



*Trafficmaster/  
RAC Foundation  
Journey Time Index*

*Summer 2008*

*In partnership with*



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## Foreword

*Summer sunshine, blue skies and balmy nights draw us out of our homes to visit attractions, attend events, festivals or go on holiday, but all this activity has unforeseen consequences for the nation's road network.*

*This report assesses the impact summer events have on our journeys, and which events have the worst effect on UK roads. We also provide an analysis of how road traffic speeds change on key holiday routes, when additional motorists take to the roads at certain times of the day.*

*Principally this report analyses the change in journey times across some of the UK's major routes as well as providing information on the observed variations in congestion and traffic hotspots over the past three years. Motorways are used regularly by the majority of drivers, and therefore the report also presents information on average motorway speeds, whilst highlighting the slowest and fastest highways.*

*Summer congestion is strongly influenced by large events such as music festivals, sporting occasions, county shows and holiday getaways. The UK is fortunate enough to enjoy over 340 large, professionally organised music and family entertainment events as well as numerous*

*sporting highlights. These include The Glastonbury Festival, the Silverstone Formula 1 Grand Prix, Cowes Week and the Epsom Derby. Unfortunately these produce heavy localised traffic on roads that are not often suitable for high volumes. Theme parks and other places of local interest will also entice crowds, causing bottlenecks and jams around these local honey-pots.*

*This report highlights the events that generate the worst congestion and identifies the holiday routes that suffer the most from an increase in summer traffic.*

*2008 has seen no overall increase in traffic volumes, according to the latest Department for Transport figures – the first time this has happened since 2000. While car traffic has fallen 2% between the first quarters of 2007 and 2008, light van traffic has continued its rise, with an increase of 4%, now making up 14% of the vehicles on our roads. Meanwhile HGV traffic has seen little change with only a 1 per cent increase.*

*Congestion remains a frustrating reality for many motorists – hardly surprising when you consider that nearly 34 million UK-registered vehicles, 1.7 million foreign heavy goods vehicles, and thousands of other visiting vehicles are fighting for space on just 245,000 miles of roads. While the volume of traffic is a key factor in causing congestion on Britain's roads, driver behaviour, road works, incidents and weather also play their part.*

*This Journey Time Index from Trafficmaster and the RAC Foundation analyses trends in traffic flow and congestion over the last three years and this data will be used to ascertain new trends in the future.*



**Tony Eales, Chief Executive**  
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## Report Highlights

### Journey Time Index

- > Journey times on average have increased by 2.6% across key routes in the UK at peak times compared to 2005
- > The route between Heathrow and junction 16 on the M1 has seen the biggest increase in journey times compared to the base taken in 2005.
- > The route with the greatest decrease in journey times is the M6 Toll road in both directions

### Top Congestion Hotspots

- > Congestion has fallen by 12% across the UK over the past 6 months
- > The M25 Western sector remains the busiest section on the UK's roads and has continued to see an increase in congestion
- > The M6 in the West Midlands has experienced the most significant rise in congestion over the last year
- > The M25 Northern sector has seen the smallest increase in congestion alerts but still maintains its place in the top 8 motorway hotspots

### Motorway Speeds

- > Motorway Speeds have decreased on average 1 mph per year over the last three years
- > The fastest motorway is the M50 with an average speed of 75 mph

### The Top 20 Summer Events for Driver Meltdown

- > The V Festival (Staffordshire and Chelmsford), The Carling Weekender (Leeds), Glastonbury and The Royal Show in Warwickshire hit top spot for having the worst impact on the roads in 2007 and 2008

### Top Congested Holiday Routes

- > The M5 and the A303 prove to be popular for holiday makers and are the UK's worst summer getaway routes
- > The A55 is the slowest holiday route in the UK

## Introduction

Britain's roads are notorious for traffic jams, but a smart motorist can take steps to avoid them.

The first step to avoiding congestion is knowing more about when and why it develops. Measuring trends in congestion can help us understand how demand for travel in the UK is changing. Avoiding congestion can help save fuel, cut emissions, and make journeys more predictable and less stressful.

The Trafficmaster/RAC Foundation Journey Time Index measures congestion in two different ways – an indexed measure of key journey times across the country, and an analysis of UK congestion hotspots.

