

See cover artwork for this page



When Lives Collide

Foreword by Green Flag,
exhibition sponsor



As a company that puts safety at the heart of its roadside rescue and recovery operation and one that supports a range of community initiatives, we are all too aware of the issues that Paul raises in his collection of images.

With some 150 deaths and serious injuries on motorway hard shoulders and vehicle collisions in the UK claiming some 3,500 lives each year, we realised that there was a place for Paul's striking and often challenging imagery in changing driving behaviour.

When Lives Collide is an apt title for the exhibition as each death and serious injury happens, not to a statistic but to a loving, warm, breathing individual, whose loss often leaves behind a void in loved ones' lives.

We hope you are moved by the real life stories Paul has uncovered, and the images of loss and pain he has captured on camera. The next step is to leave this exhibition determined to change our driving behaviour and spare someone else the pain of grieving.

Hillary Williams
Marketing Director, Green Flag Motoring Assistance



When Lives collide

Paul Wenham-Clarke

The emotional consequences of these devastating collisions radiate out like waves on a pond. Mothers and fathers are left wondering why they have outlived a child and lovers are separated forever with no opportunity to even say goodbye.

The world seemed quite a safe place to me as a teenager, terrible things happened once in while but to far removed people in obscure countries. So it came as quite as shock when one of my friends from school left to go on a gap year before starting college and never came back. He apparently was killed whilst riding a motor bike in the south of France. It never sunk in, as none of it seemed real and almost in no time I had put it out of my mind.

A year on and I had passed my driving test and had a close circle of friends. We would take turns driving so the others could drink, revelling in the role of the 'wheel man' for that night. On some nights there would be several cars and we would race through the country lanes. On one occasion I managed to get all four wheels off the ground taking off on a bridge and for a second or two I was one of the Dukes of Hazard. Today I would have been labelled a boy-racer.

Time moved on and we all went on our separate ways. So again I was shocked to read in a newspaper that one of my best friends had killed another driver in my hometown. This friend was particularly fond of cars and speed. He had over taken on a hump back bridge and hit another car coming the other way head on, he was doing 60mph in 30mph zone. My first thought was that I had grown out of the mad driving why hadn't he?

Years later I was on holiday in California fast asleep in the front passenger seat of a car travelling to Monterey. Suddenly I was woken by the feeling of being thrown forward as the car was doing an emergency stop. Time slowed down, I could see a car in front of us broadside on blocking our way. The car was trying

to cross but we were only five meters away and travelling at 50mph. I had time to see the other driver's face as she braced herself for the impact. I was enveloped in white and felt like I had been slapped in the face and then I realised I had been saved by the airbag. The car spun around glass flying through the air and I looked back to see a huge American lorry bearing down on me, the driver desperately trying to stop. Then in a split second the slow motion stopped, the truck pulled up just a few feet from my door. I could hardly believe my luck, I thanked God out loud, although up to then I was not a believer.

I had very bad whiplash and within 30 minutes I could not move my arms, they just hung at my sides. In the hospital they scanned my neck and to my great relief told me things would be back to normal when the swelling went down. For a short while I experienced something very similar to people who have broken their necks.

Those few seconds of the crash have played on my mind for years and I think it was this that led me to investigate this whole issue. The very delicate line between safety and normality that can be crossed in a split second into a world of total

mayhem, pain and destruction. My crash had put my previous experiences into place and I realised that danger is all around us, terrible things can happen to anyone of us almost at any time. Once the scene has been set for an incident and the elements put into motion the laws of physics take over and they have no respect for anything, all matter is the same. Whether it is the steel frame of the car or a concrete post or a driver's legs or baby's head there is no difference.

This exhibition is an attempt to cut through the statistics and to take a personal and emotion look at this issue. The people photographed may be terribly injured and/or bereaved, either way their lives are devastated. Many feel totally let down by the law and the government. The emotional consequences of these devastating collisions radiate out like waves on a pond. Mothers and fathers are left wondering why they have outlived a child and lovers are separated forever with no opportunity to even say goodbye.

Hopefully the exhibition will encourage some serious debate and may change some opinions.



Victoria mother of Richard Mayberry and grandmother to Sophie age 8.

On the 24th March 1999 my son Richard was involved in a crash whilst on his way to work.

On the 24th March 1999 my son Richard was involved in a crash whilst on his way to work. He was on his Suzuki 750cc motorcycle when he collided with a lorry that had just pulled out of its depot and was crossing in front of him. This happened in broad daylight at ten to nine in the morning on a bright day with no rain or mist. He had serious head injuries and was dead on arrival at hospital. The lorry driver was uninjured and said that he had not seen Richard coming and only realised he was there when he hit the lorry's cab. Richard had been on the correct side of the road and was travelling in a straight line. Why had he not seen him?

I was at work at the time as a care assistant at a local nursing home. At 11am my daughter came to my work along with the police to give me the news. "Mum its Richard he has been in an accident", she said. "Where is he?" I asked and she said, "He is no longer with us". I couldn't believe what I had just heard.

My boss and daughter took me to the hospital to see him. He looked like he was just sleeping. My body went cold as I stared at him. He was unshaven which he hardly ever was. They said that I could give him a shave if I wanted. So I did and as I was finishing a tear came from his eye and ran down his face. I was very confused but I was told this sometimes does happen.

They asked, "What do you want to do with his clothes", as they were taking him to the mortuary. I said I would take them home with me. I looked at his body he had hardly a mark on him. How could he be dead? There was just a small scar on his neck but they said all the injuries were internal. His body was transferred to the chapel of rest and I went to see him

everyday until his funeral, the 28th March. When I was there I would put on some of his favourite music and he just lay there like he was resting.

Richard's father Alex took his death very badly indeed. From the day he died he would not leave the house or see anyone. When the headstone was put in place at Richard's grave, my other son John went to see his father and found him lying dead on the floor in his bedroom.

Sophie was only two and half when her father died and only one month later her grandfather was also dead. Richard idolised Sophie, he loved her so much, he was always picking her up and kissing her. Sophie tells people that she does not remember her father to protect herself from questions but she does remember him. She remembers the hugs and the kisses and his smiling face. No one really knows how it will effect her but all I know is the pain goes on and on.

Every day I think about Richard and Alex and it torments me. The injustice

of it all leaves me in despair. No one really knows or cares what exactly happened and the authorities don't seem to want to find out the truth.

Every morning when I wake up it hits me again, only a mother who has lost a child can know how I feel.

Sophie tells people that she does not remember her father to protect herself from questions but she does remember him. She remembers the hugs and the kisses and his smiling face. No one really knows how it will effect her but all I know is the pain goes on and on.

No one really knows or cares what exactly happened and the authorities don't seem to want to find out the truth.

Every morning when I wake up it hits me again, only a mother who has lost a child can know how I feel.





Michael Penman was killed by a hit and run driver while on holiday in, Antequera, Spain, on the 3rd April 2003.

I like to think that he has given me strength to carry on... I know he would worry about me.
I miss Michael intensely, my partner, my friend.

Michael was killed by a hit and run driver while we were on holiday together in, Antequera, Spain, on the 3rd April 2003. Michael being an experienced and good long distance runner went for a training run, he always did when we went away. He set out at about 5pm on a glorious warm afternoon, while I rested in our hostel room. Michael told me he would only be forty minutes.

Michael was killed on a road that hardly had any traffic, a quiet country road, very flat and straight, with beautiful scenery ahead of him and fields on either side. It was used often by other runners and power walkers. Michael was running on the left-hand side of the road, towards the oncoming traffic. A car travelling in the opposite direction (on the right hand side) for some reason, swerved across the road into the left-hand lane hitting Michael, (from behind or the side of him).

The driver did not stop, instead he made his escape through the fields, leaving Michael lying in a field 10 meters from the road surface, not visible to other road users. Michael was not found until the following day, 4th April, by the farmer that owned the field, at which time Michael had died from his injuries. The car was found 3km away from where Michael's body was found, the driver had tried to hide the car, and removed the registration plates in order to try and conceal his identity. The Spanish police know the driver's identity and that of the passengers that are believed to have been in the car, they have been unable to locate them so far.

I was told of Michael's death on the afternoon of the 4th April. A police inspector came to the hostel where Michael and I were staying. Even though I had spent a night in absolute turmoil, not knowing where Michael was, I was not prepared to hear what was about to be said to me, I remember looking behind the inspector expecting to see Michael, looking tired and weary, saying 'you wouldn't believe what happened'. Instead the inspector told me, 'We have found your friend, I am afraid he's dead'.

