to the temporary motorways headquarters, but this caused not considerable difficulty, as over 95 per cent of telephone calls received by the police from the motorway relate to breakdowns, etc, which would not normally be a police responsibility.

Police telephone links were, of course, provided without difficulty, but a great deal of improvisation was necessary to secure adequate wireless communications. It was necessary to utilize the existing schemes of the three forces, as the expense of providing a new scheme could not be justified for a comparatively short experiment.



The combined force motorway headquarters at Knutsford, Cheshire (Picture courtesy of the Chief Constable of Staffordshire. Above: Indoors showing closed circuit television monitors, wireless sub-controls and motorway operations map.

The first complication was that the Lancashire Constabulary schemes employ frequency modulation and the Cheshire and Staffordshire Constabulary; Home Office schemes employ amplitude modulation. This was overcome by “coupling” the existing Lancashire scheme (F.M.) with a special control set (A.M.).

In addition the following equipment was supplied:

- **Motorway Headquarters** - three two-way sub-controls on the three force frequencies;
- **Helicopter** - three channel two-way wireless equipment;
- **Three Force Headquarters** - two monitor sets on the two other force frequencies;
- **Two Motorway Sub-stations** - Monitor sets.

The arrangements provided the following facilities:

- (i) The motorway headquarters had direct two-way wireless contact with the three force headquarters and, by operating the talk-through procedure, had contact with police vehicles on the motorway and with the helicopter;
- (ii) the separate force wireless schemes were preserved; *i.e.*, on receipt of emergency calls from the motorway each force could either direct a police vehicle to the scene by wireless or, if appropriate, request motorway headquarters to take the necessary action.
- (iii) each force could monitor messages being passed by the two other forces; and could contact the helicopter direct if it was then using the appropriate frequency, or otherwise by direct wireless request to the motorway headquarters or monitor request to the force on whose frequency the helicopter was then operating;
- (iv) communication between motorway vehicles and the helicopter was possible by operating the talk-through procedure.

After initial “teething” troubles the system worked satisfactorily. It must be remembered the wireless problem was unusual, as linear communications as opposed to area communications were required and, obviously, multi-channel sets in the vehicles would have been of greater operational value.

Phase Two

For this phase of the experiment, which lasted only three weeks, the motorway patrols reverted to normal; the motorway headquarters as such ceased to exist and each force resumed control of its own section of motorway. The effectiveness of this system was then compared with that of the combined force.



*Inspection of Parade by Sir Edward Dodd C.B.E.
(Picture courtesy of the Chief Constable of Cheshire)*

Collection of data

To enable both phases of the experiment to be assessed by the Research and Planning Branch a great deal of data was obtained. Briefly, this included returns of motorway emergency calls; each traffic officer's duties; utilisation of motor vehicles; traffic department establishments; road mileages; and accident and traffic offence rates.

Remembering that police problems are usually greater on ordinary roads than on motorways, the returns were required in respect of all roads. The study was not limited, however, to the three forces co-operating in the experiment and 11 other forces were requested to supply similar information during the progress of the experiment.

Technical Aids

The opportunity was taken to study various modern developments which might be of assistance to the police. Closed circuit television cameras were installed at several points with monitors in the motorway headquarters. Experiments in the use of cameras were made both in cars and the helicopter and various forms of lighting and protective clothing were tried out.

Conclusion

It should not be thought that combined forces and helicopters are necessarily the pattern for future policing of motorways and major roads. The object of the experiment was to obtain information which would lead to the most effective methods of dealing with the ever-growing problem of traffic control on such roads. Time-honoured methods of traffic patrol may not be the best way of carrying out the police task, but this can be decided only by organised studies and objective analysis.

The forces co-operating in the experiment and those supplying supplementary information were necessarily put to a great deal of trouble. Nevertheless, the police authorities, chief constables and the officers concerned were most helpful and willing in their endeavours to provide the information and assistance necessary to carry out the experiment.

The M6 Experiment

On the 14th February 1964, the following statement was made by the Home Secretary in the House of Commons:

“On behalf of a working party representative of police authorities, chief constables, the Ministry of Transport and the Home Office, the Police Research and Planning Branch has been examining as one of its tasks the basic standards of policing for motorways and major through routes, in the light of the experience already gained by the police forces concerned.

A considerable amount of work has been done within the branch, and sever forces with responsibility for policing motorways have been visited. It has been agreed that a field experiment lasting three months is needed, to provide practical experience in the working of a unified policing system for a complete motorway. This will be achieved by setting up a motorway traffic command which (subject to the continuing operational responsibility of the chief constables concerned) will direct all the police motorway units.