Trafficmaster has been monitoring traffic for over 20 years and is now one of the leading providers of in-vehicle telematics. It has strategic alliances with motor manufacturers, media and communication organisations and local government. The Congestion Report is produced in partnership with the RAC Foundation, an independent charity founded in 1991 to promote the environmental, economic, mobility and safety issues relating to the use of motor vehicles.

This and further reports will be available on both the Trafficmaster and RAC Foundation websites. Both partners are available to provide commentary, analysis and opinion on the impact of congestion for businesses, the environment and the community.

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## Index Methodology

The analysts at Trafficmaster measure levels of congestion using its network of 7,500 road side sensors across 8,000 miles of the UK's motorways and trunk roads.

Journey Times have been measured across 26 different points on the UK's main commuter and commercial routes. Journeys have been measured every four minutes. The congestion information uses data taken from the congestion hotspots – areas that receive the most congestion alerts.

An alert is sent to Trafficmaster when traffic flow falls below 30mph on motorways, below 20 mph on trunk roads and below 15 mph on urban roads. By comparing the number of alerts received over time and between regions, trends can be calculated.

## 2008 Journey Time Index

Congestion is a localised phenomenon. With the right information and good forward planning, smart motorists can avoid it.

The routes monitored for this report run between large conurbations and are seen as main commuter and HGV roads, providing us with a true picture of congestion and traffic flow in the UK.

The Index measures the length of time taken to complete the journey and includes weekend days. The period of time monitored and compared in this Index is over an annual 12 month period running from June 2007 to June 2008.

**Table of Journeys and Roads monitored**

Journey	Roads used
Cambridge to Ipswich	A14
Oxford to Southampton Docks	M40 (J9), M271, M27, M3, A34
Glasgow to Aberdeen	M8, M80, A80, M9, A9, A90
Birmingham to Bristol	M6, M5, M4, M32
London to Leeds	Staples Corner on M1, M621
M1 junction 16 to Heathrow	M1, M25, M4
Manchester M6 junction 11a to M62 junction 11	M62, M6
M6 – (parallel to Toll) junction 4 to junction 11a	M6
M6 Toll – junction 4 (M6) to junction 11a (M6)	M6 Toll, M42
Liverpool (East) to Manchester (West)	M62, M602
Nottingham to Sheffield	A52, M1
M6 at junction 11a to Manchester	M6, M56
Glasgow to Edinburgh	M8/A8, A720

### Journey Time Index

Journey	Journey time (hours:mins)	% change			
		between 2008 and 2007	Index 2008/2005	Index 2007/2005	Index 2006/2005
Cambridge to Ipswich (Eastbound)	00:59	2.4%	101	98	101
Ipswich to Cambridge (Westbound)	00:52	-5.5%	97	103	105
Southampton Docks to Oxford (Northbound)	01:06	1.2%	102	100	100
Oxford to Southampton Docks (Southbound)	01:04	2.5%	103	100	98
Glasgow to Aberdeen (Northbound)	02:42	-3.3%	103	107	102
Aberdeen to Glasgow (Southbound)	02:42	1.9%	100	100	104
Bristol to Birmingham (Northbound)	01:35	1.1%	99	98	102
Birmingham to Bristol (Southbound)	01:36	0.8%	102	101	101
London to Leeds (Northbound)	03:12	1.4%	106	104	103
Leeds to London (Southbound)	03:08	3.7%	106	102	103
Heathrow to M1 junction 16 (Northbound)	01:17	5.0%	110	105	103
M1 junction 16 to Heathrow (Southbound)	01:18	3.8%	112	108	107
Manchester M6 junction 11a to M62 junction 11 (Northbound)	01:06	-5.1%	102	108	105
M62 junction 11 to Manchester M6 junction 11a (Southbound)	01:07	-1.6%	103	105	105

Journeys measured between 9am and 4 pm each day (including weekends) average over 30 consecutive days with journey departures every 4 minutes.