That was a year and a half ago and it still seems like yesterday, my life stopped then. I was quite hysterical when they told me, I felt pain, anger and just lost all sense of reality. Michael was alive and healthy and now he's dead. How can anyone make sense of that? I wanted to end my life to, if it wasn't for my family, I know I would have.

The first 6 months after Michael's death were spent trying to obtain as much information as possible about Michael's death, which to this day is proving very difficult. I wanted to lay in bed all day and hide away, but I couldn't, I had to keep strong for Michael, to try and do all that I could to get justice, looking back I do not know how I got through it. I was in a complete haze most of the time, I felt completely numb and empty. I would wake in the mornings momentarily forgetting what had happened, I would look across to the other side of the bed, where Michael should have been and it hit me, a pain that is so intense, there are no words to describe. I could smell him on the bed sheets, his things were all around me. I hardly cried, because when I did the pain was too much. I did not even cry at the funeral, I felt completely detached from it all, it couldn't be real.

Now, a year and a half after Michael's death, the pain is still there as intense as ever. I still cannot bring myself to unpack Michael's rucksack, or remove his clothes from our wardrobes and draws, I have not even been back to the cemetery since his funeral, a part of me still cannot accept what's happened, the reality of it is too much to bear. Michael was such a special, caring and gentleperson, I want the person or persons that did this to know what a special person they took. It angers me when people refer to Michael's death as an 'accident' Michael was doing what he did everyday, he wasn't doing anything wrong, if he had tripped and fell, that would be an 'accident'. Why does society

automatically presume that when a person is killed by a car, that it is an accident? In my eyes Michael was murdered, they did not use a gun or knife, they used a car as the weapon.

I am sure some people expect me to be 'over it' by now, I know I never will be. I am fully aware that life goes on, I just do not feel a part of it. I will laugh in front of people, and join in conversations and I am steadily bit-by-bit trying to make plans for my future (I have not been able to go back to work yet). It doesn't mean that the pain has gone.

I feel part of me has gone forever. I have lost the feeling of excitement and real happiness. I used to get excited about the future, our future together, the two of us growing old together. I have days when I feel stronger, where I can cope and do certain everyday things, and there are days or weeks where I feel I am in black hole. I feel that there is no point to life, getting up and showering is a chore. There is not a day or a minute that goes by that I do not think of Michael, what would we be doing, what would he say. I always imagine him still with me, by the side of me, encouraging me to go on. I like to think that he has given me strength to carry on, I know he would worry about me.

I miss Michael intensely, my partner, my friend. My love for him is as strong as ever, that is something that can never be killed or taken away. It's not the same as him being here, but it is all that I have now.



Why does society automatically presume that when a person is killed by a car, that it is an accident? In my eyes Michael was murdered, they did not use a gun or knife, they used a car as the weapon.

I miss Michael intensely, my partner, my friend. My love for him is as strong as ever, that is something that can never be killed or taken away. Its not the same as him being here, but it is all that I have now.



Christopher my 18 year old son, was knocked down by a speeding car late one evening.

His hell was over. Our kind, sweet, fun loving Christopher was gone. Forever.

Christopher my 18 year old son, was knocked down by a speeding car late one evening. My worst nightmare had just begun.

Rushing to hospital with my daughter Emma and seeing my beautiful Christopher lying helpless in a comma, attached to tubes and a grotesque head frame to support his broken neck, was the most terrifying sight, which is now etched on my brain forever.

We sat with him everyday late into the evening, watching him, talking to him, willing him to pull through this hell but not knowing whether he was even aware of us being with him. We were praying for a miracle. Sometimes there would be a movement of his hands or a flicker of his eyes but mainly only the noise of the breathing machine in this death like room was all we could hear. This is how the next ten and a half weeks passed.

Then one morning we were told that no one could do any more for Christopher. The machines were switched off and we watched him slip away. His hell was over. Our kind, sweet, fun loving Christopher was gone. Forever.

The devastation that hit us and the pain within that followed is something totally unbearable. It left a tremendous numbness and the question, the whys?

Our lives will never be the same. Emma has lost her brother and I have lost my son.

Christopher is always in our thoughts and we will never forget him. Now we have to learn to live without him.

We sat with him every day late into the evening, watching him, talking to him, willing him to pull through this hell but not knowing whether he was even aware of us being with him. We were praying for a miracle.





Stephen and Sheila had been killed in a road crash.

We were numb but yet in so much pain.
That night haunts us to this day and always will.

It was a normal day we got up and went to work. On my way home Stephen phoned me to let me know that Sheila and himself and Macca their dog were at our house. We were going to look after Macca while they went to our caravan for couple of days. They were so excited, so young and so in love, with their whole lives ahead of them.

They left at 4.15pm joking and laughing as they drove off, "See you Friday and phone us when you get there" I said as they left. Time went by and John our youngest son came home from college, he was disappointed that he had not seen them before they left. Barry got home at 6pm, "No phone call from Stephen and Sheila yet" I told him. I tried phoning their mobile and there was no answer, 7pm came and still no answer. At 7.25pm I was dialling Stephens mobile when the doorbell rang, I opened the door and there stood a Policeman. He said does the owner of a white BMW live here, my reaction was to run into the kitchen not wanting to hear anymore, he came in and gave us the horrific news. Stephen and Sheila had been killed in a road crash. Poor John fell on his knees in disbelief. Barry asked questions and listened to what the Policeman said.

When we heard the details of the crash it just got worse. They were on the M20 when the cab of an articulated lorry travelling on the other carriageway crashed through the central reservation and hit their car

head on. Both vehicles spun around to face the opposite directions they had been travelling. The force of the impact was so great poor Sheila was cut in half and the top half of her body was thrown 50 yards up the motorway. The lorry driver was pulled out of his cab but Steven's car caught fire with him still in it, the police told me he was dead before this happened.

We just couldn't take in this awful news, why our Stephen and Sheila who were so young. We were in a state of total shock and disbelief, it was like someone had ripped out our hearts and stamped on them. We were numb but yet in so much pain. That night haunts us to this day and always will.

That selfish callous lorry driver killed our Stephen and Sheila and took the happy contented life we once knew and destroyed our future. We have cried so much and our pain and heartache is endless. The yearning to have them back is unbearable some days.

The lorry driver had been warned not to drive because he had fallen asleep

at the wheel several times in the past. He was eventually convicted for 'Death by dangerous driving'. The anger and hatred we feel towards this driver is indescribable, if only he had listened to his Doctor's advice not to drive our Stephen and Sheila would still be alive today and we would not be heartbroken.

We have cried so much and our pain and heartache is endless. The yearning to have them back is unbearable some days.

The force of the impact was so great poor Sheila was cut in half and the top half of her body was thrown 50 yards up the motorway.





Hit and run victim. Jamie was on his bike riding home after school.

When I tell people about it they say I am lucky to be alive but I don't feel very lucky. It makes you scarred to go on a bike.

I was on my bike coming home after school with my mate Aaron. We were just going along as normal at the edge of the road when suddenly I was hit from behind. I went flying through the air and landed in the middle of the road. I went head over heels onto my back. I knew a car had hit me and I looked to the side to see who had done it. A woman in a purple Ford Ka looked down at me and then drove off without stopping to check that I was ok. I couldn't believe it she just didn't care. She had two kids in the back and they saw everything.

My left arm felt funny and someone phoned my Mum. My arm was numb so I could not tell how bad it was but my Mum took me to hospital anyway. When I got there they told me I had broken my arm in loads of places and I would have to have an operation. They put metal bars and pins in my bones to hold it all together.

This was right at the start of the summer holiday so I spent the whole holiday sitting in bed or on the sofa. It was so boring and I used to playing loads of sport. I like playing football, basketball and rugby at school but they have said I won't be able to play any of them again for months. The doctors have said my arm will never be 100% again.

My Mum was scarred out of her brain and now I have to tell her everything that I am going to do. When I tell people about it they say I am lucky to be alive but I don't feel very lucky. It makes you scarred to go on a bike.

I have had to go to the hospital and physiotherapy every week since it's happened. Just recently the pins have started to work loose and they have now told me I have got to have another operation.

When it happened I was on Tele and was interviewed by lots of papers and stuff. The police were trying to find the woman but they never have and I don't think they will now.

I just hope she doesn't do it again.

My Mum was scarred out of her brain and now I have to tell her everything that I am going to do.

When I tell people about it they say I am lucky to be alive but I don't feel very lucky.





**Nancy was diagnosed with brain stem damage a permanent state of vegetation.
I sat watching my beautiful Nancy, she never spoke to me ever again.**

I combed her hair matted with dry blood.
I had to use water and as I did the smell of
blood and the stickiness covered my hands.

