

## Road Tax To Rise For 44% Of Drivers

Gordon Brown.

Sorry. That was a little blunt, wasn't it? But he is going to feature in this - best to warn you up front, I thought. After all, you wouldn't want him sneaking up on you, would you? He might do that weird jaw thing. Or worse, brood at you. You know, all dark and passionate, like Heathcliff, only "older and wiser."

Or at least that was the comparison he made in a recent New Statesman interview.

Reveled by the British public, and then you find yourself compared to Gordon Brown, talk about a tainted legacy - at least they'll have that in common, though, I suppose; if nothing much else.

You see, Gordon's been at it again. First there was the 10p tax band fiasco, and now he's upset nearly one-sixth of the nation with his plans for a road tax scheme banded according to your vehicle's carbon dioxide emission levels. By 2009-10, apparently 8.7 million drivers will find themselves worse off. And by 2010-11 the figure will have risen to 9.4 million. On the other hand, he'll have created business for Autotrader and the nation's [car insurance](#) comparison sites. So it's not all bad.

Indeed, Labour would say it's very good. Not so much the rise in circulation for Autotrader, but the improvements they foresee the new tax scheme creating for the environment. Kind of makes sense, doesn't it? Make emitting lots of carbon dioxide more expensive and people will buy more environmentally friendly cars. Environment improved. Job done.

Of course, the worst polluting cars tend to be the oldest. And you need to be fairly well off to regularly replace your car. So guess which sector of society will, again, be worst hit by his tax ideas? Unless he pulls another U-turn.

As for the environment, nice idea, but somewhat undermined when you've been calling for an increase in oil production, since at least 2005.

And that wasn't even the only mixed message Brown had for us in all of this. Perhaps people might have taken the news a little better if he hadn't said on June 4th, in Parliament, that a majority of road users would be better off under the scheme. A majority (55%) won't be better off; they will actually be either worse off, or no worse off. Only 33% will be better off.

Speaking on Simon Mayo's Radio 5 show, Treasury Minister Angela Eagle didn't exactly help. Brown, had in fact, given the correct information to the House on May 14th, she said, so dwelling on whatever he had said more recently, whether that happened to be right or wrong, and she repeatedly refused to admit it was either, was to entirely and wilfully miss the point.

Right. OK. So the most recent information is irrelevant? Well, there goes the news industry. And by that kind of logic, I should probably admit that I'm a firm believer in Father Christmas and my thoughts on anything that rattles might best be summed up as "Goo!"

Or maybe Angela Eagle's time bending theory of truth and relevance isn't so patently ridiculous? If so, then there's only one way to end this article, assuming I want you to believe a word of it:

I now realise that I was wrong.

Now, if only Gordon Brown could say that.

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