

MONDAY, 25 AUGUST 2008**FOR IMMEDIATE USE**

Country roads weekend campaign marred by drink and drugs driving, speeding and two road deaths

Police were out in numbers on the weekend throughout Scotland as part of a co-ordinated effort involving all forces to reduce the number of motorists and motorcyclists killed or seriously injured on country roads.

Despite police efforts to heighten public awareness of the need for road users to take extra care on country roads, the three-day campaign, co-ordinated by the Association of Chief Police Officers in Scotland (ACPOS), was marred by incidents of drink and drugs driving and speeding. In addition, two lives were claimed on country roads.

Capping the weekend was a nine-hour-long motorcycle workshop in Tyndrum in Perthshire conducted by four police forces. The annual 'Bikesafe' roadshow featured Central Scotland, Northern, Strathclyde and Tayside police force motorcycle section officers who encouraged motorcyclists to follow safer riding practices through education and encouragement for taking further advanced training. Northern Constabulary police officers also participated in promoting road safety at a mass gathering of Harley Davidson owners and enthusiasts in Aviemore.

Among the weekend's incidents of note were:

On Sunday morning, Strathclyde Road Policing officers stopped a silver-coloured Ford Escort on the A706 Lanark Road after monitoring driver behaviour on rural roads in the area. The motorist failed the roadside breath test, was arrested and conveyed to a police station, where he provided readings nearly twice the legal limit. He was released on an undertaking in relation to a speeding offence, no MOT and drink driving.

Meanwhile, in Perthshire, a 22-year-old male was arrested for driving whilst unfit through drugs in one of the 23 non-injury crashes that took place in Tayside over the weekend. In addition, 13 drivers, including 11 women and two women, were arrested throughout the force area for drink or drug driving offences. One of those arrested was a 40-year-old man who had been reported for two drink offences within days of each other.

Lothian and Borders police reported a flurry of speeders doing over 100 miles per hour during the three-day campaign. Topping the list was a 41-year-old driver of a BMW 330 stopped on the A702 On Saturday afternoon at an average speed of over 122 miles per hour. The next day another BMW driver was stopped on the same road after travelling at average speeds over 109 mph.

On Friday, Lothian and Borders Police stopped a male motorist on the M8 for travelling at a speed of 122 mph while later that evening, a male soldier was stopped on the A702 driving a Vauxhall Astra after at an average speed of over 115 mph.

With four friends encouraging him to exceed the speed limit, a 22-year-old male was stopped on the A702 at Felton Cottage travelling at an average speed over 103 mph. Minutes prior to that incident, police had stopped a 26-year-old male driving a Jaguar X-type on the A702 Dolphinton Straight at an average speed over 100 mph.

And speeding on country roads was not limited to motorists as Lothian and Borders Police stopped a 42-year-old male motorcyclist, on a Honda Firestorm, doing an average speed over 106 mph on the A702 West Linton to Dolphinton Road.

Running late was no excuse for a motorcyclist on the A83 at Butterbridge on Friday. He was stopped by Strathclyde Police after overtaking an unmarked police vehicle that was travelling at 60 mph as he accelerated to speeds in excess of 114 mph. The motorcyclist failed to observe the police vehicle until they caught up to him at a series of bends that he had taken on the wrong side of the road.

The weekend also saw a 44-year-old man lose his life as the result of a road crash on the A78 Greenock / Prestwick trunk road near Ardrossan in North Ayrshire early Saturday morning.

Lather that morning, a 23-year-old local male from Dornie, Lochalsh, driving a Fiat Punto, died after his vehicle collided with another vehicle at the Achmore Junction on the A890 Auchtertyre to Stromferry Road.

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NOTES TO EDITORS:

1. There are no statistics available on the number of vehicles stopped for road traffic offences.
2. Additional information on incidents can be obtained from the pertinent police force.