In agreement with the police authorities and chief constables concerned, for whose generous offers of full co-operation I am most grateful, it has been agreed that the experiment should be conducted on the M6 motorway. Officers of the Lancashire, Cheshire, and Staffordshire county constabularies will work in close conjunction with members of the Home Officer Research and Planning Branch in carrying out all stages of the experiment, including different systems of patrol organisation with and without the use of a helicopter.”

The experiment was inaugurated on the 9th March 1964, by Sir Edward Dodd, C.B.E., H.M. Chief Inspector of Constabulary, and this article is an account of the events which led up to the decision to make the experiment and the manner in which it has been conducted.



*Combined motorway force on parade at the opening of the experiment by Sir Edward Dodd, C.B.E. at Knutsford, Cheshire on the 9th March 1964.
(Picture courtesy of the Chief Constable of Cheshire)*

Motorway Memories

BONFIRE NIGHT 1994

By Geoff Taylor

November 5th 1994 and I was the afternoon Inspector on the GMP Motorway network. It had been a run of the mill day and at 10.45pm I was refuelling my Range Rover at Whitefield Police Station, prior to going home. Then a call came in, reporting an RTA with persons trapped, Fire Brigade attending M61 Northbound at Westhoughton, Bolton. I knew the afternoon troops would be in parading off and the night staff hadn't turned out yet, so I answered up for the job, hit the blues & two's and started making my way.

The accident had happened as follows: Just north of junction 5 of the M61 the motorway descends into a slight hollow. With it being bonfire night, a fog had developed in the hollow and a number of cars had collided as they entered the fog bank. No one was seriously hurt but one party could not get out of the vehicle due to the damage and so it was reported as "persons trapped". The Fire Service sent two appliances from Horwich which came south on the motorway, exited at junction 5 and turned to re-join the northbound carriageway. The first appliance reached the scene of the bump and started dealing with the incident - still no police motorway patrols at the scene. As the second fire appliance travelled up the northbound slip road there was an articulated lorry travelling north along the motorway. The lorry driver moved out into lane two to allow the appliance to join, overtook the fire truck and drove into the fog bank at 60mph. Seconds later the fire crew heard an almighty collision and thought the artic had hit the other fire appliance.

There was standing traffic within the fog bank, including a bulk powder tanker with a saloon car stationary to the rear. The artic collided with the rear of the saloon car, crushing it against the back of the tanker. The momentum of the artic then caused it to climb on top of the saloon car which then caught fire. Just after this the second fire appliance arrived at the scene and the crew rescued the artic driver from his cab. A few seconds later I arrived at the scene.

Having done a quick recce of the accident scene and knowing other police patrols were making to the scene, I instructed the motorway should be closed due to the serious nature of the incident. In amongst the standing traffic on the motorway were two cars carrying rival factions of Asian youths from the Longsight area of Manchester. November is one of the Asian Festivals and the young Asian lads used to hire flash motors and race them on the prom at Blackpool. These two rival factions were shaping up to do battle on the motorway, so putting on my best John Wayne impression, I threatened them all with instant arrest unless they got back in their cars and behaved. Fortunately, it worked.

As more patrols arrived at the scene we started creating a bit of order out of the chaos. After speaking to the Sub Officer in charge of the second appliance the HGV driver was arrested on suspicion of causing death by dangerous driving. We knew the crushed car was a Rover as we could see one wheel with the Rover emblem on it. The remainder of the car was unrecognisable and still crushed beneath the tractor unit of the artic. We started to clear the traffic that had been trapped on the motorway by sending it the "wrong way" down the northbound access slip road. When the cars containing the Asian gentlemen reached the roundabout at the bottom of the slip road they were met by two units of GMP's Tactical Aid Group and both they and the cars were thoroughly searched, the youths being suitably advised re their conduct, prior to being let go. Eventually we got a mobile crane to the scene of the accident, straps were put through the cab of the artic and it was lifted off the car. The Fire Service still wouldn't go near the car, so we put a towing strap onto the Rover and dragged it clear with a Range Rover. The fire fighters then went to work and we then found the car contained two people, believed to have been killed instantly by the impact before the car caught fire.

My 3/11 shift for Friday 5th November ended at 8am on Saturday 6th November. The HGV driver was successfully prosecuted for causing death by dangerous driving. The Sub Officer who climbed up to rescue the driver from his cab spent most of that night muttering to himself "should have left him there!". This was one of the worst incidents I attended in my ten years on the Motorway and will stay with me forever.

MAKING THAT FIRST IMPRESSION

By Maurice Kime

In the mid-1980s I was a Traffic Officer with the Greater Manchester Police Motorway Section covering all the motorways around the Manchester area including the M56 Airport spur. Our shift on the motorway section had a change of Sergeant and he asked to see me in order to introduce himself. He worked out of Birch post and I worked out of Stretford post, some 10 miles away, so I duly told him I was on the Airport spur and waited for him. In those days we were allowed to park up on the grass verge and watch for miscreants driving past us!