I was woken at 3.45am by the police knocking on my gate. A Police man and lady asked if Nancy Duke lived here, I said why what has she done wrong, the police lady asked what car she had, I replied a little white Renault 5. It's been involved in an accident we don't know if it's your daughter or if the car may have been stolen. I said has she got very long dark brown hair? She replied we don't know, I asked if she could radio through to find out and she said no. I then asked is she dead? She said no, but I asked again she raised her voice and said look at my face I said no.

The Policeman then asked Dennis if he knew Oldchurch hospital, (which he did) in shock he said no I asked the policeman if he should be driving, he just shrugged his shoulders and left.

Nancy was diagnosed with brain stem damage a permanent state of vegetation. I sat watching my beautiful Nancy, she never spoke to me ever again. The Dr said she would die. I begged him on my knees to save my Nancy.

I combed her hair matted with dry blood. I had to use water and as I did the smell of blood and the stickiness covered my hands, huge clumps of her beautiful hair came out in my hands revealing the stitched gashes in her head.

I asked a nurse if she could feel pain, she said no, look, and pinched and twisted her eyelid. This enraged me, "I said never ever do that again", I refused to let her look after Nancy.

After being with Nancy for 3 days, my world collapsed when Nancy's heart

stopped, she had gone. My beautiful daughter, my world had gone. My heart broken, I felt empty, all my love, warmth, my very being gone. My very soul had been ripped out, devastated. I felt that I had died. Nancy's mum had died with her.

When I went to see Nancy at the funeral parlour I broke down completely as I looked at her, tears ran down the right side of Nancy's cheek.

A year later in court the judge said that the driver was a man of good character and he was giving him the shortest possible sentence for killing 2 beautiful people, and he had 2 previous convictions. I felt what more can you do to me, there is nothing left, it was like vultures picking at my bones.

By the Grace of God some days my grief walks beside me, but most days I am so overwhelmed by great sadness, empty and lonely with a longing for all that I will never have with my beautiful precious child. It is a

gaping wound that never heals that no one can see. I feel like I am someone else, I don't recognise the face that looks out from the mirror. Nancy's mum has died with her.

I will take my grief with me to my grave.

The Dr said she would die. I begged him on my knees to save my Nancy.

I combed her hair matted with dry blood. I had to use water and as I did the smell of blood and the stickiness covered my hands,

huge clumps of her beautiful hair came out in my hands revealing the stitched gashes in her head.





The death of a child (whatever age) in a road crash changes your life mercilessly.

'I feel betrayed by all the authorities involved when a person is killed on the road'.

I had to extract the fact of my son's death from my husband who had to relay the message by phone to me at work in Brighton.

On my journey home to Portsmouth that day (15.03.2000) I hoped there was a mistake and my son was not dead.

Then the worst moment of my life, identifying his body in the mortuary of the same hospital, where his birth nearly 35 years earlier had given me the best moment of my life. Words cannot describe my feelings – I loved him so much.

Suddenly you experience many new feelings – numbness, pain in the gut, knife in the heart, followed by a lifetime of frustration. I lost the most weight in the shortest time of my life up to the funeral.

My husband came across RoadPeace on the internet and its members have given me strength to cope with the grief. Nevertheless, 18 months later I had to resort to counselling and anti-depressants for the first time in my life to give me strength to carry on. It is very difficult to find a purpose for living. The light of my life has gone out and the heart of our family has been ripped out.

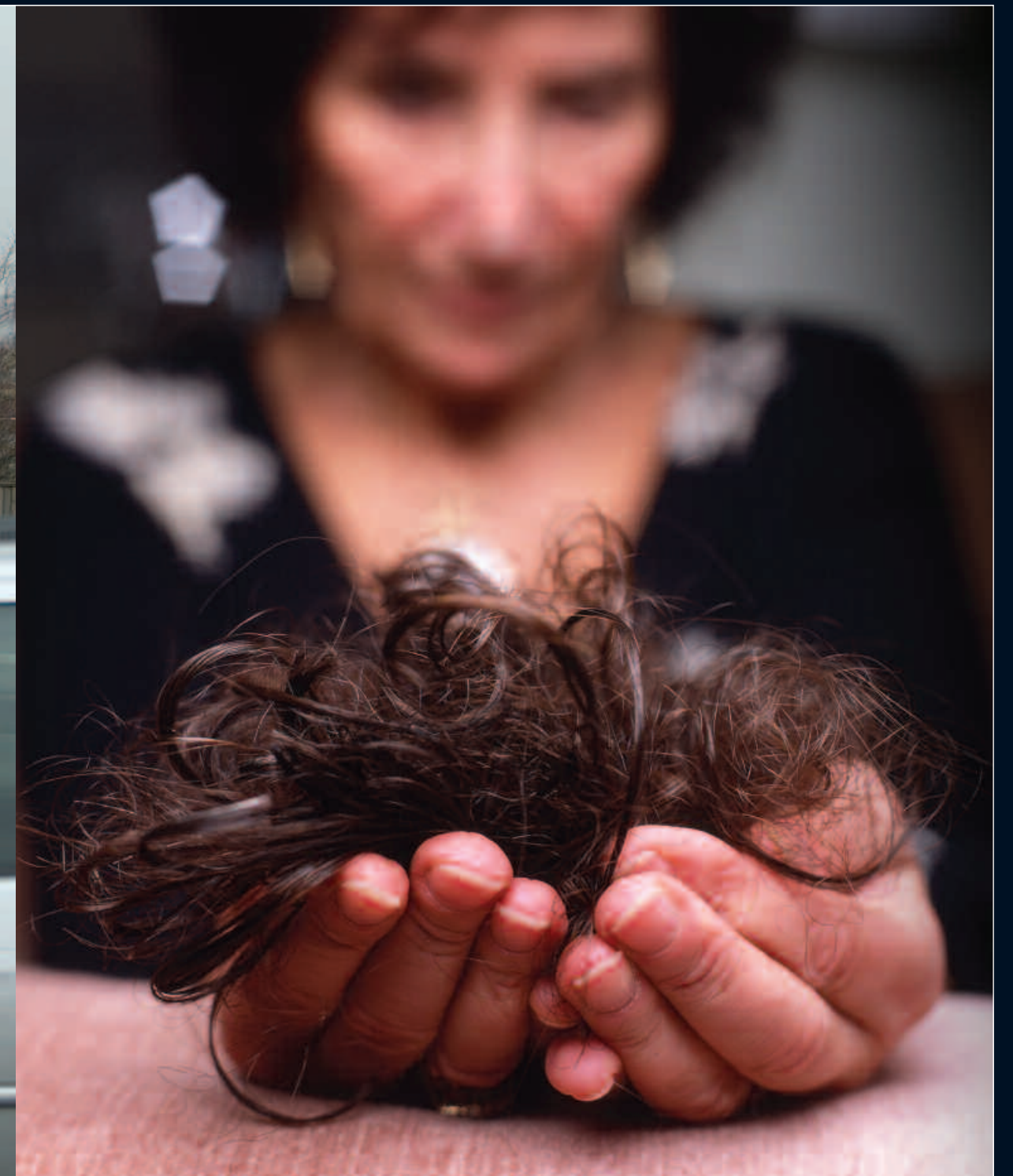
I am so angry that the driver does not have to speak to me and answer my questions. I am so angry that banned drivers do not have to be tested for safe driving before being allowed back on the roads. 'I feel betrayed by all the authorities involved when a person is killed on the road'.

How can we convince unaffected people to unite against irresponsible driving? Changing the habits of irresponsible drivers is my mission.

- Yesterday is history (my memories, with a little help from my surviving 20 months younger son, sustain me)
- Tomorrow is a mystery (my dreams for the future are shattered)
- Today is a gift (live it to the full without hurting others – thankfully my son did)

Then the worst moment of my life identifying, his body in the mortuary of the same hospital where his birth nearly 35 years earlier had given me the best moment of my life. Words cannot describe my feelings – I loved him so much. I am so angry that the driver does not have to

speak to me and answer my questions. I am so angry that banned drivers do not have to be tested for safe driving before being allowed back on the roads. 'I feel betrayed by all the authorities involved when a person is killed on the road'





“Suddenly, from the line of traffic coming in the opposite direction a lorry swerved across the road and hit us head on.”

Then later in The A&E department of the local hospital I heard a familiar voice, that of my son’s. Trying to speak, I asked him about his father and heard “Sorry Mother, he is dead”.

My husband Jim was a much-loved GP, who had always worked unstintingly for his patients. He was always willing to go out at night and yet was always cheerful. We had four children, two of whom followed their father into medicine, one became a musician and one followed his great love of nature and became an ecologist.