### Journey Time Index (continued)

Journey	Journey time (hours:mins)	% change			
		between 2008 and 2007	Index 2008/2005	Index 2007/2005	Index 2006/2005
M6 (parallel to Toll) junction 4 to junction 11a (Northbound)	00:23	2.5%	105	103	100
M6 (parallel to Toll) junction 11a to junction 4 (Southbound)	00:28	-9.9%	104	115	104
M6 Toll, junction 4 (M6) to junction 11a (M6) (Northbound)	00:21	0.6%	93	93	94
M6 Toll, junction 11a to junction 4 (M6) (Southbound)	00:21	0.2%	97	97	98
Liverpool (East) to Manchester (West) (Eastbound)	00:27	-3.5%	108	108	102
Manchester (West) to Liverpool (East) to (Westbound)	00:26	0.7%	102	102	102
Nottingham to Sheffield (Northbound)	00:55	-1.8%	103	105	99
Sheffield to Nottingham (Southbound)	00:52	-2.2%	97	101	101
M6, junction 11a to Manchester South M56/Junction 3 (Northbound)	01:07	-4.2%	103	107	105
Manchester South M56/Junction 3 to M6, junction 11a (Southbound)	01:08	-1.6%	103	105	105
Glasgow West to Edinburgh East (Eastbound)	00:56	1.9%	103	101	100
Edinburgh East to Glasgow West (Westbound)	01:01	1.1%	105	104	100

Journeys measured between 9am and 4 pm each day (including weekends) average over 30 consecutive days with journey departures every 4 minutes.

### Key Findings

Overall journey times have increased by 2.6% from 2005. However Trafficmaster has noticed journey times have decreased in the past year by 0.3%.

- > The journey times between London and Leeds have gone up year on year. This reflects the impact of the road works on the M1 in the Home Counties between junctions 11 and 20. It has also had an impact on the journey time between Heathrow and Junction 16 on the M1, which has seen the largest increase of all.
- > The A14 Westbound has seen a decrease in journey times both against last year and 2005 – this improvement maybe linked to better road management, where HGVs are restricted from overtaking on certain sections of this dual carriageway. Fewer incidents have also taken place on this section of the road.
- > Southampton to Oxford journey times have remained relatively stable over the past three years. However the increase experienced this year reflects the effects of the new road widening work around the M3/M27 interchange, which commenced in Spring 2008.
- > The M6 Southbound around Birmingham has seen the greatest fall in journey times at 9.9% less than 2007. This is due in part to the completion of the road works on the motorway. Compared to 2005 however journey times have increased.
- > The motorways around Manchester (the M6, M62, and M56) have seen a consistent decrease in journey times both north and south bound over the past year – however compared to the same period in 2005 journey times have increased.

## Congestion Hotspots

Congestion hotspots are defined as a stretch of road where dense, slow moving traffic occurs regularly. These sections of a road are frequently operating at 'stop – start' conditions with traffic moving below 20mph.

This report displays the top motorway and trunk road congestion hotspots in England, Scotland and Wales.

Overall the level of congestion appears to be falling across the country compared to

2007. This is principally due to a fall in the number of vehicles on the move.

### Top Motorway Congestion Hotspots

Road	Trafficmaster Congestion Alerts Year Ending June 08	Percentage change between y/e June 07 and y/e June 08	Percentage Change between y/e June 06 and y/e June 07	Commentary
M25 Western Sector J10 to J21a	161,610	-5	+26	Continues to be a busy section of road – but just beginning to follow the national trend with a small reduction in recorded congestion alerts.
M1 Southern J6a to J23	143,361	-11	+31	With the major road works nearing completion we expect to see a dramatic decrease in congestion.
M6 West Midlands J4 to J11a	94,985	-20	+67	A marked decrease in the level of congestion reflects a reduction in road works. As an urban motorway we have seen it used as a rat run, however there seems to be a decrease in the amount of traffic using this motorway over the last year.
M1 East Midlands/ South Yorkshire J23 to J31	89,360	+1	+63	Road works around the M1 and M18 interchange have been completed, but this has been replaced by widening works further South. Congestion levels on an annual basis are largely unchanged.
M62 J23/M1 J42 West Yorkshire	91,371	+2	+46	Traffic congestion continues to rise on this interchange, although at a slower rate than previously.
M25 Northern Sector J21a to J31	91,267	-26	+1	The completion of the road works at the Holmesdale Tunnel has resulted in a dramatic decrease in congestion.
M4 London to Severn Bridge	87,264	+4	+9	This motorway remains much the same. There are some months that experience traffic problems more than others, but as a main route from London into the West Country and Wales, we will continue to see this as one of the busiest roads in the UK.
M6 North West J11a to J27	77,485	-19	+3	Delays on this part of the M6 tend to be incident driven. We are starting to see a fall in congestion, particularly around the Thelwall Viaduct.