He duly arrived and parked his Range Rover near to mine, walked over and I told him that I needed to move my jeep a few feet. So, he stood at the side of my Range Rover whilst I performed a slight shunt. Suddenly there was this almighty bang and yes two tons of Range Rover had rolled onto a full plastic milk bottle with the result that our new Sergeant suddenly became covered in sour milk, from top to toe! All he could say was "well that's a nice way of introducing yourself". Well I was doubled up with laughter and yes as is the case in police circles word soon got around about what I had done.

MY MOTORWAY POLICING EXPERIENCES 1988 – 2008

By Steve Woodward

Getting onto the Traffic Division had been my ambition from the day I took the oath. And after doing ten years of inner city policing during the turbulent and violent 1980s it was time for me to move onto my dream job. In July 1988 I was posted to Cosham Traffic on the outskirts of Portsmouth, to commence Traffic patrol duties. At that time Hampshire had more miles of motorway than any other county in the UK (I think it was 186 miles) and included the M3, M27, M271, M275, A3(M) and the four-lane section of the A27 that links the M27 to the A3(M) and which we policed as motorway.

Despite the large amount of motorway within its force area Hampshire has never had a dedicated motorway policing unit. Neither has it ever had (until 2008 anyway) a dedicated ARV section. Instead Hampshire opted to merge all three sections under the Traffic Division umbrella and its officers' responsibilities consisted of motorway duty first and all other traffic duties second. Those on ARV duties did the same unless redeployed to an armed incident of course.



(c) PC-UK

BMW 528i sits above the A3(M)

In 1988 Hampshire was firmly in the grip of using BMW 528i (E28) saloons with the series 3 Jaguar XJ6 4.2 saloons being phased out. We had been using BMWs since 1978 but mixed in the Jags in 1983/4 plus a few oddities like the Volvo 264 DL. We didn't have any crash tenders then either. The BMWs were fantastic cars except for the seats. Not only were some of them covered in black vinyl, which made you sweat something awful during the summer (no aircon in them days me lad!) but the seats themselves were incredibly uncomfortable. We all suffered from back ache and most of us used those log-rolls to support the base of our spines. But the cars were very quick with excellent road holding and they had a certain presence about them. By 1989 we were starting to replace the E28 model with the E34, firstly as the 530i and then as the multi-valve 525i. This was the best Police car I ever drove, they were superb. Brilliant handling, bullet proof engine (my last one did 201,112 miles) and excellent build quality. By the early 1990s we started to bring in a few MK2 Vauxhall Senators. To many officers and enthusiasts these were the best Police cars of all time. Well they weren't if you worked in Hampshire because we had BMWs which were infinitely superior in every department. OK so the Senator could hit 150 mph but when the bonnet ripples at anything over a ton and the rear suspension has a habit of appearing through the parcel shelf, it didn't exactly inspire confidence. Oh, and in the wet, they were bloody lethal. I also got to drive the Range Rover 3.5 V8 Classic and the first of the diesel Land Rover Discovery's which we nick named 'the tractor' and with very good reason. It was as noisy as a farm yard tractor and just as slow! But you couldn't accuse the Volvo 850 T5 and the later V70 T5 as being slow, they were a sensation when issued to us in 1994 and were *the* Traffic patrol car for next decade when the current E61 BMW 530d estates then took over. And in 2001 Hampshire had the honour to use the very first BMW X5 3.0d 4x4 as a replacement for the old Disco. Chalk and cheese would be a gross understatement and the X5 ran the E34 a very close second to being my all-time favourite patrol car.

On board the 528i we had the usual boot full of 12 cones, 6 accident/slow signs plus the metal tripod frames to hang them on, tow rope, crow bar, first aid kit, gallon of water (usually to top up the BMW with because they had a habit of boiling over when left on the hard shoulder with the engine running!) 2 blankets and a tube full of road flares. These were great fun to play with. Basically, they were a hand-held flare about 12 inches in length. You struck the sharp end along a piece of attached sandpaper to ignite it and a long reddish flame erupted. You waved this in the dark to slow approaching traffic down or laid several of them on the road surface on the approach to an RTA. When things went horribly wrong and the car you were trying to slow down didn't, you tended to throw the flare at the rear of the offending vehicle whilst screaming out some expletive or other! This generally had the desired effect.

I could write pages and pages on the various motorway incidents I have attended in 20 years on Traffic which would probably bore you to tears, so I will just pick a few for no particular reason other than to demonstrate the huge variety of work that motorway cops deal with on a daily basis. Some are quite amusing, others tragic.