Jim retired at 65 and the first free weekend afterwards went to visit our eldest son and had an idyllic weekend going on long walks in the country. We were driving home on the Monday morning full of plans for the future and so very happy. Suddenly, from the line of traffic coming in the opposite direction a lorry swerved across the road and hit us head on. There were many feelings and thoughts, from the intense pain of the impact, feeling flung around as the car was spun, to the realisation that I could hear nothing from my husband.

I had been smashed in the face and jaw. I could not breath I was starting to choke. I knew if I were going to live I would have to spit out the blood and bone. As I did this I could feel myself going unconscious but I realised I must stay awake. I was crushed inside the car and could not feel or see my husband. Just as I started to despair I felt someone’s hand hold mine and a woman’s voice speaking to me. She was telling me everything would be fine and that the emergency services were coming. This person’s voice gave me hope and the strength to keep going. Then later in The A&E department of the local hospital I heard a familiar voice, that of my son’s. Trying to speak, I asked him about his father and heard “Sorry Mother, he is dead”.

I had severe facial injuries and had lost an eye. When I was finally able to leave the hospital I had gone from 9 stone to just 7 stone in weight. I could not see well enough to drive and my loss of balance prevented me from riding my bike. The pain in my face and head was constant but somehow I had to take stock of my life and try to deal with the aftermath of the crash.

When you are bereaved and in my case also injured it is very difficult to then deal with the inquest, a very formal occasion with no sympathy shown. You have to be interviewed by the Police and you have to learn about how the law works. I grew up respecting authority and assuming professional people were to be trusted. I thought British Justice was utterly fair and that I could just let the law take its course and justice would be done. I was very shocked when I was told by the solicitor for The Crown Prosecution Service that they would only charge the driver with “Driving without due care and attention”. “But surely”, I said, “if he couldn’t slow down and stop he was driving dangerously”. The solicitor said it would be too difficult to prove.

For the first time since that terrible day I felt really angry. Angry that the law was so useless and unfair, angry that the magistrate had said my husband’s

death was the “unfortunate result of an unavoidable accident”.

In the aftermath of this tragedy I felt that there was no one on my side. The police were trying to charge the driver but the death of my husband and my injuries were quite peripheral. I was completely ignored by the justice system and was deeply shocked by the insulting treatment of the death of my dear husband, this wonderful man, who gave so much for others.

I will miss him always.

I had been smashed in the face and jaw. I
could not breath I was starting to choke. I knew if
I was going to live I would have spit out the
blood and bone.





She was worked on at the roadside and then taken to hospital where she was pronounced dead in the early hours of the morning.

The horror of identifying your beautiful daughter's perfectly fit healthy body, laying now crushed and dirty on a morgue slab is indescribable.

On 22/6/98, around 11pm, my beautiful daughter Melanie was a passenger in a 4 ton army truck, whose driver fell asleep whilst travelling on the M4 between junctions 12 and 13. They had been on a country exercise all weekend and had at the time of driving been without food or sleep for over 40hrs. The vehicle was towing a huge missile launcher. The driver was on the inside lane and veered right over and hit the central reservation. On harshly correcting the steering wheel it jack-knifed and my daughter was thrown out of the side window directly onto the motorway bridge and was bounced back to land back up over the wheel arch of the truck. Because of the location of the crash it took a long time for the emergency services to reach her. She was worked on at the roadside and then taken to hospital where she was pronounced dead in the early hours of the morning.

A military enquiry took place a year after her death which I was not privy to. The Police or CPS would not prosecute even though the inquest clearly determined the driver fell asleep at the wheel.

The horror of identifying your beautiful daughter's perfectly fit healthy body, laying now crushed and dirty on a morgue slab is indescribable. A terrible pain in my stomach stayed with me for months after and I continually relived an impact I had not been witness to. I kept looking at my front door expecting her to walk through. She was like a mum to her younger two brothers as there was a 13 year gap between them. It breaks my heart thinking of the times they should still be sharing and discovering each other's personalities.

I have great difficulty answering the simple question "how many children have you got" or signing greetings cards. I simply have to include her. I am very grateful for the beautiful years we had together and constantly remember the beautiful memories she

left. Her death has affected the lives of my family and our friends forever.

Constantly I wonder what she would be doing and achieving in her life at her age now. Married? Babies? Grandchildren I will never see.

I am extremely paranoid over the safety of my two healthy sons and restrict what should be a truly discovering time for them. I can't risk someone else knocking at my door and saying "Sorry" because that is all it is. No explanation, no punishment, a beautiful life is wiped out in an instant and no one has to answer for it.

The military use public roads but do not have to abide by the rules other drivers do. Melanie's death was an embarrassment to the army and was swept under the carpet. I feel guilty that my daughter has been killed without any form of justice being taken. I feel I have let her down as any protective parent would.

A mother cannot put into words the joy of giving birth and having that wonderful little bundle place in her

arms. It is so opposite in feeling but again totally unable to put into words the pain and heartbreak of a child's death.

My pain and sadness is with me every single day. I am lost without her.



On harshly correcting the steering wheel it jack-knifed and my daughter was thrown out of the side window directly onto the motorway bridge and was bounced back to land back up over the wheel arch of the truck.

I continually relived an impact I had not been witness too.

Constantly I wonder what she would be doing and achieving in her life at her age now.

Married? Babies?

Grandchildren I will never see.



**I had a motorbike accident on August 3rd 1996.
“The first thing I do remember is waking up face down on the tarmac.”**

I didn't know much about the consequences of a spinal injury before my accident, I thought it'll never happen to me.

I had a motorbike accident on August 3rd 1996. It was only me involved. I was riding around a roundabout under a motorway but I don't remember any of it. The first thing I do remember is waking up face down on the tarmac. When I opened my eyes I could see my lips were swollen and my nose was hurting. I've broken my nose before and at first I thought 'oh no I've done it again' but then I tried moving my legs, I couldn't and that's when I realised it was much more serious. I passed out again.

At hospital they discovered I'd broken the sixth vertebra in my neck. I had to go through a procedure to straighten my neck allowing the bone to heal in the correct position. A metal halo had to be bolted to my head. I remember waking up because I felt a pain on the side of my head, it was the consultant shaving my hair where one of the bolts would be screwed in. There were four bolts in my head, two at the front and one each side, they attached to the halo and that was connected to a wire and some weights so it all pulled my head straitening my neck. Every few days the consultant came to tighten the bolts with a spanner which was excruciating, it felt like my skull was being crushed. Unfortunately the important damage was to my spinal cord and that is irreparable. I'm paralysed from the top of my chest down, I can move my arms but I can't use my hands.

I was a mechanic. I really enjoyed my job as cars and bikes were my passion but now I feel like it's been taken from me. Everything I was aiming for in my life I can mostly no longer have. All the dreams I wanted I now have to settle for what I'm able to have because of my position. If I got married I wanted to be able to look after my wife rather than her look after me. If I had children I wanted to teach them how to ride a bike or swim or simply kick a football with them. I wanted to decorate my own house and even do the gardening. Above all though I'll never be able to do what I loved most, enjoy driving a car and feeling the rush when riding a motorbike.

I didn't know much about the consequences of a spinal injury before my accident, I thought it'll never happen to me.

At hospital they discovered I'd broken the sixth vertebra in my neck.

Every few days the consultant came to tighten the bolts with a spanner which was excruciating.





On the 25th March 2000 my husband and I were involved in a road traffic incident.

Worst of all she has stolen Julian's life.
A smile that could light a room.

On the 25th March 2000 my husband and I were involved in a road traffic incident. A woman driving while under the influence of cocaine, cannabis, methadone and diazepam crossed two lanes of a dual carriageway to crash head on with our car. My husband survived for ten days with serious head injuries before contracting meningitis, as a result of a spinal fluid leak from a skull fracture, which despite three operations doctors was unable to close. We were taken to separate hospitals and as a result I never saw Julian again, she stole my chance to say goodbye.

I had a fractured neck, crushed feet, a fractured radius and ulna in my right arm, fractured ankles and a dislocated right knee as well as burns requiring skin grafts on my leg. I was permanently disabled and in pain for the rest of my life. She stole my health and independence.

It took fifteen months to bring her to court, in which time I had to endure all attempts to delay her trial and claims that her human rights had been violated because she had been given a blood test whilst unconscious. Finally she was sentenced to five years imprisonment having killed two people and injured me but in fact only served two and a quarter years. She stole my faith in our legal system.

Because I have to rely on a wheelchair I was unable to return to my home as I lived in a third floor flat. She stole the home I shared with my husband.