Measurement is over a 24 hour day over a month, including weekends and national holidays. The alerts reflect the number of 4 minute periods in which the average speed on a motorway or fast trunk road falls below 30 mph and are taken in both directions.

### Key Findings: Motorways

- Compared to the year between June 06 and June 07, when we saw a dramatic increase in alerts especially on the M6 West Midlands and the M1 East Midlands, we have now started to see a decrease in the overall levels of congestion on these sections of road.
- Generally traffic conditions have on average improved with the M25 Northern sector experiencing a drop in alerts of 26% and the M6 West Midlands seeing a 20% decline.

### Top Trunk Road Congestion Hotspots

Road	Location	Trafficmaster Congestion Alerts	Percentage change 2007/2008 vs. 2006/2007	Commentary
A421 Bedford to Brogborough	Bedford to Brogborough	60,304	-1	Road works at Brogborough make this one of the worst congestion hotspots. As a main route between the M1 and A1 it carries a heavy mix of commercial and private vehicles.
A3 Compton to Hindhead		36,281	-11	The start of road works on the Hindhead Tunnels initially caused considerable delays. However the road has become more settled and drivers are finding alternative routes.
A14 Huntingdon to Cambridge		31,187	-18	As a busy route between the Midlands and Eastern ports, we see a lot of incident related congestion. However with fewer accidents this year so far, congestion has decreased.
A34 M40/J9 to Newbury Bypass		21,094	-77	Road works at Junction 9 on the M40 have been completed and freed up traffic flow. However new works at Wolvercote Viaduct we may see congestion rise again.

Please note: Distances vary between each hotspot section. The number of alerts are measured over a 24 hour period.

### Top Scottish and Welsh Congestion and Motorway Congestion Hotspots

Road	Location	Commentary
M8	Scotland J12 to J24	Little change in congestion over previous years
A720	Scotland	The road continues to be one of the worst hotspots in Scotland
A90	Scotland Forth Road Bridge	This is a natural bottleneck and causes long delays
M77	Scotland M8 interchange J2	As the nearest main junction to the centre of Glasgow it carries a high volume of traffic
M8	Scotland J1 to J3	This motorway filters into Edinburgh centre
M4	Wales J23 to J32	As the main Newport to Cardiff road this attracts many commuters

### Month on Month Comparison

Over the last six months we have seen congestion fall by around 12% across the UK. The decrease in traffic congestion alerts is largely due to a fall in the number of vehicles on the move during peak time, combined with the completion of some major road works. To obtain a true picture of congestion we have looked at six months in 2008 in comparison to the same six months in 2007, which has shown a definite decline in congestion.

	June 08 v June 07	May 08 v May 07	April 08 v April 07	March 08 v March 07	Feb 08 v Feb 07	Jan 08 v Jan 07
Overall change across all hotspots	-17%	-8%	-11%	-6%	-20%	-9%