I recall coming down the on-slip at junction 11 of the M27 late one afternoon when we saw a Hillman Avenger weaving from lane 1 to lane 3 and back again. It was all over the place, so much so that the public dare not overtake it. We pulled up beside it and were horrified to see the elderly male driver slumped against the driver's side window, eyes closed, mouth wide open. "He's dead" my partner shouted out. With that the Avenger veered left again, onto the hard shoulder where it completely demolished an SOS phone and drove 10 feet up the motorway embankment before coming to rest on the hard shoulder with steam and water pouring out from under the demolished front end. He wasn't dead, he was asleep and the impact had woken him up! We drove him home where his son, who had been concerned about his father driving for some time handed us his father's driving licence and told him he would never drive again.

Late on a Sunday afternoon we got sent to a car on fire at the top end of the A3(M). On our arrival we found a MK2 Ford Granada well alight with huge flames and smoke blowing directly across both the southbound lanes. The traffic had already been forced to a halt because of this and for some reason they were all stopped in lane 2 with nothing in lane 1. The first fire appliance had arrived at the same time we had and were now busily doing their bit to extinguish the fire. We had only been there about two minutes when to my horror I saw the third car in the traffic queue pop out from the line and do a U turn and start driving north up the

southbound hard shoulder. Within seconds another eight cars did the same thing, with some driving up the hard shoulder whilst others drove up lane 1. My partner Barry and I screamed at them, waving our arms in an effort to stop them. Things got even worse as we saw the second fire appliance plus an ambulance all arriving on blues and twos to be confronted by this wave of stupidity, forcing them to swerve violently to avoid what seemed to be a certain collision. Thankfully a second patrol car was also arriving just behind the ambulance and he managed to stop seven of the cars from reaching the slip road they were aiming for, some 400 yards away from the fire. Barry and I had run after them and puffing and panting we lined them all up on the hard shoulder, took all their keys away from them and told them they could wait there until we had finished dealing with the car fire and only then would we come back to speak to them further. It took us well over an hour to deal with the remains of the Granada and get it recovered. We then went back to our now rather sheepish looking car drivers. They all got reported for dangerous driving, they all pleaded guilty and all got disqualified for 12 months and rightly so.

I hate seeing animals suffer, so imagine my horror at the sight of a horse box being towed by a Land Rover sitting on the hard shoulder of the A3(M) with the two female occupants absolutely frantic, running around the box and looking underneath it. As I approached I could see a trail of blood coming from underneath the trailer. Inside I could clearly hear a horse in distress. The two women were screaming and crying. I looked underneath the box and saw the front two hooves of the horse had come through the rotten wooden floor and had been virtually worn away as its feet scraped along the motorway surface. There was blood and exposed bone everywhere. I called for a vet and was told it would be about an hour. I told the control room that simply wasn't good enough and after much shouting on my part we eventually got one to the scene (having been picked up in a patrol car) in less than half that time. By then the two women had opened the trailer and climbed inside to calm the horse down, which to their credit they managed very well. But like me, they both knew that the horse would have to be put down right here at the road side. The vet arrived and confirmed our worst fears. He thankfully put the horse out of its misery within minutes and we were left with the grizzly task of trying to get the now limp horse out of the box and recovered to a place of rest. It was an extremely unpleasant and distressing incident to deal with and has stayed with me for years.

ECP's, remember those? Emergency Crossover Points just in case you don't recall. They were basically a large gap in the central crash barriers, big enough to squeeze a patrol car through in order to facilitate a U turn onto the opposing carriageway. Whose stupid idea was that? Anyway, I remember doing my very first one. Just as a practice run you understand, so that my partner/tutor could teach me how to go about it 'safely'. There was a definite technique to it but the scariest part wasn't the actual turn (although that was bad enough) but the slowing down in lane 3 to about 10 mph hoping that you weren't going to get rear ended by the driver doing 90 and looking no further than the end of his bonnet. I did use the ECP's on my patch now and again but only in the most urgent of responses. By the early 1990s most of them had been closed for obvious reasons and by the turn of the century I think the last of them were sealed forever.

Picking up debris is an everyday occurrence for motorway crews and over the years I've had to pick up or sweep away all manner of stuff, from dead foxes to an up-right hoover and from car exhaust pipes to a leather settee. By far the most common item to remove is wooden pallets and the damned things just disintegrate upon impact with the road surface and then spread like a wooden rash over the next two hundred yards. The protruding nails invariably puncture a few tyres and after sorting out the debris it's time to go and pacify the distraught motorist once again. The most bizarre item I ever got sent to was a complete Luton box from a Transit van or similar laying in lane 2 of the M27. It had clearly been ripped from its mountings and the empty box bounced down the carriageway thankfully without hitting anyone else. And the owner? No idea, he never came back and we didn't trace him. I often pictured the look on his face when he reached his destination to find that most of his vehicle was now missing!