Worst of all she has stolen Julian's life. A smile that could light a room. A heart so big it helped anyone in need. He was kind, generous and just plain fun to be with. A son, an uncle, a brother, my best friend, my love. All these things describe who he was but don't explain how to fill the void he leaves behind.

We will miss him always.



We were taken to separate hospitals and as a result I never saw Julian again, she stole my chance to say goodbye.

A son, an uncle, a brother my best friend, my love. All these things describe who he was but don't explain how to fill the void he leaves behind.

A woman driving while under the influence of cocaine, cannabis, methadone and diazepam crossed two lanes of a dual carriageway to crash head on with our car.



I knew my injuries were obviously serious as there was a lot of blood but I did not feel that bad.

I could not believe what was happening when the lorry cut across in front of me as if I were not there. I was crushed by one of the front wheels as the lorry turned very slowly left.

Three years ago I worked in London with a publishing company and had a wonderful interesting career ahead of me. I would cycle to and from work in central London. I did it to avoid the endless jams, keep fit and because it was green thing to do. I was not stupid on the bike, I was very aware that one day I might have some kind of incident but thought nothing too serious.

There are quite a few cycle lanes around central London but they nearly all suffer from the same problem. Wherever the road gets a bit narrow they are also bus lanes. This doesn't make sense to me as bikes and buses don't go together. Buses would come up behind me following close behind waiting to over take and it was quite scary at times.

However on the day it all happened it was not with a bus but something just as big. I was waiting at a junction just opposite Liverpool station when a cement lorry came up along side me. We were both turning left into the street ahead. I could not believe what was happening when the lorry cut across in front of me as if I were not there. I was crushed by one of the front wheels as the lorry turned very slowly left. I hung onto the side so I would not fall completely under the wheels, it was like my worst nightmare happening for real. The lorry was probably only moving at ten miles an hour but it was going to kill me. Luckily for me some pedestrians ran out in the road to stop the lorry and they literally saved my life.

A policeman turned up and sat with me as we waited for an ambulance to arrive.

I knew my injuries were obviously serious as there was a lot of blood but I did not feel that bad. I phoned my best friend to tell her what had happened and I said I would be all right.

When I got to hospital they lay me down with a blanket over me and I was chatting away to the nurses when the doctor came in. He lifted the blanket and looked under, I could see from his face it was not what he expected. He said to me many months later that when he looked at my injuries he was amazed I was not near death.

I had lots of surgery over the next few weeks and came close a couple of times of not surviving but eventually I was well enough to leave. I have lost a lot a flesh and muscle and as a result my legs and back are very inflexible. Three years on and I am still having surgery to try and improve my situation and the pain goes on.

I have not worked since that dreadful day and although I try and keep cheerful it makes me furious that my whole life has changed as a result. If I were well enough I would not ride a bike in London again. All my other friend and work mates who used to ride don't anymore after what happened to me.

I was crushed by one of the front wheels as the lorry turned very slowly left. I hung onto the side

so I would not fall completely under the wheels, it was like my worst nightmare happening.





Responding to a road traffic accident is one of those jobs where your imagination can run away with you.

This can be really harrowing as people are imploring you to help the people they love.

Responding to a road traffic accident is one of those jobs where your imagination can run away with you. Most modern cars have airbags and crumple zones but you still can't help thinking, what if the pts are trapped in the cars? If they're pinned by their feet or they were stupid and didn't wear a seatbelt?

Nowadays RTA's are generally minor, a rear end shunt, T-bone or even a roll over is easy to deal with most people are up, out & walking. But its ones where you get the 999 call and drive off with your lights and sirens going, you start getting more info from control, "this is 3 car RTA with persons reported trapped, there is body in the road? Ejected (that seatbelt thing!)" then you know it's going to be bedlam when you get there!

Often someone grabs you and says his mate/wife/friend is hurt. But being first on scene is about assessing all the pts and calling for more back up. This can be really harrowing as people are imploring you to help the people they love. Some get quite angry but you know it's just the stress of the moment if you met them in a pub they would be a really nice person.

The blood and guts you see on casualty is pretty graphic but when it's real people and they are screaming in pain, or more worryingly not screaming but just sitting there, then you know you have to move fast.

We work very closely with the fire & rescue service. When they pitch up and you wave to the sub officer on the pump to come over to you, it can be a relief, at least you can start to extract pt's from what is left of their cars! The sub will ask (we'll shout cos it's always noisy at scene) what do you need? If you have that quite pt who is trapped its "We need a rapid extrication, the pt's going off. We need to go to hospital in 10 mins" Then the fire fighters start ruining you no claims bonus!

It's the human cost that can become evident, once you have done what you are trained to do and got the pt to

hospital. Cleaning your wagon outside A&E you often see the relatives congregating with huge out pouring of emotions and sadly on some occasions grief.

It brings it home, it could be you standing there hugging your dad hoping your mum pulls through the operation. If only that fool who had hit her hadn't been using his mobile phone and why did he walk away from the crash with only scratches!



Sub Officer Ted Walker: 26 Years Service With The Royal Berkshire Fire And Rescue Service.

On some occasions it has not always been possible to stay detached.

When someone finds out what I do for a living one of the most common responses is for them to comment, "Oh I couldn't do your job". Then I know what's coming next! "How do you deal with what you see at road traffic accidents it must be awful!"

In fact I find it one of the most rewarding aspects of my job. As a large fire develops you quickly find yourself becoming a small cog in a large wheel but at a road traffic accident nearly every person around that vehicle plays a vital and pivotal role. What I see is not the horror of traumatic injury but the mechanics of entrapment. To focus on anything else would not allow me to accomplish my role of freeing those persons and giving them their optimum chance in their fight for life! That is the challenge and the satisfaction of rising to it is immense.

The hardest part of being a Fire Brigade Incident Commander at a crash scene is to stand back and not get sucked into the incident where you quickly lose the bigger picture and ultimately control of the incident but your want is, always to be on the end of the rescue equipment doing it all yourself.

The first road traffic accident I attended as a young Firefighter at the start of my career involved a car impacting with a motorway bridge stanchion, which at the time of our arrival was engulfed in flame. On extinguishing the vehicle I was given the task of hack sawing (Modern hydraulic cutting equipment not being

in use then) through the centre doorpost directly above the casualty who was by then a skeleton encased in a blackened husk. As I cut, his skull shook with the vibration of the saw. Next I had to cut the seat springs that had fused to his body, with bolt croppers. I reasoned that I could do him no further harm and that if I could cope with this I could cope with anything.

On some occasions it has not always been possible to stay detached. One foggy January afternoon we were called to four-year-old boy who had been run over by a skip lorry on his way home from school. We arrived at the same time as the Paramedics. He was laid under the vehicle dressed in a navy duffle coat his face grey with the pallor of death. This was his first and last week at school. He was not trapped, there was nothing to focus on save his young 22 year old mother sobbing beside the road having just witnessed her own son's death. I pulled her away from the scene of the paramedics trying in vain to resuscitate the small body. I sat holding her in the back of the fire appliance. In between sobs she asked me to pick up his lunch box, as he would need it the next day. I fetched it and handed it to her, she clutched it and continued to sob.

I held her for more than 30 minutes before a second ambulance could take her, to follow her son on his final journey. When she left I could cry myself. If every incident was like that one I would not still be doing this job. You can only hold so many images like that in your head. Detachment is my protection and necessity.

Sub Officer Ted Walker: 26 Years Service With The Royal Berkshire Fire And Rescue Service.



Incident or accident?

"There is no science of the accident," warned Aristotle two thousand years ago. However today we think otherwise, wrapped in a blanket of Health and Safety and risk assessment. We seem to believe that virtually all risk can be removed through the logical application of science. Our world is full of devices and systems patiently waiting to protect us, smoke alarms, fire extinguishers, airbags, safety belts, and life jackets. Should we be involved in an accident we still have nothing to fear, as all our systems of insurance, healthcare and law will kick into action. Our belief in these systems is so strong that it gives us a great sense of confidence and reassurance, that everything will be fine. Never the less the accidents keep on coming.



Probably due to our modern attitude we have started to wonder whether these unplanned events are actually accidents after all. We may often ask, "Could something have been done?" I have chosen through the majority of this book to refer to incidents rather than accidents in response to this new way of thinking.

Until the day comes when someone knocks at your door to give you devastating news of a loved one, you will not truly understand the difference between these words. An accident is something that could not have been prevented, it was just one of those things and no one is to blame. How many of the stories you will read in this book fall into that category?