## Motorway Speeds

Road	Direction and Speed	Direction and Speed	Direction and Speed
M1	Northbound 62	Southbound 66	
M11	Northbound 67	Southbound 67	
M18	Northbound 66	Southbound 68	
M180	Westbound 71	Eastbound 71	
M2	Westbound 61	Eastbound 59	
M20	Northbound 62	Southbound 61	
M23	Northbound 71	Southbound 62	
M25	Clockwise 60	Anti-clockwise 58	
M26	Westbound 67	Eastbound 65	
M27	Westbound 53	Eastbound 52	
M3	North Eastbound 63	South Westbound 63	
M32	Northbound 54	Southbound 59	
M4	Westbound 65	Eastbound 62	
M40	Northbound 62	Southbound 63	
M42	South Westbound 64	North Eastbound 65	
M5	Westbound 70	Eastbound 68	
M50	Westbound 75	Eastbound 72	
M53	Northbound 64	Southbound 67	
M54	Westbound 66	Eastbound 72	
M55	Westbound 58	Eastbound 60	
M56	Westbound 69	Eastbound 66	
M57	Northbound 64	Southbound 67	
M58	Westbound 69	Eastbound 65	
M60	Clockwise 66	Anti-clockwise 67	
M602	Westbound 74	Eastbound 56	
M61	Northbound 68	Southbound 64	
M62	Westbound 66	Eastbound 65	
M621	Westbound 57	Eastbound 61	
M65	Westbound 61	Eastbound 71	
M66	Westbound 74	Eastbound 68	
M67	Westbound 66	Eastbound 60	
M69	Northbound 62	Southbound 60	
M73	Northbound 57	Southbound 69	
M74/A74M	Northbound 66	Southbound 69	
M8	Westbound 63	Eastbound 65	
M8	Westbound 63	Eastbound 65	
M8	Westbound 63	Eastbound 65	
M8	Westbound 63	Eastbound 65	
M8	Westbound 63	Eastbound 65	

Average motorway speeds across 48 of the UK's motorways have fallen by around 1 mile an hour year on year over the last three years. The average miles per hour in 2006 was 64.4, in 2007 this went down to 63.3 and in 2008 we have seen a further decrease in speed, with vehicles travelling on average 62.2 miles per hour.

### Key Findings: Motorways

- › The fastest motorway lane is the M50 Westbound, whilst the slowest lane is the eastbound carriageway of the M27.
- › The largest difference in speeds in each direction is the M602 with an 18 mph difference.

Road speeds were measured in Spring 2008.



## Commentary: the Impact of Summer Events

### Why do jams develop on quiet rural roads? What turns a festival into a frustrating trip home?

Summer is the season for festivals, county fairs, fetes and sporting events. Generally causing an increase in localised traffic, the larger events such as the county fairs and music festivals can attract up to 120,000 people from across the UK over the days they run.

#### Key Findings

- > Congestion occurs as event locations are typically served by small local roads that feed onto the larger road network. A sudden volume of traffic often causes bottlenecks as traffic comes off or heads out onto the main roads.
  - > Visitors often arrive and leave at the same time – around the timings of the event. This often results in severe queues with drivers at some events reportedly waiting several hours before they can actually move off the site.
  - > A mix of traders, event hosts and organisers with trailers and lorries add to the volume of traffic. This is particularly prominent when an event has finished and everyone is making a getaway at the same time.
  - > We often see the Northern events attract the greatest crowds. The worst region for event traffic is around Staffordshire and Leeds with the V Festival and the Carling Weekender. With fewer major festivals in the North, these two events attract nearly 90,000 visitors on each day.
- Many of the visitors travel from across the North East and Scotland and Trafficmaster has monitored a correlation of widespread congestion in line with the event times. In addition Creamfields in Cheshire also causes abnormal traffic problems attracting crowds from Liverpool and Manchester.
- > Often the worst traffic occurs when events run on the most popular holiday weekends, especially those at the start of the summer holidays. The East of England Show in Peterborough and the New Forest and Hampshire County Show attract many families who have started the school summer holidays. In addition to this, events running at the same time encourage drivers to compete for limited road space. An example of this was the Grand Prix weekend at Silverstone on the 6th July, where the Corbury Music Festival at nearby Charlebury, featuring musician Paul Simon, was running at the same time. This caused even more severe delays than if they had run on separate weekends.

- > We also see regions holding a number of events around the same time, such as Oxfordshire – with four music events running at the end of August. This generally puts a massive strain on country roads and causes bottlenecks as traffic tries to head out onto the main routes.
- > This year Glastonbury proved to be yet another headliner – for music fans and for those watching the roads. The roads around the festival including the A303 were heavily congested from 8.00am Monday morning through to 8.00 o'clock in the evening. Those travelling around 10am hit the worst delays with a 12 mile journey taking just over 90 minutes. This journey was from Roakham Bottom to Amesbury Countess on the A303.

The list of following events shows those which have the most impact on the roads. They have been measured in terms of their severity:

**1. Local impact** – Causes delays on side roads that normally have no or little traffic.

**2. Medium impact** – Effects roads that are busy all through the year and the increase in traffic causes some impact on journey times.