And its debris again that forms the basis of this next little bit of lamp swinging. Late one evening I got sent to an RTA on the northbound section of the A3(M). Upon my arrival I found a Vauxhall Astra on the hard shoulder with the front end quite badly damaged. I spoke to the young male driver and asked the obvious question "what happened?"

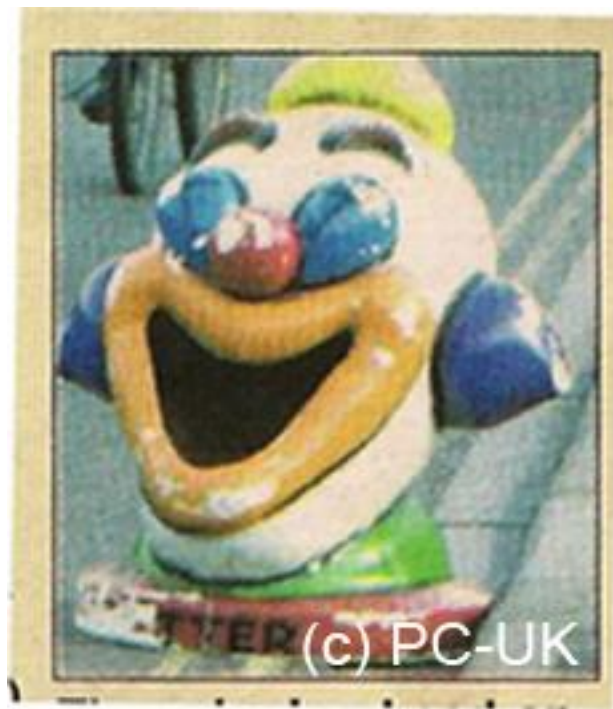
"I hit a clown's head" he replied.

“A what?”

“A clown’s head, about 3 feet high it was”

In true Traffpol style I have to confess that I was somewhat sceptical concerning his story but he was most insistent that he had collided with a 3 foot high clown’s head in lane 1.

I therefore grabbed my torch and searched the motorway hard shoulder and embankment. And there it was. A 3-foot-high, very colourful, fibreglass clown’s head with the biggest grin you’ve ever seen. And hardly any damage it has to be said, certainly not as much as the Astra had suffered. I did trace the owner via the local media and duly returned the head to him, together with his summons for having an insecure load. However, we did have a bit of fun with the head first by sitting it in our Sgt’s chair with a note attached saying ‘spot the difference’. He took it in good heart I’m pleased to say.



The clown's head

And finally from me, you never know whose watching. Whilst on nights about half midnight, my partner Chris and I entered the M275 northbound and up ahead we saw another BMW patrol car. Must be the Fareham crew we thought. What are they doing on our patch? It was very quiet, so time for a bit of fun we thought. I raced up beside them, roof lights fully ablaze, whilst Chris hung himself out of the passenger window doing his best impression of ‘The Scream’ and gesticulating with both hands in the most disgusting manner. It was hilarious until Chris shouted out “shit, it’s the Chief Inspector, drive, damn it, drive”. He wasn’t joking either. We spent all night trying to think up excuses or somebody else to blame. We were convinced we were going to be hung, drawn and quartered. And that’s if we were lucky. But nothing ever happened. Nothing was ever said. Which made us wonder. Just what *was* a Chief Inspector doing out in a patrol car at half midnight anyway? Whatever it was, we weren’t supposed to have seen him! Night, night.

MOTORWAYS – WEST YORKSHIRE by Colin Jackson

The first motorway in Yorkshire was the A1(M) Doncaster Bypass, which opened in August 1961. These 15 miles stretch of road was a 2-lane dual carriageway with hard shoulders, from Blyth in Nottinghamshire to Red House north of Doncaster. It had two intermediate junctions. Although the first 2 miles were in Nottinghamshire, agreement had been reached that the whole of the road would be policed by the West Riding Constabulary, and this duty fell to the men and vehicles of Doncaster Traffic Section from their garage at Bentley. A specially prepared vehicle, a Ford Zephyr 6 Mark II estate was purchased for the purpose. This was a completely new concept, a new experience for all concerned, and a steep learning curve for all concerned. Those of us not directly involved in this policing operation, took the opportunity during night shifts to nip over to Doncaster and take a trip along the new road.



1961 to 1962 Ford Zephyr 6 Mk2 and Mk3, West Riding Constabulary.