The images that follow have been created using actors and make-up in an attempt to make viewers realise how terrible a crash scene really would be. The scenes depicted are based upon real incidents as described by rescue workers interviewed.



Baby on Board







Long Delay

I think one-day people will look back at this time and be amazed that we accepted these violent deaths and injuries as part of our normal lives. How many times a week do we listen to traffic bulletins warning of congestion due to a serious incident and we don't bat an eyelid.



Joy Rider

I was told by a
Fireman that Joy Rides
are one of the few
groups of people who
regularly die
because they don't
wear a safety belt.



Finding my way

The logical place to start was with the statistics, they were quite horrifying and seemed to flag up more questions than answers. Around three and half thousand people die in the UK every year and around forty thousand are seriously injured. In America around forty five thousand die every year and world wide it is one point two million.

Again and again I would find myself asking why do we put up with this. More people die in this country alone in one year than died in the September 11th terrorist attack. Somehow because it is an everyday event that has occurred for decades it has become totally mundane. The more I saw, the more I began to think that at some point in the future people will look back at this era and be astounded that we had such little regard for life.

I wondered if advertising was to blame. Had we all been sold a twisted dream by the manufactures that we never wanted? In 1927 General Motors introduced the concept of the annual model. This was to make the cars appear more fashionable and fuel the desire for the latest model. The main concern was sales not safety, this is true. However the more I looked into it and observed today's media such as programs like Top Gear, it appeared to me that we have got exactly what we asked for. The glamour, sexuality and the sheer thrill of driving is so seductive we embrace it all with open arms. I remembered my early adult days and the feelings I got from having a car and it was much more than a mere machine. It represented a world of adult excitement and I would have fought hard to keep it.

The best way to help me decide on a theme was to talk to the people most effected by the crashes themselves. The injured or bereaved and to the rescue workers who deal with the aftermath of so many crashes.

I contacted a number of charities to see if they could help. RoadPeace were by far the most interested and invited me to one of their local meetings. I did not know what to expect and was shocked by how many members turned up. They were all bereaved people who had come to talk to others with similar experiences. The people took turns to tell their tragic tales and as an observer it was harrowing. Many wept as they talked and you could see from their faces that they were wracked with grief and not only suffering mentally but also physically. Many looked like they had not eaten or slept properly for months.

This was a turning point for me as it connected all the raw feelings these people had straight into me and my emotions, it was hard to take. The whole feeling of the subject seemed to change. We often hear the statistics as stated by the media but they are cold facts with no emotion. It was very different when I was sitting listening to someone whose life had been devastated by a sudden and violent death of a loved one.

I realised my work must be on a very personal level to show the pain and suffering that these people have endured. For many of them their lives are now so empty. They live on memories and they constantly rerun the events leading up to the death. What if they had stayed at home that morning or what if they had taken a different route, would it be all different now? They had all experienced a roller-coaster of emotions, grief, anger and desperate depression and sadness. I had to somehow try and incorporate this in the images.

I knew I was going to find it very hard photographing these people but I would just have to face it. I dreaded the awkwardness and the fear of saying the wrong thing, I had never faced a shoot so difficult. I realised then that this was going to be the main body of the project. I decided that I would also photograph the locations of the incidents to show how ordinary these places are and how very innocent they look. I would also photograph objects that relatives had kept because they triggered memories of the person they had lost.

The rescue workers on the other hand were quite different they mostly had a cold detached manner. For them it was a terrible mistake to get too close and emotionally involved. One of the longest serving Fireman I spoke to reminded me of an interview I had seen with the war photographer Don McCullen. They both had a distant look in their eye and a cold stare that seemed to suggest the awfulness of the things they had witnessed. I began to realise that these rescue workers would have probably seen more death and destruction than most British soldiers would ever see.

In one interview a Fireman said, "If the public saw what I see they would not drive the way they do". This was another important moment as I had already noticed that in today's media, disturbing real images of crash victims were not published. If you go back to the early days of mass-produced automobiles, crashes were frequent and even minor collisions could be fatal. Newspapers of the time would often carry images so shocking that today they would be not allowed. In the current media you can regularly see images of crash scenes, soon after the event but you very rarely see any victims, certainly not dead bodies. We are left to imagine the detail and I believe as a result we are protected from the reality of situation. You can understand why this is done to protect the dignity of the victims and not to offend or traumatise the relatives



any more than necessary. However the side effect is to put us into a bubble of false security and leave us unaware of the true picture. I have come to believe that this is one of the main reasons why people seem to think that road incidents always will happen to someone else. We are given a false sense of invincibility that whispers in our ear that its fine to drive over the speed limit or just have one more drink.

I decided that I could not travel with a rescue crew and photograph real incidents, even if I was allowed to do so, as I did not want to offend any relatives. I have put together many large and complicated shoots over the years and I thought that I might be able to construct these scenes. Using actors, make-up, wrecked cars and a safe place to shoot.

I meet with RoadPeace and told them of my plan. They were extremely keen on me shooting the portrait images of the bereaved and injured but not so keen on the crash images. The reason was not what I expected. They would rather see real images if that were possible but they agreed that this would be the next best thing. I was shocked by their hard-nosed approach but I felt it was because they felt the public needed to wake up.

I had now a clear plan in my mind of what I was going to produce. I realised after attending the RoadPeace meetings that I must include an account of what had happened in each individual's case. After some thought on this I felt this should be written in their own words to give the piece a strong feeling of authenticity and to give a clear emotional insight.

I was ready now to begin but I needed to make all the contacts. I went to several RoadPeace events around the country and tried to mingle with the members. There was a definite hostility by some as soon as they heard I was a photographer. In my mind I imagined them thinking, "Look another one of those God forsaken paparazzi, who pick over other people's bones". Soon though with Brigitte Chaudry's help (founder of RoadPeace) I was welcomed in to the "Family", as she put it. I got chatting and listened closely and soon people were asking to take part.

The Images

The Portraits

The very first portrait I tackled was Karen Morrow who lived in Cornwall. It was a very long drive and all the way I was getting more and more nervous. When I parked outside her house and I looked at her front door, I couldn't help thinking was this a good idea? Karen answered the door and was very full of life and fun and soon we were chatting away like old friends.

I tried many different ways of taking her portrait that day, as I was using this first portrait as the testing ground for how the others would work. I know I had at least one portrait that I would be very happy with and more importantly the fear I had was gone. I could do this and the project would work. Just as I left Karen handed her written piece to me, to read when I got home. Her words were stunning, she had put all her emotions into the piece and it was impossible to read without being effected.

On looking at the images later the portrait I most liked was one of her standing in a doorway. Karen could only stand for about five minutes but she was very definite about not wanting to be seen in her wheelchair. I tried a new technique for me which was to pose her and then ask her to think about her husband. Everything fell silent for a few minutes whilst her mind wondered and all you could hear was the clock ticking. I had also decided to use daylight on this occasion as there was a beautiful light coming in the window. This would mean her thought would only be disturbed by the sound of the camera and not a blinding flash. This seemed to work well, giving her face an expression that seemed very genuine.

I now was feeling very positive about the whole process. I had a style for the photography that comprised of several techniques. Firstly, using the lines and structure of their home to build the composition, secondly, using daylight when possible to give a naturalistic look. Thirdly, to use a pose that conveyed their emotional state and fourthly to use this silent period of reflective thought to create a genuine expression. I followed on with this style throughout the rest of the work. However with some of the following portraits if I felt the silent reflective method was not really working, so I asked them to tell me about the person they had lost. This usually worked well and the person would only say a few words before settling back into the quiet stage but this time locked into their thoughts.

Probably the most difficult was Jane Roche and her mother Phyllis who were a very close pair. I had originally seen them together at the very first RoadPeace meeting in Euston. Jane had left the room as she had become so distressed and I remember watching her mother comforting her and thinking that they would make a powerful image. However at their house I wondered whether I would be able to get that same display of love and despair in the portrait image. I tried to photograph them hugging but they did not seem comfortable being so close and in front of the lens. Jane said, "We don't hug". I changed over to shooting them separately but still even using the silent reflective method I could not get what I

wanted. I decided that I would have to push harder, I started to ask direct questions about Michael, Jane's boyfriend who had been killed jogging on holiday. "Why have you not unpacked his case?" as soon as I had said it I knew I had gone too far. Jane burst into tears and I took a few frames almost automatically, she ran from the camera. She flung herself into her mother's arms with tears pouring down her face, the two hugging like they had longed to for years. I moved them back in front of the camera quickly positioning their arms and then took a roll of twelve frames as they comforted each other and calmed down. I had got what I wanted but I felt so guilty, I had turned into that prying paparazzi vulture after all. I spent the next couple of hours apologising to Jane for pushing her too far but she said she understood why I had done it and that she was okay. Never the less I went away feeling really quite shaken and very guilty.

