



People for Proper Policing in North Wales

North Wales Police officer beats speeding rap

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A POLICE traffic officer who exceeded a speed limit by 16mph escaped a fine after claiming a warning sign was on the ground and another was obscured. **Mark Treleaven-Jones, 42**, accepted he had been **caught by a Gatso at 2.24am** driving to Rhos on Sea along the A55 after finishing his shift.

He was doing **56mph in a 40mph temporary limit at Llanfairfechan** on February 4. But PC Treleaven-Jones was cleared after telling a court yesterday **the 40mph speed limit sign was lying face down and another was partly obscured by another sign**. The policeman, an officer for 22 years, is based with the North Wales force's Western Roads Policing Unit near Bangor. PC Treleaven-Jones told district judge Andrew Shaw at Llandudno magistrates' court he was familiar with the roadworks, which went on for months, and was aware of a speed restriction in the area. But he denied speeding and said **the contraflow did change and the signs were very important**.

He said: *"The first I was aware there was a problem was the flash of the camera. I immediately thought there was something wrong. I returned to Aber where the speed limit started and found signs in that condition."*

PC Treleaven-Jones used a mobile phone to take photographs. He *said the weather that weekend had been "particularly bad" and was windy. That weekend we had one of the large signs blown through the windscreen of a Transit van, I'm a police officer 24/7, if I left that sign in that state God forbid if something had happened. Questions would have been asked.*

Defence solicitor Huw Edwards insisted there had been far more than a trivial departure from the signage requirements. **"The speed limit wasn't operative on that night,"** he said.

Clearing the officer, District Judge Shaw said: *"I'm satisfied at that particular time the 40mph central sign had been blown on the floor. It was a time when the weather was extremely windy."* He was also satisfied that the view of the other sign had been obstructed and **awarded costs to PC Treleaven-Jones**.

The PPP comments ... This is an interesting case in that the experienced traffic officer believed he was driving safely at 56 mph. That night the absence of signs led him to believe that the road was no longer restricted. **BUT** there was a contraflow and other aspects of road works. The officer used his judgement and the court found accordingly. How many other drivers were prosecuted under similar circumstances by these mobile cameras during this scandalously costly and long term road works. They would have received the usual letters with threats of massive fines plus **COSTS** and more points if they had challenged their cases. The signs themselves were a danger to drivers and research has shown that cameras at road works actually increase injury incidents. Did the magistrates rule that **OTHER AUTOMATIC PROSECUTIONS** that night on this international route were also invalid ... we doubt it! Why did this case get to court at our expense?