**3. High impact** – Causes delays on local roads that spill onto adjacent main roads, causing bottlenecks and heavy congestion.

**4. Severe impact** – The events are served by main roads and the additional traffic causes long delays for both event visitors and general traffic.

#### Events in England – Events in chronological order

Event	Location	Date	Roads affected	Impact Level
Royal Cornwall Show	Wadebridge	5th to 7th June	A39	3
Vodafone Derby	Epsom	6th to 7th June	M25	3
East of England County Show	Peterborough	13th to 15th June	A1M, A47	2
Isle of Wight Music Festival	Seaclose Park, Newport	13th to 15th June	Southampton ports and local roads	3
Royal Ascot	Berkshire	17th to 21st June	A332, A329, M4, M3	4
Wimbledon Championships	South West London	23rd June to 6th July	A3, A219, local roads	3
Royal Norfolk Show	Norwich	25th to 26th June	A47, A11	2
Glastonbury Festival	Somerset	25th to 30th June	A37	4
The Royal Show	Stoneleigh Park, Warwickshire	3rd to 6th July	A46, M40	4
F1 British Grand Prix	Silverstone, Northamptonshire	4th to 6th July	A43, A5, M40, M1	4
Goodwood Festival of Speed	Chichester, West Sussex	11th July	Local Roads	3
Royal International Air Tattoo	RAF Fairford, Gloucestershire	12th to 13th July	A419, Local roads	3
East of England July Show	Peterborough	15th to 17th July	A1M, A47	2
WOMAD Music & Comedy Festival	Charlton Park, Malmesbury, Wiltshire	25th to 27th July	M4 and local roads	1
George VI and Queen Elizabeth Stakes	Ascot	25th to 27th July	M4, M3 and local roads	2
20/20 Cricket Cup Final	Eastleigh, Hampshire	26th July	M27 junction 5	2
New Forest and Hampshire County Show	Lymington	29th 31st July	Local roads	1
Glorious Goodwood	Chichester, West Sussex	29th July to 3rd August	Local roads	3
Cambridge Folk Festival	Cambridge	31st July to 3rd August	A14	2
Red Bull Air Race	Docklands, London	2nd to 3rd August	Blackwall Tunnel, A13, A102, A12, A2	4
Cowes Week	Cowes, Isle of Wight	2nd to 9th August	Isle of Wight crossings	3
V Festival	Weston Park, Staffordshire	16th & 17th August	A41, M54, A5, M6, M6 Toll	4
V Festival	Hylands Park, Chelmsford	16th & 17th August	A12, A414	4
Carling Weekender Music Festival	Bramham Park, Leeds	22nd to 24th August	A64, A6120, A1, M1	4
Carling Weekender Music Festival	Little John's Farm, Reading	22nd to 24th August	M4, A329, A329M	2
Green Belt Festival	Cheltenham	22nd to 25th August	A40	1
Creamfields Dance Music Festival	Daresbury, Cheshire	23rd August	M56	3
Notting Hill Carnival	London	24th & 25th August	West Way A40	3
Dorset Steam Fair (40th Anniversary)	Tarrant Hinton near Poole	27th to 31st August	A354, local roads	3

**Events in Wales** – Events in chronological order

Event	Location	Date	Roads affected	Impact Level
Aberystwyth and Ceredigion County Show	Capel Bangor	14th June	Local roads	3
Llangollen International Music Festival	Llangollen	8th to 13th July	A5	2
Royal Welsh Show	Builth Wells	21st to 24th July	A483, A477	3
Royal National Eisteddfod of Wales	Cardiff	2nd to 9th August	Local Cardiff roads	2
Anglesey County Show	Gwalchmai	12th to 13th August	A55	2
Pembrokeshire County Show	Haverfordwest	19th to 21st August	A40	4

**Events in Scotland** – Events in chronological order

Event	Location	Date	Roads affected	Impact Level
Royal Highland Show	Ingliston Showground, Edinburgh	19th 22nd June	A8, M8, A720	2
Barclays Scottish Open Golf	Loch Lomond	10th to 13th July	A82, local roads	2
Caithness County Show	Scrabster Farm, Thurso	18th & 19th July	A9	3
Glasgow River Festival	Glasgow	19th to 20th July	M8, Clydesdale Expressway and Tunnel	2
Edinburgh Military Tattoo	Edinburgh	1st to 23rd August	All roads around Edinburgh	2
Truck Fest	Ingliston Showground, Edinburgh	2nd to 3rd August	A8, M8, A720	2
Edinburgh Fringe Festival	Edinburgh	3rd to 25th August	All roads around Edinburgh	2

## Commentary: Holiday Journeys

Caravans and families packed into cars en-route to a UK resort are a common sight throughout the summer. For many of us, getting stuck in a traffic jam has become as much a part of the holiday experience as sandcastles and ice cream.