Our turn came in October 1968, with the opening of the last 35 miles of the M1, from North Anston near Sheffield to the outskirts of Leeds. This also coincided with the amalgamation of police forces in the area, now to be known as West Yorkshire Constabulary. Three Traffic Sections were to police this piece of motorway, Rotherham, Barnsley and Wakefield. The government decreed that there should be a patrol for every 10 miles of motorway, 20 miles of carriageway, 24 hours of the day. Compared with today's congested motorways, traffic was extremely light, and motorway patrol could be rather boring, particularly on night shift. Fortunately, as we were part of a general Traffic Section, motorway duty was not every day and so we could find ourselves on area patrol one day and back on the motorway the next.



(c) PC-UK



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Selection of vehicles found on the M1 in the mid to late 1960's, West Yorkshire Constabulary.



I suppose our main duty at this stage was to educate the motoring public on how to use these new roads. Many drivers and their vehicles were just not up to sustained high speeds and breakdowns were a common feature. If a driver missed their exit it wasn't unusual for them to simply make a 'U' turn across the central reservation, as barriers were not continuous at this stage. Parking on the hard shoulder was another occurrence, one-night a crew came upon a van parked a few miles south of Leeds and on investigation found the driver fast asleep with his alarm clock ticking away on the dashboard so as to wake him in time to make Leeds market when it opened early next morning. Pedestrians on the motorway were another problem, especially after the opening of the M18 link between the M1 and A1(M). Students and servicemen hitching lifts up the M1 from the south would suddenly find that the vehicle they were riding in was turning off their desired route and so they would be dropped off on the hard shoulder, some considerable distance from a junction, to hitch another lift. Here the patrol would find them put them in the back of the patrol car and take them off the motorway at the next junction and report them for being a pedestrian on the motorway, after checking their identity. One evening 2 students were picked up in this way and the patrol asked control for an address check. The address given immediately rang alarm bells with control room staff, the students were the sons of our own chief constable. What happened to the offence report I don't know, but afterwards Traffic Admin were instructed to write to every college and military establishment in the country asking them to remind their personnel that it was an offence to be a pedestrian on the motorway and of the dangers.



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1969 Austin 3 Litre seen on the M1. West Yorks Constabulary.



(c) PC-UK



Vauxhall Victor 3.3 Litre and Cresta PC, West Yorkshire Constabulary.



Accidents, when they happened, were usually high speed and serious and it wasn't uncommon for vehicles to travel considerable distances off the motorway across the fields before coming to rest, and if the driver wasn't seriously injured, he would walk away, and we would then waste a great deal of time trying to find him and assure ourselves that he wasn't lying nearby with serious injuries.



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1968 & 1970 Land Rovers, Supplementary patrol, M1, West Yorkshire Constabulary.



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In July 1973 26 miles of the M62, from the M1 to the Lancashire boarder, opened. This Trans Pennine Route, the highest motorway in Britain at the time, had been constructed after considerable thought and experiment. Embankments were specially graded so as not to cause wind eddies and snow accumulations, boundary fences, instead of the usual post and rail, were open wire mesh, high enough to be sheep proof. In fact, it was said the motorway was so designed that weather would not be a problem and cause its closure. How wrong they were to be proved in the winter of 1979. By this time, I was in the control room, in the warm, so did not experience the problems at first hand, but many of my old colleagues did, and by all accounts it was a frightening experience. Only Range Rovers and Land Rovers were of use for patrol in these conditions, checking that there were no stranded motorists out there. In the blizzard conditions, to move away from one's vehicle more than a few yards could mean difficulty in finding it again. Even when it wasn't snowing and the snow ploughs and gritters got through the road surface immediately froze over again and it was difficult to stand up. Police patrols were issued with survival suits in addition to their high visibility clothing.



1971 Jaguar XJ6 seen on the M1 and at the Wooley Services Police Post, West Yorkshire Constabulary.



Range Rovers operated from the Wooley Edge Service Police Post, West Yorkshire Police.



The first Mark II Ford Zephyr was replaced by the Mark III and these were the first to get red and blue side striping. In 1967 a couple of Vauxhall Cresta PC estates were taken into service for motorway patrol, and these too had side striping and they were followed by Vauxhall Victor 3.3 litre estates. Two Austin 3 litre saloons were purchased in 1969, but these didn't prove very successful as motorway vehicles and were replaced in 1971 by two Jaguar XJ6's. When additional vehicles were required on the motorway these would be everyday area cars such as the Austin Westminster, initially, then Triumph PI Mark I and Mark II. From 1968 a long wheel-based Land Rover was based at Wakefield Section. This vehicle had additional emergency equipment on board, signs and cones, lamps, heavy duty jack, brushes and shovels, portable generator and flood lighting, everything that might be required at a motorway incident. When this vehicle was deployed, during the daytime, its crew had a roving commission and was able to patrol the motorways anywhere in the Force area. It was replaced by a second Land Rover in 1970 and that was replaced in 1971 by the Force's first Range Rover, but then it seems that a special vehicle was not required and Range Rovers were taken into general motorway use, although many of the crews weren't too keen and didn't like them. The early Ford Zephyr estates were fitted with a single blue lamp mounted centrally on the roof, but in 1968 most patrol cars acquired a large, full width, roof box that had internal "neon" lit police sign front and rear, the rear sign being able to flash "police" or "accident" steady or alternately and surmounted by a blue lamp. By 1971 this roof box had been replaced by another style of large roof box, both of which had a severe detrimental effect on vehicle performance and fuel consumption.