Sue Coll had been involved in a terrible accident with a lorry whilst riding her bike around central London. Her injuries are extensive and very shocking. I was having problems finding people who were injured and willing to be photographed. RoadPeace contacted Sue for me but I had never met her before the day of the shoot. I had an email conversation with her in which she agreed to be photographed but we had not discussed in what way. When we spoke on the phone she mentioned that most of her injuries were around her back, bum and legs and I realised we would have to do a nearly nude shot. Sue said she would do this so long as she was not very easily recognisable. I thought she was being amazingly brave to literally bare all to a stranger in the hope that the resultant image might change things or spare someone else her fate. On the day we talked for ages and then the moment came. I had scouted around the house, it was a four hundred year old thatched cottage with tiny windows. There did not look like there was enough room anywhere. I found a small bedroom that had good light but made a very small studio. Then the next problem was that she could only do a few positions of pose, as her legs were so inflexible. After taking a few Polaroids we agreed that she would have to remove her top and hold a sheet to her front. "Could you take off your top now" I said, she looked at me with a quizzical look. "I think that's the first time I have ever said that on a photoshoot", she laughed and said "I think it's the first time for me too". The awkward moment had gone, she lent against the wall and I started shooting. Driving away I thought to myself that I could never imagined being so confident that I could do what Sue had just done.



Hitch Hicker



Sophie Mayberry burying the Oak leaves at the RoadPeace arboretum.

I went to a special day of commemoration at the RoadPeace Arboretum in the Midlands at which members could visit the trees they had dedicated to their dead loved ones.

There was a service held in the abatoriums chapel before we would all walk in line to the saplings. Towards the end of the service, victims names, ages and the date they died were read out loud. The names were written on oak leaves and were to be taken to the RoadPeace wood where they would be buried. During the address a small girl began to cry uncontrollably and was being comforted by what looked like her mother. I later met with them and discovered that they were Sophie Mayberry aged eight and her grandmother, Victoria.

Richard Mayberry was Sophie's father and Victoria's son, he had been killed on his way to work on his motorbike. Sophie was given the task of burying the leaves at the RoadPeace wood and did a fine job, despite being so upset.

When I went to Scunthorpe to photograph Sophie and Victoria I knew I had the possibility of taking a very powerful image if only I could capture even half of the feelings that were shown in the chapel that day.

The moment came when everything was set and the two of them were in front of the lens. I tried my usual technique of silent reflection. This was enough for Victoria who almost immediately looked right but not Sophie. Because I had seen her so upset I had not counted on her enjoying the attention. I tried talking and asking questions about her father but nothing worked. Victoria took a break and went into the kitchen. I sat there with

Sophie trying to think what I could say or do to get her thinking about her father properly. "Why did you cry at the chapel Sophie?" I asked. Her face crumpled and she curled up into a ball. I called Victoria back into the room and she sat down and hugged Sophie. "She forgot to write the date of when her father died on the oak leaf so only his name and age was read out", Victoria explained as I shot a roll of film.

Poor Sophie she had barely known her father before he was killed, she was only two and half when he died. She protects herself from questions by saying she does not remember him but she does. She remembers the cuddles and kisses, being thrown into the air and his smiley face. What effect all this will have on her who can say but when Sophie goes back as adult woman to visit her father's tree there will be a real wood there not a row of saplings and that might help.

Pat Bentley lost her son who was killed cycling to work. She is a strong woman who still has a lot of anger and that is how I chose to show her, proud and unapologetic. She has things to say about what happened to her son and no one can keep her quiet. Pat keeps her son's ashes and ponytail in two wooden caskets at home. Every year on the anniversary of his death at the precise time, 7am, she stands at the roadside holding these caskets and watches the traffic pass. I went to photograph this at Portsmouth on a very cold wet rainy morning and I was staggered by her fighting spirit. She wants the world to remember what happened to her son and unlike so many other victims she won't go quietly and why should she?

The Crash Images

When I first decided upon producing these constructed images I was unsure of the style they should follow. I looked at similar images by Jeff Wall and Gregory Crewdson. Whilst Wall's work looked totally realistic, Crewdson's images were often surreal. There were styles within both I found interesting and could see how they might work in my images.

Once I had planned each of the shots it was a question of pulling together all the elements. Over a period of two weeks I phoned around test tracks, film companies and tried to bend as many arms as possible. The main problem was a total lack of budget. Finally I had arranged a day in February at which all the elements were going to be present. I had make-up artists who were students studying the subject and they were led by a woman who had done make-up for the Casualty program. They were working for expenses only and I used friends as models. I had part of a test track in Surrey for the day, to provide a safe location to work. I had hired location battery powered electronic flash and a huge trailer caravan to house the team. Also most important of all I had arranged for two crashed cars to be delivered to the site and a team to move them around with a recovery vehicle.

The weather was only five degrees above zero but it was a beautiful day. I worked like crazy that day and managed to complete three images before the light went.

The other crash images were taken at Newbury Fire Station in Berkshire. I had persuaded the Station Commander Neil Carter to allow me to take some pictures of two wrecked cars before they used them in training. The Firemen were incredibly helpful and wanted to be in the images, which gave an added element of realism. I knew I would have to do much more Photoshop work to these images but the saving in time and money would compensate for this. We were only given an afternoon to shoot so I had the team assemble just before lunch and briefed them on what we were hoping to achieve. The work went smoothly and we produced another four images.

I then spent a number of weeks editing and working on these images in Photoshop. I also shot a background view of the M4 to combine with the elevated view of the Clio and fire engine.

The Journey's End

My journey working on this project has been a long one. I have travelled three thousand miles and shot 70 rolls of film. I also had a lucky escape whilst travelling to Barry and Sylvia's house, when my car was hit by an articulated 40-ton lorry at 60mph on the M3. My car was pushed into the fast lane, fortunately hitting nothing else. On my travels nearly every person I have talked to has had a tale to tell about themselves or someone dear to them who has been involved in a serious crash.

Unfortunately for so many people, minutes count and we race from one location to another in order to complete our daily tasks. This becomes habit forming to the point that we will drive like this even when there's nothing to rush for. We become hostile to those in our way and slow down only when we have to. There cannot be too many of us who have not felt roadrage when driving in a town or city. I mentioned earlier how the media inadvertently protect us from the shock and horror of crashes but it goes further than that. After a crash the devastation is cleared so quickly and road repairs made so speedily that we often don't even realise something has happened. Take a close look at a motorway near you and every few miles skid marks will lead to new sections of barrier. Our highways are now so sanitised that often the flowers left by the bereaved are removed within hours. No wonder we don't stop to think about it much!

The combined grief of all the people I have spoken too, many so distressed they could never agree to be photographed has left its mark on me. My attitude to cars and my own driving has changed. I no longer think that I am safe in my protective bubble of glass and steel, far from it!

Although I have experienced the two different sides of the story, the boy-racer of eighteen and now the family man of forty two. I still don't have any answers but when I hear people say that the figures are very low in this country and that they probably could not be brought any lower. It makes me angry, I want to say, "What about the people that drive at 100mph in the rain, what about the lorry drivers who fall asleep, what about aggressive drives, what about boy racers" and the list goes on. I know I cannot take all this on but what I can do is take my project forward and make sure as many people see it as possible.

I think one-day people will look back at this time and be amazed that we accepted these violent deaths and injuries as part of our normal lives.

How many times a week do we listen to traffic bulletins warning of congestion due to a serious incident and we don't bat an eyelid. I believe it was important to shoot this work as it captures a significant moment in time, when corporate and social conscious are awakening. I don't think its just my imagination but the government, the media, business and the public all seem to be taking more notice of the issue.

The essayist Paul Virilio argues that to invent the train is to invent the derailment or to invent the private car is to invent the motorway pile-up. The challenger space shuttle was the first accident of a new device and as such was equivalent to the first shipwreck. Unfortunately if you believe in what he says then we will never be free of such grief.

I would like to believe in a brighter future for the automobile, after all it offers us such personal freedom. Surely through the application of technology, government legislation and an increase in personal responsibility, we could see the numbers of deaths and seriously injured drop away to almost nothing. There are devices available now that will control a car's speed using the GPS navigation system. No matter how much the driver wants to speed the car knows where it is and sticks to the speed limit. All that needs to happen now is us to want these kind of devices.

It has been a life changing experience for me to meet and photograph all the people in this book. They have shown incredible bravery in taking part and in so doing exposing their innermost feelings to a virtual stranger. I would like to thank them all and wish them well for the future.