In 2007, Visit Britain recorded nearly 102 million overnight domestic trips with 20% of these travellers heading to the South West. Not surprisingly, the most congested holiday routes serve this region.

The Top Ten Most Congested Holiday Routes 2008	Average Speed on Holiday Getaway Days	Average Speed on Normal Day	Worst times of the Day – Holiday
M5 between junction 15 and junction 31 (Almondsbury interchange and Exeter)	30-35mph	65-70mph	14.00hrs – 20.00hrs
A303 between M3 junction 7 and A30 near Honiton	25-40mph	45-60mph	15.00hrs – 20.30hrs
A30 between M5 junction 31 and Indian Queens	30-35mph	40-50mph	15.00hrs – 21.00hrs
A55 between Chester and Conwy	20mph-40mph	60mph	18.00hrs – 22.00hrs
M6 between junction 29 (M61/M65 interchange), junction 32 (M55 interchange) and junction 36 (A590)	45-50mph	65mph	13.00hrs – 20.00hrs
M27, A31 and A35 between M3 junction 14 and Dorset coast	35-40mph	60mph	13.00hrs – 18.30hrs
M4 between junction 13 (Chieveley), junction 20 (Almondsbury) and Severn Bridge	45-50mph	65-70mph	14.00hrs – 19.30hrs
M5 between M6 interchange and junction 15 (Almondsbury)	55-60mph	65-70mph	12.00hrs – 18.30hrs
A47 between A1 (Stibbington) and Great Yarmouth	25-40mph	45-55mph	11.00hrs – 19.00hrs
M11 between junction 6 and junction 8 (the airport run between M25 and Stansted)	55mph	70mph	11.00hrs – 17.00hrs

Routes in rank order with the worst affected at the top.

### Key Findings

- Typically most of these routes do not see many congestion problems outside the months of June, July and August.
- Compared to winter months, the rise in congestion can triple journey times on these routes, with an increase of over an hour and a half drive time for routes of around 100 miles.
- The worst parts of the day tend to be mid afternoon going into the evening. The A55 in North Wales sees motorists travelling later in the day, compared to the rest of the country. On the M11 we see holiday traffic influenced by flight times and congestion therefore tends to be earlier in the day, with congestion easing by late afternoon.
- The worst summer congestion times coincide with school holidays and bank holiday weekends. The first summer getaways typically begin at the start of the school summer holidays, which this year fell between the 18th and 25th July. The August Bank Holiday on the 22nd will be another severely affected day with peak congestion starting as early as 2.00pm.
- The difference in road speeds between a normal day and the holiday getaway day can be anything up to 40mph – some roads such as the A55 see vehicles travel at around 18mph during the main peak.
- Commuter routes will see a dramatic fall in congestion during the first weeks of the school holiday during peak times (7.30am – 9.00am and 4.30pm to 6.30pm). Roads that are invariably busy no matter what time of year, such as the M25, the M1 in the Home Counties, the A14 and the A34, will see a 15-20% reduction in the number of delays during the school holidays.



