



People for Proper Policing in North Wales

SCOTS POLICE CHIEF CAUGHT SPEEDING ON NOTORIOUS ROAD 31 July 2007 the Press and Journal can reveal.

Chief Constable Ian Latimer of Northern Constabulary was trapped driving at 72mph in a 60mph zone on the A9, a road where more than 60 people have died since 2002. Mr Latimer, a former president of the Association of Chief Police Officers in Scotland, admitted the driving offence in his own force area. *"I made a mistake. On July 1st this year, in daylight on a clear open stretch of road on the A9, I miscalculated my speed, which was seen to be a maximum of 72mph within a 60mph limit."*

The police chief received notice of the offence yesterday. He is expected to be given three points on his licence and a £60 fixed-penalty fine. *"I am annoyed with myself and accept full responsibility," he said. "Perhaps this will act as a warning to others. It can be seen quite rightly that the chief constable, in his own force area, is as accountable and subject to the law as any other individual."*

Last night politicians and road safety campaigners said the incident proved Mr Latimer, who has served as head of the north force for six years, is not above the law. Norman Macleod, chairman of the Northern Joint Police Board, who described the incident as *"unfortunate" rather than a serious matter, said the board would be taking the matter no further.*

Paul Smith, founder of the Safe Speed road safety campaign, based at Tain, said *"it proved that speed cameras have not made roads any safer. Something is clearly wrong, are we to believe that our chief constable is an irresponsible driver? The truth is that none of us drive without exceeding the speed limit from time to time. Perhaps Mr Latimer will finally realise how important it is to target police resources at unsafe, rather than technically illegal, behaviours? The truth is that speed cameras catch ordinary, safe and responsible drivers while risky drivers are usually undetected. That's why speed cameras haven't made our roads safer."*

Both Communities Safety Minister Fergus Ewing and Highland Conservative MSP Mary Scanlon admitted that they too had been caught speeding. Mr Ewing, MSP for Inverness East, Nairn and Lochaber, said: *"I think we should recognise and applaud the chief constable as he has been completely candid in stating that he is angry with himself for this rare lapse. As someone who has had speeding offences in the past like the chief constable is now, I too am very much aware of the inherent risks of speeding."*

Ms Scanlon said driving on the trunk road was a *"frustrating experience"*. She added: *"When there is an opportunity to pick up speed, if only to keep up with the rest of the drivers, most people take advantage of it.. I hope that the chief constable will be fined £60 and have three penalty points added to his licence like all the other mortals who drive too fast. I also hope that he will support the campaign to have the A9 dualled."*

Eighteen people have died on roads in the Highlands since the beginning of the year, including four on the A9. *It is unknown how many can be attributed to speeding drivers.*

Research has shown that the Highland force area has the highest fatal accident rate per vehicle mile in Scotland.

Northern Constabulary has pointed to three contributory factors to the death rate - **drink-driving, a failure to wear seatbelts and inappropriate speed.**

The PPP comment The only sensible comment in this whole tedious article is from Paul Smith. The truth of the matter is that almost ALL competent drivers exceed some posted limits some of the time when it is safe to do so. The Chief Constable didn't have a rare lapse other than a lapse of memory about where his own SCAMERAS were operating. The A9 runs for over 200 miles from Dunfermline to Thurso. So which section of road the story relates to is not clear.

Note a Chief constable being caught speeding is UNFORTUNATE rather than serious BUT a tourist in North Wales slipping over a recently manipulated speed limit is akin to slipping a knife into somebody.....so says Brunstrom!

The Northern Constabulary Website has so called Road fatality statistics and bland statements of government targets ... which tell us next to nothing except that 18 out of 30 fatalities occurred in the 3 summer months of 2006

www.northern.police.uk/road-safety.html