

“ PPP ”

People for Proper Policing in North Wales



ANPR camera

Pervasive surveillance imminent as national database fires up to watch us all

If you think that automatic number plate recognition (ANPR) is only there to catch the guilty, the uninsured, the tax dodger? Think again.

Britain's NEW top traffic cop has plans for a national surveillance network of cameras that will track every car, everywhere. According to an article in the Sunday Times and analysed in The Register, **Meredydd Hughes** wants the cameras installed every 400 yards on motorways, as well as at supermarkets, petrol stations and in town centres.

The unobtrusive, dull-looking and small cameras will be installed as a trial on the M42 to enforce variable speed limits, after which the plan is that they'll be installed every 400 yards along every motorway. Data from the cameras will be collated nationally with the aim of tracking every car, information that will be stored for two years, whether you're guilty or not. It'll be managed from a new control centre in Hendon, in north London, from where as many as 50 million number plates will be processed daily. And it's not some far-off dream either: it's planned to be in place by the end of 2006.

The system is going ahead under the pretence that it's just about checking tax and insurance. But as some observers have already noted, checking every vehicle's tax and insurance details every 15 seconds is massive overkill. Unless of course, it's also planned that the system could make Gatsos obsolete and act as speed cameras too -- which ties into the Government's idea of enforcing speed limits rigidly, as we reported yesterday (see link below).

The database is already being built, without any form of Parliamentary approval process having been undertaken, and it promises to be one of the most pervasive surveillance systems on the planet.

Still think we live in a free society where the right to do what you please and go where you please without state interference is among the most basic rights in our (unwritten) constitution? Not for much longer...