## Conclusions and Recommendations

*Does the decrease in congestion identified in this report mean that we are seeing the end of a traffic jam?*

*With average journey times getting longer, a fall in congestion and a decrease in motorway speeds, this may well be a sign that rising fuel prices and a slowing economy is having an effect on the way people drive. However this does not mean that congestion has been solved. It remains the same severe drain on our economy and on the quality of people's lives as it has been for many years. When the economy does recover, a growth in traffic congestion will undoubtedly return.*

*We must continue to work for congestion reduction; better road management; better real time information; investment in more capacity and more sensible taxing and pricing policies all have a part to play.*

*In the short term, Trafficmaster and the RAC Foundation believe that knowing where the jams are and how to avoid them helps the smart motorist to use the roads more efficiently.*

*This report has also highlighted the very different patterns of summer congestion, which develops around events and on holiday routes. Using technologies such as satellite navigation and mobile phone traffic text alerts can save drivers up to four hours a month.\**

*So by using roads more efficiently and taking advantage of available traffic information, motorists will not only improve journey times, but can cut down on fuel consumption and as a result, reduce the vehicle's carbon footprint. Working together, businesses, travel and transport organisations and individual drivers can make a change to our congestion problem and keep Britain on the move.*

## Appendix

### About Trafficmaster

Trafficmaster and its US sister company Teletrac provide businesses and drivers with integrated intelligent driving services that help improve productivity and efficiencies as well reducing costs and lowering vehicle carbon footprints.

With its own research and development teams, the company has developed a unique telematics platform that provides tailored solutions to various customers.

Teletrac is the leading US fleet management and vehicle tracking solutions provider. Under the Fleet Director brand it supports over 5,000 fleets that operate over 75,000 vehicles. The combination of 'intelligent' driving services, such as navigation, vehicle tracking and up to date traffic and road information and has proven to cut a fleet's fuel consumption by 30% and improve productivity by 12%. What's more Trafficmaster's fleet customers have also reduced overtime by 15% and cut unauthorised vehicle use by 12%.

Trafficmaster is also at the forefront of vehicle telematics. It launched Smartnav, the first UK satellite navigation system to use real time traffic to calculate best routes. The ability to use real road speed data and incident information enables Smartnav users to drive optimum routes and avoid traffic congestion. Smartnav is continually updated with traffic information, road closures and incidents and uses up-to-dated mapping that is stored centrally at Trafficmaster head office.

In September 2007 it introduced Fleet Director to the UK and now serves over 350 fleets. Its focus is on helping companies maximise the efficiencies of their drivers and vehicles.

Its stolen vehicle tracking solution, Trackstar, is able to watch vehicle 24 hours a day via its Control Centre. Vehicle movements are tracked in real time and their whereabouts are directly conveyed to the police for fast recovery. Trackstar is currently BMW's chosen stolen vehicle tracking system.

At the core of Trafficmaster's technology is its network of over 7,500 roadside cameras that monitor traffic flow across 8,000 miles of the UK's motorways and trunk roads. This traffic information is not only used by the company's own solutions, but is available via mobile phone and the Radio Data System-Traffic Message Channel (RDS-TMC), which is used by six of the UK's top ten car brands and a variety of satellite navigation systems.

Trafficmaster has recently been awarded the ISO4001 certificate which recognises the company's commitment to the environment and the community. Trafficmaster continues to provide products and services that are of outstanding quality and was acclaimed as an Energy Saving Trust Fleet Hero, coming runner up in the Trust's Innovation 2007 Awards. The company is also a member of the Low Carbon Vehicle Partnership.

Trafficmaster was founded in 1988 and floated on the London Stock Exchange in 1994. Teletrac Inc. is a wholly owned US subsidiary company.

[www.trafficmaster.co.uk](http://www.trafficmaster.co.uk)

### About RAC Foundation

The RAC Foundation for Motoring is an independent charity established to promote the environmental, economic, mobility and safety issues relating to use of motor vehicles.

Our vision: Advocating innovative transport solutions for safer roads, safer drivers, greener cars, improved mobility and a fair deal for motorists.

The RAC Foundation was originally set up in 1991 fundamentally as a research arm of RAC. Following the de-merger and sale of RAC in 1999, the Foundation took on a new and wider role to include researching and promoting issues of safety, mobility, economics and the environment.

The Chairman of the Foundation is David Holmes, who also sits on the Board of Trustees and is Chair of the Foundation's Public Policy Committee.

The Foundation's Public Policy Committee acts in an advisory capacity to the Foundation. The committee is consulted about research strategy, major campaigns and future policy, and is comprised of academics, MPs with an interest in transport matters and other experts with practical experience of transport and traffic related matters.

Registered UK Charity Number: 10888670

[www.racfoundation.org](http://www.racfoundation.org)



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