1973 Triumph 2.5 Litre PI. West Yorkshire Constabulary.



The equipment carried in each car was pretty comprehensive from the beginning – 2 “Police Slow” signs; 2 “Accident” signs, these were rigid metal signs and lethal on fingers for the unwary; 12 traffic cones; 6 Pifco lamps with red domes, with flashing bulbs, and modified to fit on top of the traffic cones; first aid kit; 4 blankets; 6 road flares; broom; shovel; wheel brace (spider); heavy lift hydraulic jack; hacksaw; towrope; hammer; mole wrench; spanner; heavy duty crowbar; gas bottle with flood lamp; tape measure; waterproof chalk; plastic container of water; fire extinguisher; and 2 fluorescent waistcoats. This equipment was altered from time to time, as equipment changed, the metal signs, for example, were replaced by folding plastic ones and the number increased to six, and the gas bottle and flood lamp was replaced by a hand held re-chargeable lamp.



1974 Ford Consul 3000, M1, West Yorks Constabulary.

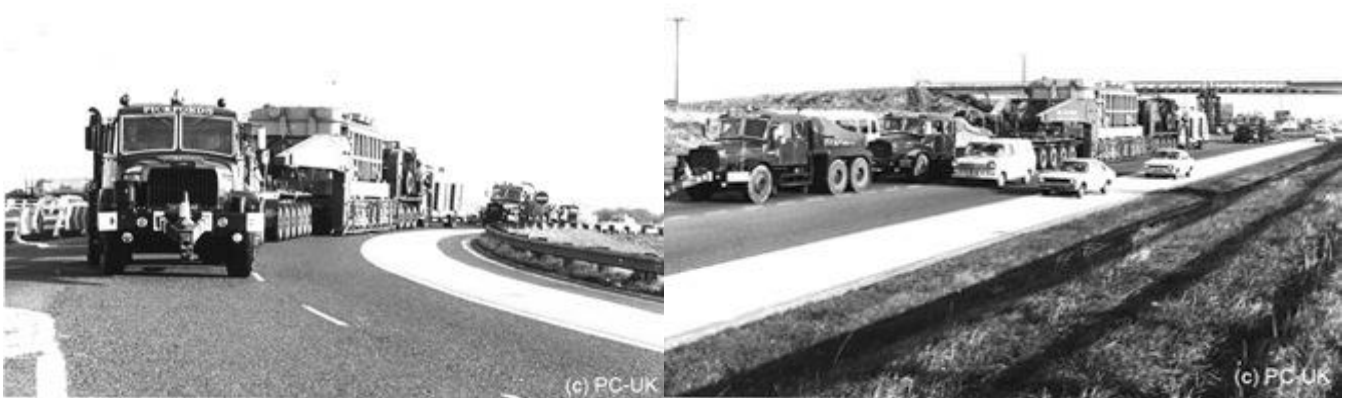


The other piece of equipment carried in each car was a “Motorway Manual”. As far as I am aware, this was unique to West Yorkshire, and produced internally. It began with a resume of the instructions to motorway drivers contained in the Highway Code, followed by a list of the most common offences that officers might encounter on the motorway. This was followed by advice on how to deal with a host of motorway incidents. The final part, and most useful, were plans and diagrams of the motorways of West Yorkshire, giving carriageway measurements, details of culverts, drains and under-passes, as well as overhead cables, wires and bridges, in fact everything about the motorway an officer might need to know when dealing with an incident.

Fog was something of a nightmare, not only did patrols have to activate the roadside warning lamps with their infra-red gun, and afterwards switch them off again, but if fog persisted and was dense, West Yorkshire operated a convoy system whereby every available patrol vehicle was directed onto the motorway and by driving in the centre lane, with warning lights flashing, and at a safe speed for the conditions, thus forcing traffic to follow in convoy. This proved quite effective and reduced the number of accidents, but for the patrol crews it was a devastating experience if kept up for long. More than one shift of that and you were ready to hand in your white cap cover for a helmet.