Life Line



RoadPeace dedicated to supporting road crash victims
support ● advocacy ● education ● research ● working for *real* road safety

'Road deaths and injuries shatter lives'

In 1896, the death of Bridget Driscoll in Britain was the first worldwide death of a person to be killed by a car. The coroner said he hoped such a thing would never happen again. But the road death toll in Britain has reached close to 1 million and worldwide 30 million. EACH year across the world over 1.2 million people are killed on the road, and for every death 4 people are permanently disabled, 30 treated in emergency rooms and 10 hospitalised.

Heathcote Williams, in his book Autogeddon, speaks of the 'Third World War nobody bothered to declare' when referring to the carnage on the world's roads.

RoadPeace is UK's specialist charity for people bereaved and injured through a road crash. It is dedicated to road victims' welfare and interests and its declared aims are:

to "support and empower today's road traffic victims, monitor the quality of services they receive, and to stop future generations from becoming victims."

RoadPeace Support

Set up in 1992, RoadPeace's first ever helpline for road crash victims - **0845 4500 355** - is a lifeline offering vital information, advice and support on 7 days a week, 12 hours each day from someone with expertise, empathy and understanding. This is supported by free literature written from the victims' perspective - about investigation, prosecution and civil claims - and based on the experience of thousands of cases.

Long-term support and friendship are offered through mailings, local groups, annual events and many joint acts and ways of remembrance:

- Internet memorial on www.roadpeace.org
- Remember Me roadside memorials and books
- World Day of Remembrance for Road Traffic Victims, initiated by RoadPeace in 1993 and promoted by them for years – nationally and internationally, resulting in a United Nations resolution to:
"recognise the third Sunday in November of every year as the World Day of Remembrance for Road Traffic Victims as an appropriate acknowledgement for victims of road traffic crashes and their families", adopted on 26 October 2005, an important milestone for road victims, achieved thanks to RoadPeace.
- Planting a tree in the RoadPeace Wood in Staffordshire
- Setting up local memorials, like the RoadPeace Garden in Manchester
- August National Road Victim Month observance
- National Road Victim Memorial project for a memorial in London
- Photography projects, such as Paul Wenham-Clarke's Exhibition

RoadPeace Advocacy

RoadPeace's essential role is championing the rights of road crash victims - to ensure that the trauma they suffer not only receives acknowledgement, but is properly addressed. RoadPeace researches and documents the experiences of road victims, using the findings to inform and influence agencies, policy makers and media in order to improve the deeply unsatisfactory legal response and treatment of road crash victims. RoadPeace campaigns for the voice of road crash victims to be heard, and for their perspective to be included, in all partnerships and initiatives that are of relevance. Victims of property crime, even minor theft, have at present more rights than injured road victims, including those permanently disabled. RoadPeace believes that road victims should be represented by organisations of and for victims and that funding by government of their work would be both justified and cost effective.

RoadPeace launched a Campaign for Justice for Road Traffic Victims in July 1998, which makes demands for six crucial areas:

victims' right to information and consultation
*investigations to national standards
*criminal justice
*civil justice
*national standards for physical and psychological medical care
*all relevant government departments to work in partnership to address this major human rights and public health disaster in partnership. As part of this Campaign, RoadPeace set up an All Party Parliamentary Group for Justice for Road Traffic Victims in November 1998 – this group has over 150 members and hold regular meetings on topical issues in both Houses – in 2005 its work centred on the Road Safety Bill and Road Traffic Law.

RoadPeace has also set up a Lawyers' Group, with the aim of Personal Injury lawyers becoming more sensitive to the plight of road crash victims and achieving fairest possible outcomes within legal restrictions.

RoadPeace - working for road danger reduction

RoadPeace also works for *real* road safety - to reduce the causes of road crashes and risks to vulnerable road users. It supports road victims in their efforts to have lessons learnt from their tragedies, so they are not repeated.

RoadPeace regularly highlights specific road danger issues, especially during August National Road Victim Month, introduced by them in 1998. Examples are campaigns - Against Hit and Run, Against the Body-count for speed cameras, Against Aggressive Driving, etc., campaigns which are always supported by RoadPeace's local groups.

RoadPeace works in collaboration with many like-minded organisations, in particular with those campaigning on transport safety issues, and has forged various coalitions over the years (some as founder member): The Transport Activists Roundtable, Pedestrian Policy Group, Slower Speeds Initiative and Safer Streets Coalition – the latter a coalition of 29 social justice groups.

RoadPeace – working at international level

Since early 1993, RoadPeace has been an active member of the European Federation of Road Traffic Victims (FEVR), an umbrella organisation of international victim organisations with similar objectives and principles, who meet bi-annually to plan joint international actions and campaigns. RoadPeace's Founder Brigitte Chaudhry is the present FEVR President.

RoadPeace participates at United Nations working parties due to FEVR 's consultative status, and with many of FEVR member organisations cooperates with the World Health Organisation (WHO) in its new role of Coordinator of worldwide road injury prevention work. The cooperation of WHO with Road Victim Advocacy NGOs will continue, with the quintessential aim of halting the global increase of road deaths and injuries, which must be of concern to everyone who travels to other countries, and of providing assistance to road crash victims. RoadPeace will represent the interests of UK road users and road crash victims at this important international collaboration forum.

Vision for the Future

RoadPeace's Vision is for a world in which road deaths and injuries are no longer treated by the economy as acceptable, by the judicial system as trivial and by society as accidents, and in which road crash victims are no longer treated as third class victims, but as people who have undergone a terrible trauma and who therefore need justice, respect for their rights, care, support and acknowledgement of their loss and suffering.

RoadPeace's Vision is for a time when there will be minimal need for any road victim charity's existence, because the risk of road use will have been reduced to that of air or rail travel, with concurrently improved services and criminal and civil justice for the greatly reduced number of road crash victims.

www.roadpeace.org



Thank you!

I would like to say a big thank you to all the people who agreed to be photographed. To allow a virtual stranger to capture your most personal feelings in order for them to be exhibited to others is incredibly brave.

Victoria & Sophie Mayberry, Jane & Phyllis Roche, Barry & Sylvia Williams, Ingrid Gray, Caroline Williams, Richard Bell, Sue Coll, Karen Morrow, Pat Bentley, Pam Moore, Shirley Caswell, Jamie Keep, Ted walker and Matt Hillis.

Also a huge thank you to all these people (listed below) who have given their time and/or money to help this project reach its conclusion.

Brigitte Chaudhry, RoadPeace
Brigitte has become a good friend during the last few years and without her the project would not look like it does today. She is the most dedicated person I have ever met.
www.roadpeace.org

Nigel Charlesworth and Melanie Denny. Green Flag Motoring Assistance
I first contacted Nigel in search of funding but I have had way more help from him than just money. With Nigel's help the work has been propelled to a different level of public awareness and I am deeply grateful to him.
www.greenflag.com

My wife Anita and daughter Bea
I don't know where to start. Thanks for putting up with the endless late nights, the days away and the never-ending talk about the same thing.

Andy Cantouris, Nottingham Trent University
Thanks for all your support and an especially big thank you for the 1851 Gallery!

The models in the crash pictures
Oli Pembridge, Marie Absolom, Jim Barry, Beth Winslett, Colin Little, Ted Walker and Matt Hillis. Well done and thanks for putting up with the difficult circumstances.

Make-up for the crash images
Thanks for your time and effort.
Sophie Waite
Tel: 07963 561650
Sandra Axell
Tel: 07905 767005
sandra_axell@yahoo.com
Vlatka Memedovic
Tel: 0772 305491

Paul Grantham, Qinetiq UK (test track)
Thanks for supplying a safe place to shoot.

99 Cars
Thanks for supplying the damaged vehicles and crew.
www.nineninecars.demon.co.uk

Neil Carter, Station Commander, Newbury Fire Station
Thanks for all your assistance and interest.

Louise Shorter, Graphic Designer
Thanks for all your good work and putting up with me!
louise@m4design.co.uk

Kevin Lunham, Building Box (Web Designer)
Thanks for all your time and patience.
Kevin@buildingbox.co.uk

Mark Rawley
Thanks for some good advice when I needed it.

Calumet Photographic
Thanks for the materials.

A4 Breakers
Thanks for your time.

White Horse Press
Thanks for all the favours and doing a great job.
Tel: 01635 527800
www.whpnewbury.com

the.gallery@oxo
Thank you for having the confidence to exhibit this controversial work.
the.gallery@oxo
Oxo Tower Wharf
Bargehouse Street
South Bank
London SE1 9PH
www.oxotower.co.uk