*1974 Escorting a heavy transformer M1/M62. The vehicle was fitted with a skirt that was lowered and inflated like a hovercraft to spread the load on bridges.
West Yorks Constabulary.*



In 1972 I moved on to other duties but returned once more to motorway patrol supervision some 4 years later. On my return in 1976, there had been some changes, we were now West Yorkshire Metropolitan, the total Force area was much smaller but motorway mileage was probably about the same as before, with the addition of the M62 eastwards into Humberside and the M606 and M621 into Bradford and Leeds respectively. The A1 Great North Road, being dual carriageway in our Force area had always been treated like a motorway for police patrol purposes, so there was that to consider as well. As far as the actual motorways were concerned, the road side fog lights had been replaced by matrix signs on the central reservation, which were now controlled from the Control Room. The system of convoys during fog had been done away with. There were now continuous barriers along the central reservation. The volume of traffic on the motorways had increased markedly, but otherwise the problems were still pretty much the same as before.



1980 Jaguar XJ6, West Yorkshire Metro Police.



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1998 Jaguar XJ at Unit 41 Garage, Wakefield, West Yorkshire Police.



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(c) PC-UK

1999 Vauxhall Omega at Unit 41 Garage, Wakefield, West Yorkshire Police.



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2001 Ford Explorer, at Hartshead Services Police Post, M62, West Yorkshire Police.



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2001 Vauxhall Omega at Hartshead Services Police Post, M62, West Yorkshire Police.



2001 BMW 5 Series & Volvo V70 at Hartshead Services Police Post, M62, West Yorks Police.



2001 Jaguar "S" Type at Hartshead Services Police Post, M62, West Yorkshire Police.





Bonus Article! Traffic Officers at Work on The Motorway

Working Gallery

Below is a snap shot of images that illustrate the work of Roads Policing Officers on the Motorway Network. The images that see here, range in date from 1959 when the first motorway officially opened to the present day.



Durham Police Jaguar XJ6 series 1 on a shout on the A1(M)



Sussex Constabulary Jaguar XJ6 sat on the observation stand M23.



Hampshire Constabulary BMW X5 on a shout on the M27.



Overturned vehicles on the A3M, circa 1993.



Hampshire Police BMW 525i at incident on approach to junction 11 on the M27, circa 1992.



Serious RTA M27 late 1970s.





Plane crash on the M27 at Southampton airport in 1993 thankfully only resulted in minor injuries to the car drivers involved.



Major RTA between junctions 8 and 9 on the M27 in 1990 involved petrol tanker and several other vehicles.



Overturned car transporter with brand new Mercedes cars on board caused chaos for 9 hours at junction 12 of the M27 in 2001.



This army trailer was loaded with live ammunition when it became detached from the Landrover towing it on the A3M and is seen in a precarious position above the A27, circa 1999.



Leicestershire Police deal with an everyday RTA on the M1 in 2005.



Nottinghamshire Police escort a Mallard class locomotive on the M1, circa 1990.



Nottinghamshire Police Range Rover on the hard shoulder of a near deserted M1 circa 1972.



Nottinghamshire Police deal with an incident in the fog on the M1 circa 1989.



A jack knifed artic poses a problem for Essex Police on the M11, circa 1987.



A Thames Valley Police Vauxhall Senator keeps watch above the M4 in 1995.



Cumbria Traffic Police meet for a chat above the M6.



The crew from this Cambridgeshire Police Range Rover have just finished dealing with an RTA on the AIM in 2006.



Bedfordshire Police Vauxhall Vectra waits for its next call at Toddington Services on the M1



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West Yorkshire Police Range Rover observes the traffic from a motorway overbridge, 2006.



(c) PC-UK

West Yorkshire Police BMW 528i sits high above the M62.



The Kegworth air disaster 1987. More than 30 people died when a jet approaching the East Midlands airport crashed onto the M1.



Metropolitan Police deal with an RTA on their section of the M1 in the early 1980s.



Overtaken Artic, M62 Westbound at Eccles. Shown is a 3ltr V6 Ford Transit and two door Range Rover, in 1985.



Casualty removal at RTA, M62 (Now M60) W/B at Swinton, Greater Manchester.



Road Traffic Collison, M62 (now M60) Eastbound at Eccles.



Road Traffic Collision, M62 (now M60) Eastbound at Eccles.



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Chemical Incident, M62 Westbound access, Junction 17 at Whitefield.



(c) PC-UK

Vehicle fire M61 Northbound at Bolton.



(c) PC-UK

Fatal Road Traffic Collision M602 Westbound at Salford.



(c) PC-UK

V8 Sherpa van and Range Rover attending HGV crossover in fog, M6 at Wigan in 1995.



(c) PC-UK



(c) PC-UK





(c) PC-UK

Road Traffic Collision on the motorway running through Northamptonshire.